

Strategy, Revisited
Analyzing the Shift from a Threat-Based to Capabilities-Based Approach
to US Strategic Planning

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April 2002

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PREFACE

In April of 2002, the U.S. Army Command and Staff College (CGSC) sponsored its annual Master Strategist competition (the *Grierson Award* competition). The annual event centers on an essay competition. This year's question related to the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the pending release of the 2002 National Military Strategy. The essay question read as follows:

In contrast to the current NSS/NMS; how does a transformed capabilities based force structure impact on the development of a new National Military Strategy, and what would that then modify in the US National Security Strategy / National Policy? What are the risks or advantages inherent to these changes?

The essay question called for a discussion of the shift from a threat-based to a capabilities-based force structuring paradigm, the impacts of this shift on the development of the new national military strategy, the changes or modification that might result in the next US national security strategy and national policy (in general), and finally, the risks or advantages inherent to such changes.

The wording of the question itself belied a larger, systemic problem in what decision-makers, defense planner, military strategist, and even instructors of the strategic art and science conceive "strategy" and strategic planning to be. There was a *means determines the ends* proposition embedded in the question that misinterprets the long established, theoretical definitions of strategy and the strategic planning process.

So, for this author, the essay question introduced a question that subsumed the first. Has the United States abandoned the broader, traditional notion of strategy and the strategic security planning process, out of short term, domestic concerns over scarce resources and/or short-sided assessments of the threat environment facing the country? That is, has the United States allowed for capabilities (resources available) and technological innovation to drive the national security policy formulation process?

This author proposes that, in fact, US national security policy (values, goals, and interests) tend to be determined by economic-technological factors affecting the national military strategy (NMS). Assessment of threat in the strategic environment at any given period of time (during any given Administration) is derived not from an unconstrained ("blue-skied") analysis, but instead from a vantagepoint of political-public will and material resources the polity is willing to expend. In other words, national policy tends to be determined not by the goals, values and responsibilities of a global hegemonic state, but instead is determined by the size and shape of the military force the country is willing to resource.

This sort of NMS-led strategic and force-planning process is contrary to our better understandings of what strategy and force planning is and should be. By following a wrong-headed process out of near-term domestic necessities, US defense planners – even “strategists” – have forgotten what strategy really is. The two-MTW – and today’s capabilities-based paradigm – are both examples of how NOT to develop national security strategy and the military forces needed to implement that strategy.

The essay question, as worded, inspired the positing of the following propositions: (1) that a capabilities-based approach to force planning will lead to a *strategy-resources gap* and mismatch between capabilities and national policy intentions similar to its predecessor, the two-MTW construct; (2) that such a paradigm wrongly privileges the military strategy over the security strategy, allowing capabilities and available resources to determine and define policy and strategy; and (3) that while there are advantages to be gained by politicians and decision makers from the strategic ambiguity upon which a capabilities-based model centers, the task facing strategist and the military in formulating and implementing a coherent and effective national security policy and strategic posture that is more commensurate with the goals and responsibilities of a global power like the United States will be all the more difficult to achieve.

This paper, then, uses the original essay question as a springboard for a broader, comprehensive discussion of what is currently wrong in the US approach to strategy and force planning, and possible ways of getting back to what strategy truly is.. A comprehensive, policy-based force structuring paradigm, one that incorporates the advantages of both a threat-based and capabilities-based approaches and one that models, shapes, and sizes military forces (as well as other instruments of power) in light of national values, goals, interests, and obligations, is a paradigm most befitting of a global hegemonic power such as the United States.¹

Introduction

*Making the best strategic and force choices in a free society is a difficult and lengthy process. The strategist and force planner must consider numerous international and domestic factors, including political, economic and military influences. [B]ecause planning involves preparing for the future, there is considerable uncertainty and **much room for disagreement about preferred strategy and how forces should be structured, organized, and equipped.** [E]qually valid arguments are often made for widely different choices, each depending on the objectives sought and the **assumptions made about threats, challenges, opportunities, technological advances, and future political and economic conditions.** This tendency is exacerbated by various advocates **who focus on the single factor most important to them, such as the threat or budget,** without a balanced attempt to explore the full dimensions of the problems.²*

There will never be enough resources to satisfy all the nation's wants. Thus, we must make *strategic choices*, establish requirements, set priorities, make decisions, and allocate scarce resources to the most critical needs. That is not to say, however, that those choices should be made based on any one of those factors. That sort of approach is flawed by design. It negates the true definition of strategic choice, setting the conditions for narrow strategic and policy determinism.

