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National Security Strategy and Forward Presence: Implications for Acquisition and Use of Forces

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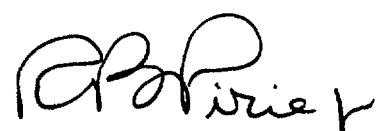

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Summary

The post-Cold War national security strategy engages U.S. power in all its forms to shape a more secure world. Overseas presence—operating forces forward to influence what foreign governments think and do—is the most important and challenging of the tasks this strategy assigns the armed forces.[1] This paper looks at the political and strategic case for presence and discusses some of its costs and risks. It draws conclusions about (1) what presence means in our use of the forces we have now and (2) what forces to buy for the future. It also suggests ways to make presence operations more efficient and issues deserving study in that regard.

The goal of the national strategy is a secure and prosperous nation in an increasingly democratic world. Today's security problems—like nuclear proliferation and "regional bad actors"—are serious, and the resulting instability that threatens U.S. interests and friends and allies must be dealt with, but the U.S. faces no mortal threat comparable to the one the USSR presented. Beyond the horizon, however, is the near certainty that, left to its own devices, the inherently flawed system of sovereign states will lead at least one of the major powers into an arms build-up, a regional arms race, hostile coalitions, and, finally, violent conflict on a growing scale. Because international organizations like the UN are not yet able to discipline a big power, the result, in perhaps a decade or more, will be a major direct threat to America.

1. Most recently by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's *Bottom-Up Review: Forces for a New Era,* published by the Department of Defense, September 1, 1993. (Hereafter cited as BUR.) The assignment of presence as a "strategic task" was first seen in President Bush's *National Security Strategy of the United States* (August 1991) and in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's *National Military Strategy* (January 1992). The other strategic tasks in those documents are crisis response, strategic deterrence, and reconstitution.

The combination of no major threat either today or clearly emerging, coupled with certainty that one will develop in the long run, means the United States has the *historic opportunity and the fundamental need* to shape events favorably well into the next century. The U.S. will want to do everything it can to make the UN effective, but global security rests on regional stability; geopolitics and economics dictate U.S. regional priorities.

U.S. strategy focuses on Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf because, today or in the foreseeable future, only these regions have the combination of people, wealth, and technology to build armed forces that can pose a major threat. Thus, the U.S. has vital interests in the security order of these regions—interests for which the U.S. will fight a war. These interests are also vital because they are key to the growth of the world economy. World growth is vital to U.S. growth, 70 percent of which has come from trade since 1988. More importantly, it has also become a U.S. *security* interest. In the long run, the U.S. cannot be prosperous *and* secure unless the world economy also grows.

The primary conditions for success are stable security structures in the key regions and collective action on behalf of stability. In the short run, stability is won though deterrence and military action; in the long run, by halting nuclear proliferation, foreclosing arms races, and strengthening patterns of regional cooperation. Collective action, which the American electorate demands whenever costs and risks are high, dictates that U.S. and allied forces be interoperable. Interoperability has become a strategic imperative. (Its requirements may contribute one basis on which to quantify the size and shape forces needed overseas.) Paradoxically, a capability for effective unilateral action, which the nation's commitments mandate independently, appears to be a requisite for success in coalition-building and leadership.

Through their effects on world trade and investment, forces overseas provide a twofold economic payoff that almost surely offsets their burden on U.S. balance of payments and, over time, possibly even the

original cost of the forces themselves. First, they provide the stability on which economic growth depends, and they inhibit arms races that divert investment from more productive activity. Second, a tangible U.S. contribution to the security order of the key regions helps check their tendencies to become trading blocs that could (1) exclude the U.S. and hurt U.S. and overall world growth, and (2) in the long term, see competition extend from the economic to the political and even the military sphere. Obviously, restrictions on open markets that preexisted or grew up even during the Cold War already abound, but one shouldn't lose sight of the distinct possibility that such restrictions could grow much more severe. At a minimum, security cooperation and (further) economic exclusion are not compatible. (One must allow for the possibility that retrenchment in the openness of European and Asian markets could lead to a reduction in U.S. military engagement there.) The devolution of the world economy into powerful trading blocs and the independent possibility of a world economic contraction are among the most significant long-term threats to world security.

Overseas presence is logically the most important strategic task of U.S. conventional forces. Forward forces are more effective in deterrence, and, if they are successful, crisis response and war are not necessary. Only overseas forces can generate military interoperability and the political cooperation needed for collective action. Only overseas forces promote stable structures of regional security in the long term. Forces based in the continental U.S. contribute heavily to the deterrent potency of forces overseas and indeed, deter in their own right. But it's not an exaggeration to say that forces operating from CONUS can only threaten or actually make war; forces overseas can also build peace.

Failure to keep significant forces overseas will lead to failure in the national strategy. To rely on a military posture centered on forces in the United States will gradually transform the broader national security strategy into one of disengagement, whether the label isolationism is used or not. The immediate consequences will be instability that threatens economic growth and increasingly more frequent crises that threaten U.S. friends and allies; in less than a generation,

the nation will face costs and risks, at least on the scale experienced in this century of ever more destructive war.

The centrality of presence in the U.S. strategy dictates that the nation will keep both ground forces and land-based air forces in Europe and Korea because nothing expresses commitment as convincingly as forces on the ground. They are needed in Korea primarily to face a manifest threat; they are needed in Europe primarily to underwrite U.S. authority in NATO and to provide the basis for interoperability for collective action in crisis both in Europe and in adjacent theaters. The need to make common cause with allies has become as important as the need to deter or combat adversaries.

The burden of presence will be carried by forces afloat in the western Pacific, the Persian Gulf, and the Mediterranean—essentially maritime theaters—where, in any case, political conditions don't allow significant U.S. presence on the ground. The additional cost of operating overseas is quite small, and improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of forward operations are available by changing Cold War ways of doing business.

Making presence a legitimate part of the rationale for acquiring forces for the future means that planners will prefer forces that are effective in presence over those that contribute little to it, other capabilities being equal. As one example, tactical air power is useful in building interoperability and cooperation with allies, while long-range bombers are less so; yet both can deliver ordnance with precision on target. How much the need for forces to execute presence will affect the total numbers of forces to buy will require further study. No single mission determines force structure. However, the primacy of the mission means that in some cases presence needs, in combination with those of crisis response and sustained combat, will determine requirements.

In this respect it is important to ensure that current plans for using existing forces to meet presence needs (in particular, the multi-service "adaptive joint force packages"[2]) do not, without close

2. *BUR*, pp. 15–16.

examination, become the framework within which acquisition decisions are made. However useful the "packages" are in "adapting" forces at hand to meet presence needs (and in advancing the joint employment of all the services), decisions to field improved versions of such packages in the future should result only from careful assessments of their cost-effectiveness in comparison with traditional alternatives.

What is clear is that, no matter what armed forces the nation decides to buy, operating them overseas is the wisest use of that investment.

Introduction

This paper was nearing completion when DOD published its *Bottom-Up Review* (BUR), which proposes unprecedented priority for overseas presence.[3] Its introduction notes that it is "for public consideration as a means of forming a new national consensus on [defense]...."[4] It remains to be seen whether such a consensus will accept that presence is a mission of the armed forces that plays a legitimate role in determining their use and, more importantly, that its requirements can justify the acquisition of forces. Regarding *use,* this paper concludes that significant forces must be forward or the national security strategy carries a high risk of failure. With respect to *acquisition,* the paper urges that the presence mission become a legitimate part of the rationale for acquiring forces.

The core of this analysis is a comparison of the relative merits of a military posture focused on operating forces overseas with its alternative—a posture centered on forces in or near the continental United States (CONUS).[5] Because confusion surrounds the term presence, appendix A defines it further, showing its relationship to the other strategic tasks of conventional forces. The basic problem is that the term describes both a military posture, i.e., military means, and a military mission, which cannot be meaningful without defining its

3. In the case of the Navy's surface combatants, especially carriers: "the Clinton-Aspin defense plan was sized based on the exigencies of overseas presence as well as the [war-fighting requirements of the] Major Regional Contingencies." p. 15.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

5. This comparison is an artificial construct meant to serve analytical purposes. The current U.S. posture is a mix of forces forward and those in CONUS, with policy weighted heavily toward those forward. As argued, however, a number of trends are at work that increase the appeal of the CONUS-centered component.

ends—influence on behalf of a variety of political goals. The problem American strategy faces concerns military posture: whether forces have to be overseas to achieve the desired political ends. Unless the mission is specified hereafter, the terms "presence," "overseas presence," and "forward presence" refer only to a military posture. Appendix A also provides the background to the discussion of force sizing and structure in the final section of the body of this paper.

A CONUS-centered military posture

In a CONUS-centered military posture, most U.S. forces are based and operate in or near U.S. territory. Some naval forces deploy, fairly small ground and air forces are based overseas or move there on a rotational basis, and a lot of military equipment is "prepositioned" overseas, more perhaps on specialized ships than in depots on foreign soil.

When a crisis breaks, long-range air forces are ready to strike directly at adversaries, from CONUS if necessary.[6] Tactical air power and ground and naval forces can rapidly reinforce whatever units may be forward, airlifting people to connect with prepositioned equipment. (Forces can be deployed preemptively to deter actions leading to crisis, but the more that is done, the more the posture becomes one of overseas presence.)

As seen in Operation Desert Storm, a CONUS-centered posture can result in a distinct conception—a military strategy—of how to provide for the national security in a complex and interdependent world. Because the U.S. has the power to reverse any undesired action, possibly while it is in progress and certainly after the fact, few will wish to challenge U.S. interests, and those who do can be answered decisively. The U.S. can marshal powerful military capabilities wherever it

6. Secretary of the Air Force, *Global Reach, Global Power: A White Paper* (Washington, DC, June 1990).

wishes, and it will be able to do so for some years to come, even including the reductions proposed by the BUR.[7]

CONUS-centered plans are naturally appealing in the mid 1990s. They are favored by people who think that the U.S. should be less engaged in international security affairs.[8] Keeping forces at home is believed to save a lot of money.[9] Post-Cold War reductions in forces forward have focused attention on ways to deal with distant security problems from the U.S. proper, the result being "a new way of doing business," a thawing of Cold War rigidities. Operating from U.S. territory fits traditional American values of independence and self-reliance: forces can act without others having a say about it; if forces go into combat, they don't have to depend on someone else for support. Being able to strike with precision anywhere is a technological achievement many Americans view with pride.

Finally, CONUS-centered thinking is concerned almost exclusively with getting ready to fight, going forward to fight, and then fighting, usually unilaterally. This thinking is highly compatible with the scenarios that are used to determine the size and shape of forces for the future.These scenarios are determined by the number, kinds, and timing of crises and wars it is judged prudent to prepare for. At least one of these hypothetical crises, Desert Storm style, involves an immediate U.S. response followed by sustained large-scale ground combat. Indeed, this is the force planning process kicked off by the Defense Planning Guidance.[10] This view has traditionally held that if adequate forces are acquired for the tasks of crisis and war, those forces will be more than adequate to be used for presence.

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7. The BUR proposes an active force structure in 1999 that includes 10 Army divisions; 174,000 Marines; 13 USAF tactical fighter wings; and 11 aircraft carriers. p. 17.

8. See, for example, Ted Galen Carpenter, *In Search of Enemies* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1992).

9. Whether it does and, if so, how much are examined below.

10. This was also the basic approach taken in the BUR, which sketched out two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies (MRCs) as the basis for judging force requirements.

Ground rules

This paper is written at the level of concepts. It is not possible to suggest specific numbers of particular forces when the focus is a single function, because U.S. armed forces perform a variety of functions, all of which need to be considered. Instead, the paper describes principles relating to presence that can contribute to the thinking of those who make the ultimate choices. Its audience is both military (the Joint Staff and the staffs of the Unified Commanders in Chief and the services) and political (the Congress, the Department of State, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council staff). It takes account of the new emphasis on economics, democracy, and human rights that is the hallmark of the Clinton Administration.[11] Because, today, it is unlikely that a U.S. security strategy can be purely *national*, this work also includes the concerns and interests of U.S. allies.

The focus here is on conventional forces over the next two to three decades in roles beyond the direct defense of U.S. territory.[12] Operating forces overseas is examined in as "joint" a context as any other undertaking of the U.S. services, though differences between the services in overseas presence are addressed. This assessment applies to all the political frameworks within which presence operations can take place, ranging from the purely unilateral, through bilateral and multilateral arrangements, including permanent command arrangements as in NATO, to operations under the aegis of an international body like the United Nations.

The paper gives more attention to the broad national strategy than is usual when looking at questions of force size and mix, because the

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11. Most clearly expressed in the fall of 1993 by President Clinton in his speech to the UN, September 27; by Secretary Christopher to an audience at Columbia University, September 20; and by National Security Advisor Anthony Lake to the School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, September 21.

12. Terrestrial anti-tactical ballistic missile systems are included, as are space-based sensing and communications.

Cold War still burdens our strategic thinking in many ways.[13] Starting from first principles leads to the conclusion that influence, long a by-product of Cold War operations to confront the Soviets, is now the reason forces are forward in the first place.

13. For example, people tend to be skeptical of any military posture or force structure that shows continuity with the Cold War. This is a valid instinct, but it shouldn't control strategic thinking.

Overseas presence

Overseas presence encompasses a variety of activities—the means through which the mission is accomplished. In addition to permanent and rotational forces forward on the ground, forces deployed at sea, and prepositioned equipment, overseas presence includes:

- Exercises and training of U.S. forces with those of friends and allies
- Unilateral training by U.S. forces on foreign soil
- U.S. command, control, communications, and intelligence (C^3I) systems, especially in their bilateral and multilateral roles
- Arrangements for access by U.S. forces to facilities overseas
- Stationing and visits abroad by senior U.S. military and defense officials
- Visits to ports and airfields by U.S. naval and air forces
- Public shows by U.S. demonstration teams such as the Thunderbirds and a host of public affairs activities, including military musical groups
- Staff-to-staff talks and studies with foreign military organizations and analytical groups
- U.S. participation on multilateral staffs
- Exchanges of military people between the U.S. and friends and allies
- Military training of foreign personnel in the U.S. and in their home countries

- Training of military officers of former totalitarian and some developing states in the roles of the military in a civil society
- Foreign military sales and funding and co-production of military equipment with other nations.[14]

As detailed in appendix A, for presence as a mission, these activities are undertaken to influence the perceptions and actions of foreign governments and others who can affect the security of the United States.[15] This paper focuses on forces in forward theaters, although the non-force elements of presence are quite important.

Thinking about presence

Military power is but one of many instruments available to U.S. policymakers. The fact that what follows focuses on the manifestation of military power in the form of forces forward does not indicate that it is the leading instrument. It is not. In today's world, primacy rests with the economic and political. But, as will be argued, military power in the form of overseas presence is an essential component of U.S. policy without which political and economic means of influence will not remain effective. Despite this relationship, a positive attitude or even open-mindedness about presence is scarcely universal. Many people have strongly held, essentially disparaging views about presence for a combination of reasons.

