

**STRATEGY
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CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING OVERSEAS PRESENCE

BY

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ABSTRACT

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U.S. military forces permanently stationed abroad have played and will continue to play a major role in supporting national strategic objectives. Since the end of the Cold War, the Department of Defense has been under pressure by both internal and external forces to realign its overseas assets to make a better match with the realities of a new and ever changing geo-political landscape. However, with exception of major force reductions in Europe, shifts in these assets have been largely incremental, while over the same period the number, types, and locations of overseas military missions have changed dramatically. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) report calls for strengthening the forward deterrent posture of U.S. forces, with an aim towards reducing reliance on CONUS-based reinforcements. This paper identifies key strategic-level factors and considerations that bear on the planning of overseas presence, and that should be useful in evaluating new overseas presence and basing requirements currently being developed in response to the new QDR guidance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	III
CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING OVERSEAS PRESENCE	1
ROLE OF U.S. FORCES OVERSEAS.....	1
CURRENT OVERSEAS POSTURE	3
EUROPE	3
ASIA-PACIFIC	3
MIDDLE EAST	4
DRIVERS OF CHANGE	5
GLOBALIZATION	5
CHANGING/UNCERTAIN THREATS	6
NEW NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGIES.....	6
QDR GUIDANCE	7
East Asian Littoral	7
Deterring Threats Against U.S. Interests	7
Transformation Efforts	8
General	9
Specific.....	9
OTHER KEY FACTORS.....	10
POLITICAL	10
FINANCIAL	11
INTER-AGENCY PROCESS	11
SYNOPSIS OF KEY CONSIDERATIONS	12
CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
ENDNOTES	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY	19

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF U.S. FORWARD-DEPLOYED FORCES	5
TABLE 2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR ASSESSING NEW OVERSEAS PRESENCE AND BASING REQUIREMENTS.....	14

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING OVERSEAS PRESENCE

Since the end of World War II, overseas presence has been an essential element of U.S. national security and national military strategies. U.S. military forces permanently stationed abroad have played and will continue to play a major role in supporting national strategic objectives. Since the end of the Cold War, the Department of Defense (DoD) has been under pressure by both internal and external forces to realign its overseas assets to make a better match with the realities of a new and ever changing geo-political landscape. However, with exception of major force reductions in Europe, shifts in these assets have been largely incremental, while over the same period the number, types, and locations of overseas military missions have changed dramatically.¹

Articles and reports published by think tanks and other defense analysts over the last several years have identified a variety of considerations and options for redesigning U.S. overseas presence. Most recently, the current Secretary of Defense directed in his 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) report that the forward deterrent posture of U.S. forces be strengthened, with an aim towards reducing reliance on CONUS-based reinforcements.² But precisely how should forces be realigned or redesigned to accomplish this? The QDR provides some broad guidance to military planners, but prescribes little in the way of specific changes. Identifying the ideal overseas posture, if there is such a thing, is highly dependent on assumptions made about a wide range of variables to include the capabilities and intent of potential adversaries, the military capabilities and resolve of friends and allies, and the extent and nature of required peacetime missions.

The purpose of this paper is to identify key strategic-level factors and considerations that bear on the planning of overseas presence. The factors and considerations identified should be useful in evaluating new overseas presence and basing requirements currently being developed in response to the new QDR guidance.

ROLE OF U.S. FORCES OVERSEAS

A traditional role played by forces abroad has been to serve as a first line of defense against attack of allies by an overtly threatening adversary. During the Cold War, containment of the Soviet Union was a central tenet of the national security strategy.³ At the peak of the Cold War, U.S. forces in Europe numbered nearly 325,000.⁴ These forces symbolized U.S. commitment to the defense of Europe and were a material deterrent to attack. The purpose of U.S. forces in South Korea today is much the same as that of those in Europe during the Cold

War. In the lexicon of today's QDR, use of overseas presence in this type of circumstance supports the strategic goals of *assuring allies* (in this case South Korea), *dissuading adversaries* (North Korea and perhaps others in the region who might threaten U.S. interests), and *deterring aggression* (primarily North Korea).⁵

A second role, argued by Kugler⁶ and others to be at least equal in importance to warfighting, is that of working with forces of allies and friends to help "shape" the security environment. Since the end of the Cold War, environment shaping has been a key mission performed by U.S. forces in Europe. Related activities have included conducting exercises with NATO allies and partners, training and education programs, and military-to-military engagement with former Warsaw Pact countries in support of the Partnership for Peace program. Although it certainly facilitates the conduct of these types of engagement activities, permanent overseas presence is not necessarily required just to provide this support. Environment shaping with the military serving as a "very visible and critical pillar" of the overall effort was a key aspect of the previous administration's national security strategy.⁷ However, attempting to deduce the new administration's national security strategy (as yet unpublished) from the QDR suggests a reduced emphasis on these types of activities.

