

**The Development
of the
Base Force
1989 – 1992**

**by
Lorna S. Jaffe**

Joint History Office

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

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FOREWORD

In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, the Cold War began grinding to a halt and the Soviet Union started its rapid descent into the history books.

In 1988, before this historic series of events began, the Joint Staff anticipated them by examining what United States military strategy and force structure should look like in the absence of the Red Army and without the inevitability of World War III. Over the next four years a strategy and force structure emerged -- sometimes leading events, at other times trailing them.

The result was the Base Force concept which guided the reduction of our Armed Forces without breaking them or reducing their quality. Moreover, this concept allowed our Armed Forces to meet the challenges of a variety of new missions.

The Base Force won the support of the Congress. It served as a transitional concept to a new, still unclear strategic future. It served well the purpose intended by its creators.

This manuscript, superbly researched by Dr. Lorna Jaffe, tells the story of how our strategy underwent its first major revision since World War II. It is the story of the clash of bureaucratic interests seeking the "right answer" in a period of great uncertainty and change. We tried to see the future while fighting real wars left over from the past.

Too many people worked on the project to be individually credited. We are all indebted to Dr. Jaffe for capturing the story for history.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. L. Powell".

COLIN L. POWELL

Chairman
of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff

CONTENTS

Changes in Strategic Thinking.	2
Anticipating Reduced Funding.	9
General Powell's Strategic Vision	11
Early Briefings	15
Going Public.	28
Endorsement of the Chairman's Views	30
Acceptance of the Base Force.	35
A New Strategy.	45
Notes	51
Principal Sources.	59

Since the late 1940s the United States had based its national military strategy on the necessity of deterring and, if deterrence failed, successfully fighting a global war against the Soviet Union. In 1987 Joint Staff strategists began to examine some of the planning assumptions supporting this strategy. Their review led them to conclude that national military strategy should put greater emphasis on regional planning. While strategists were developing new approaches based initially on assessments of US capabilities but increasingly on their assessment of the reduced threat from the Warsaw Pact, Joint Staff force planners in 1988 began to analyze the force structure that supported current strategy. The prospect of an accelerated decline in defense funding, together with the sweeping changes taking place within the Warsaw Pact, prompted them to recommend significant force reductions.

When General Colin L. Powell became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October 1989, he brought to the position his own views on the likely shape of the world in the 1990s and a determination to restructure the US Armed Forces to meet this new environment. He not only gave direction to the efforts already under way on the Joint Staff but pushed them farther, shaping them to conform to his strategic vision. The result was a new national military strategy and a new conceptualization of force structure to support this strategy. This strategy and its supporting configuration of forces marked a major departure from the US approach to the world during the preceding forty-plus years. Their development influenced as well the development of a new national defense strategy and a new national security strategy.

Changes in Strategic Thinking

The Joint Staff reassessment of planning assumptions began in response to a recommendation by the Chief of Staff of the Army. In June 1986 General John A. Wickham, Jr., proposed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff changing the long-standing Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) assumption that in a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact mobilization and deployment would coincide with the beginning of hostilities. He believed that short-range capabilities-based planning should reflect the intelligence assessment that there would be two weeks' warning of impending attack, thus permitting early mobilization and deployment of US reinforcements to Europe. In early 1987 the Joint Staff, the Commanders in Chief of the Unified and Specified Commands (CINCs), and the Services agreed that the FY 1989-90 JSCP should incorporate the intelligence community's assessment on warning and provide for early mobilization and deployment in a crisis. As discussed below, the incorporation of this warning assessment led to a reexamination of other planning assumptions.¹

JSCP FY 1989-90 also included greater emphasis on regional planning. Believing that constrained resources might force decision makers to choose between preparing for a global or a regional war, Joint Staff planners in 1987 had attempted to incorporate greater emphasis on regional planning in the National Military Strategy Document (NMSD) for FY 1990-94. Unsuccessful in this effort to modify mid-range strategic planning, they instead used the short-range JSCP to incorporate new strategic emphases. Like its predecessors, JSCP FY 1989-90, written in the spring of 1988, considered the possibility of a US-Soviet confrontation that could erupt into global war as the most serious threat to US interests. But, with the Soviet Union reducing its military presence in Eastern Europe, reducing and consolidating its military forces, and undertaking domestic reform, the JSCP argued that calculated Soviet aggression in Central Europe was unlikely. The more likely threats were indigenously caused conventional regional conflicts with little likelihood of direct Soviet intervention.²

Through 1989 Joint Staff strategists continued to press for greater emphasis on regional planning. National Security Review (NSR) 12, issued by President George Bush on 3 March 1989, had directed a review of national defense strategy. Joint Staff participants in this review argued that, with the substantially reduced risk of a deliberate Soviet attack on Western Europe and increasing non-Soviet threats in the Third World, the United States should shift its focus not only from Europe but also from the Soviet Union's role in the Third World. Instead, it should develop strategies for dealing with regionally based Third World threats. They particularly emphasized the emerging importance of the Pacific rim and Central and South America to US security interests. In their emphasis upon the necessity of preparing for regional contingencies outside Europe, the Joint Staff representatives unsuccessfully opposed the European focus of Mr. Paul D. Wolfowitz, who chaired the Department of Defense NSR 12 Steering Committee.³

Work on NSR 12 having ended inconclusively, Joint Staff planners focused on the NMSD for FY 1992-97 in their effort to change strategic priorities. They argued that although its capabilities meant that the Soviet Union would remain the principal threat to the United States through the 1990s, this threat was declining while that of regional instability, especially in the Middle East and Latin America, was increasing. They recognized, too, that declining defense budgets and changes in alliance relationships placed increasing constraints on forward basing.

Accordingly, planners recommended substituting the concept of forward presence for that of forward defense, upon which the United States had based its military strategy throughout the Cold War. To respond both to a low threat in Europe and increasing threats in the Third World, they advocated a shift from the permanently forward-stationed large land, sea, and air forces of a strategy designed to deter and defeat Soviet aggression. Instead, they recommended smaller permanent forces, together with periodic deployments, to demonstrate the US commitment to protect its interests overseas. By reducing US forces on the periphery of the Soviet Union, this shift in strategy would enhance US flexibility to

respond to potential threats around the globe. It would thus maintain US regional influence, reducing the risk of regional instability. It would also permit force reductions in response to anticipated reductions in defense spending and allow force reallocations if strained relations with US allies required the abandonment of overseas bases.⁴

The Army, supported by the Air Force, vigorously opposed abandoning the concept of forward defense, which formed the basis of its strategy and force structure. The Commander in Chief, US European Command (USCINCEUR), also objected to introduction of the concept of forward presence, arguing that it would lead to the breakup of forward deployed forces and that the United States should not initiate overseas reductions. To meet these objections, the National Military Strategy (NMS) signed by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., on 25 August 1989 and NMSD 1992-97, submitted to the Secretary of Defense on 21 September, presented the concept of forward presence as being designed to implement the traditional strategy of deterrence and forward defense and provide a framework for adapting this strategy during a period of reduced resources and force structure and increasing constraints on forward basing. Thus, despite Service and CINC opposition, the NMS submitted to the Secretary of Defense retained the concept of forward presence, introducing an important change in US military strategy.⁵

The NMS contained another significant change. In the late 1970s the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) had adopted the Illustrative Planning Scenario (IPS), a force-sizing scenario that postulated a Soviet invasion of Iran as the triggering event for global war. And from the early 1980s mid-range strategic planning had included Southwest Asia as a theater in which a regional crisis could lead to Soviet intervention, thereby precipitating global war. With the incorporation in JSCP FY 1989-90 of the intelligence assessment that warning of a planned Soviet attack in Central Europe would be about two weeks when that of a Soviet incursion into Iran would be a month, Joint Staff strategic planners had reexamined some of the assumptions used in mid-range as well as short-range

planning. Their analysis had made it apparent that, on the brink of a major confrontation with the Warsaw Pact, the United States would be unlikely to send forces to Southwest Asia when it would soon have to divert them to Europe. This confirmed a long-standing belief among many military strategists that to plan, in anticipation of global war, first to send forces to Southwest Asia was unrealistic. This conclusion led eventually to an adjustment in recommended strategy.

Believing that planning for Southwest Asia should focus on a regional war precipitated by an Iraqi attack into the Arabian Peninsula rather than on a cascading crisis leading to war with the Soviet Union, Joint Staff planners omitted Southwest Asia from the initial theaters for which NMS FY 1992-97 presented strategies for a global war with the Soviet Union. This omission precipitated a debate between the Joint Staff and Mr. Wolfowitz, who in May had become Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Regional Programs from 1977 through 1980, Mr. Wolfowitz had been instrumental in OSD's adoption of the IPS. He believed that strategy for Southwest Asia should retain its emphasis on the Soviet threat there. This disagreement over the focus of planning for Southwest Asia remained unresolved for months.⁶

Meanwhile, as part of OSD's efforts to strengthen the role of planning in the planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS), Mr. Paul Stevens of the Department of Defense (DOD) transition team had asked Brigadier General Robert Linhard, Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy in the Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (J-5), with whom he had worked when both were on the National Security Council staff, to meet informally with him and Mr. I. Lewis Libby, who was reviewing the defense management process for the transition team. The transition team wished to explore ways of changing the structure of strategic planning and more effectively linking strategy to resources. With Admiral Crowe's approval, General Linhard met with the transition team representatives. From their discussions emerged the concept of multiple generic scenarios for regional as well as global war instead of the current single

global planning scenario. On 25 July 1989 the Defense Planning and Resources Board (DPRB) charged the Joint Staff with responsibility for developing these scenarios. The work done by J-5 in designing scenarios for regional war reinforced Joint Staff strategists' conclusion that the major focus of strategy must shift to regional planning and led to the realization that this shift would require force restructuring.⁷

The work on multiple scenarios also contributed to a rethinking of the concept of warning of war. In September 1988 Major General George Lee Butler, Vice Director of J-5, had been among Defense Department officials testifying before the House Armed Services Committee Defense Policy Panel on the assumptions about Soviet mobilization readiness used as the basis for US force planning. Preparation for this hearing brought home to General Butler the extent to which strategic planners and intelligence analysts approached the concept of warning from different perspectives. Within the context of planning for war with the Soviet Union, warning traditionally had denoted unambiguous warning of attack, in response to which the United States would mobilize and deploy its forces. In addition, intelligence analysts also used the concept of warning of war preparation. Neither concept of warning met the needs of strategic planners, who had to recommend the timely execution of war plans to political decision makers. Accordingly, planners had shifted the focus of their thinking about warning from the imminent outbreak of hostilities to an earlier point at which it might be possible to take action to deter war or better prepare for it.

General Butler hoped to improve understanding of planners' needs and to bridge the gap between those needs and the intelligence community's work. He therefore convened the Roundtable on Warning (ROW), in which strategic planners, intelligence analysts, and force programmers met regularly from April 1989 through October 1990 to examine the issue of warning. By including force programmers, General Butler hoped that the ROW might also lead to a more effective linking of operational planning and force programming.

