

## Cato Institute Policy Analysis No. 94: An Alternative to Containment

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### Executive Summary

It has often been said that "containment has stood the test of time." Yet, "compared to what?" asks the hoary joke. Containment must be arrayed against its costs, the expectations held of it, and the projected costs and expectations of alternative doctrines of national strategy. Indeed, containment has been subjected to critiques from both sides: that its accomplishments have been meager, and a more ambitious strategy is in order; or that its costs and risks are excessive, well beyond the necessary and beneficial.

For almost four decades, since the beginning of the cold war in the late 1940s, America's national strategy has been devoted to the containment of the Soviet Union and Soviet-inspired communism. In that time, the paradigm of America's national strategy has consisted of two basic elements: deterrence, and forward defense or alliance--both devoted to containing communist power and influence. Deterrence is roughly equated with our strategic nuclear forces; we seek to maintain at least a balance of strategic nuclear arms with the USSR and to provide a nuclear umbrella over our allies and various other countries. Forward defense or alliance involves our protection, mostly by means of general purpose forces, of allies and other countries that occupy strategic positions or have sympathetic social and political values.

### Cost and Risks of Containment

The problem with the strategy of containment has not only been the continuing high costs associated with the requisite military preparations and the occasional egregious costs of heightened crises and regional wars; it has also been the risk, under certain circumstances, of being plunged into nuclear war. The costs can be attributed mostly to the generation of conventional forces, primarily for the defense of Europe; the risks can be attributed to reliance on the earlier use of nuclear weapons, also particularly in a confrontation arising from a conventional war in Europe. To some extent, cost can be transmuted into additional risk, and risk can be transformed into mere cost--that is what is meant by "lowering" or "raising" the nuclear threshold. But the choice itself arises from the policy of containment.

### Imbalance of Commitments and Resources

Perhaps the high cost of our present national strategy could be tolerated, if it could be demonstrated that the cost was already more than strictly necessary to implement the strategy, and if the nation found itself in comfortable fiscal circumstances. Neither is the case. Powerful critics assert, with considerable empirical support in the quantification of global and regional power balances, that even the \$314 billion that the Reagan administration requested for defense for FY 1986, let alone the \$289 billion that Congress finally granted, is grossly insufficient to execute the task of containing Soviet communism around the world. William Van Cleave proposed a 1986 defense budget \$50 billion

higher than Reagan's request.<sup>[1]</sup> And Leonard Sullivan Jr.'s estimate for projecting a confident conventional defense against Soviet arms envisions defense authorizations reaching 10 percent of GNP--a budget of about \$446 billion for 1987.<sup>[2]</sup>

So, if anything, we are spending too little, not too much, to implement our present policy of containment.<sup>[3]</sup> Another indication of this fact is the continuing shift of strategic concern to the Persian Gulf at the relative expense of Europe. This process, begun in the last two years of the Carter administration, can be measured in terms of the number of American land divisions, tactical air wings, and naval carrier battle groups primarily allocated to the Gulf (for 1987, 5 2/3 land divisions and an equivalent portion of tactical air and surface navy, out of a total of 21 land divisions, army and marine). Our explicit acquisition of this "new" area of strategic responsibility would not be unduly troublesome, were it not for the administration's additional assumption of multiple simultaneous deployments. In his FY 1986 posture statement, for example, Secretary of Defense Weinberger states:

Our forward-defense strategy dictates that we be able to conduct concurrent deployments to widely separated areas of the globe. Our present goal is to achieve the capability to deploy forces to a remote theater such as Southwest Asia, while maintaining an acceptable capability to reinforce NATO and key areas of Northeast Asia.<sup>[4]</sup>

The intention to deploy forces simultaneously raises the issue of double counting. A close reading of the force allocation embodied in Secretary Weinberger's statement indicates that, to some extent, the Pentagon intends a double assignment of certain units--characteristically for the Persian Gulf and also for Europe or East Asia and the Western Pacific. This not only violates the first law of thermodynamics, but also raises the question of the strategic overextension of general purpose forces. In more general terms, it suggests an imbalance of commitments and resources.

### **The Avoidance of Hard Choices**

This problem did not originate with the Reagan administration. It has characterized U.S. force planning since the two-and-a-half war doctrine of the Kennedy administration and even the one-and-a-half war doctrine of the Nixon administration--and before either of those, the Eisenhower administration. But the Reagan administration has exacerbated the contradiction, with its implication of a wider strategic scope of simultaneous responses to Soviet aggressions, and with its more tangible implementation of the commitment to defend the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia without significantly increasing the force structure or overall military manpower. Of course, there is no law against creating such gaps and contradictions, and they can often be maintained for some time, since these states of affairs are not always tested sharply or conclusively by events. But ultimately, events, or the foreshadowing of events by analysis, will challenge these relationships. And something will have to give.

The urgent question, then, is whether the United States can afford even its present scope of containment, let alone the more rigorous, demanding, and consistent version of the Reagan administration's strategy proposed by its still more hawkish critics. How can we pay for it and in what ways? What the United States faces, toward the end of the Reagan administration, is a crisis of solvency, in several pertinent senses of the word: not merely fiscal solvency, but also a gross misalignment between the country's strategic objectives in the world and its manifest willingness to pay for them.

It will not do for proponents of vigorous containment to impugn the patriotism of those who see our situation as arguing for significant retrenchment, or to dismiss the fiscal problem by reciting the abstract proposition that our economy could support even higher defense spending, for example, by sharply raising taxes. The fact that there are options does not make them more desirable than current policy, or more politically feasible. All of the fiscal options (taxes, inflation, more government borrowing) are not simply unpalatable, but destructive. Resources (and support) are not automatic; to be available to the state, they must be mobilized from society. Even if the government could balance its books by exacting more resources in the form of taxes (and possibly also conscription at low military wages) to support a large defense establishment and extensive foreign commitments, that would be just the end of one problem and the beginning of another.

Solvency means that the external and internal stances of this country comport with each other. An extensive, engaged foreign policy and a large, active military posture require big, intrusive, demanding government. If, as we were promised, the Reagan administration favors a more reserved, less extensive government, then we must have a more detached, disengaged foreign policy. The dilemma is especially cruel for this conservative president, who said in his first inaugural address that "government is the problem."