Overseas bases and infrastructure associated with forward-deployed forces also provide for ready reception of CONUS-based reinforcements, and make it more difficult for an adversary to deny U.S. or other friendly forces access to theater. These forward bases greatly enhance U.S. power projection capabilities. Such assets may also be used for staging smaller scale contingency (SSC) operations. Indeed, the fact that America has not had to fight a foreign power on its own soil since 1814 is due at least in part to its power projection capabilities and its willingness to use that power to confront aggressors abroad.⁸ The United States has also been very successful in denying power projection platforms to those wanting to project their forces onto U.S. shores. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans pose significant obstacles that assist in this effort.

While not overseas presence per se, the pre-positioning of equipment in theater for reinforcing forces also enhances forward deterrence and combat capability. In an emergency, having to move only unit personnel from CONUS to theater - as opposed to moving both personnel and their equipment - results in faster unit deployment and frees up valuable strategic lift assets. While this approach works fine when planning against a known adversary, it may be less relevant in today's security environment of increasing uncertainty.⁹ The pre-positioning of equipment in ships - rather than on shore - adds some flexibility to address the uncertainty.

CURRENT OVERSEAS POSTURE

For purposes of this paper, the use of the term "overseas presence" is intended to refer to those units and personnel that are permanently based overseas - or - in the case of some assets (e.g., naval forces) - are deployed to a particular region on a regular, rotational basis. (For example, U.S. forces currently fighting terrorism in Afghanistan would not be considered part of U.S. overseas presence by this definition. Any residual forces remaining after cessation of hostilities might be considered permanent presence.) Please note that the data presented in this section are somewhat dated. Cited numbers of personnel and units should be considered as approximations only. Nonetheless, the data are adequate for giving a reasonable sense of the magnitude and allocation of current assets abroad. To constrain the scope of this effort to a manageable level, and focus on areas considered most vital to U.S. interests, only the three key regions of Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East are addressed.

EUROPE

The majority of U.S. forces in Europe remain in Cold War-era bases in Britain, Germany, and Italy. Ground based combat capabilities include two Army heavy divisions and tactical Air Force assets equivalent to 2.3 fighter wings.¹⁰ (A fighter wing equivalent (FWE) is a mixed inventory of 72 mission aircraft.¹¹) These combat units with supporting intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and logistics assets total about 100,000 personnel. Assets afloat include one Navy carrier battle group (CVBG) and amphibious ready group (ARG), and one Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). While the original need for stationing forces in Europe (to serve as a deterrent and the first line of defense in the event of a Soviet attack) has largely vanished, their importance to regional stability and related U.S. interests remains high. In addition to supporting training and engagement activities with NATO allies and partners, U.S. Europe Command (EUCOM) forces over the last five years have conducted nine noncombatant evacuation operations, patrols of three no-fly zones, two major humanitarian assistance operations, nine peace enforcement operations, and two major air campaigns.¹² U.S. personnel also support staffing of NATO headquarters throughout Europe.

ASIA-PACIFIC

The majority of assets in this theater are concentrated in South Korea and Japan.

In the Republic of Korea (ROK), major units assigned to the U.S. and ROK Combined Forces Command include the Eighth U.S. Army and 7th Air Force. There are currently 36,000 Eighth U.S. Army personnel on the ground in South Korea.¹³ The 7th Air Force consists of

approximately 10,000 Air Force personnel located primarily at Osan Air Base, Kunsan Air Base, and five other collocated operating bases throughout the ROK.¹⁴

The U.S. has maintained a military presence in Japan since the end of World War II. While U.S. occupation of Japan ended in 1952, the U.S. administration of Okinawa continued until 1972.¹⁵ Today the U.S. has about 47,000 Service members stationed ashore in Japan, with about half of those based in Okinawa. Major units assigned to U.S. Forces, Japan include the Navy's 7th Fleet, the Marine Corps III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), the U.S. Army Japan/9th Theater Army Area Command, and the 5th Air Force.¹⁶ Major operations supported from Japanese bases have included the initial defense of South Korea in the 1950-1953 Korean War, the Vietnam War, and Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s.¹⁷ An important aspect of the Status of Forces Agreement with Japan is that Japan bears the majority of associated base support costs. These forces not only demonstrate the U.S. commitment to its bi-lateral security agreements with Japan, but also support U.S. national security and national military strategies to promote peace and stability in the surrounding region. They also serve as a deterrent to would be aggressors by their ability to deploy throughout the region if needed.