The ROW provided a forum for the exchange of ideas on warning in a changing strategic environment and a means for General Butler to attempt to influence thinking in the direction in which he--and later General Powell--wished to move. Its work complemented work being done concurrently to develop a range of options for responding to crises. The ROW met during a period of profound changes in the Warsaw Pact. These changes, which produced a significant diminution in the threat posed by the Soviet Union, resulted in the spring of 1990 in a shift in the focus of the intelligence community's warning assessments from Pact military preparations to Soviet political decisions to rearm and regenerate forces. This reorientation of intelligence led in turn to the development of a new concept of warning of war with the Soviet Union. The life of the ROW also coincided with J-5's work on multiple generic scenarios and the resulting recognition that responding to regional crises would require a new approach to warning.

The exchange of views in the ROW led to agreement on the need for new approaches to warning to correspond with the changes in strategic thinking occasioned by the altered relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The discussions also produced recognition of the difficulty of determining precise warning times. The outcome was the identification of multiple warning patterns applicable in a regional as well as a global context. This new conception of warning included warning patterns for both evolving and quickly breaking regional crises as well as a slowly developing global crisis and imminent global conflict. Thus the ROW, which began as an effort to improve understanding of warning of global war with the Soviet Union, was instrumental in the development of a new conceptualization of warning. This new concept of warning meshed with General Powell's strategic vision, in the implementation of which General Butler, as Director of J-5, played a key role.⁸

By the time he became Director of J-5 in August 1989* General Butler had developed his own strategic overview. His predecessor, Vice

*When he became Director of J-5, General Butler was promoted to Lieutenant General.

Admiral John A. Baldwin, Jr., had hoped that one outcome of the reform of the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS) that took place during his tenure would be allowing greater scope for new ideas. Among General Butler's responsibilities as Vice Director of J-5 during this period was to develop such ideas and present them to various audiences. Preparation of a lecture on long-range strategy for delivery at the National War College in May 1988 gave General Butler the opportunity to synthesize his ideas into a comprehensive view of the world and the US role in it on the eve of the twenty-first century.

On the basis of his assessment of developments in the Soviet Union, General Butler concluded that the Cold War was over, communism had failed, and the world was witnessing a second Russian Revolution. He examined the implications for US strategy of the success of the policy of containment. In his view, the world was entering a multipolar era, in which superpowers would find it increasingly difficult to influence events militarily. In addition to the decline of the Soviet Union and the further evolution of West European alliance relationships, the coming era would see the rise of new hegemonic powers, increasingly intractable regional problems, and the global impact of disastrous Third World conditions.

General Butler maintained that the United States was the only power with the capacity to manage the major forces at work in the world. Implementing this new use of US power in order to shape the emerging world in accordance with US interests would require a coherent strategy that defined US vital interests, decided the role of the military, and then set the necessary forces in place. It would also require dealing with the nation's fiscal problems. When he presented his views to the Air Staff in September, he anticipated that budgetary retrenchment would lead to a major restructuring of the armed forces. If they did not undertake this task themselves, they would find reductions forced upon them.

Initially, General Butler thought that the changes he had outlined would take place over a decade and that the United States would have to deal with them within the context of an ongoing relationship with the

Soviet Union. However, in the autumn of 1988, when he traveled to the Soviet Union as head of the US team to negotiate an agreement on the prevention of dangerous military activities, he found that the Soviet Union was in worse condition than he had realized. He concluded that the shift in the balance of world power would therefore be accelerated.

As Vice Director of J-5, General Butler pursued the development of his ideas on the need for a new US approach to the world independently of the Strategy Division's efforts to shift the focus of strategic planning away from the Soviet Union. However, Joint Staff planners had heard him present his strategic overview elsewhere, and his ideas about the new strategic tasks facing the United States were among the factors influencing their attempts to place greater emphasis on regional rather than global planning.⁹

Anticipating Reduced Funding

While these changes in strategic thinking were taking place, the Program and Budget Analysis Division (PBAD) of the Force Structure, Resource, and Assessment Directorate (J-8) had begun to explore the implications of anticipated further budget reductions on force structure, which consumed the largest portion of the defense budget. From autumn 1988 discussions that they had initiated with congressional staff members and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) personnel, PBAD action officers had concluded that the Defense Department could expect an accelerated decline in the growth of its budget amounting to an approximately 25 percent real decline over the next five years. This ran counter to OSD projections that the decline would continue at its current rate, resulting instead in an approximately 10 percent decline over the same period.

In anticipation of an accelerated reduction, PBAD began work in October on a closely held study of force reduction options. This "Quiet Study" proposed criteria for proceeding with force reductions and made

specific recommendations for cuts, targeting forces that would not be decisive in a global war, those with aging equipment and therefore limited combat effectiveness, and those whose growth was outpacing the growth of the Soviet threat. On 24 February 1989, J-8 presented its recommendations to the Chairman, requesting his approval of PBAD's guidelines for reductions. However, Admiral Crowe believed that to pursue force reductions without a change in strategy, for which he looked to the President, would invite further cuts in the defense budget.

Although the Chairman did not act on its recommendations, J-8 continued its work. In July PBAD undertook "Quiet Study II," which it completed in late October 1989 after the arrival of the new Chairman. Continuing to base its projections on an accelerated decline in defense funding, PBAD believed that the Defense Department must come to terms with fiscal realities. Accordingly, "Quiet Study II" proposed guidelines for matching long-term force structure and modernization programs to expected resources and then using these guidelines to develop Joint Staff recommendations on the budget cuts to be proposed by the Services and OSD during the upcoming budget and program review. Using these guidelines, it also outlined detailed sample cuts for the Chairman's consideration.

"Quiet Study I" had assumed that there would be no change in strategy. But because of the changes in the strategic environment caused by the continued diminution of the Soviet threat, "Quiet Study II" postulated a shift in focus from the East-West confrontation in Europe to regional contingencies. It examined the potential impact on force structure of the changed strategic environment as well as the domestic fiscal situation, asking not only what forces the United States would be able to fund but also what missions it wished its forces to perform. Basing its choice of conventional missions upon the concept of forward presence, "Quiet Study II" assumed that by the next century land-based forces overseas would be reduced to half their current size. The study based its recommendations for force cuts on the necessity of assuring superiority against any potential adversary. Its criteria for retention of conventional

forces therefore included maintaining quality, mobility, flexibility, and readiness.¹⁰

General Powell's Strategic Vision

J-8's views on force structure corresponded closely to those of the new Chairman. As President Ronald Reagan's Assistant for National Security Affairs, General Powell had become convinced in 1988 that the changes taking place in the Soviet Union were fundamental. This perception derived principally from his meetings in the Soviet Union with Soviet leaders. The conviction of President Reagan, a staunch conservative, that the changes were fundamental also influenced his thinking. General Powell recognized, too, that these changes, together with budgetary pressures, would produce demands for further reductions in defense spending. Although publicly cautious about the long-term effects of the changes in the Soviet Union and their implications for US-Soviet relations, he believed that if developments in the Soviet Union continued in the same direction, they would lead eventually to changes in US strategy and its supporting force structure and ultimately in the whole military culture.¹¹

However, when he became Commander in Chief of Forces Command (FORSCOM) in April 1989, he found that there had been no adjustment in Army thinking. As the commander with principal responsibility for the nation's ground forces, he thought about what continued changes in the Soviet Union would mean for his command and for the Army. He began to develop his ideas for an altered force structure that would respond to the changes in both the strategic and the fiscal environments in a way that would make it possible for the United States not only to maintain a strong defense but also to retain its superpower status. As a lieutenant colonel in the early 1970s, he had worked on the Army's post-Vietnam cutback. That nearly 50 percent reduction had included cuts in training, support, and materiel, which had produced a hollow force. This outcome affected his

thinking about force reductions. His experience as national security adviser in dealing with the concept of floors and ceilings in arms control also influenced his approach.

While at FORSCOM, General Powell reached conclusions about the reductions that would be necessary in an era of constrained resources. He also devised the configuration of forces that evolved into his Base Force concept--the minimum force necessary for the United States to pursue its interests as a superpower. To respond to the changing strategic environment, he conceived of a force structure that was composed of two regional and two functional forces: Atlantic forces and Pacific forces, whose areas of responsibility would extend respectively across the Atlantic and across the Pacific; contingency forces to deal with sudden crises; and strategic forces to meet the threat still posed by the Soviet nuclear arsenal. He concluded that the Army would have to be cut by 20-25 percent and the Navy reduced to a maximum of 400 ships.¹²

He discussed his ideas with his Army colleagues, including Chief of Staff General Carl E. Vuono, but found them reluctant to deal with the issues raised by the changed environment. In May 1989 he presented some of his ideas in a speech to a symposium sponsored by the Association of the US Army. Declaring that the Soviet "bear looks benign," he told an audience that included most of the other Army four-star generals that the world had changed and the Army must therefore adjust its thinking. While the reality of the Soviet military threat remained, the public's perception of a lessened threat and its consequent reluctance to fund forces to meet that threat meant that the military must find other bases for its policies and programming. No longer able to count on real growth in the defense budget, the Army would have to make hard choices when submitting its budget requests.¹³

General Powell elaborated on these views in his 20 September 1989 confirmation hearing as Chairman. Major force realignments were necessary, he said, because if funding continued to decline while the size of the armed forces and their missions remained unchanged, the result would be hollow forces. He therefore regarded his principal challenge as

Chairman to be reshaping defense policies and the armed forces to deal with the changing world and the declining defense budget.¹⁴

Thus General Powell became Chairman determined to reshape national military strategy and the armed forces to meet the new environment. He had found when he was national security adviser that what the military produced often did not meet policy makers' needs, and he resolved that this would not happen during his tenure as Chairman. He believed that, as a result of the Goldwater-Nichols reform,^{*} it was his responsibility as Chairman to initiate a change in strategy, and he did not wish to be accused of not responding to world events. He also thought that in the changed strategic and fiscal environment the normal programming and planning process would produce irrelevant recommendations. Therefore he wanted to break out of the PPBS cycle, in which the Services submitted Program Objective Memorandums (POMs) in competition with each other, and instead give them his guidance for programming priorities.¹⁵

Soon after becoming Chairman, General Powell reviewed the NMS that Admiral Crowe had signed in August and realized the extent to which his thinking differed from his predecessor's. In his early discussions with General Butler, the J-5 Director emphasized J-5's work on the recently issued NMS and its role in the US-Soviet military-to-military exchanges, on which Admiral Crowe had focused much of his energy during the last months of his term. General Powell believed that the changes in the world required a more radical response than the concept of forward presence articulated in the new NMS, and he concluded from these discussions that J-5 was not moving as fast as he wished to adjust strategic planning to the new environment. When Brigadier General John D. Robinson,^{**} Director of J-8, told him about PBAD's work, that seemed to coincide with his thinking, and he asked to see it.

