President George W. Bush, joined by Vice President Dick Cheney, outlines his national security strategy in the Rose Garden at the White House, July 16, 2002. Bush calls his plan to confront terrorism "our most urgent national priority."

From the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 to the fall of the Twin Towers in 2001, and even now during the Iraq war, which began in 2003, the U.S. has not had a consistent national security strategy that enjoyed the support of the American people and its allies. This situation is markedly different from the cold-war era (1945–91), when the nation had a clear, coherent, widely supported strategy that focused on containing and deterring Soviet Communist expansion. The tragic events of September 11, the increase in terrorism around the globe, threats from countries such as North Korea and Iran and the rise of great powers like China create an imperative once again to fashion and implement a coherent national security strategy that will safeguard this country's interests.

It is always something of a challenge to reduce major policy directions to stark, concise options, without distorting the arguments or losing the flavor of real choices that inherently overlap to some degree. But there are genuinely different thrusts to the national security strategies being discussed and debated within this country. Currently these

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different thrusts are represented by three approaches, each of which would lead the country in a different direction and toward developing a different military force structure. In brief, these choices respectively call for leveraging American dominance with preventive military action; creating stability by using American military superiority for deterrence and containment; and working toward a more cooperative, rule-based international system backed by America’s power used in genuine concert with its friends and allies.

The first of these policy thrusts is advocated mainly by those identified as “neoconservatives,” and by a number of conservatives as well. Their argument holds that the most serious threats to American security come from the combination of terrorism, rogue states and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The temptation for attackers to try to use these weapons against Americans is high for several reasons, including the fact that clearly identifying and punishing the attacker is inherently difficult. The U.S. is not going to be able to talk others out of developing these weapons and is also unlikely to be able to build an international coalition to help get rid of them. It must therefore have both the capability and the will to use force preemptively, if necessary, against those states and groups that represent the most serious threats to U.S. security and the American way of life. Furthermore, the U.S. should be prepared to do this essentially on its own, unbound by the need for approval from its allies or the United Nations. In the longer term, the U.S. must undercut any potential adversaries by ensuring the spread of free-market democracy throughout the world. Many contend that the first test of this policy is the war in Iraq.

The second thrust is associated with those generally called “moderates.” This approach holds that terrorism, rogue states and WMD represent the most serious threats to U.S. security and the American way of life, but that these threats cannot be dealt with effectively in all places and every time through the unilateral use of American military force. The best way, if not the only way, to manage and eventually defeat these threats is by using American power in conjunction with international support. Although the U.S. alone can inflict military defeat on just about any state in the world, it will not have the capacity to turn military victory into a stable peace or to fully remove threats without ongoing international cooperation. To gain that international support will require the U.S. to take the views of others into account and to make serious efforts to contain and deter the threats before actually employing military force.

The third thrust is advocated pri-
Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y., search fields in Rushdi Mullah, Iraq, for three missing U.S. soldiers feared captured by al-Qaeda during a deadly ambush south of Baghdad, May 14, 2007.


These four documents, the NSS of 2002 and 2006 and NSPD-17/HSPD-4, which will be referred to collectively as "the strategy," are the most detailed and comprehensive statements of how the Bush Administration intends to protect the national security interests of the U.S. in the post–September 11 world. In effect, they form the essence of what some have referred to as the "Bush Doctrine." Many people construe this doctrine to stand for the principle that this country will not hesitate to take anticipatory action to defend itself. They view it as a departure from the strategies of deterrence and containment carried over from the cold-war era by successive Administrations. And they view the war on Iraq as the first manifestation of this policy.

Some analysts, like the diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis, have argued that the Bush Doctrine represents the most profound shift in U.S. grand strategy in the past 50 years, and the first coherent statement of national security policy since the end of the cold war. Others, including secretaries of state Colin Powell (2001–2005) and Condoleezza Rice (2005–), have claimed that the items contained in the NSS and in NSPD-17/HSPD-4 are not radically different from previously existing policies.

Few mainstream policymakers, analysts or commentators—either in the U.S. or around the world—have disagreed with the goals and strategic principles outlined in the strategy. However there has been a great deal of controversy, both at home and abroad, about how these goals and principles would be implemented in specific cases, particularly when they seem to conflict with one another—for example, promoting democracy while conducting the war against terrorism, which requires cooperating with dictators. In addition, some people—even within the Administration—support some aspects of the strategy while disagreeing with others. For example, some officials support the concept of preventive action but are wary of making the extension of democracy an explicit goal of U.S. national security policy. Still others support the promotion of democracy and individual rights but chafe at the perceived overreliance on American military power to achieve these goals.

There are at least three different
ways in which this strategy can be implemented. They can be classified as preventive war, deterrence and containment, and cooperative world order.