MIDDLE EAST

The only U.S. presence currently in this region is based in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and is relatively small (about 15,000 total) with personnel deployed largely on a rotational or temporary basis. Ground based assets consist of one Army heavy Battalion Task Force and one Air Force FWE.¹⁸ The primary mission for these forces is enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq. Assets routinely afloat in this region include one Navy CVBG/ARG and one Marine MEU.

There is presently concern that an end of United Nation sanctions against Iraq or a successful replacement of the current Iraqi regime could lead to increased pressure from Arab nations to reduce the U.S. ground presence in this region.¹⁹ This anti-American sentiment stems from a variety of factors, with perhaps the foremost being poor governance that has failed to be responsive to the basic needs of large portions of the region's population. Weak governments in the region fear that allowing a permanent U.S. presence in their country may undermine the perceived legitimacy of their rule. Islamic extremists are able to take advantage of this situation to promote their own religious and/or political views, with the U.S. being widely blamed for the plight of the Arab people. U.S.-Israeli relations are also a major contributing factor.²⁰

The following table summarizes the major forces that currently comprise the U.S. overseas presence in the three key regions.

Region	Personnel	Army Units	Navy Units	USMC Units	AF Units
Europe	100,000	2 Heavy Div(-)	1 CVBG/ARG	1 MEU	2.3 FWE
Asia Pacific	100,000	1 Heavy Div 1 Light Div	1 CVBG/ARG	1 MEF 1 MEU	2 FWE
Middle East	15,000	1 Heavy Bn Task Force	1 CVBG/ARG	1 MEU	1 FWE

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF U.S. FORWARD-DEPLOYED FORCES

(Table reproduced from John J. Spinelli, "Peacetime Operations," In QDR 2001: Strategy-driven Choices for America's Security, ed. Michele A. Flournoy, 267, National Defense University Press, 2001.)

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

GLOBALIZATION

During the Cold War, U.S. security interests were focused primarily in Western Europe, Northeast Asia, and the greater Middle East.²¹ Globalization, particularly economic globalization, has caused a significant expansion of U.S. interests. The global economy, brought about in large part by the information age, has resulted in the economic prosperity of the U.S. becoming more dependent on the economic and political stability of an increasing number of nation-states and other world actors. Markets and/or investment in China, other parts of the Asian mainland, and Southeast Asia have become a significant contributor to the U.S. economy. Threats such as terrorism, organized crime, and weapons proliferation are taking on a transnational dimension, and now have potential to affect U.S. well being directly irrespective of their location of origin. For these reasons, the U.S. must have the capability to protect its interests and assert influence, militarily if need be, over an expanded geographic area. Any assessment of overseas presence must address how well the overseas presence posture, coupled with CONUS-based power projection capabilities, are able to exert influence over the expanded areas of interest.

CHANGING/UNCERTAIN THREATS

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, it has been very difficult for military planners to predict with whom the U.S. is likely to fight its next major theater war (MTW). With the exception of North Korea, there does not appear to be a state-sponsored military currently poised for conventional attack of the U.S. or its allies. Even in the case of North Korea, intent is difficult to discern. But if history is any indication, the next major war involving the U.S. is very likely to be fought somewhere that was not anticipated and against an expected foe. While perhaps less than a full-blown MTW, the current U.S. led effort in Afghanistan is but one example of this likelihood. The foreword to the QDR report, referring to events of September 11, 2001, aptly describes the uncertainty of the current security environment:

The attack on the United States and the war that has been visited upon us highlights a fundamental condition of our circumstances: we cannot and will not know precisely where and when America's interests will be threatened, when America will come under attack, or when Americans might die as the result of aggression. We can be clear about trends, but uncertain about events. We can identify threats, but cannot know when or where America or its friends will be attacked.