The approach the United States has taken during at least the last two or three rounds of security and military strategy development has centered on the question of *how the means³ might modify the ends.*⁴

This is the wrong way to think of strategy.

This sort of approach is indicative of a flawed strategic planning process; one that tends to privilege short-term concerns and considerations (such as fiscal constraints and technological issues) over longer term (seminal) issues of national interests, values, purposes, and responsibilities. This later set of considerations is in line with the more traditional (and more correct) understanding of “strategy” itself.⁵

There are numerous problems inherent in both the threat-based (two-MTW) strategic force planning approach of the past and the “transformed” capabilities-based

approach introduced in the 2002 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The most significant of these problems (Impacts) are:

- Both paradigms were/are over-deterministic. They were/are conceived from focuses on single factors deemed most critical at the time.
- Both paradigms fail (ed) to adequately and comprehensively consider all factors affecting US national security policy, and the security and military strategies that then should derive from that set of values interests, and responsibilities.
- Both approaches to the force sizing/shaping question were designed to address immediate crises (in their own right) and short-term realities of the day. Consequently, both have resulted in a means-available driven process (an NMS-led process) that has become overly-deterministic of the threat environment, relationships with allies, friends, and potential foes in the international environment, and US national policy (purpose, goals, roles, and missions) in general.

Different Paradigms, Similar Shortfalls in Strategic Planning

The following chart summarizes the differences between what are commonly regarded as the two popular methodologies available for force planning (sizing and shaping).⁶

THREAT-BASED PLANNING	CAPABILITIES-BASED PLANNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Used when threats to US interests are “easily recognized and identified” · Scenario-based or contingency-based modeling to determine force needs · Provides a quantifiable rationale for the recommended force structure · 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Used when threats to US interests are multi-faceted and uncertain · Ambiguous threats do not lend themselves to single-point scenario-based analysis. · Planners apply a “liberal dose of military judgement to determine the appropriate mix of required military capabilities.” · Claim to focus on objectives rather than scenarios. ·

The two-MTW, threat-based construct of the 1990s, clearly outlived its utility as an effective force shaping model, having led to a hollow force incapable of meeting the broad policy goals of the Clinton engagement strategy.

A Historical Aside⁷

Putting the Story of the “Two-MTW” Into Proper Perspective

Understanding the evolution toward what eventually became the two-Major Theater War (MTW) force planning construct is important to gaining an understanding and appreciation of what the approach derived from, how it was originally conceived, and why it was eventually adopted as the force sizing model that would underlie the US NMS

and NSS during the mid to late 1990s. Then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell is attributed (later, along with Secretary of Defense Les Aspin) with creating the “Base Force” in the early 1990s (still under the H.W. Bush Administration). It was a first-effort at demonstrating military responsiveness to changes that were taking shape in the strategic and budgetary environments. The Base Force was considered a minimum force that would still allow the armed forces to meet mission requirements with acceptable risks. The original focus of the Base Force was on a capabilities-based approach to defense planning, driven largely by resource constraints (Metz 2000, 10). The threats were still largely amorphous in the early 1990s. The 1992 National Military Strategy reflected a capabilities-based force planning approach, offering three conceptual conventional force packages. DESERT STORM distracted from a completion of this capabilities-based analytical construct, and at the same time gave a more relevant and measurable yardstick upon which to justify US force structure and size upon. In 1991-2, Congressman Les Aspin, using the US experience in the Gulf as a backdrop, issued two national security papers, attacking capabilities-based force planning, arguing that such an approach led to the folly of determining what US forces are needed being done in a vacuum. He argued that instead, “it is critical to identify threats to US interests that are sufficiently important that Americans would consider the use of force to secure them” (Les Aspin, *National Security in the 1990s: Defining a New Basis for US Military Forces*, before the Atlantic Council of the United States, January 6, 1992, pp. 5-6). What immediately derived from this was the “Iraqi equivalent” as the generic threat measure for regional aggressors and the “Desert Storm equivalent” as the most robust building block for US forces. The intent here was to establish a “clear linkage between the force

