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**THE UNITED STATES' GREATEST FAILURE – SHAPING THE  
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

**BY**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**The United States' Greatest Failure – Shaping the International Environment**

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## ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze the U.S. approach to achieving its national security objectives as it assumes global primacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This paper argues that the U.S. has failed at shaping the post-Cold War environment, failing to use all elements of national power to prevent political unrest, civil wars and territorial disputes before they become international crises. How well has the United States exercised leadership in defusing international disputes and conflicts before they become international crises? How well does it anticipate and react to shifts in international paradigms? Are U.S. policymakers misrepresenting U.S. "responding" for "shaping" activities? These and other issues will be explored with recommendations for increasing U.S. effectiveness in shaping.



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## **PREFACE**

Special thanks to Colonel Susan Puska, who constantly challenged my theories and observations while keeping me focused during this process.



## THE UNITED STATES' GREATEST FAILURE – SHAPING THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Since the demise of our foremost credible adversary and having attained undisputed global primacy, the U.S. has failed to take responsibility for shaping the international environment – neglecting to use all elements of national power and preventive measures to guarantee peace and stability, maintain international law and order, stifle political unrest, conclude civil wars, and amicably resolve territorial disputes before they become international crises. This, due in part to an inability to recognize and react rapidly to dramatically shifting international contextual paradigms and the absence of political will to intervene early in minor regional disputes to prevent the escalation into major global crises. Critics of U.S. foreign policy contend that the post Cold War sentiment of the U.S. Congress and the concomitant presidential administrations display a diminished interest in foreign affairs and would rather focus their collective attention on domestic and economic issues at the expense of charting the future course of world events. Yet paradoxically, that same political bureaucracy is quick to employ military force and economic sanctions when regional paradigm shifts escalate out of control and threaten to create international humanitarian, economic, or political crises. In most situations, U.S. surveillance of the geopolitical landscape could have predicted these crises and with the judicious and proactive application of preventive measures may have prevented them altogether. It is plausible to conclude that U.S. foreign policy is focused on delivering a reflexive response to international crises rather than proactive measures to shape the geopolitical landscape. Increasingly, the U.S. is viewed as displaying an unwillingness, or inability, to prevent major crises from occurring in the first place.

This paper will examine the inadequacies in the U.S. concept of “shaping” and answer questions that have baffled international pundits of U.S. foreign policy for years. Those questions being: Is the concept of “shaping” merely a buzzword introduced into our contemporary vernacular by overzealous foreign policy analysts in an attempt to overstate their contributions to reacting to the continuously shifting international contextual paradigms? How well does the U.S. forecast and react to international paradigm shifts? Are U.S. policymakers misrepresenting U.S. “responding” techniques for “shaping” activities? How well has the U.S. exercised leadership in defusing territorial disputes and regional conflicts

before they escalate to full-scale international crises? These and other issues will be examined as we explore the greatest failure of the U.S. in the past decade - shaping the international environment.

## **SHIFTING INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTUAL PARADIGMS**

Since the Soviet collapse, international paradigms have shifted at an alarming pace. Third world and lesser developed nations, previously subsidized by the United States and the former Soviet Union, are struggling to regain their economic balance and reclaim their ethnic identities with each striving to enhance its regional status and influence in the new world order. These shifting international paradigms, or changes in the geostrategic landscape, have overshadowed deliberate U. S. foreign policy planning and execution. They appear to have greater power to shape the international environment than the carefully orchestrated programs managed by the U.S. foreign policy apparatus.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the U.S. in shaping the international environment, we must first examine its ability to forecast and influence international paradigm shifts. However, to do so, we must establish a consistent definition of an international contextual paradigm.

Thomas S. Kuhn, philosopher and historian, introduced the concept of viewing the geostrategic environment as a dynamic and ever-shifting paradigm. Although his ideas were traditionally applied to the scientific community, Kuhn's philosophy had tremendous applicability to political scientists and international strategists operating in the geostrategic and geopolitical environments.

Kuhn noted that throughout history, each revolutionary advance was followed by a change in the way familiar data was viewed. This new mindset advanced knowledge in a field. New ways of looking at problems enabled specialists to devise new solutions.<sup>1</sup> Kuhn used the term "paradigm" to describe the shared mindset of a particular community, describing paradigms as universally recognized achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners.<sup>2</sup> Kuhn further explained that changes in paradigms are called paradigm shifts, and shifts strong enough to attract a significant group of adherents lead to basic and revolutionary change.

Applying this concept to international relations, an international contextual paradigm describes the geostrategic environment at a specific

point in time, providing the framework for determining the threats, challenges, and the identification of international opportunities. These international contextual paradigms provide the basis for the development and justification of U.S. foreign policy assumptions.

International contextual paradigms are constantly changing. These paradigm shifts dictate major adjustments in U.S. foreign policy assumptions and the level of U. S. involvement or abstinence in international affairs. Kuhn stresses that failure to see beyond our basic assumptions, or the assumptions derived through the existing paradigm, may keep us from recognizing basic change, permitting a paradigm shift to go unnoticed until its transformation is complete. In the past, these blindspots, or failure to foresee and anticipate a paradigm shift, have necessitated costly and often risky military response to prevent the erosion of previous geopolitical gains and to protect U. S. national interests.