Planning for future MTWs, and hence much of DoD's allocation of resources, has been heavily weighted by the assumption of a few "canonical" MTW scenarios. But given the plethora of other conceivable (and yet unconceived) scenarios and their relative likelihood, the wisdom of this approach has been called into question. Acknowledging the challenges associated with increasing uncertainty about future threats, particularly the aspects of who and where, the QDR report directs a shift in planning away from the old, largely threat-based approach towards a capabilities approach. This by no means implies that the consideration of threats will no longer play a role in military planning, but rather that the U.S. cannot afford to allow known threats to be the sole driver of its future military strategy and plans.

NEW NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGIES

The fundamental elements of the Clinton administration's national security strategy were 1) *shaping the international environment*, 2) *responding to threats and crises*, and 3) *preparing for an uncertain future*.²² Whether this stated strategy actually drove or merely describes past policy, the military was utilized as an instrument of national power more frequently under the Clinton administration than under any other in recent history. The U.S. military was called upon to perform numerous and varied missions that included humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping operations, peace enforcement, small scale contingencies in Bosnia and Kosovo, support to counter-drug operations in South America, and mil-to-mil engagement activities throughout the

world. This was perhaps due in part to the fact that the U.S. military was not evidently consumed in the performance of a mission or missions deemed vital to U.S. interests (i.e., it appeared to be available). This is not the case today.

Since September 11, President George W. Bush has repeatedly stated that the top priorities for his administration are defense of the homeland and elimination of state and non-state-sponsored terrorism having a global reach. The establishment of these priorities has obvious and significant resource implications that will force a more focused policy for use of military options in the promotion of U.S. interests abroad. All indications are that the war on terrorism, by its very nature, will be of indefinite duration, and will be actively waged militarily for at least several years, if not decades. Hence, for the foreseeable future, use of the military for other purposes will be governed by economy of force considerations.

The Bush administration's intent to develop a more focused policy for use of the military is at least alluded to by the new strategic framework identified in the QDR report. Per this report, the new strategic framework is built around four defense policy goals: 1) *assuring allies and friends*, 2) *dissuading future military competition*, 3) *deterring threats and coercion against U.S. interests*, and 4) *if deterrence fails, decisively defeating any adversary*.

QDR GUIDANCE

A substantial portion of the 2001 QDR report directly addresses reorienting the U.S. global posture. A review of this report yields the following observations, guidance and/or strategy having direct bearing on the subject.

East Asian Littoral

Without mentioning any specific nation states, the QDR report identifies Asia as an emerging region of military competition and instability. This region is currently characterized by a number of states possessing sizable militaries, some with weak or failing governments threatened by internal extremists and political movements. The report states that U.S. basing and en route infrastructure is lower than in other critical regions, and places a "high premium" on securing additional access and infrastructure agreements in the East Asian littoral.

Deterring Threats Against U.S. Interests

When elaborating on this policy goal, the QDR report asserts that the President needs a wider range of options to discourage aggression, and specifically emphasizes peacetime forward deterrence in critical regions of the world as a facilitator to this end. It also calls for enhancing the future capabilities of forward stationed forces. The QDR's "deter forward"

strategy specifically calls for maintaining regionally-tailored forward-stationed forces in Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian littoral, and the Middle East/Southwest Asia.

Transformation Efforts

Per the QDR, a key objective of U.S. transformation is to increase the capability of forward-deployed forces to enable these forces to swiftly defeat an adversary's military or political objectives with minimal reinforcement.²³ Reducing dependence on forces currently dedicated to reinforcement may allow for reallocation of at least a portion of these forces to other missions (e.g., homeland security). However, the report is careful to point out that *decisive* defeat of an adversary will still likely require substantial reinforcement forces even after transformation. Relatively new (existing) capabilities that should be considered when assessing the deterrent and combat potential of forward deployed forces include space based assets and long-range strike aircraft. Rapidly deployable, highly lethal forces from outside the theater of operations are cited as having the potential to be a significant force multiplier for forward-stationed forces. From an Army perspective, this could be interpreted to mean Interim Brigade Combat Teams (IBCT), or in the more distant future, Objective Force units.

