

PART III.
MILITARY POWER:
THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Future U.S. Defense Strategy

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What implications do globalization and its strategic consequences pose for U.S. defense policy and strategy? While the answer is complex in its particulars, it is simple in its basics. As globalization gains steam and interacts with other trends to alter security affairs in many places, U.S. defense planning likely will be affected in important ways. Not surprisingly, a changing world means that U.S. military affairs must change as well. These changes will affect U.S. forces, operations, and relations with allies and partners.

Dynamics of Change

Things will not be transformed overnight, but a decade from now, U.S. defense planning may be carried out in ways that differ from those of today in important ways. The task facing the United States is to anticipate these changes and pursue them wisely, not to make them at the last minute in a clumsy rush. This approach is the best way to ensure that U.S. forces not only retain their supremacy over opponents but also continue to support U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy in effective ways. What will remain constant is that defense planning must be guided by a keen sense of national interests and strategic priorities. Using diplomacy and economic aid to achieve overseas goals is one thing. Applying security commitments and military power in new ways is something entirely different.

Threefold Changes Ahead

U.S. defense policy and strategy should be anchored in strategic fundamentals, not in surface events and fleeting newspaper headlines. This chapter's thesis of impending changes to U.S. and allied defense plans rests on three key judgments about fundamentals. To a degree, they already apply today, and they will gain force in the medium term of 5 to 10 years as well as in the more distant future:

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- Owing to globalization and other dynamics, the democratic community likely will make further progress, but major parts of the outlying world will continue to face turmoil, not only in politics and economics but also in security affairs. This especially is the case along the “southern belt,” from the Balkans to Asia. There and elsewhere, tomorrow’s opportunities, dangers, and threats often will be quite different from today’s.
- As a result, U.S. national security strategy will be changing, and U.S. forces often will be required to perform different strategic missions than they do today. Moreover, some of these missions will occur at new places well removed from the bases and alliances inherited from the Cold War. This will be the case not only in crises and wars but also in peacetime, during which shaping the strategic environment will loom as an increasingly important and challenging mission.
- U.S. forces will themselves be changing, in response to new doctrines and structures, and to new information systems, weapons, and munitions. A decade or so from now, U.S. forces will operate much like Michael Jordan played basketball: at high speed and above the rim. The challenge will be to design and employ these ultrasophisticated forces so that they effectively perform not only their battlefield missions but also their new political and strategic missions.

Initial changes in all three areas are already altering the strategic framework for determining strategy, forces, programs, and budgets. As these changes intensify, they will put added strain on U.S. defense preparedness efforts—not only by elevating requirements to some degree but also by necessitating new approaches to using current resources. The task of pursuing new strategic purposes and priorities is difficult in itself. Equally difficult is creating new forces. Doing both will be even harder.

Because the world is changing rapidly, U.S. defense policy needs to be guided by a responsive sense of direction and purpose. For past several years, defense planning, that is, preparing strategy and forces, as opposed to actually using military power in crises, has been humming along quietly outside the glare of public debate. It has been operating on assumptions made shortly after the Cold War ended, making changes and improvements mostly at the margins. This tranquil setting is coming to an end. It is being supplanted by a growing need for deep thinking and creativity—in ways leading to a new strategic mentality. The future can best be addressed by mastering the coming period of change, not by clinging to the status quo.

Gauging Future Strategic Directions

This chapter’s aim is to help illuminate the defense agenda ahead. It asserts that the United States can best shape future defense plans, old or new, by answering three key questions in ways that produce an integrated response:

- How should the United States appraise trends in geographical regions and strategic missions, and how should it craft national security policy and defense strategy in response to these trends?

- What planning standards should the United States use to size its military forces in order to support its strategy, and how should it go about improving those forces?
- How should the United States plan to employ its forces in peace, crisis, and war—in concert with its friends and allies?

This chapter's bottom line is that the United States will continue to need strong military forces not only to win wars and intervene in crises but also to help shape the strategic environment in peacetime. In providing insights in ways that analyze, not advocate, this chapter puts forth concrete ideas for how to act, so that effective strategies, plans, and forces are produced. These ideas should be evaluated carefully before being adopted. What matters most is their basic message. The United States has a viable option other than clinging to the status quo, retrenching from world affairs because it feels overloaded, or vastly increasing its defense resources in order to stay engaged. *Instead, it can stay heavily and fruitfully involved by using available resources wisely and by making sensible changes in its defense practices. The same applies to allies and partners. If all participants take these steps, they will stand a good chance of making a strategic success out of the coming decade.*

Toward New Strategy and Missions in Endangered Regions

Assessing future directions in U.S. defense plans begins by analyzing where geo-strategic affairs, including the geography of coming dangers and conflicts, seem headed. Owing to globalization and other dynamics, the widening division of the world into two parts clearly has general implications for U.S. plans. With the democratic community progressing toward greater peace and strength, it will be freed to devote less worry to defending its borders in multiple places against direct attack by big conventional forces. Because the outlying world is changing and may be headed toward equal or greater turmoil than it is now, it is a different matter. In a manner that reflects a sound sense of strategic priorities, U.S. activity and power will have to be applied there, perhaps in growing ways, in order to defend U.S. interests and achieve key security goals. The implications of new geography, however, do not end with this general observation, for something more specific is taking place that will affect future strategy, forces, and operations in concrete ways.

Throughout the Cold War, the United States had a distinctly “northern” emphasis. It was focused intently on defending Central Europe and Northeast Asia, including both Japan and South Korea, against communist aggression, while managing relations with the Soviet Union through arms control. The United States not only permanently deployed 330,000 troops in Europe and more than 100,000 troops in Northeast Asia, but it had also backed up these formations with strong commitments for rapid reinforcement in a crisis. Especially after the United States withdrew from Vietnam in the mid-1970s, other regions mattered less in its defense plans. Defense of the Persian Gulf began gaining prominence only after 1980, and even then, few U.S. forces were stationed there. The Cold War's abrupt end swept away the threats to Central Europe and Japan, leaving only South Korea and the Persian Gulf still ex-

posed to aggression. The Korean Peninsula's future remains uncertain, but in the coming years, both Central Europe and Japan seem likely to become even more immune than they are now from direct attack on their borders. As a result, U.S. defense plans increasingly will have the luxury of taking their physical security for granted. Although the threat of ballistic missile attack may grow in ways requiring missile defense, the United States will face few major military requirements to help defend it with big ground, air, and naval forces in a crisis. The United States still stations 100,000 troops in Europe and 40,000 troops in Japan. Sizable U.S. forces may remain there, but the main reason will be larger strategic and political considerations, not defense against local surprise attack.

In the outlying world, by contrast, a new southern belt of growing strategic instability and danger seemingly is evolving. This belt includes several diverse regions located side by side, united more by the growing heat of their unstable strategic affairs than by any similarity among them. This belt begins in the Balkans, moves southward through the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, extends across South Asia, and stretches along the Asian crescent from Southeast Asia northward to Taiwan, Okinawa, and ultimately, Japan. Sub-Saharan Africa is also an unstable region owing to poverty and troubled states, and although Latin America is now part of the democratic community, it still has significant problems, such as drug trafficking. Both regions will remain important considerations in U.S. foreign policy, and they will demand appropriate attention and resources; however, the multiple neighboring regions along the southern belt are acquiring growing strategic importance, not only because of their chaotic situations but also because of their potential impact on global stability and U.S. security involvements.

Why should this southern belt be fingered as a new hot zone of rising strategic troubles that in varying ways could draw U.S. military power into it? One obvious reason is that serious tensions there already have resulted in U.S. military forces becoming involved in ways that would have surprised most observers only a decade ago. Since the mid-1990s, the United States has deployed large forces into the Balkans: first to perform peacekeeping in Bosnia, next to bomb Serbia into leaving Kosovo, then to keep the peace there. In early 1991, the United States waged a major regional war to eject Iraq from Kuwait. The effort succeeded, but since then, the United States has remained deeply entangled in the Persian Gulf in ways necessitating a steady geographical expansion of its military missions. Approximately 25,000 troops are stationed there nearly full-time, and U.S. air forces regularly bomb Iraqi targets in enforcing United Nations (UN) mandates and no-fly zones. In Asia, U.S. forces still stand guard in South Korea, but a few years ago, carriers were sent southward in order to signal China to lessen its pressure on Taiwan, and growing U.S. military contacts are now being pursued with several Southeast Asian countries. Traditionally, U.S. forces have not operated in South Asia, but in 1998, cruise missile strikes were launched against terrorist camps in Afghanistan, marking an initial use of U.S. forces there.

Across the southern belt, frequent U.S. military involvements thus already are a fact of life. Current trends suggest they may increase in scope and frequency in the coming years, in unforeseeable but potentially significant ways. *A core issue is*

whether these operations should be mounted as an outgrowth of current U.S. national security strategy or should be accompanied by a change in the strategy itself. Because the current strategy is still focused on Central Europe and Northeast Asia, it views the Persian Gulf as a primary concern but treats the rest of the southern belt as secondary (that is, as a place to apply military power only episodically and in modest ways). A revised strategy would alter this perspective in ways embodying a combination of continuity and change. In Central Europe and Northeast Asia, it would continue strongly pursuing national goals, meeting alliance commitments, deterring still existing threats, and safeguarding against the reappearance of old threats. Along the southern belt, it would continue defending the Persian Gulf in powerful ways, but it also would look beyond the Gulf to address the dangers and challenges of other southern regions where the strategic stakes are high. This new strategy would be acutely aware of the big differences among the various regions there, each of which will require a unique policy response, but it also would view the southern belt as a strategic zone whose regions are interacting and face common security troubles. As a result, it would create a strategic rationale for ensuring that U.S. forces and other instruments can operate there in appropriate ways, carrying out security missions that are viewed as primary, not secondary.