### **The Problem of Analysis**

The broad challenge to contemporary American foreign policy is how to perpetuate containment of the Soviet Union in an era of multiple constraints, both international and domestic. Some of these constraints are limits, and thus are more or less unalterable. Others are trade-offs--that is, the price we have to pay, in terms of the larger objectives of our state and society, to contain the Soviet Union. We must consider whether our society is really committed to pay that price, not just rhetorically, but objectively; that is, not just in the verbalizations of a crust of elites, but in the supportive actions of all of society, taken as a policy-making system. For the question of the perpetuation of containment will not be determined by its abstract desirability, or even by its "necessity," but rather by whether containment is viable strategically and consonant with domestic values. Among those values are economic solvency and the quality of society, including our accustomed freedoms and the unique political system that we undertake to defend in the first place.

### **Gimmicks and Wishful Thinking**

The question of perpetuating containment is therefore profound and complex. Yet, in typical critiques of containment, the goal of containing the USSR is assumed; it is taken as indispensable, not challengeable in itself. True, various constraints (e.g., budgetary, demographic, resource, popular support) are often enumerated. But such exercises generally move abruptly, negligently, and optimistically to a proposed series of mild correctives. Questions relating to the sufficiency of the proposed moves are begged, simply in the way the moves are described. Often, as a centerpiece of these proposals, certain "force-multipliers" or other gimmicks are suggested, such as "dual-missioning" of our forces--that is, treating the units the United States keeps in Europe and Northeast Asia as expeditionary forces, available for broader regional assignments. Such superficial analyses and wishful prescriptions usually ignore the obvious dilemma: that global "flexibility" can be achieved only by robbing the primary areas of some measure of our protection. There are several problems, for example, with the proposal made by Col. John Endicott.<sup>[5]</sup> First, the forces he would generate or liberate from their overall units and contingently deploy to other regional situations are not sustainable. They are rump units, or rather, detached arms and legs without their torso, which has been left behind. They are dependent on a few days of transportable supplies, then on pre-positioned logistics that will be vulnerable, because they will be known and high-value targets for a determined enemy.

Second, even the flexibly deployed forces are costly. Their pre-positioned supplies are, after all, redundant. The lines of communication to their assigned outposts must be protected by our anti-submarine systems and our carrier battle groups against determined attempts at interdiction. The locations to be reached are, by definition, the farthest off, and therefore require the greatest amounts of airlift and sealift. Moreover, the equipment to be lifted is not as light as proponents of these forces indicate: Airmobile units, with their helicopters, are notoriously bulky, and the high rates of fire that must be sustained entail heavy logistics, even if the units are classified as "light." There will be a need for a thick base structure along the way to the far-off theaters, and this, in turn, will entail subsidies and defensive obligations to local countries.

Third, above all, proponents of dual-missioning have to cope with the prospect of simultaneous conflicts, for example, in Europe and in Southwest Asia. Our adversaries will not be so obliging as to play to American convenience. Serious trouble in a peripheral area is bound to be accompanied by tension at the center. In any case, nervous allies will not cheerfully part with the cutting edge of American forces primarily detailed to their defense. That, among other things, is already the trouble with the Rapid Deployment Force under Central Command--at least with Secretary of Defense Weinberger's concept of such forces: They are to be double-hatted or even triple-hatted units. But we are not fooling anyone but ourselves; certainly not our allies, and even less our adversaries. (One is reminded of Kurt Vonnegut's description, in his novel, *Galapagos*, of the Ecuadorian navy: It consists of four submarines, which choose to remain submerged and incommunicado and have not been heard from for 15 years.)

The proponents of this dual-missioning scheme assure us that "political costs should be minimal," since "U.S. commitment to the defense of Western Europe and South Korea would be evident and continuing." But I would not be so sure of this proposition. Long before such units were actually shifted out of their primary region of deployment, in some crisis, the designation of these units as swing forces would have illustrated the inconstancy of our commitment. In any case, if such forces were more needed in the outlying theaters, we would have, or should have, permanently deployed them there in the first place. (Indeed, in the case of Asia, the scheme of force flexibility rests on the ability of South Korea and Japan to handle their own conventional defense.) Why, then, shift American forces merely temporarily? (And, ironically, the worst time to move them would be in a crisis.) Why not withdraw them in any case, and entirely?

## **The Nature of Foreign Policy**

Proposals for limited change fail because of their underlying methodology, a way of thinking that characterizes much of the current debate on containment itself. Simply put, containment may be a nice idea, but foreign policy is not made of attractive ideas peddled with competitive virtuosity and zeal. Certainly a policy such as containment is not self-executing; there are the essential questions of what may be needed to implement the policy, whether those things will be forthcoming, and at what price. Only in the context of these questions can we understand the scope of our choices, or even understand what it means to "choose." Most policy writing, whether official or critical, consists of lists of things that "must" be done. Rarely is it based on an assessment of costs, limits, and feasibility, or a comparison of alternatives. Rarely does it invoke numbers, or even imply quantities of things that must be exacted or expended. Gaps are bridged, if at all, by pure verbalisms, exhortations of "will," or the mere advocacy of shifts in our orientation.

But policy, particularly foreign policy, is not a set of items that must be obtained, preserved, or remedied in the world, without reference to situation or contingent cost. It is certainly not the official expression of objectives of state. Rather, policy is an entire system's probable responses to future contingent challenges over a range of issues and geographical areas. Many of the elements that form these responses will not be determined by national authorities. Some policy determinants consist of institutional, military, and resource dispositions that make it more likely that we will respond in a certain way. Other determinants include situations at the time of future decisions or actions, also to varying degrees beyond our control, though not totally beyond our prediction. That is why the description of a proposed foreign policy must begin by tracing the constraints of the international and domestic systems. These are the starting points in the partially predictive process that indicates what our foreign policy orientation "ought" to be.

This kind of real-world analysis must be applied to containment as the emblematic American foreign policy of the past four decades. An old expression inquires whether the game is worth the candle. Any critique of containment should ask: (a) What is the game? (b) What is the requisite candle? (c) Can we afford the candle? (d) Is there another game in town?

## **Universality and the Mirage of Selective Containment**

We start with the game of the name--the concept of containment. At the outset, we encounter an essential dispute: Was containment originally intended to be universal in its application? More interestingly, is containment by its very nature, or rather by the nature of the threat it is designed to meet, universal?