^{*}The October 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act made the Chairman, rather than the corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff, the principal military adviser to the President and the Secretary of Defense.

^{**}Major General effective 2 November 1989.

On 30 October 1989 J-8 briefed the Chairman on "Quiet Study II." Looking for an avenue through which he could begin Joint Staff work on the implementation of his ideas, General Powell asked J-8 to work with J-5 to refine its briefing. Strategy Division action officers began working with PBAD to produce a briefing, which they believed would be presented to the Service Chiefs. The J-8/J-5 working group soon learned that the Chairman did not wish to brief the Service Chiefs but planned instead to present his ideas to the Secretary of Defense. On 2 November representatives of J-8 and J-5 met with the Chairman to hear his strategic vision, and on 6 November he provided them with notes of both his overview of what the world would be like in 1994 and his conception of force structure to meet this changed environment.

General Powell projected radical changes in the world by 1994. He anticipated the transformation of the Soviet Union into a federation or commonwealth that had adopted a defensive posture, with its military budget cut by 40 percent, its forces withdrawn from Eastern Europe, and its force levels reduced by 50 percent. In addition, he expected the demise of both the Warsaw Pact and the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany, and the consequent recasting of NATO. He also anticipated substantial progress on both conventional and strategic arms control. As a result, warning time in Europe would be six months, and a new strategy would replace that of the forward defense of Western Europe. In the Pacific, relations between the two Koreas would improve, and the United States would phase out its bases in the Philippines. In South Asia, India would emerge as a major regional nuclear hegemonic power. Of the major Third World hot spots, the areas of likely US involvement would be Korea and the Persian Gulf.

In response to these changes, the United States should not only significantly cut its conventional forces and change the pattern of their deployment but also reduce its strategic nuclear arsenal. Substantially reducing its forward deployments in Europe and Korea, it should cut the Army from its current 18-division active strength of 760,000 to 10-12 divisions totaling 525,000. Instead of the Navy's current deployment of

551 ships, including 15 carriers, it should plan for 400 ships, including 12 carriers, with its active strength reduced from the current 587,000 to 400,000. While General Powell had not yet determined the projected size of the Air Force, he wished to cut the Marine Corps's congressionally mandated three division/wing teams from their current active strength of 197,000 to 125,000-150,000. The reduced threat from the Soviet Union, coupled with progress in arms control, would, he believed, make it possible to cut intercontinental ballistic missiles from their current level of 1000 to 500 and ballistic missile submarines from the current 34 to 18-20.¹⁶

Early Briefings

Using the Chairman's notes, together with "Quiet Study II" and General Butler's ideas, the J-8/J-5 working group began to expand the PBAD briefing. With General Butler now involved, General Robinson, who had provided the strategy and policy guidance for "Quiet Study II," deferred to J-5 in these areas. The two Directors and their staffs worked closely together to translate the Chairman's vision into a briefing. Their close working relationship contrasted with the strained relations that had sometimes characterized the association between J-5 and J-8 since the 1986 Joint Staff reorganization had transferred responsibility for force development from J-5 to the newly created J-8. There was, however, some resentment within J-8 at the central role played by program and budget analysts, rather than force designers, in projecting future force structure.

The Strategy Division provided a strategic underpinning for the "Quiet Study," greatly expanding its coverage of the strategic environment and US security requirements. Strategy Division action officers approached the question of force structure from the standpoint of the forces needed to carry out the Chairman's recommended strategy, while PBAD did further work on the cuts required to meet its budget projections. These two approaches produced essentially the same recommendations. With the incorporation of General Butler's strategic

concepts and the Strategy Division's views as well as the Chairman's vision, the focus of the briefing shifted to the strategy that US forces would need to execute in the changed environment and the force posture required to carry out that strategy.

On 13 November the J-8/J-5 working group presented the expanded briefing, now called "A View to the 90s," to the Chairman. There was a further exchange of ideas, after which PBAD did additional work on its recommendations of cuts and the J-5 members of the working group revised the strategy section of the briefing. On 14 November the J-8/J-5 team learned that the Chairman intended to present the briefing to the President the next afternoon. General Powell had told Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney about the Joint Staff work, and the Secretary wanted him to present his ideas to the President. They also learned that the briefing did not go as far in recommending reductions as the Chairman wished to go. He directed a 25 percent manpower cut by 1994, for a total reduction of 300,000 in active strength. The working group continued its revisions. On 15 November there was a meeting of the Directors of J-5 and J-8 and PBAD members of the group with the Director of the Joint Staff; a presentation of the revised briefing to the Chairman, followed by a further revision; then another meeting with the Chairman in preparation for his meeting with the President.¹⁷

The result of this two weeks of intensive work was a briefing that presented the Chairman's recommended strategy and its rationale; the force structure needed to execute that strategy; and the resulting recommendations for force reductions and reconfiguration. The briefing argued that the drastically different strategic environment projected for 1994 called for a major restructuring of US security policy, strategy, force posture, and capabilities. With a diminished Soviet threat and sharply reduced resources, the focus of strategic planning should shift from global war with the Soviet Union to regional and contingency responses to non-Soviet threats. This strategy could best protect US security interests and maintain US global influence in an era of diminished resources.

US forces must be repostured and restructured to conform with this new strategy. Surveying the projected 1994 world by region, the briefing argued for a reduced but continuing presence worldwide. For regional deterrence, the United States should place greater emphasis on overseas presence than on permanently stationed overseas forces, while it should rely primarily on forces based at home to respond to contingencies. Performing these missions would require ready, flexible, mobile, and technologically superior conventional forces. As for strategic forces, the United States must retain its strategic nuclear deterrent as long as the Soviet Union possessed a nuclear capability that could threaten US survival. Therefore a modernized but smaller triad would be an essential component of US strategic force posture.

Protecting essential forces and capabilities in an era of reduced resources would necessitate cuts. Applying the criteria it had outlined, the briefing reviewed programs and forces, evaluated their contributions to the new strategy, and proposed both a force structure to be achieved by 1994 and minimum forces necessary for global deterrence and for countering non-Soviet threats. The resulting recommended force structures were larger than the Chairman had initially outlined. For an interim force structure to be reached by 1994, the briefing proposed an active strength of 630,000 for the Army; 520,000 for the Navy; 500,000 for the Air Force; and 170,000 for the Marine Corps--a total reduction of 287,000 from current strength, with corresponding cuts to be taken in reserve forces. For the minimum forces required for the United States to carry out its superpower responsibilities, it projected an active strength of 560,000 for the Army; 490,000 for the Navy; 490,000 for the Air Force; and 160,000 for the Marine Corps--a total reduction of 407,000 from current strength, again with corresponding cuts to be taken in reserve forces.¹⁸

On 9 November, while the Joint Staff was preparing the Chairman's briefing, East Germany opened its borders. Culminating the liberalization that had taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall confirmed for General Powell his early

assessment of the future direction of Soviet policy. He now considered that the conflict with the Soviet Union was over. He thought that it was a mistake to assume that once the Soviets withdrew from Eastern Europe, they would maintain their Cold War force structure and pursue an offensive military policy from their own territory¹⁹.

On 14 November, when the Chairman discussed with Secretary Cheney his ideas about the implications of these changes for the United States, he found that the Secretary did not share his perception of the substantially reduced threat from the Soviet Union. Their discussion therefore centered on the question of the need for a major adjustment in US strategy. This began a series of debates between the Chairman and the Secretary on the appropriate US response to the changes in the Soviet Union. While Secretary Cheney did not endorse General Powell's views, he gave him free rein to proceed with their development. As noted above, he also asked the Chairman to present his ideas to the President²⁰.

General Powell's 15 November presentation to President Bush concentrated on the need to shift US strategy from a global to a regional focus, rather than on the force structure implications of such a shift. The President responded favorably. The Chairman then turned his attention to winning support for his views not only on strategy but also on force structure. A Joint Staff team that had not been involved in preparing the "A View to the 90s" briefing critiqued it, and it underwent further revision. On 20 November General Powell presented the briefing to a DPRB meeting attended by the CINCs. He outlined his thinking on the changes in the Soviet Union and their implications for overall US force structure and for the armed forces in each theater. Of the CINCs, he found General John R. Galvin, USCINCEUR, and General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief, US Central Command, the most receptive to his ideas. Then on 22 November in a Deep Executive Session of the Tank he informed the Service Chiefs that he had discussed with the President his views on the need for a new strategy and emphasized to them that they must accept force cuts.²¹

The fall of the Berlin Wall had strengthened General Powell's conviction that force cuts were inevitable. He believed that if the military did not plan these reductions in a rational manner, then Congress and OMB would impose them. In late December, when he met with the Secretary and the Department of Defense Comptroller to review the Department's proposed budget, they discussed the implications of ever-diminishing defense funding. When Mr. Cheney expressed concern about how they would respond to congressional demands for greater reductions, General Powell pointed out the need to undertake force restructuring²².

While the Chairman was committed to reducing forces, he did not wish to become locked into a force structure before more work was done to validate his recommended force size. During December the Panama operation prevented his devoting attention to the question of future strategy and force structure. J-8 became the center of ongoing work, which therefore focused on force structure. From December 1989 through May 1990 General Robinson and Colonel John Armbrust, Chief of PBAD, worked behind the scenes both to inform Service programmers of the minimum force concept and to verify with them that the expected budget would be adequate for the forces recommended in the "A View to the 90s" briefing.²³

While these developments were taking place, OSD's planning and programming process went forward. Since the NMS was an integral part of the Secretary's Defense Planning Guidance (DPG), the inability of the Joint Staff and OSD to agree on the focus of strategy for Southwest Asia had prevented the issuing of the DPG to guide the Services in the preparation of their POMs. After months of debate between J-5 and Mr. Wolfowitz over the omission of Southwest Asia from the initial theater strategies for war with the Soviet Union, General Powell agreed to a compromise worked out by General Butler and Mr. Wolfowitz. The Secretary would add an initial theater strategy for Southwest Asia to the NMS, but planning would provide only for Soviet air cover for an Iraqi attack into the Arabian Peninsula rather than a Soviet ground incursion into the region as past planning for Southwest Asia had postulated.

General Powell had long thought that planning for a Soviet attack into the region was unrealistic. He believed that, with the removal of Soviet ground forces, he had won the overall debate with OSD. After additional negotiations over the wording of the changes, General Powell agreed to the compromise, and Secretary Cheney issued the DPG on 24 January 1990.²⁴

Meanwhile, General Powell continued to debate his views on the Soviet Union and the need for a new strategy not only with Mr. Cheney but also with Mr. Wolfowitz, who, like the Secretary, did not share the Chairman's outlook on the likely course of events in the Soviet Union. These discussions reinforced General Powell's belief that OSD did not comprehend the depth of the changes taking place in the strategic environment. OSD, in turn, thought that he painted too rosy a picture of the situation.²⁵

General Powell's attendance at the Confidence- and Security-Building Measures Military Doctrine Seminar in Vienna in mid-January 1990 further confirmed the extent of change within the Warsaw Pact. Not only were five of the seven Warsaw Pact military chiefs attending the seminar new to their positions, but the Chairman concluded from his meeting with General Mikhail Moiseyev, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, that the Soviet army's execution of an aggressive military strategy was increasingly unlikely.²⁶

In February the Chairman began working with members of his staff on a further revision of the "A View to the 90s" briefing, which he planned to present to the Service Chiefs and the CINCs. At his direction, program and budget analysts checked the briefing's force size recommendations by function and by Service. Doing cost analysis, they also examined whether the projected force structure fit within DOD budget guidelines and how further reductions would affect the Chairman's recommendations. These analyses resulted in some adjustments in recommended force size.

