The Post–Cold War Force-Sizing Debate

Paradigms, Metaphors, and Disconnects

James A. Winnefeld

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PREFACE

RAND is examining new security concepts as part of a research project for the Strategy Division of the Joint Staff (J-5). This examination is taking place against the backdrop of a vigorous force-sizing debate between the Department of Defense and the Congress in the aftermath of the Cold War. The changed security environment and pressing domestic concerns are combining to subject the U.S. force structure to new scrutiny. Outside of the Department of Defense, there has been less emphasis on the strategy antecedents of any new force posture. This report presents supporting analysis and commentary for use by the participants in the dialog on strategy and force sizing. Its purpose is to critique the various schools of thought on appropriate strategies and forces and to present some different perspectives for identifying the relevant issues and the needed analysis.

In format the report is a series of four strategy and force-structure essays that form a commentary on the debate that took shape between Chairman Les Aspin of the House Armed Services Committee and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney as they presented position papers, posture statements, and various forms of related analysis in pubic forums during the period January through June 1992. While the positions of each have been adjusted in the succeeding months to reflect changed circumstances and new analysis, the fundamentals remain unchanged: Congress believes fewer forces are justified, and the Bush administration has said, in effect, "Not so fast."

The essays, set out in the first four sections of the report, can be read as stand-alone pieces. But they are related in their common focus on the importance of objectives and strategy as a basis for force rationale, what history has to tell us about force-sizing assumptions, and the need to challenge the conventional wisdom in such matters—particularly during a period of change and major uncertainty about the future.

Since the body of the report is made up of "essays" it is, by the dictionary definition, an interpretive and personal work. It does not purport to be finished analysis. Rather, it is intended to challenge the easy assumption, the facile generality, and the assertion that something is old (and therefore good) or new (and therefore better). These challenges should extend to the report now before the reader.

This report was developed for the Joint Staff (J-5) under the auspices of RAND's International Security and Defense Strategy Program. This program is part of RAND's National Defense Research Institute (NDRI), a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff.

SUMMARY

This report contains four "essays" on strategy and force structure. While related and presented in what appears to be a natural sequence, each essay can be read as a freestanding commentary on the post–Cold War force-sizing debate between the Bush administration and the Congress. The purpose of the report is to outline the debate, offer different perspectives for restructuring it, and set out recommendations for defining force requirements.

CERTITUDE VS. UNCERTAINTY: FORCE-SIZING PARADIGMS

The Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Les Aspin, and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney have presented two very different force-sizing paradigms. Aspin argues that the central model for force planning must be threat based. In simplified form he argues for using Iraq as a model for scaling future threats and Desert Storm as a basis for scaling future responses. Cheney believes that the central fact of developing force needs is the uncertainty of the near and midterm future. He and General Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, argue for a capabilities-based force posture, a posture that is flexible enough to deal with a wide range of poorly understood threats.

Aspin's model, while strong in structure, logic (within its assumptions), and relationship with measurable force-application phenomena, is deficient in that it is reactive (to threats) and divorced from context outside the narrowly defined scenarios he uses. It appeals to those who like a quantifiable rationale based on (recently) observed force application. It does not satisfy those who see a role for force beyond contingency response in selected scenarios.

The Cheney model provides a much broader context and rationale for the need for forces, but leaves out (even when extended to include Chairman Powell's January 1992 posture statement and the unclassified version of the National Military Strategy) important rationale as to how the size and makeup of the forces flow from objectives and missions. Cheney emphasizes the front-end context setting, while Aspin concentrates on one set of quantifiable details.

The author suggests that there is a basis for synthesis in the form of an objectives-based force model that uses both threat and needed ca-

pabilities (to hedge against uncertainty) to develop forces keyed to national goals and the missions given the theater commanders. He suggests that Aspin's model may or may not be correct, but its main deficiency is that it focuses on only one dimension of the force-sizing problem.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH? FORCE SIZING DILEMMAS AND GUIDELINES

The second essay examines the current debate between those who would effect a major reduction in forces because the new threat scenarios purportedly require less, and those who believe that force reductions, while justified, must be slower and more measured given the lingering uncertainties in the international environment. Chairman Aspin, for example, is suggesting large reductions below the Secretary Cheney–backed program in the form of the "base force."

The simple and politically attractive Aspin argument extrapolates the past and the present into the future under specific (and, to his credit, explicit and challengeable) assumptions. Cheney is skeptical of predictions and our ability to control events, insisting on a greater degree of hedging than Aspin believes necessary. To carry these positions a step farther with a metaphor: Cheney believes that force reductions greater than he has proposed pose the danger that the United States will overdrive its security headlights (the author's metaphor). That is, as we travel an unfamiliar road, we may be unable to brake to a stop within the distance illuminated by our headlights. Aspin says that the new world provides ample illumination and certainty, if we are careful. And besides, our brakes are in good shape—even if we pare the linings a bit.

Parsing the Reductionist Argument into Its Constituent Elements

Reduced to its fundamentals, the reductionists' argument could be stated in terms of the following five assertions or assumptions:

- The old security scenarios are no longer credible.
- Much of the DoD argument supporting its base force rests on the need to posture for two "major regional contingencies" at the same time. The nature of the more likely contingencies and their pairing has changed in the post–Cold War world.
- As the threat scenarios have changed, so must U.S. force requirement calculations.

- There is a demonstrable and valid link between force needs and performance in past wars and future conflicts.
- There will be time to respond to revolutionary changes in the global security environment if current force calculations turn out to be wrong.

Out with the Old, In with the ?????

The first of the five assertions or assumptions largely does away with the old Soviet (current Russian) threat. DoD is more cautious. While recognizing that the threat has changed, it still sees Eastern Europe and the former Soviet borderlands facing the Middle East and south central Asia as dangerous and potentially unstable areas that could place unforeseen demands on the U.S. military. Nevertheless, the need for fewer U.S. forces in such places as Western Europe is agreed. The argument is about what remaining forces are needed and how big they should be.

Old Scenarios No Longer Credible

Most of today's national security scenarios fall into two classes:

- Variations of past scenarios.
- Discontinuous scenarios (no plausible path from current events to future hypothetical possibilities).

Most DoD and congressionally sponsored force analysis focuses on the first category. The second category is quickly dismissed as implausible, not advanced publicly because of diplomatic sensitivities, or widely perceived to be the realm of cranks and special-interest pleaders. Running counter to this common dismissal of the "implausible," Cheney is trying to introduce uncertainty as a major force-planning factor—and give the implausible the respectability that historical experience would suggest it deserves. It is the implausible, unplanned, and inadequately responded to that has been the focal point of U.S. wars in this century.

Dual Scenarios Unlikely?

The author examines the history of conflict and U.S. contingency responses since World War II and suggests that dual contingencies (when one includes important deterrence calculations) are not as rare as is often supposed. Moreover, he believes that the end of the Cold

War and the weakening of the international discipline formerly imposed by superpower bipolarity will increase the likelihood of dual contingencies.

If We Are Wrong, Can We Rebuild Our Forces in Time?

The author analyzes the five major U.S. wars of this century and arrives at the conclusion that the United States has indeed overdriven its headlights in all but the last (Desert Storm). Depending on how readiness was measured, the amount of overdriving was from 10 to 24 months for World Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam. In Korea the United States was driving with its headlights off. For Desert Storm the United States was driving within the scope of its headlights by a period of three months. But we need to bear in mind that this factor would have been cut to near zero or less if Saddam Hussein had continued into Saudi Arabia from Kuwait in August 1990.

SQUARING THE CIRCLE

The third essay examines three important deficiencies in the current force-sizing debate between Congress and the Bush administration.

- A focus on contingency response and a neglect of the role of military force in shaping the future and in deterrence.
- A preoccupation with clearly visible "credible" scenarios and a neglect of less-plausible scenarios.
- Failure to consider adequately the effect of force reductions on the organizational and unit-effectiveness aspects of warfighting.

The author defines three major linked roles for military forces: to shape the future environment, to deter threats that emerge, and to respond to threats that are not deterred. The heavy emphasis on the last role in the current debate masks important strategic issues and distorts U.S. force requirements. The reductionist side in the current debate assumes that forces sufficient for contingency response are also sufficient for environment shaping and deterrence. That assumption needs to be tested with more systematic analysis.

A preoccupation with contingency response and the associated force requirements leads to a demand for scenarios. These scenarios must be "plausible" to be legitimate. Unfortunately, in what the author describes as the "tyranny of scenario plausibility," this mindset overlooks the less likely but nonetheless important scenario. It is the unlikely scenario as much as the intelligence surprise that has caused

major problems in preparedness and response in the contingencies experienced since World War II.

The final deficiency is the preoccupation with programmatic end items (e.g., divisions, program accountable aircraft (PAA), numbers of ships) at the expense of considering how alternative force levels affect the way the military fights. The assumption of the reductionists is that as total forces decline in size, the military will adjust efficiently in organizational and combined-arms terms to maximize operational capabilities. This assumption also needs to be tested with more systematic analysis, since there is historical evidence that unit size for combined-arms effectiveness has not varied much over time.

In the second half of the essay the author uses an *illustrative* broad-brush requirements analysis to demonstrate how the discrete requirements for environment shaping, deterring, and responding fit together to define total force needs. He concludes that while the end of the Cold War has downgraded the importance of the deterrence role, preoccupation with the contingency-response role has largely frozen out consideration of the military's vital role in helping to shape the future security environment. The rationale for forces in each of the three roles needs to be clearly understood if total force requirements are to reflect the sum of security needs associated with national objectives. Moreover, assessments of force adequacy should not rest solely on force performance in the more plausible scenarios. Such a test limits the acquisition of future forces to those suitable more for current than for possible future contingencies.

STRATEGY AS THE DRIVER OF FORCES: THE NEGLECTED ELEMENT

The final essay examines the role of national military objectives and strategy in the current force-sizing debate. The author posits three different future worlds: a more benign world, an extrapolation of the current world, and a more malign world. These worlds then become either objectives to be achieved or disasters to be avoided or prepared for. These alternative world states, and our perspectives of their desirability and attainability, become the focus for strategy development.

The author then proceeds to define four sets of military objectives and associated strategies:

- Regional defense (the current DoD strategy)
- Cooperative security (described by Kaufmann and Steinbruner)

- Low risk (an extrapolation of most Cold War objectives and the associated strategy)
- Single major regional contingency (the objectives and strategy implicit in Chairman Aspin's recommended force).

These objectives and strategies are different in many important respects, such as the mission of U.S. forces, the need for forward deployments, the degree of reliance on international security mechanisms, and the nature of likely future threats. The strategies are contrasted in Table S.1. Not surprisingly, different objectives and strategies define different force requirements. The author provides illustrative force sets matched to the strategies, based on analyses done by RAND and others.

SUMMING UP

In surveying the message of the four essays, the author offers the following recommendations to DoD:

- Return the force-sizing debate to objectives and strategy, and then deal with force issues. The *real* issues lie in strategy. If strategy is agreed upon, the argument turns on force-sizing models in which explicit assumptions can be assessed and validated or rejected.
- Think of force missions in three interlocking layers (shaping, deterring, responding), each with its own force requirements. The requirements of each are not necessarily included in the others.

Table S.1

A Summary Comparison of Strategies

Dimension	Regional Defense	Cooperative Security	Low Risk	Single Major Contingency
Emphasis on shaping	High	High	Medium	Low
Emphasis on deterrence	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Emphasis on contingency response	High	Low	High	High
Emphasis on international effort	Medium	High	Low	Medium
Reliance on prompt massive response	High	Low	High	Medium
Reliance on visible threats	Medium	Low	Low	High
Degree of hedging against uncertainty	Medium	Low	High	Low

- Don't bet on the "plausible" scenario. The implausible war is the war we usually fight. Because such wars are implausible before the fact, we have (with one exception) been unprepared in this century.
- Don't use *today's* threats to posture *future* forces, when those future forces will have up to 30 years of service life. Different time frames yield different scenarios (with differing degrees of visibility), which yield different force requirements.
- Once the strategy issue has been joined between DoD and its critics, consider the Aspin model of force sizing on its merits. Alternative force-sizing paradigms should be developed and articulated in terms that political leaders can grasp. It is not enough to say that the Iraq-threat/Desert Storm response is flawed as a basis for force sizing; an explicit, tightly reasoned alternative model is needed.

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This report is the better for the criticism and commentary provided by Carl Builder, Kevin Lewis, David Shlapak, Richard Kugler, and Rodney McDaniel. None agree with all the arguments made or the style of presentation, but all concur with the importance of the topic and the need for a broader perspective in the examination of force-structure issues. In addition, the author benefited from an analysis by Michael Rich of the issues raised by Congressman Les Aspin in his force-structure analysis papers used to assist in the House markup of the 1993 DoD budget.

The author also acknowledges his debt to the authors of the various papers developed by the House Armed Services Committee Staff under the guidance of Congressman Aspin and to the authors of the various "posture statements" and strategy documents prepared for Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney and General Colin Powell. These authors have served their country well by setting out their respective positions with clarity and candor. Colonel Dail Turner, USAF, head of the Strategy Division in the Joint Staff, and Joel Resnick of the House Armed Services Committee Staff deserve special mention for their readiness to debate the relevant issues. Their honest and open-minded approach to the issues could serve as models for all who are engaged in analyzing strategy and force structure.

This report is dedicated to Joan Allen, who prepared all the drafts and who retired in the summer of 1992 after 22 years of service with RAND in Washington, Santa Monica, and Saigon.

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1. CERTITUDE VS. UNCERTAINTY

THE ISSUE JOINED

Within the space of one week in late January 1992, the central force-planning methodological issue for the early post–Cold War era was posed by the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and the Secretary of Defense. In a speech before the Association of the United States Army, Chairman Les Aspin argued that the central model for force planning must be threat based, and that since the threat had declined, "a fundamental re-examination of our force requirements" is needed that "must be from the ground up."[1] Aspin went on to specify possible threats in terms of "Iraq equivalents" and U.S. force requirements in "Desert Storm equivalents." Although he stated that he was only demonstrating an approach to force planning, not specifying force needs, it was clear that his methodology and its underlying assumptions would lead to a much smaller (and possibly differently balanced) U.S. force structure.[2]

A week later, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney took a different view. He stated that the central model for force planning must be based on the fact that we cannot predict the future with certainty. The future environment is defined more by the unknown and the uncertain than by specific threats.[3] Cheney's statement, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell's that followed, set out a force-planning model based on needed capabilities. In their view, overspecifying threats based on today's international environment assumes a stasis and predictability not borne out by history. Whereas Aspin specifies illustrative threats and the needed forces with some precision, Cheney and Powell are keenly aware of the probability (based on historical analysis) of the unexpected and the limits of a scenario-based analysis of force requirements. Hence they speak of capabilities tailored to a wide range of threats and circumstances.

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[1]See House Armed Services Committee (1992).

[2]In the weeks following his AUSA speech, Aspin developed four contingency-based force postures for presentation to the House Budget Committee. The focus in this essay is less on the content of the Aspin and Cheney force level proposals than on the methodology used to derive them.

[3]Cheney refers to "uncertainty." The draft 1992 Joint Military Net Assessment refers to the "unknown and the uncertain."

To summarize the two positions, Aspin uses a threat model and Cheney uses a capability model. Curiously, Aspin employs a version of the traditional force-planning approach; what is different is that he has replaced the old threats with new (more precisely, currently visible) ones. Cheney strikes out into new—and unknown—territory. He believes that uncertainty characterizes a period of fundamental change and that needed capabilities to confront as-yet unclear threats should drive force planning. He is clearly skeptical of force requirements based largely on Desert Storm experience. The preference of each protagonist for his own model has some relationship to a desire to either further reduce the military structure in light of the perceived reduced threat on the one hand, or protect difficult-to-replace capabilities in an uncertain world on the other. The intent of this essay is to explore the strengths and weaknesses in these different paradigms, to set the stage for the essays to follow.

THE ASPIN THESIS

Aspin's thesis is clearly based on his own systems analysis background and his degree of comfort in dealing with the empirically measurable: If 1990 Iraq defines the envelope of future threats and if Desert Storm defines the adequacy of future U.S. response, then a relationship between threats and requirements has been established. Initially, he disclaimed any attempt to suggest force levels and said that he was providing "a rough draft on a methodology" and starting an "informed debate on how to decide the size of our future forces."[4]

His methodology starts by cataloging the "Situations for Which Americans Might Want Military Forces." These situations range from major threats from regional aggressors (Middle East/Southwest Asia, North Korea, elsewhere) to combating nuclear proliferation and keeping the peace. The regional threats are the most stressing, and he nominates an "Iraq or Iran equivalent as a benchmark or unit of account of future threats." He proceeds to tote up scores in land, sea, and air dimensions for each of the regional-threat powers. In his discussion of threats he does not deal with the quality of leadership of a future Iraq-like adversary (e.g., will they be more astute than Saddam Hussein?) or to any significant degree with their possible nuclear capabilities.

The middle third of his methodology addresses measuring U.S. capabilities. He uses three building blocks: a Desert Storm equivalent, a

[4]Aspin (1992a), p. 4.

Panama equivalent, and a Provide Comfort equivalent.[5] Most of the analysis is on the largest equivalent: Desert Storm. In the first block, he doesn't take Desert Storm forces deployed/employed as a "given." He adds forces that were needed and not sufficiently available (e.g., mine countermeasures) and subtracts forces that were not needed (e.g., some air forces and carrier battle groups). He does not limit his adjusted Desert Storm force to only those forces that had a major combat role: for example, he includes embarked Marines and some light forces that were needed initially and served in specialized roles during the four-day ground campaign.

The final third of his methodology walks through an application of the equivalent forces to the equivalent threats. He acknowledges some of the limitations of the application—every military operation is unique, instead of fighting we may choose to sit and wait, the possibility of multiple contingencies, etc. He is satisfied that his building-block approach provides the necessary tools to define sufficiency, but acknowledges that

> the threat yardstick and the building blocks do not alone yield a force structure. The next step is to identify the situations that may require the use of force, and to see how much of the building blocks might be required to deal with the situations.[6]

Aspin took this step about four weeks later. In late February the press, citing a leaked Department of Defense (DoD) planning document, reported seven force-planning scenarios used by the Pentagon as a basis for force planning.[7] Using the leaked scenarios as justification, Aspin then presented four financing and force structure options to the House Budget Committee.[8] These options were based on his building-block methodology and focused on the need to undertake a Persian Gulf War equivalent and an air power defense of South Korea. European or CIS contingencies were not addressed. The House Democratic leadership adopted an Aspin option that would reduce the defense budget by $114 billion over the next five years.[9]

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[5]Operation Provide Comfort was a U.S. relief effort to provide humanitarian aid to the Kurdish population of northern Iraq following Operation Desert Storm in 1991. This relief operation was conducted under UN auspices by a U.S. Joint Task Force and allied forces in Turkey.