The case for a newly focused national security strategy stems from the judgment that much of the southern belt seems headed toward turmoil for a set of interacting reasons and in ways that menace Western interests. A core reason is the belt's strategic fragmentation and anarchy, the stubborn presence of outlaws and troublemakers, the vulnerability of weak countries to strong neighbors, and the virility of some of its political ideologies, including nationalism in the Balkans and Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East and South Asia. Another reason is the presence of major powers in ways that magnify the southern belt's fault lines. If China begins asserting its geopolitical interests and growing power, the effect could be to destabilize Asia's already fragile security structure, which lacks the strong collective defense mechanisms of Europe. Both Russia and China are already involved in the Balkans and the Greater Middle East, in ways that create friction with U.S. diplomacy and complicate its search for stability there. In South Asia, the intensifying Indo-Pakistani rivalry does not take place in a cocoon, for the interests of the United States, Russia, and China are involved. The active presence of the big powers along the southern belt sets the stage for transforming purely local crises into escalating events with larger consequences.

Further endangering this precarious setting is the looming acceleration of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation along the southern belt. India and Pakistan already have exploded nuclear weapons and are building long-range missiles capable of carrying them. North Korea, Iraq, and Iran are also said to be pursuing WMD systems and missiles of their own, and they may succeed in deploying serious arsenals in the coming years. The prospect of these countries acquiring WMD arsenals is bad enough, but it could prove even more damaging if it triggers WMD proliferation elsewhere and further destabilizes local security affairs at key places. Added atop local instabilities and involved big powers, WMD proliferation makes the southern belt a dangerous hot zone of future geostrategic affairs—one that is capable of

producing not only small conflicts but also bigger political confrontations and nastier wars possibly involving WMD weapons.

The entire southern belt is not irretrievably destined to go up in flames; nonetheless, much of it already is deeply troubled. If current downward trends intensify and the democracies do not respond wisely, its problems could worsen. The principal danger is not necessarily that a new strategic “near-peer” will rise to challenge the United States globally, or that a large anti-Western coalition will emerge anytime soon. Instead, the danger is that the multiple local problems along the southern belt and elsewhere will fester for reasons of their own, flare up in ever-shifting ways, and interact in a globalizing world to magnify each other. If so, the strategic effect could be to confront U.S. policy with many different, but interconnected, problems along a huge geographical expanse, and with no way to resolve them by influencing a single dominant source. During the Cold War, the United States faced global problems, but they mostly stemmed from a single source: the Soviet Union. The coming era will not produce a strategic situation nearly so simple or so readily manageable with a single-minded response.

The mounting turmoil along the southern belt and elsewhere thus creates growing pressures and incentives for the United States to examine whether and how to alter its national security strategy. This does not mean that U.S. strategy should abandon traditional areas, such as Europe and Northeast Asia, that will still require heavy U.S. engagement, leadership, and security commitments. *Rather, it means that U.S. strategy should upgrade the sustained attention that it gives to the southern belt, which has long been a zone of peripheral focus and spotty activity.* Aside from Persian Gulf oil and some other exceptions to the rule, U.S. interests along this long belt commonly have not been regarded as truly vital. Many of them, however, are now becoming highly important, and some are derivative of vital interests. Defending them will be necessary to prevent the emergence of serious threats to vital interests.

Clearly a selective approach anchored in priorities will be needed, but just as clearly, standing largely aloof seems infeasible. Along this belt and elsewhere in the world, progress will not be achieved unless strategic stability is first created. Although this task will fall heavily to diplomatic and political efforts, U.S. military power inevitably will be called upon to play a role, at least as much as today, perhaps more so, and in different ways from now. A principal hope is that U.S. military power, if properly embedded in a larger approach fully employing other instruments, could make an important strategic difference, not only by permitting the United States to resolve crises and win wars there but also by preventing military conflicts. Preventing war by acting wisely and strongly in peacetime has been a key strategic mission of U.S. military forces for decades. This likely will remain the case.

How would a revised strategy for the southern belt and elsewhere be composed? The United States cannot hope to solve all of the southern belt’s festering problems, nor should it try to do so. Its aim should be to lessen those troubles that deeply menace critical Western interests and threaten to have widening consequences, breeding contagious and worsening instability elsewhere. What precepts would such an approach include? Worldwide, a revised U.S. national security strategy will still be carrying out today’s three key precepts of “shaping, responding, and preparing”—or

precepts like them. *A revised U.S. strategy should embrace a more proactive, integrated, and systematic approach to shaping, responding, and preparing at key places along the southern belt, as well as at other important places of similar turmoil.* Designing and carrying out such a strategy does not promise to be easy, for it will require synthetic thinking as well as careful handling of many complex nuances. Recognizing the need for a new strategy is the critical first step in the right direction. Examples of steps already being taken include talks with friends and allies about creating regional cooperative defense measures in response to WMD proliferation in the Greater Middle East and Asia. Progress on these counter-WMD initiatives, coupled with enhanced planning for conventional defense operations by U.S. forces and such alliances as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), would reflect the type of systematic approach contemplated here.

Importance of Strategic Shaping Mission

How will U.S. military power and other policy instruments be employed in the southern belt in advancing national interests and pursuing high-priority goals? On occasion, U.S. forces may be used to intervene in crises or wage war (for example, to defend Persian Gulf oil fields and other key assets, to rebuff attacks against close friends, or to enforce critical norms of conduct). *But on a daily basis, the mission will be peacetime environment shaping for the strategic purpose of promoting favorable changes while dampening chaos and preventing damaging trends.* That is, U.S. forces and other instruments will be used to help pursue such political aims as (1) maintaining influence, reassuring friends, creating partnerships and coalitions, and pursuing outreach toward big countries such as Russia and China; and (2) establishing power balances, reducing tensions, discouraging arms races, signaling resolve, warning troublemakers, and deterring threatening behavior.

Strategic environment shaping is a servant of U.S. interests, but it does not mean the arrogant application of U.S. military power, in ways suggesting superpower dominion and disdain for the values and traditions of a region. Likewise, it does not mean crude balance-of-power politics in ways reminiscent of the late 19th century. What it means is collaborating with peace-minded countries, in consensual and constructive ways, to protect their security, to promote multilateral cooperation, and to enhance stability across their entire region. Strategic shaping is respectful of the legitimate interests of those countries that choose to remain outside this collaborative zone. It actively pursues cooperative military ties with former adversaries seeking productive relations with democracies. It applies coercion only against countries that use their own military power to advance illegitimate interests and to bully or conquer their peaceful neighbors. Rather than impose superpower domination, strategic shaping seeks to build stability from the ground up, by helping countries live peacefully and encouraging them to work together to pursue progress in ways that reflect their own values and visions.

This kind of strategic shaping has become increasingly important in recent years in all major theaters, including Europe, Asia, and the Persian Gulf. A main implication of a globalizing world, one leaving some critical regions tottering between pro-

gress and turmoil, is that the strategic shaping mission likely will become more important still, including along the southern belt. Indeed, it may play a critical role in determining whether wars are fought more often than now, or less often. *The heart and soul of strategic shaping is using military forces in peacetime to bring about stable conditions and constructive changes that likely would not evolve on their own.* Strategic shaping within the democratic community often is relatively easy because most countries are sympathetic to American goals, which normally serve their own interests. Strategic shaping in the outlying world will be harder because the political conditions are less easy to influence, and some countries have bullying agendas different from those of the United States and menacing to their neighbors. Dealing with such countries will require a firm and balanced response.

Recent experience shows that using military forces for peacetime shaping in difficult areas is an activity that must be planned carefully and carried out wisely. If done improperly, it can achieve little, or even backfire. Done properly, it can have a salutary effect: if not by wholly transforming the geopolitics of volatile regions, then by helping stabilize them in key ways. The amount of military power committed will depend upon the requirements posed by U.S. political goals in each region. Most often, a small dose of forces will be needed, but in difficult and dangerous situations, more may be required. Overall, the turmoil and instability of the large southern belt and elsewhere could necessitate more military power, sustained on a more regular basis, than is now the case. Exactly how much more is to be seen; however, it would most likely require more than the 25,000 troops now stationed in the Persian Gulf.

Across the southern belt and elsewhere, the common U.S. agenda of strategic shaping likely will be one of promoting stability and progress. Its specific goals and concerns will vary among the regions because their endangering conditions are so different from each other. In southeastern Europe, U.S. policy likely will focus on protecting Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean, dampening raging nationalism and ethnic rivalries in the Balkans, and reaching out to the turbulent, but oil-rich, Caucasus in limited ways. In the already hot Greater Middle East, protecting Western access to Persian Gulf oil will remain primary, but U.S. policy will face the bigger problem of dealing with outlaws, enduring tensions among several states, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and WMD proliferation. In South Asia, U.S. policy will focus on stabilizing the Indo-Pakistani rivalry in a nuclear age while discouraging tensions and proliferation there from infecting other regions. In murky Asia, the strategic challenge will be protecting the commercial sea-lanes along the Asian crescent, enhancing the security of allies and friends, and seeking cooperation with China while being prepared to deter it if it begins asserting its growing power on behalf of menacing goals. In different ways, similar judgments apply to Africa and Latin America. The challenge will be to use U.S. military power and other instruments, working multilaterally with allies and partners, to dampen these multiregion dangers and especially to prevent them from infecting each other in ways that could inflame the entire southern belt and elsewhere.

Future Directions in U.S. Military Strategy

If a revised national security strategy along these lines is adopted, it will need to be accompanied by an adaptive military strategy that is capable of supporting it. A revised U.S. military strategy likely will also embody a mixture of continuity and change. It will continue relying on strategic forces to deter nuclear attack on the United States and its allies. It will continue meeting defense commitments in such traditional areas as Central Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf through a combination of overseas presence and power projection from the United States. Military bases in these three regions will no longer function solely to support deployed forces and receive reinforcements in a crisis. They will acquire the new mission of themselves serving as regional hubs of power projection, so that U.S. and allied security involvements can be projected into outlying areas in peace, crisis, and war. A key purpose will be to provide assets for missions and operations along the southern belt and other endangered areas.

