



Nonoffensive Defense and the Transformation of US Defense Posture: Is Nonoffensive Defense Compatible with Global Power?

Project on Defense Alternatives
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A. Introduction

The attempt to apply nonoffensive defense (NOD) principles in a reformulation of US defense policy raises some difficult and interesting issues relevant to the general effort to adapt NOD to post-Cold War and non-

European circumstances. These issues relate to the superpower status of the United States, which has since the 1950s viewed all the world's regions as within its sphere of interest and influence. In its definition of foreign and military policy objectives the United States stands apart from those nations where NOD has managed to sink some deep roots. NOD thinking has been most influential in nations where the pre-existing military policy consensus centered on a need to deter and defend against large-scale border threats. Even the pan-European renaissance of NOD thinking in the 1980s concerned a regional confrontation that closely resembled a simple national border confrontation writ large. In these cases NOD has prescribed the defensive restructuring of armed forces already having the strategic objective of defending either a home border or an alliance boundary contiguous with a home border. Hence, the policy goal of NOD advocates in these circumstances could be stated thus: to bring military policy into unambiguous alignment with national strategic policy. In the United States, by contrast, the mainstream strategic policy consensus has centered for more than four decades on open-ended global objectives--the worldwide defense or expansion of democracy and open markets, and the containment and rollback of communism. Of course, many nations espouse sweeping, ambitious goals, but few can realistically pursue them in the military dimension--and in recent years only one has been trying: the United States.

In the United States there is an acute tension, at least at first contact, between the country's pre-existing strategic inclination and NOD-inspired platforms. Those in the United States who work within the NOD paradigm are, therefore, drawn to either challenge the nation's prevailing strategic consensus, or to rethink the Euro-centric historical practice of NOD, or both. Of course, the passing of the Cold War order has changed fundamentally the context of NOD efforts everywhere. Even when contemplating purely national solutions, NOD thinkers are compelled to consider the reality of and prospects for new international configurations, arrangements, and institutions. We can no longer assume the strategic limits set by the Cold War. Not even in Europe, where NOD originated, and certainly not in Eastern Europe, will yesterday's models suffice¹. The disintegration of the Cold War order is pushing our thinking beyond nation-state boundaries toward a contemplation of security policy transformation on a world scale. The examination of the US case can serve as a first encounter with the limits and challenges of a global process of defensive restructuring.

B. Applying NOD Concepts in a Revision of US Military Policy

1. First Thoughts on Global Power

The question that serves as the title of this paper--Is NOD compatible with global power?--may seem to have an obvious answer: No. Inherent to global military power is the ability to project armed forces over great distances across state borders, which *prima facie* seems to violate a central NOD tenet. Although 'global military power' need not serve the type of objectives pursued by, say, a Genghis Khan, Napoleon, or Hitler--it does imply, at the least, exclusive prerogatives for the nations that possess it. Whether a nation-state *qua* global power assumes the role of imperialist, hegemon, manager, or only arbitrator; whether it acts to dominate, constrain, moderate, or only balance the behaviour of other states, it will give rise in some quarters to counter-balancing efforts. This implies that the only stable and stabilizing form of global power is that constituted globally on the basis of a substantial global consensus and under the auspices of some global cooperative security arrangement or agency.

From this perspective it appears that the divestiture of superpower status should be the first and most important plank of a NOD platform for any individual nation *qua* superpower. The corresponding change in military policy is simple and straight-forward: (i) elimination of most power projection capabilities and (ii) reduction in the size of national armed forces to the level required to ensure national defense narrowly defined. This guideline would probably entail reducing US armed forces to less than one-third their Cold

War size. Within this directive, which excludes all but strictly reactive-defensive goals, the standard NOD guideline would apply: armed forces should be structured to attain defensive goals by defensive means.

Practically, this rather literal approach would initially narrow the field of application for NOD concepts within superpower policy--the first order of business being a process of subtraction or dismemberment. Politically, this approach would make the marginalization of NOD efforts within superpower states a likely outcome--far more likely than within states without superpower pretensions².

2. Second Thoughts on Global Power

The lock-step logic of our first thoughts betray their failure to take current geostrategic realities into account. An attractive feature of the NOD paradigm is that it permits individual nations to take steps that simultaneously improve national security *and* international stability *without assuming any changes on the part of other states*. It is hard to imagine, however, that the changes in US posture ventilated in the previous section would not prove remarkably destabilizing *unless accompanied by significant changes in the policy and behaviour of many other states*.

The postures of nations formally or informally allied or cooperating with the United States presume US global power. In regions where the United States has developed a significant presence during the Cold War period, adversarial armed forces have developed correspondingly. Any unconditional withdrawal of US power would alter regional balances dramatically. Of course, America's regional allies could try to fill the gap created by US withdrawal through a corresponding program of military augmentation. Whether this would have a re-stabilizing effect or not depends on how it is perceived on the other side of regional political-military divides. And we can safely assume that should America divest itself of its global role its allies would not be alone in feeling apprehensive. Some adversaries or potential adversaries would also have second thoughts. This, because superpowers act not only to support their friends, but also to restrain them. The retraction of Soviet global power provides a relevant lesson: the weakening of Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf during the late-Gorbachev period probably contributed to Iraq's 1990 decision to invade Kuwait.

