

A Jungle Full of Snakes? Power, Poverty and International Security

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Global security issues were dominated for 45 years by the ideological, economic and military confrontation between the superpowers. While this did not involve an all-out war between them, most of the 100 or more major conflicts which took place between 1945 and 1993 had an East–West dimension. The great majority of these were fought in the South and most of the 20 million people killed and 50 million people injured were their citizens.

The East–West confrontation was so great that by the end of the Cold War, 83 per cent of world annual military spending of \$1000 billion was by the NATO and Warsaw Treaty alliances. They were also at the forefront of military research, development and deployments. Most NATO states spent at least ten times as much on the military as on international development and in the latter stages of the Cold War, after 1978, defence budgets grew as aid budgets fell.

With the ending of the East–West confrontation around 1989–91, military spending by the former Warsaw Pact nations fell rapidly, but that of the NATO member states was much slower to fall.¹ While there was a slight overall decrease in world military spending, the peace dividend in the West was minimal and there were even increases in military spending in some regions, especially the Middle East and South-East Asia.

Western strategists began to redefine what they thought their future security interests would be. They embraced new threats and problems, many of them originating beyond the old East–West divide, and often related to a new North–South axis of confrontation. As US President Clinton's newly appointed Director of the CIA put it, early in 1993, 'we have slain the dragon but now live in a jungle full of poisonous snakes'.²

This chapter reviews the main factors which are likely to dictate world security issues over the coming decades. This paints a radically different picture from that of the Cold War, with its ideological divisions and rigidly entrenched military strategies. Secondly, it examines some of the current trends in western security thinking, particularly in the US, and how these could actually increase the risks of North–South confrontation. Finally it suggests other, more appropriate, responses to these issues which are more likely to avoid conflict and enhance the chances of peace and international cooperation.³

GLOBAL SECURITY – FUTURE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Three factors seem likely to influence trends in international peace and security around and beyond the turn of the century. The first factor is the deep polarization of the world's population into small areas of relative wealth and much larger areas of relative poverty. The distribution is not clear-cut, for there is deep poverty, deprivation and exploitation in many so-called rich states. In the US around 40 million people live below the poverty line, and in Britain there is severe poverty in every major urban area and clear evidence that the gap between rich and poor is growing wider.

Even so, the global picture overshadows these problems. Just one-fifth of the entire global population uses around three-quarters of the world's wealth and physical resources. This division is largely along geographical lines – traditionally termed First and Third Worlds or North and South. This polarization alone is a source of potential instability, which is seen most graphically in incidents of mass migration such as those common around Europe and North America in recent years, especially across the US-Mexican border and into Southern Europe.

This wealth-poverty polarization is steadily sharpening because the wealthy regions have already passed through the demographic transition and their populations are relatively stable while the populations of the

South are likely to grow for at least the next 60 years. In barely half that time, only one-seventh of the world's population will control at least three-quarters of the world's wealth. Pressures on those 'islands of wealth' will grow ever stronger.

A crisis of unsatisfied expectations might be avoided if prospects for international development were greater, but all the signs are that it will be slow and tortuous. Development is hindered not just by severe historic and continuing trading disadvantages but by a continuing debt crisis, economic exploitation and political instability. The numbers of people living in absolute poverty and suffering malnutrition have actually increased substantially in the past two decades. At the time of the severe international food crisis in 1974, some 450 million people world-wide were estimated to be malnourished. Twenty years later, over 780 million did 'not have enough food to meet their basic bodily needs for energy and protein'.⁴ Although some progress in development has been made, largely from within the South, we have to assume that the massive disparities in global wealth and poverty will increase. The northern states, which still exert control over the world economy, show little commitment to cooperative international developments – hardly surprising since that very control is so advantageous to them.

The second factor which endangers our future security is that the entire global system appears to be approaching limits for human activity set by environmental constraints. At a regional level, these include immense problems of deforestation, water shortages, desertification, salinization and atmospheric and marine pollution. In the past 25 years, the world has lost over 400 million acres of tree cover (equal to the land area of the US to the east of the Mississippi River); deserts have grown by over 250 million acres (greater than the entire crop lands of China) and 480 billion tons of topsoil have been lost (equal to the crop lands of India)⁵ Globally, environmental problems already include ozone depletion and global warming. Competition for resources is also intensifying, especially for those strategic resources such as oil which are now found predominantly in the South but consumed primarily in the North. On occasions, as in the Gulf in 1991, this competition results in open warfare.

Thirdly, we are faced with the primary legacy of the Cold War – world-wide militarization. Although the excesses of military confrontation are past, they leave behind a massive array of weapons, postures and attitudes, many of them searching for new 'threats' to provide further roles at a time of declining defence budgets.

The global phenomenon of ecological limits to growth is the result almost entirely of the activities of that minority of the world's population which is industrialized and maintains a high material standard of living. It now seems intent on maintaining that life-style at the expense of the economic prospects of most of the world's population. The majority will not find that acceptable, any more than the imposition of a 'new world order' along lines decreed by a minority of states acting with local elites, will be acceptable.