- Many in Congress (and, until the BUR, in OSD) have long ruled out forces for the presence mission as anything other than a lesser included case of forces needed for warfighting.

14. This last would logically include an arms transfer policy dimension. With the exception of the Missile Technology Transfer Regime and various transparency reporting provisions of confidence-building agreements, there are not yet any arms control aspects to this part of presence, although these too would appear to called for. This listing is taken from the *National Military Strategy* and from the unclassified introduction to Annex O of the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan,* distributed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in December 1992.
15. Others include subnational groups, such as terrorists, and supranational entities like the UN.

- Quantifying requirements for the size and shape of the forces to operate forward and, especially, for acquiring forces for the future is difficult.
- The term presence sounds passive and to some suggests putting forces forward without a clear military or political objective (symbolized for many by the Beirut Marine barracks disaster of 1982).
- Some of what forces do when forward—exercises, demonstrations, showing the flag, and a growing list of humanitarian and other non-traditional activities—seems far removed from war-fighting.

This last is probably the greatest obstacle to a mature understanding of presence as a mission of post-Cold War armed forces. Many feel that the reason for the existence of military forces is purely and simply to fight[16] and so logically focus on crisis response and war. There is no question that overseas forces must possess genuine combat capabilities, and these must be used successfully when needed. The greatest utility of the armed forces in the new era, however, lies in three other strategic functions that are at the heart of overseas presence:

- Deter adversaries
- Make common cause with friends on behalf of security
- Provide stable conditions so that the U.S. and the world economies can flourish, and inhibit the development of trade restrictions that limit both.

The first, to deter—to achieve the nation's purposes without fighting—has been the highest goal of strategy since Sun Tzu, and is the

16. Indeed, as embodied in the U.S. Constitution and in federal law, combat is the named purpose for which the nation acquires its armed forces. The Defense Planning Guidance is apparently consistent with this view.

leading purpose of presence.[17] (Forward forces also help the U.S. and its friends exploit the initiative, invariably a source of leverage in any competitive situation.) Deterrence also reassures allies, a major benefit in its own right, as will be seen.[18]

The second strategic utility of forward forces is to cooperate with friends and allies on behalf of security. Cooperation yields two important results: The United States *should never have to fight alone* unless it so chooses. Cooperation also can encourage democracy and help develop enduring structures of regional security within which peace and democracy can flourish.[19]

Third, U.S. armed forces committed to overseas presence have important effects in reducing what the BUR calls "economic dangers to our national security."[20] By bringing stability to the key economic regions where they operate, U.S. forces maintain a vital condition on which economic growth depends. Forces overseas also help inhibit further growth of trade restrictions against the U.S. by its friends—a truly post-Cold War effect, the extent of whose importance is just beginning to be recognized.

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17. *The Bottom-Up Review* captures this idea explicitly:

> Our first priority in preparing for regional conflicts is *to prevent them from ever occurring.* This is the purpose of our overseas presence forces, and operations, joint exercises, and other military capabilities—to deter potential regional aggressors from even contemplating an attack [emphasis added], p. 7.

18. Many analysts place "reassurance" as a category that is separate from deterrence. There is considerable merit to such a concept, but this paper will treat "reassurance" as an important but second-order consideration compared to the three main effects named.

19. *The Bottom-Up Review* makes this last point when it sees new opportunities to:

- Expand and adapt our existing security partnerships and alliances and build a larger community of democratic nations.
- Promote new regional security arrangements to improve deterrence and reduce the potential for aggressions by hostile regional powers.... p. 2.

20. *Ibid,* p. 2.

Let us now turn to examine the goals of the national strategy—first, in the traditional way in light of the threats the nation must confront, and second, as the BUR proposes, from a new, post-Cold War perspective in light of "the opportunities" America can now exploit.

The goals of national security strategy

The objective of the national strategy is a secure and prosperous nation in an increasingly democratic world.[21] Security and prosperity scarcely need comment, but the notion of making the spread of democracy a *security* goal clearly calls for some serious reflection. Everyone agrees that the growth of democracy is desirable for moral and political reasons. Pluralistic governments, among other good qualities, are vastly more inclined than authoritarian ones[22] to respect human and civil rights.

Many people, for fundamental philosophical reasons, see this as reason enough to commit America to democratic development.[23] Democracy and the rights of the individual—values strongly shared with the world's other democracies—lay at the heart of the moral-political struggle in the Cold War. Continuity in America's purposes dictates they remain national principles.

But would a more democratic world be a safer world? On balance, the answer must be yes. No one can say that democracies will never fight

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21. Mr. Christopher put it to a Columbia University audience this way: "The central purpose of our foreign policy...is to ensure the security of our nation and to ensure its economic prosperity, and to promote democratic values." *The New York Times,* September 21, 1993.

22. As used here, democracy does not designate its U.S. form as the model for all the rest of humankind, but denotes the broad conception of governments that are responsive to the will of their peoples, where the rule of law and human rights are respected. It is contrasted to highly authoritarian governments, particularly those that rule through police authority and terror.

23. See, for example, Morton Halperin, "Guaranteeing Democracy," *Foreign Policy,* Summer 1993, pp. 105–121.

each other, although few have to date.[24] Nor can one say that future democratic leaders somewhere in the world may not appeal to popular passions and lead their countries into aggressive war. Certainly it would be unwise to rely on spreading democracy *by itself* to produce peace, because other conditions also have to be met.[25] Moreover, political development tends to proceed slowly. Whether inspired by moral-political or security motives, efforts to induce rapid emergence of democratic rule in states or regions with underdeveloped political systems can lead to chaos, or worse. For example, as Samuel Huntington has observed, today citizens in a number of Islamic countries, if allowed the opportunity, would use democratic means to extinguish democracy on behalf of radical theocracy.[26]

Still, it does not require a great deal of analysis to conclude that the United States would be more secure in a world where there many more democratic governments than Saddam Husseins. To paraphrase Mr. Churchill, a democratic world would be the most dangerous of worlds—except for all others. So, for moral, political, *and* security reasons, spreading democracy is a national objective.

The goals of the national strategy—the security and the prosperity of the U.S. and the spread of democracy—face a variety of threats. Some relatively small threats are clearly in view; others vastly greater lie over the horizon.

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24. Only India and Pakistan since the Second World War (and some would debate whether Pakistan qualified as a democracy at the time), and Wilhemine Germany in the First World War (again, if one judges Germany to have been a democracy at the time).

25. John Mearsheimer, among others, has described these conditions carefully. They include a fairly equal distribution of power among the states of a region, keeping the numbers of states in each region fairly small, and the absence of rabid nationalism. See his "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, vol. 15 (summer 1990), pp. 5–56.

26. "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, pp. 22–49.

The threat

What is the threat?

Most people agree that, with the demise of the Soviet Union, there are essentially no candidates who can threaten the United States and its major allies on a comparable scale. Russia itself, entirely independent of whether it would want to, is unlikely, for at least a decade, to achieve the economic success that could produce another Red Army. There is the danger that one of the nuclear-armed successors of the USSR could threaten the U.S. Because of the scale of this potential threat, it can scarcely be ignored; still, it is much easier to see why such a state might try to intimidate its immediate neighbors than why it would focus on the U.S.

There are many ways to characterize existing threats. According to *The Bottom-Up Review,*[27]

"The new dangers fall into four broad categories:

- Spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons[28]
- Aggression by major regional powers or ethnic and religious conflict
- Potential failure of democratic reform in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere
- Potential failure to build a strong and growing U.S. economy."

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27. Figure 2, p. 2. This listing is similar to that given by Secretary Aspin at his confirmation hearings on January 15, 1993.

28. Because of their relative cost and enormous potential for damage, weapons of mass destruction demand special attention and will be given special treatment in this section.

In addition to these specifics, how long great wealth can co-exist peacefully with even greater poverty is an open question. Mass migration, narco-trafficking, and the export of terrorism from the world's impoverished regions are likely to present the world's rich nations, including the United States, with international and internal security problems of ever greater size, which have in turn led to revised definitions of what constitutes security, encompassing nonmilitary threats.[29]

In total, these dangers may produce an uncomfortable state of affairs on a daily basis, but the situation is still desirable compared to the mortal dangers of the Cold War. Nevertheless, strategy cannot focus exclusively on *today's* problems; its formulation requires a broader, more distant horizon.

We don't yet know what the end of the Cold War means or how the international system of sovereign states will operate *in the long run.* Is there reason to expect that the world of nations has become self-balancing? The grievances that many states have against their neighbors are fueled by the inherent dangers of the system of nation-states, dangers like those outlined in table 1.

The world has already seen these destabilizing effects in practice in the 1990s. These dangers are the ultimate source of the threats that the nation will face. Until they disappear, there is no reason to expect that the world will be less likely than in the past to produce wars, including, in the end, big ones.[30]

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29. See, for example, Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 1993). This paper will confine attention to threats of a military nature, which, as Kennedy notes, have not been replaced by the new concerns.

30. That conclusions about the inherently unstable nature of the system of nation-states date from well over a generation ago scarcely invalidates them. See Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* 5th Rev. (New York: Kropf, 1978); Raymond Aron, *Peace and War,* 1966; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Inis L. Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962).

Table 1. Inherent dangers in the system of nation-states

Danger	Origin
"Security dilemma"[a]	A state's legitimate *defensive* armaments are interpreted by its neighbors as demanding *defensive* armaments in response, leading to an arms competition.
Arms competition	A minor competition in armaments degenerates into a major one, including a race in weapons of mass destruction.
Power vacuum	Weak or disintegrating states invite intervention.
Bandwagon effect	Weak states join with a strong state because of fear of it or of a neighbor.
Aggression	A state tries to intimidate others or fight a war to (re)gain resources, territory, or people.
Expansionist ideologies	Ethnic, religious, or nationalistic fanaticism drives states toward a radical disruption of the status quo.

a. This term was coined by Robert Jervis. See his *Cooperation Under the Security Delemma* (Stanford, California: Center for Arms Control, 1977).

The post-Cold War period has seen two desirable changes from the past: (1) Cooperation in dealing with security problems through the United Nations and regional organizations has risen sharply; and (2), more importantly, no major power has been a primary actor in an arms race,[31] an intervention, an attempt at intimidation, an aggressive war, etc.[32] The U.S. and the other major powers can take satisfaction in promoting effective action by the UN and try to define its scope and limitations and streamline its mechanisms as much as possible.[33]

31. Some analysts have already detected early signs of an arms competition between China and her neighbors. "Chinese Military Spending Soaring, CIA Reports" and "Citing Foes, Japan Will Build Up Its Armed Forces," both in *International Herald Tribune*, July 31–August 1, 1993, p. 4.

32. This latter has led some to conclude, on the basis of informed analysis of the policies and tendencies of the leading powers, that the U.S. faces no major threat today (correct) nor in the future (as argued here, almost certainly wrong). See Carpenter, *op. cit.*

33. Which was clearly the intent of Mr. Clinton's speech to the UN General Assembly, September 27. Text in the *New York Times*, September 28, 1993.

However, it is an open question whether the UN, or any other body designed for collective security, can be effective in disciplining one of the big powers. The League of Nations could not do it; the UN itself was unsuccessful in dealing with the Soviet Union and, because of the Soviet veto, with a host of other security problems. And *that* is the problem. In the long run, in ways whose specifics we cannot foresee today, the odds are nearly certain that, left to their own, big powers or big coalitions *will* become involved in these kinds of troubles. As the experience of the first half of this century amply showed, even one major power can cause human tragedy, not to mention financial cost, beyond measure.

(Deaths among combatants alone in World War I totaled about 8.5 million, with another 21 million wounded. In World War II a total of about 60 million people, combatants and civilians, are estimated to have died.[34] Direct financial costs of World War II, plus infrastructure destroyed and production forgone was surely measured in trillions of then dollars, and all this was before the advent of nuclear and biological weapons. Americans need to keep these numbers in mind because they reflect the scale of the minimum costs that will have to be paid if the national strategy fails. Indeed, in a nuclear-armed world, the very survival of the nation would once again be at risk.)

Talking about the threat in terms of the innate character of the system of nation-states is valid for policy-makers, but it makes it hard to give a popular label to the national strategy.[35] Throughout this century, the threats the United States has faced have come from specific nations. It is difficult to think about threats in any other terms. There is tendency to feel that if you can't name the threat, you don't face a threat. But to designate even the likely future threat would cast aspersions on one of today's powers—be it Russia, Germany, Japan, China, or some other. We don't have to search for enemies (or defame the governments and citizens of these nations today) to conclude that the

34. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Incorporated, 1987) Vol 21, pp. 753 and 799.

35. As noted in a variety of contemporary commentaries. See, for example, Thomas Lippman, "Articulation of Policy Draws Mixed Reviews," *Washington Post*, September 30, 1993, p. A10.

only predictable thing about the international system is its inherent tendency toward disorder, ending, ultimately, in catastrophe.

The wise course is to base U.S. security strategy on the somber fact that war, including a big war that would threaten the U.S., continues to be an inborn consequence of the system of nation-states. The question is not *what* is the threat, but *from where and when* is a major threat to the U.S. going to come? Identifying *where* sets geographic priorities among U.S. national interests, and it is impossible to discuss threats without identifying the interests that are threatened. Global security, pursued under UN aegis or outside it, is best pursued on a regional basis, and geopolitics and economics dictate U.S. regional priorities. Thinking about *when* gives the strategy a sense of time. We are often told we are in a "period of transition," but rarely how long we should expect the transition to last.[36]

Where is the threat?

We can be reasonably sure where a major military threat to the United States will ultimately originate: in Europe (including the former USSR), in East Asia, or in the Persian Gulf. In terms of pure potential, the first two areas have the people, the resources, and the technology to make modern war on a grand scale.[37] They necessarily command U.S. attention.

The Gulf differs in that it doesn't yet have the population or technology, but it is still has ingredients that pose a threat to U.S. security. First, Gulf oil can be a source of immense financial power that a dominant state there could use to build up its military forces, including long-range weapons of mass destruction. Such a power, directly or through others, could threaten its neighbors, some of whom—Israel, Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia—the U.S. regards as vital. Perhaps in

36. Page 1 of the BUR is labeled simply "National Security in the Post-Cold War World."

37. They are also the areas where the emergence of a threat from weapons of mass destruction is greatest; unfortunately, there are other such areas as well.

due course even the United States itself might be directly threatened, but the immediate concerns are for the security of friends who count. Second, it is a U.S. vital interest to ensure that no single power control so much of the world's petroleum supply and so dominate the market that it could set prices and access on political grounds. Not only would the "oil weapon" be a potential source of great influence, attempts to manipulate prices could become a threat to the whole world economy, whose performance can have decisive effects on international security, as discussed below. These twin concerns played a central role in the U.S. decision to fight on a major scale in the Gulf in 1991.

