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**NO MORE VIETNAM WARS!**

*One 1983 legacy of Vietnam: widespread hostility toward any U.S. intervention abroad, even in Central America, "America's backyard."*

# America's National Security

The past two decades have been extraordinarily difficult, sobering, even traumatic for the United States in matters of war and peace. President John F. Kennedy's inaugural summons of January 21, 1961, to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty" now may seem extravagant, even naive—after Vietnam and Iran and the harsh complexities of Lebanon and Central America.

In some ways, threatening as they were, the major confrontations of the Kennedy era—the 1961 Berlin Wall crisis and the 1962 Cuban missile episode—seem simpler than today's more complicated long-range challenges to the security and well-being of the United States and its allies. During the early 1960s, the United States enjoyed economic and military pre-eminence—and a high degree of domestic agreement on defense and foreign policy matters. "Containment" of communism—Soviet, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Cuban—was the order of the day. And, as even France's Charles De Gaulle noted after the Cuban missile crisis, America's nuclear advantage over the Soviets was "the essential guarantee of peace" in the world.

Today, that clear advantage is gone, thanks to a long, massive Soviet arms build-up. Now, Americans and Europeans alike differ on how best to handle the Russians. The Soviet downing of a South Korean airliner last September did not end the arguments, notably over NATO's decision to deploy U.S. cruise missiles and Pershing IIs this winter to match the Soviet nuclear missiles aimed at Western Europe—unless agreement can be reached with the Soviets on some sort of mutual reduction. Meanwhile, the Reagan administration is attempting to gain an accord with Moscow on strategic nuclear arms to follow SALT I and II. Both U.S. efforts involve bargaining with an adversary whose world-view, shaped by history and ideology, is vastly different from that of the West, and whose only claim to parity with the West lies in its military power.

**DEPLOYMENT OF U.S. AND SOVIET FORCES, 1983**



*Shown above are the major deployments of U.S. ground units and forward Navy carrier task forces; in addition, 55 U.S. advisers are in El Salvador, and 1600 Marines are "peacekeepers" in Lebanon. The general pattern has not changed since the mid-1950s. Yet China is no longer seen as an adver-*

The United States is also no longer dominant in the economic field. The Arab "oil shocks" of the 1970s, the rise of Japan as a domestic U.S. competitor, Western trade rivalries and worldwide financial troubles—all these make "global interdependence" sound a good deal less benign to Americans than it did before it became a reality. Differences with European allies over the Mideast, over El Salvador, over East-West trade, and over arms control have further complicated matters.

For all its worries, the United States is still Number One. But it has not presented the world with a coherent defense policy since Kennedy's day. Reacting to Vietnam and Watergate, Congress put unprecedented curbs on presidential discre-



sary; France has left NATO; U.S. manpower in NATO is down from 434,000 in 1962; U.S. access to overseas bases has sharply declined; Moscow now has a big "open ocean" navy, and deploys Cuban proxies and/or Soviet advisers in Southeast Asia, Central America, and Africa.

tion in foreign affairs. At the same time, weakened party leadership and other changes in Congress made it extremely difficult for any White House incumbent to negotiate a firm deal with the senior lawmakers on Capitol Hill; the latter often could not deliver their "troops." Hence, Ronald Reagan's resort to bipartisan blue-ribbon commissions (on the MX missile, on Central American policy) to achieve a consensus. Some of America's difficulties, now as in the past, are self-inflicted.

In the articles that follow, the authors variously describe four of the elements in the continuing debate on U.S. national security policy: the Soviet Union, our NATO allies, our commitments overseas, and our all-volunteer military force.

## THE VIEW FROM THE KREMLIN

*by David Holloway*

When Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party, died in November 1982, he left a Soviet Union more powerful in military terms than ever before. For more than twenty years, a steady supply of new missiles, ships, and tanks had strengthened the Soviet armed forces.

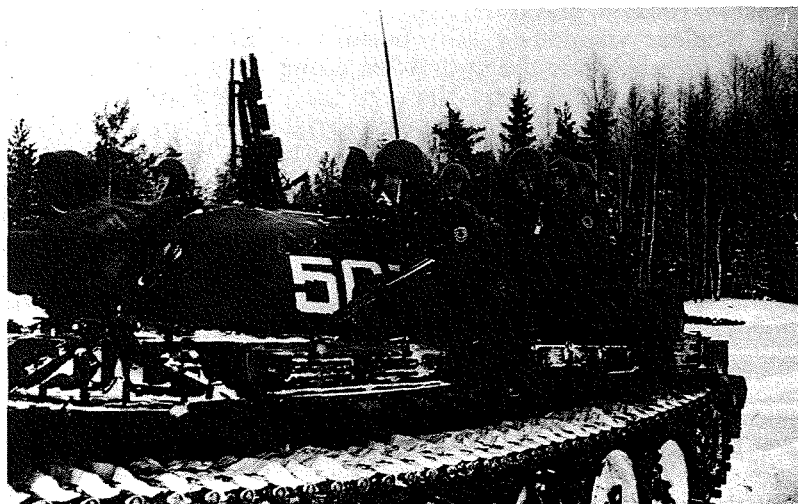
As a result, the Soviet Union has moved from a position of military inferiority to parity with the United States.

Yet the Kremlin's view of the world is by no means as rosy as one might suppose merely from counting up Soviet SS-20 missiles and T-62 tanks. In reality, Brezhnev bequeathed his country some serious difficulties both at home and abroad. And many of these difficulties stemmed directly from the drive to build up Soviet military power and influence.

Contrary to some Western analyses, the Soviet Union has not built up its armed forces simply in reaction to moves by the United States. Rather, the growth of Soviet military strength has its roots in historic Russian fears of militarily superior foreign powers. The Bolsheviks inherited from Imperial Russia—the victim of invasions by the Mongols during the 13th century and the French during the 19th—a deep anxiety about security, which went hand in hand with a determination to be strong and to dominate potential enemies.

Josef Stalin played on these feelings in forcing through his policy of rapid industrialization. "One feature of the history of old Russia," he told Soviet factory directors in 1931, "was the continual beatings she suffered for falling behind, for her backwardness." The Soviet Union, he said, must catch up with the advanced capitalist countries to avoid further defeats.

Stalin created a powerful arms industry. But he also destroyed the Red Army High Command in the purges of the late 1930s and failed to heed warnings that Hitler was planning to attack. When the German blitzkrieg came on June 22, 1941, it caught the Red Army by surprise. The Wehrmacht's rapid advance during the first months of the war called into question the very survival of the Soviet state. Only by a tremendous effort



*Red Army riflemen on winter maneuvers. The Warsaw Pact has three times as many tanks and twice as many men on the Central Front as does NATO. Yet, the Soviets must watch their East European allies; Russian tanks suppressed revolts in East Berlin (1953), Budapest (1956), and Prague (1968).*

was the Red Army able to stop the German drive, turn the tide of battle, and push forward to Berlin. Even so, 20 million Russians died in the war.

The trauma of the "Great Patriotic War" strengthened old Russian attitudes toward security. Hitler had attacked in the belief that he could smash the Soviet state with one blow. The Nazi aggression showed Stalin how important it was to avoid weakness, or even the appearance of vulnerability. He did not relax. The victory over Germany reinforced Stalin's hopes of playing a decisive role in future world politics. But he was conscious of relative Soviet weakness and showed restraint in the face of American opposition to the expansion of Soviet power during the late 1940s in Greece, Iran, Turkey, and West Berlin.

Stalin's chief gains had come in Eastern Europe. The Red Army's advance gave Stalin control over the political destinies of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Rumania and thus promised to enhance Soviet security by closing off the traditional avenues of attack against Russia. But the presence of the Red Army in Eastern Europe provided no defense against the atomic bomb. After the war, Stalin launched major programs to develop the new technologies in which the

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Soviet Union lagged behind the West: nuclear weapons, jet propulsion, rockets, and radar.

Nuclear weapons finally became available to the Soviet armed forces during the mid-1950s, along with the bombers and missiles that could carry them to targets in Europe and the United States. Earlier, Stalin had barred any public assessment of the impact of nuclear weapons on warfare, but now military policy had to be revised. Paralleling the Eisenhower-Dulles "New Look," the Soviet armed forces were reduced from 5,763,000 in 1952 to 3,623,000 in 1959, and conventional arms production was cut as the transition to nuclear weapons was made. Military spending remained at about \$30 billion a year during this period.

### **'Sufficiency' Was Not Enough . . .**

But according to the CIA, Soviet defense expenditures then grew by four or five percent annually from 1960 to 1976, and by two percent each year after that.

The Soviet build-up originated in the transition to a defense policy based on nuclear weapons. In 1960, Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party and Soviet Premier, outlined a new strategic doctrine, which stressed that the firepower of nuclear weapons was more important than the number of men under arms. Khrushchev acknowledged that "mutual deterrence" already existed, in the sense that if one side launched a surprise attack against the other, the attacker would suffer enormous destruction in retaliation. A new world war was not inevitable, he said, but if it took place, it would begin with missile strikes deep into the enemy's homeland and end with the victory of socialism.

The Kennedy administration reacted to Khrushchev's boasts about Soviet strategic power by rapidly building up U.S. forces. By 1964, the year of Khrushchev's fall from power, the Soviet Union still lagged by a ratio of four-to-one behind the United States in intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). But Moscow made a determined effort to catch up and by 1972 had achieved

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a rough parity in strategic weapons. The pace and scale of the Soviet effort surprised U.S. officials. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, for example, had concluded in April 1965 that the "Soviets have decided that they have lost the quantitative race" and were not "seeking to develop a strategic nuclear force as large as ours." As Soviet deployments continued, this comforting belief was superseded in Washington by the fear that the Soviet Union was aiming for strategic superiority.

It soon became clear, moreover, that the SALT Agreements of 1972 would not stop the Soviet Union from building up its strategic forces. Indeed, Brezhnev told President Richard Nixon at the Moscow summit in May 1972 that he would press ahead with the weapons programs not covered by SALT. Since the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union has deployed a new generation of long-range, land-based missiles: the SS-17, SS-18, SS-19 ICBMs, and the SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), targeted on Western Europe and the Far East. These missiles are MIRVed (equipped with multiple, independently targetable re-entry vehicles) and are far more accurate than their predecessors.

The Reagan White House has asserted that the new Soviet ICBMs give Moscow a clear margin of superiority by enabling it, in theory, to destroy approximately 90 to 95 percent of American ICBMs in their silos in a single strike. If the Soviet Union launched such an attack, the President (so the argument runs) would be faced with the choice between accepting this disaster, or retaliating with surviving U.S. forces against Soviet cities—in the knowledge that the Soviet Union could then demolish American cities in response.

