



AUSA ISSUES

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U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES: A PERSPECTIVE AND FRAMEWORK

(AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare sponsors a series of small conferences to examine defense topics impacting on the U.S. Army. In that regard, a two-day conference was coordinated in conjunction with the U.S. Army War College, the U.S. Naval War College and the Atlantic Council of the United States. This conference examined the issues of national security and the individual military services as they pertain to the Quadrennial Defense Review. The following are transcribed remarks by GEN Andrew Goodpaster, USA Retired, Chairman of the Atlantic Council, on 25 February 1997.)

I welcome very much the chance to meet with you whom I term the "gluttons for punishment." You're going to stay right to the end of it, and I welcome the chance to participate in this session.

To find the reason, you don't have to go beyond the title of your conference, "National Defense in the 21st Century: Defining the Issues." That, I must say, is a most timely and demanding subject because of the daunting array of issues that have to be thought through, and will need to be acted upon.

My task was to offer a summary and conclusion, the issues and perspective. And I'm going to follow the course of a rather wise man down in Texas that you may have heard of. He was asked to talk about modern art in Texas. He accepted that and then realized what he had done, and he said, "I'll talk about modern art and Texas. I don't know much about modern art but I'm sure going to tell you about Texas."

Well, I wouldn't attempt to summarize what you've heard. It's not possible, I'm sure, to do full justice to that in anything like the time available or to test your patience to that extent. But I will do the other part of what I was asked to do, and that is to conclude your conference.

I'm going to do so by offering you a perspective and a framework — a perspective for weighing the

security issues involved and a framework for placing them in what I would think to be a manageable context, just as our decisionmakers need to do, and as we hope they will do in approaching this very multifaceted challenge at all levels of our military forces. Accordingly, I'm going to speak to three main topics: First, the perspective, and there I'm going to talk about America's national interests in the international arena that have military implications. Next, the framework that I'll talk about is U.S. security policies and decision guidelines that have military implications. And the third is some of the military implications that are associated with these national interests and security policies and decision guidelines.

This, I think, is important to military officers and defense officials for two main reasons. First, they must advise the decisionmakers in the executive branch and in the Congress, and ultimately they must be persuasive to the American people, whose support is mandatory if we are to succeed in what we aim to do.

And second, they must anticipate decisions that have yet to be made. They must build forces and they must develop operational capabilities to deal with the international environment, and to deal with it in ways that attempt to foresee what our decision-

makers are going to ask them to do. And that, as I'm sure all of us know from experience, is no small chore. Yet when the future arrives, that's what military officers and defense planners are going to be expected to do.

So let's take a bit of time and talk first about the perspective that I mentioned to you, American national interests in the international arena that have military implications. The source of those interests is a primary question, and the source to me can be really identified by asking the question, "Where is American well-being now at risk in the international arena; where is it likely to be at risk in the future?"

Some of our interests have no military implications, but many — and, I would argue, the most important — do have military implications. It's very important in my mind for all of us — military officers, defense officials, military defense analysts, and the public at large and the Congress — to have a good understanding of what those interests are.

One of my colleagues and friends, Bob Ellsworth — former NATO ambassador, former Deputy Secretary of Defense — and I talked about this a little over a year ago. We joined with Rita Hauser, who is very experienced, very capable in this whole field of public policy, and we established a self-constructed commission on America's national interests. We enlisted the help of Graham Allison and others — Dmitri Simes, numerous others — to assist us in defining America's national interests. We found that the interests fall into several well-recognized categories.

In order of their military implications, I would first speak of security interests, that is, the security of the United States and its allies, support for a condition of international peace and security.

Beyond that, we have economic interests, especially where our whole economic system could be severely, or even fatally, damaged — for example, if an attempt were made to block our access to Middle East oil, on which our country is dependent and the countries of Europe and Japan, are utterly dependent.

We also have humanitarian interests, where there is genocide and ethnic cleansing. The military implications there are less sure, less certain, as we saw in the prolonged uncertainty, the prolonged dithering as to what our policy and our actions would be in Bosnia.

In addition, we have environmental interests — oil spills, for example or the Chernobyl-type disasters — actual or potential. And then we have instrumental interests that come from these, or interests of a secondary character, political interests in maintaining friendly relations with other countries. These, I think, have to be differentiated carefully, where these political interests support our other interests, our primary interests of security or economic well-being or humanitarian policies, or environmental conditions that would affect the United States.

Our instrumental interests include the maintenance of the strength and the vitality of NATO, which serves to enable us to safeguard or to pursue or to advance our security interests in particular but humanitarian interests as well. And there may be others.