[6]Aspin (1992a), p. 18.

[7]Gellman (1992), p. 1.

[8]Tyler (1992), p. 1.

[9]Pine (1992), p. 4. The $114 billion reduction compares with the $50 billion reduction proposed by the Bush administration.

The Main Assumptions and Logic Train of the Aspin Methodology

Aspin assumes that current threats are representative of future threats. His arguments are necessarily couched in terms of current capabilities. The CIS states are rarely mentioned, except in his opening arguments as to how the threat has changed. He conducts a limited contingency performance analysis, not a deterrence or regional security analysis. He does not address the effect that the mass of U.S. forces (some of which did not see much if any combat, or were unnecessary in his judgment) had on forcing the Iraqi capitulation. His central principle is economy of force. He acknowledges that any force-structure requirements that result from his style of analysis must be realized with great care (i.e., avoid morale-busting rapid force drawdowns and realignments).

Strengths and Limitations of the Aspin Methodology

Strengths. The principal advantages of the methodology are its specificity and its relationship with measurable experience. It is well structured and clearly written. Most of its limitations are acknowledged in one form or another. Within its explicit and implicit assumptions, it has a pleasing logic. While at first glance it seems mechanistic and analytically complete, it acknowledges where (within its assumption space) more work is needed.

The logic follows a military planning paradigm (except in one fundamental particular—the centrality of the objective and the mission) up to a point. Much historic military analysis has been based on threats (e.g., the "two and a half war" and "one and a half war" methods of force planning). Indeed, Aspin may have learned too well the lesson of Pentagon threat-based analysis used during the Cold War. He is using a truncated version of the old force-planning paradigm, while his Pentagon critics have chosen to develop a new one.

A major benefit of Aspin's approach is that it will force others who differ with him to be specific: defining different assumptions, different parameters, different values. He has, indeed, performed a major service in opening up a dialogue and providing some of the currency needed to join it.

Limitations. Perhaps the most fundamental flaw of the method is that it is backward looking rather than forward looking. It looks to *recent* experience as a benchmark for planning *future* forces. The enemies are yesterday's and today's enemies, not necessarily tomorrow's. While it makes a bow to the "all wars are unique" dictum, it

then proceeds to apply the methodology with adjustments around the edges to fit differences between the Iraq/Desert Storm experience and the contingency being examined. At times the analysis (admittedly cursory) smacks of the "subtraction" syndrome Aspin attributes to the Pentagon—albeit from a different base.[10] It assumes a predictability about future opponents and their capabilities that his critics will quickly point out.

As indicated earlier, Aspin's methodology (at least in the form he demonstrated it) leaves scant room for U.S. objectives in the context of a range of future threats. He does say the next step involves the identification of situations that may require the use of force. Presumably, that is where objectives would come into play in his scheme. The point is that the objectives may be different from those in Desert Storm—more or less ambitious or compelling.

His focus is on contingency performance, with the implicit assumption that such performance is sufficient for deterrence and for assuring regional stability. In effect, Aspin is saying that not only has the threat changed fundamentally, but the logic of international relations—the role of allies, and the role of U.S. forward-based forces in achieving alliance cohesion, regional stability, and a balance of power—has changed with it. If this is a correct portrayal of his thesis and if he is correct, the methodology is deficient in not making it explicit. The issue is: Do U.S. forces have a role that goes beyond responding to specified "threats," and if they do, do they require force capabilities that go beyond some yardstick of equivalents?

A Capsule Counterargument

The real world defies prediction. One buys insurance policies, drives defensively, hedges in the stock market, gets inoculated against disease, and listens to advice because the future is simply not known. Aspin states that those who plan on uncertainty are saying, in effect, "If you don't have perfect vision, you should wear a blindfold instead of glasses." A response might be, "The issue is not glasses or blindfolds, it is the safety of our country in an uncertain world, where historically we have guessed wrong in military matters more than we have guessed right." Any certainty we claim as to the shape of the future needs to be tempered by the knowledge that so far we haven't

[10]Aspin accuses DoD planners of arriving at the base force by subtracting force numbers from the Future Year Defense Plan (FYDP) rather than by defining the post–Cold War force with a bottom-up analysis.

done that very well—all too common is the clear before-the-fact view that later proved false.

This is not to say we go out and buy blindfolds. Rather, it says we buy insurance—health, accident, property, and life. Ah, but how much insurance is enough? The answer is: What we can afford, balanced against the risk we are willing to accept. But insurance isn't the only answer; we need funds (e.g., fungible capabilities) to guard against those vicissitudes that our insurance policies don't cover.

But there is a more fundamental level of criticism that could be leveled at the Aspin thesis. It is in many respects a "bean count," a force-sizing technique criticized in an earlier, more focused congressional study of force level requirements.[11] Aspin does not look into the scenarios that he uses as building blocks, and he is content with a scaling methodology that rests critically on the future validity of the Desert Storm experience.[12]

THE CHENEY THESIS

This portrayal of the "Cheney thesis" goes beyond his congressional testimony and includes public statements by General Colin Powell and the nation's national security and national military strategies. Cheney's "posture statements" before congressional budget and authorization committees do more than provide force structure rationale; they include a review in some detail of the changes in the international security environment that drive the U.S. force posture. Whereas Aspin emphasizes building-block scenarios and responses, Cheney (and Powell) emphasize that the Cold War force-planning paradigms are indeed gone, but have been replaced by major uncertainties. Cheney argues for prudence and a recognition that we don't know what lies ahead. Despite his uncertainty, he believes that we can reduce forces to the base force level until the future becomes

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[11]Levin (1988). This NATO force requirements study had flaws of its own, but it focused on the dynamics of warning and response and dealt explicitly with scenario uncertainties and their effects on force requirements. The Aspin methodology would benefit from Senator Levin's more rigorous and comprehensive approach to the dynamic dimension. As the title of Levin's study—*Beyond the Bean Count: Realistically Assessing the Conventional Military Balance in Europe*—suggests, he was skeptical of the usual approach of toting up forces to arrive at a balance. Aspin's thesis hinges critically on the validity of the Desert Storm experience and on the unproven utility of modern air power as the decisive arm in a future Korean conflict.

[12]A literature is developing on the limited utility of the Persian Gulf War experience. For example, see Blackwell, Mazart, and Snyder (1991), pp. 1–4; Department of Defense (1991), pp. I-3, I-4; and Department of the Navy (1991), pp. 51–53.

somewhat clearer. Whereas Aspin presents a proposed structuring methodology and applies it illustratively, Cheney outlines the uncertainties—particularly insofar as they apply to the former USSR—and emphasizes the environment-shaping and deterrence ("preserving our hard-won strategic depth") functions of military forces.

Besides uncertainty about the future, Cheney emphasizes our interaction with our allies ("The Silent Victory"). Thus, he paints a much richer context than Aspin does. But he is much less specific than Aspin on how the programmed base force was derived: One war or two? What are the planning scenarios? What methods were used to link scenarios to force requirements? These questions were addressed by DoD during the strategic planning and Planning, Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS) cycles, but they are not explicated in Cheney's or Powell's statements.

Main Arguments and Logic Train

The keys to the Cheney argument are the central role of uncertainty in planning (and implicitly the penalty for guessing wrong) and the need to shape, not just respond to, future environments. Cheney's first posture statement was delivered a week after Aspin's breakfast address to the Association of the United States Army. The content of the posture statement responds in part to what the Secretary sees as weaknesses in the Aspin thesis: it is too certain of the future, it is reactive, it neglects the roles of our allies and deterrence, and it puts Europe largely outside the force-structure equation. He implies that set-piece contingency building blocks, while useful devices up to a point in sizing forces, miss the crux of the force-sizing issue across the span of force needs, from shaping the future security environment, to deterrence, to crisis response (the domain of the Aspen thesis), to reconstitution.

Cheney argues that the base force is premised on the favorable developments of 1990 and 1991. It is not a baseline for further reductions based on those developments.

Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of the Cheney thesis are its completeness in defining the context for force structure decisions, its forward-looking emphasis on shaping the future environment, its careful examination of history for lessons that apply to the future, and its open acknowledgment of

what is unknown.[13] Its major weakness is that it does not provide an explicit linkage between the uncertain characteristics of the future environment that it paints so well and the certainties inherent in the specific force levels associated with the base force. The attentive observer either takes the linkage on faith or is aware of the classified underpinnings of the force requirements logic not reflected in the posture statements.[14]

Powell's statement and the National Military Strategy (NMS) document on which it is based are similarly vague. The NMS and the Powell posture statement do examine force requirements by region and function, but the basis for judgment is not clear from the unclassified documents.

A Capsule Counterargument

Even if Aspin were to agree with the Cheney thesis based on uncertainty, he could raise legitimate questions as to the derivation of the base force. The base force is intuitively appealing: it is a reduction from the 1990 FYDP force, the reduction is significant, the reductions have not been pro rata (they hit Europe and the Army harder than the Pacific and the other services), and the projected reductions have been accompanied by visible changes in structure (e.g., Unified Command Plan) and strategy (e.g., East Asia Pacific Strategic Framework). Yet the process of its derivation remains a "black box." It can be argued that an unclassified posture statement is not the place for a detailed derivation of a force-level rationale. But that rationale needs to be explicated in such a way that it can be communicated to the Congress. The emphasis on the 25 percent reduction explicit in the base force lends credence to Aspin's charge that the DoD position is based on subtraction.

A BASIS FOR SYNTHESIS AND AGREEMENT?

As suggested, in its simplest form the Aspin paradigm is threat based and the Cheney paradigm is capabilities based. Cheney is more com-

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[13]Each of the protagonists uses the "lessons" of history to buttress his argument. Aspin uses one or two recent success stories, whereas Cheney uses the four readiness horror stories occurring in this century.

[14]The seven leaked scenarios apparently provide much of the detail used by DoD in developing force requirements. Press reports suggest that DoD has used two simultaneous regional conflicts as its strategic entering argument, whereas Aspin uses approximately one and a half (a Persian Gulf–type war and an air option for the defense of Korea). See Gellman (1992) and Tyler (1992).

prehensive and complete but lacks important details; Aspin is more complete in the force-driving details but incomplete in defining the context and in the uses of forces that go beyond contingency response. There is a role for both the Aspin and Cheney forms, and indeed there are elements of both in each of the theses. What is more explicit in the Cheney thesis is the role of objectives. Objectives-based planning against a backdrop of threats and uncertainties leads more logically to the acquisition (or maintenance) of the needed capabilities.

In responding to the Aspin thesis the Department should

- Focus on the incompleteness of the Aspin methodology—it addresses only crisis response and leaves out important deterrence, alliance, and peacetime presence considerations. The strength of the Cheney argument is its focus on the need for forces that shape the environment, not on sizing forces that would react to it.
- Emphasize the importance of deriving forces based on objectives instead of on the threat.
- Provide more rationale for the likelihood of two simultaneous major regional contingencies.
- Provide, insofar as is possible, the details that link the objectives (and the threat to their achievement) to the base force.

A useful exercise for the Department would be to review and modify Aspin's list of contingencies and their Iraq equivalents and then go on to revise his list of Desert Storm equivalents. As indicated above, this would provide only a very narrow basis for total force requirements, but it has the advantage of using not Aspin's building blocks but the entire Aspin exercise as one of several possible building blocks.

Other building blocks would be the explication of force needs for deterrence, maintaining stability in regions critical to U.S. interests by forward presence and regional alliances, and providing the wherewithal for fighting a future big war if it were to come on the force-planning horizon. These building blocks and their implications for force levels will be examined in Section 3. But first we must take a closer look at the predictability of future force requirements.

2. HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

> It had been decided by the War Cabinet in 1919 that *as part of the economy campaign* the service departments should frame their estimates on the assumption that the "British Empire will not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years, and that no expeditionary force will be required." In 1924, when I became Chancellor of the Exchequer, I asked the Committee of Imperial Defense to review this rule; but no recommendations were made for altering it. In 1927, the War Office suggested that the 1919 decision should be extended for the Army only to cover ten years "from the present date." This was approved by the Cabinet and Committee of Imperial Defence. The matter was next discussed in July 1928, when I proposed with acceptance, "that this basis should advance from day to day, but that the assumption should be reviewed every year by the Committee of Imperial Defence."[1]

CERTAINTY AND PREDICTABILITY AS A FORCE-SIZING MODEL

The free world's victories in the Cold War and in the Gulf War, the concomitant reduction in visible threats, and the superior U.S. military performance in the Gulf War have combined to provide ammunition to those who believe the U.S. defense establishment is currently too large for the needs of the post–Cold War era.[2] They look around the international environment and see the CIS states prostrate economically and politically, communism as a discredited ideology, and the surviving Russian state reducing an already creaky military establishment and withdrawing from previous Soviet foreign commitments and adventures. They see an attractive opportunity to reduce

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[1]Churchill (1948), p. 50 (emphasis added). Churchill goes on to say that "The ten-year rule with its day-to-day advance remained in force until 1932 when, on March 23, Mr. MacDonald's Government rightly decided that its abandonment could be assumed" (pp. 50–51). From March 23, 1932, to September 1, 1939, the start of World War II is a period of about seven and a half years. Measuring ten years ahead from March 1932 to March 1942 would put the Allies at their nadir during the war: the loss of France, the loss of Southeast Asia to Japan, the Germans at the gates of Moscow.

[2]One is left to wonder what their conclusions would have been if the United States had lost the Gulf War (as in Vietnam) or fought to a draw (as in Korea). It reminds the author of the old Pentagon argument used when criticizing another service's forces: "If they are as good as you say they are, you only need half as many; if they aren't that good, you shouldn't be buying any at all."

U.S. forces (in their view, prudently) to match the current and visible future threat environment.

The remarkable characteristic of this school of thought is its implicit assumption that the current relatively happy state will continue into the future and that the level of forces that contributed so heavily to achieving it are no longer necessary. Looking backward, they see the Desert Storm forces as sufficient (indeed, more than sufficient), and looking forward, they see ample time to correct matters if they have decided incorrectly. The keystone of their arguments is the evidence of past successes, not challenges in an uncertain future. These assumptions lead to freeing up defense resources to respond to other national priorities. The critical element in the argument is the relative predictability in the years to come of events that would adversely affect U.S. security. The adherents of this school would add that they are not predicting any specific threat, but outlining a class of threats that appear to define the envelope for sizing future U.S. forces. That sizing is based on what exists now or is currently visible. They point out the implausibility of some scenarios that do not currently exist and others that are unlikely or would develop over sufficient time to fashion an appropriate U.S. response. These points suggest the outline of the principal argument of those who would now effect further major reductions in U.S. forces. The argument can be posed as follows.

1. The old security scenarios are no longer credible.[3] The USSR has vanished as a major near-term threat, and nothing seems likely to succeed it in the foreseeable future. Lesser scenarios, while not completely predictable, can be readily defined as a basis for force planning. Most of these scenarios are variations of past scenarios or are the result of visible trends.
2. Much of the DoD argument supporting its base force rests on the need to posture for two "major regional contingencies" occurring at the same time. History indicates that such simultaneity is unlikely and should not dominate force sizing. Some (both inside and outside the DoD) would add that the second scenario, if it occurs, can be met with an air-only option to buttress allied efforts.
3. As the threat scenarios have changed, so must U.S. force requirements calculations. Demonstrably lower threats lead to (much) lower force requirements.

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[3]Kevin Lewis suggests that most of the old scenarios were used more as a basis for deterrence and alliance planning than for force structure and employment planning.

4. There is a demonstrable (and valid) link between force needs and performance in prior wars and future force requirements.
5. There will be time to respond to revolutionary changes in the global security environment. Forces can be rebuilt in time to meet unanticipated requirements.[4]

These assumptions singly, and even together, have a comfortable logical feel to them. They suggest a nation capable of shaping its own destiny, a wise, farseeing, rapidly responding national leadership, and a rational, largely predictable unfolding of future events. Moreover, these assumptions are politically salable. DoD's critics have taken the Department's own previous largely threat-based methodology and turned it against its authors. I would suggest that there is a little too much comfort on both sides of the argument. John Kenneth Galbraith once observed that those who afflict the comfortable serve equally with those who comfort the afflicted. While this essay has something to say to both groups, it is the former that is the focus of our attention as we examine these five assumptions more closely.

Out with the Old, In with the ?????

The first of the five assumptions outlined above puts aside the Soviet—and any future Russian—threat. An emerging Russian threat is a whole new ballgame. While sizable nuclear capabilities still reside in the CIS component states, they appear for some reason almost benign and are hardly dealt with by the reductionist school. A Russia with 6000 nuclear weapons is less feared than an Iraq, Iran, or North Korea with a potential handful. CIS general-purpose forces are seen as a rapidly decreasing factor on the global chessboard. Indeed, some reductionists hardly contemplate a Russian or other CIS scenario in sizing forces.[5]

For their own reasons—some based on vested interests, some on a cautious view rooted in past mistakes—DoD officials are less quick to discard the former Soviet threat. They recognize the changed relationship with, and the changed capabilities of, the former Soviet states, but in line with their unease with the scenario certainties of

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[4]Lest the reader believe that this and other assumptions refer only to critics of DoD force-level proposals, one might observe that the DoD's East Asia Pacific Strategic Framework (April 1990) has some of this same aura of orderliness, stability, and certainty combined with a faith in the ability of the United States to shape future events decisively.

[5]See Kaufmann and Steinbruner (1991), pp. 18–20, 43.

the reductionists, they see a far less stable or predictable future. U.S. forces might indeed be required to deal with an unspecified contingency with states that once comprised the USSR. In the minds of some reductionists there is no great-power rival on the horizon. DoD planners accepted at least part of that judgment when they reportedly set as a goal keeping the United States as the only superpower.[6] But current objectives often differ from future fact. Nevertheless, the changed role of the former Soviet Union in the U.S. force-planning calculus is accepted by all. The argument lies in the realm of how far and how fast the threat will decline and whether a potential reversal is a legitimate element of force planning.

Old Scenarios No Longer Credible

The only war the United States has fought in this century for which it was fully prepared was the Gulf War of 1991. Every other war has found the United States with inadequate forces (not ready, not big enough, poorly deployed, inadequately supported) on the eve of conflict. Was this a result of not correctly predicting the future, or not responding adequately to those predictions? This essay is not the place to investigate the intricacies and interrelationships of warning and response. Of more interest here is this: Were the threat scenarios that came to pass credible in the minds of the U.S. national leadership, and did they act on them?