#### **Ambiguous at Best**

But this kind of doomsday scenario can hardly look as promising to the Soviet leaders as it seems threatening to the Reagan White House. The men in the Kremlin would have to assume that all their missiles would function as well as they have on their best test flights, and that the U.S. President would not then retaliate against the Soviet homeland with SLBMs and bombers, which carry about 75 percent of U.S. strategic warheads.

Soviet political leaders have always stressed that nuclear war would be catastrophic for all concerned. Since the late 1970s, moreover, they have explicitly denied that they are pursuing strategic superiority. Brezhnev said more than once that "to try to outstrip each other in the arms race or to expect to win a nuclear war is dangerous madness." The Soviets apparently concede that, for the time being at least, they cannot escape



### STRATEGIC ARMS CONTROL

"At each stage of the SALT negotiations, and with each new agreement, the nuclear forces on both sides have increased," wrote Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1979.

The ostensible U.S. (and Soviet) aim in arms control talks, of course, has always been just the opposite: to slow the arms race and to lessen the likelihood of nuclear showdowns. Some agreements have worked. Following the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, for example, Washington and Moscow created an electronic "hot line" to speed communications in a crisis and signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty (1963), which barred nuclear tests in the atmosphere, under water, and in outer space. And in the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty, they pledged not to transfer nuclear weapons to other countries.

But the superpowers have failed to agree on how to slow the relentless pace of the arms race, and ironically, American arms control theory may have contributed to the problem.

By the mid-1960s, it became clear that the Soviets would soon achieve strategic parity with the United States. Defense Secretary McNamara convinced President Johnson that the best way to deter a Soviet attack would be to hold Soviet cities hostage. The idea was "mutually assured destruction" (MAD): Each side's missiles would be able to survive and retaliate, thus deterring a first strike. Consequently, the United States equipped its new Minuteman and Polaris missiles with small, one-to-two kiloton warheads powerful enough to devastate vulnerable Soviet cities, but not to destroy most protected ICBMs.

Strategic arms control talks with Moscow were the next logical step. In 1969, President Nixon renewed negotiations begun during the Johnson years. The two-part 1972 SALT I accords raised popular hopes of an end to the arms race. The Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms limits the number of ICBM (1,054 for the U.S., 1,608 for the USSR) and SLBM (710 for the U.S., 950 for the USSR) "launchers," and restricts modernization of ICBMs.

Technology, however, was advancing faster than the arms control process. By 1968, the Johnson administration had begun testing MIRVs (multiple, independently targetable re-entry vehicles) to insure that even if Moscow launched a first strike, enough U.S. warheads would survive to overwhelm any Soviet defense system. The Nixon White House did not seek limits on MIRVs during the SALT talks because it assumed that superior American technology would keep the United States forever ahead.

The Soviets, in fact, never accepted the logic, such as it was, of "sufficiency" or of MAD. Without openly breaking SALT I, Moscow produced so many highly accurate, MIRVed SS-17s, SS-18s, and SS-19s during the late 1970s that Pentagon analysts began to suspect that the Kremlin sought a first-strike capability. And the Sovi-

ets' concurrent deployment of 243 mobile SS-20s trained on Western Europe threatened to upset the regional nuclear balance.

SALT II—begun by Nixon and Ford, and signed by Carter—was designed to stabilize the arms race by setting equal numerical ceilings (2,250) for U.S. and Soviet bombers and missiles and by limiting each side's MIRVed missiles. But the treaty disappointed liberals by failing to achieve real *cuts* in nuclear weaponry. And critics on the Right complained that SALT II allowed the Soviets to keep their big "silo-busting" SS-18s while denying the United States the right to build any comparable first-strike missiles.

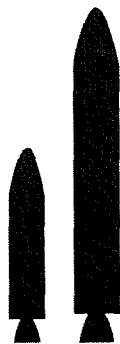
Even SALT's strongest advocates could not overlook the implications of the Soviet build-up. President Carter had no sooner signed the SALT II treaty in June 1979 than he asked Congress to fund development of the MX, a strategic missile carrying 10 warheads. Carter also endorsed Helmut Schmidt's proposal to deploy new U.S. intermediate-range Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe beginning in December 1983 to offset the SS-20s.

But Carter's critics had no easy answers, either. During the 1980 campaign, Ronald Reagan attacked Carter and SALT II and promised to close the "window of vulnerability." Yet by April 1983, Reagan's bipartisan Commission on Strategic Forces, while backing the controversial deployment of 100 MX land-based missiles, argued that nothing could *guarantee* their survival. It also implied that the vulnerability of land-based ICBMs did not really matter if the Triad's other elements—submarines and bombers—could survive and retaliate.

The prospects for arms control have probably never been bleaker. Technology keeps racing ahead: The current development by both sides of strategic cruise missiles—cheap, easily hidden, and mobile—may pose insurmountable problems of verification.

The lack of progress in the Reagan administration's Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) talks with Moscow has spawned proposals to stop the production, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons. But a "nuclear freeze" would probably eliminate any U.S. leverage on the Kremlin to reduce its nuclear arsenal; it would be impossible to enforce as long as the wary Soviets continue to bar mutual on-site inspection.

"Any form of atomic escapism"—hoping the bomb will go away, or treating it as just another weapon—"is a dead end," the 1983 Harvard Nuclear Study Group concluded. As a practical matter, the superpowers cannot *abolish* nuclear weapons. But they cannot abandon their efforts to control the arms race, for without further progress, the security of each may be further imperiled.



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from their relationship of mutual vulnerability with the United States. The pursuit of clearcut superiority would merely stimulate further costly and dangerous competition, in which the Soviet Union might well fare worse.

Still, the Soviet Union *has* tried to develop ICBMs capable of destroying hardened American missile silos, and Soviet strategic writings suggest that if the Kremlin leaders believed World War III were inevitable, they would strike first in order to smash a U.S. attack before it got off the ground. The Soviet military leadership also apparently has not accepted the American idea of "assured destruction"—the notion that a Soviet capacity to survive a first strike and retaliate against U.S. cities would be enough to guarantee Soviet security. In 1969, the commander-in-chief of the Strategic Missile Forces, Marshal N. I. Krylov, spoke of imperialist propaganda "to the effect that there will be no victors in a future nuclear war." He said: "These false affirmations contradict the objective laws of history."

The combination of an offensive military doctrine with the Soviet political leaders' peaceful rhetoric looks at best ambiguous, at worst ominous, to Western statesmen.

Strategic programs have been the key element in the Soviet build-up, but conventional forces also have grown. Khrushchev had hoped to cut military manpower by one-third, as Soviet nuclear firepower increased, but the High Command opposed this plan. Following the ouster of Khrushchev in 1964, the Soviet Union has vastly strengthened its ground forces facing China, which has become a potential adversary.

### Pressing the West

In Europe, too, Soviet forces have been built up. During the early 1960s, Soviet strategists apparently assumed that any conflict in Europe would inevitably be nuclear from the start. But by the end of the decade, the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, responding to NATO's doctrine of "flexible response" (which envisages a conventional phase in a European war), began to prepare for nonnuclear and nuclear operations.

During the 1980s, Moscow's thinking about the role of conventional forces seems to have undergone a further shift, thanks to the changing strategic balance. Apparently, the Soviets seek to use their nuclear forces—notably the SS-20s and tactical nuclear weapons—to deter NATO from resorting to nuclear weapons, and thus prevent a land battle in Europe from "going nuclear." If successful, this strategy would allow the Soviet Union to exploit its advantage in men, tanks and artillery; it

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would also undermine the credibility of NATO's policy, namely, seeking to deter a Warsaw Pact attack by threatening to use nuclear weapons if allied armies in West Germany were overwhelmed.

The Soviet Union's growing ability to intervene in the Third World is another element that has worried the West, notably the United States. During the 1970s, the Soviet press argued that increasing Soviet strength made détente possible, because Western leaders now realized that they could not deal with the Soviet Union from a position of superiority, and were thus willing to adopt a more "realistic" view of their relations with Moscow.

### **Mixed Results**

While growing Soviet power provided the basis for East-West cooperation, in Russian eyes it also provided new opportunities for extending Soviet influence in the Third World. Encouraged by the U.S. defeat in Vietnam and by the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa, General I. Shavrov, chief of the General Staff Academy, pointed to the "process of change in the correlation of forces on the world arena in favor of the forces of progress and socialism." During the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union shifted to greater use of military power (arms supplies, advisers, Cuban troops) to gain influence in Africa and Indochina. The Kremlin had always claimed for itself the leading role in moving the world from capitalism to communism and had long been active (with very mixed results) in the Third World; the interventions in Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan marked a new and more energetic phase in Soviet policy.

During the 1970s, Moscow did not seem to acknowledge that its build-up of military power and its threatening actions in the Third World might undermine détente with the West. But there is little doubt that Soviet policy during the 1970s did contribute to the collapse of Soviet-American détente by the end of the decade.

Indeed, since the late 1970s, the United States, alarmed by the Soviet Union's growing military power and its intervention in the Third World, has embarked on major weapons programs (the Pershing II IRBM, nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, the B-1 bomber, the MX ICBM, and the Trident submarine) that could pose serious problems for Soviet security. Brezhnev apparently slowed the rate of growth of military spending during the late 1970s; now it seems that the High Command has been pressing for military outlays to grow more rapidly, this time in response to the American effort.

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Moreover, Moscow's vigorous policies during the late 1970s drove its main adversaries—the United States, China, Japan, and Western Europe—closer together. To shake this quasi-alliance, the Soviet Union has been playing (with limited success) on differences between Western Europe and the United States and seeking some sort of rapprochement with China.

In spite of these shifts of emphasis, the new Kremlin leadership is unlikely to undertake bold new initiatives. Nor is the Soviet Union going to withdraw completely from its global role, as its rearming of Syria after the Lebanese war makes clear. The Soviets will pursue arms reduction agreements as a way of "managing" the strategic relationship with the United States, but they will not feel impelled to make far-reaching concessions to gain such agreements.

### **No Great Hopes**

Why is this so? Military power is the area in which the Soviet Union has come closest to achieving its goal of matching and then overtaking the advanced capitalist powers. The Soviets' view is that parity, as they define it, must be maintained.

The Kremlin is likely to pursue better relations with the United States, but it will not hope for too much. The Soviets found the United States a difficult and unreliable partner during the 1970s, partly as a result of the vagaries of American domestic politics, and partly because Washington was unwilling (the Soviet leaders felt) to recognize the Soviet Union as a global superpower. But Soviet-American relations will continue to preoccupy the Kremlin because they are, in Soviet eyes, the main axis of world politics.