The presence of U.S. forces forward in East Asia, Europe, and the Gulf—and not elsewhere—is a reflection of the primacy of these regions in the national strategy today.[38] That fact has been hidden in part because those forces first deployed during the Cold War, which was global in scope. However, the fact that it was these areas and not elsewhere that were the main focus of the confrontation between the two blocs showed how their intrinsic importance set even the geographic priorities of the Cold War as well.[39]

38. *The Bottom-Up Review* proposes forces forward in Europe, Northeast Asia, and Southwest Asia. pp. 14–15.

39. Geographic priorities in the distribution of U.S. security effort have also been hidden for other, less strategic reasons: (1) because they reflect the result of many individual decisions about where to put forces rather than a zero-based analysis; (2) because of the desire to avoid implying that some regions are less important, thus offending friends and possibly inviting unwanted initiatives by expansionist states; and (3) because the Unified Commanders in Chief are quasi-autonomous centers of power whose competing demands for forces inhibit radical change in forward force levels.

These regions are also vital to the U.S. because they are the centers of growth for the world economy, and world economic growth has become a security interest of the U.S. in its own right.[40] World economic growth, first and foremost by market-based economies, depends on international stability. International turmoil slows or stops trade, the great engine of growth of all successful post-World War II economies; just the threat of conflict can lead to the massive diversion of resources into armaments. World economic growth is vital to the U.S. for two reasons. First, because the U.S. is the world's greatest trading nation, its economic prosperity benefits heavily from world economic growth.[41] Equally important, world economic growth is a necessary condition for *long-term* stability. Economic development is also necessary for political development. Growth promotes democracy and human rights.[42] There are few examples where democracy has flowered in the midst of economic failure and far too many where democracy has been stifled by poor economic performance.[43]

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40. The idea that "...an open and *expanding* world economy [emphasis added]..." was a security interest of the U.S. first appeared in the *National Security Strategy of the United States* in 1989. The BUR does not make this connection explicitly, naming as a threat only "economic dangers to our national security, which could result if we fail to build a strong, growing national economy" (p. 2), a choice of emphasis that most probably reflects the Administration's domestic political priorities rather than any invalidation of the international security principle.

41. Since 1988, 70 percent of U.S. economic growth has come from exports; export-related jobs have increased 42 percent. Brent Scowcroft, "America: The Mission Is Leadership for a New Deterrence," *International Herald Tribune*, July 5, 1993, p. 6.

42. Assuming adequate attention to equitable income distribution. A major theme of National Security Advisor Lake's speech of September 21 was the intimate connection between market economies, economic growth, democratic development, human rights, and, ultimately, security.

43. This is not to say that democracy grows automatically from economic success or that one must have democracy to be successful economically. China has been the most spectacular contemporary success with respect to the latter. (See Nicholas B. Kristof, "Amid All the Repression, China Is Showing Results," *International Herald Tribune*, September 8, 1993, p. 1.) Earlier examples include the totalitarian states of the interwar years.

For these reasons the U.S. seeks global economic growth not so much to become more prosperous (although that is obviously important), but to become more secure against war and to promote democracy. These priorities reflect nothing other than the traditional human judgment that health, including moral health, comes before wealth.

Although U.S. forces operate overseas on behalf of security cooperation with other nations, their presence lessens the natural tensions that exist between the U.S. and those nations in the economic sphere. The extent of this contribution has not yet been the subject of analysis (and it may in any case be difficult to specify), but there seems good reason to believe that forward forces have a positive effect on economic cooperation. Obviously, restrictions on open markets that preexisted or grew up even during the Cold War already abound; but one shouldn't lose sight of the existence of strong political and economic forces in each region (including within the United States) encouraging such restrictions to become much more severe. Security cooperation and further economic exclusion appear mutually incompatible.

Security cooperation discourages the emergence of trading blocs from which the U.S. might be excluded because it is difficult to exclude a nation that is part of the security order—that is, helps provide the stability on which the prosperity of the region depends. Through this effect, U.S. military power discourages developments that harm world trade. Given the scale of benefits that accompany even small increases in trade, merely a secondary contribution from forward engagement of forces would equate to a large payoff economically. It would scarcely be unreasonable to conclude that the gains the U.S. gets in greater trade far more than offset the costs to U.S. balance of payments in maintaining the forces abroad.[44] For example, conservative estimates of growth in world trade resulting from conclusion of the Uruguay round run at about $120 billion per year, about $35 billion of that accruing to the United States.[45]

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44. Over time, the payoff might even cover the original cost of the forces themselves.

45. *The Economist*, October 17, 1992, UK edition, p. 15.

One must also allow for the possibility that the incompatibility between security cooperation and economic exclusion could work in an opposite, clearly undesirable direction. Sharp reductions in the openness of markets in Europe and Asia, could result in reductions in U.S. military engagement in those regions. While the matter can be only speculative at this point, it does seem clear that such an eventuality would strengthen considerably the arguments of those already favoring withdrawal of U.S. overseas presence.

Designating Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf as vital does not mean that the U.S. has no interests it is willing to fight for in other areas. In the first place, events on the periphery of the vital regions can affect their security. Where that is the case, peripheral areas become U.S. interests of a derivative nature. For example, President Bush named the Mediterranean—the European continent's turbulent southern frontier and the route of strategic access to the Persian Gulf—as a region that is as important to the U.S. as the Pacific and Europe itself.[46] The Sixth Fleet and other U.S. forces are permanently present there. On the other hand, if the periphery seems unlikely to affect the core regions seriously, it is doubtful that the U.S. will see interests at stake that justify commitment of forces. Uncertainty about the extent to which events in ex-Yugoslavia threaten the European security order have lain at the strategic root of U.S. reluctance to send ground forces there.

The U.S. has other strong interests it is willing to fight to protect. The first of these is Central America and the Caribbean. (Their proximity means that forces in CONUS and Puerto Rico, Panama, and so on, are "present" without having to be "overseas"; therefore, that region will not be considered further in this comparison of the two military

46. In his August 2, 1990, speech in Aspen, Colorado, Mr. Bush said, "Important American interests in Europe and the Pacific, in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, all are key reasons why maintaining a forward presence will remain an indispensable element of our strategy." *Vital Speeches of the Day,* September 1, 1990, vol. LVI, no. 22, p. 677. The speech was identified by General Powell as the foundation of the *National Military Strategy,* issued in January 1992. The Mediterranean is also crucial for U.S. support for Israel.

postures.) Others include the security of the state of Israel, to whom the U.S. has made a solemn commitment that, if anything, has been strengthened by the recent momentous advancement in Arab-Israeli reconciliation. The U.S. will also take strong action on behalf of non-proliferation, as evidenced by U.S. warnings to North Korea regarding adherence to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. In addition, the United States has essentially worldwide interests in the advancement of acceptable principles of behavior, including freedom of the seas, the rule of international law, and the protection of human rights. To halt or prevent genocide is more than a "humanitarian" act, though U.S. policy has not always observed this principle.[47]

The existence of these other concerns affects and complicates but does not change the essential geographic priorities of the national strategy.

When will the threat materialize?

The question of when a major threat to the U.S. will develop depends on many factors. An obvious objective of U.S. security strategy is to put off its emergence as long as possible, ideally until the international system can be transformed so that war is ruled out.[48] Still, the specific answer is simply not knowable. This century has shown that threats can materialize suddenly; surprise has been a constant. On the other hand, the U.S. is likely to continue to enjoy cooperative relations, to greater or lesser degree, with all the major powers.[49] None seeks a major build-up of arms today of the kind that marked this century's first nine decades. And even if one tried, developing armed forces of a Soviet scale takes time—a decade or more seems a probable minimum.

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47. Charles Krauthammer, "Drawing the Line at Genocide; Two Principles of International Intervention," *Washington Post*, December 11, 1992, p. A27.

48. Readers will note the use of the word *ideally* here.

49. Tensions and squabbles among the U.S. and its friends are the commonplace news of the day. But the issue is essentially how to cooperate effectively or fairly. Such tensions bear no relationship to the tensions borne of purely adversarial relationships that marked, say, Europe in the interwar years.

The U.S., of course, must remain on guard against surprise. Beyond that, however, the combination of the absence of a major threat today or on the horizon, coupled with reasonable certainty that one will develop in the long run, means the U.S. has the fundamental need and the historic opportunity to shape events to make America secure and prosperous well into the next the century. The latter—what the BUR describes as "An Era of New Opportunities"[50]—we turn to in the next section.

50. BUR, p. 2. The review itself notes we are in a "post-war" era, when the relations between nations tend to be fluid, and when the war's victors can determine the shape of the new security order.

Opportunities: key conditions for success

The national strategy focuses first on the regions of the world where major threats to U.S. security can develop.[51] Rather than being simply reactive to threats and undesirable changes in Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf, however, U.S. strategy faces post-Cold War conditions of unprecedented opportunity. The key condition the strategy seeks to achieve is to promote the development of structures of cooperation and stability so that those regions can become self-balancing—self-balancing within themselves and able to cope with tensions on their peripheries.

The state of the world in the 1990s also affords the opportunity for collective action with friends and allies who, despite differences in the detail of policy, share fundamentally the democratic values and economic interests that motivate U.S. strategy. Collective action has both international and domestic payoff. Internationally, cooperation with other nations is central to promoting stable security, and through stable security, it promotes conditions that lead nations that otherwise might invest heavily in military capabilities to be less likely to do so. It can also encourage democracy where its future may be in doubt.

A leading example that combines the two aspects of stable security and collective action can be seen in the former Soviet Union. To the degree U.S. and allied efforts bring stability on the periphery of that region, Russia, in particular, will have fewer incentives to invest heavily in defense capabilities and thus be less likely to be capable of presenting a serious threat to the U.S. in the future—much less have incentives to do so.

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51. The substantive description of the strategy that follows here is taken from the BUR, the *National Security Strategy of the U.S.* (August 1991), and the *National Military Strategy* (January 1992). Interpretations and extrapolations reflect the writer's reading of the emphases and directions seen from the Clinton Administration through September 1993.

Collective action with Russia helps the former communist state achieve effective participation in world security affairs, thus reducing the chance that Russia will see itself as an outsider or, worse, as the object of international indifference or hostility. Cooperation—for example, on behalf of action under the UN aegis—provides the context for military-to-military exchanges between Russia and the West on the basis of genuine mutuality. Such exchanges offer the chance to promote and show by example the benign role of military organizations in a democratic society and so reduce the possibility that the ex-Soviet military will intervene in political affairs. Most tellingly, perhaps, security cooperation fully accords with the desires of Russia's democratic leaders today and increases the chances that they will have democratic successors.

Let us now compare an overseas presence military posture with one that is CONUS-centered in fostering stability, per se. In the next section we will look at how each performs in promoting collective action.

International stability

International stability develops through many influences, especially economic and political. But, as in the case of Russia just cited, military power is also an inescapable determinant. Stability means the absence of war, the imminent threat of war, or a significant arms race. It is *not* synonymous with the status quo, because change is constant in the world of politics, and evolution in the direction of democracy is a goal. But for a region to be considered stable does require that international change be accomplished peacefully.

Whether states are internally stable is a separate matter. The U.S. clearly prefers internal stability because of its interests in human rights, democratic development, and the danger that internal conflict can spill across borders. However, the relationship between internal order and external behavior is a complex one that can vary widely with the historical situation. An important task before U.S. and allied security planners is to develop principles for legitimate international intervention into a nation's internal affairs, when the needs of international stability dictate.

What are the sources of international stability? What mechanisms does U.S. strategy have to work on? Each region has its own indigenous sources of stability, which may be strong, as in Western Europe, or barely exist, as in the Gulf. In some areas, other external powers (for example, France) may be present and contribute to regional stability. The U.S. aim—in concert with allies, especially the major economic powers—is to strengthen local structures of stability.

In the short run, the U.S. can achieve this goal by deterring or reversing actions such as intimidation, aggression, and state-sponsored terrorism that disrupt stability. Deterrence and direct military action are what people usually envision when they think about how U.S. military power can contribute to a region's stability. In the long run, however, enduring stability requires more. It requires that the U.S. also promote development of cooperative patterns of behavior—what the BUR refers to as the need to "[e]xpand and adapt...existing security partnerships and alliances" and to "[p]romote new regional security arrangements...."[52]

Patterns of cooperation can have a number of components. In the military sphere, in ascending degree of depth, the main ones are:

- The absence of a competition in armaments, particularly in weapons of mass destruction.
- The existence of mechanisms for confidence and security-building, for resolving disputes peacefully, and for the protection of human rights, the enforcement of international law, and the curbing of radical nationalism.
- The presence of military alliances to deal with states bent on expansion or with turbulence in the region or on its periphery.

If these conditions can be maintained and strengthened over time, states in the region can develop further ways to cooperate, perhaps achieving levels of integration comparable to western Europe today. If so, the region may indeed evolve toward self-balancing stability. (This is an essentially pragmatic statement of the idea of regional

52. BUR, p. 2.

stability—one that takes the basic distribution of power and other interstate relations as givens. Stability also needs to be addressed at a deeper level that deals with the dangers inherent in the system, as outlined earlier in table 1.[53] A U.S. national strategy for each region, as proposed in appendix A, would be framed in light of the particular manifestations of these tendencies in each region.)

The following is a central point in the logic of the national strategy: *Unless the U.S. addresses the long-term goal of regional security structures that stand more and more on their own, it will be condemned to perpetual reaction to crisis.* Let us first compare the two candidate military postures in their ability to achieve short-run objectives through deterrence and military action and then turn to the long run.

Deterrence and military action in the short run

Deterring undesired actions—"our first priority,"[54] is always a goal of strategy. Effective deterrence depends on an adversary's perception that you have the required military capabilities and the political will to use them. It is difficult at best, and usually impossible, to determine when an action that would otherwise be taken has been deterred. Beyond the difficulty of knowing what the presumed "deteree" sees, thinks, and expects, negative evidence (things that don't happen) rarely (if ever) lets us conclude much about cause and effect. One way[55] to get around the problem is to amass the judgments of experts—i.e., what specialists in a region judge to be the deterrent effects of U.S. forces present in it.

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53. See the Mearsheimer article cited in footnote 25 (p. 20) for aspects of this approach.

54. "Our first priority in preparing for regional conflicts is to prevent them from ever occurring." BUR, p. 7.

55. There are others, including through historical case studies; however, even when conclusions from individual cases seem relatively clearcut, there is the difficulty of aggregating across cases to reach general conclusions.

Recently, a survey of U.S. embassy country teams around the Mediterranean,[56] showed unanimity about their deterrent efficacy—their ability to produce this desired effect. Every team concluded that its host nation saw the presence of U.S. forces as a *needed* stabilizing element in the theater and that the theater would become less stable if U.S. forces were withdrawn. This judgment reflected the underlying conclusion that the presence of U.S. forces deterred actions that were destabilizing. In short, forces overseas are perceived as effective in deterrence, which is why, as the survey also showed, none of the nations wanted significant reductions in U.S. forces forward.