Preventive war
Larger trends have conspired to make the threat posed by radicalism much greater in recent times. Given the rapid dissemination of destructive technologies, sensitive information and capital flows in today's globalized world, threats from terrorist networks and rogue states can and will materialize more rapidly than in the past. Moreover, any attacks promise to be much more devastating if and when these actors get their hands on WMD. As the world's leading military and economic power, the U.S. is the most likely target of these terrorists and tyrants. In the face of, and in response to, these imminent dangers, it has not only the duty but also the legal and moral right to launch preemptive attacks, unilaterally if necessary. Common sense dictates that the government not stand idly by its security and that of the world in the long run only by maintaining military dominance. Only America can effectively respond to the perils posed by terrorists, regional thugs, weapons proliferators and drug traffickers. It can do the most to resolve problems created by "failed states" before they fester into major crises. And it alone can ensure that the world's sea-lanes and skies are kept safe and open for free trade. But the array of challenges in its path requires military dominance and cannot be met on the cheap.

The ultimate goal of American foreign policy will be to use this power, alone if necessary, to extend free-market democracy around the globe. This is the only way in which the U.S. can deal with the long-term causes of terrorism. Terrorists come from countries that suffer from political repression, economic incompetence, and a broad lack of respect for the rule of law. And, contrary to what some believe, democracy and capitalism do not spread inexorably on their own. The U.S. therefore needs to assume a leadership role in spreading and accelerating the growth of free-market democracies that have been taking hold in the aftermath of the cold war.

Supporters of this policy believe that this proactive strategy will enable the U.S. to use this moment in American primacy to make the world a safer and better place for itself and its allies.

Deterrence and containment
History has demonstrated that even the most ruthless tyrants understand and respect the logic of robust containment and active deterrence. Indeed, former Secretary of State Powell argued in early 2001 that even if a rogue country ruled by a terrorist and tyrant like Saddam Hussein acquired WMD, its weapons would cause little tangible harm because any attempt to use them would bring national obliteration. When dictators have undertaken acts of aggression, it has been as a direct result of America's failure to communicate credibly its intent to retaliate. On those occasions, deterrence did not fail; it was just poorly implemented.

A host of other problems would plague a strategy of preventive action. By making preventive war a doctrine, the U.S. will encourage other states to legitimize their own aggression under the guise of defensive measures. Other states may already have begun to do just this, lowering the threshold for armed conflict and making the world less stable. Finally, by attempting to maintain military superiority and actively working to spread democracy and free markets throughout the world, the U.S. will most likely overextend itself and take on the trappings of empire. Should the U.S. pursue an ambitious path of benign hegemony, it could lose track of its most important security priori-

"How else are we going to pay for the war?"
ties, suffer battle fatigue at home, and encourage a global backlash. It would then be likely to find itself in a situation very similar to the one that occurred in Vietnam some 40 years ago, when successive American Presidents committed national blood and treasure to a peripheral cause that was not essential to the overarching strategic goal of containing Soviet Communist expansionism; some would argue that this is already occurring in Iraq.

In the final analysis, the primary purpose of national security policy must be the narrower one of promoting stability, not the broader goal of extending free-market democracy. U.S. soldiers are not “social workers” equipped to conduct risky regime changes or undertake idyllic humanitarian interventions that are peripheral to our vital national interests. Rather than expend its energies on such futile strategies, this country should focus on the task of eradicating terrorist networks of global reach, while more vigilantly pursuing policies of robust containment and active deterrence that render outlaw regimes impotent.

Supporters of this position argue that containment and deterrence can work against nation-states, no matter how repugnant their rulers. They are wary of the U.S. losing its focus on the most critical threats to its security as it goes off on what they perceive to be utopian adventures abroad.

A cooperative world order

This strategy recognizes the contribution that military power makes to U.S. security, while acknowledging the limitations of relying too much on military power. It maintains that U.S. interests and values can best be pursued and sustained in the long term by its working multilaterally with allies and partners through international institutions. It does not mean to suggest that others be given the power to veto America’s pursuit of its security, nor does it hold naively that the national interests of others can always be set aside to achieve consensus in favor of U.S. interests and values. But when it is possible, Washington should listen to its allies and partners, so that when the time comes for collective action, it will not have alienated its friends or even inadvertently created new enemies.