General Powell wished to convey his personal views in the hope of eliciting debate and an exchange of ideas that would lead to a resolution of differences at the CINCs Conference in August. He therefore replaced

J-5's work on the strategic environment with an elaboration of his November notes outlining his strategic projection for 1994. To gain support for his overall approach, he diluted some of his earlier projections that were likely to provoke controversy and divert attention from the main thrust of his argument.

General Powell also adopted the term Base Force to designate his recommended minimum force. He believed that this would better convey that his proposed force structure represented a floor below which the United States could not go and carry out its responsibilities as a super-power, rather than a ceiling from which it could further reduce forces. To emphasize the regional focus of the new strategy and force structure, he introduced the conceptual packages that he had devised while at FORSCOM. The Base Force would be organized into the Atlantic Force, the Pacific Force, Strategic Forces, and the Contingency Force. Providing a presence in Europe and the Persian Gulf, the Atlantic Force would be composed of mobility forces, backed by US-based heavy reinforcements oriented toward Eurasia. Supplemented by US-based reinforcements, the Pacific Force would provide a land-based presence in Korea and Japan, together with maritime bases and presence in the Pacific region. A modified triad, relying primarily on sea-based systems, would comprise the Strategic Forces, while the Contingency Force would be composed of US-based predominantly light forces, deployed maritime forces, mobility forces, and special operations forces.

The Base Force would have a total active strength of 1.6 million instead of the current 2.1 million and a reserve strength of 898,000 instead of the current 1.56 million. Its conventional component would be composed of 12 active and 8 reserve Army divisions; 16 active and 12 reserve Air Force tactical fighter wings; 150,000 personnel in the 3 active Marine Corps division/wing teams and 38,000 in the reserve division/wing team; and 450 ships, including 12 carriers. This Base Force would, the Chairman argued, not only meet US defense needs in the new era but provide an expandable base upon which a larger force could be reconstituted should the need arise.²⁷

General Powell presented the revised briefing to a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CINCs on 26 February 1990. He outlined the ideas he had developed in response to the changed strategic and fiscal environment. As he told the Chiefs and CINCs, he had received no guidance from the President or the Secretary. He emphasized to the military leaders that they must start looking at the "real future," rather than continuing to request a force structure that would not be funded in current circumstances. He believed that it was necessary to look beyond the programming and budgeting cycle running through 1994 and instead aim at 1997 as the target date for achieving his projected force reductions. He hoped to reach agreement by the end of May on a new strategy that could then provide the basis for both the Secretary's responses to congressional requirements and the US position in ongoing arms control negotiations and upcoming NATO meetings.

General Maxwell R. Thurman, Commander in Chief, US Southern Command, challenged the Chairman's presentation, contending that he had not articulated a strategy and that it was not clear how he had reached his views. What was needed was a strategy and a vision behind which they could all rally, not simply the new programming guidance based on a significantly reduced budget that the Services had recently received from Deputy Secretary Donald J. Atwood, Jr. In a discussion with Secretary Cheney, who attended part of the meeting, General Thurman argued that the DPG provided the best vehicle for presenting this strategy and vision.

General Powell emphatically rejected the call of General Thurman and General Edwin H. Burba, Jr., Commander in Chief, Forces Command, for a strategy based on the CINCs' operational requirements. The Chairman also argued that threat-based analysis would not meet the requirements of changing world conditions, since it was impossible to predict where the United States might become engaged. Instead, the focus needed to be on the forces needed to carry out US superpower responsibilities. To prevent a movement toward isolationism, the Defense Department must convince the American people and Congress that this

force structure was essential to US interests. General John T. Chain, Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command, endorsed the Chairman's opposition to a threat-based strategy, pointing out that in the past when the United States had reduced its forces in response to the disappearance of specific threats, it had then been unprepared when potential aggressors had challenged US interests.

No longer opposed to the concept of forward presence or to force reductions in Europe, General Galvin supported the Chairman's force concept and agreed that NATO needed a new strategy. But he thought that the strength of 75,000 proposed for post-CFE* Europe was insufficient. He maintained that despite Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's rhetoric there had been no real change in the objectives of Soviet military policy and little change in Soviet military strength in Eastern Europe. Moreover, even in the aftermath of a Soviet withdrawal from the other Warsaw Pact countries, NATO would still have an important role to play. US forward presence would be necessary to promote European stability.

In contrast to the CINCs, the Service Chiefs had little to say. General Vuono thought that the Chairman's recommended numbers were so low that they required rethinking. General Larry D. Welch, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, objected to the composition of the Strategic Forces, wanting to augment the air leg of the triad. In what was to become the pattern of the Navy's reaction over the next several months, Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost, Chief of Naval Operations, did not comment, not responding even to the deliberately provocative question of defining the capital ship of the twenty-first century.²⁸

With the Chiefs refusing seriously to address the need for force cuts and only willing to argue their positions individually with him rather than engaging in debate in a forum where they were all present, General Powell focused on gaining the civilian leadership's approval of his proposals before again turning his attention to the Service Chiefs. In meetings with the

*NATO and the Warsaw Pact were engaged in talks aimed at reducing conventional forces in Europe.

Director and Vice Director of the Joint Staff, the Assistant to the Chairman, General Butler, and General Robinson, he planned how to proceed. J-8 stood by the force numbers in the revised briefing. Although the Chairman thought that additional reductions in defense funding were likely, he decided to let the briefing's specific recommendations stand as notional figures, with maximum total active strength to be set at 1.5 million. He directed J-5 to adopt his vision as the basis for standardizing the generic scenarios being developed for regional war. Endorsing General Butler's efforts to have strategic planners in J-5, rather than OSD force programmers, assume primary responsibility for these scenarios, he instructed the J-5 Director to win the support of Dr. David Chu, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Program Analysis and Evaluation (PA&E), for designing scenarios consistent with the Chairman's view of the world.

General Butler and General Robinson reported that policy analysts in OSD were seeking their and the Chairman's guidance in the development of strategy and force options, recently undertaken by Mr. Wolfowitz's office. Lieutenant General Michael P. C. Carns, Director of the Joint Staff, believed that OSD was engaged in a competition with the Joint Staff over the formulation of strategy. With the difference in outlook between General Powell on the one hand and Mr. Cheney and Mr. Wolfowitz on the other, knowledge of the OSD work led to an intensification of Joint Staff efforts to win acceptance of the Chairman's views.²⁹

Determined to implement a new and effective way of tackling the problem of reduced funding, General Powell wanted to develop a persuasive case for his proposed force structure so that he could convince the Secretary and the President that it was sufficient and Congress that it was the minimum necessary. He also wished to translate his views into a narrative that could be used in speeches and eventually expanded into his NMS. To accomplish these objectives, he turned to J-5. He asked Colonel Montgomery C. Meigs, III, Chief of the Strategy Division's Strategy Application Branch, to rework the briefing so that it would win Secretary Cheney to the Chairman's position and to work with General Butler in drafting a narrative version of the Chairman's strategic vision.

General Butler regarded J-5's assignment as providing an opportunity to achieve the longstanding goal of reconciling resources, objectives, and strategy. In developing a standard presentation providing a rationale for a global US forward presence, Colonel Meigs was to review the world by region, describe the Chairman's projected role for the United States in each area, analyze the likelihood of US military engagement there, and determine whether J-8's resource-driven force structure and the Chairman's recommended force posture provided the capability to pursue US objectives. Thus he was to validate from a strategic perspective the force structure that J-8 had already validated from a programming and budgetary perspective. After outlining a conventional strategy based upon this approach, the narrative that General Butler and Colonel Meigs would prepare should then address the question of strategic forces. Here the justification would remain the necessity of deterring Soviet nuclear attack.³⁰

In revising the Chairman's briefing, Colonel Meigs adopted the same approach outlined by General Butler for preparing the narrative rendition of General Powell's strategic views. In 1988 and 1989 Colonel Meigs had done analysis to ascertain how long it would take to move to each region the forces needed there in order to fight a prolonged global conventional war with the Soviet Union. On the basis of that analysis, he determined whether the forces recommended by General Powell for the Atlantic and Pacific regions and for responding to contingencies elsewhere would be adequate for the successful conduct of wars in which there was no Soviet involvement. Where there were discrepancies, he worked with PBAD to formulate an appropriate conventional force structure, within the framework of the Chairman's ceiling of an overall active force of roughly 1.5 million. To judge the adequacy of the proposed Strategic Forces for deterring the Soviet Union in the aftermath of anticipated strategic arms reductions, he used analysis done by the Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces Branch of J-8's Force Planning Division.³¹

Working directly with the Chairman, Colonel Meigs recast the briefing. To place the emphasis on force structure and 1994 as the target date for achieving initial force reductions, they retitled the briefing, "A View to 1994: The Base Force." At the Chairman's direction, the briefing explained that the Base Force took into account the driving factors of fundamental geostrategic change, major budget reductions, and enduring force needs. To illustrate the decline in the threat posed by the Soviet Union, General Powell introduced reference points from his own career. Using the Fulda Gap on the border between East and West Germany as a symbol of the East-West confrontation, the briefing began by depicting the situation at the Fulda Gap when the Chairman had been stationed there as a young second lieutenant in 1958 and when he had returned there to command the Army's Fifth Corps in 1986. Both in 1958 at the height of the Cold War and in 1986 US and Soviet forces had confronted each other across the Fulda Gap. The briefing contrasted that situation of armed confrontation with the situation anticipated for 1994, by which time the Chairman expected a unified Germany, with Soviet forces withdrawn from Eastern Europe. Before surveying the strategic environment, the briefing then outlined why this change had occurred.

"A View to 1994" placed the Base Force ceiling again at 1.6 million while reducing the force levels for the Army, Navy, and Air Force from those proposed in the Chairman's February briefing. For the Army, it also reduced the number of divisions, returning to General Powell's November 1989 proposal of 10-12 active divisions. The Chairman would have preferred greater reductions than the briefing proposed, but he did not wish to increase resistance to his proposals. Presenting the Atlantic Force as the largest of the four forces, the briefing increased the number of forces permanently forward deployed in Europe to fewer than 100,000 rather than the specific 75,000 of the February briefing. The Chairman resisted the advocacy efforts of senior members of his staff on behalf of weapons systems in which their Services had a special interest. He refused to sustain two submarine production lines as Admiral David E. Jeremiah,

the Vice Chairman, wished. Although the briefing increased the size of the air leg of the triad over that in the February briefing, General Powell refused to increase the number of B-2s to the level advocated by General Butler.