Recognition of this problem is not new – it was a feature of the 'Limits to Growth' debate of the early 1970s. The problem was put succinctly by the British ecologist, Palmer Newbould, writing shortly after the 1972 Human Environment Conference in Stockholm:

My own belief is that however successful population policies are, the world population is likely to treble before it reaches stability. If the expectation of this increased population were, for example, to emulate the present lifestyle and resource use of the USA, the demand on world resources would be increased approximately 15-fold; pollution and other forms of environmental degradation might increase similarly and global ecological carrying capacity would then be seriously exceeded. There are therefore global constraints on development set by resources and environment and these will require a reduction in the per caput resource use and environmental abuse of the developed nations to accompany the increased resource use of the developing nations, a levelling down as well as up. This conflict cannot be avoided.⁶

Unless there were a change in political and economic outlook, the end result of the growing pressures of human demands would, according to Edwin Brooks, writing 20 years ago, result in a 'crowded, glowering planet of massive inequalities of wealth buttressed by stark force and endlessly threatened by desperate people in the global ghettos of the under-privileged'.⁷

In essence then, a combination of grossly unequal distribution of wealth, with a crisis in development, progressive militarization and environmental limits to human activity make it probable that the dominant risk to global security in the next few decades will lie on a North-South axis of confrontation. This is likely to express itself in four main ways:

1. in conflicts over resources;
2. in migration;
3. in economic competition; and
4. through increasing responses from the South.

Resources

There will be a tendency towards conflict over the political control of strategic resources. Oil may be the most important but strategic minerals, food reserves and water resources will also figure prominently.

With Western Europe, Japan and now, crucially, the US, largely dependent for continued industrial performance on imported strategic resources, controlling access to those resources is already seen as a legitimate security concern. To the producers of these resources, this leads to a fear of a new hegemony rather than a peaceful new world order.

The Middle East will be the region of greatest potential competition for physical resources, with its remarkable concentration of oil reserves, especially with the steady depletion of oil reserves in the North. The Persian Gulf states now control two-thirds of all the world's oil reserves, and an even greater share of the easily-exploited reserves. Kuwait alone has three times as much oil as the entire US, including the oilfields of Alaska and the offshore reserves of the Gulf of Mexico.

The mineral wealth of Central and Southern Africa, the High Andes, Amazonia and Eastern Asia will also be significant sources of potential conflict. Two-thirds of the strategically important metal cobalt is mined in central Africa; China has a similar proportion of world reserves of tungsten; and rock phosphate reserves – essential constituents of artificial fertilizers – are concentrated in North Africa.

Against this, the continuing food grain surpluses of the US and the European Union (EU) will give them considerable leverage in their pursuit of foreign policy options, with the grain and corn belts of central US and Canada dominating world grain exports.

Migration

There is likely to be an upsurge in population movements, caused partly by a desire for a better lifestyle but also by environmental pressures. This is already leading to what has been called 'militant migration'. Pressure will become more intense on North America and Western Europe, the latter likely to experience much increased migratory pressures from North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. This is already producing an anti-immigration reaction in Western Europe, which is leading not just to the rise of far-right political parties, but to using tactics such as the fear of unemployment and other perceived consequences of immigration by centre-right and centrist parties in pursuit of electoral popularity.

Economic competition

Increased economic competition between three major trading groups, North America, the EU and Japan is also likely. The US is in relative economic decline yet has the only highly developed capability to project military force world-wide. It may have been happy to demonstrate this capability in the Gulf in 1991, with Germany and Japan paying part of the bill for protecting their access to Gulf oil, but there is no guarantee that the US will act in such a semi-surrogate role again. In practice, it is more likely to compete more forcefully with Europe and East Asia in the economic sphere and to use its military forces more specifically to support its own interests.

The Southern response

Finally, and most importantly, the developing North-South axis will lead to a more vigorous political and military response from the South. This is already shown in the evolving foreign policies of major states such as China and India, and the pursuit of advanced weapons capabilities by a number of states. It is complicated in other parts of the South by anti-elitism, militant nationalisms, regional separatism and a variety of religious fundamentalisms. Collectively this means that any idea that the control of human aspirations by northern economic interests and local southern elites through economic dominance, political control and direct or indirect repression is wishful thinking. It simply will not last.

People on the fringe of a reasonable life, particularly if they are educated to an awareness of the living standards of the North, will not tolerate the maintenance of a polarized world. These 'underclass responses' in the South are almost impossible to predict with any certainty as to their evolution, location or effects. They may express themselves in guerrilla campaigns of almost messianic fervour, as with the *Sendero Luminosa* phenomenon in Peru, with militant nationalism as in India, or religious fundamentalism as in North Africa and the Levant. When these movements directly affect northern interests, they may easily be seen by the military (and others) as a new type of 'threat' – altogether welcome as an alternative to the former Soviet Union. The tenor of the northern response to these possibilities is not encouraging. One recent US military study advocated strategies to target 'that swirling pot of poison made up of zealots, crazies, drug runners and terrorists'.⁸

MILITARY RESPONSES IN THE NORTH

The easing of Cold War tensions leaves a massive military complex searching for a new role. Protecting the interests of the wealthier North against any kind of threat from the South is an eminently saleable policy. It is one for which some military strategists have been preparing for many years. The search for a new enemy to replace the Soviet threat is both urgent and intense and that from the global ghettos might be just too good to ignore! In the military literature and in rapidly changing defence postures of significant northern states, already there is a re-orientation of military perspectives towards a North-South axis.

From a military strategist's perspective, major threats to northern security might be expressed in two broad ways. One is instability, through movements which threaten the power of local elites and related northern interests, as has frequently happened in Latin America. The other is the evolution of regimes thought to pose a more open and direct threat, especially in areas of high resource significance, as with Iraq in 1990-91.

In either case, the prime response which we see developing, especially in the US, is a military response. This takes many forms and is common to most branches of the armed forces. For example, the US Navy and Marine Corps believe that their historic capacity to project military force by means of amphibious operations or use of carrier-based air power gives them an unrivalled capacity to 'keep the violent peace' in the South after the Cold War.