Such a policy emphasizes new synergies in global law enforcement, intelligence sharing, and efforts to thwart money laundering to fight terrorists more effectively. It advocates the use of U.S. power to strengthen these norms and institutions designed to prevent the proliferation of WMD, including the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the biological and chemical weapons conventions, and the 1987 Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). It also advocates more funding for programs that aim to reduce the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons materials and expertise in the former Soviet Union, such as the Nunn-Lugar 1991 Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program. At the same time, this strategy strives to adapt existing cooperative security arrangements, such as the 26-member North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established in 1949, to deal with the present threat environment, while exploring new security-enhancing mechanisms with America’s friends in Asia. It tries to integrate former adversaries, such as Russia and China, into an international system that supports U.S. values, and it emphasizes preventive diplomacy to quell conflicts before they erupt into major crises. Finally, this approach commits the U.S. to a leadership role in organizations that deal with economic, social and health problems—problems that create a climate in which radicalism can flourish.

Although the use of force is certainly justified in self-defense, as is explicitly recognized in the UN Charter, it should be employed only when the threat is imminent and leaves no viable alternatives. In other words, striking first should be a tool of last resort, not a first option. Making unilateral preemption and military superiority the linchpins of U.S. national security policy will undermine international norms that favor nonaggression and weaken America’s security in the long run by encouraging copycat behavior. Finally, many threats to the U.S. simply cannot be resolved by unilateral force. It therefore makes little sense to try to maintain military superiority indefinitely, if doing so requires neglecting the nonmilitary components of U.S. foreign policy and diverting funds from socioeconomic programs that keep this nation strong.
Role of the U.S. military

Defining the roles and missions that the U.S. is likely to undertake is essential to developing a new strategic direction for the military. These roles and missions will obviously be impacted by the security policy that is adopted by the nation. However, regardless of whether the U.S. goes it alone or works with the international community, it must be prepared to carry out certain missions. They may be classified as follows:

COUNTERTERRORISM: DEFEATING AL-QAEDA AND GLOBAL TERRORIST NETWORKS.

Combating international terrorist networks is the most critical national security priority at this time and must be emphasized in any decision about what force structure this country will construct.

IRREGULAR OPERATIONS: RESPONDING TO HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AND DISORDER IN WEAK AND FAILING STATES. The most likely and most frequent use of American forces in the next decade will take place in areas where there is a significant degree of state weakness, often for humanitarian relief, peace-enforcement or peacekeeping missions, and nation-building or stability operations.

The operations that the U.S. military is likely to conduct span a spectrum from pure humanitarian operations, such as the one conducted in Indonesia following the tsunami, where the threat environment was very low, to operations involving a mix of humanitarian, peacekeeping, and stability and reconstruction elements, such as the operation that was conducted in Bosnia, where the level of danger fluctuated. Irregular operations are rarely static and the characteristics surrounding an operation can quickly change. Operations can fluctuate quickly from humanitarian to peace enforcement to counterinsurgency. In Somalia, U.S. forces involved in humanitarian activities gradually found themselves engaged in more dangerous and challenging missions. It is important to note that the U.S. will most likely not engage in a counterinsurgency mission initially. Instead, any counterinsurgency operations that the U.S. becomes involved in are likely to develop out of existing conventional or peacekeeping missions.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS—U.S. AS A GLOBAL FIRST RESPONDER. The military will be a force in high demand, as it is likely that it will be increasingly called upon to respond to humanitarian crises. At times, the U.S. will resemble a "global first responder," because the U.S. military is often the only organization with the logistical and force projection capability to respond.

Instead of denying this global role, the U.S. must recognize that its ability to respond can have a massive effect on reestablishing stability and can greatly help improve its standing around the world, as well as helping combat the falsehoods that groups such as al-Qaeda propagate.

The increasing effects of climate change will have a significant impact on U.S. national security. Storms of a catastrophic nature, rising sea levels, increased drought, and other natural calamities will become all the more frequent, facilitating refugee crises and regional instability. Delicate ethnic and cultural balances in countries and regions could become unsettled due to competition over control of increasingly scarce resources and possible refugee crises. These could create tremendous regional and global instability.

The U.S. does not want to be the world's policeman as well as the world's policeman, but the fact is that in many cases it has no real choice but to respond. Washington's initial hesitancy to respond to the tsunami in Indonesia in 2004 brought with it a global rebuke. A failure to respond to these sorts of crises could lead to massive instability and a drop in American prestige in the eyes of the world.

And effective action can make a tremendous difference. Following the tsunami, the U.S. eventually sent 15,000 troops, a carrier task force, a Marine expeditionary force, and a flotilla of ships and aircraft to respond to the disaster. As the newly appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff U.S. Admiral Michael Mullen noted, "We literally built a city at sea for no other purpose than to serve the needs of other people." The response to the tsunami disaster made a tremendous difference in alleviating the humanitarian crisis and assisting in the region's recovery. But it also had a tremendous impact on the image of the U.S. around the world.