As a result, the Soviet Union may well temper its activity in the Third World, since it has become clear that its actions there affect the East-West relationship. Besides, the Kremlin's optimism during the mid-1970s about the prospects for expanding Soviet influence seems to have been replaced by a more sober assessment of the costs and benefits involved. The Soviet Union is embroiled in a counter-guerrilla war in Afghanistan; the Soviet-backed regimes in Angola and Ethiopia face strong internal opposition; and financial aid for Cuba and Vietnam is a drain on the Soviet economy.

In Eastern Europe, too, the Soviets face difficulties. The political situation in Poland remains unsettled. And the region as a whole, staggering under foreign debts totalling \$80 billion in early 1983, has become an economic liability to the Soviet Union, which must provide subsidies to its allies even while its

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own economy is suffering from a declining rate of growth.

When the Soviet Union's domestic headaches are added to its uncertain prospects abroad, a rather different picture emerges of the Soviet position in the world than if one simply looks at the size and weaponry of its formidable armed forces. As Soviet publications make clear, industrial and agricultural production has fallen short of domestic requirements, and technological innovation is sluggish. The Politburo is finding it more and more difficult to allocate resources for both military programs and civilian needs.

It is not surprising, then, that the Soviet leaders feel beleaguered. In the month before he died, Brezhnev gave a speech to senior military leaders in which he painted a bleak picture of the Soviet Union's international position. The United States, he said, had "launched a political, ideological, and economic offensive" against the Soviet Union and begun "an unprecedented arms race."

Although we know in principle that East-West relations are not a zero-sum game, that one side's loss is not necessarily the other's gain, we tend in practice to assume that because the world now appears more dangerous and complicated to the West, it must be more hospitable to the Soviet Union. But that is not so. The failure of détente with the United States during the 1970s has created serious difficulties for the Soviet Union. The fact that these troubles are in large measure of the Soviet Union's own making does not make them any easier for the Kremlin leaders to contemplate.



## THE UNEASY ALLIANCE: WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

by Edward A. Kolodziej and Robert A. Pollard

"In this century," Senator Sam Nunn (D.-Ga.) observed not long ago, "Americans have died in large numbers on European battlefields. We are prepared to do so again if necessary, but only for a Europe that is dedicated to its own defense."

Once again, with anti-American demonstrations taking place in England and Germany, Americans are asking if the costs of sustaining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)\* exceed the benefits, and if the Europeans really share the U.S. view of the Soviet threat. But this is nothing new. "It is a myth," as European affairs analyst Anton DePorte notes, "that there was once a golden age when Europeans followed American leadership compliantly and cheerfully and put their faith in American power and goodwill without question."

American ambivalence toward Europe goes back to the early days of the Republic. In his "Farewell Address" on September 19, 1796, George Washington warned that "Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. . . . 'Tis our true policy to stay clear of any permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world."

As long as the United States enjoyed physical isolation from Europe, American energies could be directed westward toward conquering the frontier. Great Britain, by maintaining a stable balance of power in Europe and keeping world seaways open, shielded its former American colonies from the intrigues of continental diplomacy—"the pest of the peace of the world," as Thomas Jefferson put it.

The unequivocal threat that Josef Stalin posed to U.S. security led after World War II to the first long-term peacetime deployment of American troops in Europe and, in 1949, to the

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\*NATO's members are Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United States, and West Germany. President Charles De Gaulle pulled France out of NATO's integrated military command in 1966, but it remains a member of the North Atlantic Council, and, unofficially, does joint planning with the allies. Spain joined in 1982, but has yet to integrate its armed forces into NATO.



*"It's getting dark in here . . . Somebody turn on the lights," reads the caption of this 1983 cartoon. European protesters have largely ignored the Soviet deployment of 243 SS-20s trained on Western Europe.*

founding of NATO. In 1983, alongside British, German, Canadian, and French units, the United States maintains 248,000 servicemen, 700 combat aircraft, and 5,000 tactical nuclear weapons in West Germany alone.

The mutual interests binding together the Alliance are still strong. Neither the Americans nor the Europeans alone can preserve the democratic values or basic economic and security interests that all have in common.

Nonetheless, the Alliance has led a troubled existence. Americans and their NATO partners have repeatedly argued over four key issues: military strategy and nuclear weapons, relations with the Soviets, distribution of defense burdens, and trade and monetary matters. But at no time have these four problems afflicted the allies all at once—until now.

Since the creation of NATO, the European allies have depended upon the United States to deter a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. As long as U.S. strategic forces—first B-29 bombers stationed in England, now ICBMs, SLBMs, and B-52s—offered an inexpensive and convincing way to deter a Russian blitzkrieg, the Europeans balked at massive conventional rearmament. In effect, leaders in European capitals con-



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ceded conventional superiority to the Warsaw Pact and accepted a version of Secretary of State (1953–59) John Foster Dulles's "massive retaliation" policy that relegated NATO ground forces in West Germany to the role of a "tripwire" against a Soviet attack. Arguably, this deterrent theory has worked: The Soviets have, on occasion, threatened the West, but have yet to break the peace.

Yet once the Soviets launched Sputnik in 1957, the American nuclear "umbrella" began to look a bit fragile. European leaders, notably French President Charles De Gaulle, asked if Washington would unleash its ICBMs in response to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe once Moscow could retaliate against the continental United States with its own ICBMs. Would the U.S. President risk New York to save Paris, Bonn, or Copenhagen?

Since the late 1960s, Soviet strategic parity with the United States has renewed European anxieties. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger conceded in 1979 that the U.S. pledge "to defend NATO against Soviet attack with its own weapons is losing credibility because of the risk of exposing American cities to nuclear devastation by the USSR."

Starting in the mid-1970s, the Soviets began deploying 243 intermediate-range MIRVed SS-20 missiles and 100 Backfire bombers in western Russia—all aimed at West European targets. Ironically, the SALT I agreements, by roughly stabilizing the Soviet-American strategic balance, had magnified the importance of the Warsaw Pact's overall regional advantage in nuclear and conventional weapons. The Europeans, Kissinger has written, feared that "the Soviet Union might be tempted to exploit its preponderance of intermediate-range missiles for blackmail against Europe—reasoning that no American response with strategic weapons would be forthcoming."

NATO's reaction was a unanimous "two-track" decision in December 1979 to deploy 572 American-manned missiles (108

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Pershing II, 464 cruise) in Western Europe (West Germany, Britain, and Italy) beginning in December 1983. With the new missiles in place, European officials believed, the superpowers could not use their nuclear weapons in Europe without risking a nuclear exchange between their homelands; specifically, the Pershing IIs and cruise missiles once more tied America's fate to Europe's. On the other hand, NATO's pledge to reduce its deployment if the Soviets followed suit won the European states a role in superpower nuclear arms talks (the Intermediate Nuclear Force negotiations now taking place in Geneva).

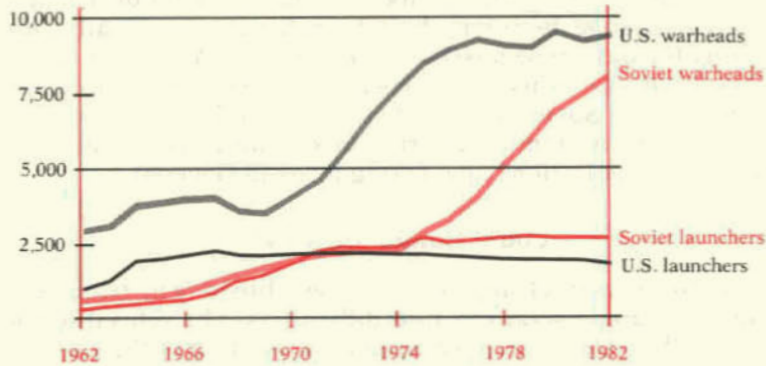
### **Come Home, America?**

Yet this two-track approach to re-establishing a "balance of terror" in Europe soon ran into difficulties. The refusal of the Reagan White House to push Senate ratification of the SALT II treaty and its acceleration of Jimmy Carter's strategic nuclear build-up reactivated the European Left, notably Germany's Green Party, and generated the most violent anti-American demonstrations on the continent since the late 1960s. Perhaps most unsettling to the Europeans were President Reagan's remarks of October 1981, suggesting that he "could see where you could have the exchange of tactical [nuclear] weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to push the [ICBM] button." Reagan's November 1981 "zero-option" proposal, issued without full warning to his allies—to cancel U.S. "deployment of Pershing II and ground launched cruise missiles if the Soviets [would] dismantle their SS-20, SS-4, and SS-5 missiles"—did not quiet European fears. Washington's terms seemed too stiff to bring the Soviets to any kind of agreement.

Leaders in Bonn, London, and Rome soon felt that they were facing the worst of all worlds: a destabilizing arms race, the overall deterioration of East-West relations, reduced prospects for genuine arms control, and strong criticism at home from the Left for having tied European interests to seemingly more bellicose U.S. policies.

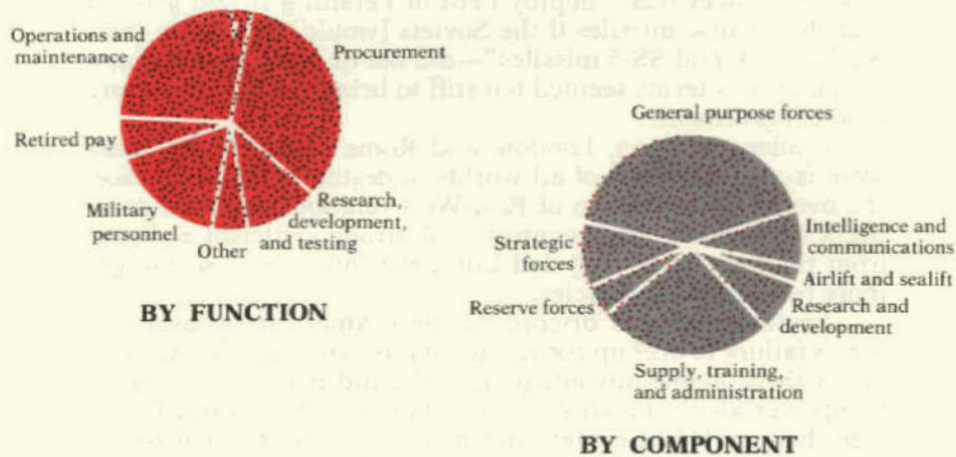
Another source of discord has been American ire over Europe's failure to beef up conventional forces to meet the Warsaw Pact's three-to-one advantage in tanks and two-to-one edge in manpower along the West German border—the Central Front. (See chart, p. 117.) Georgetown University's Earl Ravenal points out that "Europe will continue to be the main beneficiary of American defense resources in 1984, accounting for \$115 billion." A phased U.S. pullout of its nonnuclear forces, he argues,