If a revised U.S. military strategy is to be adopted, it should continue providing ample scope for both unilateral and multilateral operations. The United States always will need to be capable of acting unilaterally in defense of its vital interests—for a superpower, this is a strategic constant. Yet in virtually all theaters, multilateralism has been a key practice in the past and will remain so in the future. This is the case for both political and military reasons. The twofold advantage of a revised strategy is that it can help produce better U.S. forces while motivating key allies and partners to create better forces of their own. The by-product can be better forces for both U.S.-only operations and combined operations with allies and partners.

The U.S. military strategy needed to carry out new missions in the southern belt and elsewhere will be different from that of the past. This will be the case not only because of the new geography and security challenges being addressed, but also because the nature of U.S. military missions and operations will be different. For the last several decades, U.S. military strategy has been primarily one of fixed positional defense through continental operations. That is, U.S. defense plans focused on defending Central Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf through a combination of stationary overseas presence there, backed by the capacity to send large U.S. reinforcements to these locations for local defense against direct cross-border aggression. The Army and Air Force were especially continental and stationary in their outlook; however, even the Navy, notwithstanding its wider maritime horizons, often found itself acting as the handmaiden of this strategy, including defending sea-lanes linking the United States to specific places.

By contrast, a new military strategy for the southern belt and elsewhere will be neither positional nor continental in its core features. Instead, it will focus on applying military power at ever-shifting locations, depending upon the needs of the moment. To apply this power, U.S. military strategy will need to rely more heavily on power projection, carried out flexibly and adaptively as conditions change and sometimes mounted in distant places that today might seem surprising. In peacetime, strategic shaping missions often allow U.S. forces to move at a deliberate pace. But when direct intervention in crises and wars becomes necessary, U.S. forces will need to

project swiftly and operate decisively, sometimes in places where they have little experience and few advanced preparations.

Moreover, U.S. forces mostly will not be carrying out continental operations. Instead, their operations will be heavily littoral. That is, they will come from the sea and air, and they will operate near shorelines, rather than hundreds of miles inland. This especially will be the case in such critical regions as the Balkans and eastern Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, South Asia, and the Asian crescent. Both the Persian Gulf War and the Kosovo conflict took the form of power projection missions conducted in mostly littoral areas. They likely will be forerunners of future crises and wars as well as of peacetime operations.

Joint forces clearly will be needed to pursue this military strategy while also carrying out modern U.S. military doctrine. Strategic shaping missions often will be performed by air and naval forces, which can move quickly from place to place, supported by ground forces as needed. Requirements for crises and wars will depend upon the situation, but in general, traditional calculations will apply. The Kosovo conflict shows how, in special cases, air power and sea power alone can win a war. But the bigger and more demanding Persian Gulf War shows that potent ground forces often will be critical, too. The key point is that U.S. forces should always retain the physical capacity to mount a robust joint response, for while they can always scale back by using only one or two services, they cannot swiftly send three services if only one or two are prepared to act.

In essence, this new military strategy will be a joint strategy of peacetime strategic shaping, swift wartime power projection, and decisive strike operations. Because this strategy often will come from the sea, it will have a strong maritime dimension, but it will need to be carried out by joint forces from all components. Whether such a revised military strategy for the southern belt and elsewhere will be adopted is to be seen. If so, it will be only one part, but a very important part, of an overall strategy that will include other missions and commitments. Like all strategy departures, this one should be studied and debated before it is adopted. What cannot be debated is that new U.S. military operations along the southern belt and elsewhere already are a fact of life and that they may grow. The U.S. military is amply capable of defending Central Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf, but it is not well prepared for operations elsewhere along the southern belt and similar distant places. U.S. forces possess most of the necessary structure and equipment, but they lack such critical accompanying features as a well construed overseas presence in key regions; a well distributed network of bases, infrastructure, and pre-positioning; and supporting alliances and coalitions. Creating such assets in the coming years will go a long way to determining whether, and to what degree, U.S. military operations achieve their strategic goals.

Regardless of the southern belt's exact role, the need for the U.S. military to stay fully prepared for wars and crisis interventions will remain a top priority. The act of determining how U.S. forces can best be used to perform peacetime strategic shaping also will be a constant challenge in the coming years. This mission will not only be important, but it will also be carried out in ways quite different from those used during the Cold War. Then, U.S. forces were used in peacetime to help manage the bipolar confrontation. Focused mostly on defending continental alliances, they primarily

were guided by such familiar, well oiled precepts as containment, deterrence, forward defense, and flexible response. Their efforts were led by ground and air forces, with naval forces playing important but complementary roles. By contrast, today's strategic setting is not bipolar, and it is not even mostly continental. The old precepts cry out to be supplemented by new precepts that better spell out the relationship between military means and political ends in peacetime. Future shaping operations will be carried out by joint forces, but often they will be heavily maritime in nature, and naval forces will perform a more critical role than they did in the past. Precisely how shaping missions will be carried out on a worldwide basis is to be seen, and doubtless will depend upon how the future unfolds. What can be said is that this arena will impose strong new demands for fresh thinking about U.S. military strategy and defense plans in the coming years.

Creating New Force-Sizing Standards

What kind of military forces and capabilities will the United States require in the coming years in order to support its evolving strategy? Efforts to answer this important question should begin by acknowledging the major strides that U.S. forces already have taken to improve their capabilities for waging war and helping attain political goals. In the mid-1970s, in the immediate aftermath of the Vietnam War, U.S. forces were commonly judged to be in troubled shape. Morale was low, readiness was eroding, and the weapon systems of all three services were aging. Since then, U.S. forces have rebounded strongly to become, beyond question, the world's best in quality and combat power. High-quality people, better training, good readiness, and modern weapons have worked together to produce this turnaround. A major contributor also has been the progress made in creating better operational capabilities by each service component and by the services working together jointly.

Two decades ago, the operational capabilities of U.S. forces were considerably less impressive than they are today. In virtually all places overseas, initial defense plans were anchored in already deployed assets because the United States lacked the capacity swiftly to protect its large homeland-based forces in time to make a critical difference. U.S. air forces may have been able to win the air battle, but they lacked a strong capacity to help contribute to the land battle by destroying enemy forces and logistic support. U.S. ground forces were able to generate considerable stationary firepower, but they lacked the capacity to maneuver adroitly and otherwise show mastery of the operational art. U.S. naval forces were able to control the seas, but they lacked a capacity to contribute to helping the air and ground forces in major continental operations. These deficiencies, coupled with shortcoming in allied forces, resulted in justifiable worry about the capacity to defend Central Europe, the Korean Peninsula and Japan, and the Persian Gulf oil fields.

Since then, progress has been considerable. The U.S. military has greatly enhanced its power projection capacity by building impressive strategic mobility forces. The combination of increased overseas pre-positioning, strategic airlift, and strategic sealift has resulted in today's capacity swiftly to deploy nearly all U.S.-based active combat forces in a matter of a few weeks and months. U.S. air forces not only pos-

sess unchallenged mastery of the air battle but also can contribute heavily to the land battle with precision strikes against enemy combat formations, logistic support, and strategic infrastructure. U.S. ground forces—Army and Marines—now can fire and maneuver with high speed and powerful effect while conducting both offensive and defensive operations. This capacity allows them to defeat decisively larger, well armed enemy forces. U.S. naval forces not only dominate the high seas but also can bring their long-range firepower to bear to influence the land and air battles. Equally important, all three components are developing an improved capacity to operate together and to draw upon each other's strengths in dealing with a host of different military environments.

None of these developments means that today's U.S. forces are perfect or that all risks have been eliminated; however, the situation today is vastly better than that of 25 years ago. In the past decade, U.S. forces have been tested in two regional wars: the Persian Gulf and Kosovo. In both cases, they worked with allied forces to win decisively, with few losses to themselves. Dangers still exist at key regional hot spots; however, if war were to erupt in the Persian Gulf or Korea, U.S. and allied forces might encounter trouble at first, but they eventually would prevail. Their clear capacity to win decisively, perhaps quickly and easily, is a formidable deterrent to aggression—there or elsewhere.

This transformation did not occur easily. It came about as a result of hard strategic and military labor carried out consistently for more than two decades. Moreover, today's advantageous situation should not be taken for granted. Preserving it will require equally hard labor, backed by sufficient resources. The U.S. military will need to remain attentive to the shifting demands of remaining decisively superior in regional wars and other conflicts, including those erupting at unexpected places. Future opponents will be improving their forces with higher quality weapons, pursuing asymmetrical strategies aimed at slipping the U.S. military punch, and acquiring WMD systems. The U.S. military will need to retain and develop the capacity to prevail across a wide spectrum of future conflicts ahead. Even as the U.S. military continues to improve in operational terms, the U.S. Government will need to continue thinking insightfully about how its military power can best be used to exert advantageous political influence through strategic shaping in peacetime. Because the Cold War created a static, bipolar world, peacetime shaping was a straightforward process of supporting alliances and deterring enemies. Because the emerging era will be more multipolar and fluid, the shaping process will be considerably more complex, and doubtless demanding.

For military and political reasons, a high degree of U.S. military preparedness will continue to be needed. Even as the U.S. military remains prepared, it will have to undergo change, for it is experiencing its own internal transformation even as the world is evolving toward an unknown destination. Sound U.S. defense plans for employing forces overseas in peace, crisis, and war will be required. Forging them for today's situation and tomorrow's will be one of the most important challenges, for these plans will help determine not only how the U.S. military evolves, but also how it is employed to carry out national strategy.

