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AMERICA'S NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

by

JAMES J. TRITTEN

MARCH 11, 1991

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AMERICA'S NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

by

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ABSTRACT

Precis of President Bush's new national security strategy first unveiled in Aspen, Colorado on August 2, 1990, involving a mix of active, reserve, and reconstitutable forces, and General Colin Powell's "base" force. Discussion of parallel NATO initiatives. Discussion of major issues resulting from this new proposed strategy and force structure, including: is the new strategy real, defining new goals and objectives in both programming and war planning, the effect of Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, new requirements for intelligence, requirements for decision-making, setting technological requirements, research and development, investment strategy, impact upon DoD organization, and a transition period. Impact upon Naval Submarine Community, force structure, and missions. Concludes that there are four major critical factors upon which the new strategy depends; (1) the behavior of the USSR (2) the behavior of allies and the Congress (3) the ability of the intelligence community to meet new challenges, and (4) the ability of industry to meet new demands.

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President George Bush disclosed the outline of a new American national security strategy in his August 2, 1990 address to the Aspen Institute. The strategic concepts revealed would be **radical** and have direct and sensational impacts on NATO and our other allies. The strategy opens the door to a **complete** reconsideration of America's international role and overall military capability.

Under the new strategy, the United States would maintain much smaller active and reserve forces capable of dealing primarily with global major contingency operations, rather than deploying the types and quantities of forces it has since World War II -- primarily for a Europe-centered global war with the USSR. The U.S. now assumes that there will be sufficient time to reconstitute forces required to fight a major war against the Soviet Union -- specifically there will be **two year's warning for a future Europe-centered global war with the USSR.**

The estimated two-year warning is based upon the assumptions of: withdrawal to their homeland of all Soviet ground and air forces, a CFE-like parity from the Atlantic to the Urals, an inwardly focused Soviet Union, and NATO and member nation's intelligence machinery still functioning.

A recognition by the Congress and the Administration that the level of resources devoted to defense in the last decade cannot be sustained is the major factor underlying this reexamination of America's basic national security strategy. Given two years warning of a Europe-centered global war with the USSR, the U.S. can **generate wholly new forces** - to rebuild or "reconstitute" them if necessary. Current "surplus" forces will be disbanded, **not put into the reserves**, since the risk is deemed acceptable. Deterrence of aggression and coercion against the U.S. and its allies and friends will remain the cornerstone of American defense strategy.

Force levels supporting this new strategy were reported in the August 2, 1990 New York Times. The report, based upon leaks of a classified meeting in the White House and of the Defense Policy Resources Board, stated that the new "bottom line" levels of American forces could be: 12 active, 6 ready reserve, and 2 "cadre" or reconstitutable reserve Army divisions (currently 18 active & 10 reserve), 25 active & reserve tactical Air Force wings (currently 36), 11-12 aircraft carriers (currently 14), and 150,000 Marine Corps personnel (currently 196,000). Subsequent reports in the media and the higher force levels delivered to the Congress by the Administration in February may simply reflect budgetary "going-in" positions. These later reports include additional information: specifically 450 Navy ships (down from 538).

This new force structure was originally termed the "base force," by JCS Chairman, General Colin Powell. The force will be organized, for programming purposes, into four basic military components: Strategic nuclear offensive and defensive; Atlantic; Pacific; and Contingency Response Forces; and four supporting capabilities: Transportation, Space, Reconstitution, and R&D.

The Strategic Force includes offensive forces that will survive START-II, perhaps as low as 3000-4500 warheads for each side. In their February Congressional testimony, DoD Secretary Dick Cheney and General Powell outlined planned reductions and stated the Administration was prepared to: cut strategic bombers from 268 to 181, stop *OHIO* SSBN construction at 18, terminate advanced *Trident II* (D-5) missiles retrofitting on all of those submarines, and that they now consider the MX rail garrison and small ICBM as strictly R&D programs.

With a reduction of the offensive threat to substantially lower numbers, it is not surprising that the Administration has also revisited the question of strategic defenses. Secretary Cheney outlined a reorientation of SDI, in his February 1991 testimony and subsequent written report to Congress, to a system of Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) -- indicating that it would be space, ground, and sea-based. It is likely that strategic defenses will at least continue as an R&D program.

The Atlantic Force would be responsible for Europe, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia. It will include residual forces

remaining in Europe and those forward-deployed to Europe (perhaps 100-125,000). The residual forces retained in Europe would consist of a heavy Army component (perhaps a Corps) with supporting air forces. In his December AFCEA remarks, General Powell stated that forward presence for the Atlantic Force means Marines in the Mediterranean, strong maritime forces, access in the Middle East, interoperability with allies, flexible C³ systems, and military assistance programs.

