

# **An Era of Persistent Engagement**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **Abstract**

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On September 11, 2001 a relatively obscure Islamic organization, executed an attack against the United States with catastrophic effects. Most of the United States, as well as the world, could not fathom how a single organization could conceive, coordinate and execute such a devastating attack against the world's last remaining superpower.

This paper argues that the attacks by Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda were the result or reflect a failure to follow the National Security Strategies developed in the 1990s. The attacks were a result of a failure to recognize the rise of violent, non-state actors and engaging this phenomenon at the proper place and time. It will further argue that active *Engagement* by the whole of the United States Government, specifically the U.S. military, is the strategy for the future. This paper will examine the policy of engagement by the United States Government prior to 9/11, Osama Bin Laden's engagement activities during the 1990s leading up to the attacks on September 11, 2001 and a review of strategies proposed after 9/11 and offer a course for future strategic direction.

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## Introduction

On September 11, 2001, Osama Bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, a relatively obscure Islamic organization, executed an attack against the United States which destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City, damaged the Pentagon and attempted to strike the White House or the Capital Building in Washington, DC. Most of the United States, as well as the world, could not fathom how a single organization, a terrorist organization – an obscure non-state actor, could conceive, coordinate and execute such a devastating attack against the world’s last remaining superpower. For most of America, this attack was a surprise. It was a bold attack with catastrophic effects. For others, mostly within the world’s intelligence organizations, it was not a surprise. It was the next phase of a war first declared by Osama Bin Laden in the mid 1990s.

Carl von Clausewitz in his thesis *On War* defines war as “an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.”<sup>1</sup> He further described war “as nothing but the continuation of policy with other means.”<sup>2</sup> War, then, is a continuation of a political policy, an interaction between international players that has not progressed in a way that one side perceives as beneficial to their policy. Clausewitz further describes war as “just another form of expression of thoughts, another form of speech or writing.”<sup>3</sup> War, in other words, is a violent form of international engagement – a higher level of engagement resulting from some failure by international players to compel one party to the will of the other.

The attacks on September 11 were not the first engagement by Osama Bin Laden or his organization, al Qaeda. It was, in fact, the seventh attack by al Qaeda against the United States

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 605.

and the second attack against the United States homeland.<sup>4</sup> Since the early 1990s, acts of terrorism had intensified into a new global challenge for several reasons. Foremost among those are the accumulated frustrations of dispossessed peoples of the Third World leading them to favor violence over traditional modes of international law and diplomacy.<sup>5</sup> The reduction of the informational and economic barriers caused by the end of the Cold War, the advent of globalization throughout the world and the rise of the global reach of non-state actors all contributed to this deepening frustration. September 11 should not have been a surprise either to the U.S. government nor the people of the United States. Yet it was.

This paper will argue that the attacks by Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda were a failure to follow a well-conceived and executable National Security Strategy. The attacks were a result of not recognizing the rise of violent, non-state actors and engaging this phenomenon at the proper place and time during the 1990s. It will further argue that active engagement by the whole of the United States Government, specifically the U.S. military, is the strategy for the future. This paper will examine the policy of engagement by the United States Government prior to 9/11, Osama Bin Laden's engagement activities leading up to the attacks on September 11, and a review of strategies proposed after 9/11. Finally, it will offer an option for future strategic direction.

## **Policy of Engagement**

By the following language, a small section of a much larger reform package known as the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the Congress amended the National Security Act of 1947 to require annually a written articulation of grand strategy from

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<sup>4</sup> Information derived from CBS News web site, *Al-Qaeda Timeline*, January 23, 2009, [http://www.cbc.cs/news/background/osamabinladen/alqaeda\\_timeline.html](http://www.cbc.cs/news/background/osamabinladen/alqaeda_timeline.html).

<sup>5</sup> Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005), 61.

each succeeding President.<sup>6</sup> Congress was attempting to legislate a solution to what it believed to be a legitimate and significant long-standing problem in the governmental processes. The inability within the Executive Branch to formulate, in a coherent and integrated manner, a strategy to judiciously use resources drawn from all elements of national power and to develop a mid- and long-term strategy necessary to defend and further those interests vital to the nation's security.<sup>7</sup> The following passage outlines this requirement.

SEC. 603. ANNUAL REPORT ON NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

. . . Sec. 104. (a)(1) The President shall transmit to Congress each year a comprehensive report on the national security strategy of the United States . . .

(2) The national security strategy report for any year shall be transmitted on the date on which the President submits to Congress the budget for the next fiscal year under section 1105 of Title 31, United States Code.

(b) Each national security strategy report shall set forth the national security strategy of the United States and shall include a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:

(1) The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.

(2) The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.

(3) The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).

(4) The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.

(5) Such other measures as may be helpful to inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Few in the Congress at that time doubted that there existed a grand strategy. The nation had been following "containment" in one form or another for over 40 years. What they doubted,

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<sup>6</sup> Don M. Snider, *The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision*, Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U. S. Army War College (U. S. Army War College, 1995), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



or disagreed with, was its focus in terms of values, interests and objectives; its coherence in terms of relating means to ends, and its integration in terms of the elements of power, and its time horizon.<sup>9</sup>

In theory, at least to the reformers, a clearly written strategy would serve to inform the Congress better of the needs for resources to execute the strategy, thus facilitating the annual authorization and appropriation processes, particularly for the Department of Defense. It also, in theory, would focus all elements of national power toward a common goal, bringing all elements of power together on a common theme to ensure the vital resources and efforts were focused on the right areas.

To date, there have been ten such reports published, two during the second Reagan administration (1987 and 1988), three by the first Bush administration (1990, 1991 and 1993), three by the Clinton administration during the 1990s (1995, 1998 and 1999) and two during the second Bush administration (2003 and 2006). This paper will focus its review on the strategies of the mid-1990s and the Clinton Administration, which presided over the rise of violent non-state actors and expanding globalization.

The theme for the first Clinton Administration's National Security Strategy published in February of 1995 was *Engagement and Enlargement*.<sup>10</sup> It states in its preface, "the dangers we face today are more diverse. Ethnic conflict is spreading and rogue states pose a serious danger to regional stability in many corners of the globe. Never has American leadership been more essential — we can and must make the difference through our engagement."<sup>11</sup> It went on to state

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<sup>9</sup> Snider, *The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1995). 2.

<sup>11</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 1995, 4.

that the nation could only address that era's dangers and opportunities if it remained actively engaged in global affairs.

“The United States is the world's greatest power, and it has global interests as well as responsibilities. The nation learned after World War I, it would not find security in isolationism nor prosperity in protectionism. For the American people to be safer and enjoy expanding opportunities, the nation must work to deter would-be aggressors, open foreign markets, promote the spread of democracy abroad, encourage sustainable development and pursue new opportunities for peace.”<sup>12</sup>

It is during the introduction of the 1995 National Security Strategy in which the administration acknowledged that not all security risks were immediate or military in nature. It highlighted as “Transnational Phenomena” areas such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, environmental degradation, natural resource depletion, rapid population growth and refugee flows which had security implications for both present and long term American policy.<sup>13</sup> It did not address these issues as global threats by non-state actors. The term “Non-State Actor” was not used anywhere within the 1995 National Security Strategy.