A better alternative to any precipitous or unilateral change in US global posture would be a gradual, multi-faceted, multi-lateral process of US withdrawal and regional armed forces 're-balancing' and 'defensive restructuring.' Such a process would not be easy to negotiate or keep on track--especially difficult to implement would be the provisions for 're-balancing,' which would seek to ameliorate any gross regional power asymmetries. At any rate, the essential point we are arguing holds: without some complementary steps a US global 'stand down' would have a destabilizing effect. Hence, prescribing it would be irresponsible, unless made contingent on a broader process of global transformation. *Within such a process, the defensive reorientation of US global power--as distinct from a simple retraction of US global power--would be meaningful and necessary.*

The final sections of this paper will review some worthwhile proposals for the 'defensive reorientation' of US global military policy and will suggest broader measures of global transformation that are prerequisites for the 'normalization' of America's role in the world. First, however, we review some general issues and propositions regarding NOD and global power relevant to the US case and the global application of NOD generally.

C. NOD as a Design Principle for Global System Transformation

1. The National Application of NOD Is Not Enough

The implementation of nonoffensive defense on a national basis or even multinational basis is not sufficient to guarantee military stability in all cases of interstate opposition. Some of the limitations of national applications of NOD become clear when we consider multi-lateral confrontations and confrontations between nations or alliances of grossly asymmetrical military potential. In shorthand we can refer to the first of these scenarios as illustrating the *n-nation problem*; the second illustrates the problem of *gross asymmetry*.

First, let us consider these problems apart from the issue of how a transition to nonoffensive defense might affect them. The stability problems that arise in cases where two adversarial states are seriously mismatched in terms of military strength ---say, a theatre-level imbalance of 5:1 or more---are self-evident. The *n-state problem* is more complex: in any system of more than two states, an independent effort by each state to balance against all the others produces an endless upward spiral of military competition and development. Unlike the case of only two states in military competition, the *n-state* case has no theoretical equilibrium point.

Defensive restructuring can ameliorate both of these problems. In some cases it can resolve them. Positive effects result even when only one of the contestants in an adversarial relationship chooses to restructure along nonoffensive lines--and the benefit of increased security accrues not only to the restructuring state, but also to its adversary. Bi-lateral or multilateral defensive restructuring substantially adds to the number of potential cases resolved. NOD is beneficial because it prescribes and enables non-symmetrical responses to an adversary's military modernization efforts--that is, a non-offensive and non-threatening response to offensively-oriented modernization initiatives. Because a well-conceived defensive-defense array can absorb more of an adversary's offensive power than can an offensive-defense array, the defensive-defense approach has a levelling effect. Because it achieves this without an expansion of offensive power or threat, it is also stabilizing.

Unfortunately, the advantage of NOD is not such that it can resolve all instances of the two problems under consideration. The assertion that NOD cannot redress all cases of serious bilateral imbalance when only the weaker contestant restructures is noncontroversial: some imbalances are simply too great to absorb. No amount of defensive restructuring on the part of Estonia, for instance, would give it a robust defense against a determined Russian incursion³.

What about cases in which both or all powers choose to defensively restructure their armed forces? In some of these cases the problems mentioned above may persist at a reduced level because no practical NOD model completely eschews offensive power. Defensively-oriented armed forces retain offensive capability at the tactical level. This capability could be employed in tactical-level cross-border attacks, although the attempt would be very risky and inefficient. Nonetheless, in situations where two nations of greatly unequal capability face each other or where several nations combine against a loner, defensive restructuring may leave enough residual offensive capability to enable successful aggression--especially if the goal of the aggression is limited.

The fact that there are some limits to the stability benefits that nations can gain through defensive restructuring is certainly not a reason to forego NOD. The relevant point is that regardless of defensive restructuring, many nations may still need and seek additional means of resolving the problems of *n-state* configurations and gross military asymmetry. Three solutions of varying value readily offer themselves: First, nations can combine in counter-balancing alliances or blocs. Of course, there is no guarantee that a bipolar alliance system will achieve equilibrium. When it does, it usually does so at the risk of tempting regional or global holocaust. Nonetheless, equilibrium is theoretically possible within such a system--although it cannot be other than fragile unless based on NOD.

A second means of resolving the problems of *n-state* configurations and gross asymmetry is the establishment of a collective security arrangement whereby all nations agree to combine against any aggressor. This arrangement could be organized on either a regional or global basis. However, the recent

history of European policy toward the wars in the former Yugoslav republics suggest that efficacy requires political distance between the 'centre of gravity' of any collective security arrangement and particular sites of intervention. Otherwise, differences in nation-state perceptions of interest regarding particular conflicts critically impedes the functioning of the system. The requirement for 'political distance' can best be met by organizing on a global basis.

A third option is to constitute and support a global agency to aid nations threatened with aggression. To be effective such an agency must have at its disposal sufficient means to 'tip the balance' to the advantage of the defender in most conflict scenarios or, at least, 'even the balance.'