Did President Wilson in signing the great Naval Authorization Bill of 1916 (providing for a major U.S. naval building program) envisage that less than two years later an American Expeditionary Force of two million men would be in France? Did President Roosevelt in 1939 anticipate a Japanese attack on U.S. territory two years later? Did President Truman after his election in 1948 anticipate sending an army to Korea to fight North Koreans and Chinese less than two years later? Did President Kennedy in taking office in January 1961 envisage sending a U.S. army to Vietnam to support South Vietnam four years later? Did President Bush, as he boarded Air Force One to fly to Aspen, Colorado, on August 2, 1990, anticipate that a little over three months later he would be ordering a field army to Saudi Arabia to defend that country? These questions are not intended to carp on deficiencies in presidential stewardship, but rather to suggest that these men (and many others in positions of authority) were simply

[6]"U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop," *The New York Times,* March 8, 1992, p. 1. The plan cited refers to a leaked copy of the draft Defense Planning Guidance for developing the FY 1994 budget.

not clairvoyant. In most cases the U.S. public did not really know its own mind on the eve of hostilities.[7] Indeed, it is ironic that U.S. political leaders, who are frequently called to account by a fickle electorate, are so often certain of the direction of future events overseas determined by other constituencies.

If history is any guide, U.S. national leadership, whether the president or the Congress, has a consistently poor record in forecasting events overseas.[8] Moreover, when conflict has come, the forces needed greatly exceeded prewar expectations and planning estimates.[9] Why is it that good men and women are so often wrong in this important business? The simple answers are that we believe we can shape future events (decisively) and/or that we are comfortable with the tangible evidence around us that most of life is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The occasional close call in traffic or the unexpected death of a friend bring us face to face with the discontinuities of everyday life that lie just below the surface of more measured events. It is this mind-set that is comfortable with today's scenarios in defining future events.

A close look at today's contingency scenarios suggests they fall into two classes:

- Variations of past scenarios (e.g., a repeat of the Korean or Gulf wars, an intervention operation along Grenada or Panama lines), or scenarios that reflect a clearly visible trend (e.g., confrontation with a nuclear-armed North Korea). Most of the Aspin and DoD scenarios follow this sort of conventional wisdom.

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[7]Summers (1992a), pp. 13–19.

[8]The United States is not the only state to suffer from this malady. Winston Churchill quotes a statement made by Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in May 1935: "First of all, with regard to the figure I have in November of German Aeroplanes, nothing has come to my knowledge since that makes me think that figure was wrong. I believed at the time I was right. *Where I was wrong was in my estimate of the future.* There I was completely wrong. We were completely misled on that subject." Churchill (1948), p. 123 (emphasis added).

[9]The 1991 Gulf War excepted. The evidence in that case suggests smaller forces may have been adequate. But this is a tricky judgment, because mass has a quality all its own. The Iraqi collapse may have been as rapid as it was because of the size and rapidity of the hammer blows that its armed forces and C^3 structure received. Smaller coalition forces may have achieved the same result over a longer period of time—perhaps with greater casualties on both sides. RAND's Kevin Lewis has studied the question of force adequacy before (prewar planning) and after (in war commitment) application for a number of conflicts in which U.S. forces were involved. In most cases, prewar requirements were doubled once combat operations started. (Drawn from an informal working paper made available to the author by Lewis.)

- Discontinuous scenarios, or those in which there is no plausible "audit trail" or "storyline" from current events to future hypothetical possibilities. These scenarios are normally labeled implausible by those on the left who believe they are artificial force builders, or by those on the right who believe they project an unattainable perfectibility of mankind. These scenarios normally are placed outside the scope of responsible force-planning intercourse.[10]

The first class of scenarios is comfortable because it lies closer to our experience or our views of the evolving international scene. These scenarios have the advantage of lending themselves to quantitative and empirical analysis (e.g., force models, order-of-battle comparisons, historical planning factors). Hence, they are politically salable and become "blessed." Arguments on force levels migrate from scenario plausibility to force effectiveness and adequacy calculations.[11]

The second class of scenarios is, as was suggested earlier, usually rejected because they are implausible, i.e., too far removed from our current frame of reference. The more spectacular of such scenarios gain a popular audience and become prophetic only if and after they occur.[12] The point of this discussion is that most force analysis is only half done: it focuses exclusively on the first class of scenarios. Those who believe in the second class as well are either viewed as cranks or forced to express their concerns in terms of uncertainty. Unfortunately, to confess to uncertainty about the direction of future events and to advise preparing for it accordingly confers upon the

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[10]An example will demonstrate how vulnerable we are to believing we have defined a discontinuous scenario when in fact we have merely put a spin on the conventional wisdom. In 1988 RAND colleague David Shlapak and I developed what we believed were six "nonstandard contingency scenarios." Within the next 18–30 months, major portions of four of the six scenarios occurred (i.e., a U.S. invasion of Panama, outside intervention in a splintering Yugoslavia, overthrow of a Warsaw Pact government by a democratic majority, and Iraqi aggression in the Gulf). The point is not that we were "right," but that we confused the two classes of scenarios. See Winnefeld and Shlapak (1990).

[11]There is remarkably little difference between the DoD planning guidance scenarios (except for the widely criticized Lithuanian case) and the Aspin and Kaufmann/Steinbruner scenarios. The argument centers on which scenarios are left out (or how they are strung together) and the accuracy of the force adequacy calculations.

[12]Two books on the future Japan "threat" tell the story. Hector C. Bywater's *The Great Pacific War,* first published in 1925 (and reissued by St. Martin's Press in 1991) speculated on the outlines of a future U.S. war with Japan. It sketched out the main elements of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Some have argued that only the Japanese High Command took the scenario seriously. A more recent book, Friedman and Lebard's *The Coming War with Japan* (1991), speculates on the outcome of the increasing U.S. trade rivalry with Japan.

confessor a mantle of wimpishness and wishy-washiness, at least in the minds of those who believe that uncertainty is controllable if we only apply ourselves to the problem.[13]

Today's category-one scenarios include a repeat of the Persian Gulf War, some new form of Korean War, and unspecified interventions on the Panama and Grenada models.[14] Some would put in this category a "USSR redux" or a "resurgent/emergent global threat" that would gravely endanger U.S. interests. Note that all the scenarios are very conservative. They represent threats that have occurred *in the past* even if combat operations did not result, or they are the object of *current* security concerns. There are no strategic "surprises" except for the low possibility of a future threat from a reconstituted USSR or some other undefined major state. Category-two scenarios dealing with the possibility of a rearmed and aggressive Japan or China are not addressed, even though such a development would have serious repercussions for the U.S. security posture.[15] Also not mentioned are somewhat less grave scenarios involving a civil war in China that spilled over into the rest of East Asia, a nuclear war between Pakistan and India, and a renewed military (perhaps nuclear) threat to Israel's existence. Moreover, the powder train that could be ignited by a unified and nuclear-armed Korea is not considered outside the DoD.[16]

DUAL SCENARIOS UNLIKELY?

A major disagreement between some reductionists and DoD officials centers on the likelihood of near-simultaneous contingencies.[17] DoD planning has long focused on the need to be able to respond to two

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[13]Kevin Lewis observes that the ultimate take-charge, destiny-controlling approach to planning might have been the "massive retaliation" doctrine—at least as its more extreme proponents viewed it. The rejection of that approach (and implicitly, the acceptance of a lesser degree of control over events) was, however, a choice we were very happy to make.

[14]Most of these outline scenarios are considered by Kaufmann and Steinbruner, Aspin, and current joint force planning documents. They were also the subject of the annual DoD-sponsored "Global" war game held at the Naval War College during the summer of 1991.

[15]The deterrent or preventive role that U.S. force posture might play in heading off these eventualities is scarcely addressed outside the Department of Defense. See "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop," *The New York Times,* March 8, 1992, p. 1.

[16]RAND colleague David Shlapak observes that the difference between the two classes of scenarios is that we must be prepared to confront category one, while we must attempt to arrange matters such that category-two scenarios never arise.

[17]Kaufmann and Steinbruner (1991), pp. 44–45.

near-simultaneous contingencies.[18] Reductionists see this as a highly unlikely possibility, but one that can be hedged by such options as limiting the initial U.S. role in the defense of Korea to offensive air operations.[19] Because of the importance of the one-, one-and-a-half-, or two-contingency assumption, a closer look at the historical backdrop for contingency simultaneity is warranted.

Table 1 suggests some of the possibilities. But the table does not directly convey the force requirements associated with the U.S. commitment to NATO. Indeed, this large commitment (external to the well-publicized crises and contingencies listed in the table) raises a larger question: Did the fact that U.S. forces were postured to deal with two simultaneous large contingencies make the second contingency unlikely while U.S. forces were engaged in the first contingency? The answer hinges on deterrence as much as on worse-casing calculations. But there is a second question worth asking. In the former bipolar world, was there not a damping effect on escalation? Clients and allies were kept under a tight rein. It was not in the interest of either superpower to initiate or support a crisis elsewhere if there was already a crisis between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. With the demise of the bipolar world and the emergence (or unleashing) of independent and often erratic actors, the case can be made that unrelated simultaneous crises and conflicts are likely to increase in frequency and severity. A nuclear-armed North Korea may feel it has greater freedom of action in a future repeat of Desert Storm. A wounded Russian bear may believe it can retrieve some of the Soviet losses incurred during the 1989–1992 period (e.g., squeezing concessions from the Baltics) if the United States is engaged in the Gulf or Korea—and if it has gutted its forces in Europe.

I am persuaded that two (or more) simultaneous contingencies requiring U.S. military response are more likely during the post–Cold War era than during the earlier confrontation with the Soviet Union. The

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[18]This goes beyond the "two and a half wars" of the Kennedy-Johnson years and the "one and a half wars" of the Nixon years. In the middle 1970s, as the vulnerability of Middle Eastern oil fields to a Soviet thrust became more apparent to U.S. military planners, a simultaneous or slightly staggered NATO–Middle East dual scenario became a centerpiece of force and contingency planning. This concern has carried over into current planning—but with Korea substituted for a NATO contingency. See "Seven Scenarios," *Washington Post,* February 20, 1992, p. A21. Scenarios of this size are called "MRCs" (major regional contingencies).

[19]This Korea air-only option is sketched out in the Aspin force-sizing papers. Aspin's total force formulation *does* contemplate simultaneous scenarios. He differs from DoD in the forces considered appropriate to each.

Table 1

Simultaneity of Major Crises, 1945–1992

Year	Crisis 1	Crisis 2	Crisis 3
1946	Trieste	China civil war (U.S. forces present)	USSR threats to Turkey, Greece
1948	Berlin airlift	Arab-Israeli war	Trieste
1950	Korean War[a]	Invasion of Tibet	
1953	Korean War (cont'd)	Berlin riots	
1954	Dienbienphu, U.S. intervention considered	Honduras, Guatemala	China shootdown of U.S. aircraft
1956	Hungarian revolution	Sinai campaign	Suez landings
1958	Landings in Lebanon	Quemoy-Matsu	
1961	Berlin	Bay of Pigs	U.S. advisers to S. Vietnam
1962	Cuban missiles	Berlin (cont'd)	Sino-Indian war
1965	U.S. troops to S. Vietnam	Dominican Republic landing	Indo-Pakistani war
1967	Renewal of Arab-Israeli war	Taiwan Straits	
1968	Tet	Pueblo	Invasion of Czechoslovakia
1970	Cambodia operations	Iraq-Jordan	
1973	Arab-Israeli war	U.S.-USSR crisis in Mediterranean	Oil embargo; Indian Ocean operations
1978	Invasion of Afghanistan	Nicaragua	Ogaden war
1979	Tehran embassy	Soviet troops in Cuba	
1980	Polish riots	Desert One	Iran-Iraq war
1983	Grenada	USMC in Lebanon	KAL 007 shootdown
1986	Strikes into Libya	Lebanon hostages	
1988	Gulf escort operations	Troops to Honduras	
1989	Panama	Unrest in E. Europe	
1990	Kuwait invasion	Soviet bloc breakup	Liberian noncombatant evacuation operations
1991	War with Iraq	Somali noncombatant evacuation operations	

NOTE: The table oversimplifies the data. In any given year, some months might have separated each of the crises from one another. A more detailed time-line description would clarify the simultaneity issue. However, since each crisis had "run-up" and "run-down" periods, the oversimplification may be more apparent than real. The data in the table rely heavily on the following sources: Blechman and Kaplan (1978), Siegel (1991), and Winnefeld and Shlapak (1990).

[a]Coincided with decision to build up U.S. forces in Europe.

major difference between the two periods is that the United States can now reduce its NATO-committed forces more safely. But the forces required in other regions are likely to be much less affected. A

lesser-sized U.S. force in Europe takes off the table a capability that the United States much prized during the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf wars: the ability to dip into NATO-committed forces for needed specialized capabilities and a rotation base. These possibilities and related concerns influence me to reframe the dual-contingency possibility issue this way:

> Although the United States has rarely been engaged in simultaneous separate combat operations in the past (short of global war), it has had to underwrite deterrence simultaneously in separate theaters—often against independent potential adversaries. Engagement in combat operations in any one theater should not degrade the quality of deterrence in another. A key element of deterrence is the relative ease with which a future U.S. president is seen as able to bring superior force to bear (without having to pay the domestic political price of mobilization to meet a threat that can be quickly withdrawn).

The Linkage Between Scenarios and Force Requirements

A common theme in the reductionists' argument is that the scenarios have changed, the new ones are less demanding, ergo fewer forces are required. This lockstep linkage of specified scenarios with generalized force requirements, sometimes expressed in terms of threat-response equivalents, suggests a world of well-defined linkages and relationships between reasonably certain futures, what is needed to respond to them, and flawless decisionmaking in acquiring the "right" forces and integrating them with the efforts of allies whose future actions are predictable. It is the security community's equivalent of the "just-in-time delivery" maxim so much in fashion with bottom-line watchers in industry. There is scant room for error. If error occurs, the reductionists feel secure in having sufficient warning time and the will to act to make things right.

The scenario method of force sizing is a useful and respected method for gaining insights into force requirements, the value of specific types of forces, tradeoffs among forces, and the probability of certain outcomes within carefully drawn assumptions. DoD and others have used this method of analysis effectively. But it has three potentially grave weaknesses:

- The wrong scenarios may be selected.
- The contributions of specific forces to the scenario outcomes may be misunderstood.

- The assumptions that define the essential characteristics of the scenario may be forgotten.

I have already discussed our limitations in forecasting scenarios: we may have ably predicted the present rather than the future. Contributing to that misselection, as we devise a plausible path to a future scenario, we may be overlooking what events would occur offstage.[20] Even if we have the scenario "right," our force model may skew the contributions of some forces to the result. Scenarios can be constructed to showcase some forces and make others look less useful.[21] If we have the scenarios and the force models "right," we may have left out some key assumptions, such as "Who fires first?" "What is going on elsewhere?" and "What if force performance is not as we have assumed it to be?"

Scaling forces between scenarios and over time is a particularly hazardous enterprise. *Scenarios are unique.* Moreover, *no single scenario can define a force requirement.* And possibly most important of all, deterrence scenarios (often in multiple form) are at least as important as combat scenarios. A force requirement should be represented by an integral of many scenarios (deterrence and combat) plus a hedge to account for the failure of critical assumptions.

Although the reductionists do not rely on a single scenario to size forces, some of them rely heavily on the theorem of "What is needed to deal with the cat is sufficient to deal with the kitten." Moreover, most do not believe large scenarios (i.e., bigger than Desert Storm) are plausible in the foreseeable post–Cold War era. Their entering argument is that Desert Storm-sized forces are sufficient.[22]

IF WE ARE WRONG, CAN WE REBUILD OUR FORCES IN TIME?

Both DoD and the reductionists rely heavily on reconstitution to justify their lower (than 1991) force levels. Since the DoD-programmed

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[20]Carl Builder, in his *Toward a Calculus of Scenarios* (1983), emphasizes the necessity of explicating the assumptions that bound the scenario and constructing a path to it from current events. Gordon (1992) makes a similar point (p. 33).

[21]For example, an "air bases available" scenario in Southwest Asia plays to the strengths of land-based air forces, whereas a "no bases" scenario plays to the strength of sea-based air forces. See Builder (1983), pp. 5–8, for an example of this type of misuse of scenarios.

[22]Indeed, more than sufficient. Aspin in analyzing the Desert Storm force believes it was more than was needed, but he would add some capabilities that were not used or not fully used in Desert Storm.

base force is larger than those proposed by the reductionists, there is somewhat less risk. But the risk is not negligible. The issue hinges on

- Our ability to predict the future.
- Our ability to recognize warning.
- Our ability to act on warning.
- The lead time required to reconstitute threat-capable forces.

I have already addressed the first point and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the second and third. However, a key capability is how fast and how well we can reconstitute within the beam of our warning/decision time/response headlights. A look at U.S. performance in past conflicts may be instructive.

World War I

The U.S. experience in the events leading up to its involvement in the First World War suggests a template we might apply in better understanding subsequent major conflicts. Woodrow Wilson was elected president in 1912 during a time of great-power rivalry but relative peace nonetheless. A global war had not been fought for almost 100 years. Wilson was a strong-minded idealist who renounced what he saw as the expansionism, jingoism, and some militarism of the previous Republican administrations. The start of World War I in August 1914 was more widely predicted after the event than before. The initial reaction of the American public and the Wilson administration was to stay neutral and let the Old World fight it out. But both were unprepared for the upsurge of popular support for the preparedness movement that came to life in 1915. The sinking of the *Lusitania* in that year, the attendant heavy loss of American life, and the key role of German submarines galvanized the public. In many respects, that event and the U.S. reaction to it constituted strategic warning that the Americans would be unable to stay out of the war.

The preparedness movement's activities and its strong resonance in Washington and with Wilson personally led through a tortuous path to the great Army and Navy acts of 1916. These important pieces of legislation, while premised on a strong belief in the U.S. ability to stay neutral, greatly expanded the armed forces of the United States. They were, indeed, the first significant programmatic responses to the strategic warning of 1915. Thus, when the United States finally entered the war some eight months later in April 1917, it had enjoyed a

two-year period of warning—all but seven months of which was decision/response time. Since the American Expeditionary Force arrived in France in field army strength a year later, the total time from warning to entry into major combat operations consumed the better part of three years.[23] Even then, U.S. ground forces were critically dependent on their allies for weapons and training. No U.S.–designed and produced combat aircraft, tanks, or artillery saw combat in World War I.[24] The U.S. Navy was designed for the wrong war; anti-submarine warfare escorts, not battleships, were required. The force expansion program triggered by the 1916 legislation was projected for completion during 1920–1922—as it turned out, two to four years after the war was over.

