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Decisions for Defense: Prospects for a New Order

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The author has devoted a substantial portion of the text to the background of the U.S. Navy, and offers a detailed explanation of how and why our current navy was fashioned. Though this is a most interesting and useful analysis, one may not agree with Ullman's underlying belief that those responsible for today's navy were ignorant of the true threat: that whereas the Soviets fashioned their navy to meet the nuclear threat to their homeland from our submarines and aircraft carriers, the U.S. Navy presented its rapidly expanding surface and submarine fleet as meeting a threat to the sea lines of communication in the Atlantic—which bore little relation to Soviet strategic thinking. Despite this, Ullman's focus on the past and present is not an indictment, but rather an attempt to help one make an educated prediction of the Navy's future.

Ullman's analysis of the threats to U.S. security focuses not only on politico-military threats but on politico-economic and environmental threats as well, and dares to speculate about whether military action against Brazil might become necessary if that state does not take action to cease denuding the rain forest!

The strength of this text is that Ullman has written it for the layman. He has presented a simple premise and provided the necessary details for discussion. He does, however, possess a bias that some readers may find bothersome.

Ullman believes that the Soviet Union has not gone away. It maintains

a military capability second only to the United States. The reader should keep in mind that this book was published before the demise of the Soviet Union and before the Central Committee was removed from power. However, only the former Soviet Union has the capability to destroy the United States in fifteen minutes. (Now that it is fractured, what becomes of that capability?) Harlan Ullman maintains that despite the rhetoric of change, this fact must never be forgotten.

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Kaufmann, William W. and Steinbruner, John D. *Decisions for Defense: Prospects for a New Order*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1991. 78pp. (No price given)

The dramatic collapse of communism that ended the Cold War has led to calls for equally dramatic cuts in U.S. defense spending. The Bush administration responded in 1991 with proposals to cut outlays for defense by over \$50 billion, to \$253 billion (in 1992 dollars), and to reduce U.S. forces by about twenty-five percent over the 1991-1996 period. Critics in Congress and elsewhere do not believe that these cuts go far enough to reflect what has happened in the international environment, and domestic economic stringency. This study contributes to that debate and will help military professionals understand the critics of defense spending.

Kaufmann and Steinbruner are experienced analysts of defense and international affairs. They have authored previous volumes in the Studies in Defense Policy series published by The Brookings Institution. This latest work is certain to be cited widely.

The authors review the process by which defense programs and budgets have been developed during the Cold War period. Then they examine the FYDP (Future-Years Defense Program) presented by the secretary of defense in early 1991. (This program has since seen additional deletions in response to the breakup of the Soviet Union but is unchanged in its essentials.) The Brookings study calls the administration's FYDP "a scaled-down version of the cold war." In its place Kaufmann and Steinbruner offer three alternative force and budget options which they consider more appropriate to the threat that the United States now faces.

Initially the authors' proposals would save about \$49 billion (in 1992 dollars) through 1996 by postponing or cancelling the procurement of a number of new weapons systems, thereby reducing the fiscal 1996 defense spending to \$225 billion. The Brookings study argues that in the next five years greater cuts could be made from the 1996 program because the continued favorable international trends will eliminate potential threats in Europe, Southwest Asia, and Northeast Asia. The authors believe that it is highly unlikely that the

United States will ever have to respond to two simultaneous attacks on areas critical to U.S. interests.

They therefore propose a low-budget option for fiscal year (FY) 2001 at a cost of about \$169 billion (in 1992 dollars) resulting in a reduction to seven active army divisions and six carrier battle groups. Compared to the administration's twelve divisions and twelve carriers, this would be a significantly smaller force structure. The low option could provide forces equal to those used in Operation Desert Storm, but to match those forces the Army would have to utilize a National Guard division, and every carrier would have to be deployable. However, this prospect does not bother the authors because they believe that the United States "overinsured" in Desert Storm (in addition to U.S. forces there were also allied UN forces to draw on) and could have prevailed with fewer ground forces and carrier battle groups. Overinsurance may have been an important factor in the swift defeat of the enemy with minimal U.S. and allied casualties.

As an alternative to the low option Kaufmann and Steinbruner offer an intermediate option which would retain the low option's reduction in strategic nuclear forces but increase naval, ground, and air forces (e.g., nine carrier battle groups and nine active army divisions). This larger force structure would raise the FY 2001 budget to \$202 billion in 1992 dollars.

The concluding chapter discusses a more radical low option, "the

cooperative security option." This proposal assumes that all the nations participating are on the same side, configure their forces for defense not offense, and provide one another with mutual reassurance. The FY 2001 cost of \$147 billion (in 1992 dollars) would be about \$22 billion less than the low option, the savings being obtained through deeper cuts in nuclear forces and in tactical air forces. With this option the authors would hope to engage the (former) "Soviet establishment" and avoid the type of confrontation that led to the Cold War.

This volume offers a lot of ideas in a brief space. Readers may wish that it had been longer and that the authors had addressed more dimensions of the impact of cutting defense spending: for instance, the implications for the defense industrial base are not addressed, whereas these options will probably require a significant reduction in the number of defense contractors and production facilities. How would that affect the ability of the United States to respond to an increased threat even if the change in the international environment developed over a period of several years?

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Gray, Colin S. *War, Peace, and Victory: Strategy and Statecraft for the Next Century*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990. \$24.95

Colin Gray is a very bright man with a well-deserved reputation as a

strategist. While he invariably offers much for his reader to ponder, this book is exceedingly difficult to read.

The obvious problem is that Gray completed this text late in 1989, when most strategists were cowering in intellectual foxholes as the Cold War world exploded into revolution. While we hid, waiting for the dust to settle, or presented the briefest, most general expressions of advice ("Things sure are in flux, a lot of assumptions will have to be reexamined, and it looks like a whole new ballgame!"), Gray was standing tall, marching forward, and arguing strongly for certain views. Inevitably, some of those views have been overtaken by events; Gray's well-known distrust of arms control programs, the motives of Soviet foreign policy, and of the purportedly "defensive" Soviet military strategy now seems irrelevant. Detailed musings on Nato's Central Front battle, the Maritime Strategy, and World War III's all-out nuclear exchanges look as antiquated as a slide rule.

A deeper source of difficulty is Gray's failure to structure a sustained, coherent argument. What we find is a spectacular collection of insights, observations, and ideas that lack organization. In the ten chapters, one may find that sections of each chapter or even the paragraphs within a section are a collection of as yet unassembled pearls.

Another problem for many readers is Gray's erudition (evident in sixty-five pages of excellent notes). The index for "M" lists Manassas, Manzikert, Marie, Midway, and Mons as