The briefing also presented the Chairman's thinking on how the new strategy and force structure would begin to affect the whole military culture. It outlined programming imperatives reflecting his intention to bring other aspects of the military infrastructure into conformity with the Base Force. These included introducing new methods of assessing requirements; maintaining investment in research and development; slowing the rate of modernization; and realigning the base structure, headquarters, and the personnel and training system³².

While he regarded the civilian leadership as his principal audience, the Chairman also hoped to win the support of the Service Chiefs. The Chiefs believed that he was usurping their force planning prerogatives by proceeding with his Base Force plan despite their objections. In the hope of defusing Service discontent, General Powell asked General Butler to present the "A View to 1994" briefing to the Operations Deputies while it was still being developed. The J-5 Director presented an abbreviated version to them on 13 April 1990, with the caveat that it should not be discussed below their level.

In outlining the Chairman's views, General Butler concentrated on explaining the strategic rationale for the Base Force. He described the Chairman's belief that the Cold War was over and the Warsaw Pact dead, the difficulty the Soviet Union would have reconstituting its forces once it completed the transition currently under way, and the intelligence community's agreement with the Chairman's projection of a drastically reduced Soviet military pursuing a defensive strategy. The configuration of forces in the Base Force was designed to maintain US superpower status in this changed strategic environment. Through deployments, exercises, assistance, and military exchanges, the Base Force would make it possible to provide a global forward presence despite significant budget cuts.

General Butler informed the Operations Deputies that the Chairman expected to reduce the armed forces to 1.6 million by 1997, but he did not delineate the allocation of forces that General Powell had in mind, saying that these figures were still being worked out. He emphasized that the Base Force was a floor that would not be reached until 1997 and pointed out the importance of having a plan to submit to Congress in order to deflect criticism that the Defense Department was not responding to the changed strategic situation. But his presentation did not win over the Services.³³

Going Public

On 13 April General Butler also submitted to the Chairman a narrative outline for "A National Military Strategy for the 90's [sic]" that he had prepared with the assistance of Colonel Meigs. The J-5 Director hoped that this elaboration of the "A View to 1994" briefing would lay the groundwork for a new NMS. Of more immediate concern to General Powell, however, was mounting press and congressional pressure for a "peace dividend." The Chairman wished to counter criticism that the Department's planning ignored the changes in the world. Determined to convince the American people and the Congress of the need for continued US engagement worldwide, General Powell had already begun publicly to articulate his strategic vision³⁴.

On 22 March Senator Sam Nunn, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and one of the strongest congressional supporters of the Defense Department, had delivered a speech in the Senate criticizing the "blanks" in the defense budget. He contended that in submitting its FY 1991 budget request the Department had failed to provide a current assessment of the threat, develop a new military strategy in response to the changed threat, submit plans for a changed force structure to meet its own reduced funding request, or take into account its ongoing review of programs. Senator Nunn announced his intention to offer his own views on these subjects over the next several weeks³⁵.

Hoping to set the terms of the debate with Congress, General Powell soon began to address some of these criticisms. Believing that he needed to communicate a "mark-on-the-wall" concept in order to explain to the American people the need for continued US military engagement, he publicly unveiled the Base Force concept. On 23 March in a speech to the Town Hall of California in Los Angeles he cautioned that, despite the changes in the world, the Soviet Union remained the major Eurasian military power with a nuclear arsenal that continued to threaten the United States. Moreover, there were other dangers in the world. Therefore the United States must remain a superpower engaged worldwide. While it could gradually reduce the size of its armed forces, there was a "base force" below which it "dare not go." Outlining the Base Force's four areas of responsibility, General Powell defined the government's task as achieving a balance between these superpower Base Force requirements and what the American people were willing to fund. He expressed his and Secretary Cheney's determination that "paying a peace dividend" would not leave America "weak and unable to lead."³⁶

In another speech on 29 March Senator Nunn reviewed the changes in the conventional threat posed by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. He pointed out the need to revise military strategy to reflect the reduced threat and then to proceed to determine the forces and funding required to implement the revised strategy. That evening in a speech to the Winter Night Club in Colorado Springs, General Powell presented the rationale for the configuration of forces in the Base Force and warned against too rapid a reduction in the armed forces. In his own narrative version of the "A View to 1994" briefing, he reviewed the changes in the threat from the perspective of his experience serving at the Fulda Gap and as national security adviser. While acknowledging the need to accommodate the "fundamental reality" of a post-Cold War world, he explained that it was his responsibility to assure security for an uncertain future. To do this, the United States must remain engaged across the Atlantic and across the Pacific. It must also maintain its nuclear deterrent. The United States would indeed need much smaller forces in the new strategic

environment. But to preserve morale and readiness, it must reach the new force levels gradually. If Congress imposed too rapid a rate of reduction, it would decimate the armed forces³⁷.

Then on 19 and 20 April Senator Nunn presented his own strategic vision and its budgetary implications. On 23 April General Powell delivered a speech intended as a response to Senator Nunn. Addressing the Washington Meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations, he outlined the task facing him. It was his responsibility sensibly to manage the transition to a new era: to reshape the armed forces in light of both the fundamental change in the geostrategic situation and the coming major reduction in resources while at the same time protecting US interests against any possible future threat. He outlined his concept for the four component forces of the Base Force as the means of successfully dealing with the new environment. Expressing determination to fight for the Base Force, he asserted that to go below the level of forces required to carry out US superpower responsibilities would destroy the armed forces³⁸.

Thus, before an audience composed of members of the foreign policy establishment who would be able to influence the course of the administration's debate with Congress over the defense budget, he challenged the contention that the Department was not recasting its thinking in response to the change in the threat. In answer to the Department's critics, he offered his views--still unendorsed by the Secretary--on the strategic approach and the configuration of forces needed to meet the new situation. And he warned that reducing forces too quickly would destroy their ability to respond adequately in the new environment.

Endorsement of the Chairman's Views

Meanwhile, Mr. Atwood, who chaired the DPRB, had scheduled for May a series of meetings to review the FY 1992-97 POMs that the Services were to submit to the Secretary by 1 May. He had asked Mr.

Wolfowitz and General Powell to open the DPRB sessions with presentations respectively on policy and force structure. The focus of further work on the "A View to 1994" briefing therefore became the Chairman's presentation to the DPRB, where he hoped to win Secretary Cheney's support for his position.

A Joint Staff team reporting to Admiral Jeremiah critiqued the briefing. The concern of this "Red Team" was to prepare the Chairman for potential Service and congressional criticism. The Chairman's principal interest, however, was persuading the Secretary so that Mr. Cheney would then recommend the Base Force to the President. After the "Red Team" critique General Powell removed several slides from the briefing, including some that he had had Colonel Meigs insert. But he disregarded the "Red Team's" recommendations where he thought they would defeat his efforts to convince the Secretary. In the briefing's strategy section, the result was a greater focus on the changed threat. Working with J-8, the Chairman also added more budgetary information. As the DPRB meeting approached, his attention shifted increasingly to the force structure portion of the briefing, and J-8, as well as J-5, participated in reworking the briefing for presentation to the DPRB.³⁹

Over the months, General Powell had continued his discussions with Mr. Wolfowitz. Although the Under Secretary was still not as optimistic as the Chairman about the future course of the Soviet Union, by April he had become convinced of the magnitude of the changes there and had indicated to the Chairman his support for the Base Force concept. In response to the work being done at General Powell's direction, in February Mr. Wolfowitz had asked Mr. Libby, now Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Strategy and Resources, and his staff to examine the implications for strategy and force planning of the change in the threat. Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Resources and Plans Lieutenant General Dale Vesser (USA, Ret.) had principal responsibility for this effort. In developing strategy and force options for the projected world of 1997, General Vesser, a former Director of J-5, consulted with General Butler about strategy and with General Robinson about force structure⁴⁰.

The briefing prepared by General Vesser's office presented options for three alternative futures. For a likely future of peaceful competition, a crisis response/reconstitution strategy and force posture would permit the United States to provide forward presence, respond to major regional crises, and reconstitute its forces in response to a renewed global threat from the Soviet Union. Not only was OSD's strategic emphasis very close to the Chairman's, but the force structure recommended to support the crisis response/reconstitution strategy and force posture was virtually identical to the Base Force. OSD's recommended strategy and force posture also provided for adjustments in force structure if over the next few years events did not go as projected. The briefing showed how force reductions could be halted in order to deal with a "troubled Third World" or to provide, without reconstitution, early forward defense against a threatening Soviet Union⁴¹.

Reworked by Mr. Wolfowitz, the briefing that General Vesser's office had prepared became the basis for the Under Secretary's DPRB briefing. On 14 May Mr. Wolfowitz presented his strategic overview to the DPRB. He reviewed the changes and the continuities in the strategic environment and their implications for force posture and force structure. Acknowledging the substantially reduced threat from the Soviet Union, he cautioned, however, that the future was uncertain and emphasized that his proposed approach took into account the possibility of a reversal in the strategic environment.⁴²

General Powell had continued his discussions with each of the Service Chiefs. With the augmentation of the air leg of the triad, General Welch had ceased his strong opposition to the Base Force. But in their POMs the Services had not accommodated the Chairman's views. He had therefore become increasingly concerned that if the Department did not agree to his approach to reducing forces, Congress would impose reductions below a level he regarded as prudent and at a rate that would destroy the effectiveness of the all-volunteer force. Hoping to influence both the DPRB discussions and the congressional debate, he had discussed

his own views on force structure with a reporter from the Washington Post. A detailed account of his views that appeared in that newspaper on 7 May had disclosed his belief that a 20 to 25 percent reduction in force size and military expenditures carried out over four to five years would not endanger national security. But he had emphasized that to carry out these reductions more quickly would 'break' the armed forces. He had expressed his determination to get the Secretary's and the Services' agreement on a minimum force needed to meet US military requirements into the next century and to win the President's approval of this force structure⁴³.

On 15 May the Chairman presented his Base Force briefing to the DPRB. He underscored that his presentation was not a POM submitted in competition with the Service POMs nor was the Base Force an alternative to a POM. Rather, he was proposing a strategy and a force concept that prescribed the minimum force necessary for the United States to remain a superpower. The Defense Department must adopt this force structure as the floor below which the armed forces could not go and still carry out their responsibilities, and it must fight for the Base Force's acceptance.

Going further than Mr. Wolfowitz, General Powell argued that the threat from the Soviet Union had disappeared. Therefore the military could not justify continuing to maintain a force structure based upon that threat. Unlike the Service Chiefs and the civilian leadership, who wished to proceed slowly in response to developments in Eastern Europe, he believed that the Soviet Union was undergoing a lasting structural transformation. Even though Soviet military power still posed a potential threat to the United States, Soviet military policy would, in his view, be defensive and deterrent. Therefore there was little likelihood of superpower conflict anywhere. But, as a result of the changes in the strategic environment, there would be a realignment of alliances, uncertainty, instability, and the likelihood of regional conflict. Hence the United States must remain a military superpower in order to insure peace.

