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MITDACS Defense and Arms Control Studies Program of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
Publisher’s Note

America, we are told, has yet to decide upon a foreign policy for the post-Cold War era. Some argue that we need a national debate on the world we would like for the 21st Century, and the strategies that would allow a preferred vision to be realized. They want all the alternatives listed and the virtues and limitations of each described fully so that an informed decision can be made. But foreign policy, it seems to me, is the product of a continuing struggle among contending world views that is never resolved. During the Cold War there was not only the action/reaction contest between East and West but also a domestic struggle between hawks and doves, the right and left, about what the next American response or initiative would be. The collapse of the Soviet Union has confused the debate, but not ended it. Some see special value in American world leadership although they differ among themselves on the purpose of that leadership. Is it just to lead, to be the boss or is it to change the way conflict is settled in the world? Others want no part in the governing of the world, but stand divided in the reason for withdrawal. Is it to prevent the changing of the American national identity or is it to make others take responsibility for fixing their own problems? A mix of these positions is included in this issue of *Breakthroughs*. Collectively our authors want the old strategies pursued, but also the new. They want a new world order, but also the old. They want to be prepared for threats, but are unsure what the threats may be. A little incoherent of course, but you can be certain that some among us have it right.

Henry M. Sapolsky

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**BREAKTHROUGHS**

Sharon K. Weiner, Editor
The Interservice Competition Solution

Harvey M. Sapolsky

We do not know what the future holds. Although our nation is today vastly stronger than any other and quite secure, America is likely someday to face serious military challenges again. We just do not know when and how these challenges will occur. Because it would be both a deterrent to such challenges and the source of effective policy responses when aggression does occur, I believe our military needs a policy planning system that will identify and help correct security weaknesses as they develop.

Intuitively, we know the system to employ. Americans prefer free markets to controlled, competition to monopoly. We believe in democracy, competitive elections rather than one party rule. And when a military crisis is in fact upon us, we never quite have the will to suppress competitive urges among our armed services — the same urges usually labeled wasteful duplication when threats are not so obvious. Recall that three commands operated independently and successfully in the Pacific during the Second World War. And because three services developed ballistic missiles, we were able to meet rapidly and effectively the Soviet challenge in the 1950s.

Interservice competition offers civilians several important advantages. First, it helps generate vital information. What the Navy will not tell us about its vulnerabilities, the Air Force and the Army might. Are aircraft carriers easy to attack? Should an upgraded AEGIS system form the heart of our theater ballistic missile defense? Can naval forces stationed off a coast exert significant leverage in an evolving crisis? Ask the Navy, but also the Air Force and the Army.

Second, it gives civilians leverage in their effort to control security policy. It is extremely difficult to face down an united military. Ranks of medal bedecked generals and admirals agreeing on the same position are a formidable force to confront in any Washington policy battle. Interservice competition gives civilians the possibility of informed and powerful military allies in defense strategy and budget discussions. It allows them to play one service against another when particular policies are preferred. If the Army begins to complain about the international peacekeeping missions that the Clinton Administration seems to favor perhaps the Marine Corps will sign up to support them.

Third, competition is a big spur to innovation. When there is expectation of significant reward or loss, the services may offer up not only information about their bureaucratic rivals, but also new ideas, ways of both improving American military capabilities and protecting primary roles, missions and budget shares. It was the Navy’s fear of losing the nuclear deterrent mission entirely to the Air Force in the 1950s that gave us the Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile which in turn reduced our need to deploy hundreds upon hundreds of vulnerable and costly strategic bombers and most of the liquid fueled missiles the Air Force was developing.

The benefits of competition are not always seized. As Owen Cote describes, the Navy chose not to challenge the Air Force plans to field new bombers and the highly accurate but difficult to base MX ballistic missile in the early 1980s even though it was developing an equally capable missile system for its subma-

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The Navy tests an anti-Air Force missile.

"Interservice competition offers civilians several important advantages."
rine force. Similarly, after a brief fight the Marine Corps has not sought to have cancelled or curtailed the Army’s plans to acquire a fleet of prepositioned ships ladened with equipment for use in mid-level contingencies even though this fleet largely duplicates capabilities that the Marine Corps already possesses and intends to expand. Billions could have been saved in each instance if the public had been made aware of the overlap and the advantages of one of the alternatives over the other.

**Interservice friction produces a great deal of political heat because it usually involves appeals to Congress...**

The problem of course is that competitors do not like to compete. Their preference is to collude, to work together for mutual benefit. The antitrust laws protect us to the extent they are enforced from collusion among business firms. There is, however, no similar shield against collusion among nonprofits and government agencies. “Give the United Way” really means “Give the Charity Cartel Way” as charities collude to prevent performance comparison and the expression of donor choice. The armed services, made sensitive to their own manipulation by Robert McNamara when he was Secretary of Defense, have become the champions of jointness, their shield against being played off against one another by civilians. Joint approval means all the trade-offs are made on the friendliest possible basis where each organization threatens retaliation if its most important needs are not considered.

But the military may overestimate the willingness of civilians to instigate competition among the services. Interservice friction produces a great deal of political heat because it usually involves appeals to Congress and the recruitment of partisans among military retirees, contractors, and friendly reporters. The resulting turmoil often reflects badly upon civilian defense officials, leaving the public impression that they have failed to manage the department effectively. This is particularly true when accusations are hurled about duplicating capabilities, adding to the public belief that much waste exists in government, but also this extends to any criticism of one service by the other. Too many within and outside of government mistake noticeable debate about policy alternatives with indecisive management when it should be viewed as the necessary prelude to informed political judgement.

America’s four air forces, three armies, two strategic missile forces, and navy and a half are indeed wasteful luxuries if they are not used to generate policy options and comparisons. In an uncertain world it is better to have multiple perspectives on security problems, but can this be achieved short of a major crisis? The Congress was once thought to be the champion of the competitive approach, but became the source of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms, the 1986 blueprint for jointness now so warmly embraced by civilian and military leaders in the Department of Defense as their protection against public scrutiny. Apparently, the potential for serious oversight that a competitive structure might require was too exhausting for the Congress to contemplate, absorbed as most members have become by ideology and the quest for reelection, and it sought to stamp it out. How then can a competitive defense system be maintained?

Fortunately, fiscal austerity works in favor of increased interservice competition. The social entitlement battles now on the national agenda because of the deficit reduction effort are bound to turn some attention to the fact that defense expenditures in real terms have yet to fall below their Cold War lows, despite the fact that neither the Soviet Union nor the Warsaw Pact still exist. Collusion functions best when hard choices do not have to be made. The log rolling will stop when one or the other of the armed services discovers that its vital interests are being jeopardized by the need for further reductions.

And fortunately also the armed services have not yet lost their separate identities entirely although the academic promoters of jointness wish they did. Relatively simple and inexpensive features such as independent academies, distinctive uniforms, and unique traditions help sustain public support for the services. More important, each retains a separate headquarters planning staff, a set of affiliated civilians within the Department, and continuing attachments to particular weapons systems
that provide a power base from which to develop and promote alternatives.

The services offer us potentially the conditions that Sanford Weiner has identified as crucial for effective competition — a set of relatively secure organizations that can be made to feel uncertain about their future — what he calls “constrained autonomy.” Organizations threatened with immediate demise cannot function, their strength to plan lost in the need of their members to find replacement employment. Totally secure organizations are subject to the lethargy of tenure where the creative idea is a rarity and the urge to action difficult to arouse. Pushed to worry about their futures but not slated for a quick disbandment, the services would have the resources, the time, and the need to think hard about their special talents and the contributions they might make to the nation’s security.

Competition is not its own reward. Services will be most reluctant to provoke one another, even on the promise of defined benefits such as budget increases or the preservation of favored forces. The risks of significant losses are high for all once the war among them starts again. And the services are not alone in fearing competition. DOD civilians have shown no interest in forcing a competitive search for either savings or new insights. Witness their recent recommendation to purchase the full complement of C-17 airlifters when a buy of off-the-shelf Boeing 747s would do nearly as well for $6 to $8 billion less. Congress also seems uninterested, believing the operational unity mandated by Goldwater-Nichols gave us the great victory in the Gulf despite the contradictory strategies the services actually pursued there. Moreover, the Congressional Republicans, deficit reduction pledges notwithstanding, are seeking budget increases for defense in order to keep the orders flowing for favorite weapons or contractors. President Clinton we know is hardly the one to push the issue, having given in to the military on nearly all of the Weinberger/Powell doctrine requirements — items like robust rules of engagement, the use of reservists, a defined exit date when U.S. forces are committed — in order to get Joint Chiefs’ agreement on first a Haitian and then a Bosnian deployment.

I believe the unintentional initiator of the next wave of interservice competition will be the average middle class citizen who we know from public opinion surveys wants inconsistently his taxes cut, his parents’ Medicare and Social Security subsidies preserved, his police, educational, environmental and recreational services maintained, and welfare, both foreign and domestic, drastically curtailed. To gain his vote, politicians will have to sacrifice the defense budget. Ships will have to be tied up, the troops called home, and the planes grounded.

But this sacrifice in military readiness will not be totally in vain. With fewer dollars and more infighting, the services will have to think harder than they have about the threats America faces and the ways in which the military can meet them. There is no better spur to candor, error correction, and creativity in defense planning than a very tight budget and a few smart rivals competing for budget share.

Notes
1 An earlier version of this paper was submitted to the Commission on Roles and Missions.
Searching for that “Vision Thing”: America’s Foreign Policy Choices

Daryl G. Press and Eugene Gholz

The upcoming Presidential election and the American deployment to Bosnia have polarized the debate over American foreign policy. President Clinton urges America to lead multi-national peacekeeping efforts; Pat Buchanan attacks the Administration, suggesting that we cut foreign entanglements and put “America first, second, and third.” This polarization conceals the unity among Americans in their foreign policy goals, and the standard simplification of the debate in terms of “internationalism” versus “isolationism” obscures the breadth of choices we have to implement.

Most Americans share a global vision. In an ideal world the U.S. is secure and prosperous, democracy and free markets flourish overseas, human rights are respected and drug trafficking has been stopped. The real debate arises over two critical issues: how much are we willing to pay for these goals and what policies can we select to achieve them? In this paper we offer a simple framework to direct the foreign policy debate to these central issues. Military and economic policies are the principal tools which make up a foreign policy. Thinking about these tools will help us understand the financial and human costs which we must pay for alternative goals. A comprehensive foreign policy debate should help us evaluate which of our goals are worth pursuing by identifying the best means to pursue them and the costs they will force us to incur.

Our framework is useful for three reasons. By focusing on America’s military and economic policies, we reveal that the U.S. has many more options than the conventional “internationalist” versus “isolationist” dichotomy. The U.S. could retreat to a policy of economic autarky while continuing to play an active military role in the world, or we could keep the military home while maintaining open economic ties. Economic and military policies are tools which should be coordinated to achieve America’s goals, but they need not be used in unison. Second, our approach highlights viable policy combinations that are being overlooked in the present political clamor. Lastly, we emphasize the trade-offs between various military and economic options and among the goals that we might seek. Some policies pursue a wide range of American goals at high cost, while others save American money and lives but focus on fewer aims. Ultimately, evaluating the trade-offs between the goals we wish to pursue and their costs is the dilemma that makes policy-making difficult.

A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

American foreign policy may be designed to promote a range of possible goals. Supporting human rights and democratization, reducing drug trafficking and terrorism, and controlling migration are now important American foreign policy objectives alongside traditional security concerns. These objectives can be implemented using American military and economic power. We identify three options each for American national security and national economic policy.

Three Alternatives for American Military Policy

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the U.S. has searched for a new national security framework. M.I.T.’s Barry Posen presented to Congress a useful outline for thinking about America’s choices. We build on Posen’s three categories of military isolationism, collective security and selective engagement. Which one the U.S. chooses should depend on how we answer the question, “to what extent should we use military power to achieve America’s political objectives?”

Military Isolationism

Military isolationism is a tool which could promote several different foreign policy goals. During the Cold War, most military isolationists in the U.S. were on the political Left. In their eyes, much of the world’s disorder was caused by American military interventions. The old isolationists opposed military activism...
because they wanted to reduce America’s support for third world dictators and enhance human rights.

Today’s isolationists, like Pat Buchanan and analysts at the Cato Institute, follow different reasoning than their Cold War counterparts. The new isolationists oppose U.S. military intervention because of calculations of national power. They point out that the United States is the most secure country in the world. Two oceans separate the United States from the other great powers, and the end of the Cold War has left a rough economic and military balance on the Eurasian continent. Certainly, none of the remaining great powers can directly threaten U.S. territorial sovereignty, nor can any one of them conquer the rest. Finally, it is difficult to imagine any country conquering a nuclear-armed great power — least of all the United States.

For today’s isolationists, the only remaining external threat to U.S. security comes from terrorists — the greatest nightmare being nuclear terrorism. Isolationists believe the U.S. should stay out of other countries’ disputes to avoid becoming a target. Furthermore, we should deter terrorism by letting potential adversaries know that the United States will find terrorists and their sponsors and will respond to attacks with devastating retaliation.

Military isolationism would not require a large military — tactical airpower, a medium-sized navy and a nuclear deterrent could ensure the security of America’s coasts and allow anti-terrorist strikes. For isolationists, continued American military involvement in the world is bad on two counts — it wastes America’s resources and makes the U.S. an attractive target for the only type of threat we should fear, the threat of terrorism.