Exactly comparable assessments from other regions aren't available, but we do have a similar judgment from U.S. and Asian academic specialists on East Asia. North Korea aside, none of the nations there wants U.S. forces withdrawn.[57] It is reasonable to presume that the reasons are the same as in the Mediterranean: in the eyes of the leaders of East Asian countries, U.S. forces forward provide needed stability by deterring actions that are destabilizing.

Still, the presence of U.S. forces forward does not always deter; among the cases usually cited are Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and Serbia's expansion in ex-Yugoslavia. (In the writer's opinion, these cases can be more satisfactorily interpreted as resulting from a failure by the U.S. to express convincingly what actions it has regarded as unacceptable—that is, either from ambiguity about the geographic line the U.S. was prepared to defend (Saddam) or about U.S. political will to defend a stated position (Serbia)—than from shortcomings in the forces themselves. The topic of political will is discussed in more detail below.)

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56. CNA Research Memorandum, 93-55, *Making Forward Presence Work: A Survey of 14 U.S. Embassy Country Teams*, by Bradford Dismukes, Confidential, June 1993.

57. Paul Kreisberg, Daniel Y. Chiu, and Jerome H. Kahan, *Threat Perceptions in Asia and the Role of the Major Powers*, A Workshop Report (Honolulu, Hawaii and Alexandria, Virginia: East-West Center and the Center for Naval Analyses, February 1993).

To say overseas forces deter raises the question of what it is that they do that deters most. What is most influential? The answer seems to be: taking military action. The survey of Mediterranean country teams showed that host nations pay the most attention to the use of forces in crisis, especially combat actions. In addition, the case where there is the least uncertainty about the effectiveness of U.S. forces as a deterrent involved combat. Before April 1986, Colonel Gaddafi pursued an active program of training, supplying, and sponsoring international terrorists. After the U.S. bombing of Libya in that month, Libyan-sponsored terrorism was sharply curtailed, if it did not cease entirely.

If military action is most influential and if Gaddafi was deterred by U.S. bombing, shouldn't we question whether forces have to be overseas routinely? Can't forces in the continental U.S. deter and otherwise be influential? After all, the U.S. could have deployed the forces that struck Libya directly from the U.S. and then brought them home again on completion of the mission. (Indeed, U.S.-based long-range bombers could have been employed directly against Libya; they could have launched from and returned to CONUS.)

The answer is yes. CONUS forces are indeed influential, including in the deterrence of adversaries who know, in the first instance, that forces overseas can be augmented by forces from CONUS if necessary. Augmentation of forward forces is a classic move as a crisis builds. Thus, CONUS-based forces are an integral component of the deterrent efficacy of forward forces.

But to recognize that is *not* to say that CONUS-based forces would be as effective in either deterrence or military action as forces overseas. This is true for six distinct reasons that together show the superiority in this dimension of an overseas presence posture over one that is CONUS centered.

First, unless the U.S. deploys forces from CONUS preemptively, the adversary holds the initiative, which provides an incentive to strike. Preemptive deployment usually carries domestic and international political costs that a U.S. president may be reluctant to pay. Forces already forward are immune to this problem. Augmenting forces already on the scene involves a lower political threshold than

introducing them initially, particularly if one is obliged to negotiate access arrangements anew.

Second, forward forces express unambiguous U.S. commitment in the most compelling form of political communication: the language of action. *Words about forces are important, but they are a poor substitute for the forces themselves.* One of the great problems with a strategy of deterrence is ensuring that an adversary won't miscalculate what he can get away with.[58] Forces forward can show, for example, through combined military exercises with forces of a threatened ally, the particular interests—the line in the dirt—that the U.S. intends to defend. CONUS-based forces can rely only on U.S. diplomacy to convey the limits that the U.S. regards as tolerable.

This is not to denigrate diplomacy; solemn words, backed, say, by bombers on alert, may indeed be convincing. It is merely to observe that forces on the scene are less subject to misinterpretation. This is true in part because they are visible and in part because the U.S. decision to put them in harm's way is itself an unmistakable expression of the seriousness of the U.S. commitment.[59]

Third, forces have to be overseas to enforce some of the more frequently used tools of international diplomacy—economic sanctions, no-fly zones, and emerging forms of peace enforcement as well as peace-keeping. More generally, overseas forces can respond more quickly to fast-changing events in a crisis build-up when deterrence is crucial. When a crisis breaks, forces on the scene can act quickly when it counts, as in the evacuation of embassies. The most recent and telling case was the extraordinary effort to remove U.S. and allied diplomats from the besieged American embassy in Mogadishu in January

58. This was a problem in the dangerous early decades of the Cold War, until both sides learned what actions were unacceptable. It is much more of a problem in the fluid environments that are characteristic of the current era.

59. This latter phenomenon was in evidence for 40 years in the form of the U.S. brigade "defending" Berlin. See CNA Occasional Paper 4, *Peacetime Influence Through Forward Naval Presence,* by Linton Brooks, October 1993.

of 1991. Marine helicopters flew from amphibious ships at sea more than 450 miles at night to rescue 281 people from 30 nations in a precipitously deteriorating situation.[60] CONUS forces can, of course, deploy on warning, and often a crisis unfolds slowly. But they cannot deal with situations like the Mogadishu evacuation or others involving surprise. The most important of these is the "quick grab," which the absence of U.S. forces can invite.

Fourth, in some cases, where geography and politics combine against the U.S., forces forward are necessary to make the deployment of forces from CONUS possible. In the Gulf War, if Saddam had seized the ports or had attacked when U.S. forces were still small, the result would have been difficult and costly for the U.S. As it happened, the U.S. had forward forces at sea that provided an answer to those threats. The employability and thus the credibility of CONUS-based forces can depend on forces already overseas.

Fifth, when it comes to actual use in combat, CONUS-based forces cannot be employed by the U.S. National Command Authorities (NCA)[61] with the immediate precision equal to that of forces experienced on the scene. Forces from CONUS arrive unfamiliar with the theater and may lack tactical intelligence, which can require combat protection to acquire. It's not that CONUS forces can't sail, fly, or drop bombs; it's that the friction of unfamiliarity in a complex environment reduces effectiveness, making more likely mistakes and losses that the NCA wants to avoid.

Finally, CONUS-based forces are weak in interoperability with allies (discussed in the section on collective action below). So they are less likely to form part of an effective coalition. Adversaries know that U.S. political will is almost always greater when it is acting with others than when it acts alone.

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60. CNA Research Memorandum 91-211, *EASTERN EXIT: The Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) from Mogadishu, Somalia, January 1991*, by Adam B. Siegel, October 1991.

61. The President and the Secretary of Defense and their duly deputized alternates or successors.

In sum, forces overseas are superior to those in CONUS in the short-term tasks of deterrence of adversaries and in taking military action. Forward forces are compelling in expressing U.S. commitment, and they can be used more flexibly and quickly with greater precision. The states in regions where the U.S. maintains or deploys forces welcome them and want them to continue because they deter.[62] This is a central point about overseas presence: *it works*. The U.S. has essentially zero experience with non-presence, that is, with a CONUS-centered strategy. But for the six reasons given, it does not seem a promising avenue to experiment with.

Promoting structures of stability in the long run[63]

U.S. forces forward have contributed significantly to the long-run development of cooperative international security arrangements. Overseas presence has been very important and in the majority of cases decisive in:

- Dampening an arms race among East Asian states
- Maintaining the military effectiveness of the NATO alliance in Europe
- Maintaining stable levels of arms in the Arab-Israeli confrontation
- Mobilizing collective action to deal with instability and aggression in the Gulf.[64]

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62. Admiral Charles R. Larson, "Cooperative Engagement and Economic Security in the Asia-Pacific Region," remarks to a conference of the same title, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 3, 1993; Dismukes, *op. cit.*

63. Note: Presence activities include U.S. arms transfers.

64. Presence also played an important role in the confidence-building agreements with the Soviet Union just as the Cold War came to its end; it remains to be seen whether the CSCE framework within which those measures were negotiated can evolve into an effective means for peaceful resolution of disputes in Europe. If it does, U.S. forces forward will contribute an important part of the capabilities and interoperability that will be needed for military success.

To get a sense of how important cooperative developments like these are in the long term, we might ask ourselves how the world would look today if the opposite of each had occurred. Surely, it would be a much more dangerous place. For example, what would the future hold if a serious arms race were now under way in East Asia (that is, more serious than is already the case)? War over one of the many unresolved regional issues would have become more likely, as would the formation of hostile coalitions. Exactly which of today's latent Asian dangers would have moved nearer to becoming a reality is, of course, impossible to know. But it is certain that a lot of money would have been diverted into arms that instead has gone into economic production and the accumulation of capital. Much of the latter has been invested in the U.S. with strong positive effects on the economy.[65]

Focusing on development of security structures leads to two conclusions:

- Stable security structures in the key regions are immensely important to America's long-run security and prosperity.
- There is little or nothing that a CONUS-centered force posture could have done to produce the desirable developments listed above.

Only overseas presence can help the build the stability on which enduring peace and security can rest.

Collective action

Collective action is the second condition on which the success of the strategy depends. Domestically, collective action satisfies the basic wishes of the U.S. electorate. Americans generally prefer collective, not unilateral, action and, indeed, essentially demand it whenever costs and risks are high. (As will be discussed below,

65. Kenneth S. Courtis, "The Role of the Pacific Rim in the Global Economy," a paper presented to the Conference on Cooperative Engagement and Economic Security in the Asia-Pacific Region, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 3, 1993.

several factors mandate that the U.S. must also have the capabilities for unilateral action.) Some Americans doubt whether the U.S., under any circumstances, should pursue a strategy of engagement in world security affairs, reflecting the historic tendency of the United States to turn inward, especially in time of national domestic need.[66] Assuming they would countenance international action in the first place, *at a minimum,* only collective action should logically be acceptable to those holding this view.[67] However, acting alone does make America "the world's policeman." More fundamentally, it would be prohibitively expensive and morally debilitating if the U.S. were to seek to impose order on a global basis single-handedly.

In sum, the national strategy is unworkable on a purely unilateral basis. Among other things this means that the strategy must be framed in terms that our allies find not just acceptable but appealing. In principle, that should not be hard to do because the goals of stability and economic growth are strongly shared with the vast majority of nations, especially the industrialized democracies.[68] These common interests provide a natural basis for military cooperation:

- To promote stability on a routine and continuing basis
- To engage in coalitional warfare, if war becomes necessary.

With respect to the second, one particular case shows why cooperation is both needed and possible: A major military action in the

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66. The well-known American tendency to look inward has long been the subject of extensive commentary. For a contemporary example, see William Pfaff, "The Allies Should Get Used to the New Isolationism," *International Herald Tribune,* June 19-20, 1993, p. 6

67. Although logic doesn't always hold sway. Some "America firsters" prefer unilateral action on the grounds that denigrate, for a variety of reasons, the contribution that allies might make.

68. These consititue the "core from which [the strategy of enlargement] is proceeding," according to Anthony Lake. Address to School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC, September 21, 1993; available via Federal Information Systems Corporation, Federal News Service.

Persian Gulf would almost certainly require cooperation between the U.S. and Europe. Neither the U.S. nor Europe has the combination of military capabilities and geostrategic location nor is likely to have the political will for major action in the Gulf on its own. Threats to a common interest and mutual support in framing a response were why the U.S. and Europe cooperated to restore the balance of power in the Gulf in 1990–91, and are why they will have strong reasons to do so again when stability there is next threatened.

Nonetheless, effective cooperation with friends and allies is not automatic; it faces formidable obstacles:

- The lack of a powerful and clearly identifiable threat to the common security, as there was in the Cold War.[69]
- Tendencies toward protectionism in the face of economic competition among the leading nations of the world, who are roughly equal in economic power—at least, the U.S. does not hold the commanding dominance of the world economy that it had for the three decades after World War II.
- The dangers and costs of action in world affairs because of: (1) fanaticism amid ethnic, religious, and regional strife; and (2) threats from terrorists whose lack of state sponsorship or real assets could make them impossible to deter and difficult to preempt or even respond to.
- The problem of ensuring that costs and risks are shared equitably—particularly that no nation gets a "free ride."

69. The general hypothesis is that only a security threat can cause nations to engage in the "unnatural act" of joining an alliance. Gregory Treverton, *Making the Alliance Work: The United States and Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Uiversity Press, 1985), pp. 10–11.

- The problem of agreeing on the right course of action and which nations (if any) will have leadership roles.[70]

Cooperation for collective action is so desirable and the friction it entails can be so severe that sustained, concerted effort is required to achieve it. *Finding equitable ways to make common cause with friends has become as important in the national strategy as dealing with adversaries.*

Overseas presence uniquely provides two requisites for collective action. First, the material commitment of forces to a region underpins U.S. authority in alliance and coalition councils and in the command of forces. It provides a recognized basis for asking friends and allies to take U.S. preferences into account and the political standing to legitimize desired courses of action and assemble capabilities to carry them out. The short name for this activity is coalition-building, under U.S. leadership. It is difficult, if not impossible, to work within or to mobilize an alliance or coalition in the absence of committing forces that share the risks involved.

Paradoxically, in some crisis cases, effective coalition-building seems to require that the U.S. have the capabilities that it is prepared to use on a *unilateral* basis.[71] The Gulf crisis of 1990-91 suggests this to be a special manifestation of the bandwagon effect—less capable powers coalescing around a stronger one. It also reflects an understandable desire by allies to share the burdens of the undertaking at tolerable risk to their own forces and to have a say in the conduct of operations and, especially, in the political settlement that follows success on the battlefield. Put bluntly, the United States appears to have to possess the military strength for unilateral action in order to guarantee collective action. America also requires strong unilateral capabilities for

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70. At this point, the only alternative to U.S. leadership appears to be inaction or failure. Without concerted leadership, a single tenacious adversary can usually defeat a much stronger coalition. What the U.S. refers to as "U.S. leadership," the allies, understandably, call "partnership." For allies, the fact of U.S. leadership is accepted and, in the tough cases, welcomed, even though this sentiment does not always extend to U.S. rhetoric on the subject of "leadership."

71. The writer is indebted to Robert B. Pirie of CNA for this observation, which might be called "Pirie's paradox."

actions that allies do not necessarily support. Historically, the determining case has been the security of Israel.

Second, through training, exercises, and a host of other military interactions with friends and allies, forward forces develop the interoperability that makes alliance or coalition action effective. Interoperability comes from all the things that are necessary for integrated operations—from a shared strategic frame of reference and compatible military doctrine, through common tactical procedures, to compatible support equipment. A sine qua non is the ability to communicate—reliably and securely.

Interoperability among U.S. and allied ground, air, and naval forces is a strategic imperative. Without it, alliance or coalition forces have weaknesses a resourceful adversary can exploit; fratricide among friendly forces becomes a serious problem On the other hand, political cooperation is promoted by military interoperability. When U.S. and allied forces exercise on its behalf in NATO, they give compelling witness to the vitality of the alliance; when they do so in less formal political frameworks, they represent a "latent coalition."[72] It is no accident that the forces of the U.S. and Syria were not interoperable in the Gulf War and are not today. Finally, the main operational measures that will determine the effectiveness of forces under UN command involve interoperability.