The three potential solutions appear in the order of their desirability and in reverse order of their practicability. A global agency with standing capabilities is preferable because it would (i) facilitate timely response, (ii) be more likely to treat all cases equally, at least theoretically, and (iii) serve to separate the conduct of any particular operation from the rendering of national support to the agency (which should occur on a routine basis). These characteristics make for a credible and capable agent, and thus enhance both deterrence and reassurance.

The political and practical problems of creating a global defense force have been well catalogued and endlessly recounted in recent discussions of the United Nation's potential as a global military-security institution. Especially daunting is the prospect of fielding a global force sufficient to 'tip the balance' in most of the world's likely conflict scenarios. By some measures meeting this criteria could require a contingency force of several hundred thousand personnel and a support base at least 40 percent as large again.

A combination of the second and third option could bring the requirements within reach while preserving many of the benefits of having a global agent. *The requirements are further reduced if these steps are considered as supplements to a global process of defensive restructuring*--in which global agents and collective security arrangements would serve to resolve residual imbalances. Thus, the combination of three options--global defensive restructuring, global/regional collective security arrangements, and a small global defense force--constitutes a proximate, stability-oriented solution to the problems of *n*-state configurations and gross asymmetry.

2. Does Global Power Imply 'Offensive Power?'

The heart of global military capability is long-distance power projection. As noted above, a defining characteristic of national NOD models is the structural limitation on cross-border military action. Does the prescription for such limits put NOD at variance with the concept of global military action? The 'first thoughts' section of this paper noted an apparent incongruity. On closer examination the relationship between NOD and the concept of global power proves to be more complex.

The real point of NOD injunctions regarding the scope of military action is the prevention of cross-border offensives. Offensives on one's own territory--or more accurately, counteroffensives--are permitted. How to separate structurally the one capability from the other defines the 'design problem' which uniquely occupies NOD thinkers. Of course, defensive action on one's own territory is noncontroversial, and such action includes battlefield preparation, routine reconnaissance, counter-mobility efforts, and the use of defensive fires on a small-scale. Consideration of 'cross-border defensive action' completes this matrix, although this concept seems to lack a strong real-world referent, at least at first glance. However, there is another connotation that is both meaningful and important: the cross-border projection of an armed force lacking the capability for offensive action even on the tactical level, with the aim of supporting a second party threatened with aggression by a third.

Using the 'spider-in-its-web' NOD model for reference, we can further specify this concept. The 'spider-in-its-web,' which is the most sophisticated and practicable of current NOD designs, divides the defense array into spider and web components⁴. Area-covering web units serve to (i) locate and impede an invader and

(ii) support and provide cover for the friendly spider units, which are the main repositories of tactical offensive strength. The spiders serve to (i) disable, destroy, and eject an intruder and (ii) protect web units in a pinch. The synergy of the elements allows for a reliable, efficient, and effective defense employing a relatively small portion of offensive 'shock' units--in land warfare, heavy armour and mechanized units. The offensive capability of the spiders falls off dramatically should they leave the protective area-covering web; hence, the web serves to contain offensive power.

The 'web' part of the system can be further divided into relatively static and relatively mobile subcomponents. The static subcomponents comprise the nodes of sensor, communication, and logistics systems as well as some major field preparations--all deeply rooted to home territory. The relatively more mobile component of the web comprises relatively-light, dispersed, area-covering forces: various mixes of light motorized infantry, light mechanized infantry, light cavalry, combat engineer, and artillery and missile units. These are designed to articulate closely with the static component.

In some iterations of the 'spider-in-its-web' model provisions are made for centrally pooling some of the tactically mobile subcomponents of the web and giving these a capacity to rapidly deploy across the national territory to 'thicken' local portions of the web as needed. Their lightness makes rapid deployment of these units practical. However, should they be isolated from their logistics and communication support nets and from cooperating spider units these elements would have minimal offensive strength--even of a tactical variety; they are designed to plug into, draw sustenance from, and augment a broader system. This configuration of operationally mobile military units reflects a design concept that Lutz Unterseher, author of the 'spider-in-its-web' concept, describes as 'the separation of operational/strategic mobility from tactical offensive capability.'

There is nothing that necessarily limits the use of these operationally mobile units to the web system in the nation of their origin. They could be integrated with another nation's web system as long as provisions are made for cooperation and interoperability. Hence, these units could serve as the heart of a defensively-oriented, strategically-mobile rapid deployment force--one that could be culled as needed from national militaries or put permanently at the disposal of a regional or global agency. Clearly, intervention by such a force in a foreign conflict could not occur without the consent of the host nation. And once the force had deployed it would be dependent on the host's web and spider units.

This vision of a defensively-oriented rapid deployment force can serve a touchstone in the effort to refashion US power projection capabilities--although the pace and extent of conversion along these lines would depend on developments partially outside US control. A subsequent section of this paper examines an interim step for the United States: the optimization of US intervention capabilities for the mission of 'defensive support.'