Another aspect of the QDR that bears on planning for Army Transformation is the QDR's stated intent for DoD to explicitly plan for a rotational base – a larger base of forces from which to support long-standing contingency commitments.²⁴ The Navy and Marine Corps tactical forces have traditionally been designed around a rotational structure, and the Air Force has recently followed suit with its Aerospace Expeditionary Force concept. The Army, because of its highly specialized and varied structure (light, heavy, and designated “first to deploy” units) has tended to overuse certain units in support of contingency commitments. The associated personnel tempo has significant quality of life implications, and can adversely affect not only unit readiness, but also creates challenges with retention and recruitment. By creating a greater number of highly deployable units capable of operating across a broader spectrum of conflict, Army Transformation has the potential to provide some relief in this area. Army planners need to examine the benefits of adopting a unit rotational concept for supporting standing commitments overseas, particularly once sufficient numbers of Interim Brigade Combat Teams are fielded. Unfortunately, a more modular approach to combat arms units alone will not solve the operational tempo problems associated with the high demand/low density types of units that today exist primarily in the Reserve Component (e.g., medical, civil affairs). Additional force structure and/or reallocation of specialty units between the Active and Reserve Components is

arguably needed today, and will certainly be required if U.S. overseas commitments should grow in the future.

General

The QDR report states that the U.S. global military posture will be reoriented to achieve the following:

- A basing system that provides greater flexibility in critical areas of the world, with emphasis on additional bases and stations beyond Europe and Northeast Asia.
- A redistribution of forces and equipment based on regional deterrence requirements.
- Sufficient mobility, pre-positioning, basing infrastructure, and alternative points of debarkation to conduct operations in distant theaters against adversaries possessing weapons of mass destruction and other anti-access capabilities.

Specific

The report directs the Services to accomplish the following specific tasks related to overseas presence:

- Accelerate introduction of *forward deployed* Army IBCTs (one IBCT in Europe by 2007) and explore options for enhancing ground force capabilities in the Arabian Gulf.
- Increase carrier battle group presence in the Western Pacific and explore options for homeporting additional surface combatants and guided cruise missile submarines in that area.
- Develop plans to increase contingency basing for air forces in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Oceans, and the Arabian Gulf and ensure sufficient en route infrastructure for operations in these areas.
- Develop options to shift Marine Corps' afloat pre-positioned equipment from the Mediterranean toward the Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf to be more responsive to contingencies based in the Middle East.
- Maintain critical bases in Western Europe and Northeast Asia that may also serve as hubs for power projection for future contingencies.

OTHER KEY FACTORS

POLITICAL

While the U.S. has important and vital interests that span the globe, the reality of international politics precludes the establishment of a significant U.S. military presence in or near many areas of the world where these interests lie. Perhaps the foremost example of this challenge is in the Middle East, where potential threats to U.S. interests are relatively high, but where a visible U.S. presence is unwelcome for a variety of reasons, even in countries whose government is generally friendly towards the U.S. This dilemma requires workarounds such as increased maritime presence and/or pre-positioned equipment.

U.S. domestic politics cannot be discounted either. When major CONUS-based units deploy overseas for an extended period of time, their home bases and surrounding communities feel the economic impact that results from the reduction in local military populations, even when this reduction is only temporary in nature. If the global security environment should dictate that a sizeable and relatively permanent U.S. military presence is required at a new overseas location, the identification of units to fill that need has the potential to become as politically charged as any other base realignment and closure (BRAC) decision. Some sense of the political tension associated with this arena can be gleaned from Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson's floor remarks in reference to the Military Construction Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2002. After some brief introductory comments, Senator Hutchinson cuts to the chase:

I would like to make a couple of comments about overseas military construction. We took a close look at the overseas construction priorities of the Department of Defense to ensure the projects are consistent with the long-range policies and plans of the Department of Defense. There are a few areas that are troubling that I want to bring to everyone's attention. The United States maintains over 74 installations outside the United States. These installations subsume funding that in some cases could have been better used to maintain or improve our critical domestic base infrastructure and training capabilities. It is important that we continue to closely monitor the overseas funding plans of the Department of Defense.²⁵

The aforementioned appropriations bill directed the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress on overseas basing requirements as a result of the QDR no later than April 1, 2002. (The report to Congress was not available for consideration as part of this SRP.) The Secretary of Defense has also asked for regional commanders-in-chief (CINC) to provide input for a draft master overseas basing plan with inputs due approximately the same time.²⁶ The primary purpose of the requested CINC inputs is to feed a DoD plan to implement a new round of military base closings, primarily in the U.S., beginning in 2003. The key point to be deduced is that decisions

regarding overseas basing are inseparably intertwined with the resourcing of U.S. bases, and hence U.S. domestic politics.