The US Air Force (USAF) is developing tactics to enable it to undertake extraordinarily long-range bombing strategies and to destroy specific kinds of targets such as deeply protected bunkers. The US Army, too, is bidding for extended funding for special operations forces designed to counter local threats to US interests or the status of pro-US governmental elites. Even the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI or 'Star Wars') is now being adapted to take on Third World missiles. Revised nuclear strategies, and even new kinds of nuclear weapons, are being researched to allow a response to North-South tensions. I will return to these later.

The way these 'new threats' to world stability are represented varies from the crude through to the measured. An example of the former is seen in the Reed Report, a draft of which was leaked to the Washington press early in 1991. This *Strategic Deterrence Study* was undertaken for the US Strategic Air Command late in 1990, and paid particular attention to future Third World threats against US interests.⁹ Its terms of reference

state the belief that 'the growing wealth of petro-nations and newly hegemonic powers is available to bullies and crazies, if they gain control, to wreak havoc on world tranquillity'.

The study itself calls for a new nuclear targeting strategy which will include the ability to assemble 'a Nuclear Expeditionary Force... primarily for use against China or Third World targets', which is required because 'Nations with the wealth and ideological fervor to pursue nuclear programs, no matter what the time and cost, are very different' from traditional nuclear powers such as Britain and France. North Korea, Algeria, Libya, Iran, and of course Iraq fit this bill. To quote: 'They and their terrorist cousins are more likely driven by...the desire to...terrorise, blackmail, coerce, or destroy' among other motives.

A more thoughtful American assessment of the evolving security outlook was given by Roger Barnett, writing in the *Proceedings of the US Naval Institute* in mid-1992. The *Proceedings* has been one of the most interesting journals in reflecting new military postures, not least because of the long-term navy and marine corps concern with power projection.¹⁰

Barnett argues for enhancing military forces for regional intervention, and includes in his future security threats the problems associated with the break-up of the Warsaw Pact. He goes on to look at a range of developing problems, including in his list of primary threats to western security:

- widening economic differentials between the economic North and South;
- impact of high-technology weapons and weapons of mass destruction on the ability – and thus the willingness – of the weak to take up arms against the strong;
- inequitable distribution of world food supplies, and the dislocation of millions of people because of famine, wars and natural disasters;
- use of force or of terrorism to attempt to redress grievances or resolve problems.

Barnett's analysis is impressive because it attempts to rise above the crude rhetoric of 'bullies and crazies' and gives some indication of the background forces being seen to operate.

For the most part, however, military postures and tactics operate at a more basic level. By now examining military trends in detail, particularly in the US, we can see how military forces and activities are actually being

reshaped and the kind of threats this implies. The US is the lead state in such developments although similar, smaller scale examples can be seen in other western states.

The US nuclear response

By the early 1980s, the US and the Soviet Union were in the middle of an intense build-up of nuclear forces. This was curbed later in the decade, and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) and Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START) agreements heralded some impressive declines in armaments. Fears of a surge in nuclear proliferation proved excessive, as Argentina and Brazil curbed their nuclear ambitions and the rate of proliferation in Asia and the Middle East seemed to slow.

By the early 1990s, US perceptions of proliferation changed for several reasons. After the Gulf War of 1991, it became clear that Iraq was far further down the road towards nuclear status than had been realized. Pakistan appeared on the brink of nuclear status, estimates of North Korea's nuclear potential were raised and the Soviet Union had split into numerous republics, four of which had nuclear weapons. There was also a surge of interest in the spread of ballistic missiles, especially Scud derivatives and Chinese systems, and a recognition that many states still saw chemical weapons as a cheap alternative to nuclear arms.

The US believed that a number of states antagonistic to its interests wanted specifically to develop weapons of mass destruction. There was also a suspicion that the treatment of Iraq, with its status changing from trusted ally to deepest enemy in the space of three months, would encourage such states to acquire a means of deterrence against possible future US action. By 1992, the official US line was that its own nuclear weapons programmes had been curtailed, but there were repeated indications that new systems were being designed, specifically for Third World contingencies. The Reed Report's proposals were reportedly being backed up by the planning of new weapons, including electromagnetic pulse (EMP) bombs for disabling electronic systems, small nuclear warheads for destroying missiles armed with biological warheads and earth-penetrating warheads for destroying bunkers which were too well protected for conventional bombs to destroy.¹¹

While official confirmation of these trends is, unsurprisingly, hard to find, the proportion of the defence budget accounted for by 'black' (secret) programmes will rise in 1994. The military literature has also been full of articles pointing to the threat of a proliferated world, some suggesting tough measures to pre-empt such a situation. Republican

Congressman John Kyle, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, expressed a widely-held view of the dangers, citing the following threats to US interests:

- US intelligence officials say some two dozen countries may possess or may be developing weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them.
- At least 25 countries are pursuing chemical weapon programs and many of these have biological programs as well.
- 15 or so countries have operational ballistic missiles, with more scheduled to join the ranks in the coming decade.¹²

Kyle advocated strengthening intelligence-gathering as a priority, along with greater cooperation with allies, and more emphasis on the development, with Russia, of the planned Global Protection System. This is a 'son-of-Star-Wars' derivative of SDI aimed specifically at Third World missile threats. He said, however, that this was in all probability not sufficient to control trends in proliferation, and advocated a willingness to take military action against potential nuclear states and their sources of supply.