3. Is There a Positive Role for Offensive Power in a New World Order?

NOD thinkers usually confront this question when considering a defender's need to disable and eject an aggressor from home territory. Effective NOD models incorporate a relatively small element of offensive power for this purpose, as noted above, but they seek to structurally contain or contextualize it, so as to render it non-provocative. A more difficult discussion involves the requirements of removing an invader who has succeeded in overwhelming and displacing a defender's military array. Of course, NOD designs strive to reduce as much as possible the likelihood of this outcome, and they are more successful in the effort than their offensive-defense competitors⁵. Still, this cannot completely foreclose the possibility of catastrophic defeat--what might be called the 'Kuwait scenario.'⁶

An entirely nonoffensive response to the 'Kuwait scenario' might involve (i) diplomatic and nonmilitary measures, such as quarantine and embargo, to force an eventual return to the *status quo ante bellum*, (ii) bolstered by a nonoffensive military shield to limit the retaliatory options of the aggressor. To be effective and convincing (in the sense of contributing to both deterrence and reassurance) this option requires

improvements in the practice of quarantine and embargo. As it stands, the Persian Gulf experience suggests that in some cases it might take years to elicit the desired behaviour by these means. Even less encouraging has been the practice in the Balkan crisis, although in this case the problem is largely political.

A variation on the concept of 'pooling' may permit an interim solution that (i) relies on offensive power to reverse acts of conquest but (ii) averts the destabilizing effects of the current emphasis in military policy on offense-capable armed forces. Defensively-oriented nations could make arrangements to pool and reconstitute some of their 'spider' and other units in a fairly large offense-capable force. The pooling of air power assets is an especially promising way to selectively reconstitute some operationally offensive power using national elements that do not individually possess such a capability. However, such a capability might require command and control, communications, reconnaissance and surveillance, and target acquisition systems of types that would not exist in defensively-oriented militaries. Likewise regarding land systems, the need for operationally mobile communications and logistics nets constitutes a special problem; so would the need for a very substantial strategic lift capability. These would not otherwise exist in defensively-oriented national military arrays--and for good reason: they could give individual nations some capacity to reconstitute offensive power on a national basis. One solution would be to keep some of these vital elements of an offensive power projection force under the control of a global agency. Thus, this agency would provide a core around which national contributions could cluster to form a strategically mobile force capable of wresting back captured territory from an aggressor.

This discussion has so far assumed that a nation abutting the victim of aggression would provide a reception and assembly area for a global/multinational 'counter aggression' force. Not all cases will conform to this assumption. In such cases, counter-aggressive military action will hinge on a capacity to seize and secure an enclave within the occupied nation to serve as a landing and assembly site for the counter-aggression force. Such capacity resides in airborne, amphibious assault, and elite commando units and also depends heavily on long-range air and naval forces. These types of units and forces are the key to major offensive action over great distances. Hence, the goals of reassurance and stability requires that no single nation or small group of nations monopolize these means or possess them in great quantity: ideally, they should be dispersed with some significant portion residing at the global level².

The previous discussion suggests some of the contours of a global NOD system. Its principal elements are: (i) most of the world's national armed forces restructured along NOD lines, (ii) provisions for regional and sub-regional cooperation among these nations based on rapidly-deployable units designed solely for tactical defensive action, (iii) provision for global defensive military action based on the pooling of these units and the addition of others residing on the global level, and (iv) some provisions for global offensive action based on an essential 'core' of units controlled by a global agency supplemented by other essential units drawn from individual nations (or, possibly, regional agencies).

This picture is meant to suggest the type and extent of global military power that the goal of stability may require in the near term, and it can serve as a yardstick for judging possible transitional steps between today's arrangements and future ones. The picture does not, however, provide an exhaustive inventory of the global and regional institutions and arrangements the world needs to ensure stability. Nonmilitary means, for example, are entirely excluded. Indeed, not even all the necessary military elements have been reviewed: naval power, for instance, is given short shrift. Still, enough has been said to provide a basis for assessing from the perspective of stability requirements proposed changes in US military policy.

D. The Transformation of US Power

The following guidelines constitute the essential elements of a post-Cold War program of security policy transformation for the United States:

- Consistent with the goals of cooperative security, the United States should:
 - strive to pursue its military-security objectives through cooperative, multinational arrangements,
 - strive to gradually increase the scope of security cooperation and burden-sharing,
 - support the evolution of effective, inclusive global and regional security institutions and regimes,
 - favor gradually transferring the operational responsibility for global security initiatives to these bodies commensurate with their level of development.
- In accord with a defensive-reorientation of military policy, the United States should:
 - restrict the exercise of its military power to counter-aggressive action, narrowly defined, thus precluding acts of preemption and coercive 'diplomacy,'
 - develop and increasingly emphasize the use of defensive means in counter-aggressive action,
 - support a progressive, consensual tightening of restrictions on strategic warfare--that is, 'nation-busting' strategies and weapons of all sorts: nuclear, chemical, biological, informational, and long-range precision conventional,
 - support through its alliance, military assistance, and arms control policies a process of global defensive restructuring--especially in troubled regions--whereby national capacities for cross-border offensive military operations would be structurally constrained.
- In accord with the goal of reducing the role of force in the settlement of international disputes the United States should seek to:
 - develop, improve, and increasingly emphasize nonmilitary means of conflict containment and resolution,
 - seek to gradually shift the focus of global security efforts from measures of *post hoc* crisis response to measures of conflict prevention, mediation, and arbitration.
- In accord with a principle of sufficiency the United States should reduce the size of its armed forces and their readiness levels commensurate with (i) the post-Cold War decline in levels of threat and (ii) the development of cooperative and nonmilitary means of achieving its security objectives.