Because of this large number and long list of interests, it is immediately clear that setting priorities becomes imperative. My contribution to that study on America's national interests was to suggest something that has seemed useful to me over the years, which was to divide these interests into the "blue chips," the "red chips," and the "white chips."

The blue chips pertain to that short list of things that deserve the title "vital" — those that have a bearing on and importance to the survival of the United States and the values that the United States represents. Let's put those in the blue-chip category. Those blue chips, whatever their military implications are, we do well to regard as absolutes.

When it comes to the red chips, things that are important and are useful but do not go so far as to be vital, those are going to require trade-offs. Those are going to require the kind of assessment, "Is the game worth the candle? Will our people continue to support the operation over a long period of time when the costs begin to accumulate?"

I'm reminded in this regard of a rule that I ran into a long time ago: to govern is to choose. We in the military should know that very well. If you try to be strong everywhere, you'll be strong nowhere; that's the principle of concentration. That's also the principle of being very clear as to what your goal is, and the discriminator to me is a pair of questions: "What has enough impact on America and American well-being for our country to support the use of our military forces?" And the second question is: "Where can we have the needed impact on the situation at costs that Americans are prepared to bear?"

I would suggest that it's best to consider these questions early, because they are going to have to be considered either early or late, and if we engage ourselves without having confronted these questions, without having asked them, we are liable to have ourselves into commitments that will not be sustained. For those of you who shared with me our experience in Vietnam, you'll know just what I'm talking about, I think.

When I served with President Eisenhower, one of his fundamental rules was that when we approached a situation that might involve combat, he called down the bipartisan leadership from the Senate and the House of the United States Congress. He would lay out the problem.

Then he would have Allen Dulles give an intelligence briefing. Next he would have Foster Dulles give a briefing on the political considerations and political implications involved. And then he would ask either the Secretary of Defense or more likely the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to lay out the military implications. And then he would say, "When I put all of this together, it seems to me that the best interest of our country lies in taking the following action." And he said, "I need to know whether you will stand with me in doing that."

At that moment, I can tell you that tension would begin to rise in the room. And very often it was Senator Russell who then said, "Well, Mr. President, we understand this, but of course it's your decision, you are the president." And the president said, "I know that and I'm quite prepared to make that decision, but I need to know whether

you're going to stand with me, because that's important to my knowing whether I'm going to have the support of the American people."

Well, this was quite a little minuet that they went through. They went through it a number of times, and Eisenhower never departed from stressing that necessity. And about the third occasion when this occurred, I saw a very interesting thing. At the point when Eisenhower said, "I need to know whether you're going to stand with me," they all looked for the door. They all were looking for a way to get out, but he would tell them, and oftentimes he referred back to this, "I saw what happened with President Truman, and that's not going to happen to me." The result was that in every case, before that door opened and they got out of the room, they had to declare themselves.

Now the reason I go back to this little anecdote is that I think that's a fundamental rule. When the time came to think about taking military action in Kuwait, I myself made a very strong recommendation to the people in the White House. In fact, I went over and talked with them and, I would say, overcame their reluctance with this little anecdote, their reluctance to put this issue to the Congress. I commend that principle to you. We did the same thing, and many of you know that when the issue came up of going into Bosnia, there were those of us — senior retired military people — who joined together in sending a letter up saying we needed a clear-cut decision from the Congress, a clear-cut commitment to support the commitment. And I'm told that Senator McCain, with that letter in hand, made his talk in the Senate stressing the essentiality of getting that determination from our Congress.

So I suggest that we think in terms of these blue chips where there is use or threatened use of force against the United States or its allies, our people, our territory, and our peaceful conduct of our own affairs, and only then the red chips and the white chips — our United Nations peacekeeping, most economic issues, the humanitarian issues, the environmental issues, the political relations.

I recall from my time many years ago in graduate school, one of my professors who always spoke

with a certain pungency said that the part of wisdom is to subordinate lesser interests to greater ones. That seemed very wise to me, and over the years I've added to it; even before that comes the need to determine which are which, and make the hard choice to give priority of effort to the greater interests in our security policies and our foreign policy and security actions abroad.

But let me go on then and talk about the framework of security policies and decision guidelines that have military implications. I would offer the proposition that deterrence is now the preferred policy path for us to follow — that we should seek victory in achieving or safeguarding our interests without the costs and losses of actual combat if those can be avoided.

That's part of the wisdom of Sun Tzu, if I remember correctly, who said 2500 years ago or so that that's the wisest course — to attain your ends without actual combat. That holds good today, though it has to be thought through again in this new circumstance where we find ourselves.

The Cold War focus is gone, and we have to reshape ourselves to new needs. The requirement is still an effort to prevent foreign actions and activities that we deem harmful, if possible without bloodshed. But the first rule of deterrence, to my mind, is that it has to be based on will and capability. If it is thought that either the will to act is lacking or the capability to act is lacking, if the crunch comes, deterrence will lack effectiveness.