In this context, a key issue arises. Regardless of whether new geographical missions are embraced fully or partly, U.S. national security strategy and military strategy likely will mutate in response to a changing, globalizing world of money and power. To what degree should the current force-sizing standard of being prepared for two major theater wars (MTWs) in overlapping time frames change along with them? The answer may not be apparent, but the question merits asking because the future will require a force-sizing standard that acts as part of the solution.

The role of a force-sizing standard is both to determine the size of the U.S. force posture and to explain the posture's strategic and military rationale in public. In less visible ways, it also has a major impact on defense programs, budgets, and force allocations among the key commands. The two-MTW standard has been playing this role since 1993, when it was first installed. Its positive contributions are severalfold. It has linked U.S. force levels to clear threats and plausible wars, while reducing calculations of force requirements to a simple numerical algorithm. By proclaiming the need for a two-war posture, not one war or three wars, it has boiled defense planning down to a single-point solution. It has helped build a broad political consensus for the current posture, establishing both a ceiling over the posture and a floor under it. The two-MTW standard achieves this end with arithmetic proclaiming that more forces would be superfluous and fewer forces would be inadequate. Seasoned military officers and operations researchers may blanch at this formula because they know reality is more complex, but the two-MTW standard thus far has gotten the job done in the public arena. Meanwhile, it has allowed the Pentagon to resolve its internal debates by focusing on two clearly defined wars whose postulated features have been developed in satisfying detail.

The two-MTW standard, nonetheless, apparently is now coming to the end of its useful life. Critics have faulted it on several grounds. One criticism is that the standard lacks credibility because it is anchored in the allegedly faulty premise that two big wars will occur concurrently. A second criticism is that it anchors the U.S. defense rationale too single-mindedly in fleeting threats: both the Iraqi and North Korean threats could fade from the scene, but others could remain or appear. A third criticism is that it ignores Europe and seems to relegate peacetime shaping missions, along with preparing for other crises and wars, to "back-burner" status. Yet another criticism is that the Department of Defense (DOD) does not take being fully prepared for two wars seriously in its own programming, even though failure to do so comes across as a major deficiency in U.S. defense preparedness. A final criticism is that the two-MTW standard makes it hard to prepare for other missions or allocate forces in a flexible manner when crises arise. A similar drumbeat coming from these criticisms is that DOD allegedly is too locked into a simplistic and rigid formula that, while performing valuable internal functions, no longer adequately looks outward at emerging requirements, priorities, and political necessities.

Regardless of how these specific criticisms are appraised, the core issue is whether the two-MTW standard continues to provide a sound strategic paradigm for viewing the future. *If a new standard is needed, the reason is to do a better job of measuring force needs in the coming era and offering a credible strategic rationale that can endure.* In order to perform both functions, a new standard must reflect how

the strategic purposes of U.S. military power are changing. Defending the Persian Gulf and South Korea (the locations of the two MTWs) will remain important in shifting ways, but in the coming years, other strategic missions in other places—in peacetime and wartime—will be gaining prominence. A new standard should take these missions into account in ways that reflect the primary operations of U.S. forces and their emerging roles in national strategy.

The idea of creating new force-sizing standards is one that should be approached through careful study, for many issues must be considered. Broadly speaking, there are three alternatives: new contingency-based standards, capability-based standards, and strategy-based standards. Contingency-based standards would continue to size and design U.S. forces on the basis of wartime needs—for example, enough forces for 1.5 major theater wars or 2.5 major theater wars instead of today's 2.0 major theater wars. Capability-based standards would aspire to determine the force characteristics needed for a wide spectrum of operations—for example, sufficient land forces to provide a robust mixture of infantry, armored, mechanized, and air assault units. The same applies to air and naval forces. Strategy-based standards would look beyond wartime contingencies and combat capabilities to determine the forces needed to carry out the key precepts of national security strategy. All three options have advantages and disadvantages. The trade-offs need to be evaluated carefully before decisionmaking. The key point is that today's standard is not set in concrete. If another approach is deemed better, the door can be opened to adopting it.

Without pretending to settle the issue, this study reasons that strategy-based standards, supplemented by analysis of contingencies and capabilities, may work best. This approach's key advantage is that it would anchor force planning in a stronger strategic foundation. This approach was used successfully for most of the Cold War, during which U.S. forces were sized primarily to carry out national strategy with a broad spectrum of capabilities and secondarily to conform to the dictates of contingency plans. In this old-but-new approach, U.S. forces would be sized to carry out the three key precepts of national security strategy: shaping, responding, and preparing—or their successors. Once this key task is accomplished, forces can be fine-tuned to perform specific contingencies and provide a flexible portfolio of assets.

Illustratively, a strategy-based approach can be brought to life by anchoring U.S. defense plans in a nested hierarchy of three new standards that together provide a reliable measure of enduring military needs and a credible strategic rationale for the resulting posture. The first two standards are primary: the chief mechanisms for determining force needs for shaping, responding, and preparing because they focus on the most common strategic missions of U.S. forces and the highest probability events. The third standard is complementary, ensuring effective forces in more demanding, less probable events:

Standard 1: Forces for Normal Strategic Missions. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that during conditions short of major war (that is, 95 percent of the time), the three major regional commands—U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM)—always have enough forces assigned to them to perform their normal duties,

such as training, working with allies, performing peacekeeping, and responding to small-to-medium crises and conflicts. Such forces could include overseas-stated assets plus assigned units based in the United States. For example, this standard might allocate a posture of three divisions, five fighter wings, two to three carrier battle groups (CVBGs), and one amphibious ready group (ARG) to each command. In addition, it would withhold a sizable Reserve, under national command, for flexible use in these regions or elsewhere.

Standard 2: Forces for a Single MTW While Performing Normal Missions Elsewhere. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that U.S. forces can concentrate swiftly to win a single big regional war in varying places while not seriously denuding the other major commanders in chief (CINCs) of forces needed to carry out their normal missions. In the event of a Persian Gulf war, for example, this standard would allocate forces already assigned to CENTCOM plus the strategic Reserve in order to create an adequate wartime posture. Meanwhile, EUCOM and PACOM would retain control of most or all of the forces normally assigned to them. Thus, their normal operations would not be severely degraded. A similar calculus would apply to wars in other theaters.

Standard 3: Forces for More Wars, or Bigger Wars. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that in the event of more demanding wartime situations than those covered by Standard 2, U.S. forces would be adequate to the task if full use were made of the opportunity to concentrate them. This standard would examine force needs for two MTWs in overlapping time frames. It also would examine force needs should a bigger war—one much larger than today's MTWs—erupt. It would strive to concentrate enough forces to meet needs in these situations, albeit at the sacrifice of temporarily denuding other commands of their forces.

These new standards thus move to the forefront those missions that U.S. forces spend nearly all their time performing: normal operations and periodic waging of single regional wars. They are not blind to more demanding wartime situations, but their main effect is to ensure that defense plans address highest priority needs for Standards 1 and 2 and only then buy additional insurance for Standard 3—not the other way around. Their intent is to focus plans intently on the strategic missions of greatest activity and emphasis, and to explain publicly the rationale for the U.S. defense posture in these terms.

Initial appearances suggest that these standards do not call for force levels that are radically different from those required by the two-MTW standard. Instead, they provide a new and potentially better way to think about how existing U.S. forces are used and how they best can be improved. The current standard provides a single approach to planning: two large force packages for waging two MTWs. By contrast, the new standards provide a wide spectrum of valuable approaches. For normal condi-

tions, they disperse forces by creating four medium-sized packages: three for the major overseas CINCs and one held in reserve. For dealing with a single MTW, they concentrate forces to provide a single big package, plus two medium-sized packages for use elsewhere. For dealing with more and bigger wars, they concentrate forces even more, to create two big packages or an even bigger single package. *Their common theme is that they focus on how to create appropriate force packages for the full set of purposes and missions ahead, not only for the low-probability event of waging two big wars at the same time.*

The effect of these standards will be to provide a fresh sense of priorities in ways that can enhance the U.S. military's flexibility, adaptiveness, and across-the-board performance. They will help provide alternative lenses for viewing candidate programs, and they will reward those that provide powerful strategic benefits in more ways than one. For example, they will cast a favorable light on measures for better infrastructure in outlying areas that help U.S. forces both to perform peacetime shaping missions and to wage major wars.

Like all standards, these standards should be applied sensibly, with their interplay in mind. Standard 1 should be employed not only for its own purposes but also to help create adequate capabilities for Standards 2 and 3. Likewise, Standard 2 should be broadly targeted, in ways that have positive effects on the other two standards. Standard 2 calls for being prepared to fight a single major war, but not only one kind of war in one place. Rather, it means that U.S. forces should be able wage different kinds of wars, varying in location, strategy, and operations. It mandates being prepared for single wars in Europe, the Middle East/Persian Gulf, Korea, and Asia. The flexible capacity to wage these different kinds of wars will provide an inherent capacity to wage more than one war at a time. Standard 3 no longer will rule the roost but will be used to identify cost-effective measures that help U.S. forces fight not only two wars but also one war. Examples include strategic mobility, command, control, communications, and computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C⁴ISR) systems, war reserve munitions, and stocks: areas where preparing for multiple wars still will make sense.

A guiding theme is that future defense plans should ensure that the goals of Standard 1 and 2 are solidly met, even as Standard 3's needs, as a still important insurance policy, are amply addressed. They should ensure that pursuit of Standard 3 measures does not result in loss of Standard 1 and 2 assets. Standard 1 and 2 programs can be tailored with the goal of also enhancing Standard 3 capabilities. When unique Standard 3 measures make sense for reasons of their own, they should be funded. *By prioritizing this way, DOD will build forces fully capable of meeting Standards 1 and 2, while preserving a robust capacity for Standard 3.*

The strategy-based approach that uses these three standards will be more complex and harder to explain than is contingency planning for two MTWs, but it is no more complex than Cold War thinking. *It would create a public rationale that rings true, and it would provide a force posture that reflects the full strategic purposes of national strategy.* It would help ensure that DOD programs and budgets flow in the direction of enabling the services and CINCs fully to carry out the peacetime and wartime missions that must be performed in today's world. It would reduce the risk

that the Pentagon, in striving for a two-MTW posture, will leave itself inadequately prepared not only to fight one war but also to carry out normal duties that play a critical role in national strategy. Simply stated, this approach points toward a sound force posture because it is anchored in a balanced sense of strategic purposes and priorities.