Over the past decade, U.S. foreign policy has been marked by a series of blindspots. The singularly most significant being the failure to anticipate the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the subsequent turmoil throughout Eurasia. Closely followed by the rise of nationalist extremism in the Balkans, the growing instability and systematic genocide by rival factions in sub-Saharan Africa, and the pace of nuclear proliferation and instability in South Asia. In addition, the growing influence and potential implications associated with the full integration of the Peoples Republic of China into the global trading system, while yielding short-term economic benefits for U.S. industry, could have long-term implications for U.S. security and global dominance. The events leading up to each of these major paradigm shifts have been met with minimal resistance. Not until the transformation has been completed, does the U.S. take decisive action through radical policy adjustments as a reflexive reaction to the geostrategic realities.

Shifting international contextual paradigms have distorted and short-circuited U.S. foreign policy decisions and reduced these activities to reflexive response measures, rather than proactive pre-determined direction-setting activities, as they are so commonly billed. U. S. foreign policy decisions have routinely taken the form of "responding" to the geostrategic environment as opposed to "shaping" it. In this past decade, rarely has the U.S. utilized all elements of national power to create a world conducive to its interests and values. Rather, it has employed those elements of power while reacting or responding to circumstances dictated by other international players. Once recognition that a paradigm shift has occurred, the

traditional U.S. response is through full employment of all elements of national power - political, economic, diplomatic, and military - if required, to further define the boundaries and parameters of the paradigm to protect U.S. national interests.

This leads to the perception that these geostrategic shifts are revolutionary events that could not be forecast or influenced. This could not be farther from the truth. Paradigm shifts are often slow and cumbersome, analogous to turning an ocean freighter in open seas. Paradigm shifts are often apparent through modest surveillance from crude detection devices. However, the U.S. has realized only modest success in forecasting and reacting to trends leading up to major international paradigm shifts. As a result, extreme measures are often required for the U.S. to maintain its equilibrium and to protect its vital interests. The increase in U. S. military operational deployments is in direct correlation to these paradigm shifts and the absence of international strategic vision to shape and dictate the course of international events.

#### **ARE WE SHAPING OR RESPONDING?**

On a national and strategic level, the foundation for the concept of shaping is rooted in the U.S. National Security Strategy. Shaping, in its purest form, is designed to provide U. S. decision-makers with the requisite tools for enhancing U.S. security, promoting regional stability, and reducing a wide range of diverse threats. These are proactive tenets or principles employed to bring about a desired result. The mere definition of the word shaping conjures the image of an aggressive and predetermined set of policies by which the U.S. dictates the desirable characteristics, direction and general order of the international environment. Based on this definition, the U.S. military element of power would rarely be called upon to respond to international crises - had U.S. shaping activities been successfully employed. However, to the contrary, since the concept of shaping was first introduced, and the subsequent collapse of the "evil empire", U.S. military forces have been called upon to respond to international crises on 28 separate occasions.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of shaping is derived from the existence of a strategic vision of how the world should be, based on the premise that senior U.S. administration and policy officials would possess the mental agility and foresight to anticipate and react to unanticipated paradigm shifts,

implementing mid-course policy adjustments to ensure fulfillment of our stated objectives. Throughout the past decade, the U. S. has demonstrated strategic vision in the articulation of its foreign policy objectives; however, it often fails to anticipate paradigm shifts and reacts slowly to preserve previous geopolitical gains and to protect U. S. interests - examples of which will be discussed later.

Shaping activities, as defined in the National Security Strategy, are separated into six separate and distinct functional areas. These functional areas include: promoting diplomacy, providing foreign assistance to emerging democracies, promoting effective arms control, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, promoting military-to-military interaction and cooperation, and enhancing cooperation in international law enforcement.

Because of our inability to forecast and anticipate changes in the international contextual paradigm, our shaping activities have been reduced to responding to the world as it exists rather than shaping the world as we would like it to be.

On a national level, our effectiveness in these functional areas is considered minimal at best. Further evidence of our limitations on shaping and influencing the international environment can be seen through a closer analysis of these functional areas.

## **DIPLOMACY**

Diplomacy has long been a weak-pillar in the foundation of U.S. shaping activities. In contemporary history, the State Department's activities on the diplomatic front have often been regarded as reflexive as opposed to proactive in shaping and molding the international environment. The Department of State has become so overwhelmed with the *crisis de jour* that it has lost its ability to forecast regional events and to take proactive measures to shape the international environment in conformance with U.S. interests and objective.

Recent U.S. diplomatic efforts to secure the reunification of the fractured society in the Balkans is an example of U.S. diplomacy gone awry. These efforts to bring about a lasting peace in the Balkans demonstrate a fundamental design flaw in shaping. In fact, the diplomatic agreement reached at the Dayton Accords to create a state comprised of two multi-ethnic entities, the Bosnians and Croats, could be perceived as a major international failure. The diplomatic objectives of the Accords were to halt the fighting, reverse ethnic cleansing, and provide a blueprint for a new and

unified country. "Today, Bosnia-Herzegovina contains three *de facto* mono-ethnic entities, three separate armies, three separate police forces, and a national government that exist mostly on paper and operate at the mercy of the entities. Indicted war criminals remain at large, and political power is concentrated largely in the hands of hard line nationalists determined to obstruct international efforts to advance the peace process."<sup>4</sup>

In Kosovo, diplomatic efforts by the Russian government were tremendously more effective at halting the military conflict than U.S. diplomacy or any of the other U.S. employed elements of power.