Collective Security

Supporters of collective security contend that the key to American security is to maintain peace throughout the world, using military force to shut down all conflicts. Some advocates of collective security support this position primarily for moral reasons. The U.S., they contend, has the capability to prevent interstate violence and has the moral obligation to do so. Others advocate collective security because they fear that war anywhere could affect the United States. They believe that strategic interdependence is greater now than ever before. War threatens to destroy the environment, upset international trade, and force destabilizing migrations. Even worse, as weapons of mass destruction proliferate, the threat of nuclear, chemical, or biological war looms everywhere. The only path to security, advocates of this military policy believe, is the use of America’s might to deter war everywhere.

The supporters of collective security claim that promoting peace has never been so easy. The end of the Cold War breathed new life into the United Nations; Desert Storm demonstrated that aggressors can be punished at relatively small cost. In sum, they argue that the need for global peace has never been greater and that the opportunities for achieving this peace have never been so abundant.

The recipe for long-term U.S. security is to let potential aggressors know that any attacks will be opposed by an international coalition which wields overwhelming military power. To make this threat credible we may need to fight several wars against violators of the peace. At least in the short- to mid-term, we must keep our force projection capability large and well-oiled. If a norm is established against international conflict, perhaps this force can be cut in the future. But for now, a force larger than the current U.S. military, capable of fighting two or more major regional contingencies and several smaller operations simultaneously, might be required.

Selective Engagement

Selective engagement is a catch-all phrase which unites a host of foreign policy options. Advocates of selective engagement define American security in terms of certain “strategic areas,” but individual supporters of selective engagement define these regions using different criteria. As a group, they fear military isolationism’s unforeseen consequences but are skeptical of the costs of collective security.

Selective engagement is a big tent — some supporters emphasize the word “selective” and others emphasize the word “engagement.” On the selective side are those who are sympathetic to military isolationism but believe that there are a few foreign issues which threaten U.S. security. Some believe that the only threat to the U.S. is a war between two or more great powers, which might disrupt the global economy, degrade the environment, and risk nuclear escalation. The United States must prevent this scenario by squaring off militarily against any aggressive great power. Other selective programs place near-nuclear states under the strategic areas rubric; still others identify oil-supplying regions.

What these analysts share is a belief that there are potential threats to U.S. interests: great power war, nuclear proliferation, and domination of the world’s oil, for example. These
threats, however, are few in number.

On the opposite side of the selective engagement tent are those who emphasize the word engagement. These analysts are sympathetic to collective security. They believe that the world is strategically interdependent, but they worry that the U.S. lacks the resources to be everywhere at once. We cannot defend every country from every potential threat, but we can at least defend our friends. One version of selective engagement, called "enlargement" by the Clinton Administration, is based on democracy and the free market. Because democracies tend not to fight each other, the United States should defend Liberal ideals wherever they flourish. Protecting democracy today will build the foundation for a more permanent peace.

The forces required for selective engagement would depend on whether the emphasis is on selective or engagement. To deter great power war and prevent military aggression in the Persian Gulf, for example, a force structure similar to today's might be appropriate. To defend democracy wherever it is threatened, from Taiwan to the Baltics and from South Korea to Ukraine, the U.S. might require larger forces. The forces required for a policy of selective engagement would likely cost significantly more than those for military isolationism but less than those for collective security. Furthermore, the more we "engage," the longer our soldiers will be deployed away from home — often in harm's way.

Assessing the Costs of Military Policy

Some critics of our analysis might contend that isolationism is more expensive than we project, and others would suggest that collective security is, in fact, the least expensive option. Those who envision an expensive isolationist force might argue that weapons of mass destruction and long-range delivery systems require a robust national missile defense. It is doubtful that isolationism actually requires a missile defense — or any other expensive investment. But it is clear that selective engagement or collective security would demand still more forces, even if the isolationist burden were quite large. If we need a missile defense just to mind our own business, we certainly need one before we get involved in overseas disputes.

The other critics — those who deny the costs of collective security — make two arguments. They propose that, after a few aggressors are punished by the world community, future aggressors will be deterred. After a few years, a smaller U.S. force would be sufficient to deal with the occasional renegade. Although it is true that a collective security regime may one day deter most potential aggressors and allow us to reduce our forces, we do not know if this will happen, when it would happen, or how many wars we would have fought to establish this norm. Adopting a collective security policy is making a commitment to field a big military and fight an unknown number of wars into the foreseeable future.

The second argument for cheap collective security deals with burden-sharing. Advocates of collective security maintain that the large force requirements for preserving global peace would be shared by our Western allies. The costs of collective security, therefore, would be smaller than the "go-it-alone" policies of isolationism or selective engagement. But this depends on the dubious premise that the other Western powers are interested in playing the world's policeman. In fact, recent experience indicates that our allies are more likely to share the burdens of selective engagement than those of collective security. President Bush rallied a coalition to fight for oil and
against proliferation in the Gulf. President Clinton, on the other hand, could not sell NATO on his “lift-and-strike” strategy for supporting the Bosnian Muslims.

The exact force structure for each military policy option is not entirely clear. Each option may demand a little larger or a little smaller force than we have indicated. Nevertheless, the point is that isolationism will cost less than selective engagement, which will cost less than collective security. The more we want to use our military to achieve our goals, the more we will have to spend procuring, building, maintaining, and deploying our forces.

Three Alternatives for American Economic Policy

The addition of the economic dimension to the discussion of foreign policy is clearly essential. The U.S. interacts economically with more nations than we deal with militarily. Economic connections are much more characteristic of the “normal” range of international relations; they influence policy on a day-by-day basis. Economic and military policies are paid for in the same unit of account — taxpayer dollars. As on the national security axis of foreign policy choice, we identify three potential guiding principles for our economic foreign policy.

Free Trade

Free trade is the simplest of the three economic strategies, involving the least government action and hence the smallest direct burden on taxpayers. Economists have been the traditional advocates of free trade, because it allows countries to specialize in producing only what they are best at; they can trade with other countries to buy what they are not good at making. And because no one wastes resources on inefficient production, more total goods are manufactured. Everyone is better off.

An important lesson from the Cold War, according to free traders, is that attempts to interfere with the market process are futile. The restricted economies of the former Soviet Bloc ground to a halt. Limits on domestic and international trade were swept away by the post-Cold War explosion of capitalist activity. Furthermore, from the U.S. perspective, the growing number of democratic, market-oriented countries magnifies the potential benefits of free trade. Finally, free traders note that industrial policy subsidies are inconsistent with America’s fiscally and politically conservative mood.

Influence

An alternative economic policy would flex the power of the huge American economy to influence the political, military, and economic choices of other nations. Our national economy is by far the largest in the world. America’s economic strength offers decision makers an array of “carrot” policies based on economic aid and “stick” policies based on economic sanctions.

Modern supporters of the influence strategy tend to see it as an alternative to more-expensive military options for achieving many American foreign policy aims. Specifically, economic sanctions might have eventually forced Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, and perhaps they coerced Serbia to curtail its support for the Bosnian Serbs — in each case
with lower cost in American blood and treasure than direct military intervention. These arguments are popular with supporters of the U.N. like Madeline Albright and Boutros Boutros-Ghali. On the carrot side, economic aid to our new Eastern European friends may be the most effective way to prevent a hard-line relapse — a theme emphasized by Richard Lugar in his Presidential bid. In broad terms, "influencers" may acknowledge the loss of some of the economic benefits of free trade when their sanctions policies limit commerce and their aid policies tax away business activity. Nevertheless, they argue, these small sacrifices are justified to avoid the larger costs of inaction or military over-reaction.

Independence

Advocates of economic independence agree that the huge American economy confers unique advantages on us. They suggest that we are so large that we simply do not need open trade relationships. They support a strategy of autarky, separating the American economy from external shocks. In their view, many economic downturns in the United States can be blamed on unnecessary entanglements with the rest of the world. Commodity cartels create price hikes in the United States; over-dependence on imported oil gambles our prosperity on stability in the Persian Gulf; low-wage, off-shore manufacturing endangers American jobs. Promoters of economic independence maintain that the costs of adjusting to spikes in the international economy outweigh the benefits of economic openness. Still worse, economic openness may benefit unfriendly countries more than it benefits us. For example, Chinese income from their exports to the U.S. may be adding substantially to the power of our most-often-cited potential adversary. The suggested response would be to severely restrict trade with China — and with everyone else.

AMERICA’S FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS

As we have demonstrated, the U.S. has many more options than the conventional “internationalist” versus “isolationist” dichotomy. The diagram below conveniently organizes these options. It groups the tools available to the U.S. to achieve our national goals. The horizontal axis displays America’s options for military policy ranging from military isolationism, the least expensive, on the left side to collective security, the most costly, on the right. The vertical axis displays America’s economic options. Free trade, in the middle, requires little government action (low costs), while the top and bottom extremes would require some constraints on free economic activity (higher taxes or subsidies). The diagram also displays the foreign policy positions of the Bush and Clinton Administrations, and the positions espoused by several prominent political leaders and policy institutes. It offers at least three insights.
First, discussing U.S. foreign policy options in terms of "internationalism" versus "isolationism" obscures the breadth of America's strategic options. Specifically, the common argument that "we cannot choose an isolationist security policy because we are economically interdependent" is unfounded. Although it is true that there are some necessary links between economic and military policies, these links are minimal. For example, it would be difficult to pursue either free trade or economic influence without a small, anti-piracy force. On the other hand, the military requirements for preventing piracy might be as small as a few destroyers, some special operations forces, and some helicopter carriers — not far from the ideal isolationist size.

Similarly, it might seem foolhardy to blend economic independence with a collective security strategy. If we are willing to fight wars for global peace, why would we not use less expensive economic tools to work towards the
same objectives? However, the collective security-economic independence combination is certainly a defensible foreign policy. A collective security strategy might be hampered by the threat that relatively weak military powers could retaliate economically against the United States, but that leverage would disappear if we were independent. Furthermore, if autarky actually increased America's productive power, as Dick Gephardt argues, an economic strategy of independence may give us more money to spend on collective security. The point is that even the extreme combinations on the military and economic policy axes (isolationism-influence and collective security-independence) can be mixed into plausible foreign policy choices. America need not restrict its options to a single dimension of isolationism and internationalism — we can choose to withdraw from the world or remain engaged using economic power, military power, or both.

The second major observation is that there are large, blank areas on the graph. These indicate foreign policy positions which have not yet entered the political debate. For example, the number of American advocates of exercising economic influence while maintaining military isolation is few to none. Yet this was Japan's position throughout the Cold War (underwritten by the American military alliance), and it might be a viable alternative for the U.S. now. Although opponents of isolation conjure images of renewed security conflict among foreign powers, advocates might counter that isolation will force our allies to provide stability in their regions — and it is better that they pay the bill than we do. Moreover, the value of American economic aid may be enhanced if the U.S. is no longer bearing the costs of our allies' defense.

While the graph reveals some neglected foreign policy combinations, it apparently overlooks others which are active in the current debate. For example, some scholars and politicians talk about maintaining America's "primacy." By this they mean that we must continue to be the most powerful country in the world, both economically and militarily. Primacy, however, is not a foreign policy; instead, it is a goal which can be pursued through many different foreign policies. If we as a country opt for primacy, we still need to debate whether it should be achieved using military isolationism, selective engagement, or military activism and free trade, economic influence, or economic independence. For example, Pat Buchanan favors primacy through independence and isolationism. Professor Sam Huntington of Harvard University, on the other hand, supports primacy by containing America's most-likely future adversary, China, using economic influence and selective engagement. Another popular position, dubbed the "old Cold Warriors" doctrine, directs Huntington's containment policies — economic influence and selective engagement — against another potential adversary, Russia. In sum, if we decide to pursue primacy we must still choose the military and economic policies best suited to achieve it.

The third insight from our graph, and perhaps the most important one, is that the challenge of foreign policy decision making is fundamentally to assess trade-offs. A successful foreign policy prioritizes goals and allocates scarce national resources to address them. Most Americans support human rights, global democratization, stability among the great powers, prosperity, and a solution to America's domestic ills. But tackling each of these problems has a price. A security policy of selective engagement will cost more than military isolationism, and collective security will cost more than selective engagement. Perhaps the benefits of selective engagement, or collective security, will outweigh the costs, and a rational debate on national security policy will focus on that claim. Similarly, there are economic costs of any move away from free trade — whether in the direction of independence or in the direction of influence. These costs must be weighed against the projected benefits, and if expensive economic and military policies are both selected, we must raise the funds to pay for them. A comprehensive foreign policy debate must evaluate coordinated economic and military policies designed to achieve national objectives within our resource constraints.

Ultimately, America's foreign policy objectives are paid for out of the same pocketbooks that finance all of our other national goals. Foreign policy debates are not really about "what we want to achieve in the world" but instead consider "how many of our foreign policy objectives are we willing to pay for" and "how should we pay for them" — with military or economic means?

Notes
The ABM Treaty and the Future of Arms Control and Non-Proliferation

George Lewis

The 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty has been and remains central to U.S. national security planning. According to John Holum, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, "President Clinton has affirmed our country's commitment to the ABM Treaty. Its preservation remains crucial to stability, to the START I and START II reductions, and to longer-term strategic arms control opportunities." However, the prospects for the survival of the Treaty are at best highly uncertain. The Republican Congress is pushing for the deployment of a Treaty-violating national missile defense system. At the same time, in its haste to deploy new theater missile defense (TMD) systems, the Clinton Administration is pursuing measures that, if implemented, would fatally undermine the Treaty (and Congress is pushing the Administration to adopt even more Treaty-damaging positions on TMD systems). The Treaty survived a difficult year in 1995; 1996 may be a critical year for determining its future.