FINANCIAL

While Congressional and public support for the U.S. military is at an all time high, and DoD spending is on the increase, there are still too many competing demands chasing too few dollars. Topping the list of DoD demands are items such as military pay and health care reform, transformation of weapons systems, and DoD's role in homeland security. Resource implications of the latter are not yet fully defined, but will certainly consume force structure that has previously been designated as reinforcement for contingencies overseas. Also competing for federal budget dollars are new requirements of a host of non-DoD government agencies that have arisen as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks, as well as domestic programs that were part of the administration's agenda prior to September 11. While forcefully advocating for larger defense budgets, it appears that even the current administration is highly reluctant to entertain requirements for additional military personnel or force structure at this time. Fiscal realities coupled with political considerations suggests that near-term changes in the posture of U.S. overseas presence, absent breakout of a major theater or world war, will most likely have to be accomplished within a zero-sum change to the overall DoD budget and manpower. However, the current political landscape and fiscal policy could quickly change if the U.S. were to suffer additional terrorist attacks.

INTER-AGENCY PROCESS

From the brief consideration of the previous two factors (political and financial), it is evident that planning for future overseas presence cannot be done solely within the confines of DoD. It necessarily requires active coordination within the inter-agency arena, particularly with those agencies represented on the National Security Council (NSC). Consideration of existing military contingency plans, along with related strategic lift and operational requirements, would yield a first-cut indication of where new or enhanced overseas bases are required or desired. These requirements must then be tempered, or overlaid, with potentially achievable possibilities as determined by the Department of State through bi-lateral, diplomatic talks with potential foreign host governments. Naturally foreign governments will expect something in return for allowing the U.S. military to operate on their soil. Compensation could take a number of forms, ranging from direct monetary payment to U.S. assurance against external security threats. Any decision to invest substantial U.S. monies overseas or involving other long-term national commitments would undoubtedly require support of members of the NSC, with advice and input

from the National Economic Council. It is conceivable that in order for any newly-proposed overseas base to receive support of all the vested agencies, that the proposed location would have to reflect a strong intersection of national security concerns (e.g., regional stability) with other U.S. interests (e.g., new economic opportunities).

A current example of where such an intersection of interests may be occurring is in Central Asia. According to a recent news article appearing in the Christian Science Monitor²⁷, U.S. troops deployed to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are busy building what appear to be long-term bases in this energy-rich region of the world. Russia has acquiesced to this new U.S. presence, perhaps because of common U.S.-Russian economic interests, as well as a mutual desire to contain Islamic extremism. The author of this article also speculates that these efforts may be aimed at guarding Caspian oil reserves in advance of U.S. efforts to force a regime change in Iraq.

SYNOPSIS OF KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Considering only those challenges identified thus far, it is not surprising that current U.S. overseas presence shows little change from the legacy products inherited from prior major wars (World War II and the Korean War). Creating a new U.S. military overseas presence on the same scale that exists today in Europe or Japan may indeed be possible only on the heels of a major military conflict that concludes in unconditional surrender or at least regime change. Nonetheless, promotion of U.S. interests and global stability could be substantially strengthened with relatively modest gains in overseas basing and presence, particularly in those regions of the world highlighted in the QDR report. To wit, even the small residual presence and associated basing rights gained in the Middle East as a result of the Gulf War have proved invaluable to the conduct of many subsequent U.S. military missions.

The following questions capture the most salient issues, and would be appropriate for crude screening of newly proposed requirements for overseas basing and presence.

Is the proposed presence or base required to be successful in deterring or defending a vital or important U.S. interest against an existing or projected threat?

There are two key screening elements within this question. The first is that there must be vital or important U.S. interests involved. Resource implications alone – especially since September 11 – preclude overseas presence for lesser purposes. This economic reality is already in practice, and is evidenced by the lack of any substantial U.S. military presence in areas other than the three key theaters previously highlighted, as well as by the lack of any mention in the QDR report of the need for new basing or presence in other regions. The second key element

is that the identified U.S. interest is, or conceivably could be, threatened by regional events or actors. It might also be noted that an existing, overt threat to regional stability, such as North Korea's current military build-up along its southern border would likely have priority in the allocation of available resources relative to less imminent or merely postulated threats to U.S. interests.

