
Defense Report

AUSA



Wherefore Our National Security Strategy?

The appropriate way to design and deploy our Armed Forces is in direct support of our national strategy. The problem of the moment is that no current national strategy outline has been published, despite a mandate from Congress to do so annually.

There are abundant reasons why it is difficult to produce such a document in today's fast-moving political-economic climate. Events in Europe, the Mid-East, the Pacific and in Latin America are in ferment—hopefully in the direction of a more peaceful world. But that may be all the more reason to move with caution.

The President and the Secretary of Defense have already proposed significant reductions in defense spending. For the first time in memory the Armed Forces Committee chairmen in both houses have generally accepted these proposals as being reasonable and as about as far as we ought to go right now. However, the pork barrel has again sprung some leaks and there is a lot of jockeying for support of home programs in progress.

What is more disturbing however, has been the rush of the armchair strategists who have come forward, with various ideas about how our Armed Forces should be structured and how the defense budget should be allocated. Unfortunately, some of this daydreaming gets absorbed by the Congress and the public, thereby producing a maze of disinformation.

President Bush, on return from his recent trip to Europe, expressed his own optimism while simultaneously urging caution. All of us want to move toward a safer world and to put our resources to work for the common good. The President made it clear that this was the Administration's goal. The protection of our national interests, wherever they may be, is paramount. What the Congress, the public and the pundits need to have identified are what those national interests are and what our strategy is to protect them. This will provide a sensible basis for determining the size, composition and disposition of our Armed Forces.

In the interim, we should proceed with caution and avoid needless, meat-ax cuts in our defense budget.