structure and the sorts of threats the forces could be expected to deal with” (Metz 2000, 11). Aspin’s “threat-driven” methodology was seen as being flexible enough to include aspects of a typical capabilities-based approach, with the building blocks for the methodology (basically, the Base Force) being generic capabilities. By 1992, GEN Powell was touting the Base force as a combined, threat-based and capabilities-based methodology. Also in 1992, Secretary of Defense Cheney reported that “the ability to respond to regional and local crises is a key element of our new strategy” (Dick Cheney, *Annual Report to the President and to Congress*, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, February 1992, pg.8). The 1992 NMS was geared toward fighting and deterring regional rather than global wars (NMS 1992). At this stage, the Base Force was still centered on no more than a possible two-Major Regional Contingency (MRC) scenario set, still flexible enough to adequately meet all regional threat possibilities. The 1991 and 1992 Joint Warfighting Net Assessments (JMNAs) focused on warfighting analyses for both a Major Regional Contingency-East (MRC-East), a Major Regional Contingency-Southwest Asia, a MRC-Korea. The principle focus of these planning exercises was “regional crisis response, to include the capability to respond to multiple concurrent major regional contingencies” (“The Army Base Force – Not a Smaller Cold War Army,” February 1992; Kaufman and Steinbrunner, *Decisions for Defense*, pg. 27.). However, according the GEN Powell’s own autobiographical recollections, the 1992 NMS was focused more on a two-“MTW” threat: “the Base Force strategy called for armed forces capable of fighting two major regional conflicts ‘nearly simultaneously’” (Powell, *My American Journey*, pg. 564). The October 1993 Bottom Up Review (BUR) of the new Clinton Administration also followed the combined threat-based, capabilities-

based methodology, however, the ultimate force-sizing criterion became the ability to maintain sufficient forces to be able to win two major regional conflicts that occur nearly simultaneously. The chief difference in this new defense policy was to be seen in the new policy's call for a smaller conventional force posture – about 10-15 percent smaller than the Base Force (Richard Kugler, *Toward a Dangerous World*, Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1995, pp. 212-213). The story goes on much further, chronicling the evolution from a 2-MRC combined threat and capabilities-driven force “structuring” model to the static two-MTW, threat-based “force sizing” construct. The difference is critical; a necessary and sufficient condition for understanding where the two-MW approach leads to failure and why, and how the new capabilities-based approach may fail on similar grounds for similar reasons. As originally conceived (a combined threat and capabilities focused approach) the Base Force idea provided the appropriate “force structuring” paradigm that could facilitate the formulation and implementation of a rational and comprehensive NSS and national policy, appropriate for a global power of America's size and stature. As the approach degraded and transformed into a purely-threat-focused model, largely to accommodate domestic concerns with defense dollars and interests in a smaller force, the NSS and national policy itself became hostage to a very narrow interests in force size (a domestic, defense planning concern, largely ignoring the strategic security interests behind the process). itself.

Back to the Story

The capabilities-based paradigm that will guide US strategy and force planning into the twenty-first century, while not likely to become irrelevant due to a static adherence to a particular threat, may eventually be condemned for the narrow way

national policy, purpose, and strategy have been conceived and articulated in what might be appropriately termed the Bush deterrence strategy.

Both approaches fail, in their own rights, to adhere to the Gaddis (see endnotes) conception of ‘strategy,’ each contributing to a their own peculiar *strategy-resource gap*.

	“ENDS RELATED TO MEANS”	“INTENTIONS RELATED TO CAPABILITIES”	“OBJECTIVES RELATED TO RESOURCES”
Clinton’s Threat-Based Paradigm	Vital, Important, and Humanitarian categories of US national interests (Broad in conception) Insufficient and inappropriate forces available to conduct full-spectrum operations	Shape the international environment; Respond to threats and crises; Prepare for an uncertain future Intervene in international affairs in coalition with foreign partners Capabilities limited largely to old heavy (legacy) force systems, designed for conventional, force-on-force MTWs (specifically, in Korea and Iraq)	The 2-MTW force sizing approach is designed as a stop-gap measure to maintain the existing size and type of forces available in light of the post -CW drawdown Resources limited to the 2-MTW scenario. Little resources remain for non-MTW contingencies. Little to no strategic reserve.
Bush’s Capabilities-Based Paradigm	Limited in scope: focus on ensuring US security and freedom of action (priority), honoring international commitments, and contributing to economic well-being Leap-Ahead means (JV2020) seen by allies and foreign friends as “provocative.” Risk of leaving allies behind in technology -led RMA.	Homeland Security (defense of the homeland) is the priority mission Shift to an Asia-First focus (divert resources and focus from Europe) Middle East access still deemed important Focus of capabilities on defense of homeland and US interests worldwide (anti-access; force projection; strike) A deterrence and response-oriented posture (Defensive intent)	This approach is born out of the desire for a “ <u>leap-ahead</u> ” approach to force <u>modernization</u> (part of the Bush campaign platform in Election 2000). Attacks on the US Homeland (9/11) elevate “asymmetrical threats” to forefront of security planning agenda Purpose behind new capabilities loosely defined.