The US response to missile proliferation

If an increasing source of concern to the US military is the long-term spread of nuclear weapons, then worries over missile proliferation are much more immediate and permeate much of the military. For them, their experience in the Gulf War is salutary. The Iraqi Scud missiles were of little military significance, but they had a great political and psychological importance, especially with respect to the attacks on Israel. The USAF was tied down for more than two weeks trying to find the Scud launchers. Although publicly it spoke of great successes in the 'Scud hunt', post-war assessments suggested that very few launchers or missiles were destroyed on the ground, and even the Patriot defences were of limited value, tending mainly to fragment the incoming Scuds as they neared their targets, turning them into clusters of high velocity shrapnel.

In the past two years, the lessons of the Scud hunts have had an effect on the US and many Third World states. The US is seeking to build a political and military defence against missiles, while other states, seeing their political value, try to buy or develop them. According to one Washington defence newsletter published in May 1993, countries

which have sought to acquire missiles include Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Libya, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Taiwan, Vietnam and Yemen.¹³

One US response has been to seek to develop the Global Protection System, which was an outcome of the June 1992 Summit between Presidents Bush and Yeltsin: 'The two leaders announced the ambitious plan to implement a global system that enables both countries and their allies to share early warning data, work to curb ballistic missile proliferation and seek avenues of technology cooperation...'¹⁴ This cooperation will include a sharing of ballistic missile defence technology which formed part of the SDI programme and its Soviet equivalent. Ironically, these two technological programmes were formerly in intense competition and now will, together, provide protection from new enemies in the South.

SDI itself was directed primarily at countering attacks by intercontinental range ballistic missiles and was criticized as a hugely wasteful, probably unworkable, programme. The 'lower end' of SDI was concerned with the threat from slower missiles of medium and intermediate range, where anti-missile systems could be effective, and this is now getting the funding; the rest was consigned to the scrap-heap by the incoming Clinton administration.

The first product will be the Theatre High Altitude Area Defence missile (THAAD) developed by Lockheed which in mid-1992 received a 4-year \$689 million contract to complete it.¹⁵ Lockheed hopes to win a further \$4 billion worth of contracts for their air-transportable missile system, which should be able to intercept missiles with a range of up to 1800 miles (about twice that of improved Scuds). THAAD is a system for the US Army, but the US Navy is advocating its Aegis missile control system for theatre missile defence. It claims that most areas of security concern to the US could be protected by anti-aircraft cruisers deployed in neighbouring seas.

However fast the US and its allies develop programmes to counter one threat, new threats are seen to arise. As one official noted: 'What the US Tomahawks did to the Iraqis during the Persian Gulf War was not lost on our adversaries...'¹⁶ The most recent is with low-flying cruise missiles developed in the South. A Pentagon report in early 1993 claimed that several countries, including China, Syria and Iran, would have stealthy cruise missiles with chemical and biological warheads between the years 2000 and 2010.¹⁷ Some Pentagon officials therefore claimed that the SDI Office was concentrating too much on the threat

of ballistic missile proliferation, whereas cruise missiles would become more significant.

In response to this trend, the USAF and US Navy were reported to be working on a joint programme to tackle cruise missiles:

The plan owes some of its technological roots to the Defense Department's Air Defense Initiative (ADI). The plan links US ground and air-based sensors, Air Force and Navy interceptor aircraft, rapid data transfer and specially modified air-to-air missiles into a high-tech net to snag cruise missiles. It differs from early ADI plans in that it protects allied troops far from continental US defenses. Because many of its elements are airborne, the system can deploy with expeditionary forces into a regional hotspot.¹⁸

These adaptations to the post-Cold War world are for programmes concerned with the risk of all-out conflict. The changes in military strategy go far beyond this, however. They extend to a huge range of conventional forces, many of them involving rapid and fundamental changes in outlook, but all concerned with meeting a perceived challenge of many different kinds of threats coming not from one single enemy but from many – the 'jungle full of snakes' as the CIA director put it so precisely.

US air power anywhere

Although President Carter cancelled the USAF's new B-1 strategic bomber in 1977, President Reagan re-activated the programme four years later. The B-1B, as it was now called, was to be a nuclear-armed, low-level strategic bomber – a core part of the Reagan military expansion of the 1980s for use in East-West conflict.

An important parallel programme to the new bomber was the development of the nuclear-armed air-launched cruise missile (ALCM), first deployed in 1982, both for the new B-1B and many older B-52s. The new stand-off ALCM could be launched up to 1500 miles away from the target. By 1986, some 1700 ALCMs had been produced before the programme was curtailed in favour of the more sophisticated advanced cruise missile.¹⁹

As the Cold War tensions ebbed away, a decision was taken towards the end of the 1980s to modify part of the ALCM fleet by removing the nuclear warheads and replacing them with conventional high-explosive warheads. This was a 'black' programme and remained highly classified throughout its early development. On the first night of the Gulf War in

January 1991 a number of these ALCMs formed part of the longest air raid in history. A flight of B-52 bombers took off from Louisiana and, supported by multiple air-to-air refuellings, made a non-stop 14,000-mile round-trip flight to within a few hundred miles of the Iraqi border, where they launched ALCMs at targets within Iraq. This operation, which remained secret until several months after the Gulf War, was used to prove that the USAF could use its long-range bombers to attack almost any point on the earth's surface from bases in the US. It was a demonstration of a developing USAF doctrine: that its bombers constituted the fastest and most versatile way of projecting US military force abroad.