However, because of the public perception that the end of the Cold War would bring peace and increased stability, there would be unrelenting public and congressional pressure to reduce defense spending. The Base Force provided the means for remaining a superpower while reducing forces in response to this pressure. As evidenced by congressional proposals for greater reductions in defense funding, the Defense Department could expect its budget to be cut faster and sooner than originally anticipated. Therefore General Powell concluded that they would have to reach the Base Force by 1994 instead of 1997 so that no Service would be forced below its base. While reducing forces, they must also set priorities for investing in weapons systems and insure investment in the capabilities needed both for sustaining the Base Force and for reconstitution.

Initially, General Powell believed that his presentation had not gone well. It was clear from what one participant described as the "pained look" on the faces of the Service Chiefs that they strongly opposed cutting forces below the level of their POMs, which were based on the Secretary's guidance of a two percent per annum reduction in real growth in the budget over the Six Year Defense Plan. Moreover, having reluctantly--and, they hoped, temporarily--accepted the need for force cuts, they did not wish to restructure the forces that would remain. Because of their resistance General Powell did not present all the details of his force structure recommendations. With General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, taking the lead, the Chiefs countered that the Chairman's recommendations anticipated the continuation of favorable developments. Although the Navy POM proposed an active strength of 159,000 for the Marine Corps, General Gray insisted that it could not reduce its strength below 180,000. The Chiefs expressed reservations about the Chairman's view of the future and advocated proceeding with greater caution. However, Mr. Wolfowitz, whose briefing had devoted more attention to the uncertainties of the future, had recommended essentially the same force levels--albeit a different target

date. And he had shown how it would be possible, if events warranted, to reverse the process of force reductions.⁴⁴

In response to these initial briefings, Secretary Cheney asked for another presentation by Mr. Wolfowitz. The expanded briefing that the Under Secretary and his staff prepared for the Secretary incorporated several of the Chairman's slides. Recommending a force concept that combined the Chairman's Base Force and OSD's crisis response/reconstitution strategy, the briefing argued that this force option provided the minimum force structure that the United States could adopt without incurring undue risk. Mr. Wolfowitz and his staff believed, however, that reducing forces at the rate required to reach this level sooner than 1997 would damage the quality and readiness of the armed forces. Moreover, pacing reductions to reach the Base Force by 1997, rather than 1994, would, as Mr. Wolfowitz had shown earlier, allow for a reversal in the process if the strategic environment should change⁴⁵.

Acceptance of the Base Force

The Secretary believed not only that the Chairman's view of the future was too optimistic but that it did not provide sufficient justification for maintaining the recommended force levels. OSD's having provided for alternative futures gave him greater confidence that the recommended force structure was both adequate and justifiable. Under attack for presenting a budget that failed to respond to the changes that had taken place in the world, he endorsed the Base Force and the crisis response/reconstitution strategy as a package that could be used to establish and justify a floor under force cuts and show that the Department was responding to the altered strategic environment.⁴⁶

On 6 June Mr. Cheney for the first time publicly indicated that the Defense Department might be willing to undertake major force reductions. He agreed to prepare for the White House-congressional budget summit convened by President Bush in May a report showing the

budgetary impact of a 25 percent reduction in force structure carried out over FY 1991-95. The illustrative plan that the Secretary submitted to the summit on 19 June provided for a force structure by the end of 1995 that was close to the Base Force. However, according to the Secretary's notional plan, the 25 percent reduction in force structure would yield only a 10 percent reduction in the Department's budget. Moreover, Mr. Cheney cautioned that the projected reductions in force structure assumed a continued diminution in the Soviet threat.⁴⁷

Then, on 26 June the Secretary, the Chairman, and Mr. Wolfowitz presented the Defense Department's recommended strategy and force structure to the President and his national security adviser, General Brent Scowcroft (USAF, Ret.). Mr. Cheney reviewed the options developed by Mr. Wolfowitz's office, and General Powell presented a briefing on the Base Force without, however, elaborating on the details of force structure. The Secretary then endorsed the crisis response/reconstitution strategy and the Base Force, and the President indicated his support for the new strategy and force structure.⁴⁸

On 2 August at the Aspen Institute in Colorado President Bush announced the new defense strategy and military structure. The President acknowledged that the Cold War was drawing to a close and declared that the United States must reshape its defense capabilities to the changing strategic circumstances. He outlined the rationale for the new strategy and the Base Force and described their principal components. The United States must reconfigure its forces to respond to regional contingencies and provide peacetime presence. While the threat of global war had receded, threats to stability, illustrated by the Iraqi attack on Kuwait launched the previous night, required the maintenance of a "strong and engaged America," with ready forces able to respond rapidly and, if necessary, to rebuild. To deal with the changing world, the United States would require by 1995 an active force that was 25 percent smaller than the current force. Rather than making across-the-board cuts, it must restructure its forces in accordance with their changed mission and carry out force reductions in an orderly fashion.⁴⁹

With the President's articulation of a new defense policy and the intention to reduce and restructure forces, General Powell had achieved the objective of winning the administration's public commitment to reshaping national strategy and the armed forces. However, the speech was not the authoritative explanation of the new direction that the Chairman had anticipated. And because of the Persian Gulf crisis it did not mark the beginning of a public campaign on behalf of the new strategy and force structure, toward which he had been aiming since February.

The idea of using a presidential speech to unveil the new strategy and the Base Force had originated at the Secretary and the Chairman's June meeting with the President. When OSD had offered to prepare a draft, the Chairman had expected the speech to be ready soon. He had looked forward to its being the first in a series explaining the new policy to the American public so that leadership of the national debate over the armed forces' role in the changing world would shift from Congress to the administration. After some time had passed without the production of an OSD draft, the National Security Council (NSC) staff had written the speech from an outline prepared by a member of the Chairman's staff.

As a result of the delay, the President did not deliver his speech until 2 August, when the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait overshadowed it. The Persian Gulf crisis necessitated the cancellation of a press conference that Mr. Cheney and General Powell had planned to hold after the President's speech as a follow-up to a "backgrounder" by Mr. Wolfowitz, which had formed the basis of a 2 August article in the New York Times outlining the new strategy and force structure. Thus the crisis further delayed a full-scale campaign to marshal public support for the new strategy and the forces needed to execute that strategy.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the Department undertook a scaled-down campaign. On 2 August the Secretary and the Chairman briefed the leadership of the congressional armed services committees and the defense subcommittees of the appropriations committees. Mr. Cheney outlined the new strategy, and General Powell explained the Base Force concept and its four

component forces without, however, disclosing the specifics of projected force structure. The congressional leaders responded favorably although they pointed out that they were likely to disagree on force size.⁵¹

Despite the Persian Gulf crisis, efforts to win public support for the Department's position continued. In late August in speeches to the national conventions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, General Powell outlined the rationale for the Base Force and called upon his audiences to join him in explaining to Congress and the American people the need to move cautiously in reducing forces. Then in late September in a speech approved by the Chairman and General Scowcroft, General Butler explained the new direction in US military strategy to an audience of defense reporters⁵².

Over the summer, General Powell had continued his efforts to win the Service Chiefs to the Base Force, and General Robinson had worked individually with the Service programmers at the two-star level to reach J-8's final force structure recommendations. General Butler had then explained the recommendations to each of the Service Chiefs⁵³.

Although his programmers were cooperating with J-8, General Gray continued to resist reduction of the Marine Corps to the Base Force level. In private meetings with General Powell he argued that there was no justification for cutting his service, since geography, not the Soviet threat, had determined its mission and hence its size. To demonstrate that the Base Force's strength of 150,000 was sufficient for the Marine Corps to carry out its role in responding to regional contingencies, the Joint Staff turned to the scenarios being developed by J-5. Despite these efforts, General Gray continued to press his case. Just before the CINCs Conference opened on 20 August, General Powell informed the Commandant that he would increase the Base Force level of the Marine Corps to the POM strength of 159,000. While this was still well below General Gray's objective of 180,000, the Marine Corps was the only Service to which the Chairman made such a concession.⁵⁴

At the CINCs Conference General Powell emphasized the need to focus on force structure. He presented an updated version of his "A View to the 90s" briefing, drawing attention to the changes in the Soviet Union since his presentation of his views the previous February. Because of these changes the US approach to the world was shifting from threat orientation to force projection. The events of the past six months had strengthened his conviction that the Soviet Union was undergoing a radical transformation. Developments that in February he had thought would take place over the next few years had already taken place. He reiterated that regardless of the outcome of events in the Soviet Union, the United States must remain a superpower. To do so, it would need a first-class force able to project power globally, and the Base Force provided the requisite force structure.

He recognized, however, that, with the pressures on the budget, the Base Force had become a ceiling rather than a floor as he had originally conceived it. He now regarded his projected strength of 1.6 million as optimistic. While the "wild card" of the Persian Gulf crisis would stop the flow of money from the 1991 defense budget, the decline in funding would continue after the current operation. Budget pressures and progress in arms control might result in the loss of the B-2, necessitating a shift in strategic force posture away from the triad. In Europe, they might face a reduction of US forces to 100,000-125,000--well below the currently planned level of 195,000 but not as low as General Powell had earlier proposed. The Chairman stressed that in order to protect heavy forces, the responsibilities of the Atlantic Force must extend, as he had originally envisaged, to the Middle East.

By the time of the CINCs Conference it had become clear that the budget was unlikely to permit the force levels in the Service POMs. Consequently, with the exception of General Gray, the Service Chiefs were more receptive to the Base Force than they previously had been. General Michael J. Dugan, who had become Chief of Staff of the Air Force in July, enthusiastically endorsed the Base Force concept. He believed

that even if it were not accepted, it provided a sound basis for public discussion. However, he thought that under anticipated budgets the Air Force would not be able to provide the reserve support to sustain the number of tactical fighter wings in the POM or the Base Force. He projected that a 25 percent budget cut would result in an active strength of 410,000-420,000 for 1995-96, lower than the Base Force figure of 440,000 projected for 1997. General Dugan stressed the importance of reducing forces gradually and emphasized the necessity of preserving the industrial base. He supported peacetime presence as a means of reassuring other nations and insuring US influence and access but believed that the US Armed Forces needed to reduce their visibility overseas.

Unlike his predecessor, Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, who had become Chief of Naval Operations in July, found some aspects of the Base Force attractive. He believed that it could provide an "anchor" against pressures for further reductions. Admiral Kelso recognized that, increasingly, the budget would determine force size. He did not think that the current contingency would reduce the pressures on the defense budget and believed that the Services would be lucky to prevent reductions below the Base Force level. Although willing to reduce the Navy below its POM level, he, too, pointed out the need to reduce forces gradually. Concerned that reaching the Base Force level would lead to pressure for additional cuts, he preferred an eventual active strength of 501,000 but indicated his acceptance of the Chairman's number of 490,000. Admiral Kelso acknowledged the need to cut ships and said that the Navy would design no new ships during his tenure. However, like General Dugan, he worried about preserving the industrial base, since it took ten years to design and build the first ship of a class.