So we then have to consider what kind of military capability is needed for deterrence. And there I would say it's useful to think of two types of deterrence. One, you deter by having a visible capability to punish through the devastating application of force. But I would say that something additional is needed, and that's deterrence through the visible capability to deny success and to impose heavy costs and losses.

I recall that Churchill, speaking of the outward thrust of the Soviet Union during his talk in Fulton, Missouri — the famous Iron Curtain talk — said, "They seek the fruits of war without the costs of war." When I served in NATO, I turned that around

and said, "It seems to me that we have to present to them a certainty that they will bear heavy costs of war should they attack, and a great uncertainty as to whether they can achieve results that would be worth that."

I was asked one time if we could give assurance of the ability to hold through conventional means alone. This was in testimony here before the American Congress. And I said, "No, I don't think we can give that assurance. If they come against us with their full force, take the losses we could impose, which they could take, and sustain the attack, then we have to expect — not a certainty, but we have to expect — in a short period of days we would be confronted with a necessity to add, to augment our operations with nuclear weapons used at least selectively, or face the possibility of complete rupture of our defensive position and capability."

"Well, General, doesn't that mean the Holocaust?"

"It may, it may. They have to think about that as well as we. But it may not, because at that point they may ask themselves, 'What is there west of the Iron Curtain for which we are willing to see Russia destroyed?'"

I have to tell you the sequel to that. For some reason, that was made public, and I added a comment in which I said, "If the Russian political leaders don't ask themselves that question — What is there worth Russian destruction? — the Russian military leaders I think will." The Russians picked this up, printed it in *Red Star* (their publication for their armed forces), called me a provocateur by suggesting there could be a difference between the political and the military echelons, and circulated it to all of their military.

I could not have paid them to do this. They really did my work for me. I've asked myself in the years since, "Why in the world did they do that?" But perhaps, just perhaps, it was a move on their part to reintroduce, to my mind, a little restraint, a little common sense about getting themselves into something that could cause the destruction of their Russian motherland, which is what really means the most to them.

But I talked about the capability to punish and the capability to deny success and impose heavy losses. That takes manifest will and capability. It means, in my opinion — and you'll have to evaluate this, but I give you my view — it means American presence in some key forward areas. We provided that in Europe when we put our four additional divisions there in 1951 and 1952 when NATO was formed. That told the Soviets that they would have to attempt to run over American forces if they were going to attack in Western Europe. And I'll tell you I'm convinced that was a very sobering and useful thought for them to entertain.

Another thing we can do is to show manifest will and capability — movements of forces, a show of force — when a clash of interests occurs, to demonstrate our intent. The next thing we have to have is a credible and viable strategy, at policy level and at military level.

Let me take just a moment on what I mean by "at policy level and at military level." I've often heard that we had no military strategy in Vietnam. I would challenge that. I was deputy commander there with Abrams. He and I talked about that and we had a very clear notion of what we were aiming to do. It involved North Vietnamese main force units, it involved local units, it involved the communist infrastructure. It involved all the different types of terrain that we had. It involved all of our forces of different kinds on our side: land, air, naval forces. All of that had to be put together, and we had a very clear conception of what we were undertaking to do.

I have to say that if you went a level higher to find out at the policy level in our government what it was we were aiming to do, you got a lot of different answers. I have to tell you I didn't have all that much confidence in any of them. It was nailing somebody's hide to the wall. Now what the hell does that mean? I don't think it was ever clear, even to the speaker, just what that meant.

But we should be clear as to what our strategy is, and we, speaking at the military level, should insist that our political leaders develop and pursue what I mean by a credible top-level strategy. And it's not

all that difficult. In my mind, it is three things: what to do, how to do it, and what to do it with. If you haven't thought that through, you haven't got a strategy; you're muddling around. And muddling around with military units in combat is a recipe for disaster.

If, indeed, deterrence is our aim, then I think there are two stages of decision that we should be aware of. One is the decisions that are needed in peacetime to create, maintain and prepare plans for employment of forces in being that can be put to use.

The second stage of decision comes when the contingency occurs, and that's to employ the forces that are available. And what does that tell us? It tells us that the forces available should have maximum flexibility, because no one can foresee in full, specific detail exactly how a crisis will arise or where it will arise and how it will need to be dealt with.

So that feeds back to peacetime. When I talked about the decisions of peacetime, about creating, maintaining, preparing plans for the force, we have to take into account in peacetime the provision of maximum flexibility when the crisis comes.