At the beginning of the crisis, the U.S and the international community watched from the sidelines as the Balkans' paradigm evolved. It was not until evidence of ethnic cleansing on a massive scale was revealed that NATO, at the behest of the U.S., agreed to take diplomatic action. Although the tension in the Balkans - in the backyard of the newly formed European Union - should have drawn a swift response from the European states, Europe, wrestling with its own economic crises under the newly established economic and cultural alliance, continues to regard the U.S. as the global enforcer, the preeminent force in dictating the course of international events, and remained content to wait and follow the U.S. lead. If the U.S. does not willingly accept the lead, it is uncertain that any other nation possesses the military capability or the political will to do so.

To be fair, there were some diplomatic successes in the Balkans. For instance, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the U.S. has assisted in establishing a Central Bank, issuing common currency and common license plates, and developing state symbols and customs reforms;<sup>5</sup> however, these were superficial accomplishments and do not illustrate U.S. shaping, or implementation of predetermined direction-setting international policies.

Perhaps, had the U.S. reacted more promptly to lead the international community to formulate a diplomatic response to the crisis, the potential for the reconstruction of a stable and viable state might be closer today. The U. S. hesitant response was purely a reflexive reaction to the gruesome atrocities that had been permitted to go unchallenged for far too long and which had become hard for U.S. political leaders to ignore, rather than an attempt to shape the regional environment.

Recognizing the extent and severity of the U.S. diplomatic hesitancy in the Balkans, Somalia and Liberia, former Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in an unprecedented statement critical of the administration's policies for dealing with these events, recommended the administration adopt

a new diplomacy that can anticipate and prevent crises, like those in Iraq, Bosnia, and Somalia, rather than simply manage or respond to them.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these facts, the Administration regards the U.S. reflexive response techniques in the Balkans as a crowning example of the U.S. shaping abilities.

## **FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO EMERGING DEMOCRACIES**

The U.S. foreign assistance program, a major pillar of U.S. shaping activities, has proven to be totally ineffective at shaping the international environment. This failure is due in part to the absence of a strategy that clearly articulates the program objectives. This is compounded by the failure of the foreign policy apparatus to demonstrate a correlation between the amount of foreign aid dispersed and sustained stability and economic growth in recipient countries. Without stringent performance metrics to evaluate the return on the foreign aid investment, the continued funding for the program is tantamount to pouring billions of dollars down a black hole and could jeopardize future funding status.

Past failures of the executive branch, via the Department of State, to shape the international environment through the judicious and prudent implementation of the foreign assistance program has brought on the wrath of the U.S. Congress and its meticulous scrutiny and adversarial micro-management. Over the past decade, congressional dissatisfaction with the program has had a significant influence on its overall shape and direction, with the Congress dictating areas of emphasis through a wide-range of legislative spending earmarks and moratoriums. Congressional involvement has greatly limited the flexibility of the executive branch in program execution.

Regrettably, past congressional concerns and criticism of the foreign assistance program have had substantial merit. No where is its criticism more strongly focused than on the continent of Africa.

In the January 1993 rendition of the National Security Strategy, the executive branch took credit for diplomatic breakthroughs in Africa by "encouraging independence in Namibia; presidential elections in Benin; steps toward a multiparty system in Ethiopia; elections in Zambia, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, and the Congo; and movement toward democracy in Angola and free, democratic, and representative government in South Africa."<sup>7</sup> Success was attributed to diplomacy and a carefully focused foreign assistance program.

Today, seven years later, a different reality is unfolding on the African continent. Geopolitical and diplomatic achievements previously touted in the National Security Strategy in Angola, Congo, Ethiopia, and Zambia have suffered slow erosion as economic and political turmoil engulf the entire continent - marking this, the post-Cold War period, one of the most turbulent in African history. Political and ethnic strife throughout the African continent is greater today than at any other time in history. Examples can be seen in the ongoing conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the escalating border dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, and the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo in which factions from Uganda and Rwanda and the governments of Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Libya and Chad have become actively involved. Adding to the instability are Russian and Ukrainian mercenaries operating throughout the continent, while China and former Eastern-bloc nations are supplying the conventional arms needed to keep these ethnic conflicts alive.<sup>8</sup> To exacerbate an already dire situation, some African states that were formerly entrenched in the U.S. camp during the Cold War, and recipients of generous U.S. foreign assistance, have devolved into transnational narcotics trafficking routes supplying illicit drugs to the U.S. and Western Europe.

Opponents to the continuation of U.S. foreign assistance to Africa use the political, economic and moral order breakdowns in Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo - past foreign aid recipients all - as classic examples of foreign aid failures. Between 1971 and 1994, U.S. foreign assistance to these countries exceeded \$31.0 billion (Somalia - \$8.0 billion, Ethiopia - \$11.5 billion, Rwanda - \$4.5 billion and the DRC - \$7.8 billion).<sup>9</sup>

To fairly assess the U.S. failure on the African continent, we must first revisit the dynamics on the continent during the Cold War era. At the height of the East-West confrontation, economic and military assistance played a significant role in maintaining the balance of power in much of the third world. Both the U.S. and the former Soviet Union haphazardly pumped billions of dollars in military and economic assistance into the Africa continent with one goal in mind - to secure the loyalty and allegiance of the ruling faction to preclude a migration to the adversarial camp. Access and influence on the African continent were critical to both U.S. and Soviet grand strategies. The aid recipients were not held accountable for the funds received, nor did donor nations require political or social reforms as a prerequisite condition for further assistance. Technical assistance in

developing and administering social, economic and domestic infrastructure programs was virtually non-existent. As a result, the ruling factions remained loyal, for that period, to the donor nation with its leadership and political allies growing rich through the diversion of foreign assistance funds. Although the general population and ethnic factions remained in poverty, the political, military, and economic power instilled in the authoritarian regimes suppressed dissent and minimized demands on the political systems.