**U.S.-SOVIET STRATEGIC BALANCE,  
LAUNCHERS AND WARHEADS, 1962-1982**



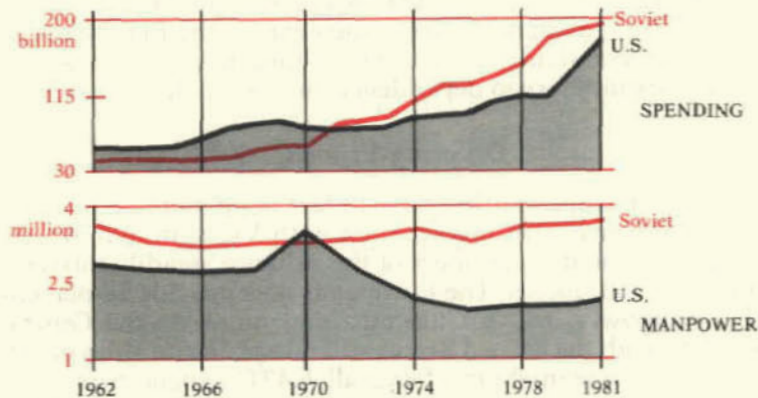
The number of Soviet and U.S. strategic "launchers" (above) has leveled off, thanks to the SALT I and SALT II talks, but the quantity of warheads has soared as both sides have MIRVed their ICBMs and SLBMs. Reagan's 1984 defense budget (below) calls for \$274 billion to pay, train, and equip nearly 2.2 million active duty personnel (783,000 Army, 613,000 Air Force, 572,000 Navy, and 197,000 Marine Corps).

**AMERICA'S 1984 DEFENSE BUDGET**



Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies; Congressional Research Service.

**U.S.-SOVIET MILITARY SPENDING AND MANPOWER, 1962-1981**



*Moscow has outspent Washington on defense since 1970 (above), and the Warsaw Pact maintains a wide margin over NATO in men and tanks (below). But numbers can be misleading. In combat conditions, such as the 1967, 1973, and 1982 Middle East wars, U.S.-built fighters and tanks outclassed Arab-manned Soviet weapons. Moreover, 52 of the Red Army's 191 divisions (not all at full strength) are tied up on the Chinese border.*

**NATO-WARSAW PACT TANKS AND GROUND FORCES ON THE CENTRAL FRONT, 1970-1982\***



\* Graph does not include French forces, which were withdrawn from NATO's integrated command in 1966, or Soviet forces in the Western districts of the Soviet Union.

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would ease federal deficits and reduce the risk of this country being dragged into another war in Europe. At the very least, many U.S. Senators and Congressmen expect the Europeans to pick up a larger share of the defense burden, even if, realistically, they cannot forego dependence on U.S. nuclear weapons.

### Differing Visions

But our European allies have in fact done more on defense. While Americans were preoccupied with Vietnam and Watergate, the continental members of the Alliance steadily modernized their armed forces. The Europeans now provide 70 percent of the manpower, combat aircraft, and tanks on the Central Front. Although the United States still outspends its allies on defense, the European share of overall NATO expenditures rose from 23 percent in 1969 to 39 percent in 1981. And West Germany and most other NATO allies retained conscription while the United States abolished it in 1973.\*

Europeans and Americans also do not see eye-to-eye on "détente." For Americans, détente is vaguely associated with a brief period under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford that was climaxed by SALT I, the 1975 Helsinki accords normalizing post-World War II boundaries, and hopes for expanded trade. Many Americans believe that the West received little or nothing from détente, that Moscow used it to legitimize the oppression of Eastern Europe, and that it placed Western Europe in danger of being seduced—or "Finlandized"—by the Russian bear.

For Europeans, notably West Germans, détente has had a longer life, bringing gains in trade and cultural exchange. From 1970 to 1981, West German exports to the Soviet Union roughly quintupled. The Germans believe that importing Soviet natural gas (\$4 billion worth, or 2.6 percent of their total energy needs, in 1982) has reduced their dependence upon uncertain Middle Eastern supplies.

Trade and monetary problems pose perhaps the greatest long-term difficulty for the Alliance. In European capitals, disenchantment with alleged U.S. economic mismanagement is widespread. High U.S. interest rates draw capital from Europe and force up rates on the continent; the exceptional strength of the U.S. dollar raises the cost of oil imports (which are paid for in dollars) and disrupts domestic economic programs, notably

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\*Only Canada, Great Britain, Luxembourg, and the United States have all-volunteer forces. The five European members of NATO with the largest armed forces in 1982—Turkey (569,000 men), Germany (495,000), France (493,000), Italy (370,000), and Spain (347,000)—have all maintained some form of conscription.

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in France. Moreover, Washington's tight money policy and its tilt toward protectionism appear to prolong the worst recession and highest unemployment in Western Europe in 50 years. At the Williamsburg economic summit in July 1983, Reagan promised to cut government deficits, lower the cost of borrowing, and stabilize the dollar. But European leaders and financiers fear that unless Washington drastically reduces its budget deficits, their countries will suffer from high interest rates and unemployment for the foreseeable future.

Washington's effort to restrict East-West trade is also irritating to the Europeans, notably the French and the Germans. The United States has repeatedly sought to use curbs on trade, investment, and technology transfer as economic weapons against the Soviets, as with President Carter's curtailment of grain exports and Reagan's restrictions of computer sales. Yet, the Soviets have usually found ways to circumvent U.S. controls, to find other suppliers, or to build plants whose output could substitute for imports from the West.

#### **American Hypocrisy?**

The prospects for effective economic pressure against Moscow today are even more remote. The Europeans now depend upon exports to the East to help sustain domestic employment and production. No wonder, then, that the leaders of West Germany, France, Italy, and even Britain's Margaret Thatcher refused to accede to President Reagan's requests during 1981-1982 to cancel their multi-billion dollar gas pipeline contracts with the Soviet Union. As European officials have made clear, they must answer to domestic interest groups every bit as vocal and volatile on foreign trade issues as their American counterparts. Reagan's decision, under pressure from American farmers, first to lift Carter's post-Afghanistan partial grain embargo and then, in 1983, to raise grain sales to Moscow by 50 percent, seemed blatantly hypocritical in European capitals.

Despite all the problems confronting NATO, it is likely that the Western allies will once again muddle through this most recent of its several postwar crises. The two-track decision remains NATO's position, despite massive protest demonstrations in London and Bonn. Even with its powerful Communist Party opposing the move, Italy is quietly preparing bases in Sicily for 112 U.S. cruise missiles. The Thatcher government, fortified by a resounding electoral triumph in June 1983, will begin installing 96 U.S. cruise missiles in England by December 1983 if U.S. talks on Intermediate Nuclear Forces with the Soviet Union

break down. And amid continuing demonstrations against the missiles, West Germany under Helmut Kohl remains America's good friend. As former Chancellor Willy Brandt argues, "It would be wrong . . . if people in the United States took the European anti-missiles attitude for anti-Americanism. . . ."

François Mitterand's France, out of NATO since 1966, has supported the two-track decision and helped to steady wavering West German resolve. Without abandoning its independent nuclear force, the *force de frappe* (18 intermediate-range ballistic missiles, five submarines with 80 SLBMs, and 34 Mirage bombers), France is willing to station Pluton tactical nuclear missiles in West Germany to reinforce the three armored divisions (48,500 troops) that it maintains in the western region of that country—forces that could serve as a backup for NATO in the event of a Soviet invasion.

The conflicts remain. On occasion, the Europeans still fear that the United States will either abandon them or go too far, blundering into war with the Soviets. They need our nuclear deterrent to protect them from Moscow; not surprisingly, they feel uneasy with their lack of control over its use. Americans worry about "Finlandization," especially of West Germany. And, through periodic threats and blandishments, the Soviets will seek, as they have since 1945, to divide Americans from Europeans, Frenchmen from Germans, Norwegians from Britons, Left from Right. Yet, international economic upheavals, such as another Mideast oil crisis or a world financial breakdown, may do more to test the Alliance than anything the Soviets can do short of war.

In the long run, the strength of the West depends as much on European and American confidence as on raw military power. If Americans and Europeans, two centuries after the American Revolution, must hang together or hang separately in assuring their defense, they must also learn to "hang loose," to remember that NATO, for all its flaws, has kept the peace in Europe for 35 years, and, with common sense, flexibility, and consistent leadership, will continue to do so for some time to come.



## LIMITS ON THE USE OF AMERICAN MILITARY POWER

*by Samuel F. Wells, Jr.*

"You can't send soldiers off to war without having the support of the American people," Army Chief of Staff General Edward C. Meyer told newsmen just before retiring last June. "I think that's one of the great lessons that comes out of Vietnam."

Meyer urged "a face-to-face discussion between the President and the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the military as to what the hell they want us to do" before the White House sends troops off to fight in Central America, or elsewhere.

A Vietnam veteran, America's top soldier was voicing the "never again" sentiment that has permeated the officer corps since 1973: no U.S. military intervention abroad without a decisive strategy and an unequivocal congressional mandate. A clearcut U.S. strategy will be hard to achieve—in good part because Congress, in its present mood, is unlikely to give the White House a mandate for action anywhere, short of World War III. In brief, President Ronald Reagan enjoys much less freedom of action than did Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1965, when he sent the first Marine units to Vietnam. The 1973 War Powers Act, for instance, bars presidential dispatch of troops abroad for more than 90 days without congressional approval; the House of Representatives has sought to prevent Reagan from giving covert aid to rebel groups attempting to overthrow the Soviet-supported, anti-American Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Indeed, Congress, fearing "another Vietnam," has sharply curbed U.S. efforts to assist, with money and advisers, the lackluster El Salvadoran regime's economic and military campaign against 6,000 Marxist-led guerrillas. And, in so doing, Congress may be bringing on the very dilemma it (and the White House) wants to avoid: sending in U.S. combat troops or accepting a guerrilla victory in America's backyard.

More broadly, what has also changed since the early 1960s is that America's military capabilities do not match its diplomatic commitments overseas, notably in the Middle East.

In January 1980, President Jimmy Carter stated that the United States would intervene "with any means necessary, including military force," to repel any "attempt by any outside



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force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region." Responding to the Khomeini revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Carter created the Rapid Deployment Force (actually a new designation for already existing home-based Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine units) to protect the area stretching from the Horn of Africa to Egypt and Pakistan. In the same spirit, Congress revived draft registration (but not draft call-ups). Yet the ability of U.S. forces to protect American interests in this vast region remains questionable—for a variety of reasons.