Several of these guidelines involve something other than an application of NOD principles. They are presented here as part of an integrated alternative security program for the United States. In the case of US policy change, progress toward defensive reorientation and the normalization of America's role in the world depends on progress in implementing other planks of the program--if global stability is to be maintained. Progress in the defensive restructuring of US power projection capabilities is pegged, to some extent, to progress in global defensive restructuring. This is because, as noted in the previous section, the efficacy of a purely defensive power projection force depends on the presence of a well-developed NOD array in the receiving or host nation. Likewise, the provisions for transferring global responsibilities to cooperative arrangements and agencies, which entails a substantial remission in US global military power, presumes the maturation of those arrangements and agencies.

In the next sections we will examine some options for the near-term defensive reorientation of US policy--specifically, policy on regional military intervention and on arms transfers. Notably, the steps we suggest in these sections *do not* have as their perquisites substantial progress in a global process of defensive restructuring or the existence of a mature global military security agency. In most cases the United States

could undertake immediate reform along the proposed lines without endangering either its own security or that of its allies.

1. The Defensive Reorientation of US Power Projection Plans and Capabilities

Much of current Pentagon force planning shares the premise that the challenges of the post-Soviet era require the United States to substantially improve on the military capability demonstrated in the 1990 Gulf War⁸. The touchstone documents remain the US Joint Chiefs of Staff's 1992 *National Military Strategy* and *Defense Planning Guidance* (DPG) study, which together define the themes that still dominate the defense policy debate⁹. Among these themes is the idea that the United States needs the capability to conduct two major regional conflicts (MRCs) anywhere in the world, each at a pace much quicker than Operation Desert Storm (ODS), and possibly without any but local allies.

The 1992 DPG posits the goal of prosecuting a Southwest Asia war in 100 days--from deployment decision to victory. In the DPG a war on the Korean peninsula requires five months; overlapping wars on the Korean and Arabian peninsulas require eight. Operation Desert Storm, by contrast, required about six months from mobilization to cease fire.

These studies and guidance documents project a vision of future regional war-fighting that is very different from the reality of Operation Desert Storm (ODS). Whereas ODS had distinct defensive and offensive phases separated by months, future intervention will compress these phases into a seamless operation that moves as quickly as possible from mobilization decision to decisive victory. The documents treat the capacity for this type of intervention as a *baseline* US military requirement, suggesting that a week's delay in deployment or an extra month spent in defensive operations could have catastrophic consequences. Ultimately, this view discounts America's freedom of action in the post-Soviet era and understates its profound strategic advantage over regional powers such as Iraq. The rush to large-scale offensive action, including early commencement of strategic air attacks on an adversary's political-military and industrial infrastructure, is intended to guarantee a short war. Unfortunately, the great demands this approach places on strategic lift and C3I capabilities may actually impede initial defensive operations. Moreover, it will certainly narrow the time window for diplomatic intervention.

A more realistic, stability-oriented alternative would seek to:

1. *Narrow the scope of potential large-scale US action:* There are only a few areas of the world in which long-standing US commitments, potential threats, and the needs of local allies might converge to prompt an ODS-scale US intervention: Europe, the Persian Gulf, and Northeast Asia. US military planning should prioritize these areas, pegging force planning to the goal of correcting near-term shortfalls in allied capabilities so as to strengthen deterrence and ensure a robust defense, should deterrence fail. A focus on supplementing allied capabilities in Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf could be called 'Core Area Coalition Defence.' With regard to these areas, US planning would assume a coalition effort involving only local allies--although the United States should also seek to expand the formal roster of cooperating powers. Outside of these core areas, US military interventions should occur only as part of a broad, balanced multinational effort under the auspices of global and/or regional agencies.
2. *Emphasize distinct defensive and offensive phases in the conduct of counter-aggressive action:* Contrary to current planning, the US should retain and further refine the concept of distinct defensive and offensive phases in regional interventions separated by a pause in operations, and it should focus force planning on the requirements of rapidly deploying and erecting a robust *defensive shield*. Not only is this approach more affordable and realistic than existing plans--thus contributing to the credibility of the deterrent--it would reassure those nations worried about

misuses of US power--a group that includes some of America's allies. An approach that emphasizes an initial defensive phase in counter-aggressive actions could serve to reinforce diplomatic initiatives and give them more time to work. It is also consistent with the use of sanctions as a coercive instrument and alternative to offensive military action. Of course, the approach does not preclude an eventual transition to (counter)offensive action. Flexibility is one of the attractive features of this approach, setting it apart from the Pentagon's plans for a rush to offensive operations. Among the implications for force structure of this guideline and the preceding one are (i) a greater emphasis than currently planned on the land-based prepositioning of war stocks, (ii) reductions in the number of active-duty personnel, (iii) a greater emphasis on reserve-component personnel, and (iv) a curtailment of plans for strategic lift capability modernization and augmentation.