The ABM Treaty, signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1972, has been widely viewed as the foundation of strategic nuclear arms control. By restricting the development and deployment of strategic ballistic missile defenses, the Treaty removed incentives for strategic offensive arms build-ups and made possible the reductions of strategic forces negotiated in the START I and START II agreements. The end of the Cold War has not, as some have suggested, made the Treaty obsolete. It remains central to the realization of a wide range of arms reduction, arms control, and non-proliferation objectives.

The most direct and obvious role of the Treaty is in enabling U.S.-Russian efforts to further reduce the sizes of their nuclear arsenals. The large Russian nuclear arsenal still poses the greatest threat to U.S. security, far greater than that of any future theater missiles. It is difficult to see how further strategic nuclear reductions could be achieved amid the uncertainty raised by the prospect of large-scale deployments of strategic-capable defenses, and even the reductions negotiated in START I might be endangered. Russian officials and parliamentarians have repeatedly emphasized the connection between preserving the ABM Treaty, ratifying the START II agreement, and continuing the implementation of the reductions agreed to under START I.

The proposed changes to the ABM Treaty also would strongly and adversely impact the

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The Extended Range Interceptor (ERINT) missile is a small, highly agile, kinetic kill missile that will be deployed as part of the Patriot PAC III upgrade.
arms policies of the three smaller declared nuclear-armed nations, which although not parties to the Treaty, rely on it in their nuclear force planning. The smaller missile forces of Britain, France and China, some of whose missiles would be considered to be theater systems if deployed by either the United States or Russia, will be particularly threatened by more advanced U.S. or Russian missile defense systems. Moreover, the United States has already expressed great interest in selling such advanced missile defenses to a broad range of countries. Such developments will inevitably make France, Britain, and China much more reluctant to join future arms reductions negotiations, and may even lead them to increase their nuclear forces.

The undermining of the ABM Treaty and the development and deployment of highly-capable new missile defenses could increase hesitation in China (and possibly France) to join two other key parts of the United States’ nonproliferation policy—a comprehensive test ban (CTB) and a multilateral convention to ban the production of fissile material for weapons or outside of safeguards. The threat of a vast expansion and proliferation of advanced missile defenses could not be ignored by China, and could lead it to develop new and modernized nuclear weapons and delivery systems to counter such defenses. At a minimum, in the absence of a strong ABM Treaty, China must be expected to preserve its option to increase its nuclear forces to overwhelm any defenses that might be built. Thus it appears possible that China would be reluctant to give up this option by joining a fissile material production cutoff. Moreover, China would likely balk at signing a CTB, which might prevent it from developing new warheads designed to penetrate defenses.

The above developments could also have serious repercussions for the nuclear policies of the undeclared nuclear states. In particular, a fissile material production ban is seen as a way to bring the de facto nuclear states—Israel, India, and Pakistan—into the international nonproliferation regime. If these countries, none of which are signatories to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), could be persuaded to join this convention, it would be the first time that an international agreement placed constraints on their nuclear weapons programs. However, as with the declared nuclear nations, these countries are likely to have concerns about the ability of their existing nuclear and missile forces to counter such defenses, and therefore may be reluctant to sign on to a production cutoff or a test ban. Moreover, without China’s participation, getting India and Pakistan to join either a CTB or a fissile material production cutoff convention would be essentially impossible.

All of the above effects could undermine the NPT, the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The NPT is explicitly conditioned on the pursuit of nuclear disarmament by the nuclear weapons states. By preventing further nuclear reductions, and possibly leading to backsliding on nuclear disarmament by both the declared and undeclared nuclear states, the loss of the ABM Treaty could undermine the long-term health of the NPT.

Thus although the ABM Treaty was originally conceived as a measure for controlling the U.S./Soviet strategic arms race, it is apparent that it still has crucial roles to play in enabling post Cold War nuclear reductions and in countering proliferation.

The Provisions of the ABM Treaty, and its limits on ABM and TMD systems

The ABM Treaty does not prohibit ballistic missile defense systems altogether, but rather aims to prevent the deployment of large-scale, nationwide strategic defenses, and to provide as much warning time as possible of any attempt to break out of the Treaty’s limits. It allows both the United States and Russia to deploy a single ABM system with at most one hundred interceptors, and further requires that all of the components of these systems be fixed ground-based and located within a single, specified deployment area. (The term “ABM system” is generally taken to mean a strategic, national missile defense system, as opposed to a TMD system that is intended to counter shorter range theater missiles). The provisions of the Treaty prevent the deployment of a system that could defend a large part of U.S. or Russian territory against even a relatively small strategic missile attack.

The ABM Treaty was not intended to limit air defenses or theater or tactical missile defenses. However, to prevent strategic defenses...
from being developed under the guise of being TMD systems, the Treaty limits TMD systems in two ways. First, it prohibits giving the components of TMD systems (or of any other non-ABM system, such as air defenses) a “capability” to counter strategic missiles, regardless of whether or not this capability has been demonstrated by testing. Second, it prohibits testing TMD components in an “ABM mode” — that is, testing them against targets with the characteristics of strategic missiles — regardless of whether or not they were actually capable of successfully countering a strategic target.

Thus TMD systems can be freely developed and deployed as long as they are not capable of countering strategic targets and are not tested against strategic targets. However, the ABM Treaty neither defines the difference between theater and strategic missiles nor provides a definition of what it means to have a capability to counter strategic missiles. There is thus uncertainty on how to draw a line between strategic and theater defenses, and the United States and Russia have never reached a common understanding on how to distinguish between theater and strategic defenses.

National Missile Defense

Throughout 1995, the Republican Congress attempted to force through legislation that would have required the deployment of a multi-site national ballistic missile defense system. The supporters of such a system argued that it was needed to protect the United States from an accidental launch by Russia or against long-range missiles that might be developed by countries such as North Korea.

The Clinton Administration countered that the threat of an accidental launch was too small to justify the deployment of a national defense and that any missile threat to the United States from the third world was far in the future, and that the Administration’s current missile defense development program would allow a defense to be rapidly deployed if any such threat ever materialized.

The primary vehicle for Congressional efforts to force the Administration to deploy a national defense system was the fiscal year 1996 defense authorization bill. The original Senate version of the authorization bill, passed in early August, would have required the deployment of a multi-site national missile defense by the year 2003. Facing a certain veto by President Clinton and delaying tactics by Senate democrats, a subsequent compromise Senate bill was passed which required only the development of a national missile defense system by 2003, with any deployment decision requiring a separate vote. However, the subsequent joint House-Senate conference authorization bill reinserted the requirement to deploy a national missile defense system by 2003. As a result, in late December, Clinton vetoed the authorization bill, saying it would put us “on a collision course with the ABM Treaty.” In early January 1996, a House vote failed to override the veto, effectively killing the bill and ending for fiscal year 1996 Congressional efforts to force the Administration to deploy a national missile defense system. However, further, and possibly more effective, Congressional efforts towards this objective will certainly occur in 1996.

The Administration’s TMD Program and TMD Systems that Raise ABM Compliance Concerns

The Administration’s current TMD program involves a number of programs, such as the PAC-3 upgrade to the Patriot; the Navy Lower Tier program, which is intended to give the AEGIS Weapons System some modest anti-missile capabilities; and the Medium Extended Air Defense System (formerly known as CORPS SAM), being developed in cooperation with a number of European countries, that do not appear to raise any ABM Treaty compliance concerns. These are all systems intended to intercept relatively short range missiles (roughly 1,000 kilometers range or less) well within the atmosphere, and their capabilities are limited enough that they can be expected to have essentially no capability against strategic missiles.

Two other U.S. TMD programs, however, raise very serious Treaty compliance concerns. These are the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system and the U.S. Navy’s Upper Tier system. Both of these systems are intended to defend large areas, with dimensions of hundreds of kilometers, from theater ballistic missiles with ranges up to 3,000-3,500 kilometers, and would intercept their targets above the atmosphere (exo-atmospheric) or in its upper layers.

The THAAD system, designed to be highly-mobile, is the core of the Administration’s TMD program. Current plans call for the procurement of 14 radars, 80 launchers, and over 1,300 missiles, at a cost over $10 billion. The THAAD interceptor, which will have a peak speed of about 2.6 kilometers/second, will carry an infrared-homing kill vehicle, and is intended to destroy its target by direct impact (that is, it does not use an explosive warhead). Intercepts would occur at altitudes ranging from a lower limit of roughly 40 kilometers to well above 100 kilometers. The
first flight test of THAAD was conducted on April 21, 1995, although no attempt was made to intercept a target. The first, and so far only, attempt by THAAD to intercept a target occurred during its fourth flight test on December 13, and the THAAD interceptor failed to hit its target.

The Navy Upper Tier System will be built around the AEGIS phased-array radar and vertical launcher system deployed on the Navy's AEGIS cruisers and Arleigh Burke class destroyers. The interceptor to be used has not yet been firmly determined, but will almost certainly be either a “marinized” THAAD interceptor (with an extra booster stage to give a peak speed of greater than 4.0 kilometers/second) or a Lightweight Exo-Atmospheric Projectile (LEAP) kill vehicle deployed on a variant of the Navy's Standard anti-aircraft missile (and having a peak speed of about 4.5 kilometers/second and a minimum intercept altitude of about 80 kilometers). The first two Upper Tier flight tests (both using the LEAP-based interceptor) were conducted in March 1995, and in both tests the interceptor failed to hit its target. Although Navy Upper tier appears to have capabilities roughly similar to that of THAAD, ABM Treaty compliance concerns have focused primarily on THAAD because of its more advanced state of development.

Exo-atmospheric TMD systems such as THAAD and Navy Upper Tier by their very nature can be expected to raise substantial ABM compliance concerns. These systems are based on the same technologies as ground-based ABM systems, and are, in many respects, simply miniature ABM systems.

**THAAD Treaty Compliance Concerns Lead to U.S. Efforts to Change the ABM Treaty**

As late as early 1994, the U.S. Administration’s position was that the testing or deployment of THAAD would be an ABM Treaty violation unless an agreement with Russia on modifying the Treaty was reached. In late 1993, the General Councils of the State Department, Department of Defense, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) jointly concluded that THAAD’s projected capabilities would violate the provisions of the ABM Treaty, and a January 1994 Department of Defense report to Congress reached the same conclusion. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 10, 1994, ACDA Director John Holum confirmed that THAAD could not be developed without first modifying the Treaty, and five days later, the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization’s (BMDO) Director, Lt. Gen. Malcolm O’Neill, confirmed that THAAD could not be tested until an agreement on the Treaty had been reached with the Russians.

In order to be able to proceed with the testing and development of THAAD, in December 1993, the United States proposed to Russia (in the Standing Consultative Commission) that the ABM treaty be modified. Specifically, the United States proposed that:

- The ABM Treaty’s prohibition on giving TMD systems a “capability” against strategic missiles be changed to a “demonstrated capability.”
- The dividing line between theater and strategic missiles would be set at a reentry or maximum speed of 5 kilometers/second.

Under this U.S. proposal, any missile defense system would be regarded as a theater missile defense system, and thus exempt from ABM Treaty limitations, as long as it was never tested against targets with reentry speeds greater than 5 kilometers/second, even if it were capable of intercepting faster targets.

While Russia appeared to be willing to accept the proposed modifications, it insisted on several additional limitations, most significantly a maximum interceptor speed of 3 kilometers/second. This interceptor speed limit would not affect THAAD, but would prevent the testing and development of Navy Upper Tier and possibly some types of boost-phase defenses. The United States was unwilling to accept such an interceptor speed limit, and the negotiations remained deadlocked.

As it became apparent that the Russians were not going to simply agree to the proposed Treaty modifications, and as the planned testing date for THAAD approached, the U.S. Administration began to back away from its position that THAAD could not be tested until an agreement on modifying the Treaty was reached. In September 1994, General O'Neill stated that THAAD testing could begin because THAAD would not be considered a strategic-capable system until it had the ability to receive space-based cueing, which it would not be given until very late in its development. In January 1995, the Department of Defense reversed its prior position and determined that THAAD could be tested without violating the ABM Treaty, and in April the first flight test was conducted. Also in April, the Department of Defense submitted a compliance report to Congress that stated that Navy Upper Tier was compliant with the ABM Treaty. According to then Undersecretary of Defense John Deutch, Navy Upper Tier “is not covered by the ABM Treaty, and you can build as many of them as...”
you want without reference to the ABM Treaty, and that’s the position of our department.”

After almost two years of deadlocked negotiations, in November 1995, U.S. and Russian negotiators reportedly reached an “agreed framework” on TMDs and the ABM Treaty. This agreement reportedly states that all missile defenses with interceptors with a “demonstrated velocity” of 3 kilometers per second or less will be legal under the Treaty as long as they are never tested against targets with maximum speeds greater than 5 kilometers per second or ranges greater than 3,500 kilometers. In addition, a number of confidence-building measures were to be implemented. The agreed framework was intended to serve as a basis for negotiating a formal agreement in the Standing Consultative Commission. Although the SCC met in December to discuss the framework, no formal agreement had been reached by the end of 1995.

Although the framework agreement might appear to set a 3 kilometer per second limit on the speed of a TMD system’s interceptors, in fact, it simply says that systems with interceptor speeds below this limit are legal, but it does not prohibit systems with higher speed interceptors. U.S. officials have stated that the United States will be free to make its own ABM Treaty compliance judgments on higher speed systems until a second agreement with Russia covering higher speed systems is reached. As noted above, the United States has already made a determination that Navy Upper Tier, designed to use interceptors with speeds of up to 4.5 kilometers per second, is Treaty compliant.