Can some type of useful framework be imposed on these events, a framework that can be applied to subsequent conflicts? Our analysis suggests five key milestones that link warning to response, to force commitment, and to identifiable results.

- **Milestone 1: strategic warning.** That point in time when the U.S. security establishment could reasonably assume a high probability of future U.S. participation in major combat operations.
- **Milestone 2: operational or programmatic response.** That point in time when major decisions are made to respond to warning. The response could be in terms of mobilization, conscription, major military systems procurement, and/or major force deployments.
- **Milestone 3: achievement of adequate initial combat capability.** That point in time when either (a) initial forces in being are adequate for immediate and effective combat response or (b) a major increase over peacetime military capability is achieved. For purposes of case (b) I assume a 50 percent expansion in combat-ready forces (i.e., mobilization is not a sufficient condition).
- **Milestone 4: commencement of major U.S. combat operations.** That point in time when U.S. forces are fully engaged in combat operations, i.e., the functional equivalent of a declaration of war.

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[23]The first U.S. corps-size offensive action was Cantigny in late May 1918. The first field army operation was during the Aisne-Marne offensive of July and August 1918. DuPuy and DuPuy (1970), pp. 980–981.

[24]Ibid, p. 976.

- **Milestone 5: achievement of prewar programmed combat capability.** That point in time when U.S. forces reach prewar programmed force expansion objectives.

Ideally, milestones 4 and 5 would coincide. Less ideally, milestones 3 and 4 would coincide. By our definition, if the time between milestones 1 and 5 exceeds the time between milestones 1 and 4, we are overdriving our security headlights. If the time between milestones 1 and 3 exceeds the time between milestones 1 and 4, we are driving very dangerously.

Returning to the example of World War I, milestone 1 occurred in May 1915 with the sinking of the *Lusitania*.[25] Milestone 2 could be linked to the Army and Navy acts of 1916.[26] Milestone 3 is less readily fixed, since it occurred after U.S. entry into the war (milestone 4) on April 6, 1917. For convenience I would establish milestone 3 as occurring with the engagement of corps-size U.S. ground units in combat in France in May 1918. Milestone 5 is also difficult to fix, but I use January 1919 as the benchmark. By that time the U.S. Army was projected to have completed its buildup in France.

To summarize, one might observe that the United States in its run-up to entry into World War I overdrove its headlights by a figure between 13 months (the delta between milestones 3 and 4) and 21 months (the delta between milestones 4 and 5).[27] While this error may appear small given the result of the war and the major American contribution to the final Allied victory, we should note that there was ample warning time (the two-year delta between milestones 1 and 4).

World War II

The run-up to U.S. entry into World War II is a more complex proposition because in effect there were two theaters that provided warning and fostered responses. In Europe there was the rise of Hitler in the early 1930s and the onset of war in 1939. Warning can be ascribed as early as Hitler's succession to the chancellorship of Germany in Jan-

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[25]Sprout and Sprout (1966), pp. 331–333.

[26]Ibid., pp. 322, 344.

[27]But note that the Naval Act of 1916 was predicated on a five-year building plan, with all construction to be completed by 1925. (Sprout and Sprout (1966), p. 335.) This points up the critical importance of timely acquisition of long-lead-time systems (not just naval) within headlight distance.

uary 1933. A dreary chain of events followed: the entry into the Rhineland, the subsequent seizure of Austria and Czechoslovakia, and finally the invasion of Poland. Any of these events constituted additional warning to the future Allies. For purposes of this analysis, the seizure of Austria on March 12–13, 1938, is used as the warning trigger. The earliest tangible U.S. policy response to the rise of Nazi Germany was the industrial mobilization plan of 1939.[28]

In the Pacific, warning could be considered given as early as September 1931 with the Japanese occupation of Mukden in Manchuria and its creation of the puppet state Manchukuo the following year. But more direct strategic warning could be dated from 1937, with the Japanese invasion of eastern China and the sinking of USS *Panay* by Japanese warplanes.

The emerging threats emanating from Europe and Asia came together in the Roosevelt administration's activities from early 1939 until late 1941 to get the nation closer to a war footing. In some ways these two to three years were similar to the more telescoped period of mid-1915 to early 1917 in the World War I case; the nation sensed a threat but was unwilling to take all the major steps to putting itself on a war footing. The plans, programs, and institutions put into motion in 1939 through 1941 envisioned a fully mobilized Army of over four million men that would require 21 months to achieve (measured from mid-1940).[29]

War came in December 1941, and the U.S. did not achieve a major offensive capability until the late summer of 1942.[30] Using these and the other dates suggested above, we arrive at these milestones:

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[28]I use the creation of the War Resources Board (WRB) on August 9, 1939. The industrial mobilization plan and the WRB were given impetus more by events in Europe than in Asia. See Bureau of Demobilization (Civilian Production Administration) (1947), pp. 6–11.

[29]Ibid., pp. 41–42. Note that in early 1940 the Army had less than 280,000 men. One estimate envisioned some five years as required to produce the requisite number of aircraft. Navy construction lead times were even longer. See pp. 40–41, 45–46. To summarize, an observer in mid-1940 would see the following estimated initial operational capability dates: Army expansion to four million men, April 1942; production of necessary munitions, October 1942; production of programmed aircraft, June 1945; production of programmed warships, March 1946.

[30]This date is even more arguable than most used in this analysis. I use as a benchmark the U.S. landings in North Africa and Guadalcanal as the transition points to the offensive in the two principal war theaters. Major actions had been fought in the Philippines, the Coral Sea, and near Midway before that date.

- **Milestone 1: strategic warning.** Mid-1937 (USS *Panay*, German arms buildup, and clash of great-power interests in the Spanish civil war). Seizure of Austria in early 1938.
- **Milestone 2: operational or programmatic response.** Mid-1939. First steps to industrial mobilization.
- **Milestone 3: achievement of initial combat capability.** Mid-1942, with the Allied invasion of North Africa and the U.S. landings in the Solomons.
- **Milestone 4: commencement of major U.S. combat operations.** Late 1941.
- **Milestone 5: achievement of prewar programmed combat capability.** Early 1945.

To summarize, one might observe that the United States in its run-up to World War II overdrove its headlights by between nine months (the delta between milestones 3 and 4) and 28 months (the delta between milestones 4 and 5). The resemblance to the World War I experience is remarkable, but there is a major difference. In World War I the United States depended to a large degree on its allies to design and produce the needed war equipment it was to use, whereas during World War II the United States assumed a leading role in the design and production of the needed combat systems.

Korea

Korea between 1945 and the onset of the 1950–1953 war was a classic Cold War political battleground.[31] Given the ripening of the Cold War in Europe in 1947 (Soviet threats to Greece and Turkey) and 1948 (the Berlin blockade), and the subsequent Chinese Communist victory in their civil war, one could measure warning from 1948. In the narrower Korean context, warning (or a situation of increased vulnerability) could also be measured from the period between July 1948 and June 1949. During this period, elections were held in the south, the UN recognized the Republic of Korea as the legitimate government for the south, and the United States withdrew its troops from the peninsula.

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[31]For a succinct summary of events on the peninsula, see LaTourette (1952), pp. 171–195.

The United States did not act on that "warning," except to announce publicly that the security of Korea was a United Nations concern.[32] When war came in June 1950, the United States was still in the process of reducing its forces in the western Pacific. U.S. forces in June 1950 were at the lowest levels they were to be for the next 40 years or more. Remobilization and force deployments started within days of the invasion of the south.

If one considers the initial North Korean invasion in the summer of 1950 and the Chinese intervention in the fall as a composite threat, the U.S. attainment of an initial "full-service" response capability occurred in June 1951. The total force requirements were met a year later. Using our set of milestones, the effect is as follows:

- **Milestone 1: strategic warning.** Early 1949. Decision to withdraw U.S. forces following the establishment of elected constitutional government in the Republic of Korea.
- **Milestone 2: operational or programmatic response.** June 27, 1950. President Truman's announcement of actions to be taken to defend South Korea.
- **Milestone 3: achievement of initial combat capability.** Mid-1951. Stabilization of the battle line following China's intervention and commencement of truce negotiations.
- **Milestone 4: commencement of major U.S. combat operations.** Late June 1950. Air strikes against North Korean forces in South Korea.
- **Milestone 5: achievement of prewar programmed combat capability.** June 1949, with the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea. There were no plans for a U.S. force buildup in the region or for the reintroduction of U.S. forces to the peninsula.

To summarize, one might observe that the United States in its run-up to the Korean conflict in June 1950 was driving with its headlights off. Since it was not a global war, the result was not catastrophic. If the United States had suddenly switched on its headlights on June 27, 1950, it would have seen that it had overdriven them by one to two years (the deltas between milestones 3 and 4 and 4 and 5).

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[32]Ibid., pp. 180–181. Korea remains an oft-forgotten example of the unanticipated effects of withdrawal of U.S. forces from areas where they had served as a deterrent and stabilizer.

Vietnam

There was ample warning in the case of the Vietnam conflict. It could have been set as early as the period of U.S. policy angst on whether to intervene to prevent the fall of Dienbienphu in 1954. The failure of the French in Indochina led to the Geneva peace accords of July 20, 1954, documents that the United States did not sign, although it felt obliged to observe that it would view any violation of them with "grave concern." In effect, the United States in its declaratory statement had given itself strategic warning. This warning was reinforced some five years later when President Eisenhower made his "falling dominoes" statement and declared that the security of Vietnam was a vital American interest.[33] The next five years saw a major increase in U.S. political and military involvement in the south. A clear signal of strategic warning against this backdrop of increasing American presence was supplied by the Tonkin Gulf incidents of August 1964, which resulted in air strikes against several North Vietnamese ports.

Although U.S. military personnel in their advisory and support capacity had been engaged in low-level combat activities for over five years, the turning-point event that triggered the commitment of major U.S. combat units was the Vietcong sapper attack on the American advisers' compound at Pleiku on February 7, 1965. U.S. forces landed a few weeks later, the spearhead of what would eventually be the equivalent of a field army.

The U.S. buildup proceeded apace and reached a level of 300,000 in country by early 1966. This represented General Westmoreland's "Phase I" buildup to stabilize the country preparatory to gaining the initiative.[34] But troop requirements expanded as the immensity of COMUSMACV's tasks became apparent. At one point a total requirement for 900,000 troops by early 1967 was anticipated.[35]

At this point I leave the events of the Vietnam War, which was to continue for the better part of a decade, and consider the application of our milestones. Because of the slow unfolding of the war and the U.S. involvement in it, it is probably the least suitable for our milestone framework. Accordingly, some of our milestones will appear extraordinarily arbitrary:

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[33]Palmer (1978), p. 15. Eisenhower's words were: "The loss of South Vietnam would set in motion a crumbling process which could, as it progresses, have grave consequences for the forces of freedom."

[34]Ibid., pp. 82–89, 107.

[35]Ibid., p. 108.

- **Milestone 1: strategic warning.** 1961, with the major increase in U.S. military presence in and support for South Vietnam.
- **Milestone 2: operational and programmatic response.** U.S. air attacks on Vietnamese ports in August 1964.
- **Milestone 3: achievement of initial combat capability.** October 1965, with offensive-defensive operations in Ia Drang Valley.
- **Milestone 4: commencement of major U.S. combat operations.** Landings of Marine forces near Danang in March 1965.
- **Milestone 5: achievement of prewar combat capability.** Early 1967. Full programmed force in Vietnam.[36]

To summarize, we might observe that the United States in its run-up to the commitment of military forces to the Vietnam conflict overdrove its headlights by between 7 months (the delta between milestones 3 and 4) and 23 months (the delta between milestones 4 and 5).

Desert Storm

Desert Storm is recent enough to make it unnecessary to recount the major events. Strategic warning of a possible future Gulf contingency probably occurred as early as the invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution in the late 1970s. The U.S. programmatic and operational response was immediate and sustained. A major force buildup occurred during the 1980s, and although it was oriented to the Soviet threat, it resulted in capabilities well suited to a Middle East threat as well. The Iran-Iraq War also constituted warning in that it provided evidence (if any were needed) that Saddam Hussein was prepared to use force against his neighbors if he thought they were weak or distracted. To adequately reflect the special circumstances of Desert Storm against a backdrop of U.S. preparations for an unspecified contingency operation (USSR 1978–1983?, Iran 1979–1988?, Iraq 1989–1991?), I will examine two cases under our framework: first, the more generalized Gulf contingency envisioned during the period 1979–1990, using Desert Shield/Storm as the war that might have occurred; second, the war that started with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

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[36]The number kept changing both before and during the conflict. I have picked General Westmoreland's Phase III capability date of early 1967.

Case 1: Generalized Gulf War Scenario

- **Milestone 1: strategic warning.** 1979–1980, invasion of Afghanistan, Iranian revolution, Iran-Iraq War.
- **Milestone 2: operational and programmatic response.** 1979 establishment of RDJTF, programming of Indian Ocean prepositioning, step-up of regional force deployments and exercises.
- **Milestone 3: achievement of initial combat capability.** 1985, with the standup of the second of three maritime prepositioned squadrons (MPS).
- **Milestone 4: commencement of major U.S. combat operations.** January 1991 (Desert Storm).
- **Milestone 5: full achievement of prewar programmed combat capability.** 1987. Completion of Reagan defense buildup.

To summarize, the United States kept well within the distance of its headlights after about 1985. Milestone 4 occurred six years after milestone 3 and four years after milestone 5.

Case 2: Desert Shield/Storm

- **Milestone 1: strategic warning.** April 1990. Intelligence indicators, Iraqi pressure on Kuwait.[37]
- **Milestone 2: operational or programmatic response.** August 1990. Initial CENTCOM force deployments.
- **Milestone 3: achievement of initial combat capability.** November 1990. Buildup of defensive forces complete.
- **Milestone 4: commencement of major U.S. combat operations.** January 1991.
- **Milestone 5: achievement of prewar programmed combat capability.** January 1991, with arrival of final ground/air/naval force increments.

Just as case 1, the larger Gulf scenario context, shows the United States operating within its crisis visibility envelope, the same is true of the included case of Desert Storm. The coincidence of milestones 4 and 5 was driven by alliance (the UN vote authorizing force) and do-

[37]Some DoD officials date strategic warning from the fall of 1989, when regional contingency plans were reoriented to the Iraqi threat. See DoD, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to the Congress*, April 1992, p. 42. I make a distinction between prudent contingency planning and strategic warning.

mestic (U.S. congressional authorization) factors as well as military deployment and readiness factors.

Table 2 summarizes this experience in five wars. The only war for which the United States was prepared was the Gulf War. In all the others we overdrove our headlights by months to years and paid a high price either in casualties or in unsatisfactory outcomes. There is an important message in the difference between cases 1 and 2 in the Gulf War portion of the table. Because we started preparing early for the contingency that didn't happen (e.g., a Soviet thrust to the Gulf), we were ready for the contingency that did happen. *Comparing case 1 with the average preparation times in the preceding four wars suggests that preparation ("make ready") times are increasing and that high states of readiness and adequate in-being force levels have a potentially very high payoff when those forces are needed.* In short, there is no way that a warning/response interval of four months in 1990 would have been acceptable in 1980, or that the five-month initial preparation time demonstrated in 1990 would have been achievable in 1980. The seeds of Desert Storm's success were planted during the period 1979–1987.

To avoid overdriving one's headlights in the 1990s one must have good brakes (sufficient ready forces), good headlights (good intelligence and assessment), and fast reactions (short response times). Or, one must drive very slowly (cut back on our commitments) and risk being late (not achieving our objectives). What are these capabilities in programmatic terms? That is the subject of the third essay.

Table 2

Warning, Response, Preparedness in Five Wars

	Intervals in Months			
Conflict	From Warning to Response	From Warning to Initial Preparedness	From Initial Preparedness to War	From Complete Preparedness to War
World War I	15	36	–13	–21
World War II	24	60	–9	–28
Korea	18	30	–12	Indeterminate[a]
Vietnam	37	51	–7	–23
Average	23.5	44.3	**–10.3**	**–24.0**
Gulf contingency (case 1)	8	72	72	48
Desert Storm (case 2)	4	7	3	0

NOTE: Numbers in bold denote "average headlight overrun."

[a]Prewar programs called for withdrawing U.S. forces from Korea, not deploying forces to Korea.

3. SQUARING THE CIRCLE

The argument between the Defense Department and its critics on the subject of force sizing is incomplete in several important dimensions. So far the focus of one side has been on how many and what types of forces are needed to meet the requirements of a set of selected *plausible* near-term contingencies. The other side has focused on the degree of uncertainty we confront in assessing the future security environment. Depending on the force-effectiveness assumptions used, the way the contingency scenarios are strung together (e.g., degree of simultaneity, method of response), and the degree of uncertainty that is assumed, the issues between DoD and its critics are rather clearly drawn.

But there are three important deficiencies in this ongoing dialog:

- Focus on contingency response as the controlling military mission and neglect of the environment-shaping and deterrence dimensions.
- Neglect of scenarios that seem "implausible" and preoccupation with near-term, clearly visible, and credible (in the conventional wisdom) scenarios.
- Failure to consider the effect of force reductions on the way the military has historically planned to fight (e.g., fighting by corps, not divisions, by task forces, not numbers of ships), and undue emphasis instead on programmatic units of account (e.g., divisions, numbers of ships, numbers of aircraft).

LOOKING BEYOND CONTINGENCY RESPONSE

A fundamental assumption made in this essay is that there is an important role for military force beyond contingency response. To focus solely on contingency response is to overlook other important roles and missions—roles and missions that might require capabilities that lie outside the envelope of contingency response. Moreover, as I pointed out in a prior essay, there is an important dimension to these missions (including contingency response) that is neglected: the time dimension.

The simple framework used here to parse requirements for forces has three elements. Military forces are used to

- (Help) *shape* the future security environment.
- *Deter* current threats and those that emerge (midterm) in spite of our shaping efforts.
- *Respond* to one or more contingencies when deterrence breaks down.

As Table 3 suggests, the force requirements for these three tasks are not necessarily identical or included one in the other.

MORE IMPORTANT THAN CONTINGENCY SCENARIOS . . .