3. *De-emphasize air attacks on strategic targets in regional conflicts--especially industrial and political leadership targets:* The present USAF emphasis on strategic attack in air war cannot be justified on military grounds. Its overall effect is destabilizing in several ways and it incurs political and moral costs that outweigh any military benefit. The United States should redefine the role of air power as a defensive instrument, placing primary emphasis on the missions of air defense, battlefield interdiction, and close-air support. The official *Gulf War Air Power Survey* (GWAPS) found the Gulf War air campaign to be quite successful in destroying deep targets of some types--for instance, command posts, industrial facilities, logistics dumps, aircraft shelters, and elements of the Iraqi air defense system; it was much less successful in destroying other categories of targets--for instance, nuclear-chemical-biological (NBC) production and storage facilities. In judging success, the GWAPS drew a distinction between 'destruction of aim points' and 'military significance,' concluding that the real battlefield effect of the strategic campaign was less impressive than its tactical success might suggest. Moreover, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that operations against some important targets--mobile SCUD launchers and the Republican Guard, for instance--were under-resourced because they did not conform sufficiently to the USAF vision of air war¹⁰.

To question the immediate military significance of the strategic campaign, however, is not to deny that it had a profound effect on Iraqi society. After the war, a team of investigators from the Harvard School of Public Health estimated 70,000-90,000 postwar civilian deaths, mostly children, due principally to the lack of electricity for water purification and sewage treatment. Even if this figure exaggerates reality by a factor of ten, the outcome would still be of a type and magnitude that can contribute to hatred and instability for a generation. The vulnerability of developing societies to precision-conventional strategic attack contributes in many cases to the felt need for countervailing capabilities. Unfortunately, one likely candidate is weapons of mass destruction, which are relatively cheap, easy to use, and increasingly available. When we consider other lessons of the air war, the potential for a dangerously destabilizing dynamic becomes clear. First, the Gulf War illustrates the difficulty of interdicting mobile launchers or comprehensively destroying NBC production and storage sites. Second, attacks on leadership and C3I targets--which seek to isolate military from political leaders, and central from field commanders--can also increase the likelihood of inadvertent NBC weapon use. Third, strategic attack undertaken early in a campaign--as current doctrine dictates--can weaken intra-war deterrence. Although Iraq did not resort to NBC weapons in the Gulf War, attacks on Baghdad and other cities left Iraq with little reason to exercise restraint. Its efforts at strategic retaliation included SCUD attacks on Israel, the use of oil as an eco-weapon, and the mass destruction of Kuwaiti oil wells. Thus, a continuing emphasis on strategic air warfare could easily contribute to an increased probability of NBC weapon use in regional conflicts. Among the implications for force structure and weapon mix of the guideline proposed above are (i) a reduced requirement for stealth aircraft, (ii) a reduced requirement for

long-range precision-attack missiles, (iii) a reduced requirement for long-range medium fighter/bombers, and (iv) a reduced requirement for 'deep looking' target acquisition systems.

4. *Gradually redefine the mission of US power projection forces to reflect a goal of 'defensive support,' and restructure these forces accordingly.* Although the United States has a positive role to play in ensuring regional stability, the end of East-West superpower conflict means that regional allies can confidently assume a bigger share of the burden of their own national defense. Whereas today the US virtually leads defense efforts in several regions, tomorrow it can safely assume a supporting role. This transformation of US capabilities should serve to ease any concerns about US global objectives, reduce the impetus for 'counter-balancing' behaviour on the part of other states, and contribute to a spirit of cooperation and equality among nations. The defensive support mission requires (i) units capable of rapidly reinforcing the defensive capability of nations threatened by aggression and (ii) units that can *supplement* the counterattack capability of those nations. The United States could quickly bolster a nation's defensive capabilities by deploying reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition assets; artillery units (especially MLRS); equipment for rapid mine emplacement; short and medium-range air defense units (especially Patriot and Avenger); airmobile infantry with a strong antitank component; close-air-support, battlefield-interdiction, and interceptor aircraft; and light infantry to provide security for combat support units. To *supplement* the counterattack capabilities of nations facing outside aggression, a force comprising a mix of light, medium, and heavy mechanized units should be used. Reasons of cost and the need for rapid deployment argue against relying solely on typical heavy manoeuvre units. The medium units could be built around a mobile armoured antitank gun system, antitank guided missile systems, and laser-designating systems to guide artillery and aircraft fire. Although lacking the self-contained combat power of heavier units, these units would have the advantage of strategic mobility and would be quite effective as a supplementary force if adequately supported by artillery and air power. The air force component of a defensive-support force should comprise close-air-support, battlefield interdiction, and interceptor aircraft, and *not* longer-range stealth fighter-bombers. The pace of the proposed transformation of US power projection capabilities depends on regional developments: for instance, the relative strength of allies and the success of arms and conflict reduction efforts. However, in two regions of core concern to the United States--Europe and Northeast Asia--significant steps toward redefining America's mission are already possible¹¹. Looking further into the future, progress in a global process of defensive restructuring will permit a more comprehensive transformation of US power projection capabilities along the lines explored earlier in this paper.