First, although the likeliest current threats to U.S. security—in the Persian Gulf and Central America—are nonnuclear, the forces designed to meet them are usually underfunded and hence left in a state of relatively low readiness. Most U.S. troops overseas are stationed in Western Europe, regarded as the most crucial "front," but, thanks to the nuclear deterrent, the least likely scene of hostilities.\*

For most of the postwar era, its nuclear superiority gave the United States the edge in any major showdown with its prime adversary, the Soviet Union, notably in the 1962 Cuban missile affair. It also permitted Washington and its allies to maintain far smaller ground forces than did the Soviets. This "age of cheap security" finally ended around 1970, as the Russians won nuclear parity; but by then, other factors, notably the drawn-out Vietnam War, had revived the popular American aversion to large conventional forces in peacetime.

The Vietnam War, of course, is the central episode in the development of U.S. defense policy since 1945. Most analysts now agree that the Vietnam conflict was the first war in U.S. history that the armed forces were materially prepared to fight, and where American troops won every major battle. And yet, North

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\*The 19 active U.S. Army and Marine divisions, each with 15,000–18,500 men at full strength, would be hard pressed to meet NATO and other overseas commitments. Four divisions are in West Germany and three in the Pacific; six in the U.S. are pledged to reinforce NATO. The Rapid Deployment Force can call upon another four-and-one-third divisions, leaving only one-and-two-thirds uncommitted divisions. Fifty-nine of the U.S. Navy's 63 amphibious ships scattered from Okinawa to the Mediterranean would be needed to transport a single division overseas. The only pool upon which the Pentagon could draw to fight any prolonged "small" war, without over-committing its active forces, would be the nine divisions, 34 air transport squadrons, and 170 transport ships of the U.S. reserve forces.

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*Samuel F. Wells, Jr., 48, is currently on research leave from his duties as secretary of the International Security Studies Program at the Wilson Center. Born in South Carolina, he was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1957 and took his M.A. (1961) and Ph.D. (1967) at Harvard. He is the co-editor of, and contributor to, Economics and World Power: An Assessment of American Diplomacy Since 1789 (1984).*



*Salvadoran officer candidates at Fort Benning, Georgia. More than 5,600 Salvadorans have been trained by U.S. advisers at Fort Benning, Fort Bragg, N.C., in Panama, and in El Salvador. Reagan has tried to use aid and diplomacy as a substitute for U.S. troops in Central America.*

Vietnam triumphed, primarily because President Johnson tried to "save South Vietnam" on the cheap. To avoid political attacks from Left or Right, Johnson variously refused to assess the true long-range costs and benefits of U.S. intervention, to seek explicit congressional approval, to sacrifice his Great Society programs to the needs of the war, to frame a decisive strategy, to mobilize the reserves, or to prepare the American public for a long, costly struggle. This intellectual and moral confusion in Washington soon led to demoralization and division across the country, exacerbated by Richard Nixon's 1973–1974 Watergate scandal, and ultimately, to Communist victory.

The legacy of Vietnam lives on. The immediate results included the 1969 Nixon Doctrine, which placed the primary burden for regional defense on American allies; the abolition of the draft in 1973; the 1973 War Powers Act; the 1975 Clark Amendment, which forbade U.S. covert involvement in the Angolan civil war; deep cuts in the defense budget during the early 1970s; and a generalized readiness in the press and Congress to believe the worst about the military, the CIA, and U.S. commitments abroad.

"By 1975," Richard Betts of the Brookings Institution ob-

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serves, "the dominant 'lesson' was that Washington should take no risks, that it should not begin messy involvements in the Third World if there is *any* danger that they cannot be concluded without considerable sacrifice."

The election of Jimmy Carter in 1976 may largely have signified a reaction to Watergate rather than to Vietnam. Nonetheless, the former Georgia governor promised to cut defense spending. He harbored mixed feelings about Vietnam. "We have an aversion to military involvement in foreign countries," he said in response to a newsman's question about troubles in Zaire in May 1977. "We are suffering, or benefiting, from the experience that we had in Vietnam." During his first year in office, Carter cut the Pentagon budget (from \$132 billion in FY 1976 to \$124 billion in FY 1978), canceled the B-1 bomber, and first advanced, then retracted under protests from Congress and our Asian allies, a proposal to withdraw 30,000 U.S. troops from Korea.

### **El Salvador Is Not Vietnam**

The Soviet dispatch of 17,000 advisers to Ethiopia and South Yemen and 23,000 Cubans to Angola did not bring on U.S. military intervention, but the sudden collapse in Iran of the pro-American Shah's regime in January 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the seemingly endless captivity of 53 hostages in the Teheran embassy did stir the American public. By the end of 1980, Americans had begun to feel "troubled, aggressive, tough, and resentful," according to pollster Daniel Yankelovich.

Like the 1950 Communist invasion of South Korea, an international crisis had galvanized popular support for rearmament. In January 1980, President Carter sought to increase defense expenditures by more than four percent annually (after inflation) over five years, while Ronald Reagan campaigned for an even higher rate of Pentagon spending.

In the newly elected administration's plans, most of the additional "Reagan money" was earmarked for ships, missiles, and aircraft with the Navy and "strategic deterrence" the chief benefactors.

But the current trouble spots lie elsewhere.

In "the American backyard," the six-year-old guerrilla war in El Salvador poses the most immediate threat to U.S. interests. This low-intensity struggle is partly sustained by assistance from Nicaragua, which is in turn supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union. Happily for the White House, El Salvador is very different "on the ground" from South Vietnam, despite the seemingly similar images on U.S. television of jungles, moun-

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tains, guerrillas, helicopters, and U.S. advisers.

The guerrillas, mostly led by admirers of Fidel Castro, belong to five different factions; they lack the tenacity, organization, and willingness to die that characterized the Vietnamese Communists. They have no counterpart to Ho Chi Minh. Their spokesmen concede that they do not have, as yet, the peasant support necessary for a true popular revolt. Nor do they enjoy sanctuaries in neighboring countries; both Honduras and Guatemala are run by pro-American regimes. The greatest asset of the rebels has been the sloth, corruption, and factionalism of El Salvador's military leadership, which has been unable—or unwilling—to curb right-wing death squads, and unable to win many hearts and minds. The people simply try to survive.

In El Salvador, as elsewhere in the region, the United States could benefit from the fact that Western ideas of democracy and pluralism are less alien than they were to the Indochinese. But prospects for a negotiated settlement seem slim in the absence of an effective political center and of any real incentive for either side to make a deal. Indeed, as Americans should know, civil wars, by their very nature, seldom end in compromise.

Almost no one, least of all the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *wants* to commit thousands of U.S. troops to Central America. To avoid this prospect, calm Congress, and still ward off a Marxist victory, the Reagan administration has adopted an *ad hoc* mix of diplomacy and covert (CIA) and overt (military training and economic aid) assistance to help friendly forces in Central America.

### Good-bye to Pluralism

In nearby Nicaragua, the United States had helped to maintain the corrupt and cruel regime of the Somozas, father and son, since 1936. In a reversal of policy, the Carter administration granted recognition and some \$75 million in economic aid to the Sandinista rebels after they ousted Anastasio Somoza in June 1979. Since then, the Managua regime under Rafael Cordoba, Sergio Ramírez Mercado, and Daniel Ortega Saavedra has moved sharply to the left, started a Soviet-supplied arms build-up, invited 3,500 Soviet and Cuban advisers into the country, jailed opponents, curbed the press, and, generally, failed to live up to its pledges to the Organization of American States to promote democratic "pluralism." Several leading Sandinistas have fled into exile or joined the guerrilla opposition. At the behest of President Reagan, the CIA is supplying 8,000 to 10,000 anti-Sandinista guerrillas, or "contras," on the northern (Honduran) and southern (Costa Rican) borders with light

**THE DOLLARS AND POLITICS OF DEFENSE:  
CARTER AND REAGAN**

With annual \$200 billion federal deficits in prospect, and national elections approaching, the "guns versus butter" debate over President Reagan's projected \$1.8 trillion, five-year Pentagon budget is likely to continue.

Senator Gary Hart (D.-Colo.), for example, has called the Reagan plan "excessive and inappropriate in view of the condition of our economy and the severe budget cutbacks the administration proposes in other areas." But others, such as the Hoover Institution's Albert Wohlstetter, reply that the critics treat "what the founding fathers called the 'common defense' as if it were only one more domestic interest group clamoring for an entitlement or a larger share of the domestic pie. . . ." Defense spending, Wohlstetter contends, must be determined by a careful calculation of external threats to American security.

Today's difficulties stem in part from Vietnam and the uncompleted rearmament efforts of the early 1960s. The Kennedy administration greatly expanded U.S. strategic and conventional forces. But the \$130 billion Vietnam War intervened, slowing both strategic weapons procurement and the research and development needed for overall modernization.

Presidents Nixon and Ford, reflecting the public's post-Vietnam antipathy to the military, cut defense spending (in constant 1972 dollars) from \$98.1 billion in 1969 to \$66.9 billion in 1976. Only part of the decline can be traced to the winding down of the war: U.S. military manpower shrank to its lowest levels since 1950.

Both friends and foes of Reagan's build-up often forget that the current upsurge began in earnest under Jimmy Carter. Carter did slash Ford's *projected* budget for FY 1978 by several billion dollars, but real spending (adjusted for inflation) actually rose slightly as Carter sought to meet his 1977 pledge to NATO to increase real defense spending by three percent a year. And the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan prompted Carter to ask Congress for even higher increases.

Carter's public vacillation on defense issues made him an easy target for candidate Ronald Reagan during the 1980 election campaign. But Carter began many of the key programs now associated with Reagan: the MX strategic missile, the M-1 tank, the Rapid Deployment Force, the Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles in Europe, and the improvement of communications and command. The Democrat's 1980 partial grain embargo also anticipated Reagan's economic pressure against the Soviet bloc. "Apart from the SALT II agreement," Harvard's Samuel Huntington notes, "no broad military concept or policy of the Carter administration was rejected by the Reagan administration."

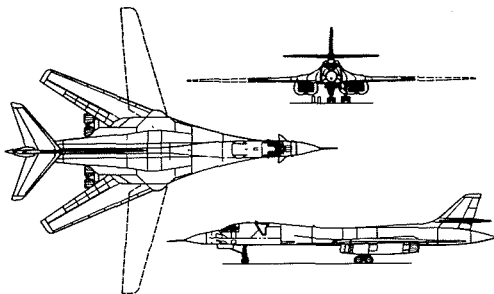
Yet Reagan shows far more determination. He displays no doubts about the value of military strength in superpower relations; rearmament does not take a back seat to arms control. In another break with Carter, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger has promised to answer Soviet aggression (presumably, against Western Europe) by launching counteroffensives against the enemy's outposts (e.g., Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam), rather than simply relying on traditional defensive strategy in the NATO area.