An added benefit is that this approach would better enable DOD to develop plans and forces for performing new missions along the southern belt. It would relieve defense planning from being so fixated on big wars in the Persian Gulf and Korea that other conflicts and places might go unaddressed. It would allocate sufficient forces to the three major commands, all of which would be performing missions along the southern belt and elsewhere. It would free them from plans that employ only very large forces, thereby allowing them to develop plans for medium-sized projection and strike packages: the kind of forces that likely will be appropriate for most key missions there. In these ways, it would help facilitate the transition to a new military strategy that makes sense not only for the southern belt but also for all other endangered regions in the years ahead.

These three standards are put forth as illustrations, not a fixed blueprint. They illustrate that the recent past need not be prologue. The two-MTW formula is one option for navigating the future, but it is not the only viable option. Creative thinking can produce other approaches with attractions of their own. They can be articulated in enough detail to provide concrete guidance for sizing forces, allocating them among missions, and setting program priorities for improving them. The challenge is to develop a full set of options, analyze them, and choose one—not because it made sense in the past, but because it offers promise of working best in the future.

Building Flexible, Adaptive Forces

What kind of U.S. forces will be needed to carry out tomorrow's strategies, missions, and sizing standards, including those outlined here? Future U.S. forces will need to remain capable of waging two MTWs, should that improbable step become necessary; however, maintaining this capability will not be their most valuable characteristic. They will need to be highly capable of peacetime strategic shaping, especially in dangerous places where their presence can greatly enhance stability. They will need to be capable of responding swiftly and decisively to a full spectrum of crisis and wartime contingencies, from large to small, including peacekeeping, strike operations against WMD-armed opponents, and interventions against determined opponents who are skillfully employing asymmetrical strategies aimed at slipping the American punch. They also will need to have the capacity to perform strategic U-turns to switch to new missions and operations fast enough to deal with a rapidly shifting global setting.

These multiple assets add up to a strategic need for a flexible and adaptive force posture—one that can perform many different missions in frequently changing ways and thereby attain national goals. Future U.S. forces should not be designed with a single script in mind. Instead, they can best be preserved and built with an approach resembling that of an estate planner who assembles a diverse portfolio of stocks, bonds, and other investments in order to provide a robust combination of liquid as-

sets, short-term growth, and long-term security. *In similar ways, U.S. forces can be tailored to provide a balanced portfolio of assets whose diverse subcomponents can be selectively brought together in ways that meet the needs of the moment as well as challenges of the future.*

Flexibility and adaptiveness come from a force posture that possesses diverse assets that can be combined and recombined to perform ever-shifting missions. To an impressive degree, these characteristics already exist in U.S. forces. As table 1 shows, this is the case partly because all service components have sizable assets. Together, they provide 13 active ground divisions plus similar reserves, 20 fighter wings, and 11 to 12 CVBGs, backed up by modern C⁴ISR assets, large strategic mobility forces, and a well endowed infrastructure at home. The stationing of 235,000 troops, supported by the ability to deploy another 500,000 troops in a crisis, provides the U.S. military a flexible capacity to project sizable forces to many key corners of the globe.

Table 1. U.S. Defense Posture, 2000

<i>Service Element</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Reserve</i>
Army Divisions	10	8
Separate Army Brigades	—	18
Marine Divisions and Air Wings	3	1
Air Force Fighter Wings	12	8
Air Force Bombers	163	27
Navy Carriers	11 or 12	—
ARGs	12	—
Other Major Combatants	163	—
Active Military Personnel	1,350,000	865,000

Source: Data from Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, *Annual Report to the President and Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000).

In addition, all services contain considerable diversity within their ranks. The Army has a mix of armored, mechanized, light infantry, airborne, and air assault forces. The Air Force has strategic bombers, air interceptors, and multimission aircraft that can perform deep-strike, interdiction, close air support, and reconnaissance roles. The Navy provides carriers, attack wings, cruise missiles, surface combatants, and submarines that can control the seas and project power ashore. The Marines provide integrated ground and air forces that can perform amphibious assault missions while working with the Army in sustained land operations. The growing capacity of the services to combine to perform joint operations, of course, provides considerable synergy and added flexibility. These characteristics allow DOD to get substantial mileage out of the current forces.

Nonetheless, the current posture is 30 percent smaller than it was during the Cold War, and its shrunken size limits the number of missions that it can perform. For temporary periods, it can surge its efforts, but if an abnormally fast pace is continued over an extended period, the posture will be stretched beyond its limits. Because quantity matters in the strategic calculus, the question arises: How many forces will

be needed in a globalizing world? The same as today, less, or more? A few years ago, critics often said that the prospect of steady progress toward a stable world translated into an eventual need for fewer forces than now. Some argued in favor of force reductions to invest the savings into faster modernization. Recently, however, the prospect of world affairs becoming more turbulent has been giving rise to a reappraisal in many quarters. A growing number of observers are expressing alarm over the force posture allegedly being stretched too thin by current missions. They fear that these missions may become more numerous tomorrow. No consensus has yet emerged, but today's talk is mostly that the force posture should stay level, or even grow somewhat, to reduce mounting strains and/or perform new missions.

This chapter's three new force-sizing standards point toward a future force posture in the vicinity of today's model, not appreciably smaller or larger. This is the case for each standard considered individually. Sizable forces will be needed to carry out normal missions (Standard 1), to wage a single MTW while keeping other key theaters stable (Standard 2), and to provide a supplementary capacity to fight more and bigger wars (Standard 3). Their combined effects reinforce this conclusion, for they act together to erect three powerful barriers against steep reductions. Properly interpreted, these standards create no single-point requirement below which the remaining forces would be clearly inadequate, or above which added forces would be clearly superfluous. Yet even when an already existing posture is reasonably aligned with strategic requirements, small additions and subtractions often can make a big difference. While fewer forces can cause strategic damage, more forces can be beneficial because they provide added flexibility, missions, and insurance.

If a decision is made to enlarge today's posture, first priority likely will go to adding so-called low-density/high-demand (LD/HD) forces from all services. These are small units with highly specialized capabilities that are being stretched thin by growing requirements for using them in regular overseas operations, such as peacekeeping and crisis interventions. Examples include Air Force C⁴I and defense suppression aircraft, Army military police and construction engineers, and Navy special operations forces. Adding assets in these critical areas could greatly enhance the U.S. military's ability to perform these missions while enlarging the total posture in only small ways.

As for major combat formations, the Army is unlikely to need additional active divisions and brigades. Priority already is being given to enhancing the readiness of 15 Reserve component brigades so that they can participate in major combat operations, if necessary. The Army may also need selective additions in special combat units, such as long-range fires, and in combat support and service support (CS/CSS) assets. More than one-half of the Army's CS/CSS structure is placed in Reserve component status. This could constrain the Army's ability to fight one major war, much less two wars at the same time. It already compels the Army to draw on Reserve component support units to perform lengthy peacekeeping roles, as has been the case in the Balkans. Selective expansion in these areas could enhance the Army's strategic responsiveness. The same applies to the Air Force, whose performance of new-era missions could be enhanced by adding active-duty pilots, mechanics, and support personnel. The Air Force's 20 fighter wings seem adequate for wartime missions, but the current structure

of having only 12 active wings, with the other 8 in Reserve component status, is being stressed by overseas rotation and crisis response missions. Shifting two wings to active status, or even adding two active wings to the current posture, may make sense in the coming years.

The Navy posture is already the smallest in many years. The current posture includes 11 to 12 CVBGs, 171 surface combatants and attack submarines, 40 amphibious ships, and 75 mine warfare and logistic support ships. The total of 316 “battle force ships” is well down from the higher levels of 567 ships only a decade ago. The Navy’s size seems headed further downward in the coming years, for although better quality ships are being built, their numbers are not adequate to offset retirements. The worrisome consequence is that the Navy already is hard-pressed to meet its training requirements, perform steady-state overseas presence in all major theaters, and react to growing missions for peacekeeping and crisis response.

Given the need for a large rotational base, current forces are meeting ARG deployment goals, but often fall short of CVBG goals. In 1998, a CVBG was deployed only 40 percent of the time in the Mediterranean, 67 percent in the Pacific, and 82 percent in Southwest Asia. In 1999, similar shortfalls were experienced in the Mediterranean and the Pacific. In 1999, the Navy responded to the Kosovo war by concentrating forces there, but this strained other theaters and missions. In the future, this situation of declining overseas presence and stressful concentrations could worsen at a time when requirements for strategic shaping, peacekeeping, and crisis response are not declining and even growing. Illustratively, adding an additional CVBG could elevate on-station time from 75 percent of current goals to 85 percent or better—a useful contribution to readiness and deployment rates. Short of this step, acquiring other combatants and support ships could lessen pressures on the Navy, while enhancing its responsiveness and ability to support national strategy.

The size of the future U.S. military likely will be debated in the coming years and its details analyzed endlessly, but the strategic bottom line seems clear. The current force posture was sized in 1993 on the basis of strategic assumptions that are now in flux and are headed toward an unknown destination that could call for equal or more forces, not less. If pressures for more forces continue to grow, they likely will come primarily not from major new warfighting requirements, but from the need to carry out a rising number of normal missions and operations around the world.