Since then, a large part of the USAF strategic inventory has been re-configured for the new world order, so the USAF can strike with conventional and nuclear weapons against targets threatening US security. Some hundreds of ALCMs have had their nuclear warheads removed, many replaced with high-explosive warheads but some with EMP which can disable a wide range of electronic devices.²⁰ They are also being coated in radar-absorbing material giving them 'semi-stealth' characteristics to make detection and destruction more difficult.

By the early 1990s, the 100 B-1Bs produced during the 1980s were scheduled to be re-fitted to take conventional weapons. This changeover is proceeding slowly and with some opposition on grounds of cost. There are now plans to make the even more expensive B-2 'stealth' bomber a platform primarily for conventional weapons. The USAF will then maintain a mixed fleet of B-52, B-1B and B-2 bombers, all capable of very long-range strike missions, a plan dubbed the 'bomber road map' during 1992. The B-2 is currently being produced in very low numbers, but its stealthy characteristics mean that it can overfly the air space of potential opponents in the South with very little risk to the aircrew. This is a key factor in current US military posture where the risk of captured military becoming high-profile prisoners is regarded as unacceptable.

The USAF wants to maintain a strategic force of 184 operational aircraft, and its 'bomber road map' strategy calls for the ability to hit 750 separate targets within the first five days of a war conducted at a distance from the USA.²¹ The B-2 can already carry 16 precision-guided bombs per flight and there are plans to develop a very accurate 2000lb bomb which could be used specifically to hit mobile targets such as missile launchers.

The USAF is also developing a number of programmes for its tactical bombers, also intended for use primarily in relatively small regional conflicts. Because of the concern about medium-range ballistic

missiles such as advanced Scud derivatives, considerable development is going into combinations of intelligence-gathering and weapons systems which can destroy such missiles on their mobile launchers. The failure to find most Iraqi Scud launchers during the Gulf War has prompted two programmes, *Precision Strike Demonstration* and *Talon Sword*, both of which coordinate battlefield sensors, command centres and attack aircraft.²²

A related problem has been the sale of advanced surface-to-air missiles to Southern states by the former Soviet Union. These missiles cannot be jammed by current USAF jamming aircraft such as the EF-111A.²³ A budget of \$250 million has so far been allocated to a System Improvement Programme to upgrade the EF-111 and the US Navy's EA6B jamming aircraft so they can counter these missiles.

In essence, then, the USAF now sees its role very much as power projection, either using long-range heavy bombers or tactical forces for forward deployment to meet regional threats. This change has been aided by the merging in June 1992 of the USAF's Tactical Air Command and most of the Strategic Air Command to create a new Air Combat Command, which can combine strategic and tactical forces in pursuit of global reach. An example of this approach was seen early in 1993:

The Air Force did something unusual with its B-1s last March. It sent a pair of the bombers from Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, via Guam, to the Republic of Korea, where they set down on an American air base within easy striking distance of a hostile neighbouring nation.

The faraway, in-your-face deployment of the B-1s was part of exercise *Team Spirit*, a muscular US/ROK combined-arms military exercise involving airforce units from Pacific Air Force (PACAF) and Air Combat Command (ACC). Among other things, it demonstrated to North Korea, now likely a nuclear threat, just how diverse and deadly US air power has become.

By using B-1s in the exercise, including a third bomber out of Guam, the Air Force underlined a message delivered with a bang in the Persian Gulf War – that bombers armed with non-nuclear bombs and based in the continental United States are now big guns in US global power.²⁴

This role for the USAF was highlighted in a recent Rand Corporation study:

In future major regional conflicts, national political and military leaders are likely to place a premium on US forces that can deploy rapidly over

long distances, swiftly destroy invading armoured forces as well as fixed assets, and engage the enemy effectively while placing minimal numbers of American service personnel in harm's way.

A quantitative analysis taking these factors into consideration shows that landbased air forces – heavy bombers and fighter-bombers – are likely to provide the lion's share of US power projection capability in future conflicts, at least in the critical days or weeks of the war.

The analysis shows that US heavy bombers, with long range and large payloads of offensive weapons, have the potential to project conventional firepower rapidly and effectively, providing critical capabilities early in a 'short-warning' conflict. In the opening days of such a war, bombers are uniquely capable of delivering heavy firepower against fixed targets and, in the case of the stealthy B-2, invading armies.²⁵

The USAF has adapted rapidly to the collapse of the old enemy and is now geared up to intervene rapidly and with great force wherever US interests may be threatened.

US sea power

The changed air force orientation is, inevitably, a doctrine which clashes directly with the US Navy and Marine Corps. These two branches of the US armed forces have traditionally considered themselves to be the real exponents of power projection. The marines' historic role, outside of major war, had been to implement foreign policy in numerous small interventions, especially in Latin America.²⁶ The navy had a more clear-cut strategic role with its long-range missile submarines and also played a central role in containing Soviet naval forces. Much of its strategy was thus concerned with open ocean or 'blue water' naval warfare, but it also saw itself as having an important secondary role in protecting US interests throughout the world. Many navy bases in Asia and the Pacific had twin roles; a primary function of contributing to a possible war effort against the Eastern bloc, and a secondary role of constraining Soviet adventurism abroad and any non-Soviet threat.

The US capacity for military force projection was concentrated especially on the Middle East and South West Asia. The increasing strategic importance of Persian Gulf oil reserves had been recognized after the oil price rises of 1973/4 and 1979/80. President Carter had called for an increase in the US capability to project military force in his 1977 Presidential Directive 11, which led up to the creation of the Joint Rapid Deployment Task Force (Rapid Deployment Force or RDF) in 1980.