Let me say just a word about the study of the deterrence environment. That's a study that should be kept current. Regarding the major powers of the world, we live in a time when there is limited need for a deterrent. There is no apparent cause of conflict among the major powers of the world or between any two of them, setting aside, for the moment, the strains over Taiwan and mainland China.

The main need for a deterrent, this limited need, is to maintain a stable nuclear relationship. I happen to believe that that can be done and that it will be in our interest to do it, by carrying out step-by-step reductions of nuclear dangers and nuclear arsenals to the lowest verifiable level that's consistent with stable security and that the condition of world relations permits. Supported by that limited deterrent, we can then direct our efforts to building positive security relationships, especially with Russia and China.

The greater deterrence challenge is in dealing with the numerous and diverse contingencies that are created and likely to be created by lesser nations. I'm speaking here of the rogues such as Saddam

Hussein. No one can be sure what the future of North Korea will be. We can work to try to keep them within the framework of good sense, but we don't know whether that will work.

We want to shape a stable and secure world order, and we are faced with a multitude of problems, disorder, conflicts, unstable governments, ethnic savagery, nuclear proliferation, use or threatened use of chemical and biological weapons, state-sponsored terrorism.

There is a long list, and they have to be thought about and prepared for because they can jeopardize important interests that will require a response on our part. The reason is that those interests involve such things as our safety from attack, our access to raw materials — especially oil, as I mentioned — our free use of the seas for our commerce, and our humanitarian commitments and obligations. It's important for us to be able to deal with all of these as far as possible upstream. If you have to deal with them early or deal with them late, it's better to deal with them early. That's more challenging in terms of getting congressional and public understanding and support, but it is much more in our interest to do that, and that's a challenge for our political leaders.

Now, let me just say a word — as I think we can — about the military implications of these interests and deterrence policies and decision and action guidelines. What do they tell us? They tell us that we need a force in being capable of rapid augmentation. It tells us that we need adequate capabilities for the tasks anticipated — adequate in terms of size and composition, adequate in terms of deliverable combat power, adequate in terms of operational effectiveness, training, flexibility and sustainability.

We need, as I suggested, forward presence in certain key areas. We need sea control if we're to have the assurance that our other capabilities can be provided if called upon. It means the ability to carry out swift action, to "be there fustest with the mostest." You can't do better than Nathan Bedford Forrest, and that should be a central element in our planning.

It tells us we need advanced technology, especially for air attack. We need stealth, the ability to

suppress casualties and combat losses. We can't avoid them entirely, but by preparation, you can carry out that suppression and thereby hold them to a minimum. We need primary reliance on conventional arms.

The nuclear weapons will be an existential back-up and hedge for a long time to come, at least 10 years or more. We could reduce our nuclear weapons at the rate of about 2,000 a year, the rate at which we built them. It'll take us 10 years to get down to what I would regard as the lowest verifiable level, say, at 100 to 200 weapons. We may not get there, and it will have to be done step by step. We'll have to know at every step that we've done it prudently.

We need, as I suggested, the ability to punish with overwhelming destructive combat power. We need the ability to identify and destroy key target complexes; that applies in particular to the chemical and biological. I don't question that our nuclear capability will add an existential make-weight to whatever we can do conventionally, but I regard the arguments that we should rely on our nuclear capability as a cop-out, a means of attempting to avoid the development of conventional forces that can take on that job. And we need the ability to seize, to destroy facilities, and to control key areas.

When you put all that together, I think you see in that the tasks for our air forces, our naval forces, our Marines and our Army forces that are essential if we are to have the kind of deterrent capability that I have described. In addition, we know that we are going to be called on for peacekeeping and peace enforcement activities and operations. This will take military power. Powerful forces, command and control, intelligence, logistic support; all of that needs to be carefully planned in relation to the tasks that our forces may be asked to perform.

With regard to these activities, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, the key question is not whether military forces can do that job. The answer is, they can. But more important is the need for clear mission statements, the need for clear command channels, the need for clear higher direction and decisions. In many cases, that's not primarily the responsibility of military people, but military people have the responsibility to give advice, indeed, to give insistence that those decisions be made.

Along with this, of course, is the need to avoid overcommitment on tasks of limited importance to American security. We can't fritter away our assets, which retain the fundamental responsibility of meeting threats, dangers to American well-being that go to the blue-chip level in terms of American security.

I was asked to conclude the conference, and I don't know a better way of concluding it than by saying that when we put all this together it is a

daunting challenge that will require our best effort in thinking it through, then referring back to General Marshall, who reminded us so often, "Man is made for action," it's not just thinking it through, it's acting on what we have thought through.

I hope the conference has been of value in clarifying thinking and clarifying the actions needed, and I commend all of those whose initiative brought about this conference. Thank you very much for the opportunity to meet with you.

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