

# WARFENSE

BY THE CENTER FOR DEFENSE INFORMATION

"Wars occur because people prepare for conflict, rather than for peace."

~TRYGVE LIE (1947)

"Worse than war is the fear of war."

~SENECA (THE YOUNGER): Thyestes

From 1945 to 1990 the reigning dogma in Washington, D.C. was, "If you would have peace, prepare for war." Congress, the White House and the Pentagon equated peace and security with military power and justified the exercise of this power as the only tool that the Soviet Union and its allies understood.

This putative threat can no longer be used as the central element of a national security strategy requiring massive military spending. As the dust settles from the Soviet Union's collapse, it becomes clear that global peace and security depend far more on economic, social, cultural, ethnic and historic political factors than on the relative military power of nations or alliances.

Yet current U.S. military strategy is essentially an extension of Cold War views. For five years the nation has avoided examining the fundamental assumptions of this strategy and its supporting programs to determine if they remain appropriate in the 1990s. The Pentagon still believes it must be able to fight and win conventional and nuclear wars, unilaterally if necessary, accepting help from our allies when it suits us. It believes we must outspend other nations for military forces and weapons and keep troops stationed "forward" in foreign lands and on foreign seas. Unsure that the force of democracy can triumph over the force of arms, America persists in supplying weapons to countries around the globe in the vain hope of "winning" their allegiance.

The last two Administrations have simply substituted the need to control "regional instability" for containing Soviet expansion to justify continued high levels of military spending. The current framework for this strategy, the "Bottom-Up Review" (BUR), calls for the U.S. to maintain military forces capable of fighting and winning nearly simultaneously two major regional conflicts without any help from friends and allies.

Based on this concept, the Pentagon calls for a force of 1,543,000 servicemen/women armed with the most advanced weapon systems and sustained by spending at 90% of the average Cold War levels. In 1997 military programs will consume 53% of all discretionary federal spending, a percentage whose projected increase jeopardizes funds for essential economic and social programs and efforts to balance the budget.

Incredibly, even the expected level of military spending — more than \$1.6 trillion over the next six years — cannot fully meet BUR requirements for force readiness and modernization. Estimates are that \$50–\$120 billion must be added to military spending by the year 2002 to fully fund the BUR. The question must be asked, "Is even the United States wealthy enough to carry this burden indefinitely?" The answer is "No!"

There is no question that U.S. economic strength is central to the security and well being of our citizens. Reversing the unnecessary drain on our ability to invest in constructive non-military programs requires more than simply stopping the growth of the military/industrial complex. We must redirect or convert resources no longer needed to defend our nation against vastly reduced military threats. We should take bold new steps to reduce world stockpiles of nuclear weapons. We are simply clinging to the past in our determination to retain 15,000 nuclear weapons. In practical terms these expensive weapons and their delivery systems are militarily useless because they would destroy everything we might believe justified their use to defend. Nor are these weapons justified as a "deterrent," for their numbers far exceed requirements for a credible nuclear deterrent capability.

On a related front, Congress should quickly ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention so that the U.S. can participate in the formation of the treaty's compliance and verification regime. We must also reverse current policies under which the U.S. has become the leading international arms supplier. Without question U.S. weapons sales have contributed to the expansion and intensification of regional violence and hampered diplomatic efforts to find non-violent solutions to national and regional problems. The use of our weapons by authoritarian regimes to suppress democratic movements within their nations further contributes to the very instability and violence we are supposedly arming ourselves to prevent.