By the early 1980s, the US already had the world's largest military capacity for projecting force, much of it naval. By the middle of the decade this included 14 operational aircraft carriers, each of which could be deployed at the centre of a carrier battle group with escorts of cruisers, destroyers, frigates, submarines and supply ships. This gave the US Navy carrier-based air power some five times larger than all other navies of the world combined. A further expansion of naval power was undertaken in the early 1980s with the re-activation of four World War II battleships, but armed with Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missiles. At the same time, the US Marine Corps, numbering around 190,000 personnel, was substantially re-equipped.

An additional development was the enhancement of logistic support with heavy investment in container ships (capable, for example, of transporting the equipment for a complete armoured division to the Persian Gulf) and improving the techniques of pre-positioning supplies by ship to a crisis area to support troops. Unless army or marine forces are fully supplied with food, fuel, munitions and other stores, their capabilities in combat decline rapidly. US military strategy under the Reagan build-up called for the capacity to act with force virtually anywhere in the world. While not widely recognized, this revolution in logistic support was probably more significant in terms of increased force projection capabilities than the expansion of the carrier battle groups or the re-activation of battleships.

The developing logistic policy of the 1980s was tailored largely, though not entirely, to South West Asia, including the Middle East. The British-owned island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean was an essential component of this strategy and was leased to the US. This gave the US the capability to intervene in the Middle East which was notably absent during the oil crisis of the early 1970s.

Finally, and specifically relevant to the Persian Gulf, the RDF was elevated to the status of an entirely new unified military command to be known as US Central Command (CENTCOM). Just as Pacific Command was responsible for US security interests in the Pacific, and Southern Command for Latin America, so CENTCOM had a particular zone of responsibility – North-East Africa and South-West Asia; 19 countries stretching in an arc from Kenya through the Middle East to Pakistan.

By late 1984, the forces available to CENTCOM included four army divisions and one brigade, together with a marine division and a brigade, backed up with comprehensive air and sea support. A key concept was

rapid deployment: a complete army brigade of over 4000 troops with comprehensive air-mobile artillery and air defences was available for air transport at 20 hours notice. By the late 1980s, CENTCOM had been further expanded and had some 300,000 personnel from all four services assigned to it. While most of the forces and the HQ of CENTCOM were located in the US, the forces were trained and equipped for rapid movement to, and deployment in, the Middle East and surrounding areas.

Keeping the violent peace

The expansion of the navy's power projection capabilities in the early 1980s may have been primarily to execute the new maritime strategy against the Soviet Union, but it led to a world-wide enhancement of military readiness. As Admiral James Watkins remarked in 1986:

We now maintain a continual presence in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and Caribbean, as well as our more traditional forward deployments to the Mediterranean and Western Pacific. Although we are not at war today, our operating tempo has been about 20 percent higher than during the Vietnam War.²⁷

This military readiness was christened 'keeping the violent peace' in the Third World, and naval forces such as aircraft carrier battle groups and amphibious warfare ships were essential for such a strategy. According to two US Navy Commanders, Robinson and Benkert, it differed from the requirements for global war with the Soviet Union in three broad ways. First, a wartime strategy, in their view, concentrates on countering overt Soviet aggression while, 'peacetime strategy objectives are more diffuse and perhaps best characterized as furthering an ill-defined set of interests of which countering the Soviets is only part, although a very important part.' Second, a violent peace strategy is inherently less structured and clear-cut in its objectives and processes. Finally, political and diplomatic considerations may dominate or circumscribe military considerations, at least in the early stages of a crisis. The major aims of a violent peace strategy are:

- protecting sea lines of communication and transit rights;
- allowing the US continued access to resources and markets; and
- demonstrating US interests overseas.

The US Navy is now well placed to respond to perceived threats from the South. By the early 1990s, and after the experience of the Gulf War, the navy began to reconfigure its forces away from the Soviet threat and towards the Third World. As most of the navy had been directed towards the East–West conflict, it could easily stand some cuts while retaining a very high level of power projection potential. The main thrust of the new strategy was a heavy concentration on coastal warfare, land attack and support of amphibious forces.

A Navy/Marine Corps White Paper ‘...From the Sea’, signed on 29 September 1992, commenced:

The world has changed dramatically in the last two years, and America’s national security policy has also changed. As a result, the priorities of the Navy and Marine Corps have shifted, leading to this broad assessment of the future direction of our maritime forces.²⁸

The nature of this new direction is that:

Our strategy has shifted from a focus on a global threat to a focus on regional challenges and opportunities. While the prospect of global war has receded, we are entering a period of enormous uncertainty in regions critical to our national interests. Our forces can help to shape the future in ways favourable to our interests by underpinning our alliances, precluding threats, and helping to preserve the strategic position we won at the end of the Cold War.²⁹

An indication of where the threats might arise comes in a report of a recent wargaming exercise at the Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Quantico, where scenarios involving Cuba, Libya, North Korea and Iraq were played out.³⁰ The emphasis was on rapid and surprise landings from over the horizon, using new generations of fast landing craft including air cushion vehicles. The marines, too, now see a bright new future for the Corps. As their commander, General Carl Mundy, put it recently:

The era of the Marines has returned. If you look back to the 1920s and 1930s, Marines came to be known as ‘State Department troops’. The reason for that description was that many people thought the despatching of the Marines to foreign lands did not connote an act of war but was simply a representation of US interests abroad.³¹

Although in recent years the marines have operated almost entirely from their own assault ships and have maintained their own air force, they are now cooperating much more closely with the navy. For example early in