The Reagan program's most striking features are new conventional weapons and forces designed for combat outside Europe, including the Persian Gulf. The lion's share of the new Reagan funds would go to the Navy to build 112 new warships (for a total of 650 combat vessels by 1995)—amphibious assault ships, two new large \$3.4 billion nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, Aegis guided-missile cruisers, SSN-68 attack submarines, and the reactivation of Iowa-class battleships with Tomahawk cruise missiles.

Congress has already trimmed Reagan's defense program (by eight percent in 1983), in part to meet domestic outcries, but also because the White House plan contains some major contradictions. Reagan, like some of his predecessors, has emphasized long-term purchases of shiny new cruisers and bombers but has slighted "readiness" of existing forces and refused to revive conscription.

And Reagan may someday regret his frequent claims—designed to arouse popular support for his defense budgets—that the Russians have won strategic superiority over the United States. As the Brookings Institution's William Kaufmann observes, playing the "numbers game" can only backfire: No matter how much the United States spends, it will probably never catch up with the Soviets in manpower, tanks, and even strategic weapons, thus reinforcing the very perception of American weakness that Reagan seeks to avoid.

Finally, the Reagan administration has yet to launch a comprehensive review of its foreign and defense goals, spurring doubts even among its allies that it has matched means to ends. For example, the early confusion within the White House over U.S. aims in Central America has made it difficult to win congressional votes for covert aid to Nicaragua's "contra" rebels. As budget deficits stir opposition to rearmament, the Reagan White House will have to set clearer priorities—or leave the choices to its adversaries on Capitol Hill.



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arms, advisers, and other assistance.

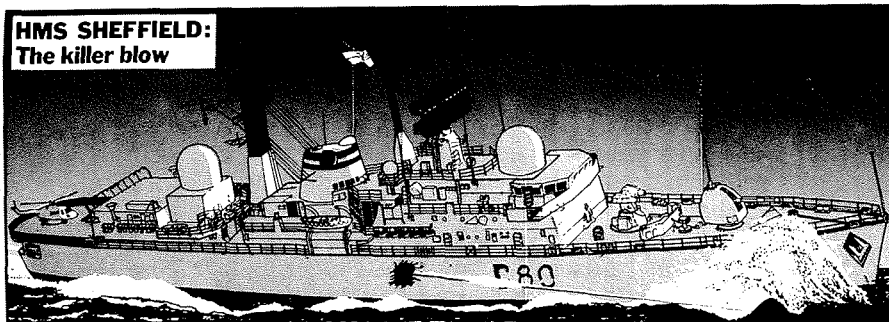
For all its strong rhetoric and military maneuvers in the area, the Reagan White House has been unable to move directly either to force reforms on the Salvadoran regime or to supply friendly forces with adequate military and financial aid. Vietnam haunts the debates in Congress. Indeed, the administration has been reluctant to increase the small number (55) of U.S. military advisers in El Salvador partly because of congressional outcries and partly because of the apparent popular U.S. indifference toward the fate of Central America. In a *New York Times*/CBS poll conducted in June 1983, only 25 percent of those surveyed knew that the United States was supporting the Salvadoran government, and only 13 percent realized that Washington sides with the insurgent "contras" in Nicaragua. With the growing debate in Washington, public awareness may increase.

### **"Power Projection"?**

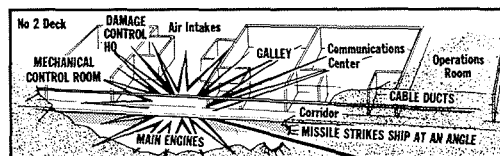
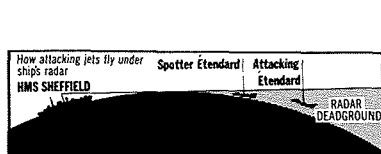
In the Middle East, which in early 1983 supplied nine percent of U.S., 49 percent of French, and 66 percent of Japanese oil imports, Washington has a major commitment. The United States has pledged not only to safeguard the independence of Israel but to preserve the flow of Persian Gulf oil to the Western industrial countries and Japan. In keeping with the Carter Doctrine, President Reagan asserted in October 1980 that "There's no way that we could stand by and see [Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Gulf] taken over by anyone that would shut off the oil."

The big question is whether the United States could execute the military effort and muster the political fortitude required to honor this commitment, should the worst happen.

For the moment, no grave menace exists, even though the border war between Iran and Iraq that erupted in September 1980 has threatened more than once to spill over into other oil-producing Gulf states, notably Kuwait. The most likely trouble in the Gulf would be an externally aided rebellion against a pro-U.S. regime. To help meet such a contingency, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) theoretically can summon 300,000 men from all four services to fill the ranks of, or support, the Rapid Deployment Force. But as of mid-1983, the RDF for all practical purposes consisted of 17 loaded supply ships at anchor in the lagoon of Diego Garcia, five to seven steaming days from the Gulf, ready to support 12,500 Marines for about 30 days of fighting. The Marines would be flown in from California to "marry up" with the supplies. In the words of Senator John Glenn (D.-Ohio), a former Marine, the RDF "has just three prob-



**HMS SHEFFIELD:  
The killer blow**



*After the 1982 sinking of H.M.S. Sheffield by a single Argentine Exocet off the Falklands, congressional critics urged the U.S. to build smaller, more numerous ships that may offer less inviting targets to enemy missiles than do a few huge but vulnerable \$3.4 billion super-carriers.*

lems: It's not rapid, it's not deployable, and it's not a force."

Even if the President, in the event of a crisis, could win congressional approval for a U.S. troop deployment in the Gulf, the RDF would face major obstacles. The local geography is unfavorable. And the realities belie easy Washington talk of "power projection." Consider, for instance, an intervention by the RDF to secure the five main Saudi oil fields, which cover an area (10,000 square miles) about twice the size of Connecticut. In an emergency—e.g., the imminent destruction of the Saudi oil fields by hostile sapper groups—the RDF's designated Navy, Marine, Army, and Air Force personnel would have to reach their destination very quickly. Just to air-land a 15,000-man division with three days of supplies would require numerous roundtrip flights by the limited U.S. fleet of 234 C-141 and 70 C-5 giant cargo planes. Even under the best conditions, a Marine Corps study estimated in 1981, "the initial forces deployed [would] run out of rations (and bullets, if committed) before the last of the division is landed," and before the ships at Diego Garcia could reach the Gulf.

Other difficulties could plague an airlift of even modest proportions. The United States has air landing agreements (for re-



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fueling) with Egypt, Morocco, and Turkey, as well as access to ports in Somalia and Kenya, but in every case, full cooperation by the host government would depend upon the politics of the emergency. Other facilities once available to U.S. air or naval forces—in Ethiopia, Iran, Libya, and Malta, to name a few—are now gone, and the growing unwillingness of our European allies to offer landing rights in advance could require eleventh-hour negotiations to secure them. The U.S. airlift to Israel during the 1973 October War illustrated some of the problems: NATO allies, such as Greece, Turkey, Spain, Italy, West Germany, and the Netherlands, refused the Americans permission to use their bases to resupply Israel for fear of offending the Arabs, and the U.S. C-5As and C-141s had to be refueled in flight by tanker aircraft at long intervals. To deliver one ton of materiel to Israel required five tons of fuel, and therefore greatly reduced the supplies that could be airlifted.

Yet despite its limited ability to intervene decisively, the RDF—with 1,800 Marines sometimes stationed in the Indian Ocean and a large backup force, including 12,500 California-based Marines, in the continental United States—may, by its very existence, serve as a useful deterrent to local conflagrations.

However, the chief deterrent to any massive Soviet thrust through Iran—the oft-cited “worst case”—would not be the RDF, but the strong prospect that such a move would risk setting off World War III.

It seems clear that in order to help NATO offset a Soviet threat in Europe, to diminish reliance on nuclear weapons, to deter attacks on South Korea, and to be prepared to fight in the Gulf and the Caribbean, the United States must mobilize, train, and equip its conventional combat forces more effectively than in the past. Yet the early Reagan defense budgets give top priority to the procurement of big-ticket, high-technology weapon systems—the B-1 bomber, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, Trident submarines, the MX missile, and F-15 fighter aircraft. In the likely event that Congress cuts Pentagon outlays, the readiness of the general purpose forces will probably suffer disproportionately. Budgetary constraints aside, the nation has yet to determine when and how it would use its forces in all of the places it is pledged to defend.



## THE HUMAN ELEMENT

by Charles C. Moskos, Jr., and Peter Braestrup

"I'm telling you," Command Sergeant Major Ronald Hammer told a *New York Times* reporter at Fort Hood, Texas, last spring, "we are so much better today than we were a year ago." Because the Army is signing up better-qualified soldiers and discharging those who do not perform well, the "[one] thing you don't hear," added Sgt. Major Malachi Mitchel, "is that old standard: I came in the Army to keep from going to jail."

This marks a major change. After the demise of the draft, a domestic political casualty of the Vietnam War, in 1973, the nation's armed services suffered well-publicized recruitment and retention problems. One result was low morale and combat capability. A study during the 1970s, for example, showed that more than 20 percent of the U.S. Seventh Army's tank gunners in West Germany facing the Soviets could not properly aim their battlesights. The services were forced to undertake remedial reading programs for their recruits and simplify training manuals to comic book level.

Such trends were especially alarming to the military chiefs in view of the services' shrinking size, the nation's unshrinking overseas commitments, and the demanding new battlefield technology. Since the Korean War, the United States had been developing a "capital-intensive" military force, with a heavy emphasis on high technology, air mobility, communications, flexible tactics, and command and control. Gone were the days of World War II, when the ground and air forces, in particular, relied on *mass* to overcome the foe. Today, to offset the quantitative advantages of its chief adversary, the Soviet Union, in men and weaponry, the United States (like the Israelis) must depend on *quality* in both. Mobile tactics, heat-seeking missiles, new radar, helicopter gunships, more complicated tanks, ships and aircraft—all require smarter fighters and technicians than did the simpler warfare of old.