Atlantic Force forward presence will be backed up by a powerful and rapid reinforcement capability. General Powell stated in his AFCEA address that Atlantic Force reinforcement and sustaining forces would include of a mix of active and reserve heavy Army divisions and tactical fighter aircraft. The Atlantic Force would contain a significant reserve component. The Chairman of the JCS stated that reinforcement also means the ability to project naval power and the Marine Corps across the ocean. In his testimony to Congress in February, General Powell stated that the Atlantic Force amphibious capability should include forced entry operations.

The Pacific Force will include a modest and chiefly maritime residual forward-based and forward-deployed force remaining in Korea, Japan and elsewhere in the theater, and reinforcing forces located in the continental U.S. General Powell has stated that "Compared to the Atlantic Force, the Reserve components maintained for the Pacific Force will be much, much smaller." It

unlikely that a modest-sized Pacific Force would have a dual commitment to the European theater in a revitalized "swing strategy."

Perhaps the most dramatic innovation of the Chairman's recommended force structure is the creation of a CONUS-based Contingency Force -- responsible for Latin America and Africa, not the Middle East or Southwest Asia. This force will be shaped by the need to provide an overseas presence and response to regional contingencies - **not** to return quickly to Europe.

Air Force General Butler, formerly the J-5, provided the following detailed breakdown of the Contingency Force when he spoke in September at the National Press Club. The first stage of a Contingency Force to be used in what he termed a "graduated deterrence response," for program planning purposes, would consist of (in the order stated): (1) Army light & airborne divisions, (2) Marine Corps Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs), (3) Special Operations Forces (SOF), and (4) selected Air Force units. At his AFCEA speech, General Powell placed Air Force and Navy units second, the Marines third, and SOF last. According to General Butler, this initial component of the Contingency Force would be buttressed as necessary by a second tier: carrier and amphibious forces.

The final tier of the Contingency Force appears to be heavier forces with the capability for long-term sustainability. We have seen this application in Operation DESERT SHIELD. Gener-

al Powell added in his December RUSI and AFCEA speeches that the Contingency Force would have a very small Reserve component. He stated at AFCEA that the Contingency Force ". . . would draw as necessary from other larger Forces if it needed additional staying power and sustaining power." There seems to be some disagreement with the Army over this issue.

Ground units would fly to a future crisis, much as forces assigned to Operation DESERT SHIELD did. Sealift capability disclosed during this crisis will be studied and may result in new requirements and supplemental assets tailored for contingency response rather than the orthodox North Atlantic and NATO scenarios. The U.S. already has many such assets but may learn from recent experience that modest increments of additional sealift or prepositioned equipment are required. U.S. forces for crisis response appear to emphasize versatility, lethality, global deployability, and rapid responsiveness.

According to General Powell, transportation is one of the four major supporting components to the new strategy. The U.S. will certainly have to set aside sufficient lift to support immediate contingency operations by either the Atlantic or the Contingency Forces. DoD lift requirement will probably include the capability to handle concurrent operations but it is unlikely that funding will be provided by Congress for simultaneous crises given the years of deficiencies in funding lift for a 1½ war

strategy. Lift requirements for the Pacific Force are less clear.

Air and sealift for a major NATO war in Europe would be put into the type of forces that could be reconstituted during the two years that future program planning now assumes is available. Reconstitution of lift should include: that provided by allies, charters from foreign non-aligned sources, and the activation of stored assets.

According to Secretary Cheney's February Congressional testimony, the U.S. will also formulate a peacetime strategy to deter low intensity conflict. Such efforts can be accomplished primarily by security assistance programs as well as other instruments of U.S. national power. In his February testimony to Congress, General Powell defined these other instruments of U.S. national power: stationed forces, rotational deployments, access and storage agreements, combined exercises, security and humanitarian assistance, port visits and military-to-military relations.

From this cursory initial look at the Chairman's base force based and the strategic assumptions apparently approved by the President, it appears that the U.S. Navy will change the least, although it is very likely that some programs for new weapons systems are in jeopardy.

U.S. forces in Europe, and elsewhere, cannot be changed without considering commitments made to allies. While the United States is considering major changes in strategy and forces, so is NATO. The July 1990 NATO London Declaration stated that "NATO will rely more heavily on the ability to build up larger forces if and when they might be needed." The declaration stated that the Alliance too was preparing a new "military strategy moving away from 'forward defense'. . . towards a reduced forward presence. . ." It also stated that "NATO will field smaller and restructured active forces" and "will scale back the readiness of active units, reducing training requirements and the number of exercises."