Soviet economic and military assistance on the continent were totally eliminated when the empire collapsed. Likewise, the need for the U.S. to continue to subsidize the fragile African regimes was considered moot. Gradually, over a decade, U.S. military and economic aid on the African continent was virtually eliminated. Subsequently, the continent spiraled into decline and the international community witnessed the true state of despair that it had helped to create.

Could the catastrophic events on the African continent have been prevented had the U.S. remained engaged with a coherent and focused foreign assistance program tied to reform and accountability? In 1995, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees posed a similar question when he asked: "What might have happened in Rwanda if the estimated \$2 billion spent on refugee relief during the first two weeks of the emergency had been devoted to keeping the peace, protecting human rights and promoting development in the period that preceded the exodus?"<sup>10</sup> Some optimists contend that the catastrophe, for the most part, was preventable, had the U.S. paid closer attention to the warning signs of the looming disaster and actively participated in the implementation of political reforms. Others argue that the political and social meltdown on the continent would have occurred despite a massive influx of U.S. aid, citing the \$4.5 billion foreign assistance investment during the years preceding the Rwanda implosion - a sum equal to 20 percent of that country's GNP.<sup>11</sup>

So what went wrong in Rwanda? How could this breakdown in the geopolitical fiber of a country occur after the significant investment made by the international community? The answer is quite clear and amplified by Mr. Brian Atwood, former Director, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In 1993, Atwood admitted, "much of the investment financed by the USAID and other donors between 1960 and 1980 has disappeared without a trace." He further stated that "only a handful of countries that started receiving U.S. assistance in the 1950s and 1960s have ever graduated from

dependent status."<sup>12</sup> A recently released United Nations report declared that 70 countries, aid recipients all, are now poorer than they were in 1980. Chaos, slaughter, poverty and ruin stalk all third world states, irrespective of how much foreign assistance they received.

In the case of Rwanda, the United Nations recently released a self-critical report on how the international organization and its member nations, especially the U.S., failed to accurately forecast and quickly react to the shifting paradigm that led to the slaughter of more than 800,000 people.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the African continent, the control exercised by the fragile authoritarian regimes, previously back by U.S. and Soviet foreign aid, were the only restraint to the containment of the sectarian rage. In the Congo, the overthrow of President Laurent Kabila plunged the country into civil war. In the absence of the government authority that historically restrained the ethnic factions, the country was propelled into a free fall. With the basic domestic infrastructure already dismantled during the waning days of the Mobutu regime (Kabila's predecessor) - the country had no court or prison system and minimal public services. In assessing this civil war, which now involves more than a half dozen countries, the American representative to the United Nations, Richard C. Holbrooke called it "the largest interstate war in African history."<sup>14</sup> Could this catastrophic cycle of events have been prevented had the U.S. and international community stepped in earlier to restore those key state-institutions deemed essential to the survival of the state - providing it with the capability to solve its own problems (i.e., the restoration and stabilization of the military, the internal police, the civil service bureaucracy, and the judicial system?) Unfortunately, we will never know. The paradigm has already shifted and the U.S. must now work within the confines of the United Nations to define the parameters of the new paradigm via costly, and often risky, peacekeeping and nation-building programs.

Clearly, the foreign assistance program on the African continent could have been executed more effectively. Carefully administered, the \$31.0 billion expended in Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and the Congo, prior to breakdown of political and social order, could have had lasting implications for shaping events and guiding the continent towards a bright future. However, U. S. policy makers failed to recognize the inefficiencies and shortfalls inherently embedded in its foreign assistance program - unintentionally contributing to the devastating cycle of events on the continent.

As the U. S. refocuses its attention on the African continent, previous gains achieved during the Cold War period have greatly dissipated. It will require a massive infusion of cash and technical assistance, directed at democracy, human rights, and infrastructure development programs, to assist the continent in regaining its political and social balance.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Congress will not make this an easy task. Recently, congressional sanctions were imposed on Liberia, placing a moratorium on the continued provision of foreign assistance in response to arrears incurred on U.S. debt payments. Ironically, the intent of U.S. foreign assistance to Liberia, a failed state recovering from a devastating civil war, is to assist in the political and economic recovery of that state. It should be expected that Liberia might experience some difficulties in meeting its international financial obligations during this rebuilding phase.

The battle lines between the U.S. Congress and the executive branch in the debate on the efficacy of foreign assistance as a tool for shaping the environment on the African continent are clearly drawn. In a recent address to a gathering of Veterans of Foreign Wars, referring to the recent turmoil and atrocities on the African continent, President Clinton stated that "the objective of the U.S. foreign assistance program should be to replace the headlines about famine, refugee crisis and genocide with stories about partnership and shared prosperity. These are the stories we can write now, if Congress will invest only a tiny portion of what we spend on defense on avoiding war in the first place."<sup>15</sup>

## **PROMOTION OF ARMS CONTROL MEASURES**

The duplicity embedded in the U.S. conventional arms control policies has prevented the U.S. from effectively promoting viable and rational arms control measures. It is difficult for the U.S. to convince industrialized arms exporting nations, like the United Kingdom, Russia, Israel, Germany and France, to curtail their transfers of conventional arms to third world nations while the U.S. remains the single-largest supplier of conventional arms to the third world - with a 50 percent share of the arms export market. Even more difficult is the suppression of appetites among purchasing nations when the perception is widely held that their requests for conventional weaponry will likely receive favorable consideration based on the U.S. economic and industrial base implications - which now appear to outweigh regional stability and nonproliferation concerns.