## **Kennan's Original Formulation**

A literal reading of George Kennan's original "text" indicates that containment was to be universal. Indeed, Kennan made containment's universality the centerpiece of his published analysis of Soviet conduct in 1947, in his celebrated image of the Soviet threat:

Its political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power.

Further, Kennan prescribed:

a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment . . . [through] the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy . . . a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world."<sup>[6]</sup>

Kennan now claims that he has been grossly misinterpreted; that he always intended to emphasize geographical selectivity (that is, Europe and its approaches from the east, the south, and the sea), and to confine our response primarily to economic means<sup>[7]</sup>--a retrospective exegesis, or prosthesis, for which there is some support in his unpublished and State Department work at the time.<sup>[8]</sup> Nevertheless, given Kennan's characterization of the Soviet threat, one wonders how a geographically and functionally limited American response could have been sufficient. That is particularly so if the purpose of containment was not to make a token defense, but to present Soviet leaders with such a prospect of frustration that the motives and dynamic of their society would be profoundly altered. Hydraulic metaphors, no less than their subject, should flow in all directions. If the threat is of such a character that there is a case for containing it at all, then containment must be universal. Selectively containing that kind of threat is like trying to hold water in a two-dimensional vessel.

### **The Illusion of Selectivity**

Nevertheless, selectivity is the most prevalent kind of argument purporting to mitigate the need for extensive armament and deployments in the implementation of containment. It can take two forms: selectivity of commitment, that is, of the objectives of our policy and strategy; and selectivity of means, of the military forces and weapons which support it.

Selectivity of commitment is proposed as a way of bringing obligations and costs into line (and also as a way of minimizing the occasions for war). The argument for selectivity fixes on places and defensive objects that "matter," that make a difference according to some criterion. Virtually all proponents of selectivity would still contain our adversaries in some sense; but they are selective in that they strive for some principle of limitation and impute to their more extreme opponents the scheme of "universality."

Most proposals of selective intervention--as diverse as those of Kennan, Robert W. Tucker, Stanley Hoffmann, and Ernst B. Haas<sup>[9]</sup>--are subject to the same problems. In the last analysis, all lead back to, or are operationally indistinguishable from, the more comprehensive versions of containment. This is true in several respects: (a) They support virtually all the same objects of our defense; objects, as it turns out, that comprise the major portion of our present and projected defense expenditures.<sup>[10]</sup> (b) They would implicitly support, in addition to the supposedly necessary prime objects, a host of minor, intrinsically dispensable objects "for the sake of" the major objectives. (c) When and if these proposals are costed out, they may turn out to be even more expensive than the supposedly universal schemes they would supplant. This is because, in emphasizing certain situations as "vital," they tend to add these to all the others, which they are wary of discontinuing. (d) Finally, the logic of threat and response, coupled with the diagnosis of the nature or "source" of the threat, leads these supposedly limitationist arguments back to an espousal of any act or response that would constitute effective containment. Selectivity becomes universality, though the authors of these proposals sometimes disown or disfigure their intellectual offspring.

An able statement of selectivity is that of Robert W. Tucker. Tucker argues for "moderate containment," or "a limited policy of containment," and he would "concentrate" American strategic attention on the Persian Gulf.<sup>[11]</sup> His requirement for intensified defense of the Gulf seems at least halfway toward the ability to stand off a Soviet incursion, as well as to discourage an indigenous disruption or refusal of oil on assured and reasonable terms. Though he does not demonstrate how our military force would accomplish this result, it is clear that it would require a larger, more ready and sustainable rapid deployment force.

We already spend some \$49 billion a year to prepare to defend the Persian Gulf (out of about \$65 billion that can be considered to be attributable to regions other than Europe and East Asia). Tucker's scheme for a more comprehensive defense of the Gulf might add another \$10 or \$12 billion a year to the cost of defending this region. And since Tucker would not give up the defense of Western Europe, which costs \$133 billion a year, there is no category of arms that he

would cut appreciably, except such minimal forces as we keep for intervention in Central America. Even there he asserts the propriety of American force if Soviet or Cuban support is discovered.

George Kennan, too, starts by seeking a principle that limits American political and military intervention and ends by asserting and implying a scope of instances that is tantamount to virtually universal involvement. In his book, *The Cloud of Danger*, Kennan advocates "the reduction of external commitments to the indispensable minimum . . . the preservation of the political independence and military security of Europe, of Japan, and--with the single reservation that it should not involve the dispatch and commitment of American armed forces of Israel."<sup>[12]</sup> True, Kennan would like to abandon "several obsolescent and nonessential positions: notably those at Panama, in the Philippines, and in Korea."<sup>[13]</sup> But he cannot deny the extent to which the primary commitments depend, physically and psychologically, on those "nonessential" positions.

In fact, one should not be unduly impressed by modifying and mollifying adjectives such as "limited," "selective," or "moderate"; for when one becomes concrete, the imperative of containment usually overrides the qualifications. The problem is generic to selective versions of containment. Containment, of its essence, must remain contingently open-ended. The circumstances of Soviet aggressive or expansive behavior are not subject to American definition and limitation; implicit in the definition of "the Soviet threat" is that the Soviets exercise the initiative. Therefore, once committed to containment, how can we keep it limited?

Stanley Hoffmann also proposes a "selective policy." He criticizes the "new orthodoxy" and its "fundamentalist response": "projection of a bipolar grid" on the world, "neo-nationalism," "emphasis on military power," "too militant [a] view of Soviet expansionism," and a "world-wide crusade." But he would defend essentially the same places and objects as his more extreme opponents, and in much the same ways, especially in Europe, where the conventional force balance trends are "disturbing" and where we "need . . . middle-range nuclear weapons capable of hitting the Soviet Union."