Following the disaster, 75% of Indonesians said they had a more favorable view of the U.S., and the overall favorability rating rose more than 20%. Such a dramatic turnaround in the largest Muslim country in the world, showed, as Admiral Mullen explained, another side of "American power that wasn't perceived as frightening, monolithic, or arrogant. We showed them American power—sea power—at its finest, and at its most noble." Admiral Mullen described the American response to the tsunami as "one of the most defining moments of this new century."

Responding to these sorts of disasters will be a core mission of the U.S. military, especially the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps, whose expeditionary capability make it America's emergency response force. This does not mean that the U.S. should engage unilaterally in every hot spot around the world. Intervening can carry risks. These challenges should often be addressed in as broad and as multilateral a way as possible and should be conducted under the auspices of the UN when possible.

When humanitarian disasters occur in places where the U.S. military could be greeted with some hostility, the difficulty of executing relief or peacekeeping missions will become
increasingly complex and dangerous, as insurgents or terrorists may seek to strike at U.S. forces engaged in such missions. The U.S. should take these risks into account and be prepared for them in providing humanitarian and disaster-relief assistance. Yet it is vital that the U.S. not shy away from these challenges, since these operations not only help save lives and mitigate suffering; they improve the image of the U.S. and expose the potential benefits of having the U.S. military close by.

The U.S. military, in order to continue responding effectively to humanitarian disasters in the future, must be able to respond rapidly and to operate logistically complex operations in areas that may be hard to reach or in which the infrastructure (ports, roads, etc.) has been destroyed. The U.S. must also be able to work effectively in coordination with other countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

**WEAK AND FAILING STATES: PROVIDING PEACEKEEPING, STABILITY AND RECONSTRUCTION MISSIONS.** While the U.S. must do more to prevent crises from emerging, the U.S. military may still be called on to respond to deteriorating conditions in weak or failing states.

The instability generated by state failure or the genocidal actions committed by a government toward its own citizens may compel U.S. action. In the last 10 to 15 years, the U.S. has engaged in stability operations in Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, Liberia and Somalia. Furthermore, the tremendous strength of U.S. military power means that if it is ever forced to act against a particular state, the sheer power of its military capabilities would likely lead to the collapse of that government. In other words, if it uses military power to change a regime, it is also likely that it will have to engage in nation-building and stability operations.

Operations in weak and failing states can vary from nation-building and correcting internal instability caused by the collapse of a country’s government, such as occurred in Haiti in 1990, to maintaining peace in a country attempting to resolve its internal conflicts (Bosnia) or recover from the forcible removal of its government or occupying force (Afghanistan, Kosovo).

There are potential near-term scenarios in which the U.S. and its allies may be compelled to act. For instance, the collapse of the North Korean regime or a violent attack against one of its neighbors would result in a response by the U.S. that would likely entail an extensive U.S. commitment. Or there could be a regime collapse in such critical states as Pakistan or Saudi Arabia.

Humanitarian crises such as the continued state-sponsored genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan or the continued misrule and abuse of the Robert Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe could also make the need for coordinated military action imperative. The collapse of a regime, whether resulting from external military force or from the country’s own internal conflict, may require the U.S. to engage in extensive nation-building activities. These operations are incredibly demanding and should be taken on only as an absolute last resort.

Operating early and preventively can help stem developing crises. Failing to act early can often inhibit America’s ability to act later, because a situation can worsen and escalate to the point where U.S. involvement may not be suitable.

Developing U.S. stability and reconstruction capabilities is vital to the success of any mission. These tasks are complex and require a tremendous level of planning and commitment that the U.S. has often failed to fully comprehend. America must clearly understand the enormity of the task before undertaking these sorts of missions. They often require a substantial number of troops on the ground to provide security for a long time. They also require that all relevant U.S. government agencies work together on stability and reconstruction tasks. And they require restructuring and retraining of ground forces to more effectively conduct these operations.

**ENGAGING IN COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS.** The U.S. is unlikely to seek out insurgencies to confront in the future. Instead, it will most likely confront them when they arise out of regime change, stability and reconstruction, peacekeeping, or even humanitarian missions. The Army has recently developed a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy so the U.S. will be better prepared to engage in these operations in the future.
ture. This is a significant development, but the U.S. should always be wary of its ability to conduct such operations.

Counterinsurgency campaigns are often particularly difficult for the U.S. because they operate in a foreign environment where the overwhelming majority of U.S. personnel lack sufficient knowledge of the language and culture. And even when the counterinsurgent force is well-trained and understands the language, culture and local politics, insurgencies are very difficult to quell—particularly when there is an ethno-national or sectarian element to such a division. Insurgent movements such as the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, the Basque ETA in Spain, the Kurdistan Workers' party calling for an independent Kurdish state in Turkey, and the Chechen separatists in Russia, for instance, have all proven incredibly durable, despite facing highly proficient counterinsurgent forces.