Today’s U.S. forces are being stretched thin by the need to stay ready for major combat while carrying out missions for overseas presence, alliance commitments, strategic shaping, peacekeeping, and minor crisis interventions. Perhaps this trend can be dampened by setting strategic priorities more selectively, but the reality is that missions important to U.S. foreign policy and national security are hard to turn down. Today’s missions and operations are being performed not for superfluous reasons, but because, after careful review, they were deemed critical enough to justify the expenditure of scarce resources. The same will be true tomorrow, and the number of these missions may increase before it decreases. The current practice of providing enhanced funds for readiness can help reduce shortfalls, but not endlessly. If U.S. forces become stretched to the point of snapping, which some observers judge already is happening, the need for more assets will no longer be debatable. *A big force*

expansion likely will not be necessary, but a modest, well planned expansion focused on critical assets might make a valuable contribution to future U.S. national security policy and military strategy.

To a degree, the future need for forces as large as or somewhat larger than those of today could come into conflict with DOD budgetary pressures as the next procurement wave accelerates. If the situation is not handled well, plausibly decisions to emphasize fast procurement could compel contractions—if the DOD budget is not large enough to fund both adequate forces and modernization. Alternatively, insufficient procurement of new weapons could compel contractions if old weapons can no longer be operated. Only time will tell. Much depends upon future defense budgets and procurement plans, neither of which is set in concrete. DOD has faced similar problems before, and as it did then, it will have options at its disposal for ensuring that sufficient forces remain in the posture even as an adequate procurement effort is carried out. If unwise contractions become necessary, the result could be a paring back of U.S. defense strategy and overseas involvements. This step could damage U.S. security interests abroad and contribute to mounting dangers, if power vacuums emerge in key areas. History suggests that the wisest course is to fund adequate defense budgets and manage them carefully so that in size, readiness, and modernization, U.S. forces are capable of meeting future requirements in solid, well-balanced ways. If necessary, a booming American economy, and surpluses flowing from it, are making a somewhat larger defense budget a viable option in ways that could dispel lingering fears of a strategy-force mismatch.

The judgment that future U.S. force requirements likely will remain similar to those of today applies for the coming decade and somewhat beyond. Over the longer haul, much will depend upon how international conditions evolve and how they affect requirements. If the level of danger and threat remains similar to that of today, the required U.S. military posture likely will remain in the vicinity of today's force levels. The main task will be adjusting the existing posture in order to handle the ups and downs of ongoing changes abroad. If the international situation improves in major ways, force requirements likely will diminish and a smaller posture will suffice. If the global situation deteriorates markedly, a significant force expansion could be needed. The distant future is too uncertain to call. What can be said is that a modestly strengthened version of today's posture provides the assets to deal with the global situation at hand, while preserving the flexibility to contract or expand as the future warrants.

Setting Priorities for Higher Quality Forces

Regardless of decisions made about quantity, U.S. forces will be kept strong and improved through efforts to enhance their quality. Judged in relation to their demanding global missions, U.S. forces are not impressively large. Although they are called upon to help keep several turbulent regions stable, they total only 7 percent of military personnel around the world. Even when U.S. forces concentrate to fight wars, their opponents typically are as large as or larger than they are. High quality is what allows U.S. forces to shape events in peacetime and to win wars. They are the

world's best by a wide margin. The challenge is to keep that status. Because adversary forces will be improving by acquiring modern weapons, information systems, and asymmetrical strategies, U.S. forces need to continue improving as well.

The current high quality of U.S. forces owes partly to their large amounts of training. To be sure, problems recently have arisen in personnel readiness because of high deployment rates that have taken some people and units away from their home bases for too long and too often. Likewise, shortfalls in some areas of materiel readiness—for example, depot maintenance and spares—are now being corrected. Lost in the clamor has been awareness that for active military servicemen, per capita spending on operations and maintenance today is 40 percent higher than it was in 1990 (in constant dollars), a year when overall readiness was judged excellent. The result is that U.S. combat forces train at high rates in ways that build impressive combat power. For example, U.S. tactical air combat pilots fly about 220 hours per year, mostly in training. This level is four times higher than that of most foreign air forces, especially those of potential adversaries. Navy ship steaming days for training meet DOD goals. Army tank miles per year are about 85 percent of DOD goals, but this level is far higher than that of most foreign armies. Indeed, many foreign armies train only at the company level, but the Army trains at the battalion level: a huge difference in combat power. U.S. forces also engage in joint training: perhaps not enough, but far more than other countries do, and the forces pursue training and exercises with key allies.

Another contributor is the high quality of U.S. weapons. Although DOD has been on an extended procurement holiday for some years, the weapons acquired in the 1980s are mostly still the world's best. This judgment clearly applies to U.S. fighter aircraft: the F-15, F-16, F-14, and F-18. It also applies to the M1 tank, Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, and attack helicopters. As for maritime forces, no other Navy in the world has the big carriers, Aegis cruisers, destroyers, frigates, and submarines to launch major blue-water operations, much less contest the Navy for control of the seas. Overall, good people, advanced training, excellent weapons, joint operations, modern doctrine, good power projection assets, and other factors combine to make U.S. forces far better than any others. Some units doubtless are being called upon to do too many things: improvements are needed. Nevertheless, the idea that U.S. forces are steadily losing their fighting power in some wholesale way is bogus.

The primary vehicles for improving U.S. forces are the revolution in military affairs (RMA) and their new joint doctrine, recently *Joint Vision 2010* and *Joint Vision 2020*. The revolution in military affairs aspires to blend modern information networks with new weapons, munitions, and structures to create ultrasophisticated forces that can operate with greater speed, lethality, and punch than do current forces. *Joint Vision 2010/Joint Vision 2020* creates new doctrinal precepts for employing these RMA-enhanced ground, air, and naval forces in highly potent ways aimed at overpowering enemy forces quickly and decisively. Owing to the RMA and *Joint Vision 2010/Joint Vision 2020*, future U.S. forces will be able to disperse widely, but operate together through networking. They are to be capable of maneuvering expertly, engaging precisely from the air and ground, striking at long ranges, drawing on leaner logistic support, and protecting themselves from attack. All services are

now designing new structures and practices that will allow them to work together in carrying out this doctrine. A good example is the Air Force's aerospace expeditionary forces, the Army's efforts to create fast-deployable brigades, and the Navy's emphasis on networking of dispersed assets. Meanwhile, DOD is gearing up for a major procurement effort to buy the new information systems, C⁴ISR technologies, tactical combat aircraft, new land and sea platforms, smart munitions, theater missile defenses, and other assets that will be needed. It is hoped that steady progress will be made in the coming years. By 2010 to 2020, this overall effort is intended to culminate in greatly enhanced forces that take modern warfare to a new dimension and a higher plane.

Spending Funds Wisely

The speed and success of this effort will depend largely upon future defense budgets and how they are spent. The budgets of recent years—hovering at about \$250 billion annually—were too small to permit a major improvement effort. Compounding the problem was the need to spend heavily on readiness, which combined with other dynamics to push DOD spending for operations and maintenance to \$104 billion, or 40 percent of the budget. This was an all-time high compared with the normal level of about 30 percent. As a by-product, procurement fell to about \$45 billion, which is barely enough to buy normal replacement stocks and not nearly enough to acquire new weapons. To help correct this problem, the defense budget has been increased by \$112 billion for 2000–2005. The fiscal year (FY) 2000 budget is \$280 billion. It will rise to \$320 billion by 2005 and is likely to rise to a higher level later in order to offset inflation and perhaps provide modest real growth. Procurement spending is also rising: to \$54 billion in 2000, \$75 billion in 2005, and likely more later. This infusion of funds will permit DOD greatly to accelerate its acquisition of the new weapons, munitions, and other systems needed to bring the RMA and *Joint Vision 2010/Joint Vision 2020* to life. In particular, U.S. air forces will improve through acquisition of the F-22, Joint Strike Fighter, F/A-18 E/F, Comanche helicopter, and V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft.

Even so, the Pentagon likely will not be able to spend its way out of the age-old dilemma of setting priorities. About 95 percent of the funds likely to be available have already been committed. Future budgets, even larger than those now planned, likely will not be big enough to fund all plausible improvements. Pressures for new spending will be arising from multiple quarters: theater and national ballistic missile defenses, overseas operations and infrastructure, conventional force expansion, new force structures, personnel, readiness, and modernization. DOD will need to make hard decisions on what assets to acquire and what assets to forsake. Its actions will have a major bearing on how the future unfolds. The challenge will be to set priorities wisely so that the programs funded will produce the kind of improved forces most urgently needed by national strategy.

Setting priorities can begin by trimming secondary spending in the current budget and making better use of existing resources. Consolidating bases and infrastructure through base realignment and closure (BRAC) is one example already being pursued. Another is DOD pursuit of the revolution in business affairs. Possibly low-

priority operations and maintenance spending can be pruned so that more funds can be spent on high-priority readiness measures. Consolidation of tri-service assets in such areas as medical care, C⁴ISR, and administrative support can help, perhaps significantly so. As the revolution in military affairs results in streamlined combat and support formations, the freed personnel can be used to add new assets, such as LD/HD units. Finally, priorities will have to be set in determining how many funds to allocate among the multiple claimants for enhanced capabilities. The coming procurement wave offers an opportunity greatly to enhance U.S. air power. Fully finding it at a fast pace will be expensive, and there will be ample opportunities to spend scarce funds on other improvements, especially in building stronger force structures. *Most likely, a balanced approach will be best, but the point is that tough decisions about priorities should be subjected to careful analysis and planning.*

Using Forces Effectively

DOD will face a second, equally important challenge: to wisely organize and employ its improved high-technology forces so that they can effectively carry out the new missions of the future. History shows that gleaming forces are of little use unless they can act as potent instruments of strategy and fully perform the operations needed to achieve success. For example, the United States enjoyed a huge technological advantage in Vietnam, but still lost the war because its strategy was faulty and the out-gunned enemy fought skillfully. Superb quality will matter in the future only if it is translated into winning performance and successful achievement of goals in peace, crisis, and war.