Throughout Hoffmann's critique there is an avoidance of choice. In the Persian Gulf, for instance, "the U.S. would be a tragic position if it had to choose between economic disaster and a military intervention that could be economically futile and would be politically catastrophic." (Yes, but which way would his argument fall if we had to choose?) Again, "the aim of foreign policy ought to be to make it possible for each of the two powers to play its own game, in such a way as not to violate the vital interests of the other." (A good rule. But should we adopt it unilaterally, asymmetrically, if "their" game does violate our vital interests?) In another place, Hoffmann proposes "to provide extended deterrence by means other than American military and nuclear might alone." (What is the function of "alone"? If we have the nuclear might, what else do we need? If we do not have it, what good are the other means?)<sup>[14]</sup>

The problems of selectivity are seen even more clearly in the essay of Ernst B. Haas. Haas's plan "scales down and redefines some American world order values, recognizing that we cannot, without risking our own ruin, continue the attempt to mold the world in our image." It also aims at a "delinking of issues." Haas even permits himself to be skeptical of the existence of "A Soviet threat," or, for that matter, a "free world." Confronted with the question, "where should we be ready to fight?" Haas recites the familiar litany: "Western Europe, Japan, South Korea, and the Pacific." To this he adds "regimes so close to the United States as to afford the adversary an opportunity for offensive action . . . Canada and Mexico. . . ." To this already substantial list Haas appends two nonstrategic criteria: "the military defense of all democratic countries against Soviet threats, provided these countries wish to be defended...[and] threats by allies of the Soviet Union against Third World countries with a democratic tradition." There is yet another, economic, objective: "key commodities that are essential for the economic welfare of the democratic countries."<sup>[15]</sup>

These proposed objects of American protection are not in themselves absurd. The point is that, in the name of "selectivity," they add up to a good part of the world--all we are now committed to defend, and perhaps more. My calculation is that the areas and objectives that Haas mentions are already costing the United States about \$237 billion out of the \$240 billion we plan to spend for general purpose forces in the 1987 defense budget. Verbal criteria, such as "selective engagement," do not save Americans much or absolve us from the risk of confrontation and escalation.

## **The Real Alternatives**

In the end, "selective" containment is not the only alternative to universal containment. Rather, it is just a middle position between universal intervention and consistent nonintervention (the uninvited guest at this contentious banquet). Limitationists think their middle positions must be more realistic, simply because the extreme positions are unacceptable or unmentionable. But because of its contradictions and its operational correspondence with more extensive containment, this middle position is instead almost fictional. It is an artifact of the debate, not a real policy. The extremes of universal containment and consistent disengagement may be unpalatable, but that is just the point. The choice of extreme positions approximates the present predicament of the United States. In the face of this real and poignant choice, the formula of "selective" intervention or "moderate" containment is more an incantation than a proposal.

### **Defining the Containment Problem Away**

But selectivity in its various forms is not the only false approach invented to avoid the burdens and risks of containment. Several positions of the liberal center and liberal left either deny the need to contain or attempt to subsume the containment paradigm in a new and presumably more acceptable framework.

Some of these arguments deny the empirical premise--the "threat"--and attempt to explain away a succession of Soviet moves, both regional intrusions and arms buildups. There are three variants: (a) "we are still ahead"; (b) "their moves are not what you think they are"; and (c) "their moves are somehow our fault, reactions to our own provocations." All are the familiar stuff of the former revisionists of the cold war. They may have once been useful correctives, but over the past decade they have had to become more imaginative, even fanciful. For some reason, whether compensatory or aggressive, the Soviets have mounted a major political and military challenge to the West; at least they have done a collection of things that equate to such a challenge, and done so in the knowledge that they would be so interpreted. Rather than deny the problem in order to justify doing less, a realistic analysis would admit the seriousness of U.S. inaction in order to measure its consequences against those of confronting the problem directly.

### **Searching for a New Yalta**

Another escape (generally a liberal one) from the responsibility of dealing frontally with "the threat" is the positing of "deals," a new round of global negotiations with the Soviet Union. Though proponents of this course of action would be uncomfortable with the parallel, this would be tantamount to another Yalta--in three respects. First, the concept is grandiose; a new deal would not be a series of ad hoc technical agreements, but a comprehensive renegotiation of the boundaries of "East" and "West" and the rules of conduct in and between those spheres. Second, "deals" do not represent one nation's adjustment to situations; they are not unilateral, consisting of measures entirely within our own competence to devise and execute. Indeed, they toy casually with the fate of other nations, whose abandonment or preservation are the agenda of the two superpowers. Third, above all, if there are to be deals at all instead of unilateral counter-threats, they must codify the farthest reaches of Soviet penetration and influence, and leave the rest, as in Lenin's dictum, "negotiable." Thus, deals simply define away the problem of our inability to act by making it part of the settlement.

### **The Pursuit of an Elusive World Order**

Still another attempt to solve the problem of America's situation in the world is to find a surrogate goal that is more congenial or putatively more amenable to solution than the unilateral pursuit of security. The classic solution is to posit "world order norms," conditions of the international system that should be sought instead of the narrower and presumably more contentious security interests of the United States. An elaborate expression of this thesis is Stanley Hoffmann's book, which embodies in its title the choice he sees as meaningful and critical: *Primacy or World Order*.<sup>[16]</sup>

But the kind of world order we would recognize as congenial or livable would include a vast component of American primacy. World order is not self-enforcing, and no one can hope for overarching impartial mechanisms or wish for the dominance of another great power. So in the critical cases it would even be hard to distinguish world order from effective American primacy. More important, it would be hard to distinguish the amount of American power needed

for the more direct and comprehensible tasks of self-protection from the amount (presumably, Hoffmann would say, the lesser amount) sufficient to establish world order. Indeed, it might take a concentration and persistence of American power far in excess of the more modest requirements of our own security to enforce world order. That effort would often be misspent, and might also be frustrated. Our simple will to move the international system toward a more cooperative, "managed" basis would likely meet the residual suspicion of our major antagonists in the world, or the competition of ambitious, rising regional contestants, or the hostility of a myriad of other less powerful but dissatisfied nations who do not relish our intrusive distribution of the things of the world, however constructive we may think it is.

### **The Question of Means**

If the objects of containment cannot be selectively limited, and the containment problem itself cannot be defined or subsumed out of existence, perhaps some relief from the burdens of extensive containment can be found in the means through which the policy would be executed. One approach is to assert that military means are interchangeable with "non-military means," and that the substitution is a matter of choice or preference. But this proposition is not much more than a placebo. Everyone hopes that in a crisis of conflicting interests, diplomacy, economic inducements, and sympathetic ties will help resolve the problem. But it is fair to ask, what if those non-military instruments do not work? Or what if they work only because military instruments lurk in the background--that is, if they depend for their efficacy, in the last analysis, on the threat of force? Simply to ignore this problem is to be thrown back on a non-policy: hoping that nothing happens.