From the point of view of U.S. military planners, exercises on behalf of interoperability can have a number of goals that vary with the partner. The aim with military organizations from advanced countries is to improve the partners' operational capabilities for mutual benefit. An example is the frequent operation of destroyers and frigates of Mediterranean allies in the screen of U.S. carrier battle groups and of U.S. escorts in the formations of French, British, Italian, and Spanish carriers. For the military organizations of less advanced partners, the

72. The writer thanks Thomas Barnett of CNA for this term. The survey of Mediterranean country teams also indicated that U.S. military-to-military relations with allies are almost invariably positive and are often among the best of the many dimensions of interaction that the United States has with its friends. See Dismukes, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

military aim is training in basic operational skills, and the political objective of broader cooperation dominates. As a general rule, exercises with all but the most advanced allies come at the expense of the readiness of U.S. forces on a unilateral basis.

Although a number of technical capabilities in communications and logistics must be compatible, in the end, interoperability is achieved exclusively through interoperations. Practically speaking, *only* forces forward can generate it. Today, widespread interoperability among U.S., allied, and friendly forces on land, sea, and in the air is essentially accepted as a given. However, if U.S. interactions with allies were to diminish significantly, interoperability would atrophy quickly, and a necessary underpinning for collective action would disappear.

In sum, forward forces are necessary for coalition-building and interoperability.[73] Under the national strategy, forces are forward as much to build cooperation with friends as to deter adversaries.

73. *The Bottom-Up Review* identifies these two purposes as the reasons the U.S. commits troops to Europe: "a commitment that will allow the United States to continue to play *a leading role in the NATO alliance* and provide a robust capability for *multinational training and crisis response* [emphasis added]," p. 14.

Presence: the broad conclusions

The posture of overseas presence is superior to one centered on forces in CONUS in capacity to support the objectives of the national strategy. Logically, operating forces overseas has become the most important strategic task of U.S. conventional forces. With respect to adversaries, if forces are successful in deterrence, crisis response (not to mention fighting one of the BUR's major regional contingencies) is unnecessary. Presence is the primary mission; crisis response is the less desirable backup. Moreover, a military posture centered in the U.S. is essentially a reactive strategy, one that cedes the initiative to others.

With respect to friends, overseas forces have unique advantages that CONUS-based forces cannot match. *Only* forces forward can promote cooperation that leads to collective action and stable security in the long term. It is paradoxical but true: *Success in presence eliminates the need for presence* when the regions where it is practiced become self-balancing. Forward forces also have desirable economic effects, as has been seen.

To rely heavily on a military posture of CONUS-based forces would in time transform the broader national security strategy. Instability in the regions that count most would rise. Crisis response would have to be practiced ever more frequently. Collective action would become steadily more difficult. The likely result for the national strategy would be a gradual turn toward disengagement (whether the label isolationism is used or not).

Failure by the U.S. to stay engaged through presence would lead in due course to the reemergence of a major threat to U.S. security. Within a generation, if not sooner, the nation would face costs and risks at least of the scale it has known in this century. As bad, if not worse, America would have missed opportunities of historic dimensions.

Implications of presence for force planning

Although everyone recognizes the differences between planning for the use of current forces and that for the acquisition of forces for the future, sometimes those differences are obscured. Responsibility for the two is quite compartmentalized, with far more people involved in the latter than the former. Strikingly different frameworks for strategic thinking exist. Washington planning documents such as the Defense Guidance are concerned almost exclusively with acquisition of future forces and employ scenarios in which deterrence *always* fails and the U.*S. always* acts unilaterally. On the other hand, planning for force employment is mainly the province of the forward Unified Commanders in Chief. The CINCs' planning scenarios make deterrence a centerpiece and assume that the U.S. is unlikely to do anything militarily big without its allies acting in concert or following a U.S. initiative. The fact that Washington's business centers on force acquisition tends to weigh thinking in the direction of acquisition perspectives and scenarios.

Overlaying this tendency is the urge to extrapolate today's decisions on using forces in the current crisis to provide the scenario for determining future needs. Today may be the best predictor for tomorrow, but not necessarily for the day after. It is especially important to be clear about the *functions* one wants forces to serve and to avoid using contemporary, often improvised, force employment schemes as the sole model for determining forces for the future. The sections that follow treat first the use of today's forces and then the need for forces for the future, highlighting possible continuities and differences.

The kinds of forces overseas

Forward forces increasingly will make up a joint mixture of the services. Secretary Aspin has described some of the directions of current

thinking on how best to combine the capabilities of the individual services for presence. These include:

- Joint task forces, not just for crisis, but for routine presence
- Task forces under a single command, comprising Navy ships, Air Force long-range bombers, long-range cruise missiles, AWACS aircraft, and air and ballistic missile defense units
- Army armed helicopters on Navy ships for maritime intercept missions
- Tactical air power in a theater, the needs for which are met alternately with aircraft carriers and with deployed USAF squadrons. [74]

Each of these possibilities has genuine merits, but important details are yet to be filled in to ensure that

- Military effectiveness of the forces deployed remains at high levels.
- Adequate account is taken of possible political constraints on the use of U.S. forces forward.
- The influence potential of forward forces is as great as possible.

The following paragraphs provide some examples of concerns that need to be taken into account when assessing measures designed to compensate for declining inventories of forces and further the drive toward jointness. The aim is to provide an introduction to a general principle that may contribute to thinking on what kinds of forces are needed.

New mixtures or "packages" of forces, such as those named by Mr. Aspin and the "adaptive joint force packages" proposed in the BUR, provide novel ways of meeting presence requirements. Currently, with the planned decline in total numbers, naval forces will be stretched so thin the resulting gaps in carrier and amphibious group

74. Remarks before the Air Force Senior Statesmen Symposium, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, June 24, 1993

presence must be filled by deploying less capable naval forces or the new "packages." According to the BUR, these packages "could contain a mix of air, land, special operations, and maritime forces" and will be interoperable—"capable of participating in combined military exercises with allies and friends."[75]

One problem the packages raise is determining the degree to which they approach the levels of combat effectiveness of traditional ones. Assessing the comparative military effectiveness of alternative packages is among the more difficult tasks military planners confront. (It is usually hard to do even within a single service.) Considerable experimentation and analysis will be needed before formal judgments will be possible. Before that time, prudence requires skepticism about the new packages and special precautions when dispatching them to situations where involvement in combat is probable. It is perhaps tempting to reckon that the technical and firepower superiority of U.S. forces of essentially any composition provide a cushion of protection that will prevent losses to any but a technologically advanced opponent. The tragic experience in Mogadishu in October 1993 reveals the fallacy in this notion. In most cases there is no substitute for forces that are clearly optimized for combat in the particular situation faced.

If forces overseas are made into joint task forces on a routine basis, it would seem important to retain as much as possible the historical nomenclature for the U.S. presence to make sure that the political impact of the forces is not inadvertently reduced. "Sixth Fleet" and "Eighth U.S. Army" symbolize American power and commitment in the perceptions and expectations of allies and adversaries. It is questionable, at best, whether one would want to abandon them or their counterparts elsewhere at a time when U.S. overseas presence is diminishing and uncertainty about U.S. commitment to engagement grows.[76]

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75. BUR, p. 16. The use of the future tense in connection with inter-operability reflects needs yet to be fulfilled.

76. In the writer's opinion, there is nothing amiss with "Joint Task Force Sixth Fleet," as long as this change in internal U.S. nomenclature is not reflected in public affairs policy. Brand recognition and loyalty are as important in politics as in commerce.

Alternating land-based with sea-based tactical air power in a joint task force for presence may be an inescapable imperative because of the size of the total pool of forces available, but one must recognize that some capabilities that can be important, or even crucial, in particular cases will not be available when land-based forces alone are present. Chief among these is the ability of sea-based air power to be brought to bear anywhere on a littoral and to be used entirely at U.S. discretion, while use of land-based air forces is subject to the veto of the allies on whose territories they are based.[77] The point is not, as we've seen, that the U.S. intends to act independently of its allies—although in cases like the defense of Israel, that option can be very important—but rather that the ability of the U.S. to act unilaterally during the initial stages of a crisis can be a decisive factor in mobilizing allied support for its ultimate resolution.

As a general rule, the kind of capabilities that the joint mixture must deliver centers on those that can affect events on the ground because those capabilities are the most influential.[78] What happens at sea, in the air, and in space is important to the degree that it can change a military balance and political perceptions on the ground.

Wherever it is militarily sensible and politically possible, this means operating ground forces and land-based air forces in the key regions; nothing expresses commitment as effectively as people on the ground (with the critical proviso that they are used effectively when needed—as is discussed below in the section on the costs of forces overseas). Today, forces are needed in Europe and on the Korean peninsula, in each case for different reasons. In Korea an important ally faces a

77. U.S. long range bombers are also available at U.S. discretion, launching either from the territory of an ally or even from U.S. soil. However, bombers cannot accomplish a number of important crisis tasks, including enforcing no-fly zones and quarantines and providing air cover for the arrival of U.S. and allied forces.

78. This a logical conclusion, given that the values almost all nations have at stake are on the ground. It also is supported by the embassy country teams' assessment that Mediterranean countries were most attentive to U.S. naval forces that could project power ashore. Dismukes, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

major ground threat in an uncertain political situation made yet more tense by an emerging nuclear dimension. The forces operating there must, in concert with our South Korean allies, be capable of defeating the threat faced.

Heavy forces in Europe are needed to underwrite U.S. influence in the NATO alliance and elsewhere in the theater as much as to deal with direct threats. Indeed, from a purely threat-response perspective, heavy forces are illogical, because, as one knowledgeable assessment put it recently, they appear designed to protect against "virtually unimaginable threats."[79] In the long run, that may prove to be true, but in the short term, U.S. forces need to have much the same shape as the forces of our European allies to promote a shared strategic framework and military doctrine, to cultivate interoperability, and, crucially, to imply U.S. willingness to share common risks equally.[80] There are many opportunities for complementarity between U.S. and European forces, but where combat is concerned, complementarity has clear limits. One of the many unhappy lessons of the Bosnian crisis is that complementarity holds little promise if it means one party takes casualties on the ground while the other confines

79. Paul Bracken and Stuart Johnson, "Beyond NATO: Complementary Militaries," *Orbis*, Spring 1993, p. 209.

80. This is not of course to say that European armies are well structured for the main tasks facing them. They undoubtedly will evolve to meet the new strategic environment, ideally, from a presence point of view, through consultation with the U.S.

participation to air and sea power.[81] Moreover, U.S. and European forces may again deploy from Europe to fight elsewhere. If the U.S. wishes to be a serious player in European security affairs, it must keep forces forward that the Europeans take seriously—for good reasons or bad.

When U.S. ground forces in Europe complete currently planned reductions, they will have what is, by the standards of the past, a distorted command structure with more general officers and senior staffs than appear justified by the number of forces routinely present. This reflects three post-Cold War imperatives: the need to maintain and strengthen interoperability at the level of strategic planning; the need to fill senior positions in the NATO command structure; and the need for commanders who are intimately familiar with the theater to direct troops flown in from the U.S. to use prepositioned equipment.

Outside Europe and Korea, equipment is prepositioned and U.S. ground and land-based air forces will deploy overseas from time to time for fairly short periods to train and exercise with friends and allies. However, naval forces must carry the bulk of the burden of presence in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf, and the Western Pacific. Forces afloat are especially valuable in these theaters, which have a strong, if not predominate, maritime character. More importantly, in these theaters, political conditions make it impossible to maintain significant forces on the ground. If the U.S. is to be present, it will have to be present at sea.

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81. Indeed, willingness to share costs and risks is the sine qua non of leadership. For example, in the words of the head of WEU Council Secretariat regarding a division of labor between WEU and NATO in ex-Yugoslavia, "[I]t would be more appropriate for NATO to take the lead, if...it appeared that the U.S. were prepared to participate substantially with *ground forces* [emphasis added]." Diarmid James Williams, "The Western European Union's Relationship to the European Community and NATO" in Jeffery Simon (ed.) *NATO: The Challenge of Change* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1993), p. 98. The writer is indebted to James L. Lacy for calling his attention to this citation that appears in Lacy's forthcoming CNA Research Memorandum, *Uncommon Defense: Frameworks and Forces in Europe's Security Future* (with Alexia Suma and Peter Swartz).

Where naval forces are concerned, the ability to put power ashore—sea-based aviation and cruise missiles and Marine amphibious forces—is central.[82] However, forces that command the seas also have essential roles related to what happens ashore: ensuring safe movement of U.S. and allied forces by sea to the theaters of engagement; and enforcing selective sea and air quarantines and complete blockades. Among other needs, these tasks imply forces for countermine and antisubmarine warfare, especially in shallow water. An important post-Cold War task is the enforcement of no-fly zones, usually on behalf of UN-mandated sanctions. Aircraft carriers, because of their command and control and self-sustaining capabilities appear especially well suited for such operations. One factor in their utility is that they are not affected by the potential reluctance of nations bordering a sanctioned state to permit the use of their territory for enforcement actions.

In terms of its contribution to the success of the strategy, forward C3I is as important as forces. It is essential for collective action and also strengthens U.S. authority in coalition councils and command structures. The nation with the best C3I is naturally propelled to a leading position in determining the best courses of action and in implementing them. Only through U.S. C3I are some kinds of complex military actions by coalition forces even possible. U.S. intelligence and visits and deployments of C3I platforms, such as AWACS, are influential in presence. The same is true for U.S. military people in staff and command positions. C3I is specifically included in the term "forces" in this paper.

The number of forces overseas

The conclusion that overseas presence is central to the national strategy means that the nation will intend to keep forward a significant fraction of the armed forces it owns. The central question, as always,

82. The new Navy-Marine Corps planning guidance entitled *...From the Sea* is based on this premise.

is "how much is enough?"[83] It must be acknowledged clearly that there is no agreed methodology to answer this question.[84] It is hoped that the remarks that follow can contribute to an urgent effort to develop one.

As discussed in appendix A, for overseas presence this question needs to be addressed at the strategic level. Forces are based in or routinely deploy to a theater in accordance with a strategic assessment of its situation. This baseline force will change relatively slowly and will reflect a variety of factors:

- The degree of instability the theater experiences
- The desire to reassure friends and foreclose arms races
- The need to underwrite U.S. leadership in its alliances and coalitions
- Requirements for interoperability.