General John R. Galvin, U.S. Army, NATO's SACEUR, recently told the DPC that he envisages a change in his primary combat mission from flexible response and forward defense (MC 14/3) to crisis response. The centerpiece of this capability would be a standing Rapid Reaction Corps centered about a multinational corps and the existing ACE Mobile Forces. Should these permanent forces not be able to support political decision making, then supplemental forces will be mobilized or "reconstituted." Under the new NATO strategy, the initial reaction to a crisis in the former German Democratic Republic might be to deploy NATO troops into the area formerly protected by the Warsaw Pact, yet avoid contact with remaining Soviet troops. The political goal of a prospective crisis appears to be - control and deescalate.

Many nations are undertaking unilateral force reductions prior to NATO reaching an alliance-wide agreement on force structure. Germany is reducing its forces to 370,000 personnel with about half of that to be placed in the reserves. France is withdrawing all its officers and men from Germany. The U.K. announced a plan to reduce the British Army on the Rhine by about 50%. According to General Galvin, SACEUR's realistic residual U.S. force for Europe apparently are one corps, several Air Force wings, and the Sixth Fleet.

The issues raised in the President's Aspen speech are numerous, complex, and require discussion. Some of the more important include: how likely is the new strategy to take hold; what is the lasting impact of Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM; what are the new requirements for personnel and organizations, programming and war planning, the intelligence community, decision-making, investment strategy and technology, and the transition period?

The new strategic concepts unveiled by President Bush's speech are a vision to be debated -- not an announcement of firm new governmental policy. Under the American form of government, the pronouncement of a policy by the Administration is not an declaration of government policy. Before any new initiative becomes a funded government policy, vested domestic interests and America's allies will have opportunities to make their desires known.

After reading DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM after action reports, analysts will try to answer the question what systems appeared to make a difference in the political and military outcome. Effective use of the *PATRIOT* anti-missile system is one that has already suggested to many the value of ABM systems for CONUS. Systems that did not make a major contribution to Operation DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM will need to be reevaluated for upgrading or cancellation and replacement. Under the new strategy to reconstitute capabilities useful in a Europe-centered global war with the USSR, there will be no need to retain systems that do not have a dual use in the Contingency Force.

A review of Service roles and missions will occur, no matter how painful, implicitly with budget decisions or explicitly if we dare. Do we need warfighting C-in-Cs for the entire world if the U.S. stops playing world policeman? Do we need the current number and geographical disposition for C-in-Cs? If the Operation DESERT STORM Air Campaign is not decisive, should we revisit the decision to have a separate Air Force? Does the U.S. need a separate Marine Corps or do we instead field a contingency response force made up of multiple services operating under joint military strategies? Should new services be created - such as strategic nuclear, space, or SOFs? Should SACEUR automatically be an American or the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Forces, Atlantic (USCINCLANT) automatically be a naval officer? These questions will all be debated.

Unquestionably, there will be a fundamental restructuring of the near-term programming already contracted, and there may be extraordinarily high penalties paid as industries move from the defense area to others. Programs such as the B-2, A-12, and other advanced technology aircraft, and programs tied to NATO's FOFA concept would appear related to an international security environment that no longer exists. There will be last-ditch attempts to salvage certain programs, to keep people employed, and legislative districts satisfied, and this will be a great challenge to the new Congress -- which should play its larger role instead of narrow constituent interests.

Some programming planning appears to have gone along, during 1990, without any clear recognition that the world has changed. There are signs that at least some parts of the Navy have recognized the changes and are worried about the implications for programming. SECNAV told Congress in February that we will reexamine the top priority emphasis formerly placed upon ASW to counter Soviet submarines. The U.S. Navy will face an extremely difficult task over retaining the SSN-21 *SEAWOLF* program in the new international security environment. Since it currently is the **only** submarine shipbuilding program (*OHIO* class ballistic missile submarines are considered national systems and exist quite apart from attack submarines), attempts to cut the SSN-21 will be interpreted as an attempt to cut the submarine force. It also seems obvious that diesel-electric submarine shipbuilding in the U.S. will once again rear its head.

A central implication of the two-year war warning of a Europe-centered global war with the USSR is that American programming strategy will shift its attention to the dangers presented in other areas of the world. Until now, the unstated relationship of the threat to programmed forces was, generally, that U.S. forces would meet the challenge of the most demanding peril, the USSR, and assume that they could also cope with lesser contingencies. That basic assumption was generally not entirely true and now will be essentially reversed: forces will be acquired to meet the challenges of the more likely, less demanding, threats assuming that they are useful against the more unlikely but greater threat posed by a Soviet Union that decides to rearm.