The body of this document, as the title implied – highlighted engagement across the global environment. It detailed this strategy as preventive diplomacy — through such means as support for democracy, economic assistance, overseas military presence, military-to-military contacts and involvement in multilateral negotiations in the Middle East and elsewhere — in order to help resolve problems, reduce tensions and defuse conflicts before they became crises.<sup>14</sup> It further described the important element of security preparedness and its reliance on durable relationships with allies and other friendly nations. The thrust of the “strategy of engagement”

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<sup>12</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 1995, 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

was to sustain and adapt the security relationships with key nations around the world and that these relationships included such activities as: conducting combined training and exercises, coordinating military plans and preparations, sharing intelligence, jointly developing new systems and controlling exports of sensitive technologies. “Our willingness and ability to play a leading role in engaging on these common interests also help ensure that the United States will remain an influential voice in international affairs — political, military and economic — that affect our well-being so long as we retain the military wherewithal to underwrite our commitments credibly.”<sup>15</sup>

This document highlighted the requirement to address terrorism by stating that it might be necessary to strike terrorists at their bases abroad or to attack assets valued by the governments that support them. This document also stated that the United States policy in countering international terrorists was to make no concessions to terrorists, continue to pressure state sponsors of terrorism, fully exploit all available legal mechanisms to punish international terrorists and help other governments improve their capabilities to combat terrorism.<sup>16</sup>

The National Security Strategy of *Engagement and Enlargement* of 1995 was followed and supported by the National Military Strategy of *Flexible and Selective Engagement* in the summer of 1995. This strategy consisted of three components; peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention, and fighting and winning the Nation’s wars.<sup>17</sup> The document highlighted the term “engagement” 27 times within its text and introduced the terms “selective engagement” and “peacetime engagement”. Selective engagement was described as, “Selective employment of military capabilities in peace consisting of three sets of tasks: remaining constructively engaged

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<sup>15</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 1995, 15.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy, A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1995), 7.

in peacetime; acting to deter aggression and prevent conflict; and fighting and winning our Nation's wars when called upon to do so."<sup>18</sup>

Peacetime engagement describes a broad range of non-combat activities undertaken by the United States armed forces that demonstrate commitment, improve collective military capabilities, promote democratic ideals, and enhance regional stability.<sup>19</sup> The different types of programs described within this strategy were military-to-military contacts, programs used to enhance the capabilities of friendly nations armed forces through exercises. Nation assistance, programs used to assist friendly nations as they combat lawlessness, subversion, and insurgency; and security assistance programs, the selective use of cooperative programs with allied and friendly armed forces that furnish countries with the means to defend themselves from aggression and to fight alongside US forces in a coalition effort.<sup>20</sup>

All of the programs listed within this document suggested a proactive, offensive strategy of engagement; one where in the use of military forces was a preemptive or preventive measure to deter possible adversaries from developing and posing a threat to the security of the United States. Yet this document acknowledged that in the Middle East the United States maintains only a small presence. In Africa, forces deployed primarily in support of humanitarian or peace operations while in Latin America, small numbers of forces helped to promote democratic growth and work to halt the import of drugs into the United States.

The 1998 National Security Strategy published in October continued the theme of engagement and referenced the term 27 times within its text. Its primary idea, the "Imperative of Engagement", recognized that the United States must lead abroad if it was to be secure at home.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>19</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy, A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement*, 1995, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 18.

The United States must be prepared and willing to use all appropriate instruments of national power to influence the actions of other states and non-state actors.<sup>21</sup> It stated that diplomatic and military responses alone would not deter threats to the national security from non-state actors such as criminals and terrorist groups; the nation must promote increased cooperation among law enforcement officials and improved methods for dealing with international crime and terrorism.<sup>22</sup> This was the first formal mention of non-state actors within National Security Strategic documents.

This updated and refined document on the strategic direction of the United States recognized that the complex security environment demanded that all instruments of national power be effectively integrated to achieve the nation's security objectives. It stressed, "To ensure the security of the nation, the United States must demonstrate the will and capabilities to exert global leadership and remain the preferred security partner for the community of states that share the United States interests."<sup>23</sup> In many instances it stated, "The United States is the only nation capable of providing the necessary leadership and capabilities for an international response to shared challenges."<sup>24</sup> This version continued the ideas of overseas presence and peacetime engagement activities such as defense cooperation, security assistance, and training and exercises with allies and friends, armed forces help to deter aggression and coercion, promote regional stability, prevent and reduce conflicts and threats, and serve as role models for militaries in emerging democracies.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1998), 60. Note, this is the first time the term "Non-State Actor" is recognized as a possible adversary that must be addressed. Non-State Actor is referenced three times within this document as opposed to no reference in the 1995 document.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

The 1999 version of the National Security Strategy, *A Strategy of Engagement*, was the third and last issued by the Clinton administration. It highlighted the term engagement 33 times and continued on the theme introduced in the 1998 version – engagement through United States leadership, use of all appropriate instruments of national power to influence the actions of other states and non-state actors, and to remain a reliable security partner for the community of nations that share our interests.<sup>26</sup> It reintroduced the idea brought forth in the 1995 National Military Strategy by stating that the United States engagement abroad must be selective, focusing on the threats and opportunities most relevant to our interests and applying our resources where we can make the greatest difference.<sup>27</sup>

Words do have meaning. These four presidential directives accentuated the tone of international discourse in words like – selective engagement, preventive diplomacy, negotiations, resolve, reduce, defuse, shape, deter and durable relationships. In highlighting its strategy in regards to terrorism and non-state actors, the administration used terms such as – strike, attack, pressure, exploit and punish. All these terms were used to describe a form of engagement. The tone of these words took on different meaning when applied to different aspects of national power. Selective engagement, preventative diplomacy, and negotiations are not words immediately connected to military operations or the use of military capabilities. On the other hand, words such as strike, attack, pressure or punish are not terms normally associated with diplomatic elements of national power such as the Department of State or the Treasury Department. Such was the impact of the term “containment” that it permeated official and

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<sup>26</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1999), 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

unofficial documentation of strategy before the fall of the Berlin wall;<sup>28</sup> – the term “engagement” became the theme de jur within strategic direction during the 1990s.

The term *Engagement*, however, is never defined in the above strategic documents. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines *Engagement* as a noun; the act of engaging; the state of being engaged; something that engages; a promise to be present at a specified time and place; the state of being in gear, or the hostile encounter between military forces.<sup>29</sup> It further defines the use of *Engage*, a verb; to offer as security or debt; to entangle or entrap or to attract and hold by influence or power.<sup>30</sup> *Engage*, used as an adjective, as being actively involved in or committed to political concerns.<sup>31</sup> The word *engagement* used as a noun denotes the name of an entity such as a person, place, thing, idea or action. This definition implies an exchange between two forms – a physical act, a dialogue. Used as a verb or adverb, engage implies action with the use of the words to offer, to entangle, to entrap and to hold. The definition, both as a noun and a verb, denotes action by one body onto another – an exchange of ideas, a confrontation, in the case of military units, or communication.

Joint Doctrine defines *engagement* as a tactical conflict between opposing lower echelons maneuver forces and *engage* as bringing the enemy under fire.<sup>32</sup> This definition is in-line with the use of this term as described in Webster’s, but does not fully describe the spirit of the term used in the four national security directives reviewed. *Military engagement* is defined in Joint Doctrine as the routine contact and interaction between individuals or elements of the Armed

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<sup>28</sup> Snider, *The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Merriam-Webster, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 150th Anniversary Edition* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1981).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Defense, *JP 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defence, 2001), 195.

Forces of the United States and those of another nation's armed forces, or foreign and domestic civilian authorities or agencies to build trust and confidence, share information, coordinate mutual activities, and maintain influence.<sup>33</sup>

President Clinton stated in his first National Security Strategy, "Our leadership must stress preventive diplomacy – through such means as support for democracy, economic assistance, overseas military presence, military-to-military contacts and involvement in multilateral negotiations".<sup>34</sup> *Military engagement*, as defined by Joint Doctrine, supports this intent, but Joint Doctrine further defines a number of other terms that also touch upon the intent outlined in these National Security directives. Joint Doctrine defines *military options* as a wide range of military force responses that can be projected to accomplish assigned tasks. Options include one or a combination of the following: civic action, humanitarian assistance, civil affairs, and other military activities to develop positive relationships with other countries.<sup>35</sup>

*Peace operations* is a broad term that encompasses multiagency and multinational crisis response and limited contingency operations involving all instruments of national power with military missions to contain conflict, redress the peace, and shape the environment to support reconciliation and rebuilding and facilitate the transition to legitimate governance.<sup>36</sup> Peace operations include peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacemaking, peace building, and conflict prevention efforts.<sup>37</sup> *Peace enforcement* is defined as the application of military force, or the threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 344.