If the theater is one where crisis is endemic, which is the case in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean today, presence requirements can be significant indeed. This is what Mr. Aspin meant when he spoke of the need for "carrier battle groups to maintain a U.S. presence—to 'show the flag' in troubled areas such as Bosnia and Somalia."[85] Beyond the political imperative to modulate the size of the forces in response to unsettled conditions over the long haul is the military requirement to provide forces that increase deterrence and, if necessary, form the first component of the nation's response

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83. Because forward forces as well as overall force size are being reduced, perhaps, today, the question is better put, "How much is too little?" With shrinking forces, calibrating the size of the force forward in each region becomes even more important.

84. As far as the writer is aware, only the Navy and Marine Corps thus far have attempted to address this question systematically. Their departure point is a methodology developed by Rear Admiral Philip Dur, originally outlined in his doctoral dissertation, *The Sixth Fleet: A Case Study of Institutionalizing Naval Presence, 1946–1968,* Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, December 1975.

85. *Op. cit.*, Remarks to Air Force Senior Statesman Symposium.

to crisis in the theater. Crisis response, however, is a conceptually distinct activity. It is non-routine and unscheduled and is triggered by indications and warning intelligence of a tactical nature.

In military terms, sizing forces for presence on the basis of the imminence and scale of the crises anticipated means, traditionally, on the basis of the threats to be faced, as in Korea where the threat is tangible. More frequently, today, however, threats are "generic," that is, the aim is to prepare for a threat that is still over the horizon.[86] The size and capabilities ascribed to generic opposition forces and the political conditions under which forces will be employed can only be the result of military and political consultations between the U.S. and its allies. This will determine the levels at which interoperability and complementarity must come into play. (Often the U.S. uniquely provides capabilities that are essential for military action. C3I has already been mentioned; others in this category include strategic mobility, logistic support, electronic warfare, and advanced air and missile defense.)

Given such consultations and assessments, requirements for forward forces can, in principle, be quantified—in part by establishing interoperability norms or targets and deriving the interaction rates necessary to achieve them (i.e., by calculating how many of what kinds of U.S. forces need to exercise with what frequency with the various allies to be able to perform desired missions together effectively). Determining precisely the right amount of interaction needed must be the result of military judgment. To date, no analyses are available that shed light on how much interaction is necessary to achieve desired levels of interoperability.[87] In general, however, if the forces overseas are not capable of exercising often enough with allies to

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86. To some, training to fight an unnamed adversary suggests that military planners are "inventing" enemies, especially formidable enemies, that don't exist. This attitude is an understandable holdover from the Cold War, when military exercises always involved action against a threat of quite specific dimensions.

87. Relating training levels to operational readiness is a difficult process even *within* the U.S. armed forces alone. It will be more difficult yet on a multinational basis.

develop and maintain interoperability, *they are too small.* In view of the strategic imperative of interoperability, committing forces that are too small by this measure will lead to failure in overseas presence.[88]

In political terms, the answer to how much is enough is, as always, one of judgment.[89] At least two criteria seem apparent. First, the forces operating forward (along with military capabilities transferred to or withheld from the states of the region) should be sufficient to foreclose a regional arms race. This can be as much a psychological as a physical standard. It involves the calibration of presence[90] partly in response to the changing military balance in a region and partly to reassure allies who feel themselves threatened. The eruption of a major arms race in a key region would also indicate the failure of overseas presence. The key role played by the U.S. in this respect appears to be as much the reassurance of allies as the deterrence of adversaries. Here, too, more analysis is needed to investigate these relationships in each region.

Similarly, there do not appear to be any objective standards against which to determine how many forces (including C3I) are needed for effective U.S. participation in regional coalitions and alliances. The level must be great enough: (1) to make the U.S. voice heard in determining the security policies of the regions that are vital to it; and (2) to promote the development of patterns of cooperation in security

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88. Forward forces also engage in actions—including exercises with friends and allies—that are not related to combat tasks. These include humanitarian relief in response to natural disaster and the effects of war and dealing with narco-trafficking and illegal immigration and various environmental problems. These activities are also influential and desirable because they promote cooperation. Whether they could constitute an additional basis for reckoning how much is enough deserves study.

89. The military mission areas encompassed, the level of skills that are "needed," the number of countries involved, and the relevant political frameworks are themselves also matters of policy judgment.

90. Today it is hard to envision anything other than reductions in forward presence. But over the long term, it will be important that the level of presence be adjusted in response to events. From time to time that will mean a rise in forward presence.

affairs.[91] A key mechanism in this regard is to occupy senior positions in alliance and coalition command structures and to be a dominant influence in determining doctrine. One can speak only of examples to indicate how much is enough today for this purpose. Apparently, the post of Commander in Chief of NATO's Southern Region will continue to be occupied by a U.S. admiral as long as U.S. naval forces are dominant in the Mediterranean. Similarly, a Navy flag officer can continue to serve as Commander Submarine Forces Mediterranean, (COMSUBMED), with special responsibilities for water space management, as long as the U.S. deploys and operates its submarines in that body of water. Absent those deployments, it is difficult to see the rationale for continuing U.S. leadership.[92]

We have seen that the composition and size of forces the U.S. commits varies with the peculiarities of each region and with purposeful short-term changes such as those that Secretary Aspin described. Assuming that the minimum size of the forces the U.S. commits meets

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91. *The Bottom-Up Review* announced an intention to retain 100,000 troops in both Europe and Northeast Asia, to rotate additional forces to those theaters, and to maintain naval deployments in the Mediterranean and other European waters, in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, and in the western Pacific. p. 14–15.

92. How many submarines, how often is itself an open question. Water space management, the scheme to ensure that friendly submarines stay out of each other's way, is a very important control function in naval operations. For COMSUBMED, it involves each NATO nation reporting its intentions to operate submarines in particular areas of the Mediterranean at specified times. COMSUBMED's "deconfliction" has obvious payoff in the safety of submarine operations, in providing information critical to ASW intelligence, in ensuring the separation of forces whose governments may not be on friendly terms, and in increasing the freedom of action of the nation occupying the senior post. If a U.S. officer did not occupy this NATO post, an officer of some other nationality would, or possibly the alliance would relinquish the function to some other body like the WEU. In such a case, U.S. submarines entering the Strait of Gibraltar would face unattractive alternatives: notify a non-U.S. authority of its operational intentions; or face a much more complex operating environment with an increased risk of an undersea incident with an indigenous submarine, an event that would confirm the "alien" character of its presence.

the criteria named, note that changes in their size and shape are nonetheless never written on a blank slate. Politicians everywhere prefer continuity and, as a rule, tend to react to change adversely rather than positively. Change in U.S. overseas forces needs to be managed—in concert with the allies involved—with considerable care to minimize the effects of this tendency.

For the variety of reasons discussed in appendix B, continuity and predictability in U.S. overseas deployments are highly desirable. Appendix B also examines the implications of variations in overseas forces for supporting infrastructure, logistics, personnel, and other policies—all of which affect the costs and effectiveness of overseas forces. Appendix B discusses a variety of measures potentially available to bring greater efficiency in the use of forces for presence.

Costs of forces overseas

Putting forces overseas imposes both political and financial costs. Politically, the inescapable complement of that action is the demonstration by the United States of its intent to reinforce these forces in crisis and use them in combat when necessary.

To be prepared to commit forces to combat does *not* mean that shooting is the policy of choice. On the contrary, the central concept of the presence mission is to promote stability without shooting. It does mean, however, that from time to time the costs and risks of combat will have to be borne to confirm that: (1) the U.S. does indeed have the necessary will; and (2) its military forces have the needed competence. *Genuine combat power in crisis is the foundation for success in presence.*

Forces overseas—more than forces kept in CONUS—imply a willingness to fight on behalf of the specific interests at stake. Failure to do so undercuts the credibility that is essential to deterrence. This is the major shortcoming of overseas presence: because credibility lies in the perceptions and expectations of others, credibility itself becomes

a value that has to be protected.[93] This provides an added imperative for *successful* military action that the U.S. and the alliances of which it is a member can't ignore.

Equally problematical is the added incentive to take military action that arises when allies take action at their own initiative, as in Bosnia. In such cases, one aim is to make common cause with allies and maintain existing levels of U.S. influence. The failure of the U.S. to take action on the ground in Bosnia in concert with its European allies (independent of the wisdom or effectiveness of the Europeans' activities there) has considerably undercut the U.S. claim to a leadership role in European security and the credibility and relevance of the NATO alliance.[94]

These imperatives carry several dangers: that the national leadership will misjudge the gravity of some foreign situation and become "bogged down" in conflicts from which the nation cannot extricate itself without loss of credibility or the commitment of forces on a larger scale than the interests at stake otherwise justify; that the U.S. public will judge that the interests at stake do not justify the losses incurred and withdraw support not just for the operation at hand but for a military posture of presence in general; and that the United States may become the unwitting object of manipulation by others, being drawn into the commitment of forces in situations that it logically should ignore. Today, only accurate assessments of the interests at stake, the true nature of the situations faced, and wise policy

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93. Other states have expectations about U.S. behavior—"images of the U.S." When what the U.S. does fails to fit with what the image led them to expect, they tend to question U.S. credibility. See Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Politics,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

94. According to the WEU Institute of Strategic Studies, [W]ould the Americans really incur the risk of involvement in a local war in Europe? Yet what remains of NATO without the physical involvement of the Americans? If risk-sharing is no longer its foundation and it is only Europeans...sustaining casualties..., how could it be imagined that they [the Europeans] would not also assume *complete* political and military responsibility for those operations? Quoted in Lacy, *op. cit.,* emphasis added.

judgments "on a case-by-case basis"[95] can guard against these dangers. One thing is apparent: forces forward for presence must be given clear political objectives and be assigned the military objectives and tasks that follow. Reliance on overseas presence dictates urgently that the nation debate and reach a consensus on the principles to guide the commitment to combat of its military power.

Even short of the costs of combat is the risk of a kind of ratchet effect: that forces committed to presence in a region cannot be withdrawn without undercutting the interests they were dispatched to support. This concern is valid, but states the problem in too limited a way. If the strategic situation in a theater demands forces, then forces must be maintained forward because the alternative is judged to be too risky. The complaint that U.S. troops have been in Korea for well over four decades, loses its force if one concludes that the alternative—no forces—would lead to all-out war on the peninsula. Among the goals of overseas presence is the development of regional security structures that are self-balancing; until that point is reached, withdrawal of U.S. forces from unstable theaters is not wise. (Note that this observation applies to the strategic level of planning; operationally and tactically, presence needs can be met with a variety of force packages. The fact that a particular package—say, a carrier battle group—has been committed initially does not mean that only a battle group can meet those particular requirements.)

Finally there is the issue of financial cost and its partner, effectiveness. Here we will look at the cost of *operating* existing forces forward and then touch on effectiveness. Somewhat surprisingly, no DOD-level figures exist showing the marginal cost of overseas presence operations; neither are any available from the unified commanders in charge of forward forces in Europe and the Pacific. One analysis of operating a carrier battle group in the Mediterranean, as opposed to keeping it at the same level of readiness in the waters off Norfolk, estimated the

95. The case-by-case approach has been voiced by many senior officials, most recently by Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine K. Albright, in a speech to the National War College, September 23, 1993. Available via Federal Information Systems Corporation, Federal News Service.

additional cost—using current practices for ship workup and length of deployment—at about 8 percent a year.[96]

Costs of this order of magnitude are likely for the other Services because the bulk of the expense of operating military forces comes from people, whose pay and allowances are essentially the same wherever they are located; and ships, tanks, and aircraft burn the same amount of fuel and need about the same amount of maintenance wherever they are. In annual terms, these costs are not particularly high in view of the strategic payoff that accrues; they are minuscule in terms of the life-cycle costs of the platforms involved.

At the same time, it is crucial to recognize that the mission of forward presence demands that operating budgets be adequately supported. As Brooks argues persuasively, the powerful tendency to underfund operations during periods of budget contraction must be resisted.[97] It defies logic to put forces forward but maintain them at low levels of unilateral readiness or interaction with allies.

Regarding costs, objections to forces overseas can be raised on two further grounds: they add to U.S. balance-of-payment problems (here, too, no DOD-level figures are available); and part of those costs go to foreigners rather than benefiting Americans directly, as do DOD dollars spent in the U.S. proper. Regarding the first, as described earlier, there is good reason to expect that forces forward, through inhibiting restrictions on trade, produce payoff to U.S. GNP that more than offsets balance-of-payment costs. The second objection means there is no natural constituency in the U.S. electorate that, on grounds of direct economic advantage, urges Congress to spend on forces abroad.[98]

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96. CNA Research Memorandum 90-155, *Carrier Battle Group Costs Under Alternative Operational Scenarios*, by Henry L. Eskew, John D. Keenan, and Christopher A. Trenholm, Cleared for Public Release, September 1990.

97. Brooks, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30.

98. Presumably, when the connections between forward presence, international stability, and U.S. prosperity becomes more widely recognized, such a constituency will form. Today, even those Americans directly involved in non-defense-related international trade and investment rarely participate in the national security dialogue.

Current plans will lead to reduced costs in the future. Allies contribute substantially to support U.S. forces based overseas, and, thus far, none has suggested that its proportion of the costs borne be reduced—whatever the ultimate size of the force. No significant military construction is currently planned or is likely to be needed overseas. Finally, the increasing share of overseas presence to be accounted for by naval forces, as planned ground force reductions proceed, means that balance-of-payment impact will fall, because, even including port visits, naval forces spend considerably less abroad than do forces based on foreign soil.

In addition, numerous other ways (see appendix B) are available to reduce the costs and increase the effectiveness of forces forward. Examples include adjusting the doctrinal foundations of the services to encompass presence as a mission, aligning the responsibilities of key functionaries such as military attachés and public affairs officers to focus directly on presence objectives, and improving the coordination in Washington and in the forward areas of information policy that is such an important supporting element of the mission. These examples and others involve little more than changing Cold War procedures, organizational relationships, and training. That is not to say they will be easy to do because they require organizational and bureaucratic change in the services, OSD, and other departments and agencies involved in national security policy. It is to say, however, that they involve spending little or no more money.

It seems clear that costs and effectiveness of presence are subjects that need analysis. But what we already know about its low marginal cost, the opportunities for improving efficiencies, and the strategic importance of operating forces overseas means it is affordable to do so.

What kinds of forces to buy

Deciding what kinds and how many forces the nation needs are two closely related questions. They can be answered only on the basis of the strategic tasks to be accomplished, the threats and opportunities faced, and affordability. As discussed in appendix A, the addition of overseas presence brings to three the basic strategic tasks of the conventional forces, namely:

- Overseas presence
- Immediate crisis response
- Sustained, large-scale combat.[99]

During the Cold War, the last of these—in the form of a major war with the Warsaw Pact—dominated. Today, however, no single strategic task can determine force structure, and no single force structure is at the same time best in each task. Choices on desirability and adequacy should be based on an amalgam of informed judgments about cost-effectiveness of alternative forces across all three. Addressing such judgments is beyond the scope of this paper, but some observations relevant to the impact of overseas presence on those judgments are possible.