During peacetime, the act of wisely using U.S. forces will depend heavily on carrying out strategic shaping missions as effectively as possible. In each major theater, the United States will be employing a spectrum of defense assets on behalf of multiple objectives in a fluid setting. These multiple assets will include headquarters units, stationed combat and support forces, temporary deployments, committed reinforcements from the continental United States (CONUS), pre-positioned equipment, stocks, bases and facilities, and various types of security assistance. Together, these assets constitute an overall overseas presence program that must be integrated and blended with the other instruments of U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy. The successful performance of these assets and their cost-effectiveness are not to be taken for granted. Instead, the relationship between means and ends must be continuously studied and reevaluated in order to ensure that program resources are sufficient, adequately balanced and prioritized, and effectively applied in ways aimed at bringing about the desired political and strategic results. Because international conditions will be continuously in flux, the defense management agenda in this arena promises to be challenging and difficult in ways that mandate constant attention, plus a willingness to change when necessary. The future in this arena likely will be dynamic, not static, and the United States will need to react accordingly. In recent years, DOD has created the Theater Engagement Plans (TEP) system to help determine goals and priorities through overseas presence. Continued use of this methodology and further improvements to it will be an ongoing need.

In the coming years, the United States likely will face the need to reassess the strategic rationale for its current pattern of troop deployments overseas. In general, sizable overseas deployments offer important strategic advantages in maintaining American influence at high levels, training with allies and partners, and being ready to deal with emergencies. Nevertheless, there are countervailing considerations: the current overseas presence of about 235,000 troops costs about \$10 to \$15 billion annually, and DOD capacity swiftly to deploy forces from the United States means that rapid reinforcement now works effectively in many cases. Given this, large U.S. forces should remain deployed, not for continuity's sake, but because they serve clear strategic purposes, perform critical missions, and are a cost-effective way to spend scarce funds. The current distribution of forces has worked well during the past decade, but should not be seen as sacrosanct if a different, more appropriate presence becomes desirable. The continuing need for 100,000 troops in Europe likely will hinge not on NATO needs for border defense, but on whether the Europeans create improved forces for new missions that can act as partners with U.S. forces. In Asia, the need for 100,000 troops will depend heavily upon the situation on the Korean Peninsula. If tensions relax and Korea unifies, the United States may have reasons to seek a smaller Asian posture, one configured for mobile operations and regionwide missions. In Southwest Asia, growing dangers could increase the need for U.S. troop deployments, but political considerations currently bar this step.

Regardless of decisions on future force deployments, DOD will be best advised to rethink how overseas presence and power projection are blended in performing new-era missions in dangerous places. Current overseas bases in Europe and Japan will need to be reconfigured as regional hubs for power projection, rather than as mere reception facilities for reinforcements that operate locally. To the extent possible, steps can be taken to acquire new bases, facilities, storage, and equipment pre-positioning in distant areas where U.S. forces may be operating. Designing light but still strong units that can deploy rapidly is important. Added pre-positioning can help the Army make its heavy forces deploy faster. Airlift and sealift, critical to moving combat units swiftly, may need strengthening. Such practical steps, which often escape public attention, will have a major impact in determining whether future U.S. forces can serve as fully potent instruments of national strategy or are left gleaming but not succeeding. Such measures should be given careful attention in DOD budgets, for they easily can be lost in the clamor over bigger things.

In recent years, Armed Forces have been used to conduct peacekeeping missions, but their capacity to fight and win wars will remain their bellwether. Future crises and wars could come in many sizes and shapes, each requiring a tailored response that reflects force needs, military doctrine, and political goals. Flexibility is needed because small-to-medium crises and wars, in particular, could produce events that depart widely from commonly expected scenarios. In some cases, joint operations will be necessary in ways that require balanced contributions from all services; in other cases, one or another component may predominate. Normally, however, joint operations will be needed to some degree because each service brings uniquely valuable skills to war fighting. Simply stated, U.S. forces fight best as a joint team. Their capacity for jointness heavily accounts for their superiority on the modern battlefield.

Stripped of jointness, other assets—sophisticated technology, modern doctrine, and advanced training—become less significant.

For major theater wars, well endowed joint operations—that is, a robust combination of air, naval, and ground forces—will remain the standard. For such wars, a realistic scenario is a threefold operation in which small but potent U.S. forces rush to the scene of battle in order to halt an enemy attack in the early days, before valuable terrain is lost; larger U.S. forces are deployed over a period of weeks, during which enemy forces are degraded; and when their deployment is complete, U.S. forces launch a decisive counterattack aimed at destroying enemy forces, restoring lost territory, and attaining other political goals.

The task is to assemble a joint posture with the proper mix of assets to carry out operations in all three phases. Maritime forces provide an invaluable capacity for early availability, sea control, littoral operations from the sea, and forced entry. Clearly, air forces and other deep-strike assets will play major roles, especially in the initial halt and buildup phases, before large ground formations have had time fully to deploy. While the Air Force normally will deploy a large portion of these forces, the Navy and Marines provide fully one-third of total U.S. air power, and ship-launched cruise missiles provide added firepower. The Army contributes to deep-strike missions with attack helicopters and multiple-launch rocket systems and tactical missiles (MLRS/ATACMS). Blending these assets into a coordinated campaign, guided by a well construed targeting strategy, is key to success.

The ongoing acquisition of JSTARS, other C⁴ISR assets, information networks, and such smart munitions as Skeet and BAT is greatly increasing the capacity of these long-range strike assets to attack targets in near real time, to destroy them with maximum effectiveness, and to inflict major attrition on enemy forces. In theory, they will possess the raw firepower and lethality to dominate many future wars while suffering few casualties. The mechanical application of attrition mathematics, however, is often a poor guide to judging the complex dynamics of war. Relying exclusively on deep-strike assets to defeat a well armed and wily enemy seems unwise because their effectiveness can be degraded by rugged terrain, bad weather, enemy tactics, and the sheer frictions of war. In addition, deep-strike assets cannot seize and hold ground, liberate cities, or physically eject enemy forces that are entrenched to the point of withstanding bombardment from the air. For these reasons, sizable numbers of ground forces often will be needed in order to conduct blocking actions during the defensive phase and to conduct swift, decisive counterattacks in the aftermath.

The exact number of ground forces needed will vary with the occasion. The key point is that numbers matter in determining how campaign plans are carried out. More forces broaden the tactical options available to commanders and thereby provide increased leverage over opponents. For example, two corps may possess more than double the combat power of only one corps—by a considerable margin. Two corps can allow a commander to conduct a dual “hammer-and-anvil” maneuver rather than a single-dimension operation, thus significantly enhancing prospects for defeating a tough enemy. In designing deployments and campaign plans, the proper approach normally will be to determine the missions that must be performed in order to win decisively and to tailor force commitments accordingly. This standard applies

not only in determining total force levels, but also in selecting the mix of ground forces (that is, the combination of armor, mechanized, light infantry, airborne, air assault, amphibious, and artillery used on each occasion).

The combat operations of U.S. ground forces are undergoing major changes in response to new doctrines, technologies, structures, and practices. Their firepower and lethality are growing, frontages are widening, and speed of tactical mobility is increasing. Combat units are expected to strike deeper than in the past, and logistic support is improving while being streamlined. As a result, U.S. ground forces seem likely to preserve and upgrade their capacity to perform demanding missions in ways that keep their casualties low. In the final analysis, nonetheless, it is the joint nature of U.S. force operations that greatly elevates their combat power owing to the synergy, leverage, and fast tempo provided by all services working together on behalf of common campaign plans. Equally important, U.S. combat operations are being guided by a new military mentality aimed at capitalizing on the changing nature of modern warfare. Success at this endeavor promises to help keep U.S. forces superior to future opponents. If these gains are to be achieved, however, the necessary changes will have to be carried out, and future U.S. joint operations will need to be planned carefully in ways that reflect the mix of forces needed in each case.

U.S. defense plans also will need a clear understanding of force needs for carrying out specific new missions and operations in future crises and wars. In recent years, a prevailing assumption has been that U.S. military interventions will be either relatively small or quite big—for example, 10,000 troops for peacekeeping or, alternatively, 400,000 troops for a big major theater war. In some situations, one or the other of these polar-opposite models will still apply. In other situations, a quite different model may be needed: a swift and decisive medium-sized deployment of 75,000 to 150,000 troops. For example, the Kosovo conflict required about this number in directly committed air and naval units. *A sensible step would be to develop medium-sized joint strike packages for each of the three major commands: EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM.* A joint package composed of the following units would provide a broad array of operational capabilities, including the capacity to conduct counterproliferation strikes against WMD-armed opponents:

- A CVBG, including a carrier, its air wing, and surface combatants armed with cruise missiles
- An ARG, with a Marine battalion and associated combat aircraft, backed by the capacity to build to one to two brigades
- For the Air Force, two to three aerospace expeditionary forces (AEFs), with a mix of interceptors, fighter bombers, bombers, reconnaissance, and other aircraft
- For the Army, one to two brigades capable of building to one to two divisions in a few weeks
- Advanced C⁴ISR systems, information technologies, and smart munitions

Efforts to tailor appropriate force packages for crises and wars should be accompanied by careful thought about how U.S. force operations are to be integrated into the politics and diplomacy of each situation. Although the new U.S. military

doctrines and forces will provide enhanced capabilities to inflict decisive battlefield defeat on opponents, the issues and stakes in many conflicts may be heavily political, rather than primarily military. The ability to win does not necessarily guarantee successful achievement of political goals. These goals often will be attainable only if military campaigns are tailored to support them and U.S. forces are employed accordingly. Because many crises and wars likely will grow out of murky politics, achieving such political-military integration of force operations may be one of the most important challenges confronting U.S. strategy in the coming years.