The two-MTW force structuring approach focused too much on fiscal constraints, truncating a more realistic assessment of the changing strategic (threat) environment in the late-1990s.⁸ The result was the articulation of a broad, comprehensive, “do everything” engagement policy, crippled and de-legitimized by a record of less-than effective interventions in the 1990s. America was soon regarded as the reluctant hegemon that got involved in international crises with “too little, too late.”⁹ This reputation was largely the result of a flawed strategic and force planning process that centered too much on warding off the domestic demands for force downsizing rather than on national interests and global responsibilities and the resourcing of a force to meet that national policy.

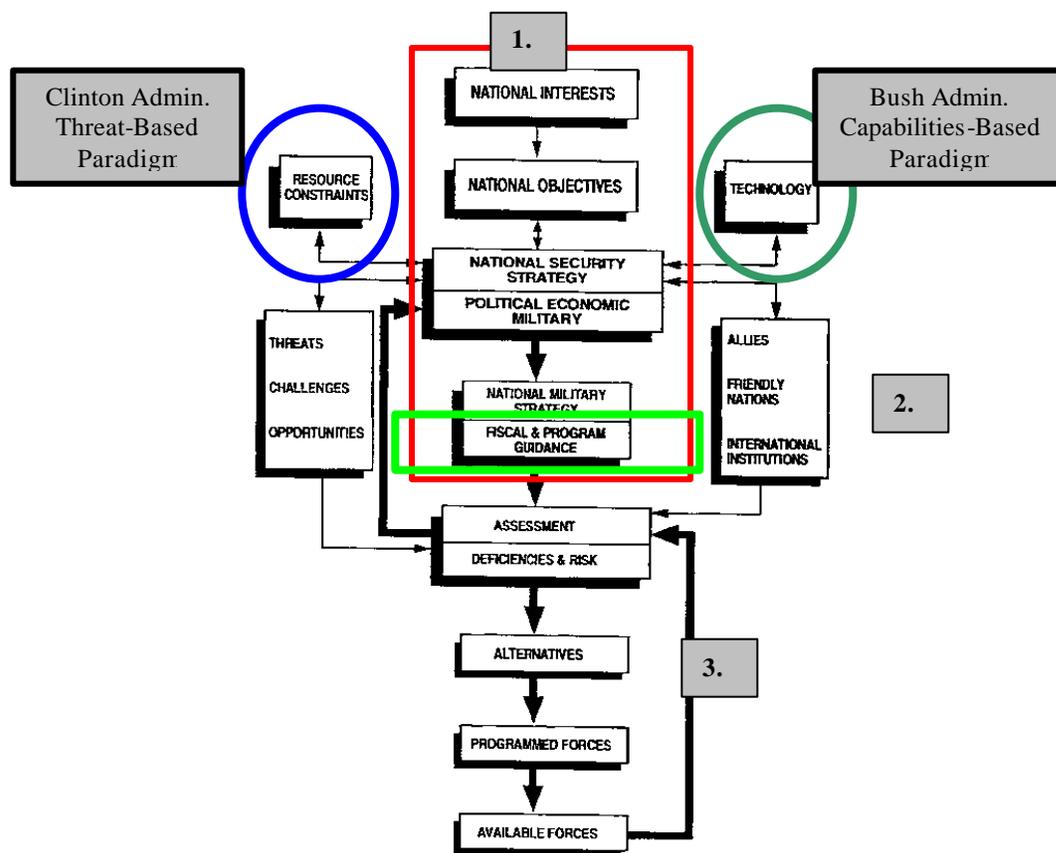
The new paradigm may herald a *strategy-resource gap* of its own; this one defined more by its narrowly conceived strategy than by its resources (resourcing). A capabilities-focused approach to strategic planning – an approach this Administration has championed since the 2000 Campaign¹⁰ – could tend to build “all” (military strategy, security strategy, national policy, and national interests) on the tenuous hopes of future technological innovations and the so called “revolution in military affairs.” The result could be the national military strategy (what America has the resources and capabilities to do) defining the national security strategy . . . even national policy and interests themselves (what America “is” and what it ought to do as a global superpower). This is not strategy. This sort of approach denies the facts that (1) most of America’s national interests are global in nature, and (2) preservation of America’s global leadership role is itself a vital US national interests. The Clinton engagement strategy recognized these facts. However, that Administration failed in its inability to properly derive the right military strategy to meet that broad set of policy goals and responsibilities. It also failed to properly resource that strategy. The Bush Administration’s failure may be in how that same national policy is narrowly defined in truly “national” or “America first” terms – leaving that impression with allies and adversaries alike – an impression reinforced in the very types of capabilities the strategy prescribes (leap ahead; strike; forced-entry; C4ISR; etc.).¹¹ National Missile Defense (NMD) is the perfect example of this US-centric posture, an example of the US defense-oriented force development plan, and an example of how a purely capabilities-based force shaping and sizing paradigm can signal US unilateralism and a distanced and adversarial approach of the international environment. The response the Pentagon’s Joint Vision 2020 received from its transatlantic allies also