Thus although the Administration argues that an agreement based on this framework would allow the deployment of planned TMD systems while preserving the ABM Treaty, in fact such an approach would severely undermine the Treaty. The framework agreement would eliminate the Treaty’s prohibition on giving TMD systems capabilities to intercept strategic missiles. Under the proposed framework, there would appear to be no limits whatsoever on the capabilities and deployments of ballistic missile defense systems. Even systems designed and intended to be capable of intercepting strategic missiles would be fully legal, as long as they were not tested against targets with a speed greater than 5 kilometers per second.

This testing limitation is of little significance because there is very little intrinsic difference between a warhead reentering at 5 kilometers per second and one reentering at the 7 kilometers per second speed characteristic of strategic warheads. If lingering doubts about the capabilities of a defense remained due to such a testing speed limit, these doubts could be easily resolved by a quick series of tests, requiring no more than a few weeks, of an already fully deployed system. Thus the breakout time to a full scale, fully tested defense would be essentially zero.

Assessing the Capability of THAAD

An evaluation of THAAD’s ABM Treaty compliance and its strategic capabilities hinges on whether and to what extent it will have capabilities to counter strategic ballistic missiles. Although much of the details of THAAD’s characteristics remain classified, there is enough information about the system publicly available so that, when combined with an understanding of how missile defenses operate and the current state of technology, it is possible to construct a detailed model of THAAD’s capabilities. In 1994, the DACS technical working group [Lisbeth Gronlund, George Lewis, Theodore Postol, and David Wright] published an assessment showing that if THAAD was effective against its intended targets, then it would also have a significant capability against strategic missiles.

This assessment began by assuming that THAAD would be effective against the threat it is reportedly designed to counter — theater ballistic missiles with ranges of up to 3,000-3,500 kilometers. Under this assumption, we then assessed how effective THAAD could be expected to be against 10,000 kilometers range strategic missiles.

Figure 1 shows one result of this assessment. It shows a comparison between the areas that can be protected against a theater (solid line) and strategic target (dashed line). The target warheads are assumed to be approaching from the top of the figure. Figure 1 shows that although the defended area against the strategic warhead is somewhat smaller, it is still roughly comparable in size to the defended area against the theater warhead — and both are large enough to cover a major metropolitan area. This result — that the defended area against strategic warheads is comparable to that against theater warheads — holds over a wide range of conditions. For example, if the warhead radar cross sections were reduced, or if more than one warhead was approaching simultaneously, the size of the defended areas would be reduced, but their relative sizes would remain roughly comparable. Thus if THAAD is able to defend a significant area on the ground from 3,000 kilometer range TBMs, it will also be able to defend a somewhat smaller but still significant
Figure 1: The defended areas for a THAAD-like TMD system against a 3,000 km range theater ballistic missile (solid line) and a 10,000 km range strategic missile (dashed line). The defended areas shown here assume that the TMD radar has a power-aperture product of 500,000 watt-meters squared and that the attacking reentry vehicles (assumed to be coming from the top of the page) have radar cross sections of 0.05 square meters.

Thus our analysis clearly established that if THAAD was effective against 3,500 kilometers range TBMs—as it is designed to be—then it would also have significant capabilities against strategic missiles, making its testing a clear violation of the ABM Treaty. This analysis was published in April 1994 and was also presented at a hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in May 1994. The Congressional Budget Office subsequently reported that they had reproduced our results using a computer model supplied by the BMDO. Our calculations have also been independently verified by Russian and Chinese analysts.

In fact, although the U.S. Administration continues to argue that THAAD would not endanger the Treaty, it already knew that the central point of our analysis—that THAAD would be able to intercept strategic warheads—was correct, since its own analysts had concluded that THAAD would be capable of intercepting strategic warheads. In a written response to a question submitted by Senator Exon following BMDO Director O’Neill’s testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on May 11, 1994, General O’Neill stated that “…analysis indicated that in one-on-one engagements against RVs deployed on some strategic missiles, THAAD, if cued from space, would have a capability to counter a non-trivial portion of Russia’s strategic force.” Moreover, two months earlier, in a closed session before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, General O’Neill showed the Senators a defended footprint for THAAD against a strategic missile. Thus both independent analysis and the U.S. Administration’s own analysis clearly indicated that THAAD would have strategic capabilities.

**Force-on-Force Criteria**

In May 1995, during their summit meeting, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin issued a joint statement of principles on TMD that reaffirmed their commitment to the ABM Treaty. However, the joint statement went on to state that TMD systems could be deployed as long as they do not “…pose a realistic threat to the strategic nuclear force of the other side.” The statement was not signed by the Presidents, reportedly because the State Department lawyers had informed the Administration that if Clinton signed it, it would constitute an amendment to the Treaty and would have to be submitted to the Senate for ratification.

The joint statement reference to a “realistic threat” criteria appeared to reflect growing interest in the U.S. Administration in moving to a “force-on-force” criteria for determining ABM Treaty compliance. Under such a criteria, TMD systems would be permitted as long as they did not “…pose a realistic threat to the aggregate strategic force of the other side.” The interest in this approach may reflect an increasing understanding of the fact that systems such as THAAD will inevitably have capabilities against strategic missiles (see the next section). Thus in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, after acknowledging that THAAD could intercept strategic ballistic missiles, BMDO Director General O’Neill went on to argue that “THAAD simply would not suffice as an ABM system; it would be easily overwhelmed by the Russian strategic missile force.”

Stanley Riveles, the U.S. Commissioner to the Standing Consultative Commission, where TMD negotiations were taking place, recently argued that this approach will not “threaten the integrity” of the Treaty, because: “TMD is not deployed in numbers and locations to perform strategic defenses; Multiple strategic reentry vehicles can easily overwhelm...
defenses based on TMD systems; A determined attacker can use decoys and other countermeasures to counteract defenses; The defense does not control engagement factors — The offensive force continues to be able to choose scale, timing, and location of attack; Defenses deployed in the vicinity of ICRM fields that could influence the strategic balance would raise clear military, as well as political and legal issues; [and] TMD systems are not tested using strategic ballistic missile targets."

However, with the exception of the last point (which, as discussed above, is not significant), all of these arguments either are equally applicable to full scale strategic defenses or ignore the high mobility and large numbers involved with the planned U.S. TMD systems. Even full scale strategic defenses can be overwhelmed or defeated with countermeasures, and it was the realization of this fact that in part led the United States and Soviet Union to negotiate the ABM Treaty. THAAD is designed to be air-mobile and could be redeployed anywhere in the world on a time scale of roughly one day. Current plans for THAAD call for procurement of over 1,300 interceptors, and this numbers could easily be increased, particularly since production lines are likely to remain open for a long time producing missiles for foreign sales. No planned interceptor numbers for Upper Tier have been released, but there will be over 50 Upper Tier-capable ships, and the number of Upper Tier interceptors could easily match or exceed the over 1,800 interceptors currently planned for Navy Lower Tier. Thus the number of advanced U.S. TMD interceptors will likely exceed by a large margin the number of warheads the Russians can expect to have available for a retaliatory attack, particularly if START II is implemented.

Summary

The United States is currently developing and testing a new generation of advanced theater missile defense systems. Despite Administration claims to the contrary, it is clear that at least some of these systems, such as THAAD, will be strategic-capable and will therefore violate the ABM Treaty. The changes the United States has proposed making to the Treaty in order to be able to proceed with the deployment of these defenses would severely undermine the Treaty, leaving it unable to impose meaningful restraints on the deployment of strategic capable missile defenses. At the same time, Congressional Republicans are pushing for the deployment of a multi-site national missile defense system that would overtly repudiate the Treaty.

The crippling or destruction of the Treaty could have widespread and adverse impacts on U.S. security, including preventing the ratification of START II; endangering the START I nuclear reductions; preventing China, France and Britain from joining in future nuclear reductions (and possibly leading them to build up their nuclear forces); interfering with efforts to achieve other important arms control and non-proliferation objectives, such as a comprehensive test ban and a fissile material production cutoff; and endangering the long-term health of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

An argument might be made that these consequences would be tolerable if these defenses were indeed solving important national or international problems. But they are not and can not. There is no threat justifying a U.S. national missile defense program and TMD programs such as THAAD and Upper Tier are vastly overdesigned to meet a long-range theater missile threat that does not now exist and will not exist for many years if ever. Moreover, exo-atmospheric defenses such as THAAD, Upper Tier, and the proposed national defense remain vulnerable to defeat by simple countermeasures. This countermeasure problem could not be solved during the "Star Wars" era, and it remains unsolved today.

The end of the Cold War has presented the United States with an unprecedented opportunity to greatly reduce and perhaps ultimately eliminate the primary threat to its security — the large Russian arsenal of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles. Significant and important steps in that direction have been accomplished, most notably by the negotiation of the START I and II agreements. Now these accomplishments are endangered by a missile defense program that appears to be driven by vastly exaggerated threat assessments and to be proceeding with essentially no consideration of its long term security impacts. U.S. security would undoubtedly be better served by continuing and expanding its efforts to reduce and eliminate the nuclear and ballistic missile threats, rather than by pursuing costly and ultimately counterproductive efforts to defend against them.

Notes


2 Although the missile defense provisions of the authorization bill were the ones cited most prominently by Clinton in his veto message, there were other provisions he also cited as prompting his veto.
including limits it placed on his ability to deploy U.S. troops in U.N. missions, and additional limits it placed on a $300 million program aimed at assisting former Soviet republics in dismantling nuclear warheads.

BMDO and the Air Force are also considering systems intended to intercept theater missiles during the first few minutes of flight, while they are under powered flight. These boost phase systems may also raise important ABM Treaty compliance issues, however these issues are significantly different from those raised by systems such as THAAD, and we will not consider these systems here.


In a written question following the Hearing, Senator Pell asked: “Assuming that the THAAD will utilize Brilliant Eyes, does that change the size of the defended footprint that General O’Neill testified to in closed session today?” O’Neill replied in writing that “…LTG O’Neill described THAAD’s capability to engage an ICBM utilizing stereo DSP cuing data.” O’Neill went on to say that if Brilliant Eyes cuing was used, “the defended footprint would increase.”


Whither Humanitarian Intervention? 
Indications from Rwanda

Taylor Seybolt

In recent years military interventions for humanitarian purposes have garnered increased attention, but there is no consensus on what we should learn from them. Humanitarian intervention raises a host of legal, moral, and pragmatic questions. This article seeks to shed some light in the pragmatic realm by asking a simple question: does intervention for announced philanthropic purposes produce humanitarian outcomes?

If ever there was a need for international philanthropic response, it was in Rwanda in 1994. From the beginning of April until the end of August, the world watched as genocide consumed the country and a quiescent civil war sprang to life. For the entire period a small United Nations peacekeeping force was in the capital, Kigali. For two months, from the end of June, France undertook a military intervention in the southwestern part of the country. Comparison of the two military operations is instructive for understanding humanitarian intervention.

I find that humanitarian intervention can benefit the indigenous population. But (and this is a big “but”) to be successful, humanitarian intervention must be subject to certain restrictions. Among the most important, the political and military conditions must favor the intervenor and indigenous actors opposed to continued violence. Expectations must not be high: lives can be saved in the short run, but “nation-building” is beyond the capacity of outside militaries.

Background

Rwanda is about the size of Maryland — 10,169 square miles — and lies in the center of Africa. Before the genocide and civil war it was the most densely populated country on the continent. Ninety-five percent of the roughly seven and a half million Rwandese lived in the countryside, scratching out a subsistence living on the steep and lush hills. The population was 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, and 1% Twa. The majority Hutu are traditionally subsistence farmers, while the minority Tutsi are traditionally aristocratic land and cattle owners. In 1959, Hutus forced the Tutsi king and thousands of Tutsi supporters into exile in Uganda. Three years later, the Republic of Rwanda gained independence with a Hutu government.

On April 6, 1994, an airplane carrying Hutu President Habyarimana, Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira and several of Habyarimana’s top aids was returning from talks held in Tanzania. The talks were intended to facilitate implementation of the Arusha peace accord that had ended a three-year civil war in Rwanda between the Hutu government and the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) operating out of Uganda to the north. The plane was shot down with two surface-to-air missiles. To date all evidence is circumstantial, but the strongest argument implicates extremists within Habyarimana’s own government who strongly disapproved of his movement (halt- ing though it was) toward implementing the peace accord that would allow members of the RPF into the government.

Within half an hour, members of the Presidential Guard killed interim Prime Minister Agathe Unwilingiyimana, leader of the Hutu opposition, and 10 Belgian UN peacekeepers defending her. Belgium subsequently decided to withdraw its battalion from the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR). Five days later, April 12, the interim government fled Kigali for the

“Within two weeks the deaths were considered to number tens of thousands.”

“The plane was shot down with two surface-to-air missiles. To date all evidence is circumstantial, but the strongest argument implicates extremists within Habyarimana’s own government...”
town of Gitarama, 35 miles toward the southwest. RPF forces entered Kigali the same day, but did not gain full control of the city or the airport until May 22. On April 21, the UN security Council voted to reduce UNAMIR's authorized strength from 2,500 to 270. In fact, 450 troops stayed, mostly from Ghana.

By the end of April the RPF had gained control of most of northern Rwanda. Massacres continued in government held areas to the south and west. By the end of May, the chief of operations for the International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that between 200,000 and 400,000 Rwandese had died. A UN special mission found those responsible for the killings to be the Presidential Guard, the interhamwe, and the Rwandese army. The RPF's record was by no means entirely clean, but it was not found to have equal culpability. The mission also found that RPF areas were virtually empty of people, due to previous massacres and incitements to flee the advancing RPF that were broadcast on the interim government's clandestine, mobile Radio Mille Collines.