Have supporting diplomatic efforts been conducted, and if so, do they indicate a potential willingness by the objective host government to grant to the U.S. basing rights or permanent presence on its soil?

This may be perhaps the single most challenging barrier to establishing the new basing and strengthened forward deterrence called for by the latest QDR report. Assuming a peacetime environment, an answer other than "yes" to this question may mean going back to the drawing board to identify an alternative basing location or an entirely different approach to deterrence/defense of the involved interest(s). If there is a pressing need for immediate U.S. access, applying other instruments of national power (e.g., economic or diplomatic arm-twisting) to gain the necessary access may be appropriate.

Can the newly proposed base/presence be resourced within existing or projected budget and force structure?

The focus of this question is to move beyond the securing of basing rights and paying for basic supporting infrastructure (neither of which is non-trivial), and to address the challenge of providing a permanent ground-based combat capability at the new base. For the purpose of discussion, it is assumed that only under the most extenuating circumstances would there likely be the required U.S. political support to stand-up, man, and equip an entirely new major combat unit or units. It is further assumed that it would be politically preferable to provide the needed combat capability for a new overseas base from assets already deployed overseas as opposed to giving up a CONUS-based unit. While not the only conceivable scenario, these are arguably reasonable assumptions to make for planning purposes. In order to proceed under these assumptions, at least one of three possible conditions would have to exist. One condition would be that transformation efforts have provided sufficient gains in combat effectiveness or CONUS-based power-projection capabilities to allow a portion of forces currently resident at an existing overseas location (e.g., Europe or the Korean Peninsula) to be moved to the new objective location(s) without incurring undue risk. Another possible condition might be that the threat driving the need for combat capability at an existing overseas location has lessened, or the risk posed by that threat mitigated by other means, such as improved ally capabilities. A third conceivable condition would be that the need for a permanent combat capability at the new

location overtime grows more pressing than the need to retain that capability in full at the donor site(s). All these postulated conditions suggest that changes in overseas posture, at least with respect to ground forces, will probably need to occur in an evolutionary manner, with deliberate plans for such spanning decades or more. The actual execution of any planned moves of combat units would be dependent on when transformation capabilities are actually achieved and/or how well planning assumptions regarding the future security environment prove to hold true.

The strategic level considerations raised up to this point are summarized in a condensed question format in Table 2. An answer of "no" to any of these questions would suggest that a proposed requirement may be unwarranted, or is unachievable given current political and/or economic restraints. The resource restraints imposed by the logic and assumptions of this study should not be construed as prescriptive, but merely the author's assessment of the current environment. If new or increased threats to vital U.S. interests emerge, then the DoD should certainly argue for any additional resources it may need to protect those interests, irrespective of the current fiscal environment or administration policies.

Is there a vital or important U.S. interest at stake?
Are there existing or potential threats that place the interest at risk?
Would a new overseas base and/or permanent presence substantially reduce that risk?
Do supporting diplomatic efforts indicate a potential for the granting of U.S. basing rights?
Can the direct cost of obtaining basing rights be absorbed within projected DoD budgets? - If not, does the nature of the interest or threat warrant requesting additional obligation authority?
Are the required units and manpower needed to operate and/or sustain the new base available within existing force structure? - If not, is there sufficient urgency to warrant a request for additional manpower? - When can the necessary units/personnel be made available?
If a permanent combat capability is required, what type(s) of units are needed, and have acceptable donors (CONUS or OCONUS sources) been identified? - What time frame will these units likely become available?