evidences this potential “America leads but no one is able (or desires) to follow” backlash to what is perceived as US-unilateralism.¹²

Revisiting Traditional Strategy and Force Planning Concepts

The Naval War College prescribes the following strategy and force planning framework:

Figure 1. Strategy and Force Planning Framework.



Source: Richmond M. Lloyd, et al., *Strategy and Force Planning*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1997, pg 3.

What the Naval War College presents is a *systems approach* to strategy and force planning.¹³ A systems approach sees the policy process (any policy process) as an interaction of internal processes (Point #1) and external influences (considerations; Point

#2). What is an internal factor of the process must be identified and delineated from what is an external consideration affecting the process as an input, but in no way defining the process itself. Where the Clinton strategy focused on resource constraints, the Bush strategy derives from what appears to be a predominant focus on technology. The inherent risks are (1) a potential failure to maintain a heavy force to contend with the possible conventional, MTW threat (more possible now than ever before), (2) the potential for leaving friend and foe alike, behind in technological innovation (the JV2010 and JV 2020 dilemma),¹⁴ a tendency to privilege “go-it-alone” strategies (unilateralism) at the expense of our commitments to allies, foreign partners and international organizations. The risks could be a turning away from America’s national character – those values and principles that define our nation – and its obligations to the international community as the self-elected (and consensus based) global hegemon.

“What the President Proposes, The Congress Disposes”

Problems with an NMS being conceived and resourced in times of crisis

Where the two-MTW construct focused far too much on the fiscal bottom line, this new paradigm may be flawed by the fact that it was conceived of and formulated in a time of crisis and unconstrained resourcing and public support. The attacks on the United States Homeland on 11 September, 2001 profoundly affected the QDR process. The crisis opened the congressional coffers, and rightfully so. A \$40 billion boost to national defense is significant even in Pentagon terms.¹⁵ Caution is called for, however, when one considers that while the crisis has presented an opportunity to “blue-sky” force options (that is, to consider capabilities needed without significant consideration of resource constraints), no such “blue sky” approach has taken place with regard to national policy, interests, and strategy in general. That process is even more constrained than before, as

the United States seems to be adopting a defensive and adversarial (some might say even ‘paranoid’) strategic posture.

An Empirical Analysis of the Two Paradigms

There is little to no significant difference in forces required from a near-simultaneous win over two-MTWs and a “win-hold-win” approach to the MTW dilemma that is couple with an ability to deal with multiple smaller-scale contingencies.¹⁶ The appendix provides a chart that summarizes the analysis of the 1997/8 and 2002 strategies and force planning frameworks. What that analysis reveals is:

- No significant difference in the array and types of threats assessed in the latest strategic assessments informing both series of strategy reviews (1997/8 and 2002).
- No significant difference in the type of capabilities prescribed as needed to meet the new threats of the new security environment.
- Differences in the paradigms (strategic reviews) found in the prioritization of objectives and interests (i.e., defense of homeland now explicitly the top priority, where under the Clinton NSS, it was listed as number 3 or 4 in the list).
- Difference found in the manner of US interaction in the international environment. Under the Clinton NSS/NMS, a proactive presence, enhanced and buttressed by allied support, defined the strategic posture. Under the Bush NMS/NSS, creation and preservation of a force capability that allows for a more reactive, defensive, and (if needed), unilateral posture is the *modus operandi*.

The national military strategy is what our allies, foreign friends, and potential adversaries see and witness in terms of US policy, interests, values, goals, wants and desires. Official policy may say one thing – set particular categories of interests and objectives – but, what the United States does in the execution of those policy ideals is what really matters.

“Policy is the art of the possible,”¹⁷ and more often than not, what becomes possible is what is enforceable through the use and support of the military instrument of power.