<sup>34</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy, A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement*, 1995, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Department of Defense, *JP 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 346.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 414.



resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order.<sup>38</sup> *Peacekeeping* is defined as military operations undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute, designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an agreement (cease fire, truce, or other such agreement) and support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement.<sup>39</sup>

*Peacemaking* is the process of diplomacy, mediation, negotiation, or other forms of peaceful settlements that arranges an end to a dispute and resolves issues that led to it.<sup>40</sup>

In comparison to Peace Operations, *civil-military operations*, as defined by Joint Doctrine, are the activities of a commander to establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile operational area in order to facilitate military operations, to consolidate and achieve operational US objectives.<sup>41</sup> Civil-military operations may include performance by military forces of activities and functions normally the responsibility of the local, regional, or national government. These activities may occur before, during, or subsequent to other military actions. They may also occur, if directed, in the absence of other military operations. Civil-military operations may be performed by designated civil affairs, by other military forces, or by a combination of civil affairs and other forces.<sup>42</sup>

Peace operations, which, by joint definition, include peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacemaking, and peace building imply by their definition as actions taken after hostilities have broken out or have come to some level of resolution. These terms do not appear to meet the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>41</sup> Department of Defense, *JP 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 90.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

intent of the national strategy of engagement to deter, prevent or encourage as outlined. The strategy of engagement, denoted by the tone of the documents and the definitions explored, are active measure to shape outcomes and the environment to the nations benefit prior to hostilities. In this light, military options, civil-military operations and military engagements better meet the intent of engagement outlined by the Clinton Administration. For the purpose of this paper, the definition of engagement is the routine contact and interaction between nations to build trust and confidence, share information, coordinate mutual activities, and maintain influence.

If this was the form of engagement envisioned by the National Strategy, then why was a non-state actor able to build an organization, gather the recourses, deploy its members and strike the homeland of the United States? The question that arises, is that if active engagement was the stated strategy, how did the United States engage during this timeframe?

Between the end of Desert Shield/Desert Storm in January 1991 and February 2001 there were roughly sixty-four named deployments conducted by the U.S. military.<sup>43</sup> Of those, twenty were show-of-force type operations such as No-Fly Zone implementation, naval blockades, or peace enforcement/peace making operation such as Operation Joint Endeavor, the NATO Intervention Force in Bosnia.<sup>44</sup> Sixteen deployments were in support of humanitarian aide or disaster relief such as Operation Atlas Response to Mozambique and Operation Strong Support, hurricane relief in Central America.<sup>45</sup> Eight Non-Combatant Operations were ordered for the evacuation of U.S. personnel in deployments such as Operations Autumn Shelter, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Operation Safe Departure from Eretria.<sup>46</sup> There were

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<sup>43</sup> Information was compiled from the Center for Defense Information web page, [www.cdi.org](http://www.cdi.org), 23 January 2009. It is not meant to provide a detailed list of all named deployments but meant to provide an overview of the type deployments conducted during the time specified.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

seven relief operations such as Operation Allied Harbor, Kosovar Albanian refugee aid, and Operation Pacific Haven, which included the relocation of 6,500 Kurds to the island of Guam.<sup>47</sup> Ten direct-action missions such as Operation Deliberate Force, the U.S. and NATO air strikes against Bosnia, and Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti that included the deployment of over 21,000 combat troops. Finally, there were three named operations involving U.S. military forces in support of United Nation resolution such as Operation Stabilize, which included a UN International Force for East Timor in the South Pacific.<sup>48</sup>

The above data does not take into account other, non-named operations such as Partnership for Peace exercises<sup>49</sup>, military exchanges, and individual officer and soldier school exchanges, which are all forms of engagement and activities in-line with the national strategy. The data does indicate that the military during the ten years prior to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks were used to respond to some catastrophic event or as a means to reach a political end. The data indicates that the military was used as a tool to “resolve problems, reduce tensions and defuse conflicts” as stated in the 1995 National Security Strategy, but only after the crises had already emerged.

All three National Security Strategies reviewed stressed the requirement for the United States, namely the U.S. military, to sustain and adapt security relationships, conduct combined training and exercises, deter aggression, and prevent conflict (1995). All strategies stressed the need to increase cooperation among law enforcement officials, to improve methods for dealing with international crime and terrorism and to use all instruments of national power to effectively achieve the nation’s security objectives (1998), and to use all appropriate instruments of national

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Exercises designed and carried out by Combatant Commanders within their Area of Responsibility as described by MG Mixon, the Deputy Commanding General, European Command, 07 November 2008.

power to influence the actions of other states and non-state actors (1999). All three documents stress “Engagement” in all its forms as the strategy to insure adversaries are identified by a forward presence, shaped by actions to deter or prevent attacks to the United States. The sixty-four named operations conducted from 1991 to 2001 suggest that the military was not used as envisioned by the nation’s leaders as directed in these National Security directives. The data suggests there was a reluctance to operationally deploy the military force until a crisis arose or as a result of an event beyond the scope of other capabilities. The data suggests that at some point, the use of military forces, short of crisis resolution, was either not used or not used properly. U.S. military operations must shift from being reactive (i.e., retaliatory and punitive) to being largely preventative. Forward presence, pro-actively engaged, will be valued more than strategic deployment from home in order to deter the rising influence of the phenomenon of Non-State Actors.<sup>50</sup>

## **The Rise of Non-State Actors**

The rise of Armed Non-State Actors can be attributed largely to the end of the Cold War and the advent of globalization.<sup>51</sup> The Cold War was a world contained by walls. It was impossible to go very far without running into a wall – a Berlin Wall, an Iron Curtain or a Warsaw Pact. Behind these walls, nation-states could preserve their own unique forms of life, politics, economies and culture. Behind these walls, differences could remain sharp, black and white.<sup>52</sup> These walls also defined, very clearly, the doctrinal context for military action. It contained the adversaries of the United States’ in boxes and allowed a framework to be applied.

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<sup>50</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett and Arthur K. Cebrowski, *The American Way of War*, The U.S. Naval Institute, January 2003, <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/awow.htm> (accessed January 28, 2009), 3.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas L Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York, NY: Anchor Bookd, 2000), 44.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

The factors that began to remove these walls were how the world's population communicated and connected to each other. The proliferation of weapons gave non-state actors the means to inflict violence. The development of global media networks projected images of American materialism that repulsed conservative communities around the world.<sup>53</sup> These global media networks instantly broadcasted news of terrorists' attacks, which served the terrorists' psychological warfare objectives.<sup>54</sup> This new phenomenon began the rise of globalization due to the democratization of information.<sup>55</sup>

The spread of globalization pitted two types of states against one another: nation-states seeking to align themselves internally to the emerging global rule and nation-states that refused such realignment – thus remaining largely “disconnected” from globalization – due to either political or cultural rigidity or continuing abject poverty.<sup>56</sup> The democratization of information meant that governments could not isolate their people from understanding what life is like beyond their borders or even beyond their village. Life outside could not be trashed and made to look worse than it is and life inside could not be propagandized and made to look better than it is.<sup>57</sup> The revolution in the way nation-states, non-state actors and individuals communicated with one another changed the way each of these entities engaged with one another. The removal of these walls allowed sub-groups within the “disconnected” nation-states to view not only other cultures contrary to their beliefs but exposed their own countries inadequacy.

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett, *Forget Europe. How About these Allies*, April 11, 2004, <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/wp.htm> (accessed January 23, 2009), 3.

<sup>54</sup> Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*, 81.

<sup>55</sup> Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 45.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas P. M. Barnett and Jr., Henry H. Gaffney, *The Pentagon's New Map*, 2009, <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/gts.htm> (accessed January 23, 2009), 2.

<sup>57</sup> Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 67.