On May 17, the Security Council passed resolution 918, authorizing an expanded UN military force. That force did not come into being for another six months. Subsequently, the Security Council approved Operation Turquoise, a French-led force of about 2,500 troops, in resolution 929, adopted June 22. The mandate was to use all necessary means under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to protect displaced persons, refugees, and civilians at risk. French troops based their operations in Zaire, and established a smaller base in the town of Gikongorno, Rwanda. The objective of the base inside Rwanda was to halt the advance of RPF troops. The RPF, which controlled the capital and about two-thirds of the country, announced it considered France an invader. Yet both sides avoided engagement and by July 8 the French, the RPF, and the provisional Hutu government agreed to a no fighting zone that covered most of the area still in Hutu hands.

On July 19 the RPF installed a broad-based government, having declared victory in the civil war the day before. In a period of less than a week, a wave of close to a million Hutu fled to Zaire out of fear of Tutsi reprisals. By the beginning of August, aid workers put the death toll from cholera and dysentery epidemics in the camps at 20,000 to 30,000. At the end of July, 2,350 American troops participated in an emergency humanitarian airlift to refugee camps in Zaire and in rebuilding Kigali airport. The American action, along with extraordinary efforts by numerous aid organizations, was instrumental in bringing the epidemics under control and attending to the refugees.

Many of the refugees were army troops and interhamwe who retained their weapons.
interhamwe who retained their weapons. Clandestine Hutu extremist radio broadcasts continued to polarize the people and incite violence, as they had done since before the genocidal killing. By the end of September, Hutu extremists had seized control of most of the refugee camps. The former interim government had re-established itself in Bukavu with complete freedom, a large stock of weapons, and mobile Radio Mille Collines. The presence and activities of former Rwandese army, militia, and civilian leaders seriously disrupted humanitarian operations. In some camps they virtually took control of all food and relief distribution; the lives of relief workers were repeatedly threatened; and refugees who expressed a desire to return home were terrorized or killed. In November, some relief workers withdrew from camps at Katale and Bukavu, Zaire.

The situation continues to be desperate. Refugee camps are a breeding ground for Hutu extremism, prisons are overflowing, and survivors are psychologically scared. The new Tutsi dominated government in Kigali has very few resources with which to rebuild, it is beginning to expel private relief organizations, and it resisted the recent extension of UNAMIR’s mandate.6

UNAMIR

UNAMIR utterly failed to prevent the outbreak and spread of genocidal killing or the resumption of the civil war. It also failed to fulfill many aspects of its original mandate and the two revised mandates noted above. Furthermore, UN troops were endangered and unable to defend themselves. Despite constant effort by UNAMIR commander Brigadier General Dallaire, no cease-fire agreement was forthcoming.

When its mandate was expanded, UNAMIR did not have the capability to establish civilian safe zones or provide protection for the delivery of humanitarian relief. It could act only around Kigali and only with the consent of the belligerents. Finally, given the extremely slow response rate to the third mandate, one must question whether having a small presence on the ground made deployment of UNAMIR II any easier or faster.

UNAMIR was not a complete failure, however. UN troops assisted civilian relief organizations and prepared the way for an increased relief effort. More importantly, they managed to protect about 20,000 Rwandese in Kigali.7 They also escorted civilians across battle lines to remove them from the ravages of the front line. UNAMIR troops were directly responsible for saving the life of moderate Hutu Faustin Twagiramungu, Prime Minister designate and the first Prime Minister in the new government. They were also instrumental in helping expatriates flee the country in the early days of the violence. Finally, UNAMIR personnel served a valuable monitoring and reporting function (although there is some question about the accuracy of their perceptions).

There are three primary reasons for UNAMIR’s failures: inadequate mandates, inadequate force strength, and slow response time. UNAMIR commander Brigadier General Romeo Dallaire has said, “I needed a mandate, which was very tardy in coming. We needed the equipment: there was none of that. We needed food, water, rations, fuel and medical supplies: We didn’t have any . . . And thirdly, we needed the troops.” He claims if he had had the 4,500 troops he asked for, “we could still have saved hundreds of thousands.”

Two other factors were important contributors to UNAMIR’s failure, and indeed the failure of the entire international community. First was the pace and scope of events. Immediately after President Habyarimana’s airplane went down a planned killing spree began. The first victims were the moderate politicians who offered the only real hope of a non-violent solution to the long-standing tension in Rwandan society. Within a matter of days the Presidential Guard, interhamwe, and the Rwandese army, usually with the complicity of local government leaders, were killing thousands of Tutsis throughout the country. It would have been extremely difficult to bring under control a large number of loosely controlled assailants operating over a wide area with impunity from governmental sanction.

Second was the lack of political will on the part of the UN and its member states. Stopping the genocide and the civil war would have entailed the loss of life by UN troops. Potential donor countries would not pay that price. The desire to avoid donor country casualties led to the evisceration of UNAMIR April 21, 1994, and the reluctance to reinforce it later. The United States in particular bears responsibility for opposing a strong UN response. The Clinton administration made it a policy not to use the word “genocide,” which would have greatly increased pressure to intervene as a signatory of the 1948 Genocide Convention.

Operation Turquoise

All 2,500 troops for Operation Turquoise were mobilized on June 23, 1994, the day after passage of Resolution 929 which authorized
the operation. French forces already stationed in Africa — primarily in the Central African Republic — established bases of operation in Goma and Bukavu, Zaire, which are on the border of Rwanda at the north and south ends of Lake Kivu. Within a day they were making incursions into Rwandan territory. Such a rapid response was made possible by extensive preparations in advance of the UN resolution.9

A quick look at some numbers gives an indication of Operation Turquoise’s effect. Of approximately 2,580,000 people who were within the Cyangugu-Kibuye-Gikongoro triangle that the French proclaimed a safe zone (see map), slightly less than one million were internally displaced persons (IDPs) — almost exclusively Hutus — who had fled in front of the advancing RPF forces. People continued to seek refuge in the safe zone, so that at the close of the operation IDPs in the zone numbered approximately 1.7 million.10

During the third week in July, when the flood of Hutus fleeing the RPF’s final push to victory poured into refugee camps in Goma and Bukavu, Zaire, refugees at Goma were in desperate need of food, but those at Bukavu were relatively well fed.11 The latter had been in the safe zone, the former had not. Aid agencies verify that greater security afforded them better access to the region occupied by the intervention force. A spokeswoman for the UNHCR described people within the safe zone as being “in much better shape . . . be-

cause they know what the harvest is, they know where to go, their homes haven’t been so damaged as in other places.”12

In an address to the Security Council on July 11, Prime Minister of France Edouard Balladur said humanitarian goals had been “largely achieved”: massacres had almost completely stopped, a large volume of humanitarian supplies was being delivered, and about one million IDPs were being protected.13 These claims are confirmed by UN agencies and private non-governmental organizations working in the Cyangugu-Kibuye-Gikongoro triangle. However, this all becomes rather less impressive when one realizes all but about 20,000 Tutsis had already been killed, and that many of the IDPs were active in the pursuit of genocide.14

Finally, Operation Turquoise cooperated with UNAMIR command from the start and worked to make a smooth transition from Turquoise to UNAMIR II control after the two-month operation came to a close.15 Turquoise also gave the UN some information on massacres and the killers, and disarmed some militia members.

Six factors were key to achieving a certain level of humanitarian benefit in the Cyangugu-Kibuye-Gikongoro zone. First, Operation Turquoise had limited objectives. It did not involve any social or political engineering. Further, although there was no trust between France and the RPF, the French did not challenge the RPF’s vital interests — they did not attempt to prevent an RPF victory, they helped stop militia massacres (at least to some extent), and they made a public promise to withdraw after a short time. No less important, France based most of its forces outside Rwanda, signaling to the RPF that it did not plan offensive operations.

Second, combat forces were used in a militarily appropriate manner. Turquoise developed a clear deterrent strategy toward the RPF. They clearly articulated their decision to establish an exclusion zone. They drew a line far enough in front of advancing RPF forces to give them time to stop. They were more heavily armed and mobile than the RPF so their threat of engagement was credible, despite vastly smaller numbers.16

Third, the Hutu extremists were weak perpetrators and the RPF was a responsible opposition. The interim Hutu government was on the run and viewed France as friendly. Consequently, they did not oppose Operation Turquoise even when it (haltingly) moved to stop their genocidal behavior and arrest some perpetrators. The RPF recognized it was not in its interest to engage the French, even though
they regarded France as a hostile presence and a hindrance to stopping the genocide.

Fourth, France was held publically accountable for its behavior to a large degree. It received a UN mandate and abided by its restrictions. France also encouraged the involvement of non-governmental organizations and UNAMIR. These third parties were in position to keep an eye on events and independently report their observations.

Fifth, the French government displayed strength of political will. France placed its troops along the RPF line of advance and prepared to fight in Gikongorno. Such behavior can not be imagined in the United States today. Nor has the UN displayed such a willingness to intervene forcefully for what it believes is right. It should be noted that the will probably emanated from perceived national interests rather than philanthropic intent, as discussed below.

Sixth, Operation Turquoise swam with the current rather than against it. Most of the Tutsi population in the southwest had been killed. It was difficult, then, for interhamwe to kill as wantonly as they had previously. Outside the protected zone, the RPF had the capital city, most of the land, and the former government facing imminent defeat. In short, events had largely run their course. Yet Turquoise was launched in time to still do some good.

Operation Turquoise also failed in significant ways. Turquoise should be held responsible for not shutting down or jamming transmissions from Radio Mille Collines, the clandestine, mobile, extremist radio station that operated within the protected zone. The station wrongly claimed the RPF killed all Hutus they encountered and it encouraged all Hutus to kill any Tutsis they could find. Le Monde quoted a “reputable” American source saying, “Technically, it was possible to locate and destroy or silence Radio Mille Collines’ mobile transmitters, and we were surprised that France did not consider such a mission a priority.” A US Special Forces commander confirmed that it was possible to shut down or jam the transmitters.

The secretary general of the French Foreign Ministry, Mr. Dufourq, said soldiers and militia who entered the safe zone were disarmed immediately. Yet at the end of July, armed Hutu militia still roamed the French zone attacking and plundering. French troops occasionally clashed with interhamwe but on numerous occasions they proved too few in number to rein in the militia. Several times they discovered Tutsis being systematically killed by interhamwe and simply drove away.

They did not even venture into remote rural areas. Turquoise officials were silent on the matter of the large number of interhamwe, including their leaders, who congregated around Gikongorno, were the French established a military base.

Turquoise troops did not stop the destruction by Hutus of government property, the lack of which now significantly hinders the new Rwandan government. Nor did they attempt to apprehend major killers in anticipation of bringing them to court under the Genocide Convention, even when the killers were identified to them. Worse yet, there are reports of cooperation between French troops and Rwandese army and militia members. The head of Ethiopia’s contingent within UNAMIR saw French troops transporting Hutu government troops to Zaire. The BBC’s correspondent in Goma saw “a French military vehicle [draw] up and it had General Augustine Bizimungu, chief of staff of the former Rwandan Armed Forces in it.” Turquoise commanders also retained well-known killers in senior positions in local government administration.

Three factors explain the problems and duplicity. The first pertains to capability. Operation Turquoise did not have enough troops to adequately police the entire area, despite their mobility. The United States and many European countries are policed at an average ratio of 2.2:1,000. Within the safe zone, a security personnel to population ratio of 1:1,000 existed (2,500 troops; 2.5 million people). The ratio is even greater when one considers that not all Turquoise personnel were directly engaged in patrolling the area. A second consideration is that the Western country police ratio is for peace time. When the US invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965 to maintain order, it enjoyed a ratio of 6.6:1,000 military personnel to population. In Northern Ireland, Britain maintains a 20:1,000 ratio. But even a small force can be more effective than were the French. Their failures are further explained by intentions and history.

Concerning intentions, the French government claimed philanthropic motives. To the extent philanthropy played a role, it was more image than anything else. Leading French politicians, with an eye toward the 1995 elections, competed with each other for the moral high ground after former “ministre sans frontieres” Bernard Kouchner was filmed braving shell fire in May. Beyond domestic politics, the primary intent was to reaffirm France’s dominant role in francophone Africa.
Tutsi refugees from Uganda, an English-speaking former colony. After the intervention, the French Chief of Staff spoke of “the Anglo-Saxon conspiracy.” The vice-president of the defense committee in the French National Assembly said “we have just proven that we are still capable of acting in Africa. Fast and well.”

The third reason is political and military ties. France had a history of providing military aid to the Habyarimana regime and it trained the Presidential Guard who trained the interhamwe. Soon after the Operation Turquoise began, a senior French official visiting the troops said the RPF could not be allowed to achieve a military victory. The commander in the Cyangugu area played down atrocities against Tutsis by emphasizing the suffering of the majority Hutu population. He also said he had no qualms about working with local authorities directly linked to the killings. The overall commander of Operation Turquoise went out of his way to distance the Rwandese army from responsibility for the massacres. French troops said they were told the Tutsis were the perpetrators and the Hutus the victims.

Could More Have Been Done?

Both UNAMIR and Operation Turquoise had positive effects, but to a very limited extent. Some lives were saved, more aid was delivered than would have been otherwise, and UN troops recorded events so that those who cared to find out could know what transpired. Still, a million people were hacked to death, four and a half million were displaced, what infrastructure the country had was destroyed, and the Rwandese people were ravaged.