Therefore, what the military does (how it is shaped, sized, and implemented) really

becomes the *de facto* national security policy of the United States. It is vital, then, that the NMS reflect the nation's true and full character and interests (long term and lasting).

Conclusion

The capabilities-based construct could have a damning effect on the Bush Administration's National Security Strategy, distancing allies and potential friends in the international community in its technology-based approach to US defense and security. This could justify the complaints of potential adversaries of the imperialistic and self-interested character of US hegemony. The revolution in military affairs, and its leap-ahead technological baseline, is not a substitute for a "comprehensive security strategy."^{18 19} The RMA, capabilities-driven approach revealed in the 2002 QDR may create an enormous interoperability gap – a strategic deficit – between US forces and those of allied nations.

Many (most) of the technological wonders this new paradigm bases its hopes upon have not even reached the R&D stage. Those already in the acquisition process will continue to allude the actual force structure for at least another seven years.²⁰ We may not see some until as late as 2020.²¹ In the here and now, the present crisis and the open checkbook leads many to conclude that the United States can in fact "eat its cake and have it too"; that it can recapitalize the legacy forces and simultaneously resource a leap-ahead to new technologies and capabilities. Caution is in order when we consider the fact that eventually and inevitably, the United States could find itself with plenty of "cake", but left to "dine alone."

Figure 2. Analysis of the 1997 and 2002 Strategies and Force Planning Approaches.

	DEFINING PRINCIPLES	IMPACT(S) ON NATIONAL POLICY	IMPACT(S) ON NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY (NMS)	IMPACT(S) ON NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY (NSS)
THREAT-BASED CONSTRUCT	<p>Used when threats to US interests are “easily recognized and identified”</p> <p>Scenario -based or contingency-based modeling to determine force needs</p> <p>Provides a quantifiable rationale for the recommended force structure</p>	<p>Enhance Security at home and abroad</p> <p>Promoting Prosperity</p> <p>Promoting Democracy and Human Rights</p> <p>Consistent with the objectives as defined in the preamble to the US Constitution: <i>provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.</i></p>	<p>Maintained a heavy (legacy) military force, good at “fighting and winning” the 2-MTW scenario.</p> <p>“Held the line “on defense force and budget downsizing</p> <p>Failed to adequately justify resourcing for non-MTW threat scenarios (asymmetrical threats)</p>	<p>The December 2000 NSS derives more from a reassessment of National Interests and National Objectives (Engagement Policy) than the existing NMS and its threat -based force sizing construct</p> <p>Forward presence and reliance on/cooperation with allies</p> <p>A “Strategy-Resources” gap, with insufficient resources available to realize the interests and objectives of Engagement at a moderate level of risks to military forces.</p> <p>Left little if any “strategic reserve” or allocation of forces for small-scale contingencies</p>
CAPABILITIES-BASED CONSTRUCT	<p>Used when threats to US interests are multi-faceted and uncertain</p> <p>Ambiguous threats do not lend themselves to single-point scenario-based analysis.</p> <p>Planners apply a “liberal dose of military judgement to determine the appropriate mix of required military capabilities.”</p> <p>Claim to focus on objectives rather than scenarios.</p>	<p>“Four Key Goals:”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assuring allies and friends · Dissuading adversaries. · Deterring aggression and coercion by deploying forward capacity to swiftly defeat attacks and impose severe penalties · Decisively defeat any adversary if deterrence fails. 	<p>Unleash the “revolution in military (technological) affairs”, allowing for the development of the following capabilities:</p> <p>Strike capabilities</p> <p>Forcible entry capabilities</p> <p>Special Operations capabilities</p> <p>Counter-WMD/E capabilities</p> <p>Battlespace Control capabilities</p> <p>Space Exploitation capabilities</p> <p>Information Superiority capabilities</p> <p>All-Source Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Counterintelligence capabilities</p> <p>Full Dimensional Force Protection capabilities</p> <p>Focused Logistics capabilities</p> <p>Strategic Mobility capabilities</p> <p>Interoperability</p> <p>Quality People</p>	<p>A US-first, Deterrence-first, distanced and reactionary-based posture</p> <p>Shift to a post-crisis, strike and response approach to threats to US interests (From ‘Forward Presence’ to ‘Force Projected’ posture)</p> <p>Over-emphasis on “capabilities” and leap-ahead technological innovation.</p> <p>Allows for a “capabilities-solves” approach to national policy and strategic planning.</p> <p>Essentially makes the entire force a “strategic reserve” – available for any contingency, with priority to (1) the US Homeland and (2) the Asia-Pacific realm.</p>