An equally weighty challenge will be learning how best to employ U.S. forces in WMD settings. During peacetime, a principal challenge will be reassuring a number of friends and allies who may be seeking U.S. nuclear deterrence coverage of the sort extended to NATO nations and to Japan. Extended deterrence worked in those places, but the numerous conditions for its re-creation may not be present along much of the southern belt and elsewhere. If this is the case, a different approach—one that adequately protects these countries and U.S. interests—will have to be found. Crafting it promises to be a demanding exercise in new strategic logic. The Cooperative Defense Initiative now being pursued in the Greater Middle East is an example of the new approaches likely to be needed. Another example is the U.S. effort to promote multilateral cooperation in Asia for a response to WMD threats.

During crises and wars, the challenge will be similarly difficult. Throughout the Cold War, U.S. forces faced an enemy with nuclear weapons in Central Europe, but since then, they have had the luxury of preparing for purely conventional conflicts. In contrast, future wars may see aggressors attacking with conventional forces, but holding WMD systems in reserve and being potentially willing to use them. Many important steps are under way to prepare for this development. Acquiring theater ballistic missile defenses will help protect deploying U.S. troops and other local targets. If a national missile defense system is built, the continental United States will be protected against limited attacks as well. Dispersing deployed forces can reduce their vulnerability. Acquisition of better strike assets, especially at long ranges in real time, will provide a capacity to degrade enemy WMD systems before their use.

While all of these steps will help in important ways, creating a sound political-military doctrine for force operations may be equally important. During the Cold War, the doctrine of forward defense and flexible response provided a path for initiating conventional operations, crossing the nuclear threshold, and gradually escalating in a politically controlled manner. Whether the same doctrine can be applied to the coming era of different strategic affairs is to be seen. What seems certain is that an appropriate doctrine will have to be created and implemented in ways that leave U.S. forces prepared to carry it out, not only through conventional operations but also through escalation when necessary.

Building Better Allied and Coalition Forces

Plans to enhance the quality of U.S. forces need to be accompanied by policies aimed at encouraging allies and partners to become better at power projection and new missions. Otherwise, U.S. forces will be left carrying too many burdens and so

overstretched that they cannot be effective. For this reason, satisfactory progress in this arena may be fully as important as is enhancing the quality of U.S. forces. Owing to the Cold War heritage of defending only their own borders, allied forces are weak at performing new power projection missions. Whereas the United States can project about 750,000 troops from all services, the European allies could project only about 75,000 troops, and even then, slowly. Asian allies are even worse. As U.S. forces become more capable of swift power projection followed by RMA strike missions, the gap could grow so large that allied forces will not be able to operate with them even if political leaders want them to do so. If today's gap grows into a huge gulf, it could put a practical end to Western coalition defense planning.¹

In 1998, there were few signs that NATO and the Europeans would respond effectively, but since then, matters have changed for the better in political terms. Initial signs of change were evident even before the Kosovo conflict erupted in early 1999, but when NATO initiated combat operations aimed at compelling Serbian troops to leave Kosovo, the experience turned out to be galvanizing. The conflict showed that wars could still occur in Europe and that NATO could muster the widespread resolve to win them. Kosovo also highlighted the shortfalls in European forces. Even though only air and naval forces were used, and operations were launched within range of NATO bases, the Europeans contributed only about 30 percent of the forces: the rest were provided by the United States. European forces performed their missions effectively, but deficiencies in such areas as C⁴ISR, support aircraft, all-weather capability, and smart munitions became evident. When the Serbs withdrew in June, large U.S. and European ground forces entered Kosovo to perform enduring peacekeeping duties. In the aftermath, European leaders began voicing heightened awareness of the need to improve their forces, and U.S. leaders publicly urged them to act.

At its Spring 1999 summit in Washington, NATO adopted a new strategic concept. While this concept reaffirmed that NATO will remain a collective defense alliance for defending common borders, it also called upon the alliance to prepare forces for new missions—from peacekeeping to war fighting—outside its territory in the Euro-Atlantic area or beyond. At this summit, NATO also adopted its new Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), which encourages the Europeans to focus on swift power projection and decisive strike operations for new missions. This multiyear plan, now under way, calls for major improvements in such critical areas as RMA weapons, C⁴I systems, multinational logistics, and strategic mobility assets. With the DCI under way, a few months later the Europeans announced parallel changes to their unification-oriented security and defense plans under the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Their Helsinki accord broadened the ESDP beyond purely political steps to include efforts to build the types of improved military capabilities called for by the DCI.

These multilateral gestures have been accompanied by forward-looking steps by individual European countries. The United Kingdom defense review called for further measures aimed at improving British forces for power projection and modern strike operations. The French defense review did the same. Although these two countries always have been Europe's best at power projection, the Germans have begun showing signs of life by earmarking similar forces for new missions. In smaller ways,

other countries, including Italy and the Netherlands, are doing likewise. Critics have derided these gestures as hollow because insufficient funds allegedly are being made available for fast progress. But at least the Europeans are now talking in responsive political language: in the past, such talk normally has been a sign of action to come.

The key issue now is whether the Europeans will act in sufficiently strong ways. The task facing them is far from Herculean. They already possess the basic assets needed to perform new missions if modest improvements are made. They have 2.3 million active troops under arms, and a force posture of about 53 mobilizable divisions, 3,350 combat aircraft, and 345 major naval combatants. This large posture—almost 50 percent larger than U.S. forces—arguably provides more formations than are needed to perform NATO missions, old and new. The chief constraint is lack of funds for new measures, but this problem seems solvable. Reducing current forces somewhat could free funds for investment: today, Europe's defense spending of \$160 billion annually is mostly so consumed by personnel and operations that procurement efforts are too meager. If prudent priorities are set, the overall, 10-year cost of the DCI likely will be about \$100 to \$125 billion. This amount is only about 6 to 7 percent of Europe's planned defense spending for the coming decade. A combination of savings in current budgets plus modest increases—for example, 1 to 2 percent annually in real terms—could generate the flexible funds needed by the DCI and other improvement priorities.

The high-priority need is to improve European contributions to NATO rapid reaction forces (or similar formations) for new projection and strike missions. These forces number eight divisions, 600 combat aircraft, and 150 naval combatants. Currently, only about one-fourth of them can swiftly deploy outside NATO borders—a deficiency that was manifested in the Persian Gulf War and Kosovo. The biggest deficiency is lack of adequate strategic transport and logistic support assets for long-distance combat missions in austere settings. Fortunately, this deficiency can be remedied inexpensively: through using commercial aircraft and cargo ships and by acquiring limited amounts of special logistics equipment. The European forces already possess modern weapons and other platforms. If they are given improved C⁴ISR assets, information systems and networks, smart munitions, and updated doctrines, they will be able to operate alongside RMA-capable U.S. forces in complementary ways. With better mobility and logistic support, they also will be able to deploy more rapidly than now and operate decisively with U.S. forces in the aftermath. In this way, NATO can preserve its capacity to perform combined U.S.-allied operations, not only inside Europe but outside as well.

Prospects in other regions are less bright, but modest steps can be taken as the political traffic permits. In Asia, Japan has agreed to new defense guidelines that enhance its forces for some new missions outside its borders, and other countries are expressing interest in collective military endeavors. In the Persian Gulf, U.S. partners have only small forces, but efforts to bring them closer together can enhance the region's self-defense prospects. Across the Greater Middle East, other countries, normally with bigger forces, can be brought together in a flexible web of coalition partnerships. Much will depend upon the Arab-Israeli peace process, but if major progress is made, the door may be opened for closer U.S. collaboration with various

countries. In both regions, coalitions of the capable and willing, rather than formal alliances, likely will provide the main mechanisms for combined operations.

In all key regions, progress in this arena will be critical for both military and political reasons. Emerging security requirements are too big to be handled by U.S. forces alone: greater contributions by allies and partners are a military necessity. Politically, enhanced contributions are needed to maintain the bonds that tie the United States to its European and Asian alliances. Otherwise, allies will be defending their secure borders, while the United States struggles to defend common interests against serious threats and dangers elsewhere. Such a strategic imbalance will be unsustainable on both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific.

What the future will require is agreement on a new transatlantic defense and security bargain, and one for the Pacific as well. Such bargains will need to provide a common agenda for protecting mutual security interests, sharing burdens fairly, and ensuring that defense requirements are met through appropriate but flexible commitments of U.S. and allied forces. A strategic bargain of this sort sustained both alliances through the dark years of the Cold War and helped them emerge victorious. A similar but new bargain is needed now. If crafted, it will help enable the United States and its democratic partners perform the new and demanding missions of the future in ways that allow them to cope better with the problems and opportunities of a globalizing world.

Conclusion

This chapter has advanced several specific ideas for how U.S. defense planning in the coming era can be improved. These ideas will need to be evaluated on their merits. The underlying point is more important. The United States enjoys a favorable strategic situation around the world largely because, in the past, it created a strong defense posture and proved adept at using it effectively in peace, crisis, and war. With globalization now taking place and the international scene evolving in other ways, the same strategic effectiveness will be needed tomorrow. What marks today's scene as radically different from that of the Cold War is the scope and pace of change taking place, propelling events toward an uncertain destination. The central strategic challenge facing the United States is to influence how the future unfolds so that the ultimate destination proves healthy. Because the world is changing, U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy will need to change so that this demanding strategic mission can be accomplished. In more ways than one, the same judgment applies to U.S. defense planning. The United States will need to maintain strong, high-quality military forces. It will need to apply them wisely around the globe, in places dictated by U.S. interests and unfolding events. If the United States can perform both tasks, it will greatly enhance its capacity to deal with the international challenges ahead, regardless of how they unfold. 🌐

Notes

¹ For more detail, see David C. Gompert, Richard L. Kugler, and Martin C. Libicki, *Mind the Gap: Promoting a Transatlantic Revolution in Military Affairs* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1999).