



NATIONAL DEFENSE INTO THE 21ST CENTURY: DEFINING THE ISSUES

AUSA is embarking on a project to participate in the upcoming debate on national security. It is increasingly apparent that current policy — requiring DoD to be prepared to conduct two major regional operations nearly simultaneously — cannot be fully supported with the resources being made available. Estimates of the short-fall range anywhere from \$50 billion to \$150 billion over a five-year period.

Congress has recognized this situation through a legislated requirement for an independent National Defense Panel to review military strategy, policy and structure and to provide a final report by 15 December 1997. Also, as recommended by the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces in 1995, a quadrennial review will be conducted by DoD, with a report due to Congress by 15 May 1997.

Others have already undertaken efforts to address this mismatch of the current national security strategy and resources. Senator John McCain issued a paper in March 1996 titled "Ready Tomorrow: Defending American Interests in the 21st Century." His approach suggests a single, generic major regional contingency (MRC) concept with primary initial reliance on U.S. naval and air forces and greater reliance on *allied* ground forces; and a reassessment of the relative balance between U.S. heavy and light ground forces and required levels of force readiness.

In June 1996, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a doctrinal paper, "Joint Vision 2010," which

provides a conceptual framework for the conduct of joint operations by leveraging technology — particularly in command and control and intelligence — and the core competencies of quality forces needed to dominate an opponent across the range of military operations. The paper visualizes increased reliance on technological advances and the use of information to give a smaller force the qualitative edge over any adversary.

In July 1996, the self-appointed Commission on America's National Interests addressed a theme central to the national security strategy debate in the post-Cold War period — namely, defining the U.S. national interests in today's world. The commission's goal is to crystallize the debate on U.S. national interests as a principal factor in addressing U.S. national security needs. By prioritizing these interests, the commission believes U.S. policy makers can better "explain how and why specific expenditures of American treasure or blood deserve support from American citizens." The commission's concerns are echoed in David M. Abshire's article, "U.S. Global Policy: Toward an Agile Strategy," which appeared in the Spring 1996 issue of *The Washington Quarterly*.

Taking a different perspective, Lawrence J. Korb, in his November-December 1995 *Foreign Affairs* article "Our Overstuffed Armed Forces," believes the DoD budget is excessive simply because the two-MRC strategy exaggerates the threats faced by the United States. Korb would reduce armed forces personnel and structure by twenty percent, with four fewer combat divisions, three fewer carrier battle groups, 34 fewer bombers and 2,500

more . . .

fewer nuclear weapons. Defense spending would be reduced by about \$40 billion per year. Korb's article is particularly important because it questions many of the assumptions which underlie the current strategy and is primarily budget-cut oriented.

As is apparent from these examples, the first salvos regarding the validity of the present U.S. defense policies have been launched. The debate of U.S. national security priorities will escalate after the November elections and continue throughout 1997, and will have significant impact on subsequent defense programs, force structure and budgets. The three traditional elements of national military power — land, sea and air — will be scrutinized in terms of their respective contributions to national security and the capabilities needed to protect U.S. interests along with the fiscal reality of a balanced budget environment.

Future U.S. security strategy will almost certainly be drawn to conform to fiscal realities — driven by deficit-reduction initiatives. The United States will have to pick its fights carefully but in a manner to maintain its role as a world leader and in keeping with its most important national interests. This means that resources devoted to national defense must be apportioned in a manner to best meet both the most likely and the most serious threats to national interests. This must be a balanced approach. We must be careful not to put all our eggs in one basket and rely too heavily on a few discrete high-technology and expensive solutions. All elements of military power will be needed.

The debate must encompass a *balanced* examination of U.S. military power, its deterrent value and utility for the types of military operations in which the armed forces can expect to be engaged as we enter the 21st century. This involves a realistic vision of the international environment, to include primary actors and allies; the state of U.S. interests and the threats to those interests; and an examination of the relative contributions of each element of military power to successful joint military operations.

From the perspective of landpower, military policy has to weigh carefully the capabilities needed to project, fight and sustain ground forces in a wide range of possi-

ble operations conducted with the other services and allies. In this regard, some of the related issues have been examined in earlier *Defense Reports*, to include resourcing Army modernization (DR 96-1); the long-term nature of technology investment (DR 96-3); sizing the Army's personnel strength and force structure (DR 96-4); and the need for an overall balanced defense program (DR 96-5). But other issues must be examined, particularly those which would require resource trade-offs with the other services.

The upcoming defense reviews must not be simply a venue for preserving present defense programs. Examination of major variables which drive the equation of national security policies and decisions must focus on a balanced approach. Land-, sea- and airpower are the basic ingredients of the national military capabilities needed to protect the nation's interests. AUSA has the responsibility to present information and recommendations regarding landpower which are balanced and in the context of joint operations. The Army cannot go it alone, but the Army must have the wherewithal to conduct operations in conformity with the defense policies inherent in a military strategy appropriate for the times and based on the needs of the nation.

Over the next year AUSA, through its Institute of Land Warfare, will participate in this national security debate through a program of seminars and the development of papers and articles which address the issues and their impact on landpower, and the U.S. Army in particular. Issue papers will be presented to the various defense panels and to Congress. These same papers will be made available to AUSA members through a variety of publications. Several issue conferences will be conducted, as well as one or more extensive symposia aimed at an understanding of the overall issues and the contributions of each of the military services to national security and future military operations.

AUSA's goal is to bring to the attention of all involved the vital role of landpower in the equation of U.S. military power to ensure that the Army will have the proper structure, equipment and resources to carry out its joint role in the future defense of the nation.

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