The argument of "non-military means" amounts to a displacement, actually a transcendence, of the security problem. Again, one version is represented in the current writings of George F. Kennan. Kennan's attitude toward the Soviet challenge and America's predicament is expressed poignantly in an article in the Atlantic called "Cease This Madness,"<sup>[17]</sup> which is an impassioned appeal directed to the leadership of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Laying about him evenhandedly with imputations of blame--equating, for example, the Soviets' depriving their youth of liberty with our society's granting them too much liberty--he proceeds to impugn the "madness" that underlies the "dreadful militarization of the entire East-West relationship." He avers: "For the maintenance of armed forces on a scale that envisages the total destruction of an entire people there is no rational justification."

There is no question that Kennan is describing a real peril to humanity; but his remarks only underscore the tragic predicament of both nations, the perverse but still recognizable rationality of arms competition. What one would call, ruefully, strategic interdependence is not "madness" in the ordinary sense of the word. Kennan's frequent charge of "militarization" and his rather vague advice, ". . . thrust [these] destructive powers . . . from you," in the end simply reflect his longstanding impatience in the presence of military factors, an impatience born of the disdain of the diplomatist to do his homework in the military stuff of the strategic nuclear age. What remedy follows from this dual ascription of cause: madness and militarization? Simply, that "the decisionmakers of the two super-powers . . . should . . . take their military establishments in hand and insist that these become the servants, not the masters and determinants, of political action--" as if the military created the foreign policies of either state.

### **The Role of Military Force**

A variant of the argument for "non-military means" is the well-worn thesis of the disutility of military force. This is another attempt to avoid the price, and even the calculus, of our national objectives. The argument plays upon an equivocation: first, that U.S. military power, in relation to that of others, is in decline; second, that military power in general is less usable, less translatable into political advantages.

It is probably true that pure application of military force is declining in its effect on situations, that it is increasingly cost-ineffective, and that its means are becoming more widely diffused among multiple centers of political and strategic initiative. But military force is still integral to the structure of international relations.<sup>[18]</sup> And, of course, military power can be decisive if asymmetrically possessed in a particular situation.

As for non-military means, one can cite a variety of instruments to influence other parties, through incentives as well as threats.<sup>[19]</sup> Everyone favors non-military instruments, where they are appropriate. But one needs force, or at least residual force, to defend a nation's security decisively and confidently. If the object is to minimize the use of military

force, then the task is to devise a system and a foreign policy that do not occasion violent intervention. Non-military means might have to be taken into the calculus, but they do not excuse us from the calculation.

## **The Concept of National Will**

An associated confusion arises when we ask whether our political leaders could enhance American power in the world by mobilizing national "will." It had become a fashion to deplore the supposed absence of "presidential leadership," at least until the Reagan restoration of 1981, in which America was dealt the semblance of presidential leadership in spades. Now various pundit-journalists, professorial strategists, and even many national security bureaucrats talk almost obsessively about will. Foreign challenges and problems are seen as tests of our resolve; Vietnam was a "trauma" that impaired our capability to respond to threats; we are paralyzed by a "failure of nerve."

But this terminology itself is a tissue of anthropomorphisms and misleading abstractions. We are not talking about "will" in some primal personal sense; we are talking about the operation of a complex political and social system, not even an organism except in a mostly misleading metaphor.

The politics of "will" stems from a profound misconception of the nature and function of foreign policy, embodying a curious mixture of necessity and choice. The necessary, proper, and exclusive referent of foreign policy is held to be external, having to do with the state of the outside world, not the impact of it on our own political or social or economic system; and rather abstract, such as global and regional power balances and assessments of relative credibility. "Interests" are held to reside objectively, and almost implicitly, in objects of our foreign policy or in situations themselves, when in fact they are more the result of our own perceptions of relevance and immediacy, and of our tangible commitments, which forge the linkages between events elsewhere in the world and our own indicated responses.<sup>[20]</sup> And yet, in apparent contradiction, our responses are seen as a matter of choice, an exercise of will. Indeed, policy itself is most often defined as a set of authoritative declarations of intent, when, operationally, policy is more a set of contingent predictions about our own probable future response--in short, what we will be able to do as much as what we would like to do.

## **The Issue of Constraints**

Thus, our interests, far from being unarguable external impositions on us, evolve more from the abstract sense we insist on making of the world and the way we intellectualize foreign objects and situations. And policy, far from being a matter of pure choice or will, is more determined by constraints, both external and internal. If there was a trauma occasioned by the Vietnam War, it has to be analyzed in terms of what the war revealed about the constrained operation of our own system and about our constrained ability to coerce the conduct of others in the international system. What is not appreciated, even by those who consider themselves foreign policy "makers," is that you don't "make" foreign policy as you make boats or houses or gadgets or soup. The question is not even who makes policy, but what makes policy.

To determine the responses of our system, then, we cannot look to factors of will, predilection, or even intention. Rather, we are thrown back on the analysis of (a) the strategic orientation that is conditioned by our preparations and built into our institutions, and (b) our capabilities and constraints. Those factors constitute, respectively, the logic and the logistics of national action. They are what make certain responses both "necessary" and yet at times impossible.

Thus, a proper theory of national conduct would have to include:

1. The probable limits of Soviet expansion and other challenging activity, without our deterrence or counterintervention;
2. The ability of the United States to live with these situations;
3. What it could cost to counter Soviet or other actions at various stages, and the comparison of these costs with the costs of other things our system could do; and
4. The alternatives we have, and the effects that would occur in the international system if we were to exercise some large-scale alternative choices.

## **An Alternative Doctrine**

The entailments and disabilities of containment suggest the consideration of a major, coherent alternative. Such a policy would be one of strategic disengagement and non-intervention. In such a program, both of the cardinal elements of the present U.S. strategic paradigm would change. Instead of deterrence and alliance, we would pursue war avoidance and self-reliance. Our security would depend more on our abstention from regional conflicts and, in the strategic nuclear dimension, on finite essential deterrence.

### **America's Core Values**

In a program of non-intervention, the United States would defend primarily against an umbra of direct threats to those values that are so basic that they are part of the definition of state and society: our political integrity and the safety of our citizens and their domestic property. Because those values are inalienable, their defense would ipso facto be credible. We would also defend against a penumbra of challenges that are only indirectly threatening but are relevant because of their weight, momentum, direction, and ineluctability. We would be looking for a new set of criteria, decision rules, if you will, that condition and bound our responses to future events that could be considered challenges. This definition is intensive, rather than extensive, in nature.