The conclusion that overseas presence is central to the success of the national strategy means that, other factors being equal, the nation will prefer to buy forces that have comparative advantages in the mission. For example, with respect to aviation forces, some, like long-range bombers, don't operate forward and play little or no role in strengthening the fabric of stability in the key regions, in coalition building, in interoperability with allies, and so forth.[100] When compared to tactical aviation, they are not as useful in the cooperative aspects of the national strategy.

The point is not that bombers aren't highly effective in delivering large amounts of ordnance accurately. It is that they are limited to either threatening or engaging in that single dimension of crisis action. Forward tactical air and missile forces can perform essentially the same combat tasks as bombers, although more sorties may be

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99. The writer is indebted to David Perin of CNA for this construct and supporting logic. See his CNA Occasional Paper 6, *Aircraft Carriers: Where Do They Fit in the Nation's Aviation Force Structure?*, Oct 1993, and his CNA Occasional Paper 7, *Aircraft Carriers: Why Do We Have Them?*, October 1993.

100. This is not to say that U.S. bombers cannot make goodwill visits that can deepen relations with friends and impress adversaries with U.S. technlogical prowess.

required, but TACAIR and missile platforms are also effective at presence and thus are more consistent with the national strategy.

It is perhaps an open question whether a similar logic could apply to missile defense, and the answer is less clear. Terrestrial systems, both on land and at sea, can be integrated into allied sector defenses with payoff in cooperation, coalition-building, and interoperability. (Today, sector defense—vice 360-degree area defense—is at least the first priority for many states such as those on the northern littoral of the Mediterranean.) But space-based defenses can also have a role in overseas presence. This has been recognized by those in charge of planning for the Global Protection System (GPS) and its predecessor, the Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS). GPS has emphasized high-level political exchanges, combined warning and command centers staffed by U.S. and allied personnel, and joint production of equipment. In short, those aspects of GPS fit the definition of presence given earlier. Still, terrestrial systems on land and at sea involve greater degrees of interaction—more people and more levels of command—between U.S. and allies and thus seem to have advantages purely from the presence point of view.[101]

In any case, analysis of other forces and weapon systems may well identify other dimensions that are poorly or well suited to presence. For example, regarding tactical aviation and relatively light ground forces, the desirability of basing them on land or at sea varies with the theater. For the reasons argued earlier, mainly land-based forces are preferred in Europe and Korea and mainly sea-based forces in other theaters—the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Western Pacific—although sea-based TACAIR and Marines can obviously be brought to bear on the European littorals and in Korea. An added dimension that favors sea-based forces (because of their organic capabilities for combat on land, sea, and air) is their easy cooperation with *all* the services of allies. Thus, they are especially well-suited for maintaining interoperability. In part for this reason, among the U.S.

101. Note that this assessment is entirely independent of the comparative cost-effectiveness of the two. Whether recent OSD decisions to favor terrestrial approaches were affected by presence considerations is unknown, but they are consistent with such concerns.

services, those at sea have a long tradition of cooperative engagement with friends and allies. On balance, the presence mission, considered in isolation, would seem to add to the attractiveness of sea-based forces.

Finally, the centrality of C3I in presence dictates a major emphasis. In the communications area, this means avoiding the introduction into U.S. forces systems that cut existing links with allies. Whatever the level of sophistication of U.S. communications, it means ensuring effective communications with allies even if they are not based on state-of-the-art technology. In command and control, it means that attention be given to developing doctrine in concert with allies for interoperability. In intelligence it means collective undertakings for the gathering and analysis of information and an ever greater sharing with allies of U.S.-derived basic and tactical information, even while safeguarding sensitive sources and means. Given the importance of information in the modern world and the low cost of C3I (relative to platforms and weapons), C3I appears to be among, and perhaps is *the*, most cost-effective investment for overseas presence.

How many forces to buy

If presence is, as has been seen, the first-priority task of conventional forces, logically, in some cases, its requirements, rather than requirements for crisis response or sustained combat, will dictate the numbers of forces needed. In the case of the Army and Air Force, it appears that forces required for combat tasks will generally be larger than those required for presence. This appears to be so for two reasons: (1) the declining inclination on the part of the United States and declining opportunity overseas to put forces on foreign soil and (2) the size of the force needed for sustained combat. For naval forces, however, the number of ships needed to sustain overseas presence can be at least equal to that needed for sustained combat.[102] This is because several ships must be owned to keep one ship forward

102. As noted at the outset, *The Bottom-Up Review* concludes that "...presence needs can impose requirements for naval forces that exceed those needed to win two M[ajor] R[egional] C[onflict]s." p. 15

due to the need to maintain ships and train people for deployment. The so-called rotation base, the size of the total inventory needed, varies with the distance of the operating area from the base of repairs, ship overhaul cycles, and the personnel policies that keep sailors and marines at sea.[103] As observed in appendix C, each of these factors can be varied to achieve greater efficiencies—to a point. A rotation base is still needed.

The deeper question is how one should regard forces in the rotation base. David Perin has observed that the ships and aircraft (and this author would add Marines) that compose this base are not solely or even mainly an "overhead" cost of overseas presence; rather, such forces should properly be considered as reserves for crisis response and sustained combat. In this light, changes up or down in the size of sea-based tactical aviation forces (and Marines) have greater effects on capabilities for presence, crisis response, *and* sustained combat than comparable changes in Army and Air Forces.[104] Changes in the latter mainly affect capabilities for sustained combat, secondarily affect capabilities for crisis response, but affect capabilities for presence scarcely at all.[105]

A final issue connected with the numbers of forces needed involves the tradeoff in quality of forces versus their quantity. As has been seen, the presence mission does not appear to affect the Army and Air Force; so these comments apply to naval forces. Here the tradeoff

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103. For assessment of these relationships, see Ronald O'Rourke, "Naval Forward Deployments and the Size of the Navy," CRS Report to Congress, Congressional Research Service, November 13, 1992, pp. 13–28 and CNA Research Memorandum 90-236, *The Arithmetic of Naval Peacetime Presence,* by John V. Hall, October 1990.

104. David Perin, *op. cit.*

105. These relationships would appear to make forces afloat more attractive than forces based on land. The force structure proposed in the BUR (11 active and 1 reserve aircraft carrier plus 174,000 active Marines) is consistent with that view. The writer is quick to add that he has no knowledge of the deeper analytical judgments that led the review to reach these or any other of its conclusions.

could be acute: The presence mission implies numbers of ships are needed for "coverage"[106] of the key regions plus the other areas that demand forces from time to time. At the same time, the growing spread of advanced military technology throughout the world means that adversaries will be capable of a serious threat in all dimensions of naval warfare; thus, quality is needed to counter an advanced threat.

In principle, this dilemma could be "resolved" with a new "high-low" mix—a force combining larger numbers of less capable platforms with smaller numbers of very advanced forces.[107] The "high" component of such a force structure could also provide a relatively small number of ships and other capabilities to test advanced technologies through which the nation can continue to enjoy superiority in the quality of its forces and guard against technological surprise.[108]

Still, the risks of sending forward "low" capability forces must be reckoned with and consciously accepted. Here an important distinction needs to be made between planning for force employment and planning for force acquisition. From the vantage point of employment, the adaptive joint force package surely is a wise "adaptation" of the capabilities at hand to meet overseas presence needs. However, today's "adaptation" is not necessarily a wise guide for choosing among alternative forces for the future. Clearly, it is desirable to improve joint capabilities, but it seems doubtful that one would want to procure and field more advanced adaptive packages until they are found to be more effective across the three main missions, including presence, than an equal cost, high-low mix of naval forces.

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106. The term used by Secretary Aspin, in his remarks to the Air Force Senior Statesman Symposium, *op. cit.*

107. The first high-low mix was in the tenure of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt as CNO. CNA Research Memorandum 93-22, *On His Watch: Admiral Zumwalt's Efforts To Institutionalize Strategic Change,* by Jeffery I. Sands, Jul 1993.

108. The Royal Navy responded with a high-low mix in a comparable situation in the 19th century. John T. Beeler, "Defense Spending and Technological Changes," *Swords Into?,* (Fall-Winter 1991), p. 4.

In sum, the addition of overseas presence as a valid component of the rationale for acquiring armed forces seems destined to change the outcome of comparable decisions made during the Cold War. It is hoped that this work has shed some light on the nature of presence and on the issues that need to be addressed in meeting its requirements.

Postscript

The national security strategy is not aimed at merely "managing" the transition from the Cold War until the true and enduring shape of the world reveals itself. To be sure, U.S. defense planners face a host of tough managerial problems in cutting the size of the defense establishment by at least a third, taking care of its people, and cleaning up the environment affected by the urgencies of the Cold War. But these problems should not be confused with strategy.

Today, only America has the resources *and* the cohesive strategic purpose to catalyze the favorable forces in international affairs on behalf of stability, economic growth, and democracy. For the nation to recognize this is not self-congratulation, but simple reality. The strategy will require this generation to make sacrifices so that succeeding generations can be more secure, just as this generation has benefited from the sacrifices of those before.

With luck and wise policy, the UN will be made more effective and the other centers of world power in Europe and East Asia will continue on paths toward greater integration and capacity for cohesive action on behalf of stability. America can only welcome these developments wholeheartedly. They lighten its burdens and take the strategy nearer its ultimate goals. The clear message of this analysis is that overseas presence is an essential part of that strategy. Presence is the most sensible way for the nation to get maximum payoff from its investment in military power.

Appendix A: Defining terms

Introduction

As Robert O'Neill has observed, the end of the Cold War has produced a situation that is as revolutionary for world security affairs as the dawn of the nuclear age a half century before.[109] Just as *then*, old language is used today to express new concepts, resulting in ambiguity. This appendix examines the concepts and language of security planning and defines overseas military presence in the context of the other strategic tasks of the armed forces. Its purpose is not to advance some particular set of terms, but to identify concepts, variables, and key relationships. The larger aims are to clarify the language used in the body of this paper and to provide the background for the discussion of force size and structure with which it concludes. The reader is encouraged to focus on the functions of the armed forces that are being described rather than on the particular labels given them. New labels will undoubtedly appear as the debate progresses, but the basic strategic functions are likely to change little, if at all.

Functions of U.S. armed forces

Beyond the direct defense of the United States, U.S. conventional forces fulfill three strategic functions: overseas presence, immediate crisis response, and sustained, large-scale combat. The definitions of the three provide the framework for decision on forces. Basically, forces needed for other tasks—for example, peace-keeping and peace enforcement—are lesser cases of these three. (The Bush Administration grouped the latter two together under the label "Crisis Response." *The Bottom-Up Review* does not address crisis response except by implication as part of phase 1, before large-scale

109. Robert O'Neill, *International Herald Tribune*, September 7, 1992, p. 4.

combat in a "major regional contingency."[110] Mr. Aspin tends to put the label presence on all forward forces whether they are forces for presence (as will be specified) or whether they are engaged in the tasks of crisis response.)

A basic problem with overseas presence is that the term describes both a military posture (military means) and a military mission (military means and political objectives). In the case of presence as a mission, the objective is influence on behalf of a variety of U.S. political goals. This ambiguity is made worse by the fact that the term has been in use since at least the 1960s,[111] but it has never been defined in the JCS dictionary of military terms.[112] As a strategic task of the armed forces, overseas presence is here defined as the routine operation of forces forward (the means) to influence what foreign governments,[113] both adversary and friend, think and do (the ends) without combat.[114]

Overseas presence does not constitute a strategy, though it or a similar term may in time become the shorthand name for the national strategy. The national strategy is one of engagement of U.S. power in

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110. BUR, p. 7.

111. See Jeffrey I. Sands, CRM 93-22, *op. cit.*

112. *Dictionary of Military and Military Related Terms,* (JCS: Washington, DC, 1989). JCS Pub 1. This is true of each of the strategic tasks in the *National Military Strategy* except deterrence.

113. Note that presence also aims to influence non-governmental entities who can affect U.S. security, ranging from international organizations down to terrorists who don't represent a government.

114. This short definition is derived from the treatment of presence in the *National Military Strategy* and in the unclassified initial chapters of Annex O (Forward Presence) to the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan for Calendar Years 1993 to 1995,* distributed to the relevant DOD staffs in December 1992. The Bush Administration used the term "forward presence" in the *National Military Strategy.* In the BUR, the Clinton Administration has chosen "overseas presence," which is not specifically defined except to say, "U.S. forces deployed abroad protect and advance our interests and perform a wide range of functions that contribute to our security." (p. 14.)

the key regions to promote their stability and democratic development. As described in the body of this paper, a national strategy would integrate the components of U.S. power to achieve stability in the short term and build cooperative relations in the long term. The latter would address the dangers inherent in the international system, outlined in table 1, on page 23.

An important distinguishing characteristic of overseas presence[115]—the absence of combat—places it on a continuum of increasing violence with the other strategic tasks, crisis response and sustained combat. Each form of the application of power aims to influence political behavior. Presence is nonviolent (though it is their potential for violence that makes forward forces influential); crisis response involves the threat, or the actual practice, of limited violence; sustained combat seeks to change an adversary's behavior through large-scale violence aimed at destroying his armed forces in the field, denying him the means to control or continue to support his operations, and so on.[116] Thinking about the three strategic functions as points or bands on a continuum fits the real world; yet the three define the need for distinct kinds of capabilities.

Another difference between presence and crisis response is that decisions on forces for presence are taken at the strategic level, while those for crisis response are operational and tactical. Presence is a *routine* activity; the size of the baseline force operating forward changes relatively slowly as the strategic assessment of the situation in the theater evolves. At this level, routine deployments and changes in U.S forces based forward are made through U.S. initiatives, scheduled well in advance, ideally in consultation with allies. Crisis response is conceptually distinct from presence in that it is *not* a routine activity; the forces needed are reckoned at the operational and tactical levels in response to "tactical warning" of the initiatives of adversaries.

115. This paper uses the terms presence, overseas presence, and forward presence interchangeably.

116. In the BUR, phase 3 of an MRC calls for "a large-scale air-land counter offensive to defeat the enemy decisively by attacking his centers of gravity, retaking territory he had occupied, destroying his warmaking capabilities....," p. 14.

Changes are not scheduled in advance and may well be undertaken before consultations with allies can be completed.

This means that presence planning should be concerned only with forces forward—whether based, deployed, or there on a rotational basis—and that forces in CONUS, important as they are for the credibility of forces forward, cannot be considered as executing the presence mission. This distinction provides an important boundary for force planners because the need for CONUS-based forces can be safely reckoned exclusively on the basis of the crisis response and warfighting needs of major regional contigencies. Unless this distinction is made, overseas presence cannot be a separate activity if the forces needed for it become those forward *and* in CONUS when the buildup to an MRC begins.