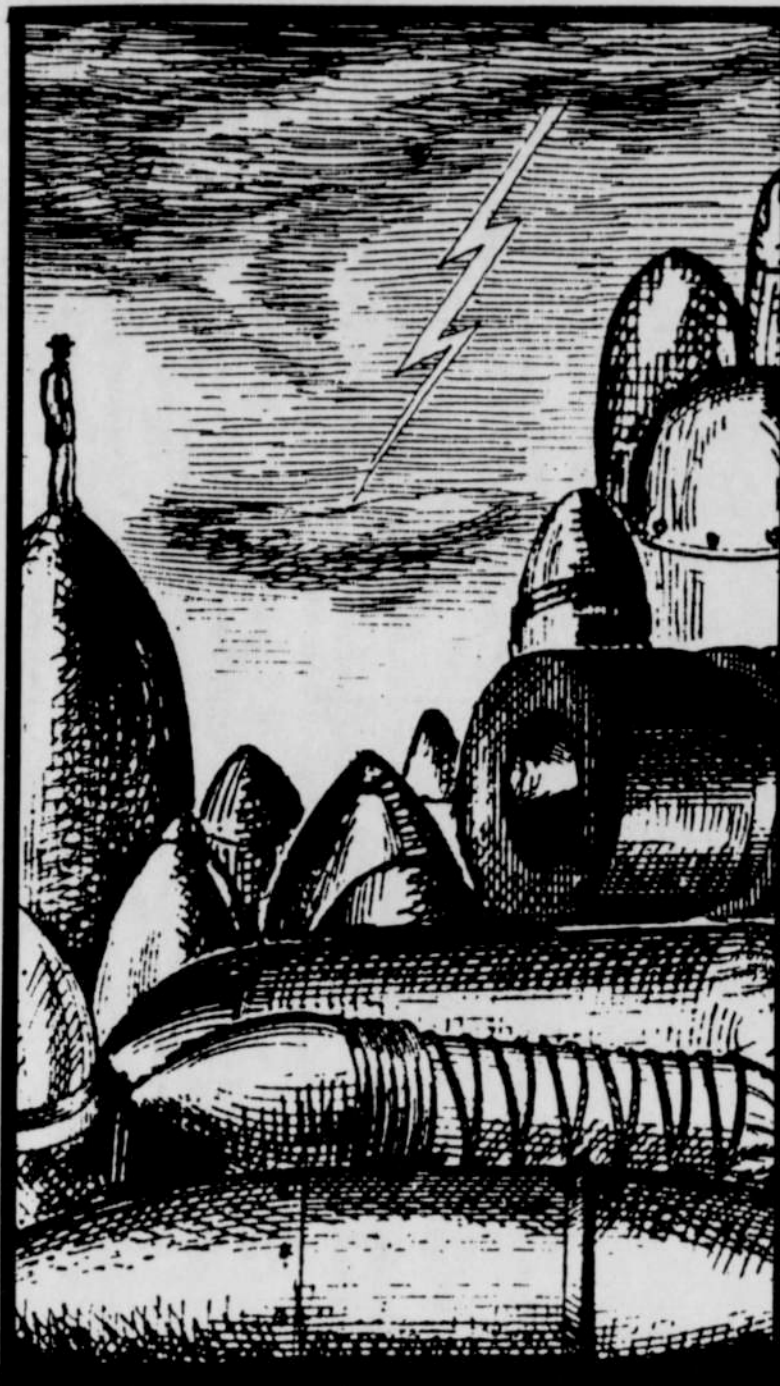
Far from increasing our security, overwhelming U.S. conventional and nuclear war-fighting capabilities signal our resolve to use our military superpower status as a legitimate means to influence world affairs. This message provides the most powerful incentive possible to others to develop their own conventional, and where possible, nuclear military forces.

There are four critical issues which must be considered in revising U.S. security policies and programs: Military Strategy, Nuclear Weapons, Chemical/Biological Weapons and Arms Sales. Constructive alternatives that would help the U.S. move the world community toward a system of common security need to be considered. Only if the U.S. surrenders its superpower role of world policeman and shares responsibility for maintaining global peace will we ever see the gradual reduction of military forces and the amelioration of the crushing burden that present military security structures place on individual nations around the world.

Between 1989–1991, four seminal events turned America's national and military security worlds upside down. The fall of the Berlin Wall, German reunification within NATO, the end of the Warsaw Pact, and the collapse of the USSR robbed the U.S. of its only significant external and military threat and destroyed the lethal East/West balance-of-power struggle which had been waged through client states and factions within states. What emerged — or rather reemerged — in place of this rivalry are numerous, unpredictable and seemingly unmanageable ethnic, cultural and religious-based conflicts.

Unlike the struggle against the former Soviet Union, none of these renewed conflicts directly threaten U.S. national or military security. Thus military responses to such conflicts are largely inappropriate. In fact, just what constitutes appropriate responses — our national strategy — is a controversial point among those concerned with U.S. foreign policy.

This was not always the case. Until the Soviet Union began to crumble post-World War II U.S. national strategy —



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containment — had been equated with military strategy. This initial effort was to prevent Soviet territorial expansion beyond those areas it had seized in the closing months of World War II; a policy that could only be enforced by military power. This threat made us forget the lesson of our early history: military strategy is but one aspect of total national strategy. Thus when the Cold War ended, both military and national strategy lost their "polar star"; national objectives suddenly became unclear, and military strategies became captive to political ideology and corporate profits.

The last two Administrations have proposed military plans, forces and budgets reflecting remarkably similar but anachronistic world views. The "Base Force" concept of the Bush Administration reduced U.S. military strength and military spending from their 1986-87 high point but continued to emphasize America's military superpower status. The justification given for not cutting military forces and budgets further was that the U.S. had to be able to dominate unilaterally any potential battlefield anywhere in the world against any enemy or combination of enemies.

The Clinton Administration's "Bottom-Up Review" (BUR) of September 1993 was another attempt to justify a military force and budget that would ensure U.S. superpower status. While reducing military strength below the Base Force figures, the BUR's strategy required U.S. forces to be able to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts anywhere in the world without any help from traditional allies and friends. "Where" obviously was a key consideration in transforming strategic theory into concrete force structure plans and military budgets.

In place of the Soviet Union we now have the infamous "rogue" states as our chief military adversaries. Who actually is included on this list varies with the issue. Originally there were six rogue states: Cuba, North Korea, Libya, Syria, Iran and Iraq. In adding details to its two-war strategy, the Pentagon said it must be able to fight and win conflicts on the Korean peninsula and in the Persian Gulf. Many in Congress and in the public were not convinced that these scenarios, or others that might be devised from the list of rogue states, represented genuine military threats to America's interests and well-being.