Although not opposed to the Base Force concept, General Vuono was less amenable to accepting General Powell's figures. He pointed out that, under the Army POM, by 1997 active strength would decline to 580,000 from its 1987 level of 780,000. He argued as he had in repeated discussions with the Chairman that more precipitous reductions would "fracture" the force and "unhinge" the military. General Gray, too,

warned against the danger of hollowness. He contended that at its current active strength of 197,000 the Marine Corps was at only 90 percent of the strength needed adequately to perform its wartime missions. Since in the new strategic environment the United States needed to have peacetime influence and presence in order to promote stability worldwide, it was essential for the Marine Corps to have an active strength of 180,000. To go below this level would degrade capabilities.

Of the CINCs, General Carl L. Stiner, Commander in Chief, US Special Operations Command, was closest to General Gray in his assessment of the Base Force. General Stiner thought that the Base Force would never be adequate for global war and was in some respects inadequate for regional war. In contrast, General Galvin recognized the inevitability of force cuts. Reviewing the situation in his own area of responsibility, he argued that, given the enormous changes taking place in Europe, they must make substantial reductions there. He acknowledged that there were tremendous pressures on all the CINCs and the Services, none of whom wanted the United States to "lose one ounce of influence." He noted, however, that, even with significant force reductions, the United States would remain the major world power.

When Admiral Jeremiah expressed concern that the Chairman's emphasis on the necessity of remaining a superpower might lead to accusations that the United States aspired to be the world's policeman, Admiral Leon A. Edney, Commander in Chief, US Atlantic, suggested that a more acceptable formulation might be General Gray's description of the US role as that of fostering stability. Admiral Huntington Hardisty, Commander in Chief, US Pacific Command, seconded this as being consonant with the wishes of the nations in his area of responsibility.

General Powell summed up his position by warning the Service Chiefs that they would not get their POM forces. His own figures were below the levels of the Army, Navy, and Air Force POMs and at the level of the Marine Corps POM, and he was not optimistic about the outcome of the budget summit negotiations. He believed that regardless of how the Persian Gulf crisis affected the Secretary's thinking, congressional

participants in the negotiations would not agree to funding at the level of the Service POMs.⁵⁵

Despite the Secretary's endorsement of the Base Force, he had not yet instructed the Services to adjust their programs accordingly. After the CINCs Conference, J-8 developed a formal alternative program based upon the Chairman's proposed force structure. While PBAD was preparing the Base Force program, on 5 September OSD issued new programming guidance, the Program Assumptions Memorandum (PAM), requiring the Services to amend their earlier proposals. This further delayed adoption of the Base Force. The PAM's fiscal assumptions called for force levels below those of the Service POMs but above the Base Force. While it instructed the Services to adjust their budget estimates downward for FY 1994-97, it assumed higher funding levels for FY 1992 and 1993 than the earlier POM guidance. The Chairman believed that delaying adoption of the Base Force might jeopardize the Department's position in the budget summit negotiations, resulting in funding below the level needed for the Base Force. He expressed his displeasure to the Secretary at the PAM's having been issued without his having been consulted.⁵⁶

When the budget summit reconvened in early September, it was clear that there would be further reductions in funding for the Defense Department. On 31 July the House Armed Services Committee had approved a bill that authorized roughly \$271 billion for the Department for FY 1991 instead of the approximately \$296 billion requested by the administration in January. And on 4 August the Senate had passed an FY 1991 defense authorization bill that provided approximately \$277 billion for the Department. Mr. Cheney assumed that the reconciliation of the House and Senate figures would be less than the Senate authorization. Hoping to obtain funding above the level of the House proposal, he told the other participants in the summit that a funding level slightly below that of the Senate authorization would be adequate for the Department to begin implementing a strategy and force structure consistent with the President's Aspen speech and would therefore be acceptable to him. The funding ceilings for the Department in the budget agreement that

eventually emerged from the summit in October were roughly \$273 billion for FY 1991 and \$278 billion per annum for FY 1992-93.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, in early September Brigadier General William Fedorochko, Jr., Deputy Director for Force Structure and Resources in J-8, had begun meeting with members of the Defense Department Comptroller's office to assure that the budget provided for the Base Force. General Fedorochko had worked with Mr. Sean O'Keefe, the Comptroller, and his staff during his previous assignment in OSD.* For his part, the Comptroller had been won over by the Chairman's presentation to the DPRB in May. Mr. O'Keefe believed that the program review had become "patently irrelevant" to the budget process. Bypassing PA&E, the Comptroller's office worked with J-8 to prepare a budget that provided for the Base Force.

With the Chairman's and the Secretary's approval, during October and November J-8 worked closely with the Comptroller's office to refine the details of the composition of the Base Force and to be certain that its components were correctly costed. General Powell then reviewed the figures with Mr. O'Keefe and made some adjustments in composition. Toward the end of November J-8 presented a briefing to the Secretary comparing the funding needed for the Base Force and for various alternatives. Given the outcome of the budget summit and the fact that the Chairman's Base Force recommendations had derived from the reduced threat from the Soviet Union, which was unaffected by the Persian Gulf crisis, Mr. Cheney decided that he would stand by his endorsement of the Base Force⁵⁸.

Meanwhile, General Vuono had accepted the Base Force. After the CINCs Conference General Powell and he had continued their discussions. In response to the Chief of Staff's arguments on behalf of the Army POM figure of 14 active divisions, the Chairman countered that budgetary constraints might require reduction to 10. In late autumn General Vuono

*General Fedorochko had been Deputy Director for Acquisition Policy and Program Integration in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition.

agreed to the Base Force size of 12. General Gray, however, continued to resist reduction of the Marine Corps.⁵⁹

At a meeting of the Department's Executive Committee (ExCom) on 29 November the Secretary directed the Services to implement the Base Force. They were then given an opportunity to respond to his guidance, and their appeals resulted in some adjustments. The force projections submitted with the Department's FY 1992-93 budget request in December and forwarded by the President to Congress in February 1991 reflected these adjustments. Aiming to approximate the Base Force by the end of FY 1995, the Department projected for that date an active strength of 535,500 for the Army; 509,700 for the Navy; 437,200 for the Air Force; and 170,600 for the Marine Corps, for a total active strength of 1,653,000. Reserve strength would be 906,000. There would be 12 active and 6 reserve, plus 2 cadre, Army divisions; 15 active and 11 reserve tactical fighter wings; and 451 ships, including 12 carriers. The Department anticipated that by the end of FY 1997 additional reductions in active strength, principally in the Marine Corps and the Navy, would yield a Base Force with an active strength of 1,633,200, while there would be a slight drop in reserve strength to 904,000. Thus the Base Force adopted by the Department was very close to the Chairman's February 1990 projections of an active strength of 1.6 million and a reserve strength of 898,000.⁶⁰

Having accomplished his objective of formal adoption of the Base Force, General Powell focused next on an issue he had briefly addressed in his DPRB presentation and touched upon in his August speeches: insuring investment in the capabilities required for sustaining the Base Force and for reconstitution. Without the ability to transport forces and support them far from their home bases, the Atlantic, Pacific, and Contingency Forces would be unable to perform their missions. In the areas of intelligence and communications, command, and control, US ability to function in the "new frontier" of space was essential to each of the Base Force's component forces. In order to reinforce the Base Force, should circumstances warrant, the United States must maintain its industrial base

and retain the reserve capacity needed to regenerate forces. And, in an era of smaller forces and reduced resources, it was essential to maintain technological superiority. General Powell therefore expanded his conception of the Base Force to include these requirements for its sustainment: transportation, space, reconstitution, and research and development. On 5 December 1990 in a speech to the Royal United Services Institute in London he introduced the concept of the four "supporting capabilities" to describe these requirements. Thereafter, the supporting capabilities were an integral part of the Base Force.⁶¹

A New Strategy

Soon after the President had announced the new defense strategy, work had begun on its implementation. From September 1990, action officers in J-5's Strategy Division worked informally with members of OSD who were drafting the 1991 Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG) to provide direction for the development of war plans consistent with the new strategy. They also began work on JSCP 1993-95, the first JSCP to be based upon the new strategy and force structure.

When OSD submitted the draft CPG for formal Joint Staff review in December, its regional focus and emphasis on a more flexible approach to planning for a range of possible crises were consonant with the Chairman's strategic vision. However, there were some important differences in outlook between the Joint Staff and OSD. The OSD draft declared that regional threats would replace global war as the central basis for conventional planning. Strategic planners in J-5, however, thought that, despite the change in focus to regional contingencies, for the period covered by the CPG the United States must still plan against a residual Soviet global capability. On the other hand, the Joint Staff disagreed with OSD's view that it was necessary to plan for the possibility of Soviet involvement in regional contingencies in Southwest Asia and Korea. OSD revised the CPG to reflect the Joint Staff position.

When the Chairman reviewed the revised CPG in June 1991, he objected to OSD's limitation of the use of reserve forces to specific types of crisis situations. He believed that planning should allow for the use of reserve forces and transportation systems requiring a presidential call-up at whatever stage of a crisis they might be needed. Mr. Wolfowitz incorporated the Chairman's recommendation in August, but the situation in the Soviet Union after the failed coup there in mid-August necessitated some changes before the CPG's submission to the Secretary. Finally, on 25 October the Chairman concurred in a draft that had been modified to reflect the disintegration in the Soviet Union. The Secretary then submitted the CPG to the President, who approved it and issued it to the Chairman in December.

The 1991 CPG established a new framework for operational planning based upon both the changes that had taken place in the strategic environment and expected force reductions. Not only was the CPG prepared in consultation with the Chairman, but it also derived from the strategic vision that he had worked for two years to implement⁶².

By the time Secretary Cheney submitted the CPG to the President, the Chairman had already issued the JSCP that provided detailed guidance for its implementation. Issued on 7 October 1991, JSCP 1993-95 directed the CINCs to prepare operational plans that focused on regional threats. The first JSCP to shift the focus of strategic planning from global to regional war, it emphasized the need for flexibility and planning for uncertainty. This included directing planning for reconstitution should the transformation of the Soviet Union create conditions that threatened US interests. Drafted to reflect the Chairman's strategic vision, it predated a formal statement of the new national military strategy that it was intended to carry out⁶³.

Work on preparing a new NMS had proceeded while the CPG and JSCP were being drafted. Over the months, General Butler had interwoven his ideas with the Chairman's into a statement of the new strategic direction. He had expanded the outline for a national military strategy based upon the Chairman's strategic vision that he had submitted

to General Powell the previous April. He had incorporated as well the ideas that he had first presented in his 1988 speech to the National War College, the new approach to warning that had emerged from the meetings of his roundtable, and the results of J-5 work on crisis response options. This exposition of the new strategy became the first two chapters of the 1991 Joint Military Net Assessment (JMNA), completed by the Joint Staff in December 1990 and issued by the Secretary of Defense in March 1991.