Could members of the international community have done better? There were many diplomatic actions that could have been taken, but here I focus on military variables. UNAMIR commander General Dallaire claimed he could have stopped the genocide if he had been given immediately 4,500 well armed and trained troops and a mandate to act aggressively. There is reason to question Dallaire’s claim. The argument is made that stopping genocide is not a conventional military operation; instead it requires troops to carry out a policing mission. Such a mission would have been next to impossible to accomplish for the following reasons: the genocide was very well organized and spread rapidly; it was carried out over a fairly large area by many perpetrators; the victims lived spread across the countryside, rather than in concentrated areas; there was a great deal of participation by local authorities, but no central control; and out-

Nearly 2 million refugees struggled to survive in Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi.
...siders did not have enough information to act intelligently. I find the counter arguments more persuasive. However, the assertion must be that the genocide could have been significantly curtailed, but not halted. An interventional force would have met little resistance from the government forces and extremists who were numerous but militarily weak, poorly disciplined, and poorly led. At the beginning of April there were about 35,000 army troops armed with automatic rifles, hand grenades, some mortars, and a few artillery pieces. Sustained large-scale operations were not possible as troops and supplies were transported in small trucks or on foot. Ammunition supplies were very low; interim government forces immediately ran short after the UN imposed an arms embargo May 17. There were also about 1,500 Presidential Guards and 1,700, interhamwe. Immediately after the fighting broke out thousands of untrained people joined the militia (many under duress). Numerous local policemen also participated in the genocide. These forces were very effective when attacking unarmed civilians, but showed little or no resistance against the RPF, who were fewer, comparably armed, far better led, and more disciplined. Most of the killing occurred in churches where Tutsis sought refuge. Policemen would secure the entrances, then the interhamwe would slaughter those inside. If any half-way serious resistance were mounted, Presidential Guard or army units were called in. “In all of the largest massacres, which were organized as military operations, soldiers played a key role in organizing and carrying them out.”

Against this strategy and these forces general policing was not necessary. Point defense would have been very effective. UNAMIR units did exactly that in Kigali, despite being small, poorly armed and under severely restricted rules of engagement. Point defenses could have been established in at least the capital town of each of the country’s ten prefects. Interventionary forces could also have limited the spread of the genocide. They could have jammed Radio Mille Collines or countered it with an alternative broadcast without having to use ground troops. On the ground, the genocide spread sector by sector in a deliberate and bounded manner. There was local resistance throughout the country which was somewhat successful against interhamwe and local police, but not against outright military assault by army soldiers and national gendarmes. An interventionary force would have had trouble with the readiness of local officials to carry out orders to kill and with the speed of events, but there were opportunities to draw lines against the genocide’s advance.

**Conclusion**

The case of Rwanda indicates that if in the future any state finds cause to intervene for philanthropic reasons, at least seven military factors will be essential to success: rapid reaction, a strong force, permissive rules of engagement, good intelligence, limited objectives, a willingness and ability to respond to changes on the ground, and impartiality but not neutrality. In addition to military requirements, political will is essential. In Rwanda, the powerful states of the world, particularly the United States, lacked political will, partly because they misinterpreted Rwanda as another Somalia. At a minimum the interim Rwandese government should have been unequivocally condemned by other governments, and removed from its rotating seat on the UN Security Council. Despite lack of “national interests” in Rwanda, a case can also be made that military intervention should have been undertaken. The moral reasons are obvious; the legal reasons are grounded in the Genocide Convention. Most important for this paper, a number of people at the time saw that the potential physical benefits outweighed the potential costs. In an extreme situation such as this, even a marginal impact on the course of events translates into tens of thousands of lives.

**Notes**

1. The word ‘philanthropic’ implies intent to provide assistance. ‘Humanitarian’ refers to the promotion of human welfare, whether intended or not.
9. “RPF Chairman comments of Talks with French Envoy,” (Clandestine) Radio Muhabura, in Foreign

“In an extreme situation such as this, even a marginal impact on the course of events translates into tens of thousands of lives.”
In addition to material preparation, French officials talked with Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko concerning basing rights in his country about six weeks prior to deployment.


UN Chronicle, p. 7.

African Rights, p.1147.

UN Chronicle, p. 7. At the local level, some French commanders facilitated meetings between the new government and community leaders, but others incited fear by spreading rumors the RPF would take reprisals. African Rights, p.1153.

The RPF was about 20 kilometers in front of the Turquoise zone when the French announced their intention. They moved within 10 kilometers the next day. There were 150 French troops when the order to halt the RPF advance came. They were soon reinforced with about 300 Legionaries. The number of RPF troops was estimated at 2,000. "French Troops Ordered to Stop RPF Advance," France-Inter Radio Network, in FBIS, 5 July 1994, p8.


Off the record conversation, November 16, 1995.


African Rights, p.1149

The Economist (July 9, 1994), p. 42.

African Rights, p.1150-1151.


African Rights, p.1151.

All ratio numbers, except for Rwanda, are taken from James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," unpublished paper.

I argue below that policing was not the most effective mission to pursue.

African Rights, p.1158-1139.

Quoted in African Rights, p.1105.

African Rights, p.1106.


All quoted in African Rights, pp. 1145-1148.

Strategic Airpower in Desert Storm and Beyond: A Symposium Summary

Daryl G. Press

Did airpower win the Gulf War? What lessons should policy makers and informed citizens learn from the various applications of airpower used against Saddam Hussein? Do we need an army anymore? How did the attacks against command and control facilities in Baghdad affect the outcome in the field? These and other questions were discussed during the day long set of panels and talks dedicated to understanding the use of strategic airpower in the Gulf War that formed the Second Annual General James H. Doolittle airpower symposium cosponsored by M.I.T.'s Defense and Arms Control Studies Program, the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, and the Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.

M.I.T.’s Barry Posen chaired a panel and began the session by raising questions about the relative effectiveness of airpower in its different missions. In the Gulf, Posen noted, we had the time and aircraft to fly all types of airpower missions. We achieved air supremacy, struck strategic targets deep in Iraq, conducted deep interdiction raids against Iraqi supply columns, and flew thousands of sorties against Iraq’s forces in the Kuwaiti theater of operations (KTO). But in a future war, he suggested, we may not have the resources to conduct all of these missions. Time might be short — we may not be able to conduct a month-long air war before engaging our ground forces. Or, aircraft might be scarce — reductions in defense spending have cut the size of the Air Force since the Gulf War. In 1991 we did not have to choose whether to focus on strategic bombing, deep interdiction, or close air support; we could do them all.

Leading off the panel, Professor Robert Pape of Dartmouth College, began by stating that the point of retrospective analysis is not to criticize the performance of the military, but to learn lessons so that we can continually improve our capabilities. Pape then presented his two main arguments; first, that airpower succeeded in coercing Saddam Hussein to unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait before the ground war began and, second, that it was the attacks on Iraq’s forces in the KTO — the close air support sorties — that had the greatest impact on Saddam’s decision to withdraw.

The Coalition’s six week air campaign destroyed Iraq’s capability to execute its military strategy and convinced Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait before the ground war began, Pape argued. Saddam’s plan for defeating the Coalition rested on the assumption that the United States would not accept 10-20,000 casualties in a war to liberate Kuwait. He planned to deter an American attack by demonstrating the capability to inflict high casualties on Coalition forces or, if that failed, to compel the Coalition to stop an assault by inflicting thousands of casualties. As long as he could engage the Coalition forces with his best units, the Republican Guard, Saddam hoped to raise the costs of war beyond the point that the Western countries would be willing to pay.

This plan, Pape argues, was destroyed by the air campaign. For six weeks Iraqi forces suffered aerial bombardment and could not retaliate. The Coalition, Saddam began to realize, could wear away Iraqi military strength indefinitely, and Iraq’s ground forces would not have the strength to inflict high casualties on the Coalition once a ground attack began. By mid-February, Pape argues, Saddam was looking for a way out of the crisis.

In mid-February the Soviets advised Saddam to pull out. A Coalition ground attack would soon begin, they warned their old client, and the Iraqi forces would be crushed. Saddam sent Tariq Aziz to Moscow to negotiate a withdrawal. On February 22, Iraq agreed to withdraw from Kuwait over the course of six weeks — time they claimed they needed to withdraw their forty-two divisions. President Bush immediately rejected the Iraqi offer and laid down an ultimatum. Iraq could with-
The USS Missouri fires a Tomahawk missile on the first day of Operation Desert Storm.

draw, but it had to be within the next seven days. The U.S. clearly had no desire to see Iraq withdraw its heavy equipment from Kuwait. Powell, in fact, called Schwarzkopf in Saudi Arabia and asked if the plans for the ground attack could be moved up. In the following days, Iraq’s foreign minister suggested that Iraq would accept the seven day offer, but news of the burning of the Kuwaiti oil fields and reports of increased looting in Kuwait City drowned out this concession. Ultimately, the United States was no longer looking for an Iraqi withdrawal; the U.S. wanted to finish the job it had come to do.

Airpower had clearly changed Saddam’s calculus. In late February Saddam agreed to part with the so-called “19th Province of Iraq” — the sticking point was how much of his military equipment he would be able to retrieve. The question remains, what type of airpower coerced Saddam to give up Kuwait? The answer, according to Pape, is that the attacks on the Iraqi forces in the KTO had the greatest effect on Saddam’s decision to withdraw.

The strategic air campaign against facilities deep inside Iraq quickly destroyed all of its designated targets. After the first few days of the air war almost all of the strategic targets had been hit at least once. Nevertheless, despite the destruction of these targets, the strategic campaign never accomplished its objectives. Saddam Hussein maintained control of his army throughout the war. In late January he personally ordered the attack on Khafji; throughout the war it appears that he controlled the launch of Scud missiles; during the first couple days of the ground war the Iraqi high command repositioned the Republican Guard to block the VII Corps’ “Left Hook;” and after the war Saddam fought a
successful civil war against the Shiites and Kurds. Despite the destruction of the targets on the strategic target list, it appears that Saddam retained control of his forces throughout the war.

In addition, the timing of Saddam's decision to withdraw does not support the argument that strategic bombing coerced Iraq to withdraw. The strategic campaign was essentially completed in the first few days of the air war, but Saddam did not agree to pull out of Kuwait until mid-to-late February. The timing of this decision makes sense when we consider Saddam's military strategy and what was happening to his forces in the theater. As his forces were steadily degraded, Saddam realized that the Coalition might never launch a ground attack and never expose itself to casualties. On the other hand, the Coalition was wearing down Iraq's forces to the point at which the Coalition's ground forces could easily overrun the Iraqi defenders. Specifically, attacks on the forces in the KTO had caused widespread desertions, had destroyed about 20 percent of the armored vehicles, and had made it difficult for Iraqi forces to move. Unable to effectively maneuver his Republican Guard, Saddam realized that his ground forces would be destroyed piecemeal by a Coalition ground attack. The bombardment of Iraqi forces in the KTO made Saddam's strategy untenable and he decided it was time to save as much of his forces as possible.

Pape concluded his remarks by retracting an argument that he had made in earlier presentations. Based on J-STARS pictures, Pape used to believe that Iraq began unilaterally withdrawing forces from the KTO before the beginning of the ground war. After careful analysis of the J-STARS tapes by the Air Force, it became clear that this did not happen. Nevertheless, Pape stated, the negotiations in Moscow led to an Iraqi offer to abandon Kuwait in six weeks — and a later statement by the Foreign Minister implied that Iraq would pull out of Kuwait in seven days, if necessary. Air strikes against Iraq's forces in the KTO successfully coerced Iraq into giving up.

Lt. General Bernard Trainor, USMC (Ret.), of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard spoke next. General Trainor said that he largely agrees with Dr. Pape's analysis but wants to stress three additional points. First, our efforts to assess the conduct of the Gulf War have been hampered by an unwillingness to acknowledge that we did not accomplish all of our military objectives in the Gulf. One objective of Operation Desert Storm was to liberate Kuwait. Another objective, however, was to destroy the Iraqi military machine, especially the Republican Guard. Frequently people deny that the destruction of the Republican Guard was one of the U.S. objectives, but the Army was explicitly instructed, in its orders to commence the ground attack, to destroy the Republican Guard. Operation Desert Storm was largely a success, but only if we recognize the failures can we address them and be better prepared next time.

Trainor's second point was about the impact of "CINC-dom" on the Gulf War. The last decade's military reform made the CINC a warlord in his theater. We should evaluate the impact of this change on the operations in the Gulf. One of the effects of the centralization of authority in the CINC was the adoption of the "Instant Thunder" strategic air campaign. The Air Force originally saw their role in the Gulf as a support for the ground forces. Colonel John Warden, from the Checkmate planning cell at the Pentagon, envisioned things differently. Warden and the air staff designed a plan for the air war to defeat Iraq "from the inside out." The plan was presented to the CINC and, over the objections of the tactical air forces, Warden's plan became the foundation for the strategic air campaign. The centralization of authority in the CINC allowed a minority viewpoint in the Air Force to effectively overrule the Air Force's conventional wisdom.

Third, the inter-service "jointness" that we heard so much about during the war was true more in form than in substance. The services each conducted their own wars, according to their own doctrine, without much coordination with the other services. The Air Force in particular, argued General Trainor, did not look carefully after the needs of the Army and Navy.

Next was Dr. Richard Hallion, the Air Force Historian, who began his discussion with a few brief comments about the previous presentations, and then offered the lessons which he drew from the Gulf War air campaign. First, Hallion argued, the distinction that has been drawn between tactical and strategic airpower is much blurrier in practice than it often seems in these discussions. Modern war involves simultaneous combat in three dimensions against targets throughout the theater. The impact of deep air strikes and close air support interact in the same way that air and ground operations contribute together to a single coordinated effort. To assess the relative effectiveness of hitting strategic or tactical targets, or even to assume that the two can be distinguished, Hallion argued, somewhat

"The timing of Saddam's decision to withdraw does not support the argument that strategic bombing coerced Iraq to withdraw."