As indicated above, to rely solely on contingency-response requirements is an incomplete method for sizing forces—unless one can demonstrate that the force requirements for other tasks are contained within the contingency-response envelope in the force size/shape and time dimensions. But our objective should be to maintain sufficient force to shape events to achieve our objectives, not solely to clean up the mess after diplomacy and deterrence have failed. This means structuring and deploying forces to head off untoward events. For example, as we survey the current global strategic environment there are only three power centers that could eventually pose fundamental

Table 3

Military Functions in Regional Security

	East Asia	Europe	Middle East	Elsewhere
Environment shaping (long term)	Creating conditions where no single power is seen as military hegemon		Demonstrating that access to resources is vital U.S. interest	Precluding rise of major military power
	Making arms races unnecessary		Demonstrating that U.S. and Arab security interests are not irreconcilable	Improving security climate
	Encouraging orderly change			
Deterring threats (near and midterm)	Korea, SLOCs, residual CIS	Residual CIS	Iraq, Iran, Libya, SLOCs	Protecting U.S. citizens, property
Responding to contingencies (near term)	Korea	Residual Europe, Libya	Aggression in Gulf, against Israel, U.S. citizens	Drug traffic, countersubversion, counterterrorism

long-term challenges to the achievement of U.S. security objectives.[1] These centers are a future Western Europe (or a subset, perhaps led by a Germany that had drifted out of the NATO Alliance and the European Community), a future revived Russian state, and a future expansionist Chinese state.[2] These power centers are simply not plausible as *near-term* threats to U.S. security. Consequently, they are not central to U.S. force planning, and are often put in a strategic second tier with such nebulous phrases as "ensuring regional stability," "the United States is the least disliked among the major powers," "the United States is the only power capable of exercising effective military power on behalf of the world community," and so on. Thus, the uncertainty or vague strategic concern is identified but not defined in any meaningful way. Why? In part, the answer is found in the fact that it is politically painful to confront such unpleasantness as the prospect of a current ally becoming a future enemy (or a current enemy becoming a future ally).

For this reason and others, U.S. officials have had a difficult time articulating the rationale for an American role in preventing future conflict and fostering orderly change *over the long term*.[3] As delicate and difficult as this type of force rationale is to formulate and articulate, it has to "come out of the closet" and be made analytically and politically respectable if our true force needs—current and long term—are to be made visible and thus supportable by the Congress and the American people. Relying just on contingency response to define the envelope of U.S. force requirements is to be satisfied with the incomplete and the readily quantifiable, and to leave other important force drivers unaddressed. Force rationale, to be complete, must be based on the three categories addressed above: shaping, deterring, and responding. We shouldn't be surprised if the force needs vary

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[1]There are of course, other international players and regions that have a vital impact on U.S. security (e.g., the oil-producing regions of the Middle East, and much of Latin America). In using the term "power center" here I am talking about states or combinations of states that have (or could have) the power to directly pose a superpower challenge to the United States.

[2]Some would add a future expansionist Japan to this grouping. I deem such a conflict less likely, since it makes little sense to quarrel with your banker and trading partner on one hand and with your security guarantor and principal market on the other. But sense does not always prevail.

[3]Other reasons include the discomfort of many (in the United States and abroad) with casting the United States in the role of world policeman, the national-security establishment's fear that in raising the prospect of an ally turned enemy we appear skeptical of the effectiveness of current policies and strategies, and the "soft" nature of a rationale for forces that turns on difficult-to-prove (and often controversial) political judgments rather than quantitative analysis.

greatly across categories. I would suggest that much of the confusion and controversy over U.S. force requirements in Europe is based on a preoccupation with contingency response for what many consider to be implausible scenarios rather than the more pertinent case that needs to made for environment shaping. Simply stated, DoD—and many of its critics—are relying heavily on threat-based Cold War force paradigms to develop force requirements, when they should be paying more attention to the environment-shaping mission.

The added danger of a myopic focus on near-term contingency response to a less-than-world-class *current* threat is that it can lead to a decay in the development and fielding of important top-of-the-line capabilities needed to deal with a strong, technologically competent opponent in the future. Most of these potential future opponents lie in the imprecisely defined realm of future environments that we should be attempting to shape now to conform to our interests. *In focusing on the current, reasonably certain, and generally weak military threat, we are in danger of mortgaging our ability to deal with the future, less certain, and militarily strong threat.*

THE TYRANNY OF SCENARIO PLAUSIBILITY

> In using or interpreting a study of the future, there is a temptation to push too hard for consensus . . . [but] consensus can be misleading, particularly when an institution, an organization, or a society is in a period of change or subject to new, powerful, and unfamiliar forces and, therefore, there is an important role for the outlier, the deviant thinker, the unusual.[4]

A preoccupation with contingency response inevitably leads to the question, What contingencies? The tension between a demand for scenarios and a propensity to dismiss the scenarios of others as implausible places an unfair burden on those who must simultaneously be forward looking and yet cast realistic scenarios. The only really plausible scenario is the one already looming on the horizon and playing to the fears of those who have significant roles in national decisionmaking. Scenarios that remain *over* our plausibility horizon are plausible only if we can get to them by an agreed-upon path from current events. The scenarios that are over the horizon—yet nevertheless make a sudden preemptive strike on today's comfortable assumptions—lie in the category of unanticipated surprises. These surprises are usually consigned to the nether realm of "intelligence

[4]Coates and Jarrett (1992), p. 19.

failures." The fact of the matter is that the implausible scenario seems to occur as often as the one associated with the conventional wisdom. This oddity is portrayed in the simple matrix in Table 4. Its northwest box receives probably 90 percent of the attention from the force requirements community.[5]

These problems of omission suggest that there is no single collection of all-purpose scenarios that will do for current contingency planning, FYDP development, and system acquisition. The longer the planning horizon, the greater the role of the implausible (or the politically uncomfortable) scenario. The challenge for analysts is to offer a scenario framework—with appropriate labels—that makes it easier for officials in the executive and legislative branches of government to deal with the dilemma posed by those who insist that only the clear and present danger is plausible. Since the "implausible" is never believable until after it has occurred, we need a different terminology to provide a medium for productive discussion and debate before the event. I suggest that actual and hypothetical threats be grouped by time periods (near, mid, long range) and degree of *visibility*. When trying to qualify the unknown, "visible" is more accurate than "plausible." It conveys both the limitations of human prescience and the modesty the historical record suggests is warranted. The term "plausible scenario" should be given the same degree of respect as that accorded what is called the "conventional wisdom."

Table 5 suggests what one scenario framework would look like. Illustrative candidate scenarios are offered for each cell of the matrix. The reader is asked to modify the illustrative entries to suit his tastes. I

Table 4

Scenario Focus of Contemporary Force Analysis

	More Plausible	Less Plausible
Short Term	The domain of most current force analysis	The domain of "cranks" and special interests
Long Term	The domain of extrapolators of current trends	The domain of some futurists

[5]To test this assertion, the reader is asked to examine any document in the current security-strategy and force-sizing literature and allocate coverage given to each of the four cells of the matrix in Table 4. While conducting this exercise one should bear in mind that major system acquisition times (e.g., F-22, Centurion submarine) appear to be increasing to the 10–15 year range.

Table 5

A Framework for Scenarios

	Visible Scenarios	Less-Visible Scenarios	Least-Visible Scenarios
Near Term: 0–2 years The Domain of Contingency Planning	North Korean invasion of South Korea	Indo-Pakistani conflict	War between CIS states
Midterm: 3–10 years The Domain of Resource Planning	Iran/Iraq aggression in Gulf	Overthrow of Saudi monarchy	Civil war in major Latin American state
Long Term: 10+ years The Domain of Acquisition Planning	Russia reemerges as aggressor	Chinese aggression in Southeast Asia	Japan or Germany as military rival

suggest that all cells require near-equal emphasis, but with a different blend for each planning dimension (e.g., acquisition planning). Long-range acquisition scenario selection should not be bound to either the short term or the most visible scenarios. Rather, such selection should have some bias toward the southeast part of the matrix to counterbalance the natural focus on the first column.

The far right column of the matrix warrants some additional discussion. Along with those scenarios that are less visible because they are considered (for whatever reason) to be less likely, there is another group that might be called "less comfortable." These are the scenarios that are mentioned in whispers by responsible officials and shouted from the rooftops by some publicists and special interest groups.[6] Yet these scenarios ("worst case," "implausible," or "unthinkable" according to the conventional wisdom) must be included in the less-visible category. Rather than saying "They can't happen" (perhaps meaning we hope they won't happen), we should be saying "While they may happen, we don't see any clear path to such a conflict at the moment. And it is certainly not in the best interests of the countries involved to let it happen."

This category of scenarios leads us directly to the environment-shaping mission that I discussed in the previous section. We have an important interest in seeing that these least visible (and less comfortable) scenarios don't happen. There is no current threat to be de-

[6]For example, see Friedman and Lebard (1991) for scenarios that deal with a subject that serving officials have difficulty addressing directly.

terred, but there is the potential for one developing unless we play our hand skillfully. The way forces are deployed and employed has an important role to play in this mission.

While the focus on contingency response and the bias in favor of plausible scenarios detract from the completeness and thus the quality of current force planning, a more fundamental problem is the poorly understood connection between force-sizing parameters and the units of account used in force programming and budgeting. It is to that subject we now turn.

THE MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS DIMENSION TO FORCE SIZING

A look at the FYDP force tables suggests that the military is sized according to a short list of force end items, divisions, PAA fighter aircraft, aircraft carriers, battle force ships, and the like. The Congress and its agencies have a similar focus on such items because, in Willie Sutton's words, "That's where the money is."[7] The impact on the way forces fight is scarcely addressed except in the most cavalier way.[8] The issue here is not whether the Congress and its official and unofficial analysis arms have a responsibility to size (or suggest the size of) U.S. forces. Clearly they do. Providing resources, assessing risk, and ensuring the efficient use of resources is the responsibility of the nation's political leadership. But there is an intersection of interests between the best way to fight, deter, and shape with military forces and the resources made available to achieve those capabilities.

To put the matter baldly, it should be DoD's concern *how* the Army fights—whether by corps, divisions, or brigades. There is some range of quantity, quality, and mix of resources that experience and analysis shows is the best way to fight. DoD's leadership is properly held

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[7]For example, see the various Congressional Budget Office staff memoranda published in December 1991 on the subject of the costs of the Administration's plan for each service through the year 2010. To the CBO's credit, in its analysis it did focus on Army corps in addition to the customary attention to Army divisions.

[8]Fortunately, some of the analytic literature is better on this point. See Kugler (1992), in which he shows how programmatic reductions would affect USEUCOM's fighting organizations and how it would lose discrete combat capabilities under alternative resource-allocation schemes. A more modest but useful parallel effort is Shlapak and Davis (1991). Less useful is the Kaufmann and Steinbruner (1991) analysis that with a broad brush would reduce programmed forces, because the authors believe DoD has inflated the threat, and assumes the remaining forces would somehow be repostured to fit the smaller resource envelope.

accountable for defining what it is.[9] As resources diminish, the smaller amounts available reshape the mixture, require new assumptions (e.g., warning, mobilization), and change the outputs (e.g., an Army unit is supported to fight for 60 days instead of 90). At some point, because of much-maligned and often important support considerations (the cost of being in the business), the military outputs start falling off more rapidly than the resource inputs.[10]

What, then, are the units around which a service fights? Putting aside the important, but relatively small, joint task force organizations used in Grenada, Panama, and other such contingencies, I would assert that the Army fights with corps, the Navy with (usually carrier) battle forces, and the Air Force with numbered air forces with beefed-up planning and operational staffs. A look at post–World War II history confirms this point. The Eighth Army in Korea 1950–1953, MACV in Vietnam into the early 1970s, and ARCENT in Desert Storm fought as a group of Army corps. This means that the corps is the basic military unit with specific military objectives and (almost all) the means to achieve them. It contains from two to four divisions plus support echelons. The corps has always occupied the crucial realm of the operational art in the ground campaign.

Similarly, the Navy has fought as battle forces—in Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. A battle force comprises two to five carriers. One carrier is often adequate for the presence and deterrence roles, but in the business of warfighting the Navy depends on a grouping of three carriers, and a minimum of two. The reason for this is that there are certain support missions (e.g., combat air patrol, antisubmarine warfare) defined as much by the geography as by the threat. One informal rule of thumb is that a battle force's usable power goes up with the square of the number of carriers present.

The Air Force has fought using numbered air forces in Korea (5th), in Vietnam (7th and portions of the 13th), and in Desert Storm (9th/CENTAF). As in the Navy's case, it usually takes more than one tactical (or composite) wing to be effective in large contingencies. Al-

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[9]DoD is not immune to the virus of the inappropriate warfighting paradigm. The 1954 strategy (and force structure) built around "massive retaliation" is a case in point. See Summers (1992b), p. 10.

[10]One of the many useful contributions of the House Armed Services Committee report, *Defense for a New Era: Lessons of the Persian Gulf War*, April 1992, is the persuasive case for revisiting the tooth-to-tail issue (pp. 34–36). Other less-informed critics often belabor DoD for allegedly preserving tail at the expense of teeth, when tail (even headquarters-associated tail) is often vital for the effective employment of today's weapons systems.

though peacetime staffing of the numbered air forces has not been sufficient in most cases to support a combat command role, in wartime the staffs are augmented quickly to undertake the necessary combat direction tasks.[11]

The Marine Corps' basic combat organization is the MEF, which in fact is a combined-arms expeditionary corps in all but name. It is the basic Marine unit designed for a major expeditionary operation and was used in Vietnam and the Gulf War.

This discussion of the minimum size of effective fighting units suggests that the basic units of account are the corps, battle force, battle-configured numbered air force, and MEF. How many of each of these units can be afforded and the risk to be accepted (e.g., we can do a Desert Storm, but we can't do a Korea at the same time) are political judgments that benefit from military advice. But at this point some readers will say that the services must rethink the way they fight to fit the smaller resources envelope that will be available. The old way of doing business will not do in the post–Cold War era. This is an important point and must be addressed directly.

Implicit in that argument is an assumption that smaller service organizations, such as divisions, battle groups, Air Force tactical fighter wings, and a Marine brigade, can perform most of the functions of a larger unit—or that if we just mix the forces more efficiently, somehow the old capabilities will be preserved at less cost. What is lost in this line of reasoning is that the corps, battle force, numbered air force, and MEF already reflect efficiency calculations based on historical analysis and force modeling. Economy of force is a cardinal military principle. Forces are directed at the corps, battle force, etc., level to exploit to the maximum the forces available. At some point the economies of scale come into play in military operations just as they do in business ventures. The services are saying that those economies are most fully exploited at the corps, battle force, etc., level.[12]

If these minimum units are needed for warfighting, something less may be suitable for environment shaping and deterrence—in which

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[11]The current Air Force reorganization is intended, among other things, to improve the numbered air forces' ability to support a rapid transition to combat operations.

[12]I am not addressing the controversial service roles and functions issues raised by Senator Nunn. More analysis of these important issues is needed, but saying that there are issues is not the same as saying that there is unaffordable duplication of roles and missions across services. See "Powell Unlikely to Radically Reshape Military," *Air Force Times,* August 10, 1992, p. 22.

one is operating on the minds of others, not on their bodies. But a contrary argument can be made: more is needed to work on the minds if we are attempting to demonstrate will and commitment. Force sizing on the cheap is seldom fully convincing.

Force Sizing for the Mission of Shaping Future Events

Vacuums are an unnatural state of nature. When they occur, they are transient phenomena. In the political sense, the manner and substance of their disappearance ("filling") is a matter of profound importance to the future security of the United States. The presence of U.S. forces in more than token amounts is prima facie evidence of U.S. interest and commitment. Such presence and the demonstrated capability to augment it reassure those who fear other regional states. Moreover, it can head off or attenuate potential regional arms races. Note that this reassurance does not operate solely on U.S. allies and friends. It also reassures such states as China and Russia who fear each other as well as others (e.g., a future, more militarily powerful Japan). It reassures the states of Europe who fear a future resurgent Russia, a future maverick Germany, a threat to their oil supplies, and, in some cases, potential threats from lesser neighbors with whom they share a troubled history (e.g., Greece and Turkey).

These arguments in support of shaping future environments do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis and thus are difficult to cast in terms that support specific force levels. It is easier to assume that they are included within the force requirements defined by contingency-response calculations.[13] Moreover, the mission of shaping the security environment is sometimes construed as placing the United States in a policeman's role—a role that is anathema to some. The issue is often posed by a question: Why should the United States bear the burden of high force levels and forward deployments to protect others, when those others are wealthy enough to perform that function on their own? Or, put another way, why should the United States maintain forces overseas just so the Japanese, the Germans, the Chinese, or the Russians won't threaten their neighbors with their own high force levels?

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[13]I recognize that the military dimension of environment shaping is usually less important than the political and economic dimensions. However, I believe the military dimension often leverages the other two. Richard Kugler observes that the military component of stability is the significant factor in underwriting political and economic progress. In short, we need an adequate military to provide the conditions necessary to pursue our political and economic objectives. The argument is over what constitutes adequacy.

The answers to these questions lie in the nature of the path to past and possible future wars. Our experience tells us that we have been unable to avoid many conflicts that (initially at least) were not our quarrel. But in a future more multipolar, nuclear-proliferated world, our security interests are more closely if not yet more clearly engaged with events occurring elsewhere. For example, it is not in our interests that the Japanese, Germans, Chinese, or Russians (or anyone else) have such a fear of their neighbors that they embark on a major military armament program (or attempt to export destabilizing ideologies) that would threaten those neighbors or our interests. Our economic, political, and security interests are simply too widespread to permit ignoring an increase in international anxiety or major arms programs. Some would argue that the most cost-effective use of military force is in heading off future conflict, including conflicts that today look implausible.

Once one leaps the hurdle of accepting that there is a valid U.S. military role in looking beyond deterrence to prevent future conflicts, the question turns to how much U.S. presence and total force is enough. The simple answer is that the forces must be of sufficient size, structure, and readiness to be credible to the actors who have the capacity to destroy stability or the process of orderly change. While the optimal structure (or building blocks) is at root a political question, it is also a military one, as pointed out in the previous section.

If these force building blocks are too expensive in political and fiscal terms to maintain forward, a lesser force could serve if it were quickly and effectively expandable *and is perceived as such by important regional actors.* But this is a slippery slope: a contingent promise is gradually substituted for an observable fact.[14] Regional actors are quick to perceive the hollowing out of the commitment implicit in such phrases as "dual basing," "burden sharing," "round outs," and substituting strategic mobility for forward-based forces. The building blocks described earlier do much to explain the DoD rationale for forward-deployed forces in the predeterrence role. While some see the

[14]In a sense this divides the political art from the military art. The politician uses promises, illusions, and aspirations as a medium of exchange. The capital behind these promissory notes is conserved to exploit other openings or to reduce political costs. Thus, political leaders also believe in the principle of economy of force. Conversely, the military person uses concrete and visible capabilities to influence the minds (and if necessary, the bodies) of real and potential opponents. Thus, military men and some political realists tend to be skeptical of contingent commitments, reliance on warning, mobilization of reserves, and other paraphernalia that blur the distinction between expectation and fact.

building blocks as force builders, the military man would answer, "Those building blocks are the way we fight."