FIGURE 3. *SIZING THE US/COMBINED FORCE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*

	STRATEGIC CONCEPTS	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	FORCE SIZING
1997 QDR / 2000 NSS <i>“Strategy of Compellence”</i>	<i>SHAPE</i> <i>RESPOND</i> <i>PREPARE</i>	PROMOTE PEACE AND STABILITY DEFEAT ADVERSARIES PEACETIME DETERRENCE FIGHT & WIN MAJOR THEATER WARS CONDUCT MULTIPLE, CONCURRENT SMALLER-SCALE CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS	2 MTW
2002 QDR / draft NMS <i>“Strategy of Deterrence”</i>	<i>ASSURE ALLIES</i> <i>DISSUADE ADVERSARIES</i> <i>DETER FORWARD</i> <i>DECISIVELY DEFEAT</i>	SECURE THE HOMELAND PROMOTE SECURITY & DETER AGGRESSION WIN THE NATION’S WARS ENSURE MILITARY SUPERIORITY	“CAPABILITIES”
A “Third Way” A Comprehensive Security Strategy	<i>Shapes, prepares, and responds (proactively and preventively) in order to assure allies, dissuade adversaries, deter forward, and decisively defeat any foe threatening US and allied interests and security</i>	<i>Ensuring the security of the US homeland entails ensuring the homelands of friends and allies also remain secure</i> <i>The US perception of a “limited engagement” or “small-scale contingency” may be an allies’ idea of a major regional or theater war/conflict. Maintain a “joint and combined force capable of all US and allied contingencies</i> <i>Avoid “do-it-alone” approaches to force modernization and force structuring. There can be no transformation unless it is truly “combined”</i>	A COMBINED, THREAT-BASED and CAPABILITIES-BASED CONSTRUCT

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NOTES

¹ This policy prescriptive is discussed (due to space limits in this paper) at the end of the essay in the endnotes. See figure 3, appendix.

² Dr. Richmond M. Lloyd, et al., *Strategy and Force Planning*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1997), 2.

³ ‘Means’ refer to capabilities, resources available, operational and organizational designs. As such, the “means” are equivalent to what we expect to define in the National Military Strategy itself (the “how” in the national policy-strategy-implementation process). Regarding means, the question in this essay is referencing those changes to the 2002 National Military Strategy expected to derive from the adoption of a new, capabilities-based force sizing and shaping construct (See the 2002 Quadrennial Defense Review).

⁴ Same as above. See Gaddis (1982).

⁵ Strategy, in its simplest definition, is a balance of national ends, ways, and means See the following: (Gaddis 1982; Summers, Jr. 1982; Lloyd 1997; National Defense University 1999; Flournoy 2001). The articulation of “strategy” offered by John Lewis Gaddis accurately defines the issue and appropriately sets the stage for the argument presented in this essay. For Gaddis, “strategy” is “the process by which ends are related to means, intentions to capabilities, objectives to resources” (Gaddis 1982, viii).

⁶ As collected from Steve Metz’ anthology, *Revising the Two MTW Force Shaping Paradigm*, (US Army War College, SSI study, 2001).

⁷ For more on this background, also refer to: Carter and White, *Keeping the Edge: Managing Defense for the Future*, (Stanford, CA: Preventive Defense Project, 2000); Flournoy (ed.), *QDR 2001: Strategy-Driven Choices For America’s Security*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2001); and Flournoy, *Report of the National Defense University Quadrennial Defense Review 2001 Working Group*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2000).

⁸ For more on the two-MTW construct, see Powell (1995); Woodward (1991); Halberstam (2001); Clark, Wesley (2001); Kennedy (2000). Also refer to the National Defense University, *Strategic Assessment 1999: Priorities for a Turbulent World*.

⁹ “Too Little, Too Late: The Dilemma of US Intervention Policy in the Balkan Crises of 1991 to 1995,” *World Affairs*, Winter 1999. Article written by this author.

¹⁰ “Campaign 2000” witnessed Candidate Al Gore and the Democratic Party championing an incrementalist approach to military force modernization and force development, arguing for the maintaining of the US heavy forces while allocating defense dollars for the acquisition and production of new capabilities. George W. Bush and the Republicans advocated a “leap-ahead” approach that centered on a general abandonment of the legacy force for an investment in future forces, accepting risks during the interim years. Evidence gathered from author’s observations at the 2000 Democratic and Republican National Conventions and study of the two party’s campaign platforms.