Nor are these rhetorical terms. As I have discussed at greater length elsewhere,<sup>[21]</sup> our military program would be designed to defend the most restricted perimeter required to protect those core values, a much smaller perimeter than the one the United States is now committed to defend. We would defend against military threats directed against our homeland. That is not, in the first instance, an overtly geographical criterion, and deliberately not. We should not be fixated on drawing lines in the sand; rather, we should be concerned to characterize correctly the nature and import of other countries' actions, and appreciate the characteristics of foreign events that cause us to consider them "threats." Functional criteria may be less definitive than geographical ones, but they are more important.

The concomitant of this restricted definition of American interests and of the threats to them is that the United States would encourage other nations to become self-reliant, to hedge. In fact, many foresighted countries already discount American protection in a wide range of possible cases, despite our formal obligations to come to their assistance. This does not imply that all these countries face imminent threats; simply that some are impressed more by the reality of our circumstances than by our reassurances and have drawn the appropriate conclusions.

War avoidance invokes primarily, though not exclusively, the strategic nuclear component of this counterparadigm. We will always need a strategy that discourages direct nuclear attacks on our homeland or intolerable coercion of our national political choices by nuclear threats. But today, given the parity between the nuclear arsenals of the two superpowers, our safety depends on maintaining a condition that is called crisis stability, wherein both sides have a strong incentive to avoid striking first with their nuclear weapons.

### **Toward Nuclear Stability**

A design for nuclear stability would look like this: Since an enemy's first strike must logically be a damage-limiting attack against our nuclear forces, we should eliminate systems as they become even theoretically vulnerable to a Soviet preemptive strike. Land-based systems are inevitably vulnerable, despite the efforts of a succession of administrations to put them in multiple or closely spaced shelters (as with the MX), or to acquire a redundant and dispersed force (as with the prospective Midgetman single-warhead missiles). Instead, we should move to a dyad of strategic nuclear forces: ballistic missile submarines and bombers armed with medium-range air-launched cruise missiles. Then, to discourage further a Soviet first strike, we should not target Soviet missiles (nor does it make any strategic or moral sense to aim at Soviet cities). Rather, we should develop a list of some 3,000 military targets such as naval and air bases, concentrations of conventional forces, military logistical complexes, and arms industries that are relatively far from large civilian population centers. Finally, since nuclear war is most likely to occur through our escalation in the midst of conventional war, probably in Europe, or possibly in the Middle East, we must confront our attitude toward the first use of nuclear weapons. I believe we should impose upon ourselves an unconditional doctrine of no first use.

### **Assessing the Soviet Threat**

The two elements of war avoidance and self-reliance constitute a new paradigm, a principled policy of non-intervention that should be a major alternative. We would no longer consider peace to be seamless and indivisible. There might well be continuing troubles in the world, including cases where a Soviet-sponsored faction perpetrates a forcible revision of the local military balance. If we were to intervene, we might win a few rounds, as in Grenada in November 1983. But the list of feasible interventions is far shorter than the list of desirable ones, and even shorter than the list of "necessary" ones.

But what of the expected, and frequent, charge that a noninterventionist foreign policy would lay the world open to Soviet expansion or revolutionary violence? In the last analysis, a true non-interventionist position does not depend on trust in Soviet intentions: It takes Soviet power seriously. It simply accepts the possibility of suffering some foreign losses in order to preserve the integrity of our own economy, society, and political system. Yet there are reasons, also, to doubt the unvarnished projection of a Soviet political-military windfall. These reasons depend on a more sophisticated calculus of the motives (the propensity to intervene) of a potential aggressor; on an unavoidably complex analysis of the course and future of the international system; and on a somewhat speculative projection of the status of Western Europe without America.

First, it is difficult to determine just how the Soviet Union would react to a non-interventionist American foreign policy. However, a potential aggressor will consider not simply the odds of victory or defeat; he must weigh whether his potential gains, minus the predicted costs of achieving them, exceed what he could achieve without attacking. That is a very different, and a much more discouraging, calculus.

Beyond that, a serious proposal of non-intervention must make some assumptions about the world--that is, the global political-military balance, specifically between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the situation in strategic regions of the world. The international system is not just an inert environment for the making of foreign policy, or so much malleable clay or putty for the designers of an active and manipulative foreign policy. The structure or design of the international system is also in important ways a determinant of foreign policy, a framework within which each nation must choose. Its characteristics are to some extent alterable by individual nations, more or less according to their power, and the United States will continue to have preeminent ability to set and modify those parameters through its own choices and actions. But to do so requires a further expense or effort and is arguably less efficient than a policy of operating within the parameters.

## **A New International System**

The evolving international system will offer increasing challenges and temptations, but it also will impose greater costs and risks for less ample and less secure gains, all within the social, economic, and political constraints of the domestic system, which are themselves becoming tighter and more trouble-some. The world that we will confront as we move beyond the turn of the millennium will evolve further from the world that we have experienced during the past four decades, in six critical dimensions.

The first is the high probability of troubles, such as embargoes, expropriations, coups, revolutions, externally supported subversions, thrusts by impatient irredentist states, and calculated probes of defense perimeters; these will be neither resolved nor constructively equilibrated by some benign balance of power mechanism.

The second tendency is increasing interdependence. But this has a different implication from the one that proponents would recognize. Interdependence is a set of functional linkages of nations: resources, access routes, economic activities and organizations, populations, and the physical environment. These areas harbor problems that could be aggravated to the point where they became threats to the security of nations, demanding but not suggesting solutions.

The third element of the future international system is the probable absence of an ultimate adjustment mechanism, in the form of a supranational institution that can authoritatively police the system, dispensing justice and granting relief, especially in those extreme cases that threaten to unhinge the system.

The fourth factor is an interim conclusion of the first three: Stabilization, the long-range action of states to bring about conditions in the external system that enhance their security, will take the form of unilateral interventions rather than collaborative world order.