The United States, recognized as both an economic and political-military leader of the connected world, did not display much unity of vision regarding globalization until the Sept 11<sup>th</sup> attack triggered the ongoing war on terrorism.<sup>58</sup> Globalization was treated as a largely economic affair that the U. S. government left to private business.<sup>59</sup> The U.S. security community worried about globalization only to the extent that it fostered the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the actions of certain nefarious transnational actors.<sup>60</sup> The perturbations of the global system triggered by Sept 11 have done much to highlight both the limits and risks of globalization and the expansion of engagement avenues.<sup>61</sup>

The dynamics of terror and the significance of non-state actors require a global perspective. Non-state actors address the whole globe when fighting their cause, not just their country of origin. The terror some non-state actors are able to inflict does not take issue with people's politics; it assails their very existence by using intimidation and chaos as weapons. The international community must now address a "profound and unequivocal" challenge to global stability that is being orchestrated by groups with which many civilians were not even familiar with on or before September 11<sup>th</sup>. For all countries, the new global reality adds another complex dimension to regional stability and engagement activities.<sup>62</sup>

A key difficulty in engaging armed non-state actors is that legal and normative frameworks governing the use of force are still understood primarily on the nation-state level. The classic conception of the state as guarantor of citizens' rights conceptualizes the existence

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<sup>58</sup> Barnett and Gaffney, *The Pentagon's New Map*, 2009, 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Margaret Buse, "Non-State Actors and Their Significance," *Macic*, 2003, [http://acic.jmu.edu/journal/features/maggie\\_buse\\_nsa/htm](http://acic.jmu.edu/journal/features/maggie_buse_nsa/htm) (accessed November 15, 2008).

and conduct against armed groups as a domestic politico-criminal problem for the state, not an international issue between nation-states.<sup>63</sup>

The primary reasons for engaging non-state actors are to bring them into the political arena in a legitimate way. By opening a dialogue with insurgent groups, the isolation within which they operate is removed.<sup>64</sup> The issue with engaging non-state actors is generally met with two sets of concerns. The first relates to the relationship between state and non-state actors. The argument is made that by addressing and engaging armed non-state actors, the international community is in effect conferring legitimacy on inherently illegitimate and often criminal actors. The second is, as a result of the legitimacy gained from this engagement, there is a risk of prolonging or sustaining conflict by making the behavior of illegitimate actors seem more legitimate.<sup>65</sup>

In 1977, an addition to Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions addressing 'non-international conflicts' represented the first significant attempt to confront the inherent state-bias in provisions of international law. Non-state actors under the jurisdiction of the Conventions are defined as groups that have a clear organizational structure and hierarchy and which control sufficient territory to permit them to carry out substantial and concerted military efforts.<sup>66</sup> This definition of a non-state actor, one containing clear organization structure and sufficient territory to direct military efforts, does not encompass the non-state actors threatening the world today.

Non-state actors are entities or organizations that play on the international level and are involved in the conduct of international relations but are not recognized as an established nation

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<sup>63</sup> Caroline Holmqvist, "Engaging Armed Non-State Actors in Post Conflict Settings," *sipri*, ed. A Bryden and H Hanggi, Security Governance and Post-conflict Peacebuilding, 2005, [www.sipri.org/contents/conflict/nonstateactors.html](http://www.sipri.org/contents/conflict/nonstateactors.html) (accessed October 07, 2008), 49.

<sup>64</sup> Buse, "Non-State Actors and Their Significance."

<sup>65</sup> Holmqvist, "Engaging Armed Non-State Actors in Post Conflict Settings," 62.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

state.<sup>67</sup> In defining a non-state actor, it is helpful to define them as either armed or unarmed non-state actors. The majority of wars fought in the later half of the twentieth century, and those which are currently being fought, involve non-state, anti-state or stateless actors outside the control of states or governments recognized by the United Nations.<sup>68</sup> In 2004 the 19 conflicts recorded by the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme as 'major armed conflicts' were all fought within states, by definition involving at least one non-state actor.<sup>69</sup> In addition, 31 non-state conflicts (conflicts involving the use of armed force between two organized groups, neither of which was a government of a state) were recorded for 2003.<sup>70</sup>

Armed non-state actors are '*armed groups that operate beyond state control.*'<sup>71</sup> They include but are not limited to the following groups;

- Rebel opposition groups; Groups with a stated incompatibility with the government, generally concerning the control of government or the control of territory within a sovereign state or spanning multiple states.
- Criminal Organizations; Groups that are involved in criminal activities which span more than one sovereign state. Drug cartels are an example of this type of armed groups.
- Local militias; Groups which are ethnically, clan or otherwise based.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Buse, "Non-State Actors and Their Significance."

<sup>69</sup> According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Project 'major armed conflict' is one that has resulted in over 1,000 battle related deaths in any one given year. Wallensteen, P., Harbom, L., 'Appendix 2A; Patterns in major armed conflicts, 1990-2004'. *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, forthcoming). The project did not maintain records on non-state armed conflicts before 2001.

<sup>70</sup> Holmqvist, "Engaging Armed Non-State Actors in Post Conflict Settings," 54.

<sup>71</sup> Definition used here draws on David Petrasak's ('groups that are armed and use force to achieve their objectives and are not under state control'). Petrasak, D., "Ends and Means; Human Rights Approaches to Armed Groups ," *International Council on Human Rights Policy* (Geneva, September 2000).



- Vigilantes; Factions within a state that act against government or non government forces based on a perceived injustice.

- Warlords.

- Civil defence forces and paramilitary groups (when such are clearly beyond state control).

- Private companies that provide military and security services.<sup>72</sup>

Unarmed non-state actors can be defined as ‘groups that act within civil society in support of and in coordination with a state’<sup>73</sup>. They include but are not limited to the following groups;

- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Privately held and non-profit organizations not directly affiliated with a state government but operating within and often in support of government policies. They include such groups as Amnesty International, Greenpeace and Doctors Without Borders.

- Multinational Corporations (MNCs); a corporation or enterprise that manages Production or delivers services in three or more sovereign states. They include organizations such as McDonald’s, Adidas or Nike, and large hotel chains such as Best Western or Hilton.

- International Media such as CNN and BBC.

- Religious Groups such as the Quakers and the Roman Catholic Church, although, the Vatican, the seat of leadership for the Roman Catholic Church, is considered a state.

The Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept document proposes a definition of Non-State Actors as a group or organization that is not within the formal structure of the government of any state, not limited by any state boundary and operates beyond the control of any state without loyalty to any state.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Different terminology is used in the literature to denote non-statutory armed forces; ‘irregular armed forces’ (Davis, D. E. Pereira, A. W. (eds.), *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in State Formation* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003); ‘armed groups’ (Armed Groups Project, policzer, P., Capie, D., URL [www.armedgroups.org](http://www.armedgroups.org)); ‘armed groups as non-state actors’ (Bruederlein, C., *The Role of Non-State Actors in Building Human Security: the Case of Armed Groups in Intra-State Wars* (Geneva, 2000), URL, [www.humansecuritynetwork.org/docs/report\\_may2000\\_2-e.php](http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/docs/report_may2000_2-e.php),

<sup>73</sup> Holmqvist, "Engaging Armed Non-State Actors in Post Conflict Settings," 57.