TABLE 2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR ASSESSING NEW OVERSEAS PRESENCE AND BASING REQUIREMENTS

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- In a peacetime environment, the creation of conditions necessary for establishing a new overseas presence or base is dependent on influences well beyond the direct control of the DoD. It necessarily involves coordination across the full spectrum of agencies and institutions typically involved in formulating and implementing national policy, including the U.S. Congress.
- In the absence of clear and present danger to U.S. interests, the range of options actually available for satisfying military basing requirements will likely be constrained by political and/or economic considerations.
- Evaluation of new overseas presence and basing options must take into account potential impact on extant and future CONUS units and basing plans.
- Future changes to the U.S. overseas posture will necessarily occur in an incremental vice wholesale fashion.
- Whereas most of today's overseas presence was gained as an after-effect of war, consideration should be given to ensuring that military contingency plans for those areas where additional presence or basing is required include courses of action needed to create the conditions under which such presence might be obtained in the aftermath of conflict.
- Creation of a new or increased ground force presence in regions at risk (e.g., the Middle East) will likely be at the expense of forces in other regions. Realization of increased capabilities promised by transformation – and the resulting efficiencies – will be key to mitigating the risk to “donor” regions.
- As part of Transformation, The Army should give consideration to adopting a unit rotational force structure for support of overseas commitments. Evolution towards such a concept for combat arms units may be feasible once a sufficient number of IBCTs have been fielded.
- It is unlikely that the Army can develop the larger base of forces to support rotation of forward-deployed forces as called for by the QDR without additional manpower. The greatest challenge lies in those branches and specialties that today reside largely in the Reserve Component. Additional manpower and/or a rebalancing between Active and Reserve Components are needed to address high demand/low density type units.

WORD COUNT = 6003

ENDNOTES

¹ John J. Spinelli, "Peacetime Operations: Reducing Friction," in QDR 2001: Strategy-Driven Choices for America's Security, ed. Michele A. Flournoy (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001), 270.

² Donald H. Rumsfeld, Quadrennial Defense Review Report (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, September 2001), 20.

³ Ernest May, "Introduction: NSC 68: The Theory and Politics of Strategy," in Army War College Course 2 Selected Readings, AY02, Vol III, "War, National Security Policy & Strategy" (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 30 July 2001), 162.

⁴ Roger Cliff, Sam J. Tangredi, and Christine E. Wormuth, "The Future of U.S. Overseas Presence," in QDR 2001: Strategy-Driven Choices for America's Security, ed. Michele A. Flournoy (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001), 237.

⁵ Rumsfeld, 11-12.

⁶ Richard L. Kugler, Changes Ahead: Future Directions for the U.S. Overseas Military Presence (RAND, 1998), 136.

⁷ William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a Global Age, (Washington D.C.: The White House, December 2000), p16.

⁸ Cliff et al, 235.

⁹ Mackubin T. Owens, "Marines Turned Soldiers: The Corps vs. the Army," National Review Online December 2001; available from <<http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-owens121001.shtml>>; Internet; accessed 10 December 2001.

¹⁰ Spinelli, 267.

¹¹ The Air Force is evolving towards a new, unit rotation concept referred to as an Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF). While not yet fully institutionalized, existing Air Force tactical assets have been evenly distributed across 10 AEFs, each nominally equivalent to a fighter wing.

¹² Cliff et al, 238.

¹³ Eighth U.S. Army Homepage, "Eighth U.S. Army History," 20 June 2001; available from <<http://www.korea.army.mil/eusa/Eusapages/EUSA%20History.htm>>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2002.

¹⁴ 7th Air Force Homepage; "7th Air Force History," available from <<http://www-int.osan.af.mil/7af/7af-history.html>>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2002.

¹⁵ General Accounting Office, Overseas Presence: Issues Involved in Reducing the Impact of the U.S. Military Presence on Okinawa, (Washington D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, March 1998), 14.

¹⁶ United States Pacific Command Home Page, "Subordinate Units," available from <<http://www.pacom.mil/about/pacom.htm>>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2002.

¹⁷ General Accounting Office, Overseas Presence: Issues Involved in Reducing the Impact of the U.S. Military Presence on Okinawa, (Washington D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, March 1998), 14.

¹⁸ Spinelli, 267

¹⁹ Cliff et al, 246-47.

²⁰ Ibid., 247.

²¹ National Defense University, Strategic Assessment 1999: Priorities for A Turbulent World, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1999), 10.

²² Clinton, 1-3.

²³ Rumsfeld, 20.

²⁴ Ibid., 21.

²⁵ Congress, Senate, Appropriations Committee, Floor Speech by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson: Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2002, 107th Cong., 1st sess., 26 September 2001.

²⁶ Department of State Washington File, Defense Department Report, "Overseas Base Review," 2 August 2001; available from <<http://usis-australia.gov/hyper/2001/0802/epf402.htm>>; Internet; accessed 16 January 2002.

²⁷ Scott Peterson, "Terror War and Oil Expand US Spheres of Influence," Christian Science Monitor, 19 March 2002, sec. 1A, p.1.

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