The fifth future condition--perhaps the most important one--is the unmanageable diffusion of power, beyond some ideal geometry of powerful but "responsible" states. Instead, this process is likely to proceed to a kaleidoscopic interaction of multiple political entities. By all measures of power-- military (nuclear or conventional, actual or potential), economic (total wealth or commercial weight), or political (the thrust to autonomy and achievement)--there may be 15 or 20 salient states, not necessarily equal, and not necessarily armed with nuclear weapons, but potent to the point of enjoying the possibility of independent action. This diffusion of power will have several aspects. One is that limits will become evident in existing polities, and cracks will appear in existing military alliances. Another aspect of diffusion is the impracticality of military power, whether nuclear, conventional, or subconventional--quite a different matter from the absolute or relative disutility of military force.

The sixth condition that will complicate the enforcement of international order is the incoherence of domestic support, not just in our country but to a certain extent in all, and not just when political systems are free from external pressure, but precisely when they most need steady support. The lack of public support might not prevent intervention, but it might critically inhibit its prosecution. (This, in my view, is the enduring lesson of Vietnam.)

The net result of these tendencies is that general unalignment, as a pattern or type of international system, is likely to succeed the present multipolar balance of power, just as the balance of power succeeded the earlier regime of bipolar confrontation. This would be a world of circumscribed regional powers. Though absolute technological and military disparities might increase, there might be more equality of usable power among the present superpowers, great powers, and middle powers, including some accomplished or would-be regional hegemonic states.

### **Implications for the United States**

In the face of such a world, the policy choice for the United States is whether to attempt to control its environment, or simply to adjust. Although challenges and opportunities will arise, it will be increasingly unnecessary and undesirable for the United States to intervene in regional situations. It will be unnecessary because the very presence of either a regional hegemonic state or a situation of perpetual conflict will be an obstruction to the other superpower, or to any other external power. There would be less potential profit for any intervenor, making our own abstention less risky. It will be increasingly undesirable for the United States to intervene in regional situations because these situations will be messy and interminable. They will tend to be profitless, because intervention will be expensive, and results, even if achieved, will be transient.

Of course, for the United States the most important region is Europe. What would be the probable status of Europe without American protection? I would envisage a Europe that is independent politically and diplomatically and autonomous strategically, and that acts in greater military concert, though not political unity. Actually, Europe could go quite far toward defending itself without American help. It need not be "Finlandized," either in whole or in part. If the United States were to withdraw, the principal European countries would probably increase their defense spending gradually, perhaps to 5 percent or 6 percent of their gross national product. The countries of Western Europe, even if not formally united in a new military alliance, have the economic, demographic, and military resources, and the advantage of natural and man-made barriers, to defeat or crucially penalize a Soviet attack.<sup>[22]</sup>

The United States can make large cuts in its defense budget if and only if a policy of strategic disengagement and nonintervention is adopted. We could defend our essential security and our central values with a much smaller force structure than we have now. Such a force structure would provide the following general purpose forces: 8 land divisions (6 army and 2 Marine Corps), 20 tactical airwing equivalents (11 air force, 4 Marine Corps, and 5 navy), and 6 carrier battle groups. With the addition of a dyad of nuclear forces (submarines and cruise-missile-armed bombers), this would mean manpower of 1,185,000 (370,000 army, 315,000 air force, 365,000 navy, and 135,000 Marine Corps). The total defense budget at the end of a decade of adjustment would be about \$158 billion in 1987 dollars. In contrast, the Reagan administration originally requested, for 1987, 21 land divisions and 46 tactical airwing equivalents, with 14 carrier battle groups; this force requires 2,181,000 men and a budget authorization of \$312 billion.

These differences will multiply greatly unless we change our course. The way we are headed, the defense budget will be about \$530 billion by 1996, and cumulative defense spending during that decade will be over \$4.1 trillion. Under a

noninterventionist policy, the 1996 defense budget would be 58 percent less, and the cumulative cost over a decade would be under \$2.6 trillion.<sup>[23]</sup>

## **Advancing the Debate**

The case for non-intervention is not a pure prescription of a state of affairs that is inherently and universally attractive. It is prescription mingled with prediction. Non-intervention is proposed as an adjustment to the world as it is shaping up and to the constraints of our polity, society, and economy. Our national orientation should not depend entirely on whether some objective, such as containment, is worthy of our commitment. Worthy causes are not free. As in all things, there is a price to be paid, and that price has been growing higher. The multidimensional costs of containment (the specific acts and the general stance of perpetual preparedness) should be weighed against the consequences of not containing and not preparing to contain. Part of the prediction is that our country, taken as a decisionmaking system, will not pay those costs.

The consistent pursuit of non-intervention by this nation will entail a fundamental change in its foreign policy and national strategy. We would have to test our foreign and military policies against the harder questions about national security. In the first instance, this means distinguishing sharply between the interests of our allies and dependents and the interests of our own country. We would also have to learn to differentiate even our own interests from our security. This is not to deny that our other interests (defined in terms of the objective goals of actual individuals and organizations) are real, and mostly legitimate. It is rather to challenge the automatic notion that we must prepare to defend our panoply of interests by the use or threat of force, overt or covert, wholesale or piecemeal, through proxies or by ourselves.<sup>[24]</sup> And it is to challenge the notion that "milieu goals"--the shape and character of the international system, "balance" in general or with a particular antagonist, and even the more abstract concept of order in the system-- should be assimilated into the schedule of objects that we must pursue and, by implication, defend. Sometimes, in the typical inflated and debased political rhetoric of our time, these more abstract and generic milieu goals are disguised as more immediate, even vital, security interests. But "vital" should be reserved for those truly supreme interests that derive so strictly from our identity as a nation that they could not credibly be alienated, even by an official expression.

When put up against these more stringent criteria, most interests are alienable, in the sense that we can choose not to defend them against all kinds of threats. We can draw back to a line that has two interacting and mutually reinforcing characteristics: credibility and feasibility--a line that we must hold, as part of the definition of our sovereignty, and that we can hold, as a defensive perimeter and a strategic force concept that can be maintained with advantage and within constraints over the long haul.

Such a national strategy would not, admittedly, maximize gross American "interests" in the world. But it would be designed to optimize the net interests of American society in the world, in terms of the value of these interests measured against the costs (and costs disguised as risks) of defending them. Ultimately, we may have to settle for less than we would like--even for less than we think we need.

## **FOOTNOTES**

This study appears in a different version as "Containment, Non-Intervention, and Strategic Disengagement," in Terry L. Deibel and John Lewis Gaddis eds., *Containing the Soviet Union* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1987), and is reprinted with permission.