Arms control, focusing on the proliferation of strategic and advanced conventional defense equipment and related technologies, has provided one of the greatest challenges to the U.S. in its attempt to shape the international environment. Although the U.S. has taken the lead in developing and implementing several international agreements to promote transparency and encourage greater responsibility with regards to the transfer of conventional arms and dual-use technologies - the Wassenaar Arrangement and the United Nations Resolution on Transparency in Armaments - both are widely viewed as perfunctory arrangements and have had minimal impact on curtailing international arms transfers.

The Wassenaar Arrangement is an agreement reached with 33 nations to enhance cooperation in preventing the acquisition of armaments and sensitive dual-use items for military end-uses, if the situation in a region or the behavior of a state is, or becomes, a cause for serious concern to the participating states.<sup>16</sup> The UN Resolution on Transparency in Armaments requires arms exporting nations to annually provide a roll-up of all international arms transfers in order to promote transparency while increasing confidence, reducing suspicion, and helping expose and stem the proliferation of destabilizing and excessive accumulations of conventional armaments, especially in regions of tension.<sup>17</sup>

Although these two agreements represent the height of international consensus in this arena, the veracity and credibility of both rests solely on the integrity of reporting by the participating nations. Further diluting the effectiveness of these agreements is the absence of an international control or enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance. The Wassenaar Arrangement carries no provision for international review, while the UN Transparency in Armaments Resolution provides for international review only after the fact.

The difficulties in this arena are not solely attributed to the limitations of the international treaties and agreements, but are also constrained by U.S. political and economic concerns. Within the U.S., domestic spending on conventional arms has suffered a steady decline since the end of the Cold War. Funds previously allocated for the procurement of weapon systems were diverted to domestic infrastructure and social programs as the "peace dividend." This trend was repeated throughout the industrialized world with devastating implications for U.S. and foreign defense equipment manufacturers alike. In many countries, bolstering international arms sales were critical to the survivability of their

indigenous defense industrial base. In the United Kingdom, South Africa, France, Germany, and Russia, government agencies were established to promote international defense trade. Meanwhile, within the U.S., defense associations and special interest groups applied relentless pressure on the Clinton Administration to make it easier to transfer defense technologies to allied and friendly nations and to garner the support of U.S. government officials during international sales competitions. As a result of these efforts, the conventional arms transfer policy promulgated by the Clinton Administration in 1995, is widely regarded as the most proactive arms transfer policy in history. A key provision of the policy is the instruction that U.S. officials within the Departments of Defense and State must give full consideration to the impact of the denial of a particular sale on U.S. industry and the defense industrial base as a part of the general evaluative criteria for approving arms exports.

The marketing and sale of U.S. defense equipment and technology is fast becoming a business-based activity as opposed to a tool for assisting policymakers in achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives. U.S. Defense manufacturers routinely cite the Administration's commitment to enhancing access to foreign markets and bolstering America's prosperity as its justification for seeking approval to sell advanced defense technologies to third world states. Other industrialized nations, who view defense equipment sales as a means of industrial base survivability, are set to challenge the U.S. in upcoming sales competition in the Middle East, the Pacific, and Latin America - with the potential of setting off an arms race in which the tension will not be between purchasing countries, but rather an intense competition between the industrialized seller nations.

In some instances, U.S. defense sales are viewed as having a destabilizing effect. In the Pacific, recent U.S. approval to sell Apache Longbow helicopters to Singapore may disrupt the regional balance of power as Malaysia and Indonesia strive to maintain military parity. While in Pakistan, U.S. congressional prohibitions on the transfer of conventional arms is considered to have accelerated the pace of nuclear proliferation, as will be discussed in the following section.

**PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

It is overconfident for the U.S. to assume that it can dictate and control admission into the "international nuclear weapons guild," a small, yet elite group of nations which has access to the world's nuclear secrets

and keystone technologies. Recognizing that it was the nuclear "ace" that gave rise to the U.S. as a world superpower, smaller lesser-developed nations view the restrictions imposed on access to these technologies as an affront to their national sovereignty.

In today's environment, U.S. led efforts to limit the proliferation of nuclear technologies is met with stiff resistance. Allied and friendly nations, loyal to either side during the East-West confrontation, are now struggling to maintain aging conventional weaponry. Incapable of financing modernized replacement systems, and often unwilling to pursue costly service life extension or performance upgrade programs, many are faced with the daunting task of defending their borders from external aggression at a time when their military force structures have been reduced to the lowest levels in history. Additionally, security guarantees previously doled out by the U.S. and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War are no longer certain. To these nations, the development of weapons of mass destruction is the most economical and reassuring means to guarantee their national security.

Despite U.S. efforts to curtail the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through programs such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Missile Technology Control Regime, and various chemical and biological weapons conventions; it has reluctantly accepted the fact that the paradigm has already shifted, releasing a devastating capability that may never again be contained. The U.S. will find it difficult to curtail the ambitions of those countries that view their nuclear development as legitimate defense requirements.