¹¹ For a fuller discussion of this array of capabilities, refer to the latest draft version (as of 3/27/02) of the 2002 National Military Strategy, or to the summary presented in the appendix (Figure 2).

¹² See Joint vision 2010 and 2020. This author had the opportunity to partake in a workshop held in February of 2001 at Chatham House (London) that focused on a US/European discussion of NATO and the European Security Defense Initiative/Policy (ESDI/P). Key decision-makers from both sides of the Atlantic were present. The discussion of the Pentagon's Joint Vision 2010 and its updated variant (JV 2020) was visceral. The perception of the JV plan amongst our strongest Transatlantic allies is that the JV programmatic was conceived with little regard for European interests in a "full spectrum dominance" force capability or in Europe's individual or collective capacity to keep pace with the United States in this sort of policy. The provocative sentiment in ESDI/P was deemed to derive from and reflect a reaction of European nations to the provocative US posture displayed in the JV idea, and a main reason behind recent changes of the growth of a "Fortress Europe, versus Fortress America" situation. This, at least, was the sentiment and atmosphere I observed in early 2001. See observer's notes and conference notes (RIIA Conference, London 2001).

¹³ Strategy and force Planning Faculty (eds.), *Strategy and Force Planning*, second edition, (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1997, 3).

¹⁴ Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010*

¹⁵ George W. Bush, *State of the Union Address*, (29 January 2002).

¹⁶ National Military Strategy, 2002 (draft version, as of 3/27/02).

¹⁷ Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership From Roosevelt to Reagan*, (New York: The Free Press, 1990); David Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

¹⁸ Walter Neal Anderson, "Comprehensive Security and a Core Military Capability," in Steven Metz (editor), *Revising the Two MTW Force Shaping Paradigm*, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2001, pp. 165-183).

¹⁹ See Appendix for figure 3. This figure outlines a comparison between the threat-based QDR and NSS of 1997 through the December 2000 Clinton Administration NSS and the 2002 Bush Administration QDR and the latest draft version of the next National Military Strategy (NMS). The comparative shows little substantive differences between the rhetorical concepts and objectives in these policies and strategies, popularly touted as being complete opposites of each other. The difference cannot be found explicitly in the documents. The differences lie in the intentions underlying the type of forces resourced and the manner in which those resources (that force) is to be deployed and operated. The same array of capabilities are demanded in both sets of documents (see figure 2, appendix). Their manner and timing for deployment and use are different. The 1997/2000 array of forces was intended to be forward positioned for a more proactive, preventive, and compellant posture. The 2002 array of forces is intended for a quick response to crises, from CONUS bases (in defense of the homeland) and/or from offshore (afloat) positions; a deterrence force. The 1997 and 2000 mismatch between goals and "true" resourced intentions left friend and foe alike thinking that the United States would act everywhere on not only its own interests but on those of allies, friends, and the international community in general.

The reality was not enough of a resourced array of forces to do more than what was in the direct security and interest of the US homeland. The 2002 mismatch between goals and actual resourced intentions signals the community of nations (friends and foes) that the United States will develop and resource a wide array of capabilities in order to secure and defend its own security interests first and foremost. Consideration of whether or not allies and partners are willing or able to “leap-ahead” technologically along with the United States seems absent from this capabilities-based approach. The chart, then, presents this authors idea of a “third way”; a different option for US decision makers, defense planners, and the military for fashioning a combined (US and multinational) array of force capability that is able to effectively ensure the values goals, and interests of US national policy stated in both the 1997 and 2002 NSS (or NSS proxy) documents (but failed to be realized due to domestic factors already discussed). The combined, threat and capabilities-based formulaic underpinning this “comprehensive security strategy” meets US and allied goals and interests, makes a force capable of achieving those goals more interoperable and therefore more “affordable” (in a broader sense of the term), and presents a strategy and policy more commensurate to the status and responsibilities of a global hegemon like the United States.

²⁰ The Chief of Staff of the US Army, General Eric Shinseki, has recently accelerated the acquisition, testing, production, and fielding plan for the Army’s Interim Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) transformation bridging force from an originally planned and programmed 7 to 11 year cycle to a 5-7 year cycle. Recent journalistic accounts indicate that the US Army plans on deployment of the first IBCT to the European Theater in 2007. Early-Bird reports, week of 1 March 2002.

²¹ US Navy and US Air Force systems acquisition cycles are significantly longer than those of the US Army. Projections forecast the USAF’s F-22 and JSF following acquisition cycles of 15 years. Researcher notes.