[1] "Defense Strategy: A Debate," in George E. Hudson and Joseph Kruzal, eds., *American Defense Annual, 1985-1986* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1985).

[2] "The FY 84 Defense Debate: Defeat by Default," *Armed Forces Journal International*, May 1983.

[3] This is an entirely different argument from that of the critics of containment who ridicule its passive stance and its failure to bring about the originally advertised downfall or evolution of the Soviet government. The latter point of view is sometimes labeled "containment-plus." It is the program of, for example, most of the authors gathered in the recent Aaron Wildavsky, ed., *Beyond Containment: Alternative American Policies Toward the Soviet Union* (San Francisco,

CA: ICS Press, 1983).

Wildavsky himself denigrates existing American policy as "minimal containment," "piecemeal resistance," and "defensive." He proposes to bring about nothing less than "political pluralization" within the Soviet Union, indeed as a necessary condition for avoiding the eventual Soviet move to "subjugate" the United States. Yet, as is typical of such advocates, Wildavsky purports to eschew "physical force," instead begging the essential question by postulating the sufficiency of mere "political warfare," a sort of Radio Free Europe writ large, a lot of noise at ramparts more substantial than the walls of Jericho. The most that can be said for this sophisticated troublemaking is that it is cheap--except that Wildavsky and other such militant hawks would add it to, not substitute it for, everything we are doing in the tangible defensive dimension.

[4] Annual Report, FY 1986, p. 39.

[5] "Forward Deployed Expeditionary Forces," in Terry L. Deibel and John Lewis Gaddis, eds., *Containment: Concept and Policy* (Washington, D.C.: NDU Press, 1986).

[6] "X" [George F. Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947): 566-582.

[7] See "'X' Plus 25: Interview with George Kennan," *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1972): 14ff., referring to Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Boston: Atlantic Little, Brown/Atlantic Monthly Press, 1967), *passim*.

[8] See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[9] George F. Kennan, *The Cloud of Danger* (Boston: Little, Brown/Atlantic Monthly Press, 1977); Robert W. Tucker, "The Purpose of American Power," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1980-1981): 241-274; Stanley Hoffmann, "The New Orthodoxy," *The New York Review of Books*, April 16, 1981, and "Foreign Policy: What's to Be Done?" *The New York Review of Books*, April 30, 1981; Ernst B. Haas, "On Hedging Our Bets: Selective Engagement with the Soviet Union," in Aaron Wildavsky ed., *Beyond Containment: Alternative American Policies Toward the Soviet Union* (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1983).

[10] The three main theaters, which virtually all proponents of supposed selectivity of American commitment, intervention, and deployment would retain (Europe/NATO, the Middle East including the Eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf/Southwest Asia, and East Asia/Western Pacific), take \$224 billion of the \$240 billion for general purpose forces, out of the \$312 billion initially requested defense budget authority for FY 1987. Thus, the peripheral regions, some part of which most proponents of selectivity might dispense with, take only about 5 percent of the defense budget. There may be good and even sufficient reasons for not intervening in such peripheral areas, but they are not budgetary. In this respect, at least, selective containment is hardly less demanding than supposed global containment.

[11] Tucker, "The Purpose of American Power," p. 256.

[12] *The Cloud of Danger*, p. 229. No doubt Kennan would now also include the Persian Gulf/Southwest Asia. Evidence for this surmise is in Kennan's article on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times* in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late December 1979, in which, after calling for "mature statesmanship," he hastened to reassure: "These words are not meant to express opposition to a prompt and effective strengthening of our military capabilities relevant to the Middle East . . . [As for the] big stick . . . who could object?" "George F. Kennan, On Washington's Reaction to the Afghan Crisis: 'Was This Really Mature Statesmanship?'" *The New York Times*, February 1, 1980.

[13] *The Cloud of Danger*, p. 230.

[14] Hoffmann, "The New Orthodoxy" and "Foreign Policy."

[15] Haas, "On Hedging Our Bets."

[16] Stanley Hoffmann, *Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978).

[17] George F. Kennan, "Cease This Madness," *The Atlantic*, January, 1981.

[18] Indeed, the debate about the efficacy of military force is over the extent to which the structure of the international system is determined by strategic or nonstrategic factors, resting, in turn, on the the distribution and exploitation of military or non-military resources and advantages. This is a debate conducted by, among others, Seyom Brown, "The Changing Essence of Power," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1973, and *New Forces in World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1974); and by Robert W. Tucker, "A New International Order?" *Commentary*, February 1975, and *The Inequality of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[19] A striking inventory of such non-forcible (or at least non-violent) means is presented in Richard W. Fogg, "Creative, Peaceful Approaches for Dealing with Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, June 1985.

[20] A further word about "threats": No pile of facts (for example, about the military capabilities or the intentions of the Soviet Union), no matter how high or deep, leads by itself to any conclusion, particularly a policy conclusion. What is essential in disposing a nation's response to some challenge or state of affairs is the "major premise," which is always an "if-then" proposition; in other words, a general policy statement. Indeed, a nation's "policy" can be considered a summation of the important major premises relating to possible events or occurrences across geographical areas or in functional areas of national activity. Thus, it is well to take seriously the facts of, say, the Soviet state and leadership. But such sobriety in itself neither disposes the factual determination nor dictates the policy conclusion. Odd as it may seem, there is no necessary connection between taking threats seriously and doing something about them.

[21] See Earl C. Ravenal, *Defining Defense: The 1985 Military Budget* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1984).

[22] See the more ample treatment of this point in Earl C. Ravenal, *NATO: The Tides of Discontent* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1985).

[23] These figures, based on official Pentagon estimates for the first five years, assume, for the five-year period 1992-1996, 4 percent inflation plus 2 percent real annual increases. My alternative assumes, for the entire period 1987-1996, 4 percent inflation only, with my prescribed cuts taken over a 10-year period.

[24] As in the case of the Persian Gulf, some national interests cost more to defend than they are worth. See the analysis in Earl C. Ravenal, "Defending Persian Gulf Oil," *Intervention*, Fall 1984, and "The Strategic Cost of Oil," testimony before the Subcommittee on the Panama Canal and the Outer Continental Shelf, Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, U.S. House of Representatives, 27 June 1984.