Since 1980, the Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, and Navy have enjoyed something of a windfall. The dramas of Afghanistan and the Iranian hostage crisis stirred more public support for the military, even in academe; the number of colleges with Army Reserve Officer Training Corps units has grown from 287 to 315 since 1975. Higher recruit pay (\$573 per month) and fringe benefits have helped. And above all, the dearth of civilian

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jobs, aggravated by the 1982–83 recession, has made a three-year hitch, or even a 20-year service career, attractive to more young Americans.\*

Although the Army is the least popular of the services, 86 percent of its enlistees during the first half of fiscal year 1983 were high school graduates, compared with 54 percent in 1980. Efficiency and unit morale have risen; rates of unauthorized absence and desertion have gone down. In fact, the Pentagon is now worried that its brighter recruits may be serving under too many not so bright sergeants and petty officers—those who entered service during the 1970s when enlistment standards were lowered in order to fill up the ranks.†

### No More Mutinies

Problems still remain. Contrary to the predictions of the 1970 Gates Commission, which recommended the all-volunteer force, U.S. peacetime military strength has declined from more than 2.6 million men and women in the early 1960s (before Vietnam) to around 2.1 million today, affecting manning levels of U.S. Navy ships and U.S. Army units assigned to back up NATO. Nine of the Army's 16 active divisions, for example, now depend on call-ups of designated Reserve or National Guard units to bring them to full combat strength.

To maintain even the current reduced force level, the four armed services must recruit each year about 350,000 enlisted men—or roughly one in four of all eligible males. Similarly, the end of the draft has hurt recruiting for the National Guard, although organized Ready Reserve units of the Navy, Air Force, and Marines now approach 100 percent of authorized strength.

In both active and reserve units, minority members account for a rising proportion of the enlisted ranks, particularly in Army and Marine Corps rifle companies. Blacks made up 37 percent of all Army entrants in 1980, thrice their proportion of the

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\*In mid-1983, the unemployment rate for male Americans aged 18 and 19 stood at 21 percent (versus 13 percent in 1978).

†Half of all first term re-enlistees in 1982 were in the Army's lowest mental category (Category IV).

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*Unlike peacetime military service, war pushes men to their limits. Life's Tom Lea sketched an exhausted Marine on Peleliu in the South Pacific in 1944. "His mind had crumbled in battle, and his eyes were like two black empty holes in his head," Lea wrote.*

population as a whole. Yet, during the recent economic recession, more whites have entered the services; only 23 percent of Army recruits were blacks in 1983. Because blacks re-enlist at a 50 percent higher rate than do whites, the percentage of blacks in the Army is still increasing, but at a much lower rate than before. More important, the racial violence that jarred the military during the 1970s (including sabotage and near-mutinies on board Navy aircraft carriers) has receded; black Americans are, increasingly, in leadership positions.\*

Still under way is the Pentagon's bold experiment in using more women in more military jobs. With the end of the draft in 1973, Pentagon civilian planners, over the objections of the military chiefs, pushed the recruitment of women as a politically painless way to make up for shortfalls in male enlistments. In the heyday of ERA, Congress did not object. All told, the proportion of women in the ranks rose from one percent in 1973 to nine percent (or 196,000) in 1983, ranging from 11 percent in the Air Force to four percent in the Marine Corps.

\*Blacks now account for 25 percent of the Army's senior sergeants, nine percent of the officers; 26 are generals.

### NATIONAL SERVICE?

A number of proposals for reviving the draft in various guises have cropped up in Congress and academe since the end of conscription in 1973. Some advocates emphasize equity: Is it fair to rely on marketplace incentives to fill the armed forces' ranks, hence allowing more affluent Americans to avoid service? Or, like France, Sweden, and most other European countries, should the United States insist that every young man do his bit? Others, notably senior military men, deplore the "divorce" between college-educated youths and the experience of service to the nation. Still others believe that reinstating conscription would serve as a clear sign of the U.S. "resolve" that the Reagan administration wants to demonstrate to the Soviets.

A broader notion of "national service," military or civilian, for young men and women seems to have more popular support. In February 1982, Gallup found that 71 percent of its respondents favored some sort of obligatory plan. A study of various plans—and their likely effects on the military, the job market, and college enrollments—has been commissioned by the Ford Foundation for completion by year's end. The foundation's president, Franklin A. Thomas, has suggested that some form of universal service (properly debated, tested, and managed) might not only fill the needs of the armed services for high-quality personnel, but also help local civilian governments. About four million boys and girls now turn 18 each year.

"No one believes that national service will work magic on all its enrollees," Thomas observed. He cited the Pentagon's "mixed success" in uplifting below-average recruits (under Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's "Project 100,000" during the 1960s). Nor, said Thomas, could such a service plan substitute for higher economic growth and better education as a solution to high youth unemployment, especially among minorities. But it might provide a useful and satisfying experience for most of the participants.

On the civilian side, a 1978 Urban Institute study found that without displacing older workers, some three million "real" (not make-work) jobs existed that could be filled by college-age youths—in local police and fire protection, public health, forest conservation, day care, tending the elderly. One precedent: the much-praised Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the 1930s. As Thomas suggests (and the Pentagon emphasizes), there exist major imponderables in terms of selection, complexity, management, training, costs, and discipline, even if local governments share responsibility and expenses. The crucial test of any national service plan, of course, would be the response of American youth to an official revival of President John F. Kennedy's 1961 appeal: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

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Women were admitted to ROTC in 1972 and to the service academies in 1976. The separate branches for women—the Women's Army Corps (WAC), the Women Marines—were abolished: *Integration* was the watchword. By 1978, excepting direct combat roles (e.g., fighter pilots, infantrymen, aircraft carrier crews), most “nontraditional” positions were open to women at home and overseas—to a degree that astonished America's allies, including the Israelis, who restrict army women to rear-echelon duties.

The Army found that its women recruits were better educated (at least during the 1970s), more highly motivated, and less likely to desert than men. Yet, as congressional committees later learned, there were also unforeseen difficulties: “fraternization” between senior males and junior females, disruptive to unit morale; pervasive male resentment, notably at West Point and Annapolis, over perceived “double standards” in discipline and physical requirements. Attrition among women assigned to nontraditional tasks, e.g., driving trucks, was far higher than among women assigned to “traditional” office and health-care jobs. Overall, women enlistees dropped out faster than men.

### Readiness for War

The Pentagon also discovered that young women have babies. After 1973, pregnancy was no longer cause for automatic separation from the service. It became common to see obviously pregnant soldiers at missile batteries in West Germany or pregnant sailors aboard Navy supply ships.\* Seven to 10 percent of all service women, married or unmarried, become pregnant in the course of a year.

Amid such realities, the push toward a “gender-neutral” military may be ending, although recruiting of women will continue. Congress decided to exclude women from the reinstated draft registration of 1980. There were few ensuing protests from feminists. In the fall of 1982, male and female Army recruits were again segregated in basic training, following Marine Corps practice, and, during the spring of 1983, certain heavy-duty occupations were again restricted to men. Early reports indicated few complaints from either sex.

In plain fact, the Pentagon, without much protest from Congress but with some bitterness among women officers, has

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\*In 1979, Jimmy Carter's Army Secretary, Clifford Alexander, warned U.S. commanders in Europe that in case of Soviet attack, they would have to evacuate an estimated 1,700 pregnant Army soldiers from the war zone at once.

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quietly decided to put the emphasis on "operational readiness" for war, not new career opportunities for women, whenever the two goals conflict.

As time goes on, the Pentagon's heavy reliance on "market-place" incentives, i.e., money, and "front loading" of pay may hurt the military's effectiveness. The pay scale for junior enlisted men is now three times greater in constant dollars than it was during the draft era. An 18-year-old recruit, for example, can expect to start earning the annual equivalent of \$14,500 (including \$8,000 in cash wages) within 12 months. Yet an Army first sergeant, E-8, after 20 years of service, earns only about twice that amount; as he sees it, his relative status has diminished in the all-volunteer force.

### **A Political Problem**

Moreover, the young soldiers' large discretionary income—and more permissive Army regulations—have probably undercut the group cohesion, so vital in wartime, that barracks life used to encourage. A visitor to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, or Fort Hood, Texas, can see the signs: parking lots full of sports cars and stereos in almost every barracks room. Fewer and fewer soldiers eat in the "dining facility," as the old mess hall is now called. Forty percent of Army junior enlisted personnel are married, twice the proportion common during the draft era. More and more soldiers, male or female, rent apartments off base and leave the military environment promptly at 4:30 P.M.

The service chiefs have resisted the Pentagon's post-Vietnam shift to a more "civilian" ethos, even as the Labor Department this year, for the first time, counted service personnel as part of the nation's "labor force." Indeed, the military services have renewed their emphasis on the distinctive "institutional" and "professional" aspects of life in uniform. The Army, for example, is moving toward a British-style "regimental" system, with a permanent home base for the units of each regiment to which they return after, say, a tour in South Korea or Europe. It is also trying to reduce personnel turnover in units, notably among officers. It wants more housing, more services-in-kind, not just more pay, to bind the Army closer together and encourage re-enlistments of needed specialists.

In the long run, such approaches (characteristic of most modern armies) run at odds with the "job"-oriented philosophy of the civilian econometricians who have dominated Pentagon manpower policy since the end of the draft. To hold key technicians, the Pentagon civilians are pressing for pay scales gov-

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erned by specialty, not by rank, to reduce "fringes" and services in favor of cash.

Both the econometricians and the military chiefs have yet another contingency to face. The Reagan administration's plans call for a gradual increase in military manpower (from 2.1 million in 1983 to 2.3 million in 1987), mostly for the Air Force and Navy. Yet the annual number of Americans who reach the age of 18 will decline by 20 percent over the next decade, and the current influx of better-quality male recruits is unlikely to continue if economic recovery persists. The question then will be how to preserve (and improve) the quality of service manpower required for America's capital-intensive defense forces.

By one reckoning, just to maintain the *current* strength in 1986–1993 of the active and organized reserve forces (a total of three million men), the military will need to enlist one out of three eligible males—"eligible" meaning able to meet current physical and mental standards. If all college youths are excluded, one out of two eligibles will have to be recruited.

Inevitably, the question of reviving the draft—presumably a two-year draft by lottery with low pay but with some sort of G.I. bill—will come up again shortly. Even as the Defense Department's 1982 military manpower task force contended that any recruiting shortfalls could be overcome by higher cash incentives, it admitted that its assumptions "may not stand up in practice." Yet, resuming the draft, the task force said, would exchange "one set of problems for another," mostly political.

Neither the President, who has publicly opposed reviving the draft, nor his Democratic critics have recently taken up the question. The libertarian Right has regarded peacetime conscription as an unwarranted government curb on individual freedom. The Democratic Left sees a revival of the draft as a prelude to "another Vietnam" (although only 25 percent of those who served in Vietnam were draftees). Public support for a draft has swung widely, as measured by Gallup polls, from 36 percent in 1977 to 59 percent in 1980 (after Afghanistan). Last year, 51 percent favored (and 41 percent opposed) mandatory military *training* followed by eight years in the reserves.