This boundary poses no problems for deciding the needs for all forces except for forces to be used in the Caribbean and for strategic bombers in general. The proximity of the Caribbean means that forces in the southern United States proper (and Puerto Rico, Panama, etc.) are "present" without having to be "overseas"; therefore, the relatively small forces needed for presence and crisis situations there will not be further considered here. Bombers can be employed (that is, used without first being deployed) anywhere in the world quickly and directly from CONUS. Knowledge of this fact by adversaries undoubtedly serves as a deterrent on a routine basis, thus meeting one of the objectives of overseas presence. However, bombers can only deter; they cannot contribute to its other presence goals—e.g., building coalitions, developing interoperability, and so on. Although the question of whether to include CONUS-based bombers as a component of overseas presence is one of judgment, on balance, their limited contribution to the goals of presence dictate they not be considered part of presence.

Let us briefly examine the temporal relationship between presence, crisis response, and sustained combat before turning to overseas presence, per se.

Crisis response and forces for sustained combat

As a situation deteriorates and the probability of violence rises, forces forward for presence provide the initial component of crisis response; often, but not always, they are augmented by forces from CONUS. The boundary between presence and crisis response is matter of policy judgment. Typical characteristics of crisis include involvement by the National Command Authorities in ordering augmentation of forward forces and in the direction of their employment; establishment of crisis action cells by the Joint Staff, the Unified CINCs, and their service components; and the direction of forces on the scene by the commander of a Joint Task Force who can come from any of the services.

The sizeable forces operating in Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, and Indian Ocean today are a combination of forces for presence and those that have deployed for crisis response. These theaters are in prolonged crisis with combat a continuing possibility in the respective no-fly zones, at a minimum, and certainly ashore in Somalia.[117] When these particular crises are resolved, augmenting forces will be withdrawn, but the basic force for presence will still remain large because the strategic situation in the theater remains unstable. Endemic instability leads to a more or less continuous crisis response; periods of time measured in years are "non-routine." This distinction can be highlighted by looking at U.S. forces in Europe's center and in the western Pacific. Today, they are basically fulfilling routine presence functions (described in the body of this paper)—though, in the case

117. U.S. forces in Somalia and, if forces should be committed to peacekeeping/enforcement operations, in Bosnia, Macedonia, or elsewhere face the kind of violent environment that qualifies as crisis response. However, the absence of a major adversary, as in an MRC, and the possible continuing nature of the commitment make the term "crisis response" of uncertain applicability. The BUR has therefore treated "peace enforcement and intervention operations" as an independent category (p. 13). The forces that are envisioned for this category are substantially smaller than for a even a single MRC, and, thus, from the point of view of force planning, present a lesser included case that will not be examined further here.

of the Pacific, their size and composition reflects the fact that the probability of violence on the Korean peninsula is hardly negligible.

Crisis response forces can take limited actions on their own, and their main task in a major regional contingency is to provide combat power in the initial period of an aggression to achieve what the BUR names as "the highest priority": to "[h]alt the invasion" and "minimize the territory and critical facilities that the invader can capture."[118] The outcome of the initial period can be a crucial determinant of the scope and cost of the phases that follow. Success reduces the extent of captured territory that the enemy can use as bargaining chips, keeps the threatened ally a viable partner for "collective action," and minimizes the number of forces "required for the counteroffensive" as well as the number of casualties.[119] This puts a great premium on success in crisis response, and thus on the kinds of forward, rapid response, flexible, yet lethal forces that are implied.

Crisis response forces become forces for large-scale combat through major augmentation—what the BUR calls "Phase 2: Build-up U.S. and allied combat power in the theater while reducing the enemy's."[120] The "air-land counteroffensive" that is planned for Phase 3 obviously requires heavy ground forces and land-based air power.[121]

Overseas presence

A principal aim of presence is to make crisis response unnecessary, just as the latter seeks to eliminate the need for large-scale combat. In addition to permanent and rotational forces forward on the ground, forces deployed at sea, and prepositioned equipment, the means of overseas presence are:

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118. BUR, "Phase 1: Halt the Invasion," p. 7.

119. *Ibid.*

120. *Ibid.*

121. In due course, the boundaries between overseas presence, crisis response, and sustained combat will need to be defined with care, both in the ascending direction when presence turns into crisis response and vice versa.

- Exercises and training of U.S. forces with those of friends and allies
- Unilateral training by U.S. forces on foreign soil
- U.S. C3I systems, especially in their bilateral and multilateral roles
- Arrangements for the access by U.S. forces to facilities overseas
- Stationing and visits abroad by senior U.S. military officials
- Visits to ports and airfields by U.S. naval and air forces
- Public shows by U.S. demonstration teams such as the Thunderbirds and a host of public affairs activities including military musical groups
- Staff-to-staff talks and studies with foreign military organizations and analytical groups
- U.S. participation on multilateral staffs
- Exchanges of military people between the U.S. and friends and allies
- Military training of foreign personnel in the U.S. and in their home countries
- Training of military officers of former totalitarian and some developing states in the roles of the military in a civil society
- Foreign military sales and funding and co-production of military equipment with other nations.[122]

122. This last would logically include an arms transfer policy dimension. With the exception of the Missile Technology Transfer Regime and various transparency reporting provisions of confidence-building agreements, there are not yet any arms control aspects to this part of presence, although these too would appear to called for. This listing is taken from the *National Military Strategy* and from the unclassified introduction to Annex O of the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan,* distributed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in December 1992.

This discussion focuses on forces, though, as this listing shows, the non-force components are important in their own right and play a major role in the effectiveness of forces.

In contrast to crisis response and sustained combat, overseas presence is also aimed at friends; it underwrites U.S. efforts to cooperate with them on behalf of common security. This adds a dimension to calculations of presence needs that cannot be captured by threat-based planning scenarios of the kind reflected in an MRC. The language of opportunity—for example, coalition building, interoperability, and alliance strengthening and extension—is much less well developed than the vocabulary of threat. Including the cooperative dimensions of presence in the methodology to quantify its requirements is an important unresolved task.

Finally, for those charged with presence planning, it is also important to distinguish among the various personnel planning systems employed to keep forces overseas. Under existing schemes, forces stationed or based forward bring dependent families, which adds to their monetary costs and intrusiveness in the domestic affairs of host nations. Forces rotating to land facilities overseas or deploying at sea do so for shorter periods of time without dependents, with correspondingly less dollar and negative political impact; indeed, forces afloat have little disruptive impact on host nations. Rotating and deploying forces forward does carry some cost in morale, however, because of family separations. Because the quality and well-being of its people are so important to DOD, it is likely that any formal definition of overseas presence will include reference to the personnel system through which forces are maintained there.

Appendix B: Continuity, variation, and efficiency in overseas presence

With the important assumption that the mix of forces put forward has adequate real combat capabilities, some of the thornier judgments connected with overseas presence relate to its continuity, variation, and support. These factors determine its costs—one half of the calculus of the efficiency of overseas presence—and to an important degree its effectiveness. They must be the subject of searching analysis. This appendix suggests some of the questions that need to be addressed and offers some tentative hypotheses about a few of their answers. Included are:

- What factors determine the importance of regularity and predictability in deployment policy?
- How much variability is possible or desirable?
- What factors bear on deciding how much (and how much variation) is enough?

The basic assumption in what follows is that operating and supporting policies should be geared first for overseas presence—the priority mission—and second for crisis response and sustained combat.

Change in overseas force levels is likely to be more the rule than the exception—in the long term because of the need to respond to changes in the vital regions and in the short term to cover many areas with a smaller pool of forces. This represents a radical change from Cold War patterns. Still, a number of military and political factors mandate some degree of regularity—certainly predictability and continuity—in deployments. (These remarks apply mainly to naval and other forces that deploy forward rather than to forces that are based

overseas.[123]) From the military standpoint, some minimum level of predictability seems necessary so that U.S. and alliance planners can schedule combined exercises efficiently. Given the centrality of interoperability, study is needed to determine how to reduce the amount of time the national forces involved need to get ready to exercise together and to make planning systems more streamlined and flexible.

Similar problems surround predictability in contingency plans, which are more important because mission success is potentially at risk, not to mention people and equipment. If the presence of U.S. forces is to vary widely, what assumptions should plans make about U.S. forces on scene? If, for example, the U.S. fills aviation needs in a region alternately with land-based and then sea-based forces, does this imply two separate plans for combined forces? Such possibilities multiply further if the U.S. also meets needs for ground combat capabilities alternately with Marines and then with light Army or Airborne troops. What if allies also wish to vary the composition of their forces committed to a contingency plan?[124] Can training and exercising scenarios cover the possible variations within the cost and time budgets available? Study is needed to determine whether planning and exercising systems can be upgraded (perhaps with computerized support) to accommodate such variation and how much variation is reasonable and tolerable.

The question of predictability is also central from the political standpoint. It is quite possible that, while the size of the deployed U.S. force may move up and down, it is desirable to ensure that presence does not approach or even fall to zero. If the presence of forces deters

123. It is against this background that changes in deployed forces signal changes in U.S. interests and concerns. In the metaphor of radio transmissions, forces routinely forward are the "carrier wave"; modulations in force size convey the "message."

124. The military organizations of all advanced countries are aware of the advantages that come from integrating the operations of the several services, but (Russia aside) few have pursued integration as far as the U.S. France, for example, is just beginning to integrate its three *armées—terre, aire, mer.*

adversaries, reassures allies, and makes the U.S. a "regional power," surely the absence of forces has the opposite effect. What is not known with any certainty is the relationship between the size of the forces deployed, their variability, continuity, and the degree of positive influence that accrues. These must be the subject of research both through historical case studies and through contemporary investigations of foreign reactions to changes in the U.S. posture, including through surveys of expert opinion and through examinations of official and foreign press responses to change.

A second consideration bearing on the continuity of the overseas presence of U.S. forces is access to infrastructure. If U.S. forces are not present giving, through regular use, concrete evidence of the importance of access, will scarce resources like dedicated sectors of ports and airfields tend to migrate toward the exclusive use of host nations? It may well be that we can never know exactly how much is enough, but it seems reasonable to expect that systematic assessment can at least aid those who must make such ultimate judgments about what variability in deployments is acceptable.

For those responsible for training and supplying forces, predictability is equally important for rational planning. Existing personnel, training, and equipment maintenance systems reflect the priorities of the Cold War, whose understandable rigidities are reflected throughout. Research is needed to see whether these systems can be made somewhat less cumbersome without damage to morale and readiness. In the case of readiness, particularly, study is needed to resolve the perceived tension between the need to have forces forward for presence and the need to husband them near CONUS in readiness for surging forward in crisis. Similarly, what measures are needed to ensure that forces in one theater are ready for action both there and also in adjacent theaters?

The differing personnel schemes the services use to maintain their members forward basically reflect the imperatives of the Cold War. Moving away from these could cut the costs of overseas operations. Examples worth study include reducing the number of dependents overseas, rotating unaccompanied military personnel forward on shorter tours, leaving equipment, including ships, in *place, and*

changing only people to reduce transit costs. Personnel policies are most important because people are the DOD's most valuable resource. Whether unaccompanied tours or longer time at sea would require special compensation would need study. There is also the question of whether the presence of U.S. military dependents in a theater is not in itself an additional expression of U.S. commitment. It was certainly so regarded during the Cold War, and situations may yet arise where an additional measure of reassurance to an ally or deterrence of an adversary may be required, independent of efficiency considerations.

Fundamentally, the doctrine of all the services regarding overseas presence needs to be modernized. Only the Navy has given it particular attention, until recently in a Cold War framework.[125] Assessments by the other services, as well as further assessment by the Navy and Marine Corps, will almost certainly show how to contribute more efficiently and effectively to the mission. One obstacle is that overseas presence involves substantial attention to public affairs in a context different from that of the Cold War. The line leadership of the U.S. military must be comfortable with the idea that public affairs goals constitute a valid objective of forward operations and determine how they can be met without compromise to military training, not to say operational, needs.

The other side of the efficiency equation is effectiveness. There are opportunities to increase the influence potential of the forces overseas. Responsibilities here lie more at the Joint, OSD, and interdepartmental levels. Most doctrine, organizational relations, and

125. Early Navy doctrine on presence can be found in Naval Warfare Publication 1 (revision A), "Strategic Concepts of the U.S. Navy," (Washington: Office of the CNO, March 1978, pp. 1–34ff. An earlier, less formal expression is Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, "Missions of the U.S. Navy," *Naval War College Review,* vol. XXVI, no. 5 (March–April, 1974), pp. 2–17. The new Navy doctrine command intends to establish a doctrine for operations other than war (*Defense Daily,* August 18, 1993, p. 268), which presumably will include presence operations. Similar efforts are under way in the other services and the Joint Staff. For ideas on how Navy doctrine might be affected, see Brooks, *op. cit.*

SOPs have changed little since the Cold War.[126] Overseas forces can be made more effective in presence though improved coordination between information policies for forces and for diplomacy. What the U.S. says about overseas presence is a major determinant of how both friends and adversaries react to it. Today, there is no national-level doctrine for the information policy that supports forces forward.

Organizing for coordination between State and DOD seems particularly important, both in Washington and between Unified Commanders in Chief, the forward forces they command, and embassy country teams. Today there are no national-level bodies coordinating presence operations. Similarly, lines of communication and procedures for coordination between State and DOD entities in forward areas appear generally underdeveloped, although there are wide variations between theaters. Improving direct coordination between the Unified Commanders and embassy country teams would seem to hold considerable promise. One aspect of this problem is that, in the Department of State, no bodies outside Washington have responsibilities above the level of single country; further, State Department organizational structure in Washington does not parallel the organization or geographic boundaries of the Unified Commands.

The responsibilities and subordination of key people like attachés and public affairs officers deserve particular attention. Military attachés are crucial players in the process of deriving political influence from forward forces; however, they are trained mainly in intelligence collection, and they report primarily to the Defense Intelligence Agency. Their training emphasizes the control and protection of information—essentially the opposite of the dissemination of information that the presence functions call for. The DIA understandably measures an attaché's effectiveness by the volume and accuracy of reporting he provides. Attachés currently have few formal incentives to pursue presence goals. In addition, with the exception of the Air Force, attachés receive guidance from the services via their intelligence chiefs. The Air Force experience of shifting attachés to

126. An important exception is Annex O to the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan on Presence* distributed in December 1992 within the Department of Defense, but not outside it.

the subordination to the Air Staff deputy for policy may provide a model for the other services.

Similar experience surrounds military public affairs officers (PAOs), who also play a central role in realizing the influence potential of overseas forces. Their training and responsibilities continue to reflect Cold War mores. PAOs tend to be oriented toward internal service needs, toward the dissemination of intra-service information and the improvement of morale. The content of military public affairs programs rarely conveys a coherent policy message to allied governments, armed services, and populations. After the early days of the Cold War, for 40 years there was little need to do so; everybody knew why U.S. forces were overseas. Today, there is a clear need to explain U.S. purposes to foreign audiences as well as to the U.S. personnel involved. This suggests the need to review the training, tasks, and responsibilities—"the job descriptions"—of military public affairs officers.

These are only a few of the issues that need to be addressed. Fundamentally, the priority that overseas presence operations now holds in the national strategy means far-reaching change in the way the DOD does business.

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