In Iraq, America's failure to properly plan for the period after the invasion and the ineffective policy thereafter enabled a highly capable insurgency to develop. The counterinsurgency approach adopted in Iraq in 2007 may turn out to be too little, too late. The number of combat troops needed to conduct such a campaign would be in the hundreds of thousands. And after spending years in denial about its engagement in Iraq, sending just 21,500 additional combat troops and 9,000 support troops to confront a highly trained insurgency that was entrenched within the population represents a desperate form of wishful thinking. The Army's own counterinsurgency manual says that there should be 25 troops on the ground for every 1,000 people. To have that amount of troops in Iraq, the U.S. would need a force in excess of 500,000. Counterinsurgency campaigns are incredibly labor-intensive and require a significantly greater force ratio than the presence currently in Iraq. Furthermore, there would have to be both a viable political process and an effective political leadership that seeks to reconcile the differing groups within the country in order for such a strategy to work;

there is neither in Iraq. Without such political reconciliation, any temporary security would be transitory and incapable of instilling a corresponding faith in the existing government.

STATE-BASED THREATS. The emergence of threats and challenges from ungoverned areas of the world will likely be the theater for most direct U.S. military involvement, but nation-states are still leading actors on the international scene. The U.S. military's role in strengthening and protecting states that choose to play a constructive role in the international community and dealing with states that challenge the international order will be a vital part of America's military's mission in dealing with these state-based threats.

A primary threat facing the U.S. and its allies is that of extreme regimes. These regimes, such as Iran and North Korea, have unchecked authoritarian rule and extremist ideology, and may seek to acquire, produce or disseminate WMD, destabilize countries within their region, support terrorist networks and engage in other dangerous behaviors. Yet these regimes, unlike terrorist networks, can likely be contained and deterred because their leaders, despite potentially unpredictable behavior, want to remain in power and therefore do not want the U.S. military directed against them. To maintain an effective deterrent, the U.S. must continue to possess conventional and nuclear forces capable of quickly and decisively destroying these regimes.

The U.S. must therefore continue to modernize its relevant conventional weaponry. This will ensure the security of the U.S. as well as its allies. The military may be called on to conduct a range of actions short of war, such as enforcing a blockade, as the U.S. did in the Cuban missile crisis, or enforcing the no-fly zones, as it did in Iraq between the first and second Persian Gulf wars and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The U.S. is conventionally unrivaled, yet there are current and potential challenges from major powers like a rising China and a resurgent Russia. However, too often countries are elevated to "threat" status as a means of justifying increased spending on new conventional weapons systems.

In dealing with a rising China, the U.S. must be careful not to adopt a hostile posture or build up its military forces as if war with China were either imminent or inevitable. If the U.S. adopts a hostile approach toward China, China could adopt a hostile approach in kind and build up its own forces more rapidly. This could lead to an arms race that would result in escalating tension, a new cold war or potential conflict. It is important for the U.S. to prevent this cycle of escalating tensions from emerging. Therefore, while the U.S. must maintain strong conventional capabilities that would enable it to defeat China in case of war, it is essential that the U.S. not instigate such an arms race. China is an emerging power that is experiencing massive economic growth and its efforts to modernize its forces should be expected. The U.S. now outspends China on the order of 10 to 1. But China has increased its defense spending by a little over 11% a year over the past decade. (Officially, China devotes about $45 billion to its military. Independent analysts believe the figure to be closer to $80 billion.)

Since President Bush came into office, a resurgent Russia under President Vladimir Putin has become increasingly authoritarian and a less engaged member of the international community. Russia's increasing confidence and influence in world affairs is due primarily to its growing energy wealth. Its vast oil and gas reserves have fueled economic growth and given Russia increased leverage in world affairs. Russia sees its energy wealth as the key not only to its economic resurgence but also to its renewed status as an international player. Yet Russia is also beset by internal challenges, from endemic corruption to health and development challenges, as well as a declining population. The two key issues on which the U.S. and Russia disagree are placing missile defense systems in Eastern Europe and verifying nuclear weapons reductions.
Toward a 21st-century U.S. force

To meet the challenges of the 21st century and carry out its national security strategy, the U.S. force of the future must be more mobile and flexible, as well as more robust. It must be able to respond to many different types of operations. It must have the agility to respond rapidly anywhere in the world, yet be strong enough to sustain operations over the long term. U.S. ground forces, from the Army and Marines, must be able to muster hundreds of thousands of people to engage in conventional combat or manpower-intensive counterinsurgency operations. But the U.S. also needs a force that is agile and mobile enough to quickly respond to crises around the world in order to conduct combat operations, as well as more delicate peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

U.S. naval forces must be able to patrol the world’s blue-water oceans and also to operate along the world’s coastlines and use the flexibility of the seas to support operations on land. The U.S. Air Force must be able to control the world’s skies, strike quickly, and transport large numbers of personnel and materiel around the globe. Each of the four armed services must be able to work seamlessly, not just with each other, but also with other agencies and with allied partners.