As discussed earlier, the vast majority of U.S. military interventions during the 1990s occurred after a crisis arose or an environment deteriorated to the point where only U.S. military force could rectify the issue. The trend identified during this period seemed to be that the United States tends to “export” security to precisely those parts of the world that have a hard time coping with globalization or are otherwise not benefiting from it.<sup>75</sup>

According to the Center for Strategic Studies, roughly 95 percent of the U.S. military responses in the post-Cold War era (1990 – 2002) were to the portions of the world not engaged.<sup>76</sup> As globalization continues to expand and developing countries increase the manner in which they engage with the world, it is reasonable that the U.S. is less likely to need to send forces there to restore order or eradicate threats. Conversely, if a country is not engaging or not embracing globalization and rejecting much of the content associated with the advance of globalization, there is a far greater chance that the U.S. will end up sending forces at some point.<sup>77</sup>

These continuing interventions underline the reality that the U.S. military remains, now and for the near future, in the business of working the seams between the nations that choose to engage with the world and the non-state actors who do not.<sup>78</sup> Fulfilling the type of leadership described in the 1990’s security strategies, required a new understanding on the part of the United States as to its essential engagements with those parts of the world that were not willing to engage, which is – unsurprisingly – the source of virtually all the global terrorism.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Barnett and Gaffney, *The Pentagon's New Map*, 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>77</sup> Barnett and Gaffney, *The Pentagon's New Map*, 5.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Al Qaeda, a multi-national, armed non-state actor with members from numerous countries and with a worldwide presence, was one such organization that sprang from the seams of the unconnected world that rejected globalization. Al Qaeda, translated as “The Base”, was founded by Osama Bin Laden in 1989 primarily from mujahedeen, or “Holy Warriors”, who were fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.<sup>80</sup> Its stated objective is to seek a global radicalization of existing Islamic groups and the creation of radical Islamic groups where none exist.<sup>81</sup> Al Qaeda wants to drive the West out of the Middle East so it can drive the Middle East out of the Modern World.<sup>82</sup>

Terrorism thrives where globalization has yet to extend itself in any meaningful way because the countries that lack the ability for widespread political, informational and economic engagement with the outside world are failed states which generate desperate young men seeking political change through violence.<sup>83</sup> Osama Bin Laden learned this in the early 1990s as he witnessed the number of young, desperate men flocking to Afghanistan for a cause they wanted to believe in and follow. It was among the disconnected masses within the portions of the world that rejected globalization that Bin Laden found his following.

Bin Laden has stated that al Qaeda goals are to “Unite all Muslims and to establish a government which follows the rule of the Caliphs.”<sup>84</sup> He further stated the only way to establish the Caliphate is by force. His goal is to overthrow nearly all Muslim governments, which are

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<sup>80</sup> John Pike, *Federation of American Scientists*, September 10, 2008, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/ladin.htm> (accessed January 24, 2009).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett, *Forget Europe. How About these Allies*, April 11, 2004, <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/wp.htm> (accessed January 23, 2009). 1.

<sup>83</sup> Barnett, *Forget Europe. How About these Allies*, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Pike, *Federation of American Scientists*.

viewed as corrupt, to drive Western influence from those countries and eventually to abolish state boundaries in order to establish a true Islamic State.<sup>85</sup>

Bin Laden began his engagement with the west in 1993 when individuals associated with al Qaeda detonated a 500-kilogram bomb in the garage of the World Trade Center in New York, killing six and injuring 1,042 people. Bin Laden's associate and know member of al Qaeda, Ramzi Yousef, was sentenced to life by a U. S. court in 1998 for the bombing.<sup>86</sup> Bin Laden continued his engagement throughout the 1990s. Al Qaeda or its supporters were linked to the attack on U.S. servicemen in Somalia in 1993, the bombing of the U.S.-Saudi military faculty in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1995, the bombing of U.S. military bases near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in 1996, the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar as Salaam, Tanzania in 1998 and the suicide bombing of the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen in 2000, which resulted in the death of 17 U.S. sailors.<sup>87</sup>

Throughout this time, Bin Laden or members of al Qaeda issued numerous written documents and proclamations. In 1996, Bin Laden issued a "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places"<sup>88</sup> This declarations was reissued by Bin Laden in 1998, under the banner of the "World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders" and called for all Muslims to rise up and attack the United States, military or civilian, and their allies everywhere.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> CBS News, *Al-Qaeda Timeline*, January 23, 2009, [http://www.cbc.cs/news/background/osamabinladen/alqaeda\\_timeline.html](http://www.cbc.cs/news/background/osamabinladen/alqaeda_timeline.html).

<sup>87</sup> Information derived from CBS News web site, *Al-Qaeda Timeline*, January 23, 2009, [http://www.cbc.cs/news/background/osamabinladen/alqaeda\\_timeline.html](http://www.cbc.cs/news/background/osamabinladen/alqaeda_timeline.html).

<sup>88</sup> Pike, *Federation of American Scientis*.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

The decade leading up to the attacks of September 11th vividly demonstrated the consequences of failing to address adequately the dangers posed by insurgencies, failing states and armed non-state actors. The country's national security capabilities are still coping with the consequences of the 1990s – the current conflict did not begin on September 11, 2001.<sup>90</sup> The 1990s saw key instruments of U.S. power and engagement abroad reduced or allowed to wither on the bureaucratic vine; the State Department, for example, froze the hiring of new Foreign Service officers. The U.S. Agency for International Development dropped from a high of having 15,000 permanent staff members during the Vietnam War to having less than 3,000 today.<sup>91</sup> All of this occurred during a time when the stated national strategy provided in four presidential directives as active, forward engagement. The attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> and the last eight years of war demonstrate the consequences of failing to engage across the full spectrum of conflict or the use of the whole of government to address the issues surrounding globalization and failed states. It demonstrates the consequence of not understanding the national strategy and not executing its sound principles.

The diffusion of power and military capabilities to non-state actors and unpredictable regimes has become another potent threat to the U.S. homeland and American interests abroad.<sup>92</sup> The nature of war in the 21<sup>st</sup> century remains as it has been since ancient times – “a violent clash of interest between or among organized groups characterized by the use of military force.”<sup>93</sup> Protection afforded by geographic distance has diminished, while challenges and threats from the

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<sup>90</sup> Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* (Council on Foreign Relations) 88, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2009), 3.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Peter J. Schoomaker and Anthony W. Vassallo, "The Way Ahead," *Military Review* 84, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2004), 4.

<sup>93</sup> MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, Washington, DC, United States Marine Corps, June 1997, 3.

territories of weak and failing states and ungoverned space have grown.<sup>94</sup> Organized groups, however, are no longer limited to states with easily identifiable regular forces, nor do they operate by internationally accepted conventions and standards.<sup>95</sup> America's adversaries can be expected to increasingly rely on idiosyncratic and dangerous methods: asymmetric approaches, anti-access and area denial strategies, unrestricted warfare, and terrorism.<sup>96</sup> Terrorist networks find sanctuary within the borders of weak nations and strength within the chaos of social breakdown if left unattended or not engaged by the nations of the world. The strategy and capabilities needed to deal with these scenarios cannot be considered exotic distractions or temporary diversions.<sup>97</sup>

The Military must prepare for operations of a type, tempo, pace and duration different from those for which American forces were structured.<sup>98</sup> The United States does not have the luxury of opting out because these scenarios do not conform to preferred notions of the American way of war.<sup>99</sup> Given American military dominance, some adversaries will seek to bridge their conventional military gap, or lack of a conventional military capability, by adopting methods that capitalize on indirect and asymmetric approaches.<sup>100</sup> This capability was suitably demonstrated during the 1990s culminating on September 11, 2001. Future military commanders, prior to major combat operations have begun, during, and for some time after, will not be able to rid themselves of the simultaneous tasks of maintaining security and stability. This is a lesson hard learned over the last eight years.

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<sup>94</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 3.

<sup>95</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 6.

<sup>96</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 4.

<sup>97</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 2.

<sup>98</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 2.

<sup>99</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 4.

<sup>100</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 4.

Winning wars and campaigns involve the control of forces, populations and territory. Conventional or “traditional” warfare is a form of warfare between states that employ direct military confrontation to defeat an adversary’s armed forces, destroy an adversary’s war-making capacity or seize or retain territory in order to force a change in an adversary’s government or policies.<sup>101</sup> In the past, the focus of conventional military doctrine and operations had been an adversary’s armed forces with the objective of influencing the adversary’s government. It was generally assumed that the populations within the operational area were non-belligerents and would accept whatever political outcome derived from the conflict. The fundamental military objectives in conventional military operations were to minimize civilian interference in military operations.<sup>102</sup> The U.S. military must retain the best of its current capabilities and attributes while developing others that increase relevance and readiness to respond in the current and projected strategic and operational environments.<sup>103</sup>

Terrorist organizations are exceptions to the conventional rule in that they attack populations to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in pursuit of their objectives without regard to their own legitimacy or popular support.<sup>104</sup> Traditional state-based armies, sub-national paramilitaries, transnational terrorist and sophisticated organized crime syndicates are becoming more capable and more dangerous. Satisfactorily offsetting the hazards of each, individually or in combination, will likely demand comprehensive, decisive, and often simultaneous actions by the United States and its allies.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 7.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>103</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 3.