This disagreement became more apparent when the U.S. started negotiating with the North Koreans to induce them

to stop their nuclear weapons program. When a preliminary agreement was reached, North Korea seemed to drop off the Administration's list of rogue states. A similar dichotomy occurred when Syria was drawn into the Madrid framework for Middle East peace talks. Syria fell off the list of rogues even though it continues to allow terrorist groups to train on its soil. On the other hand, there was widespread agreement when Sudan was added to the list when the extent of its support for terrorists became apparent.

Terrorism, in fact, has emerged as the real threat of the 1990s. But U.S. military strategy and budgets are still oriented toward forces better suited to counter the old conventional threat from massed armies, represented by Iraq in the 1991 war in the Persian Gulf, and to meet the Pentagon's "requirement" that the U.S. must dominate every aspect of anticipated high-tech battles of the future.

Given the size, cost, and equipment programmed for U.S. military forces, these two conditions seem set to prevail into the next century even though the "threat" will still be terrorism sponsored by rogue states. Collectively, these seven countries have 2.6 million people under arms and spend approximately \$16 billion per year on their military. By contrast, the U.S. keeps over 1.5 million men and women on active duty and will spend in fiscal year 1997 over \$265 billion on military programs including weapons systems designed for combat between massed armies or major fleets of ships and high performance aircraft. This obvious mismatch is even greater considering that where the U.S. has important interests many allies also have important interests of their own to defend and should carry their fair share of the costs.

To the degree that terrorism rather than conventional military threats poses the more probable danger to the U.S., the Pentagon's counter-strategy should emphasize capabilities that can be effective against such attacks. Terrorists are not defeated by tank divisions or F-22 jets. Light infantry — highly trained, easily transported — supported by air power is better adapted both to counter the more probable terrorists and to help deter or defeat conventional military forces. These same well equipped, well trained troops also serve to back U.S. diplomatic and economic initiatives aimed at encouraging the peaceful settlement of disputes between and within nations.

What we should realize by now is that Cold War national and military strategies are inadequate to meet the probable challenges that will confront the U.S. well into the 21st century. With a flexible national military strategy, the U.S. could more effectively deal with "rogue" states and push them toward more acceptable international standards. But a greater benefit would come from fostering the growth of a reliable consensus about what constitutes a violation of this understanding. A community of concerned nations acting in concert would be more effective in dealing with these problems than the U.S. attempting to act independently as a global policeman.

The best strategic scenario is one in which the global community assumes significant additional responsibility for the maintenance of peace and the U.S. returns to its traditional reliance on a relatively small, active duty military force. In the very worst case, in 15 or 20 years China, Russia or some other state might begin developing military forces to support aggressive foreign policies. This could require prudent increases in U.S. military capabilities — a change in strategy to protect America's interests against an emerging threat.

As long as nation-states are the highest sovereign authorities, America cannot completely abandon its capability to act unilaterally in *extremis*. But the increased warning times available to identify and counter an emerging hostile nation with battle-tested superiority in people and weapons, provides the U.S. a unique opportunity to profoundly influence how the international order will be reshaped. The choice is still ours today.

When it comes to nuclear weapons, the United States is guilty of sending out conflicting messages. While claiming to seek the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Clinton Administration, like those before it, plans to retain thousands of these weapons and to preserve the heart of the nuclear complex, including the ability to design and build new nuclear weapons.

President Clinton was first in line to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to support a fissile material production ban. Yet his Administration has not proposed deeper cuts in nuclear weapons than those already negotiated. According to former Defense Secretary William Perry, the U.S. must "maintain a hedge to return to a more robust nuclear posture should that be necessary" — with "necessary" meaning whether or not democratic reforms continue in Russia.

To the consternation of the non-nuclear weapons states, the Administration seems to be backing away from treaty commitments. In May 1995, to ensure that non-nuclear states would agree to indefinitely extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the U.S. promised to not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that had signed the treaty. One year later, upon signing the relevant protocols to the Treaty of Pelindaba which established the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, the White House stated that its pledge to not use nuclear weapons against any party to the treaty did not apply if a party used chemical or biological weapons.

Another problem area is the possibility that U.S. policy with regard to European security and NATO may undercut a decade's worth of arms control treaties.<sup>1</sup> The Administration's promotion of NATO expansion threatens to do just that. Should NATO decide to deploy troops or nuclear weapons on the territory of new members (as suggested in NATO's September 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*), Moscow, with its historic fear of encirclement, may feel compelled to rely more heavily on its own nuclear arsenal and refuse to consider further cuts.

Failure to pursue deeper reductions could have serious consequences. It could undermine the NPT; it has already prompted India to reject the CTBT, jeopardizing the "determined pursuit" of "systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate aim of eliminating those weapons." Furthermore, if the world's sole military superpower claims to need nuclear weapons for its security, why shouldn't other nations seek nuclear weapons of their own or, at a minimum, the poor man's version — chemical and biological weapons?

If budgets reflect national priorities, it's easy to understand why non-nuclear states are suspicious. The U.S. spends roughly \$27 billion annually to prepare to fight a nuclear war.



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