Given the demographics, some sort of service requirement for America's young men seems likely by 1986 unless the White House, Congress, and the public are willing to accept still smaller active and reserve forces, still higher emphasis on pay, or a return to the low-quality, low-readiness days of the 1970s.



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## BACKGROUND BOOKS

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### AMERICA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

"The art of war is of vital importance to the state," Chinese strategist Sun-tzu wrote 2,500 years ago. "It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence under no circumstances can it be neglected."

Anyone hoping to build a library on U.S. defense policy should beware: Most books on the subject are out-of-date before they reach print, and few make for easy bedtime reading. "Policy intellectuals" tend to chase headlines—nuclear disarmament is a current favorite—and to ignore the past.

The United States has traditionally kept its military forces as small as possible. Even after it joined the ranks of the recognized world powers in 1898, America relied on a small cadre of regulars and on a citizen army mobilized after a declaration of war. When the Nazis invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, for instance, the U.S. Army had obsolete equipment and only 190,000 men and officers.

After World War II, the United States, no longer isolationist, first demobilized, then, facing Soviet threats abroad, revived the draft in 1948. But only after the 1950-53 Korean War began did the United States start to rearm. Since then, reflecting American technological gains, the U.S. military has become increasingly capital-intensive. Machines and firepower are substituted as much as possible for men, requiring in turn intensive training and a long logistical "tail."

This system often stirs complaints on Capitol Hill about a "fat" Army

and Air Force, but it is precisely this system that allows the United States to support sustained, highly flexible operations overseas in wartime. In Vietnam, as Zeb B. Bradford, Jr., and Frederic J. Brown observe in **The United States Army in Transition** (Sage, 1973), there was an unprecedented substitution of mobile tactics and firepower for the traditional costly ground assault. Where possible, Army rifle companies acted as "a finding and fixing force—an anvil against which the enemy could be destroyed by artillery and air power."

A common notion is that the generals are more likely than civilian leaders to favor military solutions to overseas crises. This is the thesis of Richard J. Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies in **Roots of War: The Men and Institutions behind U.S. Foreign Policy** (Atheneum, 1972, cloth; Penguin, 1973, paper). Since World War II, he contends, the military has "supplied to the rest of the government the conceptual framework for thinking about foreign relations."

Not so, argues Richard Betts of the Brookings Institution. His study of **Soldiers, Statesmen and Cold War Crises** (Harvard, 1977) shows that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and lesser military men were generally *no more* eager to intervene in postwar crises than were the President's top civilian advisers. Sometimes, they were *less* eager, as in the case of Laos in 1961. Once U.S. troops were in battle, however, the military tended to urge more forceful policies than did the civilians, as in Vietnam after 1965.

For better or worse, "military advice," writes Betts, "has been most persuasive [to Presidents] as a veto of the use of force and least potent when it favored force."

"To a remarkable degree," Ohio University's John Lewis Gaddis adds in **Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy** (Oxford, 1982, cloth & paper), U.S. defense spending has been "the product, not so much of what the Russians have done, or of what has happened elsewhere in the world, but of internal forces operating within the United States," notably changing political fads and budget priorities.

Today, Adam Yarmolinsky and Gregory D. Foster observe in **Paradoxes of Power: The Military Establishment in the Eighties** (Ind. Univ., 1983), senior officers still answer primarily to their own service—Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps. They regard the civilian Office of the Secretary of Defense as a "foreign power with which their organization is forced occasionally to deal," and concentrate in peacetime on "maximizing" their service's share of the defense spending pie.

The seeming unmanageability of defense programs—costing \$240 billion and employing 5,656,000 military personnel, Pentagon civilians, and defense plant workers in 1983—has spawned a "military reform" school of thinkers on national defense. In **National Defense** (Random, 1981, cloth; 1982, paper), the *Atlantic Monthly's* James Fallows attacks the professional military's penchant for extremely expensive, "high-tech" weapons over simpler, but equally effective ones.

Not everyone thinks high-tech is superfluous. The reformers may be right when they allege, for instance,

that the 106mm Recoilless Rifle not only sells for a fraction of the cost of the TOW (tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided) missile, but is just as effective as the TOW in knocking out enemy tanks within 1,000 meters. But the TOW, unlike the 106mm, can also engage targets up to 3,750 meters away at night and has a special passive sighting device that, unlike infra-red devices, does not give away its position.

Moreover, conclude the authors of **The Defense Reform Debate: Issues and Analysis** (ed. by Asa A. Clark *et al.*, Johns Hopkins, forthcoming), many of the problems that the reformers have identified—poor Pentagon decision-making (notably through the ineffectiveness of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), unwieldy "force structure" (e.g., heavy Army armored divisions are unsuitable for Persian Gulf conditions), and weapons design and acquisition—are not the exclusive province of the armed services. Pentagon bureaucrats, Congress, defense contractors, and the news media all share the blame.

Nuclear strategy gets big headlines. But much of the literature on the subject remains almost theological in its complexity, the product of a small clique of policy intellectuals cloistered in California's RAND Corporation and other "think-tanks," notes freelance writer Fred Kaplan in **The Wizards of Armageddon** (Simon & Schuster, 1983). One exception is Bernard Brodie, who, in his classic **Strategy in the Missile Age** (Princeton, 1959), foresaw that the American abhorrence of preventive war would lead the U.S. military to develop "deterrent" retaliatory strategic forces whose survival had to be ensured.

Defense analyst John M. Collins in **U.S.—Soviet Military Balance: Con-**

**cepts and Capabilities, 1960–1980** (McGraw-Hill, 1980) outlines alarming *quantitative* deficiencies in the strategic and tactical forces of the United States relative to those of its chief adversary. Yet the popular “bean-counting” approach obscures the uncertainties of how weapons (and national leaders) would perform in wartime, observe Samuel Huntington and the other authors of **The Strategic Imperative: New Policies for American Security** (Ballinger, 1982). While the Kremlin seeks to exploit opportunities when and where the West appears weak, Harvard’s Adam B. Ulam suggests, in **Dangerous Relations: The Soviet Union in World Politics, 1970–1982** (Oxford, 1983), that their calculation of the “correlation of forces” in Europe necessarily depends not just on raw numbers of men and tanks.

And, as Richard Betts argues in **Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning** (Brookings, 1982, cloth & paper), various factors—the ascendancy that the defense usually enjoys over the offense, the questionable loyalty of Polish and other East European forces, the superior NATO pilot training—help to offset the Warsaw Pact’s considerable advantages in numbers and geography (e.g., shorter supply lines).

On the other hand, Betts warns, a Warsaw Pact surprise attack could pose a serious danger to the Alliance. With a little bit of luck, the Soviets could quickly divide West Germany and push allied troops to the Rhine within a week, long before major reinforcements could arrive from America or NATO politicians could agree on a united response.

In the end, concludes London’s International Institute for Strategic Studies in its annual review of **The Military Balance** (IISS, 1982, paper

only), neither side could be assured of victory in a European war: “The consequences for an attacker would be unpredictable, and the risks, particularly of nuclear escalation, incalculable.”

Those risks are the subject of Jonathan Schell’s controversial sermon, **The Fate of the Earth** (Knopf, 1982, cloth; Avon, 1982, paper). The *New Yorker* writer observes that a single 20-megaton bomb (of which the Soviets have an estimated 113 in their arsenal) exploded over Manhattan’s Empire State Building would produce a fireball four-and-a-half miles in diameter and flatten an area of 1,450 square miles, killing millions.

But even serious efforts to cap the arms race may fail in the absence of trust between the superpowers. Both John Newhouse in **Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT** (Holt, 1973) and Strobe Talbot in **Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II** (Harper, 1979, cloth; 1980, paper) show that dissimilarities between Soviet and American strategic forces and the technical difficulties of verifying Soviet compliance with the arms control agreements nearly wrecked the SALT I and SALT II talks with Moscow.

Détente was doomed from the start, contends Robert W. Tucker in **The Purposes of American Power: An Essay on National Security** (Praeger, 1981), because Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter took too rosy a view of Soviet intentions. According to Tucker, the underlying premise of détente was badly flawed: that Western economic incentives, mutual recognition of the status quo in Europe, and arms control accords would lead to lasting cooperation between communist and Western countries.

The 1982 conflict between Great Britain and Argentina showed, as recounted by reporters of the *Sunday*

*Times* of London in **War in the Falklands: The Full Story** (Harper, 1982), that the booming export sales of modern arms (notably that of France's Exocet missile to Argentina) can dramatically narrow the gap between great (or near-great) and lesser powers. In the end, superior British training and esprit decided the battle.

Soviet inroads in the Third World during the late 1970s catalyzed a neoconservative reaction against détente in this country. *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, addressing **The Present Danger** (Simon & Schuster, 1980, cloth & paper), charged the Carter administration with "Finlandizing" America and called for a major U.S. arms build-up to contain Soviet expansion.

The problem of winning localized, conventional wars in a nuclear age has perplexed analysts (and statesmen) throughout the postwar era. In **Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy** (Chicago, 1957), Robert E. Osgood develops the theory of using small wars to support containment of the communists. He argues that the danger of limited conflict escalating into total war requires an American President (e.g., Truman in aiding South Korea) to seek something less than the unconditional surrender of the enemy; to maintain a diplomatic dialogue looking toward a negotiated settlement; and to restrict the geographical scope of the war. (This has been, in some respects, the 1983 Reagan strategy in Central America.) Yet, be-

cause Americans value human life so highly, Osgood believes, they "are disposed to demand that the sacrifice of life serve some purpose of commensurate value; and total victory seems like the minimum compensation."

But even "small" wars like Korea and Vietnam may impose an unacceptable cost in U.S. blood and treasure, according to Russell F. Weigley in **The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy** (Macmillan, 1973, cloth; Ind. Univ., 1977, paper). Nowhere in the Third World, he concludes, "does the use of combat offer much promise [of decisive outcomes] for the United States today."

The lessons of the Vietnam War are still hotly debated, but most military analysts would agree with Harry Summers's contention in **On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War** (Presidio, 1982) that the American defeat in Indochina was primarily *political* in origin: U.S. leaders failed to define their objectives in Vietnam clearly, to pursue those aims with determination, and to mobilize the nation for war.

"The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make," the German strategist Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) wrote in **On War** (ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, 1976), "is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking. . . . This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For further reading see WQ's *Background Books* essays on *Strategic Arms Control* (Autumn, '77), *Vietnam as History* (Spring, '78), *The American Military* (Spring, '79), and *Vietnam as the Past* (Summer, '83).