<sup>104</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 8.

<sup>105</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 3.

Warfare that has the populations as its “focus of operations” requires a different mindset and different capabilities than warfare that focuses on defeating an adversary’s military.<sup>106</sup> The U.S. military should attempt to balance winning current conflicts and preparing for other contingencies, between institutionalizing capabilities such as counterinsurgency and foreign military assistance and maintaining the United States' existing conventional and strategic technological edge against other military forces.<sup>107</sup> The War on Terror will be a prolonged, worldwide irregular campaign -- a struggle between the forces of violent extremism and those of moderation.<sup>108</sup> Faced with the conventional war fighting capacity of the United States, adversaries will likely choose to fight using hybrid or irregular, disruptive, catastrophic and traditional capabilities as a way to achieve their strategic objectives.<sup>109</sup> The War on Terror is being conducted across the globe and throughout the full range of military operations against rogue states and terrorists who cannot be deterred, but nonetheless must be prevented from striking against the United States, its allies, and their interests.<sup>110</sup>

The state system created by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 remains the basis for international order, and the threat from potentially hostile regional powers remains. Non-state actors operating autonomously or with state-sponsorship are increasingly able to threaten regional and global security.<sup>111</sup> The strategy of America’s adversaries will be to subvert, attrite and exhaust the United States and its allies rather than to defeat them militarily.<sup>112</sup> Direct military force will continue to play a role in the long-term effort against terrorists and other extremists, but

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<sup>106</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 9.

<sup>107</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 1.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>109</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 17.

<sup>110</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 3.

<sup>111</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 4.

<sup>112</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 17.



over the long term, the United States cannot kill or capture its way to victory.<sup>113</sup> America's adversaries will seek to undermine and erode the national power, influence and will of the United States and its strategic partners.<sup>114</sup>

The United States is not likely to undertake a forced regime change followed by nation building under fire in the foreseeable future, but it may face similar challenges in a variety of locales and at different levels along the spectrum of conflict. The United States and its partners are likely to face state and non-state adversaries in protracted struggles for popular support and legitimacy.<sup>115</sup> Insurgents, paramilitaries, terrorists, narco-traffickers, organized criminals, networked and enabled by the same tools and informational systems state actors use, will be an increasing threat to the United States.<sup>116</sup> The ability to generate strategic effects is no longer restricted to nation-states. Future conflicts will be exacerbated by the increasing number of hostile states armed with weapons of mass destruction and sophisticated anti-access capabilities that may preclude direct military options.<sup>117</sup> Flat, networked and cellular adversarial organizations, such as al Qaeda, have proven able to exploit the inabilities or unwillingness of failed or failing states to govern their own territory and proven capable of decentralized execution of complex, coordinated, and dispersed attacks against the U. S. and its interests.<sup>118</sup> The defining principle for future military strategy, especially for the U.S. military, should be one of persistent engagement.

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<sup>113</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 2.

<sup>114</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 17.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 4.

<sup>117</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 17.

<sup>118</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 4.

## An Era of Persistent Engagement

“Arguably, the most important military component in the War on Terror is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern their own countries.”

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, 10 October 2007

Combating violent non-state actors and transnational terrorism in the era of globalization will be a decades-long task.<sup>119</sup> To be successful, the military must begin a campaign of non-kinetic, supporting operations. Kinetic operations should be subordinated to operations aimed at promoting better governance, improving security forces, enhancing economic programs, and measures that address the grievances among the discontented throughout the world’s un-governed spaces, from which the terrorists recruit. Globalization has provided enhanced maneuver space for terrorist organizations and violent non-state actors. The U.S. must address this space to achieve success in our global war on terror.

Joint Publication 3-0 (JP 3-0), *Joint Operations*, 2006, details the manner at which Joint Force Commanders and Geographic Combatant Commanders structure military operations in support of national security goals and objectives. JP 3-0 describes a “Phasing Model”, where in the Joint Force Commander determines the number and actual phases used during a joint campaign or operation to meet the national security goals.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Barnett, *Forget Europe. How About these Allies*, 2.

<sup>120</sup> Department of Defense, *JP 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2006), 129.

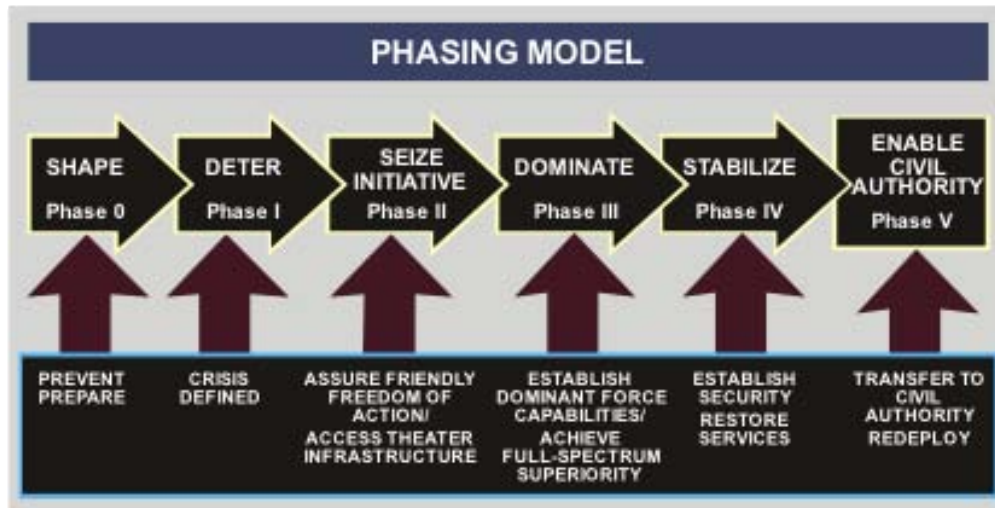


Figure IV-7. Phasing Model

Operations and activities in the “shape” and “deter” phases normally are outlined in Joint Security Cooperation Plans (JSCPs), and those in the remaining phases are outlined in JSCP-directed operation plans. By design, operation plans generally do not include security cooperation activities that are addressed elsewhere. Combatant Commanders generally use the phasing model in Figure 1 (Figure IV-7 above) to link the pertinent Security Cooperation Plans and operation plan operations and activities.<sup>121</sup>

Shaping Operations are joint and multinational operations that are performed to dissuade or deter potential adversaries and to assure or solidify relationships with friends and allies. They are executed continuously with the intent to enhance international legitimacy and gain multinational cooperation in support of defined military and national strategic objectives.<sup>122</sup> Shaping operations are designed to mold the perceptions and influence the behavior of both adversaries and allies, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 130.

coalition operations, improve information exchange and intelligence sharing, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access.<sup>123</sup>

The intent of the Deter phase is to prevent adversarial action by demonstrating the capabilities and resolve of the joint force. Deterrence operations are largely characterized by preparatory actions that specifically supports or facilitates the execution of subsequent phases of military operations or campaigns.<sup>124</sup> Many actions in the “deter” phase build on activities from the previous phase and are conducted as part of Security Cooperation Plans and activities. Joint Force Commanders are able to take actions before committing forces to assist in determining the shape and character of potential future operations.<sup>125</sup>

It will take the patient accumulation of quiet successes over a long time to discredit and defeat extremist movements and their ideologies.<sup>126</sup> Adversaries employing irregular warfare against the United States may not have to defeat the United States and partner security forces to win. They need only to survive or outlast the United States to win.<sup>127</sup>

It is the authors opinion the U.S. military should prepare to employ indirect approaches -- primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces -- to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require direct military intervention.<sup>128</sup> Potential state-based adversaries should take little comfort from the U.S. military’s record in Afghanistan and Iraq, primarily because it has proven itself capable of learning how to better

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<sup>123</sup> Department of Defense, *JP 3-0, Joint Operations*, 130.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>126</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 2.