To illustrate this building block hypothesis, we can overlay our nominal modular structure of an Army corps, three Air Force tactical fighter wings (comprising a warfighting numbered air force), one MEF, and three carrier battle groups on the three major overseas deployment regions and see where we have excessive or deficient forces in place.[15] Table 6 portrays this overlay, using open-source descriptions of the base force for comparison.

Recall that we are discussing *credible* military capabilities appropriate for the predeterrence security environment, not capabilities tied solely to contingency response. Smaller capabilities convey decreased credibility. It is conceivable that we might need a corps based overseas for environment-shaping and deterrence purposes, while for contingency-response purposes we could plan on lifting most of that corps overseas under most circumstances of warning. The conventional wisdom today is that rapidly deployable force capabilities are a cost-effective substitute for in-place force capabilities, and by implication that what you need for contingency response is adequate for environ-

Table 6

Illustrative Active Force Requirements vs. Base Force Deployments for the Environment-Shaping Mission

	Europe	Pacific	Middle East	CONUS[a]
Army Corps				
Illustrative requirement	1	1	1	3
Base force proposed	1	1	0	2
USAF TFW				
Illustrative requirement	3	3	3	6
Base force proposed	3	3	1	8
USN CVBG				
Illustrative requirement	1	2	1	7
Base force proposed	1	2	1	8
MEF				
Illustrative requirement	0	1	0	2
Base force proposed	0	1	0	2

[a]CONUS-based forces provide the first echelon of reinforcement, the rotation base, and necessary force diversity (e.g., heavy vs. light divisions).

[15]The reader is reminded that this is an illustrative application of a methodology, not a prescriptive statement of force requirements.

ment shaping and deterrence. This line of argument suggests that rapid-lift capabilities are needed to respond to contingencies in places where we do not have forces or bases *and* to enable us to maintain most forces in the United States regardless of whether overseas basing is available for other contingencies.

FORCE SIZING FOR DETERRENCE

When we discuss environment shaping, we are identifying force needs associated with payoffs in the possibly distant future. Such force needs are the price of a security insurance policy—or effective preventive medicine, to use another metaphor. In addressing deterrence we move to a closer time frame: the threat exists or is emerging, and we must dissuade those who pose the threat of aggression.

The previously identified building blocks are also suitable units of account for quantifying deterrence-related force requirements. But in the deterrence case there is probably some opportunity to trade off forward-deployed forces against rapidly deployable CONUS-based (or other theater-based) forces. In environment shaping we are dealing with the perceptions of *many* regional actors, some of whom will not be persuaded by capabilities in other theaters. In deterrence we are dealing with a smaller number of regional actors who will make a more direct connection between what is in-theater and what can get there quickly enough to make a difference.[16] Table 7 gives one set of illustrative deterrence force requirements judgments. The validity of the numbers themselves is not essential to our analysis. What is

Table 7

Illustrative Force Requirements for Deterrence (Forward deployed)

	Europe (Non-CIS)	Pacific (North Korea)	Middle East (Iraq, Iran)	CONUS (Cuba, etc.)
Army corps	0	1	1	1
USAF TFW	1	3	3	3
Navy CVBG	1	2	2	3
Marine MEFs	0	1	0	1

[16]Some would argue the reverse: Deterrence is the more compelling case for substantial in-place, convincing military capabilities. There is merit to both sides of the argument. For the sake of illustration, the reader is asked to accept my reasoning in this example to illustrate that there is probably a difference between force requirements associated with environment shaping and those associated with deterrence.

important is to relate force needs to specific functions—deterrence, in this case.

FORCE SIZING FOR CONTINGENCY RESPONSE

This dimension of force sizing has been the focus of most of the current dialog between the Administration and the Congress. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) have developed alternatives to the DoD base force. The HASC has assessed the suitability of its proposed force in various contingency scenarios under specified assumptions as to the threat and U.S. force effectiveness. The CBO analyses were oriented toward costing alternative force sets.

RAND has conducted extensive research into force needs for a variety of scenarios. However, it has not developed a comprehensive DoD-wide set of force requirements for the contingency-response and other missions.[17] The purpose of the research documented in this report is to assist DoD in this effort by linking alternative strategies to associated force needs and then testing their robustness across missions (e.g., contingency response) and scenarios. Because much work has already been done on contingency-response requirements and more is in progress, and because there has been no apparent consensus yet on what those requirements are, the discussion that follows is intended to be more illustrative of a process than definitive as to force needs. The objective is to demonstrate a process of the totality of force requirements that might be derived using the current National Military Strategy.

Computing the forward-based forces needed for contingency response requires a calculus involving warning/decision times, closure rates, and theater base availability. Force analysts usually focus on total force requirements and the lift required to get those forces to the theater under some assumed time line. It is usually possible to write off the need for forward-based forces if one assumes that sufficient warning/decision time, bases, and reception and onward-movement capabilities exist to support the employment of CONUS-based forces. The force requirements shown below for contingency response are based on (not necessarily identical with) recent RAND analysis. Illustrative forward-deployed/total force requirements are shown in Table 8.

[17]However, RAND has looked at individual theater requirements and some individual service requirements. Taken as a whole, this work lacks a coherent strategic framework across theaters and services outside the generalities and constraints of the current National Military Strategy.

Table 8

Illustrative Force-Building Requirements for Contingency Response (Forward deployed/total needed by D+70)

	Europe (CIS)[a]	Pacific (North Korea)[a]	Middle East (Iraq, Iran)[b]	CONUS (Cuba, etc.)[a]	Total[c]
Army corps[d]	1/5	1/2–4	0/1	0/1	2/5–7
USAF TFW	3–4/20	2–3/5–12	2/8	0/3	7–9/15–27
Navy CVBG	1–2/8	1–2/2–4	2/4	0/3	4–6/7–13
MEFs	0/2	1/1–2	0/1	0/1	1/3–4

[a]Most stressing regional scenario is used.

[b]Forces shown are for defensive posture in Saudi Arabia.

[c]Total assumes simultaneous Pacific and Middle East scenarios plus continuing peacetime forward deployments in Europe, plus continuing CONUS presence/rotation base.

[d]An Army corps is assumed to have two to three divisions assigned. In most cases the third division could be a guard division.

SOURCES. Pacific, Korea: Winnefeld et al. (1992) and working papers prepared by Bruce Bennett, "Korean Force Requirements," March 1992 (prepared as input to a congressionally mandated Active/Reserve mix study). Europe: Kugler (1992). Middle East: Shlapak and Davis (1991). Other: "A Series of Global 1991 Wargaming Analyses," informal working papers prepared by RAND.

AGGREGATING AND CORRELATING FORCE REQUIREMENTS

The reader is reminded again that the force-requirements data displayed earlier in this essay are illustrative in that they are intended to illuminate the separate and distinct requirements associated with shaping the future, deterring opponents, and responding to contingencies. The "correct" data to be inserted in Tables 6, 7, and 8 are an appropriate subject for analysis and debate. Our hypothesis has been founded on these assumptions:

- The tabulated force data across tables are different.
- The contingency-response requirements do not necessarily define the envelope of the aggregated requirements.

Table 9 aggregates the data. The table is premised on the assumption that the requirements for deterrence and contingency response relate to simultaneous Pacific (e.g., Korea) and Middle East threats that have required some form of force deployment to deter or respond. The Middle East case selected (defending Saudi Arabia, not liberating Kuwait) leads to an understatement of aggregated requirements if

Table 9

Illustrative Composite Active/Reserve Requirements Based on Simultaneous Pacific and Middle East Scenarios for Deterrence and Response (Numbers in table refer to shaping/deterring/responding missions)

	Europe	Pacific	Middle East	CONUS/Other	Total
Army corps	1/0/1	1/1/3	1/1/1	3/1/1	6/3/6
USAF TFW	3/1/3	3/3/9	3/3/8	6/3/3	15/10/23
Navy CVBG	1/1/1	2/2/3	1/2/4	7/3/3	11/8/11
MEFs	0/0/0	1/1/1	0/0/1	2/1/1	3/2/3

Desert Storm is the model for future contingencies. The CONUS-based forces in the table provide the wherewithal to further reinforce the threatened/active theaters and to provide a rotation base. The aggregated data just barely support the argument that contingency response defines the envelope of force requirements. But for all except the Air Force tactical fighter wing, the environment-shaping requirement for forces is very close to the totals for contingency response. Our selective use of requirements data by theater and force component, and of the threats postulated, suggests the need for considerable care in accepting the primacy of the contingency-response requirement. More thorough analysis is needed. However, it is safe to say that the environment-shaping function can be a major sizing and deployment driver in force planning. In the absence of thorough analysis it should not be assumed that it lies within the contingency force requirement envelope, either quantitatively or qualitatively. Even if the contingency-response requirement is larger, as our illustrative data show in this case, the environment-shaping mission may require different kinds of forces, differently deployed, and differently supported from those purchased primarily for contingency response.

Aside from these fundamental points, there are a number of other inferences that can be drawn from Table 9.

- Deterrence has ceased to be the major force driver that it was during the Cold War. However, to the degree we fail to shape the future to our liking, new threats will emerge and the deterrence component of the force requirements calculus will increase.
- There *is* a difference between shaping and deterrence requirements.

- Efforts to base force requirements for Europe on deterrence (and possibly contingency response) are misguided in view of the central role of U.S. force presence in environment shaping.
- Maritime force requirements are driven as much or more by environment-shaping and deterrence requirements than by response requirements—in part because of important rotation base considerations.
- A future European contingency—say, less than responding to a full-blown Russian threat but as big as a Desert Storm—would have a profound effect on total contingency requirements.[18]

Implications for Current Force Structure Dialog

Table 9 suggests that both the DoD position (as articulated by Secretary Cheney) and the congressional position (as articulated by Chairman Aspin) are in the force sizing "ballpark." The differences lie principally in the importance placed on the environment-shaping mission and the associated investment in forces, and in the related issue of the future role of Europe in U.S. security. The United States could be competently *defended* by either force. Chairman Aspin believes that a response capability is adequate and that the forces needed are somewhat fewer than those in DoD's base force. Secretary Cheney believes that something more than a response capability is needed if we are to maintain the "strategic depth" we have achieved as a result of the Persian Gulf War and the "quiet victories" against communism and the Soviet Union. Thus, the issue turns not on some precise calculation of what was or was not needed to win in the Gulf or will be needed to defeat the future Saddams, but on our vision of our future role in global affairs and the leverage that military power provides in achieving it.

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[18]This raises the question of whether, except for an active Corps (and commensurate USAF forces) in Europe and an immediate reinforcing corps in CONUS, the Guard and Reserve should be given the primary mission of providing *all* the follow-on forces for a European contingency.

4. STRATEGY AS THE DRIVER OF FORCES: THE NEGLECTED ELEMENT IN THE CURRENT FORCE-SIZING DEBATE

> History is littered with wars which everybody knew would never happen. —Enoch Powell

INTRODUCTION

To paraphrase a popular saying, we might observe that "A fool and his security are soon parted." The United States today enjoys a greater degree of security than it has in over five decades. Though there are many who still wish us ill, there is no single super or world power enemy who *today* can pose a major threat to our security.[1] The twin victories of the Cold War and the 1991 Gulf War have given the United States powerful levers as it decides its own security destiny. The choices the United States makes in its security strategy, its foreign policy, and its deployment of its resources will be the principal determinants of whether the nation and its security "are soon parted."

This essay examines some of those choices by considering a range of national military strategies that might be adopted by the current or future administrations—as a result of policy choice or by the force of circumstance. It starts with the simple assumption that the international security environment can stay the same, improve, or deteriorate. We don't know which of the three paths it will take. But many Americans believe that the choices the United States makes can decisively influence the direction of movement—whether it is improvement or deterioration. Many of these same Americans are willing to bet the nation's future internal welfare and external security on what they believe will be the direction of movement. For example, some see a more benign world with the demise of the old Soviet threat (and little indication that new commensurate threats will emerge) as justification for a much smaller U.S. defense posture. Others, now a minority, see that the threat has taken a different form but believe that the United States still needs a large defense establishment to protect it from the unknown, the uncertain, and the unpredictable. Between these extremes lies the Department of Defense, which supports a posture that is smaller, because the world has changed, but is still

[1]Assuming a stable strategic nuclear balance and rational actors in control of the world's nuclear arsenals.

large, because history teaches that in all the wars fought in this century, save one, the United States has been unprepared at the outset and paid a high price for its neglect.

A SIMPLE MODEL OF ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

One simplistic formulation of the state of creation is that it is composed of three parts: heaven, hell, and earth. Much of the strife the world has experienced has been the result of confusing one with the other, particularly as that confusion applies to predicted or desirable futures. Our starting point is less ambitious: we simply don't know whether the current state of the world—whatever one believes it to be—will change for better or worse. Those with an activist turn of mind believe our current actions can have a decisive effect on the future state that is realized. Others with a more fatalistic outlook and a more modest view of human capabilities and limitations believe that we will be presented with a different world and that the best we can do is to prepare ourselves for it. A third group, comprising most of the world's political leaders, strives to shape the future world *and* do their best to prepare their states for the possible failure of their efforts. These uncertainties and their effect on strategy are portrayed in Figure 1.

In this, the final essay, I sketch out three alternative states of the world as a basis for considering alternative U.S. national military strategies.

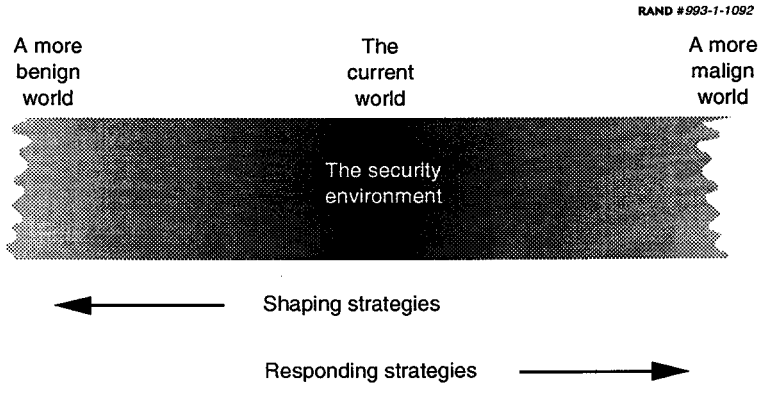

Figure 1—Alternative Futures

The Current World Extrapolated into the Future

> The most common source of failure [in forecasting] is the mechanized extrapolation of trends.[2]

The current world situation could project into the indefinite future. The postwar world shaped by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 lasted until 1914, if one makes allowances for such periodic disturbances as the Franco-Prussian War and major intramurals such as the American Civil War. During that prolonged interval the world was defined by a rough balance of power within the old Europe that gradually extended to the world as the United States and Japan became major powers. When the balance was altered—the confluence of long-term trends such as the growth of German power with the spark of Sarajevo—a global conflict, albeit centered in Europe, was launched. It is conceivable that the West's victory in the Cold War could be transformed into a global peace that will endure for many years.

This extrapolated world would not look like the current world in every particular any more than the agrarian, monarchic world of 1815 looked like the industrial, partially democratic world of 1914. Wars might be fought in this projected world, but they would not upset the fundamental balance achieved by a benign American military and political leadership buttressed by the economic strength of Western Europe and East Asia. New actors might emerge to replace some of the old, or to contend with them, but enduring stability founded on modulated change would be the basic characteristic of this largely stasis world.

As the United States *responded* to the events in this world, its military strategy would be focused on the twin objectives of stability and protection of U.S. interests. As in Desert Storm, the United States would be ready to intervene militarily—with allies if possible, without them if need be. Through diplomatic, economic, and military means, the United States would work for stability and peaceful change by attempting to resolve conflicts and contribute to peacekeeping efforts.

As the United States attempted to *shape* events to continue this world, it would maintain sufficient military power and deploy it as necessary to head off arms races and other forms of conflict among antagonistic regional powers. In this world, the United States is not so much trying to improve matters (though that is not ruled out) as it

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[2]Coates and Jarrett (1992), p. 18.

is endeavoring to insure that change is measured, nonviolent, evolutionary, and not detrimental to U.S. interests.

Many find this stasis world attractive, and would prefer it to a more benign world in which the United States wielded relatively less influence and was obliged to act more in concert with others, and obviously to a more malign world where it was caught up in the priorities and disruption of a new cold war—or worse. Attractive or not, the United States has to be prepared to navigate in this stasis world. It is here now and may define the future.

A More Benign World

> A third belief [shared by futurists] is that we can influence the future.[3]

This world has a compelling attraction for most of mankind. It is a world in which the basic human needs of a growing world population would be met with a growing pool of resources, a pool increased by the lesser likelihood of war and the expense of preparing for it. It is a world of growing international institutions—not military alliances, but vehicles of economic and political cooperation. It is a world of arms control, free trade, effective disease and famine control, sharing by the wealthy with the needy, international cooperation in dealing with global environmental problems, and so on. It is also a world in which American influence, while still important, would probably be less and in which American resources would have to be shared. The United States would be more constrained in any attempt to secure its national interests by unilateral action. A self-reliant, proud, resourceful, frontiersman America would become a member of a larger, international, highly integrated world society. It would find its global leadership capabilities both more important and *relatively* less powerful at the same time.[4]

Many would argue that with the end of the Cold War and the increased vitality and spread of democratic institutions globally, we are well launched down the path toward this more benign world. Accidents and other setbacks may happen along the way, but we will need less military force to respond to any contingencies that do occur, since they will be fewer, smaller, and less frequent. Moreover, larger U.S.

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[3]Coates and Jarrett (1992), p. 14.

[4]This world is described in part in a recent Carnegie Endowment for International Peace report, *Changing Our Ways: America and the New World*, Washington, D.C., 1992, pp. 1–6.

forces will be counterproductive, since they might foster rivals and would draw upon resources that could better be used in international development and domestic renewal.

As the United States *responded* to this world, it would steadily reduce its forces as international security institutions gradually took hold. U.S. forces would be postured more to act as part of an international force than as unilateral or coalition intervention forces. Nuclear weapons, because they are tightly controlled and much fewer in number, would be reduced to an absolute doomsday countervalue minimum. Forces that are considered destabilizing because they hamper progress toward this world would not be fielded. Such forces include missile defenses, major new military technologies, nuclear weapons, and long-strike weapons of all kinds.

As the United States attempted to *shape* this world, it would take the lead in arms control initiatives and take major risks to demonstrate its willingness to start deescalation of any residual arms races. The United States would attempt to give international institutions—particularly the UN and the Conference on Security Cooperation in Europe—more security and military clout as well as their own international forces and drawing rights on national forces. The United States would forgo that part of its global military security role that it has exchanged in the past for economic advantage or protection. In other words, the role of the United States in Northeast Asia and Western Europe would be defined less in military or security terms and more in political and economic terms. The leverage lost would be made up by using the released military resources and commitments to foster greater U.S. economic competitiveness.