But because funds are limited the U.S. must address several issues.

**GROUND FORCES.** The ground forces have borne the brunt of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army is on the verge of breaking and both the Army and the Marine Corps are experiencing severe equipment shortages. U.S. ground forces are one of America’s most important strategic deterrents. These must be rebuilt, reformed and over the long term may even require expansion to meet the challenges of this new era.

Following September 11, the Bush Administration had a tremendous opportunity to increase the size of U.S. ground forces. Unfortunately, the President and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld actually sought to cut their numbers. Now, more than six years after 9/11, the Pentagon has finally called for a permanent increase of 92,000 soldiers and Marines. This would increase the size of the active Army to 547,400 personnel and the Marine Corps to 202,000 over the next four years. Increasing the size of the Army and Marines will not help the situation on the ground in Iraq. Instead, this is about preparing America’s military for the future.

Expanding the ground forces will allow the U.S. military to more effectively conduct manpower-intensive missions. In Iraq, the current pace of deployments has put great strain on the ground forces, yet future stability and reconstruction operations might require an even larger troop presence than the U.S. has ever had in Iraq.

Many opponents of expanding the force argue that the main lesson of Iraq is that the U.S. should avoid these unwanted occupations in the future, and that therefore the military does not need larger ground forces. But, as noted above, there are numerous scenarios that could require a substantial U.S. response. It is also important to note that even if the Administration had not invaded Iraq, there is still the likelihood that the military would be experiencing similar stresses today. Few would have predicted in the summer of 2001 that just a few months later the U.S. would invade and occupy Afghanistan. Another Administration might have inserted tens, if not hundreds of thousands of troops into Afghanistan right from the beginning, many more than the roughly 25,000 the U.S. has there now.

An expanded active ground force would also enable the Army to become less dependent on the Army National Guard, which would allow the National Guard to more effectively fulfill its important homeland defense tasks. It would decrease excessive reliance on private contractors to perform military functions and ensure that soldiers and Marines receive adequate time at home between deployments. However, in light of the difficulties the Army is experiencing with recruitment and retention due to the war in Iraq, it will take some time to expand the force.

**DEFENSE BUDGET.** America currently spends more on defense than the rest of the world combined. But the U.S. military remains heavily focused on engaging in wars that require intensive use of military capital as opposed to wars that rely heavily on labor. And it devotes many resources to weapons programs that may be more relevant to threats from a bygone era than the threats the U.S. confronts today. Therefore, if it wishes to expand the size of its ground forces, it must either reduce funding for these weapons or increase the size of the defense budget.

One option is to increase the regular defense budget (excluding the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan) to 4% of the gross domestic product (GDP) from its current level of 3.5%. Some contend that after years of war and supplemental requests so large that Congress is already balking, the nation has already reached the point at which it is unwilling to invest more resources in its military forces. Therefore, they say there will be a downturn or flattening of defense spending in the next few years.

To pay for expanding the ground forces, the Army might consider slowing down the Future Combat Systems (FCS). This project seeks to modernize 15 of the Army’s more than 40 combat brigades with new manned vehicles, unmanned aerial and ground vehicles, and other munitions systems and sensors that are all linked together in a seamless network so that these units...
can engage in high-intensity conventional combat. The FCS vehicles would replace the durable Abrams tank, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the M113 Armored Personnel Carrier. Future Combat Systems is a good concept, but the timelines, technology and cost might benefit from a new, slower and less disaggregated approach. Under the current design, FCS vehicles would not be able to deploy significantly faster than the current fleet of heavy vehicles, largely because of the need for sufficient armor. FCS, while important, should not be the Army’s top priority. Modernizing the Army’s heavier combat brigades is less essential than equipping it with vehicles and systems more suitable for conflicts at the lower end of the spectrum.

**U.S. MARINES.** To pay for adding 27,000 people, the Marines should consider halting the production of the V-22 Osprey. The controversial V-22, a medium-lift tilt rotor aircraft, is now becoming operational, but questions remain about its capabilities. From its inception, the Osprey, which takes off and lands like a helicopter and flies like a fixed-wing airplane once airborne, has been beset by safety, technical and cost problems. While the V-22 can fly much farther and faster than any other helicopter, its limited cargo capability makes it essentially “a high-speed people-mover.” Additionally, the V-22 is twice the size and weight of the CH-46 assault helicopter, which creates tremendous problems for a “sea-basing” operation. The Pentagon intends to buy 458 Ospreys at a cost of more than $110 million for each aircraft.