<sup>127</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 17.

<sup>128</sup> Schoomaker and Vassalo, "The Way Ahead," 3.

shape environments by capitalizing on the use of host nation security forces.<sup>129</sup> The key limit on America's use of force is its operational capacity. What America has learned in Iraq, and is learning in Afghanistan, is the utility of transferring security responsibility to incentivized locals.<sup>130</sup> In this kind of effort, the capabilities of the United States' allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more so than, the fighting the United States does itself.<sup>131</sup>

One of the enduring issues the military struggles with is whether formations and units organized, trained, and equipped to destroy enemies can be adapted well enough and fast enough to dissuade or co-opt them -- or, more significantly, to build the capacity of local security forces to do the dissuading and destroying.<sup>132</sup> The United States supports international partners with their defense and development, regardless of whether those partners are highly developed and stable or less developed and emerging. While many of these partners are nations, they can also include alliances, coalitions, and regional organizations such as non-state actors that influence the security of a certain area<sup>133</sup>. US support to these international partners can range from merely providing humanitarian assistance to major combat operations and includes conflict transformation, bolstering partner legitimacy, and building partner capacity. A vital part of these three aspects of US support is assisting partner security forces.<sup>134</sup>

*Security Force Assistance* is defined as unified action to generate, employ, and sustain

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<sup>129</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett, *Lessons Learned from Bush's War on Terror*, January 11, 2009, <http://www.knownews.com/news/2009/jan/11/lessons-learned-from-bushs-war-on-terror/> (accessed January 23, 2009). 2.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 3.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2009), 9.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

local, host nation or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority.<sup>135</sup> Security Force Assistance activities are conducted to train, advise, assist, and equip Foreign Security Forces, to support efforts to generate, employ, and sustain Foreign Security Forces, and to support Foreign Security Forces institutions, which may include local, host nation, or regional security forces.<sup>136</sup> Foreign Security Forces units include military, paramilitary, and law enforcement forces and can span from the ministry level to tactical units of action.<sup>137</sup>

Security Force Assistance spans the spectrum of conflict, from stable peace to general war. For example, Security Force Assistance could focus on improving the security forces of a host nation that is currently under no immediate threat, or paramilitary forces to counter an insurgency, or in providing advisors to accompany Foreign Security Forces in major combat operations against an external threat. Security Force Assistance efforts to assist law enforcement, border guards, paramilitary forces, conventional military forces, and special operations forces can also span the spectrum of conflict.<sup>138</sup>

Security Force Assistance can occur as part of any of the operational themes—peacetime limited engagement, limited intervention, peace operations, irregular warfare, and major combat operations, and will most likely occur in the peacetime military engagement, peace operations, and irregular warfare phases of an operation – Phase 0, the Shaping Phase or, as discussed earlier, the Engagement Phase.<sup>139</sup> The use of Security Force Assistance capabilities increases the U.S. capacity to combat Armed-Non-State Actors and connect underdeveloped countries to the developing world.

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<sup>135</sup> Department of the Army, *FM 3-07, Stability Operations*, 5.

<sup>136</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft*, 9.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

Army units, specifically Special Forces units, can conduct Security Force Assistance unilaterally when necessary or can be conducted as part of a US whole of government and whole of military approach. Security Force Assistance is conducted in close collaboration with joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, non-governmental, as well as private actors.<sup>140</sup>

The US Army has been involved with advisory missions for over a century. The Army advisor experience began in the early twentieth century in Panama and the Philippines. The Organization of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency, provided advisors to allies during the Second World War fueled by the need to stop the spread of communism<sup>141</sup>. Assisting friendly nations to develop stable governments and improve security forces was a key aspect of the overall strategy of containment. In support of this containment strategy, the US provided conventional and special operations advisors to Greece, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cuba, and other nations battling internal and external adversaries, especially communists.<sup>142</sup>

Advisory efforts grew in the 1960s with the Alliance for Progress, which involved Central and South America, and culminated with the war in Vietnam.<sup>143</sup> In 1969, President Richard M. Nixon announced a new US approach to supporting friendly nations, which is referred to as The Nixon Doctrine, which stated that the US would assist friendly nations, but the US would require its partners to provide the manpower and be ultimately responsible for their own national defense.<sup>144</sup>

There are several types of operations that are directly or potentially related to Security

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<sup>140</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft*, 10.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 11

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

Force Assistance. The overarching operational construct for Security Force Assistance is nation assistance, which is civil or military assistance rendered to a nation by US forces within that nation's territory during peacetime, crises or emergencies, or war, based on agreements mutually concluded between the United States and that nation.<sup>145</sup> Nation assistance operations support the host nation by promoting sustainable development and growth of responsive institutions. Its objective is to promote long-term nation-state and regional stability.<sup>146</sup> Nation assistance programs include security assistance (SA), humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA), foreign internal defense (FID), and Security Force Assistance. Security Cooperation (SC) is also a vital concept with respect to Security Force Assistance.<sup>147</sup>

Foreign internal defense is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.<sup>148</sup> Foreign humanitarian assistance operations relieve or reduce the impact of natural or manmade disasters or other endemic conditions such as human suffering, disease, or privation in countries or regions outside the United States.<sup>149</sup> Humanitarian and civic assistance is assistance to the local populace provided in conjunction with authorized military operations as specifically authorized by Title 10, United States Code (USC), Section 401. Assistance provided under these provisions must promote the security interests of both the United States and the host country and the specific operational readiness skills of the members of the armed forces who participate in the

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<sup>145</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft*, 13.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*



activities.<sup>150</sup> Security Force Assistance missions encompasses all the above listed activities and are conducted to train, advise, assist, and equip Foreign Security Forces in support of the U.S. partner efforts to generate, employ, and sustain security forces and their supporting institutions, which may include local, host nation or regional security forces to deter and, if needed, combat Armed-Non-State Actors.

A nation's security sector is the foundation of effective, legitimate governance and establishes the potential of a state for enduring viability and connection to the global economy. The security sector comprises the individuals and institutions responsible for the safety and security of the host nation and its people.<sup>151</sup> Security Force Assistance is conducted as part of security sector reform. Security sector reform is the set of policies, plans, programs, and activities that a government undertakes to improve the way it provides safety, security, and justice.<sup>152</sup> This includes the military and any state-sponsored paramilitary forces, national and local police, the justice and corrections systems, coastal and border security forces, oversight bodies, militia, and private military and security companies employed by the state.<sup>153</sup> Security sector reform aims to provide an effective and legitimate public service that is transparent, accountable to civil authority, and responsive to the needs of the public. It may include integrated activities to support defense and armed forces reform; civilian management and oversight; justice, police, corrections, and intelligence reform; national security planning and strategy support; border management; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and concurrent reduction of armed violence within its borders.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft*, 19.

<sup>152</sup> Department of the Army, *FM 3-07, Stability Operations*, 5.

<sup>153</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft*, 14.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 19.

Security Force Assistance may be part of Foreign Internal Defense in order to build host nation capacity to anticipate, preclude, and counter threats or potential threats, particularly when the host nation has not attained self-sufficiency and is faced with military threats beyond its capability.<sup>155</sup> The fully developed and institutionalized Foreign Security Force must be able to plan, prepare, and execute at the appropriate levels. Security Force Assistance must be integrated into U.S. operations and designed to work seamlessly with the host nation government at all appropriate levels, from the ministries dealing with security down to initial entry-level Foreign Security Force training.<sup>156</sup> All in an effort to control, deter, and prevent the rise of armed groups.

There are three forms of Security Force Assistance: advising, partnering, and augmenting.