For the submarine community, this means that the goal of 100 SSNs, previously justified assuming a European-centered global war with the USSR, must find new rationalization. From the programming documents released in early March, it seems that we are headed toward an overall force structure and OPTEMPO that will support the ability of the U.S military to respond to 1 or 1½ contingencies with active-duty forces. The CNO told Congress in February that with a 450-ship Navy and a 30% deployment rate, we could sustain 14 SSNs on forward deployment and could respond to any crisis with 2 CVBGs and a MEB. It would take a 40% deployment rate to be able to respond to regional conflict with 3 CVBGs and a full MEF but rates in excess of this to have a carrier available for simultaneous response in another theater. Certainly there will be those that question whether we need 14

SSNs at sea in our new crisis response-heavy strategy if we are only going to have the capability to respond with two CVBGs and a MEB?

New justification for the submarine force might include substituting for carriers called away for crisis response and direct integrated response in crisis areas performing: surveillance, power projection, delivery of special forces, combat SAR, evacuation of nationals or hostages, blockade interdiction of surface traffic, etc. Rationalization for SSNs also involves GPALS since submarines are a high leverage platforms that can carry ICBM/SLBM interceptors which can catch missiles in the boost phase of flight. Perhaps we should consider ready reserve submarines. Using these and other more traditional missions, the submarine force can justify some total number of hulls that it needs before it proceeds to the specific types to be built. The CNOs 30% deployment rate means that he used around 50 available submarines in order to achieve 14 subs routinely on deployment.

As for the type of submarines we will build in the future, the CNO told Congress that he has ordered studies to explore a new, lower cost option for a successor to the *SEAWOLF*. Since it would likely take 10-15 years to launch the first "SSN-X," we may see a maximum of some dozen or so SSN-21s built before a newer and less-capable class would be available.

Four main problem areas threaten success for the President's dream. The first is that everything depends upon the responsible

and good behavior of the Soviet Union. It may not be desirable to have your fundamental national security strategy so dependent upon the behavior of the once "evil empire" but, for any of this to work, the Soviets must return to their homeland, remain inwardly focused, and continue the serious reductions in military capability they have started.

The second critical area demands that the intelligence community must be able to surmount the new challenges. If funding for intelligence follows defense downward, then the reconstitution portion of the new strategy is bankrupt. The intelligence community should move into spheres they have traditionally underemphasized, such as the Third World and economics. They will also have significantly increased burdens demanded by the monitoring and verification of compliance of arms control agreements. All of this is possible if decision-makers recognize this crucial underpinning of the new strategy and are prepared to make courageous decisions early.

The international behavior of allies and the U.S. Congress is the third area that can undermine a successful transition to this new world. None of this is going to happen without Congress onboard. Secretary Cheney's efforts to articulate the new strategy are designed to ensure that the Department of Defense is ahead of Congress and that the new policies are adopted.

A fourth critical success factor is the ability of private

industry to deliver. What is envisaged is **not** the same as industrial mobilization. We need to both save our defense industrial base under **very** new conditions, **and** simultaneously reduce defense spending. How can we do this when the Administration is not willing to address the need for a national industrial policy?

The President's new strategy is a **programming** concept that supports the continued reliance on deterrence of war as the cornerstone of American security. There are those who doubted that the U.S. would ever actually use centrally-based nuclear weapons for the defense of Europe -- perhaps a President would have never decided to actually do that. Deterrence strategies are influenced **greatly** by perceptions; under the new strategy, it will be important to maintain the perception of our ability to reconstitute. Just as in the past, programs, deployments, exercises, and literature evidence will need to be provided to support deterrence.

Major changes to the international environment have led planners to a uncustomary turnabout in the manner of addressing problems and issues. The first order questions, such as "what is America's role in the world, or the business and purpose of the DoD," now demand answers prior to consideration of second order programming or efficiency issues, that have dominated the traditional defense debate.

Much legislation will be required as a result of the changes in the international system -- this exercise is not going to

occur only in the Executive Branch of government. The two government branches can cooperate or they can assume an adversarial relationship. Congress will cut forces and programs -- with or without a carefully thought out plan. The Administration must present all possible options for cuts to the legislature -- even those that wrench the very souls of the leaders of a particular combat arms or military service. They appear to be prepared to meet this challenge.

Should the military Services refuse to present realistic plans for reductions to the DoD, or play end-around games with Congress, the cuts will be made anyway. The Services could find themselves playing catch-up, and redrafting strategies from whatever forces the resulting legislation permits. The looming debate should be about goals and objectives, realizing that they do not have to be what they were in the past. If we are realistic about these goals and objectives, there is every likelihood that we can reach a consensus on force requirements. If we engage in debate over force structure, instead, we will perhaps stumble into a strategy that will not serve the national interests in the 21st Century.

Notes

(1) The views expressed by the author are his alone and do not necessarily represent the position of the U.S. government, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Navy. For a full treatment of this issue, see the author's "America Promises to Come Back: A New National Strategy," Naval Postgraduate School Technical Report NPS-NS-91-003, December 1990 - updated February 17, 1991, 104 pp.

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