Instead of the V-22, the Marines might consider building the CH-53X heavy-lift helicopter. This vehicle would have a much greater hauling capability in terms of cargo and personnel compared to the V-22 and its predecessor. This will be important for sea-based maneuver missions. The CH-53X may not be available until the middle of the next decade, which is a concern because the Marine Corps is already facing helicopter shortfalls that cancellation of the V-22 will worsen. The Marines could therefore purchase other existing medium-lift helicopters that are in production as a stopgap measure until the new CH-53X becomes available.

**U.S. NAVY.** During the cold war, the Navy fleet was on average twice as large as today’s fleet. Despite its reduced size, the current combat fleet of about 285 combat vessels has more total striking power than the fleet possessed at the end of the cold war. Most of the world’s other navies are also smaller than in the past. As defense analyst Robert W. S. explains, “Today’s 300-ship Navy is likely the most powerful that has ever sailed the seas and it is in no immediate danger of losing its place as the number-one world naval force.” The Navy wants to increase the size of the fleet to just over 300 ships, but according to a Congressional Budget Office report, Navy cost projections are unrealistic and would require substantial increases in the projected size of the overall Navy budget. Tough choices therefore remain regarding the future fleet. The Navy must recognize, as Admiral Mullen explains, that “the days of big sea battles, at least certainly for the foreseeable future, are over.” The Navy should consider investing in new capabilities that are relevant to current challenges and that hedge against future challenges.

The U.S. must develop its sea-basing capability since it will likely be involved in more areas of the world with weak or failing governments and less secure land-basing options. It must develop sea-basing capabilities and invest in the future Maritime Prepositioning Force. This is a squadron of ships that the military is designing to support sea-basing operations. It would allow for the rapid transoceanic movement of expeditionary forces, as well as goods, services and additional personnel, into regions with undeveloped or destroyed infrastructure, such as ports. Sea-basing is not a new concept. During the tsunami in 2004, the U.S. Navy essentially set up bases at sea off the coast of Indonesia. It did the same off the Gulf Coast in 2005 in response to Hurricane Katrina. Using the sea as a secure base of operations anywhere along the world’s coastlines provides unmatched mobility and power projection, allows the flexibility of having a significant base close to operations, and enables the U.S. to deploy power without

Two V-22 Ospreys, a tilt-rotor aircraft, hover over a runway during a demonstration at a Marine Corps station in North Carolina, July 20, 2005. Designed to take off like a helicopter and fly like an airplane, it is an aircraft whose capabilities still remain questionable and whose future is in doubt.
depending on unreliable land bases.

The Navy should also develop capabilities to operate along the world’s coastlines and rivers, and invest in the Littoral Combat Ship and the Riverine Force. Most of the world’s population lives within 200 miles of the sea. The key priorities for the Navy in the current and future operational environment will be supporting operations on land and operating effectively along the world’s coastlines. The Littoral Combat Ship, which is being developed to effectively operate along the world’s coastlines, is vital to this mission. It is necessary to better police the world’s oceans in order to more effectively counter piracy and illegal trafficking. And although the U.S. frequently operates in the vicinity of rivers, the Navy has been slow to develop this capability. The Navy plans to stand up its first three squadrons this year with 36 armed and armored boats. It should stand up at least 10 squadrons over the next five years.

To ensure power projection the Navy needs to build the CVN-21 Ford class aircraft carrier. The Navy plans to buy at least three new aircraft carriers to replace the ones that will reach the end of their service life starting in 2015. Aircraft carriers are important for projecting U.S. power. It will cost about $10 billion for each of the three new carriers. These will incorporate next-generation technologies and have the capacity to launch Navy and Marine Corps tactical fighters and special operations aircraft.

To pay for the new capabilities the Navy should consider slowing the development of the SSN-774 Virginia-class submarine. Although building additional submarines should hardly be a Navy priority in the current era, it is important for the U.S. to maintain its submarine industrial base in order to hedge against the prospect of future challenges. Additionally, the Navy is beginning to retire the older Los Angeles-class submarines and will therefore see the size of its submarine fleet shrink. Without construction of the Virginia-class, the submarine industrial base will crumble, as no more submarines will be built. This is potentially dangerous, since it will be very difficult to regain the technical expertise embedded in the submarine industrial base once it is dismantled. Furthermore, the design of the Virginia-class is fairly stable and the cost of the program has flattened to just over $2 billion. However, the submarines should not be rushed; they should be built just fast enough to sustain the submarine industrial base at a rate of not more than one per year.