- Advisors work by, with, and through host nation security forces by advising, coaching, and teaching. They may also provide the host nation security forces with direct access to U.S. and multinational capabilities such as air support, artillery, medical evacuation and intelligence. Advisors primary focus is on the development of the Foreign Security Forces to which they are detailed. Advisors assist Foreign Security Forces in assuming full responsibility for security of their country.<sup>157</sup>
- Partnering attaches units at various levels to leverage the strengths of both U.S. and Foreign Security Forces. As Foreign Security Forces capabilities mature, the echelon and degree of partnering will decrease. As the Foreign Security Forces conducts more autonomous operations, U.S. forces continue to support host nation forces by providing quick reaction forces and other assistance as appropriate.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft*, 20.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

- Augmenting is an arrangement where the Foreign Security Forces provides either individuals or elements to combine with U.S. units.<sup>159</sup> This is the same concept used in the KATUSA (Korean Augmentation to United States Army) program. Augmentation can occur at a number of levels and in many different forms. For example, a U.S. squad can be augmented with host nation individuals, a U.S. company can be augmented with a host nation platoon, and a U.S. battalion can be augmented with a Foreign Security Forces company.<sup>160</sup> The advantage of augmenting is that the Foreign Security Forces element is immersed in a U.S. environment while providing language capability and cultural awareness to the U.S. unit.<sup>161</sup>

Even as the US military hones and institutionalizes new and unconventional skills, the United States, however, still has to contend with the security challenges posed by the military forces of other countries. Both Russia and China have increased their defense spending and modernization programs to include air defense and fighter capabilities that in some cases approach the United States' own. In addition, there is the potentially toxic mix of rogue nations, terrorist groups, and nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. North Korea has built several bombs, and Iran seeks to join the nuclear club as well.<sup>162</sup>

What all these potential adversaries -- from terrorist cells to rogue nations to rising powers -- have in common is that they have learned that it is unwise to confront the United States directly on conventional military terms.<sup>163</sup> Adversaries will exploit state boundaries and other

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Department of the Army, *FMI 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance; Final Draft*, 34.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 3.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 4.

political, economic and tribal fault lines in order to seek sanctuary from conventional military capabilities.<sup>164</sup> Other nations may be unwilling to challenge the United States fighter-to-fighter, ship-to-ship, tank-to-tank, but they are developing the disruptive means to blunt the impact of U.S. power, narrow the United States' military options, and deny the U.S. military freedom of movement and action.<sup>165</sup>

## Conclusion

When thinking about the range of threats, it is common to divide the "high end" from the "low end," the conventional from the irregular, armored divisions on one side, guerrillas toting AK-47s on the other. In reality, as the political scientist Colin Gray has noted, the categories of warfare are blurring and no longer fit into neat, tidy boxes.<sup>166</sup> The United States can expect to see more tools and tactics of destruction -- from the sophisticated to the simple -- being employed simultaneously in hybrid and more complex forms of warfare.<sup>167</sup>

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has repeatedly made the argument in favor of institutionalizing counterinsurgency skills and the ability to conduct stability and support operations. Secretary Gates has stated that the United States' conventional and strategic force modernization programs are already strongly supported in the services, in Congress, and by the defense industry, but that the ability of the United States to conduct prolonged, persistent irregular warfare is lacking.<sup>168</sup> Over the last 40-plus years the United States has been involved almost exclusively in irregular warfare: Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa, and more. The first Gulf War stands alone in over

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<sup>164</sup> Department of Defence, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 18.

<sup>165</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 4.

<sup>166</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 4.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

two generations of constant military engagement as a more or less traditional conventional conflict from beginning to end.<sup>169</sup>

Apart from the Special Forces community and some dissident colonels, for decades there has been no strong, deeply rooted constituency inside the Pentagon or elsewhere for institutionalizing the capabilities necessary to wage asymmetric or irregular conflict -- and to quickly meet the ever-changing needs of forces engaged in these conflicts.<sup>170</sup>

This attitude is beginning to change as reflective in an official report prepared by the Army for President-Elect Obama in December 2008. It states;

*We believe the Army's role is to provide trained and ready forces to the Combatant Commander to permit them to; Engage with other nations' armies and police forces to assist them in developing the capability to deny their territories as safe for terrorists, to maintain domestic order, to protect their territory, and to participate in coalition operations. Deter aggression and violence against the U. S. and its interest and citizens by retaining ready forces that respond decisively across the spectrum of conflict. Prevent terror attacks against the U. S. and our interests and citizens. Compel enemies of the U. S. to accept our will and permit accomplishment of our strategic objectives.*<sup>171</sup>

Advising, partnering and augmenting as described and discussed in the interim doctrinal manual FMI 3-07, Security Force Assistance, is a fundamental change to the way the U.S. military plans for and conducts shaping activities. The policies of engagement developed during the 1990s were sound strategic guidance but not followed to the spirit of the intent. Today and in the near future, the U.S. military must meet a balance between preparing for the war they want and fighting the war in which they find themselves.

The U.S. military must take the hard lessons learned over the past two decades and create a force designed to operate primarily during Phase 0 with the mission of prevention, shaping and

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>170</sup> Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," 6.

<sup>171</sup> Information stated in Army Papers for Administration Transition, *The American Soldier – Army 101*, 12 December 2008.

detering future threats.<sup>172</sup> A greater commitment during the this phase of operations will allow the US to seize and maintain the initiative in the irregular warfare domain, control US operational tempo and regulate US military resource usage.<sup>173</sup> The future U.S. military force that best fits this strategy should feature the following;

- Forward engaged forces, such as general-purpose forces, with easier insertion and greater local knowledge providing greater power and utility than large formations deploying from remote, home-based installations.
- Forces able to operate within urban environments.
- Surveillance-oriented forces embedded with the host nation security forces to counter weapons of mass destruction.
- Forces with interagency capabilities for nation building and constabulary operations.

The United States must create an “Engagement Force” based on the principles of Security Force Assistance, which allows the US to establish relationships with sub-national ethnic groups, tribal groupings and other non-state actors. These relationships provide accessibility, flexibility and reach in areas with potential threats.<sup>174</sup>

Adversarial non-state actors should recalculate assumptions about America’s entry into perceived quagmires with the knowledge of America’s lessons from its experience over the last eight years. Potential adversaries, both state and non-state, should realize that America’s military leadership now possess a crystal ball on low-intensity conflict akin to the one long held on the subject of nuclear escalation.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Robert Haddick, "Nagle and Gentile are Both Right," *Small Wars Journal Op-Ed*, 2008, [www.smallwarsjournal.com](http://www.smallwarsjournal.com) (accessed January 23, 2009). 1.

<sup>173</sup> Haddick, "Nagle and Gentile are Both Right."

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>175</sup> Barnett, *Lessons Learned from Bush's War on Terror*, 1.

Rising powers such as China and India, whose militaries are nowhere near advanced to the point where they can defend their nations' far-flung global economic interests, are the primary customer base for Security Force Assistance missions. The strategic "awakening" of the worlds emerging global economic powers from the realization that they do not possess the capacity to project security neither to the quantity or the quality of the United States creates new alliance opportunities for the U.S.<sup>176</sup> Non-state actors who present their movement as some new form of "anti-American" coalition present no strategic advantages, because rising powers interested in connecting to the globalization movement see no gains from bankrolling such activities.<sup>177</sup>

U.S. operations should seek to resemble hockey superstar Wayne Gretsky's "speed" on the ice. Never the fastest skater, Gretsky concentrated less on skating to where the puck was and more on skating to where the puck will be. The goal of U.S. military capability speaks to this type of speed, not trying to be everywhere all the time, but to be exactly where it needs to be exactly when it needs to be there.<sup>178</sup> The key to this speed is the ability to engage and maintain that engagement over the long haul. It is the "fast" U.S. military establishment the advanced world fears most; reckless, trigger-happy, and prone to unilateralism. An inevitable military Leviathan is what the global system needs, decisive in its power projection, precise and proportional in its targeted effects and constantly engaged with its forward presence. Instead of an era of "Persistent Conflict," future National Strategic focus should be one of "Persistent Engagement".

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<sup>176</sup> Barnett, *Lessons Learned from Bush's War on Terror*, 1.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Thomas P.M. Barnett and Arthur K. Cebrowski, *The American Way of War*, The U.S. Naval Institute, January 2003, <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/awow.htm> (accessed January 28, 2009). 2.

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