In Pakistan, a growing dissatisfaction with the inconsistencies in the implementation of the U.S. conventional arms and foreign assistance programs fueled what many observers view as a legitimate need to pursue the maturation of its nuclear program. As a result of the imposition of sanctions on Pakistan over a 20 year period by the U.S. and its western allies, India was perceived to have attained a quantitative and qualitative advantage in its conventional arms program through its close association with the former Soviet Union and through a vibrant indigenous production capability. As India's conventional capabilities continued to grow, Pakistan was denied the delivery of new U.S. F-16 fighters and witnessed a decay in readiness of western-produced equipment as a result of the cessation of supplies and spare parts for existing aircraft and helicopters. In addition, outdated U.S. frigates, previously leased to Pakistan by the U.S., were repossessed and

later scrapped. Pakistan, having been a close U.S. ally throughout the Cold War and a staunch U.S. supporter of U.S. policies during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, regarded U.S. draconian sanctions as an affront to its national sovereignty and a threat to national security. Thus, Pakistan's relentless pursuit for the maturation of its nuclear program was an inexpensive means of counterbalancing the conventional arms build-up by India.

In May 1998, after India resumed nuclear testing following a 24-year hiatus - despite U.S. diplomatic overtures to dissuade Pakistan from resuming its nuclear test activities - Pakistan was quick to follow suit, confirming its admission into the "nuclear weapons guild." Unfortunately, the demonstrative nuclear aspirations of India and Pakistan are indicative of those of numerous lesser-developed nations who feel disenfranchised by the international system and are committed to pursuing their nuclear aspirations at any cost.

By no means can the U.S. take credit for shaping the nuclear non-proliferation paradigm. Luckily, the U.S. maintains enough influence to shape the policies and practices of the major industrialized players through continued transparency and consultations. However, although these treaties and agreements have served to reduce the size of the nuclear arsenals of the two largest treaty participants - the U.S. and the Russian Federation - they have done little to curtail proliferation to third world and rouge states. In addition to India and Pakistan, there is continued concern regarding the proliferation of North Korean missile technology, along with mounting evidence of North Korea's continued efforts to develop its nuclear capabilities despite a previous commitment to remain nuclear free. Iran's advances in developing a medium-range missile capability, along with the continued suspicion of Russian and Chinese collaboration with any country willing to pay for their services and expertise are of great concern.

Within the U.S., efforts to set the example for other nations to follow by ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) met stiff opposition in the U.S. Congress, and in October 1999, the Senate rejected its ratification. This action drew a barrage of criticism from Russia and China, as well as from U.S. allies in Europe and Asia. European leaders have concluded that the U.S. failure to ratify the treaty represents a failure in the struggle against proliferation. The U.S. decision is viewed as having a destabilizing effect on the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was ratified in 1968 and extended in 1995.<sup>18</sup> Critics contend that the credibility

and effectiveness of previously negotiated treaties and agreements have had minimal effect on curtailing proliferation and advocate an abandonment altogether.

Its difficult to definitively say whether or not previously negotiated nonproliferation treaties have had an influence on shaping the nonproliferation paradigm. U.S. policy makers have recognized the extent and the potential consequences of its failure in this arena. Consequently, increased attention has shifted to the development of appropriate responsive measure in the event of a WMD attack.

### **PROMOTION OF MILITARY-TO-MILITARY INTERACTION AND COOPERATION**

It is easy to recognize the contribution of U.S. military-to-military engagement activities to shaping the international environment. According to the National Military Strategy (NMS), the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have adopted a philosophy committing U.S. forces to helping shape the international environment through deterrence, peacetime engagement activities, and active participation and leadership in alliances:

**Engagement activities, including information sharing and contacts between U.S. military and the armed forces of other nations, promote trust and confidence, and encourage measures that increase our security and that of our allies, partners, and friends. By increasing understanding and reducing uncertainty, engagement builds constructive security relationships, helps to promote the development of democratic institutions, and helps keep some countries from becoming adversaries tomorrow.<sup>19</sup>**

While military-to-military engagement is quite possibly the most visible of all U.S. shaping activities, the greatest strengths of these activities might conceal their most serious weaknesses; whereby, military-to-military engagement activities might be equally responsible for destabilizing fragile nation-states as they are at promoting stability.

Military-to-military engagement activities are most visible and effective in lesser-developed countries, such as Africa and Latin America. In many instances, these states are emerging from dictatorships or authoritarian regimes, under which the military wielded considerable influence and remains highly regarded by the local population. On the continent of Africa, the military remains the stabilizing force in most of the emerging democracies; while in Latin America corruption within the military ranks make it a credible threat to civilian rule.

U.S. military engagement activities include a myriad of well-funded and judiciously executed programs. These include security assistance and international military education and training, multilateral and bilateral

exchange programs, joint military exercises, technology and information exchanges, and well as professional reciprocal visits from the highest levels of the force structure to small unit and individual technical and professional exchanges. These activities are carefully woven into the theater commander's engagement plans and are meticulously managed. For the most part, these activities are well funded through defense appropriations.

The combined international expenditures of the State Department and other executive branch agencies pale in comparison to those of the Department of Defense, through the Unified Commanders and the military departments. There is no wonder why military-to-military engagement activities remain at the "tip of the spear" in assessing U.S. regional-shaping initiatives. Paradoxically, we must question the effectiveness and appropriateness of placing such a high value on military activities when dealing with states that for years have suffered under corrupt authoritarian military regimes. Although, the underlying message conveyed through these activities continues to be the subordination of the military to civilian control, it is questionable as to whether this message is conveyed to the local population in these countries in which U.S. forces are actively engaged, or that the military force is willing to accept this concept. This remains questionable.