"The inter-service 'jointness' that we heard so much about during the war was true more in form than in substance."
misses the point. Neither type of mission can be fully effective alone; the combination of attacks against the spectrum of targets, in conjunction with ground and naval attacks, is the essence of modern three dimensional warfare. The Gulf War does not demonstrate that airpower is the dominant arm of military forces, Hallion noted, but it does demonstrate that on the three dimensional battlefield, ground forces are no longer the predominant force.

Second, Hallion spoke of the revolution in strategic lift operations. In the 1973 war, he noted, the United States sent emergency sealift to Israel — it arrived two weeks after the war ended. Now the calculus has changed. The United States can deploy much more lethal force around the world, and in less time, than ever before. This capability will continue to be critical in the post-Cold War world, in which America’s major military contingencies will often be in unexpected third world hot-spots.

Third, the Gulf War allows us to assess our decision twenty-five years ago to aggressively pursue “smart” bomb technology. Smart weapons made up only 20 percent of all bombs dropped but accounted for 75 percent of the damage inflicted on the Iraqis. Smart bombs, Hallion argued, were not scarce during the war. The U.S. took only 30 percent of our stock of smart bombs to the Gulf — but we used 90 percent of the aircraft capable of firing these weapons. A second simultaneous contingency would not have found us lacking smart bombs, but would have found us short of the aircraft to deliver them.

Fourth, smart munitions have changed air warfare in some subtle, often unrecognized ways. Smart munitions allow planners to carry out missions simultaneously which would have once been conducted sequentially. During World War II, 100 planes were frequently launched to destroy one target. Now, 100 planes can be sent to hit 100 targets. Furthermore, smart bombs are more humane than previous munitions. Important military targets can be destroyed without killing many civilians. In the age of CNN, having the ability to destroy military targets without killing civilians gives military planners great flexibility.

Lastly, the Gulf War showed us that we need to work harder on using information effectively. For example, we need to “net” together J-STARS, Rivet Joint, and remotely piloted vehicles with our ground forces.

Dr. Peter Perla of the Center for Naval Analysis spoke next. He spoke about the evolving role of airpower since World War I. More than eighty years ago it was already clear that airplanes could play an important role in warfare. The speed of aircraft, their ability to see over the horizon, and their ability to avoid the constraints of terrain made airplanes an ideal scout platform. The development of effective aerial weapons made airplanes much more flexible and allowed aviation to become a potent combat arm. At the same time it raised fears from the Army and Navy that they would lose the use of air scouts. The beginning of the air-surface rivalry can be dated almost as far back as the use of airplanes in war.

The bottom line, according to Perla, is that airpower and ground forces are rarely used independently. In almost any conceivable scenario the U.S. would deploy both air and surface forces. These forces should be seen as complementing each other. What we should work on now is improving the way we coordinate our air and ground efforts.

The Joint Forward Air Controller (JFAC) is a step in this direction. The JFAC provides a central authority to coordinate efforts across the theater to respond to changing contingencies. To coordinate airpower more effectively we must combine centralized control of airpower with decentralized execution.

Fundamentally, Perla argued, problems in inter-service cooperation will persist as long as the services distrust each other. The Army does not believe that the Air Force will use airpower in the ways which Army doctrine says are most effective for assisting ground forces. The Air Force does not trust that the Army understands how to effectively use aircraft to their potential. The services need to develop comprehensive expertise so that each
better understands the others’ doctrine and can appreciate the other services’ needs. This, said Perla, is the path to true jointness.

Dr. Kevin Lewis of the RAND Corporation, in the next presentation, noted that the English-speaking nations have long thought about fighting separate air campaigns against their enemies. Their faith in the potential for strategic airpower, he argued, is almost religious. In order to get pilots to fire-bomb cities, to fly missions which take 25-50 percent casualties, and to maintain the dream of decisive independent air campaigns requires religious conviction.

The religion of airpower has five fundamental tenets. First, the idea of strategic air war is driven by a desire to substitute capital for labor. Ground wars are manpower intensive but with some expenditure on sophisticated aircraft and munitions, advocates of airpower have promised, a country can win its wars without having to field large standing armies. Second, airpower is attractive to countries who believe that their comparative advantage lies in technology. Shortages in manpower, or an unwillingness to take casualties, can be compensated with sophisticated air weapons.

Third, strategic airpower theory has been most attractive to those countries which have sought to avoid lengthy conflicts. Fourth, strategic airpower offers a way to maintain a powerful military while preserving a separation between the military and civil society. A large powerful ground army usually requires that a significant fraction of a country’s men be in the military. A military which depends heavily on airpower, on the other hand, is far less dependent on large standing armies, on universal conscription, and may be less threatening to the other domestic political institutions.

Finally, airpower promises to allow the discriminate use of military force. With PGMs, according to the theory, the “bad guys” (the adversary’s political leaders) can be targeted without hurting the “innocents” (the adversary’s citizens). This promise is one of airpower’s newest attractions. The United States, which burned down cities during World War II, grieved over the Al Firdos bunker incident in the Gulf War. Things have clearly changed, and the religion of airpower promises to free countries to wield their power in ways that are palatable given today’s standards.

Lewis concluded with an observation similar to that offered by Posen and Pape. The debate between tactical and strategic airpower advocates is about the allocation of resources, he claimed. As long as there are enough platforms there does not need to be an airpower debate. But Desert Storm required most of the United States’ advanced PGM “shooters,” and since Desert Storm we have cut our force structure significantly. Air platforms may be scarce in our next war. We should confront the issues about the employment of airpower now so that we will not have to confront them later, during a shooting war.

Dr. Benjamin Lambeth, also from the RAND Corporation, began his talk with a suggestion about how to frame the debate over airpower. Before we evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of airpower, and its ability or inability to live up to the promises of strategic airpower theory, we must separate the reasonable from the unreasonable claims of airpower advocates. Instead of refuting the arguments of zealots we should address the fundamental question: “how should we use airpower as a national asset?”

The critics of airpower are quick to point out that during Desert Storm airpower did not single-handedly defeat Iraq. Furthermore, the critics rejoice, airpower has never lived up to the claims that it could bring down countries from the inside out. Lastly, they always mention, airpower can not hold or seize territory. But while the critics rebut the claims of airpower extremists they risk ignoring the more fundamental issues. For example, attacks on Saddam’s command and control did not topple the Iraqi regime, but it did destroy much of Iraq’s infrastructure. We need to ask, “what was the effect of destroying the items on the strategic target list?”

A second risk inherent in the way we think about airpower is that we artificially bifurcate the air war. There was only one air campaign, according to Lambeth, and we should evaluate the effectiveness of that campaign as a whole. When we assess the air campaign as a whole several conclusions become obvious. First, airpower properly applied proved to be the decisive element of the war in the Gulf. Second, gaining air supremacy gave U.S. aircraft freedom to roam Iraqi airspace searching for targets to destroy. Third, airpower permitted Coalition ground forces to maneuver freely without fear of enemy air attacks.

How do we know that airpower was truly “decisive?” Airpower successfully “blinded” the enemy. Without his “eyes” and “ears,” Saddam was unable to control his forces effectively. A second measure of airpower’s dominance is the low number of U.S. casualties. The Coalition lost fewer forces in the five weeks of fighting than in the five months of deployment and training. Finally, Lambeth suggested, we should listen to the evaluations of others. A Russian General commented

“The United States, which burned down cities during World War II, grieved over the Al Firdos bunker incident in the Gulf War. Things have clearly changed.”
that “airpower alone formed the basis of victory — air supremacy altered the war from the outset.” In sum, the Gulf War teaches us a very important lesson about airpower. Airpower may not be able to win wars alone but it does have the power to control the way a war is fought. “With airpower all is feasible,” said Lambeth, “without it all is difficult.”

The seventh commentator was Dr. Caroline Ziemke of the Institute for Defense Analyses. Ziemke began by noting a surprising phenomenon: the focus of the meeting was very different from similar meetings which were held right after the Gulf War. Right after the war the three conclusions which were accepted as given were that the Coalition had won the Gulf War; that the Vietnam syndrome was a thing of the past; and that Douhet was right after all about strategic bombing. Today, four years later, each of these conclusions has come under serious doubt.

For the United States, “winning” has traditionally meant something very specific. Experts in international relations may know that the U.S.’ purpose in the Gulf was never to remove Saddam Hussein from power, but the American people do not see it this way. The Arab world does not seem to see it this way either. Saddam claims to have won because he survived and our frustration over his survival has tarnished our sense of victory. Ziemke described the result of the Persian Gulf War as a continuation of a larger pattern which began with the Korean War. Our encounter in the Gulf is another step towards understanding that “winning,” in the traditional sense, may no longer be possible. We did not lose in Vietnam because we were unable to execute military operations — similarly, victory in the Persian Gulf, in the traditional sense, has proven equally elusive.

Her second observation was that the early reports of the death of the “Vietnam syndrome” were greatly exaggerated. The lessons of the Vietnam war led American decision makers to create a restrictive set of conditions regarding the use of American military force. The first of these conditions is that when force is used the objective must be to achieve a quick and decisive victory. The second aspect of the Vietnam syndrome is that military power should always be applied with overwhelming force. Lastly, our sensitivity to casualties is a legacy of the Vietnam war. Despite the initial claims that the Gulf has helped us move beyond Vietnam, each of these maxims, which we developed as a response to Vietnam, guided our efforts in the Gulf and persist with us today.

Finally, at the end of the Gulf War everyone seemed to agree that Douhet had been right about the promise of strategic bombing. Now no one seems prepared to make this claim. Strategic bombing is about destroying a society’s ability to function. A frequent criticism of strategic bombing theory is that it is based on the assumption that other societies have the same vulnerabilities as the advanced industrialized nations. Although there may be targets in advanced industrialized societies which, if destroyed, would disrupt the ability of the society to function, our adversaries are frequently from the third world. Their vulnerabilities may be less susceptible to precision bombing.

Ironically, Ziemke argued, Iraq was the ideal target for strategic bombing. Iraq spent the last two decades trying to imitate the advanced industrialized countries in a way that maximized the disadvantages of advanced industrialized society — for example, centralization — and minimized the advantages — like flexibility. If strategic bombing would ever work against a third world opponent, it should have worked against Iraq.

The last participant in the session, Dr. Thomas Keane of the National War College, is one of the primary authors of the Gulf War Air Power Survey. Keane brought the session to a close by refocusing the discussion on what strategic airpower is, and what it did in the Gulf. According to Keane, the phrase “strategic airpower” is used in so many different ways that it has nearly lost its meaning. Nevertheless, it can have a useful definition. Strategic airpower, argued Keane, is the application of airpower linked directly to achieve

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“The early reports of the death of the ‘Vietnam syndrome’ were greatly exaggerated.”
strategic objectives, not to support other efforts to reach these objectives. Once we settle on a definition we can try to deal with the important questions, for example “can airpower achieve strategic objectives alone or must it support surface forces?”

A review of strategic airpower’s accomplishments and failures during Desert Storm will help us answer this question. In Desert Storm, our main strategic targets were Iraqi electrical power infrastructure, Iraq’s leadership and military command centers, and Iraq’s nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) facilities.

How did airpower do against these targets? Against the electric power infrastructure we did more damage in less time than we expected. Against NBC targets we were less successful than we hoped. Many facilities were moved before the air war began — leaving us to bomb empty buildings. Furthermore there were many NBC targets which we had not even identified before the war. The weak link in our ability to destroy Iraq’s NBC infrastructure was not our ability to hit targets but to find and identify them. Overall, we demonstrated in Desert Storm the ability to destroy targets. The extent to which destroying these targets translated into a significant strategic impact is still unclear.

Summary

Events are difficult to assess in their immediate aftermath. Good historical analysis usually requires the clarity of hindsight and the Gulf War is no exception. As Ziemke observes, many of the lessons which we took from Desert Storm in 1991 are disputed today. With five years hindsight it is now time to reconsider our assessments of what worked and what didn’t in the Gulf.

The Gulf War does appear to offer important insights into the role and effectiveness of airpower. Pape makes a strong case that the Coalition’s attacks on strategic targets in Iraq did not topple the Iraqi regime, or even force Iraq to abandon Kuwait. On the other hand, air strikes on Iraq’s forces in the KTO do appear to have coerced Saddam to agree to withdraw from Kuwait. Coercion with airpower is possible if the attacks alter the military balance on the ground.

Many critical questions about airpower in the Gulf have not yet been answered. As Lewis, Pape and Posen suggest the biggest question to resolve is how we should use our increasingly scarce airpower assets in the next war. In other words, “how should we divide our assets between strategic and battlefield targets?” Even if we accept Pape’s analysis and believe that strategic bombing did not force Iraq to abandon Kuwait this question is still unanswered.

Strategic bombing may not have brought the Gulf War to an end but destroying Iraq’s strategic targets may have had a significant effect on Iraqi military operations. As Hallion suggests, the real value of allocating sorties to destroy facilities deep in Iraq may have been in degrading Iraqi military operations. Lambeth is correct that it is insufficient to conclude that strategic attacks failed to win the war independently; to better allocate our resources next time we must determine the effect of these attacks on Iraqi military effectiveness. That analysis is still unfolding.

An equally important air war took place between the Navy and the Air Force.