The Navy should also consider canceling the DDG-1000 Destroyer. The proposed DDG-1000 is a new class of surface combatant that is substantially larger than any existing surface ship and is sized more for open ocean warfare against another naval superpower than for its stated mission of providing fire support for forces ashore in crowded, dangerous coastal areas. The program has been beset by technological and cost difficulties; the costs have ballooned from $1.7 billion to $3.6 billion per ship and the destroyers will not be ready before 2015.

U.S. AIR FORCE. The Air Force is confronted with an aging fleet of aircraft. The average age of these aircraft is 24 years, while 10 years ago the average age was about 18 years. Aging aircraft create readiness challenges; only two in three aircraft are ready for flight today.

The Air Force needs to maintain the global “air-bridge,” that is, the ability to refuel its transport aircraft in flight so that they can take troops and equipment all around the globe. By building the KC-X Tanker. The average age of the existing tanker fleet is 48 years old. The Air Force describes the tanker as its number-one acquisition priority because in-flight refueling aircraft are vital to maintaining the global air-bridge. The new tanker program is still in its initial development phase, but must be accelerated.

To ensure global mobility, the Air Force needs to continue to build the C-17 Globemaster III, a cargo aircraft that is capable of transporting a significant amount of personnel and cargo without needing large runways. This flexibility means that the C-17 is capable of making deliveries to fairly remote areas, and the Air Force should not close down its production line.

To maintain its competitive edge, the Air Force should develop the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. The F-35 has been beset with design complications and difficulties in establishing international production arrangements, but it is vital to the future fleet of fighter aircraft because it will replace a significant portion of the aging F-16s and F/A-18s fighters in the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. The F-35 is also part of an international procurement program involving 10 other countries, including Britain, Australia, Italy and the Netherlands. However, the cost of the F-35 has grown from $196.5 billion to $223 billion, while the number of planes built has decreased from 2,866 to 2,458. This program is vital to the future air fleet and must receive more attention from the leadership in the Pentagon.

To pay for this the Air Force could stop production of the F/A-22 Raptor, a fifth-generation stealth fighter. This impressive aircraft is highly maneuverable at both supersonic and subsonic speeds and it has highly advanced radar systems that allow it to strike targets at a considerable distance. However, it was originally designed to achieve air superiority over Soviet fighter jets that were never built. Cutting the F/A-22 would save $12 billion over five years and leave the Air Force with more than 100 of these planes.

Finally, the Department of Defense might consider reducing the number of strategic nuclear weapons to 1,000 and keeping ballistic missile defense and offensive space-based weapons systems in a research-and-development mode. These steps could save $10 billion to $15 billion per year and enhance the credibility of the U.S. in the area of nonproliferation.
POLICY OPTIONS

1. The U.S. should adopt a national security strategy of preventive war.

**PRO:** As the world’s leading military and economic power, the U.S. is the most likely target of terrorist groups, like al-Qaeda, and extreme regimes, like North Korea and Iran, that might use weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, in the face of these dangers, the U.S. cannot wait until the threat materializes. It not only has the duty but the legal and moral right to launch preemptive attacks, unilaterally if necessary.

**CON:** By making preventive war a doctrine, the U.S. will encourage other states to legitimize their own aggression under the guise of defensive measures, thus lowering the threshold for armed conflict and making the world less stable.

2. The U.S. should expand its ground forces by cutting large programs from the Navy and Air Force budgets.

**PRO:** The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated that U.S. ground forces are too small to stabilize a country after a regime change. A larger ground force will allow the Pentagon to give troops more time at home between deployments and reduce the reliance on the National Guard and reserves.

**CON:** Because of the costs in blood and treasure in Iraq, the U.S. public will not be willing to send large numbers of ground troops to a foreign country any time soon. Future interventions will most likely rely on small numbers of ground forces backed up by potent air power and other unmanned technological weapons, and the U.S. needs to maintain its edge in these areas.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that the U.S. should adopt a preventive war strategy, a strategy of containment and deterrence, or a cooperative world order approach? Or some combination of the three? Why, or why not?

2. Do you believe that extreme regimes or rogue states like North Korea and Iran can be deterred? If not, why not?

3. Is it naïve to think that the U.S. can rely on international organizations like the United Nations to protect its national security? If not, why not?

4. Should U.S. military forces be trained to deal with humanitarian crises or should they focus on fighting and winning the nation’s wars?

5. Does the U.S. have sufficient military power to overthrow such extreme regimes as North Korea and Iran? Does it have enough trained forces to occupy these nations after removing their regimes?

6. Will China’s economic development necessarily lead to its becoming a military rival of the U.S.? Should the U.S. maintain global military superiority, regardless of the cost?

READINGS & RESOURCES


versity Press, 2004, 369 pp. $29.00. Explores how George Bush’s election and the fear and confusion of September 11, 2001, combined to allow a small group of intellectuals to seize the reins of U.S. security policy.


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