There is an inherent danger associated with bolstering military-to-military cooperation with countries where the civilian government has not yet demonstrated its ability to establish and maintain control of its military force, or where the military force has not yet totally divorced itself from the political process. Thus is the case in Nigeria and Colombia.

In Nigeria, the U.S. placed tremendous stock in its military, providing materiel support in return for Nigerian support in peacekeeping initiatives on the continent. The Nigerian military is well trained and well equipped; however, it has not yet divorced itself from involvement in the political process. The civilian government remains mindful that the military ruled the country for 29 of its 38-year history, and faces a formidable challenge to sustain civilian democratic rule while keeping the military out of politics.<sup>20</sup> Concurrently, the U.S. and the United Nations are providing equipment and training for the Nigerian military to serve as the peacekeepers of choice on the African continent. Within Nigeria, the local population, becoming frustrated with the slow pace of reforms under a democratic regime and the absence of basic domestic services are longing for the swift, and often ruthless, justice of the military to solve civil and social disputes. The question that must be answered is: Is it effective for the U.S. to continue

engagement with the Nigerian military, elevating it to a status that exceeds the nation's justice, local or civil police, or the civil service bureaucracy? Are U.S. military-to-military engagement activities undermining the civil democratic government in Nigeria? The sentiments of the Nigerian people can be summarized in a statement made by a Nigerian native; "...the military will send 10,000 troops if there are any problems. A civilian government will sit down and deliberate."<sup>21</sup> The civilian government in Nigeria remains ever mindful of this type of thinking.

In Colombia, the situation is a bit more severe. The civilian government has not only lost control of its military forces; but is finding it difficult to distinguish between the government forces and the rebel guerrillas - with the guerrilla forces having entered into an alliance with the nation's drug traffickers. Nevertheless, the U.S. government is considering enhancing military-to-military cooperation through a \$1.6 billion military aid package that will include training, equipment, and other assistance.

Admittedly, Colombian President Andres Pastrana recognizes that ties between the paramilitary forces and individuals within the government forces do exist, but contends that collusion and collaboration is not widespread nor is it institutional. Nonetheless, the slow pace of reforms by Pastrana and his government to purge its ranks of unlawful collaborators reveals a lack of civilian control over its military forces. Since no one can definitively assess the level or extent of the corruption within the Colombian military ranks, the continued support and bolstering of the military's capabilities poses a significant threat to the civilian democratic government, as well as U.S. values and regional interests.

Although there are some successes that have resulted from military-to-military cooperation, as we see from the number of countries who have made the transition from military authoritarian rule to civilian democratic governance, the U.S. must exercise extreme care in preventing the strength and influence of the military forces to disrupt the balance of power with a nation's civil bureaucracy.

## **ENHANCING COOPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Fundamentally, U.S. efforts to enhance cooperation in international law enforcement have been plagued with setbacks. These activities transcend the traditional boundaries of executive branch agencies, which ensures

integration of all activities towards a common objective. Considerable effort has been devoted to enhancing the effectiveness of U.S. international law enforcement activities. The lead agency responsible for integrating this myriad of requirements is the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) within the Department of State. This agency is charged with "enhancing the institutional capabilities of foreign governments to define and implement strategies and national programs to prevent the production, trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs,"<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the agency "works with other concerned governments through extradition treaties, mutual legal assistance agreements, information exchanges, technical assistance, and law enforcement training to counter the threat posed by transnational organized crime."<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the agency's shaping activities because most of its ongoing operations are restricted from open discussion. However, a brief synopsis of a few of the more significant activities in which the agency is involved includes: revitalizing U.S.- Mexican counternarcotics cooperation, working with the Chinese government to enforce existing laws to curtail intellectual property rights theft, the recent reenactment and enforcement of the U.S. extradition treaty with Colombia after a eight-year hiatus, and investigating suspected Russian financial fraud in regards to U.S. backed loans from the International Monetary Fund.

Foreign governments often fiercely oppose U.S. activities in this area as an unwarranted intrusion into their national sovereignty. In Mexico, government officials, enraged over the political strings attached to U.S. anti-drug assistance, and out of resentment of U.S. intervention in Mexican law enforcement and drug policy, have declared "that Mexican law enforcement agencies and its military are prepared to fight drug traffickers without U.S. equipment and other logistical support."<sup>24</sup> While in China, the U.S has had minimal success in securing Chinese enforcement of a 1992 agreement to curtail piracy of U.S. computer programs, music and films. In fact, during the past decade, the problem has spread rapidly.<sup>25</sup> In Russia, U.S. efforts have encountered similar setbacks to investigate suspected financial fraud with the Russian government taking the unequivocal stance that the suspected crimes are a Russian affair and require no outside intervention. Potentially, the most critical situation is in Colombia where growing links between narcotics trafficking and the guerrilla paramilitary movement pose a significant threat to U.S. national security interests. With the estimated

\$1 billion pledged by the Clinton Administration over the next two years to assist Columbia in the drug war, the INF will be at the forefront of U.S. efforts to integrate the services provided by other executive branch agencies.

As the international paradigms continue to shift, international law enforcement activities will play a pivotal role in defining the parameters of change to mitigate the damage to U.S. interests and investments.