2. Defensive Reorientation of Military Assistance Programs

The experience of the past few years has dispelled the hope that the Gulf War would catalyze effective action to constrain the global arms trade--at least so far as most types of conventional weapons are concerned. Among the factors confounding such efforts are (i) domestic economic incentives for the trade, (ii) the difficulty of controlling a system comprising multiple, motivated buyers and sellers, and (iii) the growth potential of indigenous arms production. Also serious is the fear that stopping the trade completely and abruptly would not guarantee greater military stability; indeed, it could reinforce existing imbalances and exacerbate instability¹². Many regional powers are dissatisfied with existing strategic balances, and they see continued weapon procurement as a means for redressing the perceived asymmetries. Even if practicable, a total ban on transfers would leave some nations feeling put at a disadvantage. This could prompt new patterns of trade and production or even new strategic alignments.

As the undisputed leading exporter of conventional weaponry, the United States can and should play a leading role in breaking the current impasse. It can help resolve the range of problems outlined above by

supporting a defensive reorientation of the arms trade--a regime among leading exporters that prohibits or strictly limits the transfer of those weapon systems most vital to offensive operations¹³.

Such a regime would require:

1. cooperation among several of major exporting countries (US, Russia, France, UK, China, and Germany) in
2. identifying two classes of weapons--offensively- and defensively-oriented,
3. prohibiting or sharply curtailing the trade in offensively-oriented systems,
4. permitting or subsidizing transfers of systems in the defensive category,
5. coordinating other military assistance efforts to support the defensive restructuring of the armed forces of recipient nations, and
6. making access to transfers contingent on agreement to abstain from procuring proscribed weapon types from other sources, foreign or domestic.

If fully implemented such a regime would effect a gradual defensive restructuring of armed forces throughout its area of application. Stability would improve as offensive military potentials atrophied and defensive potentials increased. Enhanced military stability would facilitate an improvement in interstate relations and, thus, lay the groundwork for more thorough measures of arms control and reduction. In addition, this regime would replace a potentially destabilizing competition among major exporters with cooperation.

This approach has several practical advantages over approaches that seek to abolish the arms trade in the near-term. First, it would ease domestic economic opposition to arms trade constraints. Second, it would mitigate the concerns of both exporters and importers about security and stability. Third, it would not require agreement among all producers in order to achieve a system-wide effect on the pattern of transfers. Finally, it would affect not only imports but also import substitution--that is, indigenous production.

The selective weapons controls mandated by the treaty on conventional forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), which are meant to especially restrict capabilities for surprise and large-scale attack, provide both a precedent and reference point. Especially relevant to the prospects for defensively reorienting the conventional arms trade is the distinction suggested in the CFE mandate and treaty between offense- and defense-oriented weapon *mixes*. Although no weapon is purely 'offensive' or 'defensive,' all have different values in offensive and defensive roles--a fact that already plays a central role in military planning. Using this distinction as a guideline, planners can devise armed forces optimized for defensive operations¹⁴.

A comprehensive process of defensive restructuring requires more than just a change in weapon mix--especially if the change is effected from outside the region and in a piecemeal fashion. Doctrine, training, operational plans, and force deployments should be altered as well. For this reason, supportive training and planning assistance should accompany a defensive reorientation in arms transfers. Moreover, the major powers could provide incentives for arms importers to participate in other forms of qualitative arms control on a bi- or multi-lateral basis. These could, for instance, involve selective reductions in those weapon categories most vital to surprise- or large-scale offensive capabilities. The creation of 'offensive-weapon exclusion zones' along borders and measures that increase military transparency would also be important. Even without these additional measures, however, a defensive reorientation of the arms trade together with the aging of existing weapon stocks would gradually effect defensive restructuring throughout a region.