In this world, economic competitiveness would have to be more closely regulated by international bodies, and there would be some attendant loss of national sovereign rights. Simply put, the world would be facing many of the strains that post-Maastrict Europe is encountering. Nations would no longer be able to go it alone economically as much as they do today in spite of the GATT, IMF, G7, and other international economic regimes. In this better world, military competition is eschewed for greater but much more regulated economic competition. In most cases, sanctions would be economic and political, not military. But at the extreme, violators could be faced with some form of military pressure from the global community.

A disturbing element of this more benign world, as we view it from 1992, is the nagging doubt that the nation has not thought through

the intersecting effects of a myriad of policies (each attractive when standing alone) that create an aggregate world in which the United States is a diminished power with less of a voice in its own destiny. In this world the luxuries of "Japan bashing" or criticism of the agricultural interests that define many policies of the European Community would have to be channeled into less controllable (by the United States) venues. Advocates of this more benign world would say "it is about time" that we took a larger view of our responsibilities in a world that must grow closer together as it faces major health, environmental, and political institutional problems (to name a few).

A More Malign World

> A study of the future often reveals circumstances or trends that cannot be significantly influenced but that nevertheless must be coped with.[5]

This world has few advocates, but it has many who predict it. The former include hatemongers, some losers in the Cold War, and those who find more opportunity in troubled than in quiet waters. Dean Rusk is alleged to have remarked that at any given time more than half of the world's people are awake and that some of them are up to no good. More to our point, this is the world that many fear will result in spite of our best efforts to prevent it.[6] This world could take many forms: a renewal of the Cold War in a different form (perhaps with different opponents), major regional conflicts possibly involving nuclear or chemical weapons, a return to international instability of the type experienced before the onset of the two World Wars, a powerful ideological or religious movement led by an irresponsible charismatic figure that challenged the basic assumptions of not only the stasis world, but the more benign world we have described. The response of many to these fears is not to hope, but to prepare for the worst. They represent "survivalists" on a global scale. The skeptics of this view would respond that hope is not enough, you must work to achieve the better world and may have to take some risks to achieve it. Regardless of the merits of the arguments of the two sides, fear shapes them both: fear that the worst will come and fear that the best may elude us—or even fear that things will remain as they are.

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[5]Coates and Jarrett (1992), p. 18.

[6]See Flexner and Flexner's tongue-in-cheek *A Pessimist's Guide to History* (1992) for a catalog of how things have gone (badly) wrong in the past in spite of often heroic efforts to prevent disaster.

A disturbing element of this vision of a more malign world is the possibility that we may have created a self-fulfilling prophecy.[7] This possibility is based on more than the old arms race spiral bugaboo that so captured the imagination of writers of the 1920s and 1930s and enjoyed a revival during the Cold War. We may have entered the domain of the law of unintended consequences. Actions that are taken to protect one state's interests (and have no larger intent) result in the emergence of failures elsewhere—perhaps even at home. A strong case can be made for this thesis on the basis of the Soviet economic collapse. Actions taken to shore up the state's security and create a major heavy industrial base led to lethal economic dysfunction. The result has been a dangerous degree of instability as national antagonisms flare and the custody of nuclear weapons is transformed into a political bargaining chip.[8]

As the United States attempted to *respond* to this more malign world it would maintain or strengthen its security alliances even in the absence of a visible immediate threat. Forces would be strengthened or maintained at high levels. They would be deployed to trouble spots not just to head off untoward events, but to be better postured to respond if needed. Nuclear forces would in particular be maintained at high levels. Arms control efforts in all fields would be limited to only those activities where the payoff was clear and immediate and the risk negligible. In some respects, this is America in a new Cold War—or worse, engaged in a major hot war.

As the United States attempted to *shape* this world it would try to weaken its potential enemies and shore up its friends. Security guarantees would be extended. Deterrence would take on renewed relevance. International institutions would be viewed more as adjuncts to the U.S. security establishment—to be exploited or disregarded consistent with U.S. and coalition interests rather than as engines of global prosperity and welfare. As conditions got more acute, the focus of policy and resource allocation would flow to the near term at the expense of the long term. A not very attractive world, but suppose one finds oneself in it in spite of a "personal best" to head it off?

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[7]Fukuyama (1992) makes a similar point in his criticism of foreign policy "realists" who see "competition and war [as] inevitable by-products of the international system" (p. 247). His realists look very much like the low-risk strategies to be discussed below.

[8]Coates and Jarrett (1992, p. 15) state that one of the shared beliefs of futurists is that "based on the evidence, . . . side effects of the human enterprise will increasingly dominate the future. . . . Whatever we do will be accompanied by unplanned side effects."

The two extreme views we have described rest on unthinking hope on the one hand and unthinking fear on the other. Since neither prevails today, we are left with the present defined by a mixture of hope and fear. Variations of this mixture are the parents of alternative military strategies. The alternative worlds we have defined, then, become a test of the strategies: how well are the strategies suited to a future we cannot predict with certainty? Before assessing the strategies, we must first define them.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

> Figuring out future American strategy is a puzzle involving guesses whose worth won't be proven out for decades, or until a crisis looms.[9]

The most obvious alternative strategy is the current regional defense strategy articulated in the National Military Strategy document and put in programmatic terms by the base force concept.[10] This strategy is rooted in the Bush administration's view of the future: more benign than during the Cold War, but still subject to major uncertainties and the unknowable. Other strategies are premised on different views and objectives for the future. At one extreme we might put what Kaufmann and Steinbruner call the "Cooperative Security Option."[11] This option rejects what they call "unregulated international competition" and calls for greater internationalization of security strategies and national forces. At the other extreme we might have a strategy tailored for a future renewal of the Cold War (perhaps with different opponents). This strategy would be based on the need and capability for decisive unilateral action when needed to counter a major and competent enemy. It might require a return to a force of the size and composition of the Cold War force. I call it the low risk strategy.[12] A fourth alternative is, compared to the extreme strategies, closer to the Administration's regional defense strategy, but lies to the left of it. It is what might be called the single major contingency strategy. While in many respects similar to the regional de-

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[9]Editorial in *Washington Post*, May 27, 1992.

[10]The Defense Planning Guidance document also contains a strategy formulation, but the focus of that document is resource programming.

[11]Kaufmann and Steinbruner (1991), pp. 67–76.

[12]Of course, such a strategy might not be "low risk" at all, as its opponents would quickly point out. I use the term "low risk" to signify preparedness to react to worst-case situations. Almost any label one places on this strategy will draw fire from its opponents or supporters. Such alternative labels include: fortress America, renewed Cold War, hedging, America first, and peace through strength.

fense strategy, it is based on the premise (risk) that fewer forces can do most of what the Administration's strategy is designed to do. Smaller peacetime force deployments and planning on a smaller number of major contingencies occurring simultaneously are its hallmarks.

I will now flesh out these four strategies and their associated forces. But first I am obliged to examine the roots of the strategies: the national and military objectives of each.

Objectives

The 1992 National Security Strategy, and its companion, the 1992 National Military Strategy, set out the "National Interests and Objectives in the 1990s." These are as follows:

1. Interest: The survival of the United States as a free and independent Nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure.

   Included National Objectives:

   a. Deter any aggression that could threaten the security of the United States and its allies and—should deterrence fail—repel or defeat military attack and end conflict on terms favorable to the United States, its interests and its allies.
   b. Effectively counter threats to the security of the United States and its citizens and interests short of armed conflict, including the threat of international terrorism.
   c. Improve stability by pursuing equitable and verifiable arms control agreements, modernizing our strategic deterrent, developing systems capable of defending against limited ballistic missile strikes, and enhancing appropriate conventional capabilities.
   d. Prevent the transfer of militarily critical technologies and resources to hostile countries or groups, especially the spread of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and associated high technology means of delivery.
   e. Reduce the flow of illegal drugs into the United States by encouraging reduction in foreign production, combating international traffickers and reducing demand at home.

2. Interest: A healthy and growing U.S. economy to ensure opportunity for individual prosperity and resources for national endeavors at home and abroad.

Included National Objective:

a. Ensure access to foreign markets, energy, mineral resources, the oceans, and space.

3. Interest: Healthy, cooperative and politically vigorous relations with allies and friendly nations.

Included National Objectives:

a. Strengthen and enlarge the commonwealth of free nations that share a commitment to democracy and individual rights.
b. Strengthen international institutions like the United Nations to make them more effective in promoting peace, world order, and political, economic, and social progress.

4. Interest: A stable and secure world, where political and economic freedom, human rights, and democratic institutions flourish.

Included National Objectives:

a. Maintain stable regional military balances to deter those powers that might seek regional dominance.
b. Aid in combating threats to democratic institutions from aggression, coercion, insurgencies, subversion, terrorism, and illicit drug trafficking.

A fundamental assumption in this report is that the majority of these interests and objectives are accepted as valid by the American people and by leaders in the executive and legislative branches. While some would downplay the military dimension and emphasize the political, social, and economic dimensions, there is fundamental agreement. Disagreements would be more over priority and emphasis than content.[13]

If this assumption is correct, the differences reflected in alternative views of strategy and force posture have their roots elsewhere: in the objectives of military strategies, in their strategic concepts, and in perspectives of acceptable risk. If the national security debate on different strategies and force levels is to be productive, it must start with an understanding of the differences among the objectives of dif-

[13]For example, proponents of the cooperative security strategy (to be defined below) might place national interest 3 first in the order of presentation and downplay or eliminate the emphasis on military balance and the more military aspects of countering aggression and insurgencies explicit in national interest 4. Moreover, some would quarrel with the programmatic content of national objective 1c (ballistic missile defense and improved nuclear deterrent).

ferent strategies. In the discussion that follows, I attempt to define those differences.

1. Objectives of the Current National Military Strategy (Regional Defense Strategy)

The current national *military* strategy does not explicate its objectives in terms other than support for the national *security* strategy and its objectives. Rather, it sets out "foundations and principles" and goes on to emphasize a potential regional conflict as the principal threat to national security. The objectives of the national military strategy must be deduced from official statements on related matters. In my view, the U.S. national military strategy has these objectives:

- Maintain military capabilities to help *shape* the future security environment, recognizing that the future is likely to be an "uncertain world [where] we face . . . the unknown and unexpected."[14]
- Maintain the capability to *deter,* and if need be, react rapidly and *decisively* to regional military conflicts, *even if several occur (or threaten to occur) simultaneously.*
- While mindful of the need for concerted international action and allied support in response to aggression, be prepared to act unilaterally if our vital interests so require.
- Maintain U.S. global military leadership in terms of military capabilities, use of advanced technology, and forward force deployments.
- Maintain U.S. nuclear forces to deter nuclear use by others, and use them as a hedge against the emergence of an overwhelming conventional threat.

These objectives convey a guarded, conservative, and worried view of how the future might unfold—a view perhaps focused midway between the current and more malign worlds I have described. While they do not represent a worst-case view, they do represent a high de-

[14]There has been some considerable furor in the press and among pundits and academics as to whether this means the United States should strive to remain the only superpower—and to keep any candidates (e.g., Germany and Japan) from emerging. A more productive formulation would be in this form: It is not in the interests of the United States or the world community to see the emergence of a new totalitarianism (with global reach) on the Nazi, Imperial Japan, or Soviet models. Few responsible observers would quarrel with such a statement, yet that is the true intent of the discredited "no new superpower" objective. The capability to *shape* future environments includes removing the incentives for arms races or antisocial international behavior. There is an important military element to such a capability.

gree of skepticism about the early emergence of the benign world I described earlier. Believers in these objectives are worried about the direction of future events in Europe and the inability to adequately forecast them. They see the Middle East as a still very dangerous place that might once again require U.S. intervention. The prospect of a nuclear-armed North Korea is frightening not only for its immediate impact on regional security, but also for its effect on keeping nuclear proliferation under control. The objectives do not foreclose the possibility of a malign world and are based on a perception that there are sufficient problems in the stasis world to warrant keeping our guard up.

2. Objectives of the Cooperative Security Strategy

While there are many possible combinations of objectives that might form the basis of a cooperative security strategy, I have used the Kaufmann-Steinbruner (1991) formulation to deduce the objectives described here:

- Establish and use international mechanisms to regulate military deployments on the assumption that the participating military organizations of contributing states are on the same side.
- Use military forces to reassure rather than intimidate. All use of external force is based on international action.
- Reduce the capability of U.S. forces to take unilateral action on the assumption that national retention of the means of unilateral force application is destabilizing.
- Reserve the use of force for preventing aggression rather than responding to unanticipated acts of aggression.

Kaufmann and Steinbruner recognize that these objectives are not attainable quickly. Rather, they believe that as we achieve them we should progressively change our strategy, policies, and forces. They also see the need for much more rigorous technology, arms control, and arms trade regimes than are currently in place. Lawbreakers under these more rigorous regimes would face powerful economic sanctions. Kaufmann's and Steinbruner's implied objectives convey an optimistic view of the future and a willingness to take not insubstantial risks to achieve it. Clearly their focus here is on a more benign world.

In one important respect, the Kaufmann-Steinbruner formulation closely resembles the objectives associated with the Administration's regional defense strategy: the use of military force to shape the fu-

ture environment to our liking—to make deterrence and contingency response unnecessary. Where they differ is in their perception of whether such shaping efforts might fail, and what is needed to hedge against such a failure. Moreover, they differ in their methods used for environment shaping. Critics would question the attainability of the requisite degree of international support in view of the failure of past and current efforts in the multinational use of force.[15] They would also point out that eschewing a unilateral intervention capability could put vital U.S. interests at risk. U.S. interests are not always identical with the interests of the larger international community as they are defined by the UN or other international organizations (e.g., OAS).

Supporters of the Kaufmann-Steinbruner formulation would state that more innovative and statesmanlike U.S. international leadership can overcome the problems cited and that the country's leading role in the post–Cold War and post–Gulf War eras gives it a unique opportunity to do so.

3. Objectives of the Low Risk Strategy

This strategy and its objectives have no comprehensive and integrated formulation in the post–Cold War security literature. They have to be deduced from the scattered views and writings of those who believe the United States has gone too far in reducing its military capabilities to base force levels and that it cannot rely on current allies and security regimes to safeguard vital U.S. interests. Popularly portrayed as hawks or unreconstructed cold warriors, these individuals are more accurately described as ardent skeptics and advocates of low risk. The glass is half empty rather than half full. They clearly fear a more malign world. Ironically, some otherwise "dovish" members of the Congress are numbered among them on specific issues (e.g., believing the Seawolf submarine is indeed necessary because no one knows for sure what the future holds). But also among their number are those of the "never again" (should the United States be caught unprepared) school. Veterans organizations (representing those who paid the price of policy and strategy failure) and hardware contractors (who have much to gain or preserve in continued high levels of military investment) are often members of this group.

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[15]For example, the League of Nations experience in responding to aggression in Ethiopia and Spain, the UN experience in Korea, the thinness of the international veneer on coalition operations in the 1991 Gulf War, NATO's inability to agree on out-of-area use of force, and NATO/EC/CSCE/UN difficulties in supporting peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia.

The objectives of the low risk strategy might be set out as follows:

- Be militarily prepared to deal with the new security challenges as well as with the residual dangers of the Cold War world.
- Be prepared to intervene with military forces not only to protect nonshared vital interests, but also to provide a strong nucleus around which international response capabilities can be built.
- Maintain Cold War security structures and most deployments as a bulwark against the probable emergence of new opponents.
- Retain U.S. military technological superiority in all relevant weapons types, including nuclear delivery and defense systems.

These objectives convey a suspicious view of the durability of recent cheering events on the international security scene and a belief that future nasty surprises are a certainty.[16] For every Cambodia there is a Yugoslavia. For every democratic success in Eastern Europe there is a future Tiananmen Square. For every democratic election on the Chamorro model in Nicaragua there are less promising elections on the Jordanian and Algerian models. For every Ceaucescu gunned down there is a Kim Il Sung or a Castro in power thumbing his nose at international opinion. In the view of the low riskers, security has a fundamental military dimension. Nuclear proliferation, the breakdown of the Cold War security regime, and the emergence of new power centers and sources of instability promise more future horrors than beneficences.

4. Objectives of the Single Major Contingency Strategy

This strategy is implicit in Chairman Aspin's force option C.[17] The fundamental assumption behind all his options is the low probability of two simultaneous regional contingencies requiring major U.S. air, ground, and naval forces and the future need for major peacetime force deployments to Europe. Aspin's formulation is deficient in not adequately specifying the underlying context, objectives, and military strategy for his force structure.[18] His objectives, or more accurately force-sizing principles, appear to be as follows:

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[16]See Fukuyama (1992), pp. 249–253, for one observer's description of this view (a view Fukuyama does not share).

[17]See Aspin (1992b).

[18]His several papers on this subject suggest agreement with the Administration's regional defense strategy *except* for full posturing for two simultaneous major contingencies and the need for a corps-sized force (and supporting elements) in Europe. He is willing to accept the risk inherent in posturing for one (or one and a half, if one in-

- Force requirements are defined by threats and the need to respond to them. As threats change, forces should change commensurately.
- Either threats are visible and we must posture to meet them, or they are not visible and we will have adequate time to respond to them appropriately.
- Uncertainty about future events is insufficient in and of itself to justify retention of large forces whose relationship to visible threats is at best unclear.
- Adequate lift can be a more cost-effective substitute for forward force deployments.
- The principal function of U.S. forces is to respond to contingencies. Forces of adequate size and composition for this function are also adequate for such less easily quantified missions of environment shaping and deterrence.[19]
- The United States will maintain conventional forces adequate to respond to one major regional contingency, and selected force elements to deal with a second if it were to occur simultaneously.

These objectives are closer to those associated with the current regional defense strategy than the two bounding strategies. But they convey a more optimistic view of the world than the regional defense strategy's objectives: enemies are fewer and will not concert their actions, a new superpower threat on the Cold War model is highly unlikely and will be heralded by adequate warning, and perhaps most importantly, contingency response is an adequate basis for military strategy and associated forces. It is a stripped-down version of the current regional defense strategy's objectives, based on a self-assured vision of future events and what forces might be required. Its focus lies somewhere between a current world and a more benign one.

Strategic Concepts

A variety of strategic and operational concepts could be grouped under each set of objectives and its derivative strategy. The "bumper sticker" phrases in Table 10 are the result of plumbing current writ-

cludes his posturing for an air option for the defense of Korea) contingency and in eliminating a corps-size rapid-response capability in Europe.