1993, a Marine Air-Ground Task Force of 600 personnel and 10 helicopters was deployed on board the aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt*. The carrier left behind some of its anti-submarine warfare aircraft, but still maintained almost all its force of fighters and strike aircraft. This combination gave it the capability for a much wider range of activities than in the Cold War years, including operations in low intensity conflicts such as counter-insurgency operations in support of friendly government elites.³²

At a more general level, naval analysts argue forcefully that the navy is the best equipped force for power projection, pointing to its highly mobile aircraft carriers and its substantial cruise missile force. There is continuing competition between the navy and the air force. The USAF argues that strategic bombers can hit almost anywhere in the world from the US, and the navy argues that the versatility of carrier-based aircraft is superior.³³

The US Army

The army is not to be left out of this debate. It is arguing that it too has a system suitable for deep strike against targets in regional conflicts – the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), while the air force promotes precision-guided bombs and the navy, sea-launched cruise missiles:

US Air Force control over precision strike missions could erode rapidly with the advent of US Army and Navy deep-strike systems that can smash enemy targets faster and more decisively than air-launched weaponry, US military and civilian sources say.

The role each service should play in the increasingly critical deep-strike mission is a subject of contentious debate within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Pentagon sources say most regional commanders argue the Army should place an increased role in deep strikes...

Loren Larsen, Deputy Director of the Pentagon’s deepstrike systems office said Nov. 9 that the Army’s emphasis on rapid communications and the fast-flying ground-launched Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) gives the service ‘a significant leg-up’ over the Air Force, which relies on piloted aircraft that react more slowly. The ATACMS can be used to destroy a target at long range within 10 minutes of its detection while Air Force pilots are still en route, he said. Navy use of the Tomahawk cruise missile and potential use of a ship-launched version of the ATACMS also rival Air Force capabilities, he said.³⁴

We see here, as so often during the Cold War, rivalry between the armed forces as each seeks the biggest budgets for policing the new world order and protecting US interests. While the air force and navy (and the 'son of Star Wars') seem the obvious candidates for new spending, the army has been doing its best to argue its case, even as troops are being withdrawn from Europe. Use of ATACMS in regional conflicts is one of the few systems available to the army at a time when the navy and air force are making the running in military policy transition. In one other area, the army is pushing hard to maintain its position – special operations forces.

As with the marine corps, army special operations forces act principally in low intensity conflicts. They expect to increase their spheres of operations in an era of diverse conflicts and security interests in the South. They act with units of the other services in US Special Operations Command, and there is a major re-equipment programme under way:

The US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) identified a broad spectrum of technology thrusts in its new posture statement. To cope with the rapid proliferation of military technologies in Third World countries, special operations forces (SOF) will require new equipment and personal gear that can provide a defense against current sensors.³⁵

Programmes include a series of major upgradings to support aircraft and helicopters, new long-range support craft with an open-ocean range of over 1000 miles, and the provision of newly modified submarines for secret delivery of forces into hostile areas.³⁶ The army's role in policing the new world order may be smaller than that of the other services, but it is determined to take its place within the new strategy.

Areas of action

While small-scale intervention by the US may occur wherever local interests appear threatened, three areas of action are pre-eminent. The Persian Gulf region, with two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves, is considered of fundamental importance to the US, especially as its own oil reserves are depleted and it becomes a major oil importer. Secondly, any threats to US economic and political interests in Latin America are regarded as particularly significant and in need of control. Finally, there is an increasing likelihood of a resort to military force to control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Parallel processes in Europe

The US has by far the most powerful military forces in the world. But the re-orientation of forces and postures in which it is currently engaged are mirrored among its allies. Though NATO as a whole is still primarily oriented towards the security of Europe, the development of its Rapid Reaction Corps and its increased emphasis on the extended deployment of air power show elements of the US trends.

Individual NATO states give clearer indications of an outlook which parallels that of the US. An example is France's continuing commitment to carrier-based naval air power and rapid reaction army and air force units. Britain is particularly interesting: there are modest cuts in the defence budget under way, but coupled with a marked and quite costly re-ordering of posture. The defence cuts in Britain have fallen most heavily on those units in the forces which have been concerned specifically with the East-West confrontation, including a proportionally large cut-back in ground forces, especially armoured units in Germany, substantial cuts in naval anti-submarine forces and cuts in deep strike aircraft. While some tactical nuclear systems have been withdrawn, the Trident strategic nuclear force, still under development, appears to be in transition to give it an added 'sub-strategic capability', probably including a relatively small-yield nuclear warhead. The air force has lost some Tornado bomber squadrons but will retain almost all of its transport capability, including tanker aircraft. The Royal Marines suffer little in the way of cuts. The most interesting development is the changing make-up of the Royal Navy, with the withdrawal of a significant proportion of escorts as well as all four new conventionally-powered submarines. At the same time, the three small aircraft-carriers will all be maintained in service, a helicopter carrier has recently been ordered and it is likely that the two ageing assault ships will be replaced. Thus, Cold War defences are cut back, but military forces of use in small and medium-scale power projection are maintained. Together with Trident, these enable Britain to maintain some of its pretensions to global reach in an uncertain world. It is part of the same process, as in the US, preparing for 'a crowded, glowering planet'.

Even more intriguing are the developing links with the armed forces of the former Soviet bloc. Russia's concern with instability on its southern borders already extends to seeking links with the US in ballistic missile defence. The idea of a Global Protection System discussed by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin in 1992 is not 'global' at all but much more

a shielding of the North from a potential missile threat from the South.

PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVES

Curbing the development of a North–South axis of confrontation is intellectually and politically difficult. It requires a reversal of the main threads of northern strategic ethnocentrism which has seen all world problems in terms of its own interests – previously East–West, now North–South. The northern strategists and politicians will readily view threats to a new world order as being legitimate security concerns which should best be met by modifying military strategies to meet such threats. This is a particularly seductive viewpoint at a time of defence budget cuts.

In reality, the complex of global security problems now developing is not best approached from a military standpoint, indeed this is almost certain to be thoroughly counterproductive. Solutions lie principally in the political and economic arenas.

The core problems of poverty, environmental constraint and militarization require five responses:

1. Processes of militarization have to be reversed.
2. Northern industrialized countries have radically to change their policies towards the South.
3. Development policies encouraged by such change must be in a form which will ensure accelerated yet environmentally sustainable development.
4. Future development in the industrialized countries must itself be sustainable, recognizing that the major global environmental problems are caused primarily by the activities of these countries.
5. There must be a change in international behaviour to ensure a rapid and effective response to any future changes in the global ecosystem.

This requires a process of political evolution that is based on the concept of common human security and on a willingness to extend greatly the timescales of political action. In an environmentally constrained planet, there is no alternative to seeing security as synonymous with peace and justice – self-centred security is no longer tenable. This idea is only just beginning to emerge through the work of the Palme, Brundtland and South Commissions.

To counter militarization requires an agenda for arms control and

disarmament which would amount to a rapid reversal of the patterns of the past 40 years. While the ending of the Cold War will certainly see significant cuts in that spending, our concern must be global militarization. The agenda has, therefore, to extend to addressing those threats which, while usually originating in the context of the Cold War, also carry global risks. They include the full range of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical, biological or conventional, together with control of arms transfers and the progressive demilitarization of military manufacture.

The processes of demilitarization and arms industry conversion are complex and incur costs, yet cutting of as much as one half of global military spending over the next decade would release resources hugely in excess of anything previously committed to development assistance and environmental repair.

Of the other four areas for action, the first and foremost is the re-ordering of North–South relations. This requires comprehensive trade, debt and aid reform. Trade reform entails commodity agreements providing for progressively higher and stable primary commodity earnings for the South. Tariff preferences and commodity processing incentives are essential to encourage substantially higher export earnings, giving greater potential for investment in internal development. Debt cancellation rather than debt re-scheduling is needed to counter the debt crisis, and development assistance should be in grant rather than loan form and aimed principally at basic needs. These necessary changes in North–South development relationships are both radical and fundamental. They represent a near-total re-ordering of attitudes which would, over a period of years, involve a redistribution of wealth from North to South. This is a reversal of the pattern of the last several decades.

While the changes above involve a basic shift in the approach to international development, they do not of themselves address the issue of environmental constraints. The need in both the South and North is for patterns of development which are, to the best of our knowledge of environmental processes, sustainable in the long term. Conditions for sustainable development aim to prevent local, regional and especially global environmental deterioration.³⁷ Renewable resources, whether crops, forests or fisheries, must be maintained in a manner which ensures their continued productivity. Over-exploited ecosystems which have already deteriorated must be returned to a state in which sustainable exploitation is possible. More generally, any exploited ecosystem must contribute a broadly similar level of energy flows and

materials recycling to the natural ecosystem it replaces; and substantial areas of natural ecosystem must be preserved to maintain species diversity.

Any depletion of non-renewable resources must involve depletion only to a defined minimal stock. Any further exploitation would require newly discovered reserves. Part of the earnings from the exploitation of non-renewable resources should be invested in more efficient use of these resources (recycling, avoidance of wastage) or their replacement with renewable resources. While zero emission of pollutants into the biosphere may rarely be possible, emissions must not exceed recognized limits (whether local, regional or global).

It follows that a greatly improved standard of living for the majority of the world's population must be achieved using patterns of development greatly different from those pursued by the industrialized North. The massive and ecologically inefficient over-use of resources by the North must also be curbed.

North-South economic relations could be transformed in a manner which simultaneously redresses North-South inequalities and allows for environmentally sustainable resource use. For example, a commodity agreement covering a major non-renewable resource could involve a progressive increase in price, which would encourage conservation in consumption and allow an increased potential for sustainable economic and social development in the areas of production. This will not happen unless policies are constructed which encourage it to happen.

Switching away from conventional military approaches to security to such changed environment and development policies faces three core forms of opposition. First, there is the problem of political and economic timescales. Political systems tend to support planning which shows a social or economic return on political investment within five to ten years at the most. One to two years is often preferable, or even weeks or months prior to an election! Similarly, economic returns are normally sought within much less than ten years. Political and economic planning to counter environmental degradation may show little positive return in one or even two decades. To implement sustainable development which also addresses North-South polarization will involve a degree of planning and co-ordination that is antagonistic to the broadly free market approach which has dominated much of western politics in the 1980s. Secondly, the longer term effects of major environmental trends are difficult to predict with any kind of certainty. It is therefore easy to adopt best-case scenarios in order to avoid facing up to uncomfortable choices. Finally, and most intractable, evolving a sustainable and

peaceful global economic system inevitably means considerable costs for the wealthy industrialized states of the North, especially the Group of Seven – the US, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan.

Common global security implies radical cuts in resource use by the North, together with the transition to stable economies and a costly commitment to sustainable development in the South. This will be in direct opposition to those schools of thought which believe that existing levels of wealth and consumption can be maintained in the North, and that the countries of the North have a legitimate international right to maintain their standards and styles of living, if need be by military force.