Notes

1. For a presentation of recent innovations in NOD models for Europe see Unterseher, Lutz: 'Military Stability and European Security--Ten Years from Now', *PDA Research Monograph*, no. 2 (November 1993); and idem, Carl Conetta, *et al.*: *Confidence-Building Defense: A Comprehensive Approach to Security & Stability in the New Era* (Cambridge, USA: Commonwealth Institute, 1994).
2. NOD advocates in the United States operate within a strategic context and associated policy consensus that is very different than that prevailing, for instance, in Germany or Austria or Sweden during the Cold War. Since the early-1950s 'global reach' has been the fundamental instrumental goal guiding US armed forces development. Military isolationism--defined as a singular or paramount focus on the problem of defending national borders and integrity--has not enjoyed a respected position within US policy discourse since the mid-1950s. Today's isolationists of the Buchananite Right are not really isolationist at all, but narrow nationalist and unilateralist; on the Left, military isolationism is well represented, but it is not hegemonic. Its influence is greatest among the non-parliamentary and 'pressure group' left, which is very small and divided. Perhaps even smaller in number, although not influence, are the true military isolationists of the 'libertarian' or anarchist Right. During the period 1967-1976 moves toward military isolationism had some broad appeal, reflected in the 1973 McGovern campaign slogan 'Come Home America.' However, some of the same conditions that gave rise to this sentiment prompted a more significant return during the Reagan era to policies reminiscent of both the brinkmanship of the Eisenhower-Dulles period and the robust 'flexible response' activism of the early Kennedy-McNamara years. Indeed, conservatives successively laid the blame for a decade of foreign policy troubles--roughly from the 1968 Tet Offensive to the 1979-1980 Hostage Crisis--on a lack of resolve in international and military affairs. In sum, military isolationism proved politically unsustainable--its longer-term effect being to contribute to the regeneration of its opposite. For a discussion of the US Left's engagement with military policy see Knight, Charles: 'The Left and the Military,' *Dissent*, Volume 41, No. 4 (Fall 1994).
3. In such cases, it still makes sense to restructure--first, because NOD is the least provocative of available defence options; second, because there are worthwhile goals short of a robust defence: damage limitation, delay, and increasing the price of aggression.
4. For a recent iteration of this model see Unterseher, Lutz: 'Military Stability and European Security--Ten Years from Now', *Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph*, no. 2 (November 1993).
5. For comparative assessments see Unterseher, Lutz, Carl Conetta, *et al.*, *Confidence-Building Defense: A Comprehensive Approach to Security & Stability in the New Era*, pp. 49-59; Milton Weiner: 'Distributed Area Defense,' paper prepared for a conference on 'Enhancing NATO Conventional Defense in Central Europe' (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1986); and Hofman, Hans, Reiner Huber and Karl Steiger: 'On Reactive Defence Options', *Briefing*, no. S-8403 (Munich: Bundeswehr University, November 1984).
6. It is worth noting, however, that had Kuwait assumed a NOD posture during the 1980s, it could have substantially increased the price of conquest for Iraq and might have stalled Iraq's initial success long enough for outside help to arrive. For discussion of NOD model applicable to Kuwait and how its adoption might have affected the Persian Gulf conflict see Conetta, Carl, Charles Knight and Lutz Unterseher, 'Toward Defensive Restructuring in the Middle East,' *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, June 1991; also published as *PDA Research Monograph*, no. 1 (February 1991).
7. Another case that may illustrate the need for some global offensive capability is the 'Kampuchea scenario'--wherein a state commits gross and persistent violations of human rights on a mass scale and as a matter of policy. Of course, intervention in this case raises special issues concerning national sovereignty, which have blocked formation of a general consensus on 'human rights interventions.' These issues fall largely outside the scope of this essay. Suffice to say that in the foreseeable future political

concerns will likely restrict the practice of 'human rights intervention' to cases in which the transgressions are uniquely egregious and the transgressor is politically isolated. A firmer stand than this would require the world's nation to have much more confidence in cooperative security and the rule of international law than exists today.

8. For an analysis of post-Cold War US military planning see 'Rand's "New Calculus" and the Impasse of US Defense Restructuring', *PDA Briefing Report*, no. 4 (August 1993).

9. Christopher Bowie, et al.: *The New Calculus: Analyzing Airpower's Changing Role in Joint Theatre Campaigns* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1993); National Defense Research Institute: *Assessing the Structure and Mix of Future Active and Reserve Forces: Final Report to the Secretary of Defense* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1992); General Colin Powell: *The National Military Strategy of the United States* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1992); Secretary of Defense: *Defense Planning Guidance* (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 1992); Joints Chief of Staff: *Mobility Requirements Study* (Washington DC, 1992).

10. For a discussion of the air war and its implications see Alan Bloomgarden and Carl Conetta: 'The Promise of Air Power and US Modernization Trends After Operation Desert Storm', *The Hawk Journal*, 1994; and 'After Desert Storm: Rethinking US Defense Requirements', *PDA Briefing Report*, no. 2 (July 1991).

11. For a discussion of new era defense requirements in Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf see 'Reasonable Force: Adapting the US Army and Marine Corps to the New Era. Part 1. Threat Environment and Force Size Requirement', *PDA Briefing Report*, no. 3 (20 March 1992).

12. An indiscriminate, across-the-board ban on arms transfers would limit the scope and intensity of war, but not necessarily its occurrence. As existing military capabilities atrophied new types of military instability could arise. Lower force-to-space ratios could leave defences porous and, thus, more susceptible to rapid, deep attack. Also, as national armed forces decreased in size they would probably shed existing redundancies. But small, homogenous armed forces are more vulnerable to surprise assaults--even those conducted by similarly sized opponents. To resolve these types of problems a program of force restructuring must accompany reductions.

13. For additional discussion of this proposal see 'Restructuring America's Arms Trade with the Middle East', *PDA Briefing Memo*, no. 2 (November 1991); and Conetta, Carl, Charles Knight and Lutz Unterseher: 'Toward Defensive Restructuring in the Middle East', *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, June 1991.

14. Generally speaking, in environments suited to large-scale tank operations, a defence-oriented military would be somewhat 'lighter' on average than today's heavy mechanized divisions and less capable of long-range campaigns; it would rely more on artillery, anti-tank weapons, and anti-armour mines than on main battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles; and its air power component would emphasize air defence fighters and anti-tank aircraft, rather than long-range multi-role aircraft optimized for deep attack. See 'The US-Saudi F-15E Sale and the Search for Stability in the Middle East', *PDA Briefing Memo*, no. 5 (September 1992); and 'Restructuring America's Arms Trade with the Middle East', *PDA Briefing Memo*, no. 2 (November 1991).

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