“We demonstrated in Desert Storm the ability to destroy targets. The extent to which destroying these targets translated into a significant strategic impact is still unclear.”
When Ted Postol was asked by House Armed Services Committee chairman Les Aspin in early 1991 to testify before his Committee about the lessons for SDI of the Patriot experience in the Gulf War, he had no idea that he was about to become involved in a long and bitter controversy. To his surprise, he soon discovered that the casualties and damage resulting from the Scud attacks seemed inconsistent with the nearly perfect Patriot performance claimed by the U.S. Army. Ultimately, after over a year of detailed analysis, including months spent collecting and analyzing news media videotapes of Patriot-Scud encounters, he reached a conclusion that completely negated all that the U.S. Army and Raytheon had told the American public: rather than a success rate of nearly 100%, Patriot’s success rate was actually almost certainly zero.

Postol was not the only party to be taken by surprise. When officials at Raytheon tried to discredit Postol, when Pentagon officials alleged that he had used classified information in his January 1992 *International Security* article, and when the Defense Investigative Services tried to block him from speaking publicly about Patriot, his adversaries discovered that Ted Postol would neither back down nor allow the truth to be withheld. He went on to publish numerous documents about Patriot’s performance in the Gulf War, including articles in *International Security* and *Science and Global Security* that provided detailed analyses of Patriot’s performance, based in part on the press videotapes of Gulf War Patriot/Scud engagements. He has also given many talks on the subject, with catchy titles such as “Scuds, Lies and Videotape.” His analysis of the Patriot’s performance during the Gulf War has provided the only publicly available detailed analysis of the operational experience of a missile defense in a combat situation.

Patriot was not Postol’s first encounter with controversy. His involvement with security policy issues began, when in 1978, while working as a physicist at Argonne Laboratory, he was one of several independent physicists who were expert witnesses in the *Progressive* magazine court case. This historical first amendment case, the *United States of America vs. the Progressive Magazine*, centered around the *Progressive’s* plans to publish an article that allegedly would describe the operating principle of the hydrogen bomb. The Carter Administration obtained a court order prohibiting the publication of the article. This order remains to this day as the only instance in which a court granted a U.S. government request for prior restraint of a publication.

Postol prepared an affidavit in which he convincingly argued that the information in the article was already in the public domain and that the release of the article represented no threat. The restraint order was ultimately reversed and the article published with no harm to national security. In fact, information released during the case, in large part due to government mistakes, eventually resulted in significant benefits to independent scholarly analysis of public policy issues such as the Limited Test Ban, the Comprehensive Test Ban, and efforts to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1981, Postol co-authored
the book *Born Secret: The H-bomb, the Progressive, and National Security*, which drew heavily from the experience of the *Progressive* case but also reflected more broadly on questions of government misuse of secrecy.

After leaving Argonne, and before taking his current position at MIT, Professor Postol worked as an analyst studying the MX missile at the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, at the Pentagon as an advisor on matters of military technology and policy to the Chief of Naval Operations, and as a Senior Research Associate at Stanford University’s Center for International Security and Arms Control. At the Pentagon, he was the principal advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations on ICBM/SLBM vulnerability, the strategic applications of Navy and Air Force nuclear weapons systems, Soviet and U.S. ballistic missile defense systems, strategic anti-submarine warfare, strategic command, control, and communications, and advanced sensor applications.

Dr. Postol’s other scholarly work has included technical and policy analyses of strategic and tactical missile defenses, the potential effects of superfires from nuclear attacks near urban areas, the possible civilian casualties from nuclear counterforce attacks, nuclear weapons targeting practices, policy and technical questions associated with the possibility of a Nuclear Winter induced by fires following nuclear attacks, Accidental Launch Protection Systems, and Soviet tactical missile threats to NATO.

Dr. Postol’s work is widely known and respected within the scientific and defense policy community. He received the 1995 *Hillard Roderick Prize* in Science, Arms Control, and International Security from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for “outstanding contributions that advance our understanding of issues related to arms control and international security...that have important scientific or technical dimensions.” And earlier, in 1990, Dr. Postol was the recipient of the American Physical Society’s *Leo Szilard Award* for “incisive technical analysis of national security issues that [have] been vital for informing the public policy debate....”

Dr. Postol has been at MIT and the DACS Program since 1989, as Professor of Science, Technology, and National Security Policy. Most recently, his research has focused on the capabilities and implications of advanced theater missile defense (TMD) systems currently under development by the United States. His 1994 *Arms Control Today* article “Highly Capable Theater Missile Defense and the ABM Treaty” written with colleagues Lisbeth Gronlund, George Lewis and David Wright demonstrated that TMD systems currently under development by the United States would have the ability to intercept strategic missiles, and that the deployment of these systems would both violate and seriously undermine the 1972 ABM Treaty. As discussed elsewhere in this issue of *Breakthroughs*, the resulting crippling or destruction of the ABM Treaty could have serious and adverse implications for a wide range of arms control and non-proliferation initiatives.

As the leader of DACS technical working group, Professor Postol has increasingly emphasized international aspects of security policy. He has contributed significantly to the development of the independent, and increasingly influential, Center for Arms Control, Energy, and the Environment at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, by bringing five of its arms control researchers to DACS for visits ranging from a few months up to a year. He has developed strong connections with a number of Israeli researchers, including Reuven Pedatzur, one of his collaborators in the Patriot studies, and Uri Reychav, who is currently a visitor at DACS. Most recently, Professor Postol has begun to emphasize contacts with Chinese scholars. In 1994-95, he hosted a year-long visit to DACS by Dr. Li Bin, a researcher at the Program for Science and National Security Studies at the Institute of Applied and Computational Physics in Beijing. In June 1995, together with George Lewis, he gave a series of five lectures on missile defense related topics at a meeting in Beijing.
By Barry R. Posen

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early 20,000 U.S. soldiers soon will be ensconced in northern Bosnia to support the Dayton peace agreement. Although the mission is under way, debate about its validity continues. Many commentators doubt that the tragedy in Bosnia threatens any vital U.S. interests, or that the United States and its allies have discovered a viable political solution to the war in Bosnia. These doubts are well-founded. What can we do to improve the chances that the next time we face a “Bosnia,” we will be better prepared to assess its relevance to U.S. interests?

A pattern has emerged. Bosnia is the fifth “invitational crisis” in which the United States has agreed to intervene militarily abroad since the end of Operation Desert Storm. The crises have included two armed and one unarmed operation to provide humanitarian assistance: in Kurdistan, Somalia, and Rwanda. They include three armed projects to help rebuild political systems: in the second, nation-building, phase of our operation in Somalia, in Haiti, and now in Bosnia.

Three facts help explain this pattern. The United States is a great military power with an extraordinary, historically unprecedented ability to dispatch forces around the globe. It faces no great-power adversary that could pose serious opposition to its foreign adventures. And it is an open society and policy: It is easy to get the attention of the American people and the American elite. While the United States is not driven to intervene in every crisis abroad, many crises become candidates for U.S. involvement.

Supporters of a particular intervention seek support through selective use of facts, appeals to grand principles, misapplied historical analogies, and moving images of human suffering. They hope to break down opposition through a rhetorical war of attrition. They often succeed. The big policy question is seldom confronted systematically: Is there a compelling national interest for the United States?

Arguments about our becoming involved in Bosnia—or anywhere else—should first be conducted in terms of a national strategy. A grand strategy should take the form of a well-developed argument about what interests in the United States’ interests in the years ahead.

One reason disagreements persist over Bosnia is that at least three grand strategies now vie for preeminence within the foreign-policy elite, both inside and outside academia: isolationism, selective engagement, and collective security. Each strategy provides alternative advice on how to deal with Bosnia and similar crises. But because the United States currently faces no great threat in the world—and is otherwise occupied with weighty domestic matters—it faces no great pressure to begin a public debate and to develop a consensus around one strategy. Nevertheless, the regular appearance of crises in which we’re invited to intervene should encourage us to do so.

Scholars have both a general and specific role to play. We are trained to make and criticize arguments and can hold politicians to a high analytical standard in foreign-policy discussions. The impending presidential campaign provides an ideal vehicle. But more specifically, scholars of foreign policy, international politics, military affairs, and comparative politics, need to assess the basic premises of the alternative strategies more systematically than we have to date.

Selective Engagement, my own preferred strategy, acknowledges that there are few obvious threats to the United States. The oceans retain their traditional utility as barriers to aggression, and U.S. possession of massive and secure retaliatory nuclear forces would make it suicidal for any power to attack us with weapons of mass destruction. Isolationists oppose intervention in Bosnia because they cannot see how events there could affect U.S. security. Polls show us that nearly two-thirds of the public agree.

But the premises of isolationism require more systematic examination. Given the cost of facing down a rival superpower in a hot or cold war, shouldn’t the United States be active enough in international politics to try to reduce the chance that a new superpower might develop? Second, how do we know a prospective superpower adversary when we see one?

The time is ripe to turn what has been a desultory discussion among experts into a full-fledged national debate.”
would include Russia, China, Japan, Germany, France, and Britain. Moreover, although weapons of mass destruction permit the United States to deter direct attacks on itself, other states may be more vulnerable. Intense regional wars, whether fought with conventional, chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, now have an immense potential for destruction. The United States thus should ally itself with other peaceful great powers and oppose ambitious ones.

But those who advocate selective engagement also call for careful consideration of the direct political, military, and financial costs to the United States of any proposed humanitarian mission. Because projects to rebuild failed states seem particularly complex, costly, and open-ended, we view them with great skepticism. Many of us did not oppose the relief operations in Kurdistan, Rwanda, and Somalia. But we were more cautious about our involvement in the second—nation-building—phase in Somalia and in Haiti.

To many who support selective engagement, Bosnia is an important U.S. interest primarily because our European allies are deeply concerned about what’s happening there. The NATO alliance is a key vehicle for preserving peace in Western Eurasia, and most members of NATO view Bosnia as a critical security problem, although the reasons they do (other than proximity) remain disturbingly ambiguous. But our allies’ concern does not predetermine the nature of the solution, which we should consider pragmatically.

Selective engagers have long advocated partitioning Bosnia as a solution to its war, because that promises the greatest political and humanitarian gains at the least cost. Thus, many of us support those aspects of the Dayton accord that divide the real estate in Bosnia among the competing factions, because this can be done at a moderate cost and policed with conventional military power. Those aspects of the accord that call for rebuilding a united Bosnia-Herzegovina, reforming the politics of the country, and returning refugees to their place of origin seem not only costly, but also impractical and capable of sparking a new round of fighting. The Dayton accord does not commit NATO military forces to enforce these provisions, and President Clinton should not succumb to appeals to do so.

That said, however, advocates of selective engagement still could do a better job of examining some of their basic premises. How damaging would a large-scale war, whether fought with conventional or nuclear weapons, really be to those not directly involved? Is the United States actually likely to be drawn into such a war? While we argue about the Bosnians, we haven’t spent enough time asking such questions.

The third strategy, collective security, seems quite close to the views of policy makers in the Clinton Administration. The strategy makes peace—not just among great powers, but farther afield—a central interest for the United States.

Its advocates believe that wars are vortexes that spread trouble in a host of insidious ways. Thus, armed conflicts in places of no direct interest to the United States will draw in more states until they do affect one of our important interests or allies. This argument figured prominently in President Clinton’s speech explaining his policy in Bosnia.

Because most of the great powers in the world are democracies, allied with the United States, collective security seems easier to achieve than ever before. If we and our allies punish military aggression anywhere, all other potential miscreants will take note and fewer wars will break out. This thinking assumes that the policies of even distant states can affect us. Evil ideas, such as extreme nationalism, and evil practices, such as “ethnic cleansing,” will be imitated if they go unpunished. The refugees spawned by war flee to other countries, where they either organize militarily for a forcible return to their homelands or provoke indigenous nationalist reactions that poison the politics of the country of refuge.

Collective-security advocates have favored intervention in most of the conflicts we have seen in the past five years. Bosnia presents a clear national interest, to their way of thinking. They have argued from the outset that the war would spread, possibly as far as Turkey and Greece. They have characterized the war as an act of aggression by Serbia, acting under the influence of its opportunistic nationalist leader, Slobodan Milošević, rather than a war of secession by Bosnian Serbs unwilling to live as a minority in a state they had no role in creating. Advocates of collective security view successful war-crimes trials as an essential element in terminating this war, not just for the sake of future peace in the United States.

Finally, they have opposed partition of Bosnia, partly on the grounds that it would reward the criminal perpetrators of ethnic cleansing, and partly because it would encourage other ambitious nationalist leaders to rip apart their nascent multi-ethnic democracies. Advocates of collective security thus enthusiastically support those provisions of the Dayton accord that endeavor to reassemble Bosnia-Herzegovina as a functioning state. But the premises on which their arguments rest also need much more systematic examination if they are to persuade isolationists or selective engagers.

Do wars simply spread? Why? And how far? Do nationalist leaders imitate each other? Do those contemplating aggression in one part of the world learn lessons from the fate of aggressors elsewhere? Can loose coalitions of democratic states win credibility in a place like Bosnia, and then use it to deter aggression elsewhere?

The likely appearance of a steady stream of crises in the immediate future demands that we put our strategic house in order. Every new crisis will have its political and military risks and costs. Without a clearly delineated strategy, we have no sensible way to determine whether those risks and costs are worth bearing. And our friends and enemies—as well as innocents caught in between—have no way to judge our intentions.

Scholars and policy analysts have produced an inventory of possible grand strategies for the United States, but much work remains to be done. In particular, the basic premises of each grand strategy should be subjected to more-intense scrutiny and analysis. This will give us the means to evaluate more systematically the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy as a guide to U.S. foreign policy. The time is ripe to turn what has been a desultory discussion among experts into a full-handed national debate on what our over-arching strategy should be in the post-Cold War world.

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