

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY, 1945-1999

I. HOW SHOULD THE UNITED STATES SET MILITARY REQUIREMENTS?

By answering 5 sequential questions: (1) What are U.S. national interests? (2) What threats to these interests can we discern? (3) What strategies would best address these threats? (4) What missions must U.S. forces perform to support these strategies? (5) What forces are required to perform these missions?

II. THE NUCLEAR REVOLUTION AND AMERICAN SECURITY

A. The evolution of the U.S. nuclear arsenal (see this outline, page 3).

B. The effects of the nuclear revolution: good or bad? offensive or defensive? Nuclear weapons have five cascading effects:

1. Hydrogen bombs are more powerful by six (6, count them six) orders of magnitude compared to the TNT explosives used in World War II. The atomic bomb = 1,000 increase on TNT; the hydrogen bomb = 1,000 increase on atomic bombs.
2. Due to '1' (the destructiveness of nuclear weapons), the "cost exchange ratio" vastly favors defenders (better termed "retaliators") over attackers seeking to disarm them. Nuclear weapons pack tremendous explosive power in devices that are cheap, light, easily hidden, protected, and delivered; hence destroying them is very hard, protecting and delivering them very easy.
3. Due to '2' (the cost-exchange ratio), a relationship of MAD ("Mutual Assured Destruction") develops between major powers. Both can destroy the other's society even after absorbing an all-out counterforce attack by the other.
4. "Flat of the curve" dynamics. One of MAD's special characteristics is the "flat of the curve": beyond a certain point, the capacity to inflict damage on the other society, or to prevent damage to one's own, is inelastic to the size and capability of one's own force or one's opponent's force. Capabilities are absolute.
5. "Defense-dominance." Some argue that MAD strengthens defender-states and weakens aggressor-states. Are they right?

C. Alternate nuclear doctrines: Countervalue vs. Counterforce strategies. Nuclear weapons present states with two basic nuclear doctrines: counterforce and countervalue.

>> Countervalue: the enemy society is targeted. Political aims are achieved by threatening to punish the adversary by destroying its population and industry.

>> Counterforce: the enemy nuclear forces are targeted. Political aims are achieved by threatening to disarm the adversary--to remove its capacity to inflict punishment on oneself.

Counterforce forces include forces that could preempt the others' nuclear force (e.g., accurate intercontinental missiles) and defenses that could destroy the other's retaliating weapons (e.g., national ballistic missile defenses).

Since forces can be used first or second, we have a crude universe of four possible nuclear capabilities:

1. First-strike countervalue capability: the capacity to launch a first strike that inflicts unacceptable damage on the adversary's society.
This capability is very easy to build, for reasons noted above in Section II B, but is quite useless.
2. Second-strike countervalue capability: the capacity to absorb an all-out counterforce first strike and inflict unacceptable damage on the adversary's society in retaliation.
This capability is easy to build, for reasons noted above in Section II B.
3. First-strike counterforce: the capacity to launch a first strike that removes the adversary's capacity to inflict unacceptable damage on oneself in retaliation.
This capability is very hard or impossible to build, for reasons noted above in Section II B.
4. Second-strike counterforce capability: the capacity to absorb an all-out counterforce first strike and mount a counterforce counterattack that leaves the attacker's forces unable to inflict unacceptable further damage on one's

own society.

This capability is even harder to build than a first-strike counterforce capability.

These four capabilities can be displayed in a 2x2 table:

		Striking what?	
		Values (cities)	Forces
Striking When?	First	#1 First Strike Countervalue Capability	#3 First Strike Counterforce Capability
	Second	#2 Second Strike Countervalue Capability	#4 Second Strike Counterforce Capability

Past debates over US nuclear doctrine have focused on whether the US should be content with capability #2 (second strike countervalue capability) or should also strive for #3 (first strike counterforce capability).

D. QUESTIONS

- Which of these four capabilities should the U.S. maintain against:
 - China?
 - "Rogue states" (now called "states of concern" by the State Dept.) that seek or have weapons of mass destruction (WMD), e.g., North Korea, Iran, and Iraq?
 - Russia?
- Which of these capabilities would be intolerable in the hands of hostile states?

III. SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE: OFFENSE AND PREEMPTION. (PRETTY CRAZY! WHY ADOPTED?)

IV. THE US DEFENSE DEBATE, 1947-1991

- America's prime problem: defending Western Europe from Soviet conquest.
- Three generic strategies: offense v. defense/denial v. deterrence/punishment.
- The "how to defend Europe" debate, 1953-1991: 7 contending strategies:
 - Strategic nuclear countervalue: threaten to punish Soviets by blasting their cities if they invade.
 - Strategic nuclear counterforce: threaten to disarm & conquer Soviets if they invade.
 - Theater nuclear denial: threaten to incinerate invading Soviet armies.
 - Conventional denial: thwart invading Soviet armies with conventional forces.
 - Conventional offense: seize Soviet territory if they invade.
 - German nuclear deterrent: let Germans threaten to blast Soviet cities.
 - Tripwire strategy: spring-load a European war to make it uncontrollable. US goal: Conventional war ---> theater nuclear war ---> general thermonuclear war.
- The Third World intervention debate (The "how to contain" debate recast).
- The military balance debate. How strong was the USSR?
- The burden shares debate: did US allies do their share?

V. US DECLARATORY POLICY, 1947-1991. During the era from Truman to Reagan we see a general drift from offense to less offense, and from nuclear reliance to conventional emphasis. The US finally settles on Strategy #C7, Tripwire. (The US public never understood this.)

VI. KEY ISSUES TODAY

- How much counterforce toward China, Russia and rogues?
How much conventional offence toward rogues?
How to posture US forces for humanitarian interventions? Specifically, how to limit U.S. casualties? How to speed deployments?

U.S. COLD WAR DECLARATORY DEFENSE POLICIES:
STRATEGY SUMMARY

	Strategic Nuclear Counterforce?	TNF re- liance?	Conventional Offense? ¹	Conventional Defense?	Direct US Intervention in 3rd World?	Mobiliza- tion?	Cost?
Early Truman (1945-49):	No--Soviets have no strat force to hit	No	No	No	No	Yes	Small: \$
Late Truman (NSC-68):	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Huge: \$\$\$\$
Ike "New Look" (1954-56):	Double Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Lots: \$\$\$
Ike "New New Look" (1956-61):	Yes, but less than with "New Look"	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Lots: \$\$\$
JFK/LBJ "Flexible Response" (1961-69):	Yes, but less than Ike	No	No	Yes	Yes, with counter- insurgency added	No	Lots: \$\$\$
Nixon/Carter "Nixon Doctrine" (1969-81):	Yes, but less than Ike	No	No	Yes	No	No	Some: \$\$
Reagan/ Bush (1981-89):	Yes: more than Car- ter, less than Ike	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some	Lots: \$\$\$

US Nuclear Weapons Inventory:

1945: 2
1946: 9
1947: 13
1948: 50
1950: At least 292
1953: 1500
1959: 6000
1991: 18000

Sources for 1945-1950: David Alan Rosenberg, "U.S. Nuclear Sockpile, 1945 to 1950," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, May 1982, pp. 25-30. Sources for 1953-1959: Stephen Ambrose, Eisenhower, Vol. 2, p. 494. Source for 1991: Kurt Campbell, Ashton Carter, Steven Miller & Charles Zraket, Soviet Nuclear Fission, p. 22.

Soviet Nuclear Weapons Inventory:

First a-bomb in 1949; first fusion device (proto-H-bomb) in 1953; first H-bomb in 1955; 27,000 nuclear weapons in the Soviet inventory in 1991.
Source for 1953 & 1955: John Holdren, "The Dynamics of the Nuclear Arms Race," in Avner Cohen and Steven Lee, Nuclear Weapons and the Future of Humanity, p. 45. Source for 1991 inventory: Campbell, Carter, Miller & Zraket, Soviet Nuclear Fission, p. 15.

¹ This column indicates whether standing conventional forces capable of offensive action are to be maintained. Both Truman and Eisenhower administrations planned to invade the Eastern bloc after mounting a strategic nuclear campaign, and after mobilizing a ground force.