[19]This formulation takes considerable liberty with Aspin's rationale. His force-sizing papers rarely address the environment-shaping and deterrence functions directly.

Table 10

Operational Concepts Associated with Alternative Strategies

1. Regional Defense	2. Cooperative Security	3. Low Risk	4. Single Major Contingency
Prompt, massive contingency response	Prompt international deterrence response	Prompt massive contingency response	Prompt, sustained contingency response
Major forward deployments	Deployments IAW international guidelines	Major forward deployments	Major reliance on lift
Balanced forces	Defensive forces	Major offensive forces	Bias toward air and naval forces
Postured for 2 simultaneous major regional wars	Regional wars deterred	Postured for 2+ regional contingencies	Postured for 1+ simultaneous major regional wars
Shaping role of forces as important as contingency response	Shaping is the key role	Deterrence and contingency response are primary	Contingency response is primary
Minimum reliance on current defined threats	Threats readily identified and promptly countered	Uncertain future is the threat; major threat will emerge	Heavy reliance on current, visible threats
Major unilateral response capability is basis for international response	International response is the norm	Minimal reliance on international support	Rationalization of U.S. posture to fit allied capabilities
Nuclear forces for deterrence and to counter massive conventional forces	Minimum nuclear forces consistent with basic counter value	Major nuclear capabilities across conflict spectrum	Nuclear forces for deterrence and to counter massive conventional forces

ing on such concepts and suggest those that match best with the strategy alternatives.

The salient features of each of the four strategies can be compared in more discrete terms across selected dimensions, as indicated in Table 11. Note that the table makes no judgments as to the benefit realized from the specified degree of emphasis.

If we limit comparison to the dimensions specified in Table 11 and weight each dimension equally, we see that the highest degree of cor-

Table 11

A Summary Comparison of Strategies

Dimension	1. Regional Defense	2. Cooperative Security	3. Low Risk	4. Single Major Contingency
Emphasis on shaping	High	High	Medium	Low
Emphasis on deterrence	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Emphasis on contingency response	High	Low	High	High
Emphasis on international effort	Medium	High	Low	Medium
Reliance on prompt massive response	High	Low	High	Medium
Reliance on visible threats	Medium	Low	Low	High
Degree of hedging against uncertainty	Medium	Low	High	Low

respondence is between strategy 1 (regional defense) and strategy 4 (single major contingency). The next highest correspondence is between strategies 1 (regional defense) and 3 (low risk). The next highest is between strategies 2 (cooperative security) and 4 (single major contingency). As we might expect, the lowest degree of correspondence is between strategies 2 (cooperative security) and 3 (low risk). But the real lesson here is that *the strategies are indeed different,* since even the most closely related strategies are similar in only three of seven dimensions. It should be no surprise that the force requirements that flow from them are different as well. It is to that subject that we now turn.

THE FORCES

If we assume that the low risk force is identical to the Cold War force, we have an adequate description of the force requirements associated with each strategy expressed in terms of major warfighting end items.[20]

[20]The regional defense/base force totals are drawn from the National Military Strategy document, the low risk force from the 1991 FYDP, the single major contingency force from option C of the Aspin force papers, and the cooperative strategy force from Kaufmann and Steinbruner (1991). The low risk force is in effect the force that helped win the Cold War.

As Table 12 suggests, the regional defense force lies about midway between the low risk and the single regional contingency forces in all dimensions except nuclear forces and carriers. These exceptions are also the principal differences between the single regional contingency and the cooperative security forces.

Forward Deployments in Peacetime

Except for the regional defense strategy (base) force, most force structure essays and some analyses are deficient in identifying with precision the effects of force reductions on overseas deployments in peacetime.[21] Those shown in Table 13 are based on the available published material, but are not definitive.

While adding disparate force units of account is misleading, if not flat wrong, it is clear that the regional defense (base) force lies somewhere between the low risk and single contingency forces in size. The correlation between the regional defense force and the low risk force is closest—the principal difference being the larger number of deployed

Table 12

Comparative Active Force Requirements Across Strategies

	1. Regional Defense	2. Cooperative Security	3. Low Risk	4. Single Major Contingency
Army corps (2–3 divisions each)	4	3	6	3
CVBF (3 CVBG each)	4	2	5	4
Air task forces (3 TFW equivalent each)	5	3	7	3 1/3
MEFs	2 1/3	3	3	2
SAC bombers	215	40	266	215
SLBM tubes	432	240	480	432

[21]DoD is explicit as to where reductions are taken. See the 1992 National Military Strategy. Kaufmann and Steinbruner (1991) in defining their cooperative security force are particularly vague in this respect, but somewhat more forthcoming in defining the overseas deployments associated with their other force posture options ("three standard options"). See pp. 58–61. Aspin (1992c) addresses deployments in general terms (Sec. III). For the low risk force we use the 1988 Cold War force deployments, except that only one "capable corps" is left in Europe; the other is brought home and kept ready in deployable status.

Table 13

Peacetime Force Deployments

	1. Regional Defense	2. Cooperative Security	3. Low Risk	4. Single Major Contingency
Europe				
Corps	1	0	1	1/2
Air task force (3 TFW equivalent)	1	1/3	3	2/9
CVBF	1/3	1/6	2/3	1/3
MEF	1/9	1/9	1/9	1/9
Pacific				
Corps	1	0	1	2/3
Air task force (3 TFW equivalent)	1	1/3	1	1 1/3
CVBF	1 1/3	0	1/3	1/3
MEF	1	1	1	2/3
Southwest Asia				
Corps	0	0	0	0
Air task force (3 TFW equivalent)	1/3	1/3	2/3	1/3
CVBF	1/3	1/9	1/3	1/3
MEF	1/9	0	1/9	1/9
Totals				
Corps	2	0	2	1+
Air task force (3 TFW equivalent)	2 2/3	1	4 2/3	2
CVBF	1	1/3	1 1/3	1
MEF	1 2/9	2/9	1 2/9	1

Air Force fighter wings in the low risk force. The major difference between the regional defense force and the single contingency force is in the numbers of deployed army forces (in Europe) and marines (in the Pacific). The single contingency force is indeed a pared-down version of the base force.

To sum up, the regional defense strategy and the single contingency strategy have a relatively close correlation in strategic concepts (Tables 10 and 11) and total forces (Table 12), but they diverge significantly in the peacetime force deployment dimension. This should not be a surprise. A major element of the regional defense strategy and its forces is the environment-shaping role—something that is critically dependent on forward deployments. Take differences in peacetime overseas force deployments out of the equation, and the two force levels are strikingly similar. The single contingency strategy

compensates for its smaller forward deployments by giving more attention to lift than the other strategies do.

The Role of Airlift and Sealift

The four alternative forces vary widely in the amount of lift provided. I limit our examination to a comparison of selected end items rather than to such (arguably more useful) measures as ton-mile capacity. Table 14 outlines the important differences, and shows how the single major contingency force substitutes lift for deployed force structure. Again, the regional defense force gains its leverage not only by being in-theater for regional contingencies, but also because *it is there to be seen and to help the United States wield its influence.* The single contingency force is designed more for contingency response, and it needs (according to its internal strategic logic) fewer deployed forces. There is an apparent anomaly here: the regional defense force, which is predicated largely on the imperatives of an uncertain future, has already picked the likely theaters in which its forces will be employed and settled on how much force needs to be deployed forward in each in peacetime. Forces are deployed in those theaters even though the scene of combat may be somewhat removed from deployment bed-downs. Conversely, the single contingency force, which is predicated on a largely predictable future—at least insofar as the size of the needed forces is concerned—has a larger proportion of its forces in CONUS, with more lift ready to deploy it where needed. The regional defense strategist knows what theaters are important to him even if he doesn't know who the enemy will be and what form it will take. The single contingency strategist knows that wherever the fight is, it will not be any bigger than Desert Storm, and that he will need a lot

Table 14

Airlift and Sealift Forces
(Active and reserve)

	1. Regional Defense	2. Cooperative Security	3. Low Risk	4. Single Major Contingency
Strategic airlift aircraft	396	261	401	410
Theater airlift aircraft	416	450	490	400
Fast sealift ships	8	8	8	24
MPS	13	13	13	13
Afloat prepositioning	8	8	8	24

of lift to get his forces there. To sum up, the regional defense strategist thinks he may need a large force to shape the environment in a few selected theaters where U.S. vital interests are engaged, whereas the single contingency strategist thinks a smaller force will be needed but does not underwrite security in those theaters with substantial peacetime deployments. Instead he substitutes lift for more expensive force structure.[22]

In looking over our discussion of objectives, strategies, and forces, it is clear that most of the arguments have migrated to the force totals and overseas deployments instead of dwelling on differences in strategic concepts and their root military objectives. Why this is the case, and what can be done about it, is our next topic.

THE CRITICAL ISSUE: SLIPPAGE BETWEEN STRATEGY AND FORCES

It is ironic that the Department of Defense, which has so often been criticized by the Congress for its alleged lack of a strategy, is the only current partner in the dialog with an explicit strategy, and that the Congress, which has for so long been accused by its DoD critics of not relating its force reductions to any logic, has a more explicit (and open to the public) force-sizing model than the DoD. This is not to say that either the strategy or the forces of any player is "right."

Strategies by their very nature are less rigorously defined than forces. Forces are costed (not without difficulty) and the results expressed in such concrete terms as dollars and manpower over time. A budget must be submitted and acted upon, and these budgets must be set out in concrete terms because it takes real dollars to buy equipment and meet the payroll. Strategy documents play to many audiences: the public (witness the furor over a leaked early draft of the Defense Planning Guidance), the Congress, our allies, our possible opponents, and the men and women who must execute it in the form of force deployment and employment. Since the interests of these audiences vary, it is not surprising that strategy documents tend to be vague, and when not vague, controversial.

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[22]The DoD skeptic sees sleight of hand in all this: he is told to accept a smaller force structure and compensate for it with more lift, only to see the lift evaporate in squabbles over procurement (e.g., C-17), service priorities (e.g., the Navy's historic reluctance to fund lift out of its slice of the resource pie), or the state of the supporting industrial base (e.g., the deplorable state of the U.S. maritime industry as it is torn between unions—and high costs, government subsidies, and overage inventory).

Thus, arguments over strategy often involve the various protagonists talking past one another, and the argument moves to where there is an agreed unit of account (dollars and the forces they buy). The major defect of Chairman Aspin's various force-sizing papers is that their crisp, explicit treatment of force requirements is not balanced with a similar treatment of strategy. The major defect in the DoD's various strategy and force documents (that are in the public domain) is that they don't directly relate force sizing to their admirably articulated strategy. If this debate is to be closed, it must start with objectives and strategy before shifting to the forces that preferred strategies require. These objectives and strategic concepts must be expressed candidly, crisply, and in some detail for useful comparative analysis that isolates the roots of differences in force needs. The simplistic formulation set out earlier in this section is a start that needs to be expanded, challenged, defended, and validated—even if validation is no more than isolating key differences in objectives and strategic concepts among the parties to the dialog.

The reductionist thesis has many important *assumptions* that need to be brought into the open and tested with systematic analysis. They include the following:

Assessment of the Future Security Environment

- The U.S. response in Desert Storm is the envelope of force requirements for plausible regional contingencies in the foreseeable future.
- Only one major regional contingency will occur at a time, except possibly for Korea.
- The successor states of the former Soviet Union do not pose a nonnuclear threat to the United States and are unlikely to do so without providing us with substantial warning time.
- The United States will not face a future opponent with as good or better equipment than we have in the inventory to counter it.

Objectives

- Force requirements are defined by threats and the need to respond to them. As threats change, forces should change commensurately.
- Either threats are visible and we must posture to meet them, or they are not visible and we will have adequate time to respond appropriately to them.

- Uncertainty about future events is insufficient in and of itself to justify retention of large forces whose relationship to visible threats is at best unclear.
- Adequate lift can be a more cost-effective substitute for forward force deployments.
- The principal function of U.S. forces is to respond to contingencies. Forces of adequate size and composition for this function are also adequate for the less easily quantified missions of environment shaping and deterrence.
- The United States will maintain conventional forces adequate to respond to one major regional contingency, and selected force elements to deal with a second if it were to occur simultaneously.

Strategic Concepts

- There will be adequate warning of the emergence of a reconstituted superpower threat to U.S. interests.
- The warning available is commensurate with the time it takes the United States to mount an effective response (we are not "overdriving our headlights").
- Lift is an adequate substitute for most forces that are currently forward based.

Force-Sizing Principles

- Force requirements for environment shaping and deterrence lie within the envelope defined by contingency-response requirements.
- Air and naval force structure should be preserved at the expense of ground forces.
- Guard divisions are suitable for early reinforcement of Europe if we are already engaged in a major contingency elsewhere.

Similarly, the current DoD strategy and its associated forces have many important assumptions that need further attention in the dialog with the Congress.

Assessment of the Future Security Environment

- The future security environment is defined by uncertainty and a large degree of unpredictability.
- New threats will emerge, and some of them may have selected military capabilities characteristic of a superpower.
- Vital U.S. security interests will not always coincide with those of our security partners.

Objectives

- Shaping the future security environment is a priority mission of military forces (and their use must be blended with the other instruments of national power).
- We must retain global military preeminence, on the assumption that today's threats are likely to be less stressing than future threats.

Strategic Concepts

- Military forces are maintained for three interlocking missions: to shape the future environment to preclude the emergence of new threats, to deter threats that emerge in spite of our shaping efforts, and to respond to those threats that are not deterred.
- These missions vary in relative importance over time and with unfolding events.
- The United States cannot dictate the number of contingencies that might occur simultaneously.
- Overseas-based or deployed forces provide leverage that deployable forces and their requisite lift cannot furnish. In some cases this leverage can be decisive.
- The United States must retain the capability to intervene unilaterally when its vital interests are threatened and if immediate support from our security partners is not forthcoming or the United States must set the example or provide the nucleus for international response.

Force-Sizing Principles

- Two simultaneous major regional contingencies are the prudent force-sizing driver.
- The United States must retain a balanced and "full-up" warfighting capability in Europe as a guarantor of regional stability and as a ready in-theater contingency force.
- Force reductions (from Cold War levels) should be taken primarily in strategic nuclear forces and ground forces.
- Force structure should be kept at relatively high levels and force modernization slowed to pay for it.

5. SUMMING UP

It is appropriate to look back to see where we have been and distill the major points that have been made in these four essays.

The first in this series, "Certitude vs. Uncertainty," set out the terms of the debate between Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and one of DoD's most articulate (and responsible) critics, Chairman Les Aspin of the House Armed Services Committee. What is most striking about the two positions is the role played by "uncertainty" in their two sets of force rationale. Cheney sees an uncertain future that leads to buying force capabilities to cover a range of threats, while Aspin sets out representative threats and then sizes forces adequate to counter them. The Cheney argument is long on context and strategy but short on force-sizing details. The Aspin argument is a mirror image.

The second essay, "How Much is Enough?" focused on two important elements of the debate: the question of whether two simultaneous major regional defense scenarios are warranted as a basis for security planning, and the risks that history demonstrates are incurred when reconstitution times outrun warning times. The latter is referred to as "overdriving one's security headlights." The analysis suggests that dual scenarios are indeed possible, and perhaps likely, and that Desert Storm was the only war in this century for which the United States was prepared.

The third essay, "Squaring the Circle," centered on an examination of three major deficiencies in the current force-sizing debate: a myopic focus on the contingency-response dimension of the DoD mission, an insistence on "plausible" scenarios when the implausible happens about as often, and a neglect of the optimal unit of warfighting account and a preoccupation with budget-related units of account. That essay suggested there are three missions for DoD: environment shaping, deterrence, and contingency response. All three need equal emphasis in sizing forces. Focusing only on plausible scenarios is what leads to surprise and to being prepared for past threats instead of future challenges. A preoccupation with budget units of account can lead to force reduction actions that lead to false efficiencies. The military, supported by competent analysis and the lessons of experience, should focus on what comprises a warfighting force module; political leaders should focus on how many modules are affordable and what risk should be accepted.

The final essay reintroduced the notion of objectives and strategy as the preferred initial medium of policy dialog on force sizing. Four discrete groups of objectives, strategic concepts, and forces were set out to sharpen the terms of the debate. To this point the objectives and strategy issues have not been adequately joined, and the discussion has migrated to force issues by default. The DoD must be persuasive in returning the discussion to objectives and strategy before arguing with its critics about forces. If it is unsuccessful in doing so, it must set out in crisp and candid terms the differences between it and its critics on specific objectives and specific elements of its strategy.

What should the reader take away from all this? I suggest the following five points.

- Return the force-sizing debate to objectives and strategy, and then deal with force issues. To do otherwise is to avoid the fundamental underlying issues. The *real* issues lie in strategy. If strategy is agreed upon, the argument turns on force-sizing models in which explicit assumptions can be assessed and validated or rejected.
- Think of force missions in three interlocking layers, each with its own force requirements. The requirements of each are not necessarily included in the others.
- Don't bet on the "plausible" scenario. The implausible war is the war we usually fight. Because such wars are implausible before the fact, we have (with one exception) been unprepared for them in this century.
- Don't use *today's* threats to posture *future* forces, when those future forces will have up to 30 years of service life. Different time frames yield different scenarios (with differing degrees of visibility), which yield different force requirements.
- Once the strategy issue has been joined between DoD and its critics, consider on its merits the HASC model of force sizing. Alternative force-sizing paradigms should be developed and articulated in terms that political leaders can grasp. It is not enough to say that the HASC Iraq-threat/Desert Storm response is flawed as a basis for force sizing; an explicit, tightly reasoned alternative model (open to public debate) is needed.

Finally, it needs to be said that the participants in the force-sizing debate are patriots who cherish the ideals on which this nation was founded. Their differences focus on means, not ends, and on differing views of the future and our ability to control it. No one wants to shut down the U.S. defense establishment. Most agree that we do not need

Cold War force levels and posture. We have the time and the ability to determine the extent of the reductions that are prudent and the speed at which they are to be achieved. The issue centers on whether we have the will—and the goodwill—to do it with partnership and civility.

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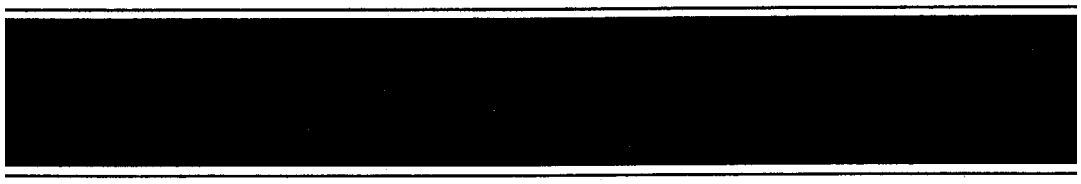
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