### **SUMMARY - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

The road ahead is fraught with challenges that must be overcome if the U.S. fails to actualize its goal to shape the international environment. As the preceding discussion argues, the U.S. is in a reactive mode - responding to international environment as it unfolds - with its actions dictated by foreign activities - rather than the U.S. shaping the international environment as it would like it to be. The ineffectiveness at shaping, as demonstrated through failed diplomacy, the absence of accountability in the disbursement of foreign assistance funding, neglected responsibility in promoting effective conventional arms control measures, the unabated proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the growing lack of confidence and cooperation displayed by international partners in international law enforcement, leads one to challenge the concepts of shaping as a bedrock of our national security strategy. There is no evidence to prove that the U.S. has contributed to forecasting or dictating evolutionary international paradigm shifts; however, has been quick to step in to further refine the parameters of the paradigm once the shift has been completed - often with military force.

The most disconcerting aspect of U.S. shaping activities is the lack of consistency in funding priorities and program emphasis. Both are subject to radical modifications and adjustments as a result of each successive presidential administration or the prevailing majority in Congress. This creates tremendous turmoil within the U.S. foreign policy community, as well as in the foreign countries with whom we are engaged - prohibiting the creation of a long-term strategy and vision for the future with realistic and quantifiable goals and objectives. Thus, emphasis and focus has shifted to those programs and activities that can be accomplished during a near-term four-year presidential administration. During the past decade, U.S. shaping activities have become hostage to the political agenda of both parties -

with the potential for creating a desperate situation of the U.S. in the long run.

U.S. shaping activities are too important to be linked to the political objectives of a specific political party or hampered by political squabbling. Unfortunately, those senior foreign policy officials responsible for developing the U.S. strategy for shaping are, for the most part, politically affiliated. With this in mind, there is a high proclivity to devote an inordinate amount of time and resources into short-term, highly visible crises (reactive), rather than those long-range and moderately subdued (shaping) activities designed to dictate the course of future events. Because of the need for expedient results, to correspond with the near term election cycle, there is the propensity for these senior officials to render expedient short-term decisions which may not always be in the long-term best interest of the nation; however, palatable to the current administration's near-term political objective. Ironically, some might contend that the failure of the U.S. to shape the international environment is a deliberative attempt to refocus funding priorities and program objectives on those issues which will create the greatest near-term political gains - neglecting the long-term implications. The disconnects between the current Administration and the U.S. Congress on the U.S. diplomatic agenda, the level of funding for foreign assistance, ratification of the CTBT, as well as military-to-military engagement activities in Africa and Colombia, are indicative of just how interwoven U.S. shaping activities and the political agenda, on both sides, have become.

In order to achieve former Secretary of State Warren Christopher's vision for a new diplomacy that can anticipate and prevent crises, like those in Iraq, the Balkans, and Somalia, rather than simply manage and respond to them - the U.S. must de-link the nation's foreign policy objectives from the political debate. Then, and only then, can the U.S. effectively chart a long-term course for shaping the international environment.

Word Count: 7994



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Imran Javaid, "Thomas S. Kuhn: Paradigms Die Hard," available from <http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~hsr/hrs/winter97/kuhn.html>; Internet, accessed 19 October 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Walker and Dennis J. Reimer, A Statement on the Posture of United States Army Fiscal Year 1999, Posture Statement presented to the 105<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. (Washington, DC.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1998), vii

<sup>4</sup> "Is Dayton Failing? Bosnia Four Years After the Peace Agreement," linked from New York University at "Global Beat," available from <http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/balkan/ICG110399.html>; Internet, accessed 1 December 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Pauline Baker and John Ausink, "State Collapse and Ethnic Violence: Towards a Predictive Model," Parameters (Spring 1996): 30.

<sup>7</sup> George Bush, National Security Strategy of the United States, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, January 1993), 5.

<sup>8</sup> "Global Intelligence Update: U.S. Attempts to Contain and Segment African Conflicts," linked from STRATFOR Global Intelligence Center, available from <http://www.stratfor.com/>; Internet, accessed 27 July 1999.

<sup>9</sup> "Foreign Assistance and U.S. Foreign Policy," Linked from CATO Congressional Testimony at "Testimony." Available from <http://www.cato.org/testimony/ct-tc031397.html>; Internet, accessed 7 December 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> "Looking Back at Rwanda," New York Times on the Web, Editorial Desk, 17 December 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Crossette, "Holbrooke to Draw Outline of New U. S. Plans in Africa," New York Times on the Web, Foreign Desk, 6 December 1999.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Wassenaar Arrangement

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Craig Cerniello, "Russia, China, U.S. Allies Condemn Senate Defeat of Treaty," Arms Control Today (September/October 1999), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Shalikhshvili, John M., National Military Strategy of the United States of America. Washington D.C.: The Pentagon, 1997, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Funmi Olofinakin, "Democratic Transition in Nigeria: Will the Military stay out of Politics," African Insights, no. 1-2, Volume 29, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> "Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs." Linked from International Narcotics/Law Enforcement Affairs, available from [http://www.state.gov/www/global/narcotics\\_law/](http://www.state.gov/www/global/narcotics_law/). Internet. Accessed 7 January 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Moore, Molly, "Official Says Mexico Can Fight Drug War on Its Own." Washington Post, 11 November 1999, sec A, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> Mastel, Greg, "Enter China." Washington Post, 4 January 2000, sec A, p. 15.



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