Before he left the Joint Staff in mid-January 1991, General Butler gave an expanded version of his strategy statement to General Powell. The J-5 Director hoped that this statement would soon be issued as the Chairman's NMS. Like previous statements of national military strategy, General Butler's draft--though unclassified--was aimed at the defense planning community. General Powell, however, believed that it was essential for the American people to understand the new strategy in order for them to be willing to provide the funding required to support it. He wanted a "Parade magazine article" NMS. Moreover, within days of General Butler's departure, the US-led United Nations coalition, which had been organized after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, launched an air campaign against Iraq. The middle of a war was not an appropriate time for issuing a new NMS⁶⁴.

Since the autumn of 1990 General Butler and the Strategy Division had also worked informally with the NSC staff on incorporating the new strategy and force structure in the President's 1991 National Security Strategy Report (NSSR). With guidance from the Chairman on the concepts and wording he wished included so that the presidential report would accord with his own public statements, the Strategy Division continued this work after General Butler's departure. General Powell also reviewed draft versions of the report. As a result, the report issued by the President on 13 August 1991 not only presented a conceptual framework derived from the Chairman's strategic vision but also specifically used the term Base Force to denote the minimum forces needed for guaranteeing national security. With the issuing of the NSSR, the new strategy and

force structure became official US policy. General Powell had accomplished a major part of the task he had set himself upon becoming Chairman⁶⁵.

Meanwhile, General Powell was also closely involved in the ongoing revision of the draft NMS. After the defeat of Iraq the Chairman had asked J-5 to reexamine General Butler's strategy statement in light of the war. While the overall thrust of the strategy was not changed, the experience of the war led to some additions. A key element of General Butler's strategic approach was the graduated use of various options to deter aggression. General Powell interpreted this as the type of gradualism that had led to the United States' becoming mired in Vietnam. He accepted the idea of using flexible deterrent options--small discrete actions to send a signal to a potential adversary. But the Chairman believed that the deployment of overwhelming force was the most effective deterrent in a regional crisis. He introduced into the NMS the concept of using overwhelming force--on Mr. Wolfowitz's advice later modified to decisive force--quickly to defeat an adversary. At General Powell's direction, there was also an expansion of the treatment of the link between strategy and war planning. In addition, J-5 introduced the concept of strategic agility to denote the rapid movement of forces not only from the United States but also from one theater to another. During the spring and summer of 1991 J-5 worked with the Chairman to incorporate these ideas and to recast the NMS in a style and format that would achieve the Chairman's objectives.

By the time the President issued the NSSR, the Chairman had approved a revised NMS. But consultation with Mr. Wolfowitz after the failed coup in the Soviet Union led him to postpone signing it. The unfolding of events in the Soviet Union from the coup until the dissolution at the end of December made it impossible to rewrite the NMS accurately to reflect the changing situation. Moreover, Mr. Wolfowitz had several suggestions for modifications, which General Powell decided to accommodate. These included specific reference to forward presence,

crisis response, reconstitution, and strategic deterrence as the foundations of the new defense strategy that Secretary Cheney had outlined in his 1991 Annual Report. Incorporating Mr. Wolfowitz's recommendations and the changes required by the dissolution of the Soviet Union led to further rewriting. Finally, on 27 January 1992 General Powell signed--for both formal submission to the Secretary and the President and public dissemination--an unclassified National Military Strategy embodying the strategy and force configuration he had devised while at FORSCOM. With the issuing of the NMS, the final document was in place for implementing his strategic vision⁶⁶.

In working to translate his ideas into policy, General Powell initiated not only substantive changes in strategy and force structure but also new approaches to defense planning. He fully used the enhanced authority of the Chairman that had resulted from the Goldwater-Nichols reform. Not only did Goldwater-Nichols make the Chairman, rather than the corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff, the principal military adviser to the Secretary and the President, but it left to the Chairman's discretion when to consult with the Chiefs. Moreover, Goldwater-Nichols gave the Chairman the authority to submit to the Secretary his own alternative program recommendations and budget proposals.

This expanded authority had existed since 1986. But General Powell had a very different conception than his predecessor of how he should use this authority. Rather than waiting for the President to enunciate a new national security strategy, which he and the Secretary would then be charged with implementing, General Powell believed that it was his responsibility to press for a change in strategy in response to the changes in the strategic environment. He also thought that, as Chairman, he should provide programming direction to the Services. In doing so, he stressed the importance of submitting programming requirements that took into account both available resources and the political context in which the Defense Department operated. He believed that to survive as effective forces in the changed fiscal environment, the Services must cease competing with each other for dwindling resources. Moreover, the armed forces must reduce and reconfigure.

While he hoped to win the Services to his point of view, he did not aim for either bureaucratic consensus through staff work or corporate consensus through JCS meetings. He never asked the Service Chiefs to vote on either the Base Force or recommending to the Secretary and the President adoption of a new strategy. Rather, he thought that it was more important to win the Secretary's approval⁶⁷.

Instead of simply responding to guidance from the President and the Secretary, General Powell successfully shaped that guidance. As world events and congressional pressures increasingly vindicated the Chairman's views, Secretary Cheney eventually issued programming guidance that embodied General Powell's approach to force structure. And President Bush announced a new national security strategy that reflected the Chairman's strategic vision. The result was the first change in national strategy in over forty years and a commitment to restructuring the armed forces to support that strategy.

NOTES

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INDEX

- Air Force, US
 - Base Force endorsement: 39-40
 - Chief of Staff: 23, 32, 39-40
 - force reductions: 15, 17, 23
- Armbrust, Colonel John: 19
- Army, US
 - Base Force endorsement: 40-41, 43-44
 - Chief of Staff: 2, 12, 23, 40, 43-44
 - force reductions: 12, 13, 17
- Atlantic Force: 12, 21, 25, 26, 44
- Atwood, Donald J., Jr.: 22, 30-31

- B-2: 27, 39
- Baldwin, Vice Admiral John A., Jr.: 7-8
- Base Force: 12, 21, 44-45
 - "A View to 1994: The Base Force"
 - briefing: 26-28, 29, 31
 - "A View to the 90s" briefing: 16-17, 18, 19, 20-23, 39
 - budget influence: 39-40, 42-43
 - Bush endorsement: 36-37
 - Cheney endorsement: 31, 35-36, 42, 43, 44, 50
 - Defense Planning and Resources Board
 - briefing: 30-32
 - force structure: 21, 26, 44
 - Program Assumptions Memorandum (PAM): 42
 - public relations: 33, 37-38, 47
 - "Red Team" critique: 31
 - Service Chiefs and: 27-28, 34, 38-41, 50
 - "supporting capabilities": 44-45
 - see also* Force structure
- Burba, General Edwin H.: 22
- Bush, President George: 3, 18, 35, 36-37, 45, 46, 47, 50
- Butler, Major General George L.: 6-8, 13, 15, 19, 24, 25, 27-28, 31, 38, 46-47

- Carns, Lieutenant General Michael P.C.: 24
- Chain, General John T.: 23
- Cheney, Secretary of Defense Richard: 4, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 29, 35, 37, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48-49, 50
- Chu, David: 24
- CINCs Conference: 20, 39-42, 43

- Commanders in Chief (CINCs): 22
 - Atlantic Command: 41
 - Central Command: 18
 - European Command: 4, 18, 23, 41
 - Forces Command: 11-12, 22
 - Pacific Command: 41
 - Southern Command: 22
 - Special Operations Command: 41
 - Strategic Air Command: 23
- Congress, US: 19, 22-23, 24, 28-30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37-38, 41-43, 44, 50
- Contingency Force: 12, 21, 25, 44
- Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG): 45-46
- Crisis response/reconstitution strategy: 35
- Crowe, Admiral William J.: 4, 5, 10, 13

- Defense Planning and Resources Board (DPRB): 6, 30-32, 33-35
- Defense Planning Guidance (DPG): 19-20, 22
- Dugan, General Michael J.: 39-40

- Edney, Admiral Leon A.: 41
- Executive Committee (ExCom), Department of Defense: 44

- Fedorochko, Brigadier General William, Jr.: 43
- Force structure
 - Air Force reductions: 15, 17, 23
 - Army reductions: 12, 13, 17
 - "A View to 1994: The Base Force"
 - briefing: 26-28, 29, 31
 - defense budget influence: 9-10
 - European force strength: 23
 - J-8/J-5 working group: 15-16
 - Marine Corps reductions: 15, 17, 38
 - Navy reductions: 12, 13-14, 17, 23, 34
 - post-Vietnam cutback: 11
 - Powell position: 11-12, 18-19
 - "Quiet Studies" on force reduction: 9-11, 14, 15
 - reductions: 34-35

strategic nuclear arsenal reduction: 14-15
see also Base Force
 Force Structure, Resource, and Assessment Directorate: *See* J-8.
 Galvin, General John R.: 18, 23, 41
 Germany: 14, 17-18
 Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act, 1986: 13, 49-50
 Gorbachev, Mikhail: 23
 Gray, General Alfred M., Jr.: 34, 38, 39, 40-41, 44

 Hardisty, Admiral Huntington: 41

 Illustrative Planning Scenario (IPS): 4-5
 Intercontinental ballistic missile reduction: 15

 J-5 (Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate): 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 24, 31, 45, 47, 48
 J-8/J-5 working group: 15-16
 Strategy Division: 9, 14, 15-16, 24, 45, 47
 J-8 (Force Structure, Resource, and Assessment Directorate): 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 24, 25, 31, 38, 42, 43
 J-8/J-5 working group: 15-16
 Program and Budget Analysis Division (PBAD): 9-10, 13, 14, 15-16, 19, 25, 42
 Jeremiah, Admiral David E.: 26-27, 31, 41
 Joint Military Net Assessment (JMNA): 47
 Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP): 2, 45
 Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS): 8

 Kelso, Admiral Frank B.: 40

 Libby, I. Lewis: 5, 31
 Linhard, Brigadier General Robert: 5

 Marine Corps
 Commandant: 34, 38, 39, 40-41, 44
 force reductions: 15, 17, 38, 40-41
 Meigs, Colonel Montgomery C., III: 24-26, 28, 31
 Moiseyev, General Mikhail: 20

 National Military Strategy (NMS): 3-5
 Butler drafts: 28, 47, 48
 NMS 1989: 4
 National Military Strategy Documents (NMSD): 2, 3-4
 National Military Strategy, 1992: 3, 4, 5, 30, 48-49
 National Security Review (NSR) 12, 1989: 3
 National Security Strategy Report (NSSR): 47
 Navy, US
 Chief of Naval Operations: 23, 40
 force reductions: 12, 13-14, 17, 23, 34, 40
 Nunn, Senator Sam: 28, 29, 30

 O'Keefe, Sean: 43

 Pacific Force: 12, 21, 25, 44
 Persian Gulf War: 37, 38, 39, 41-42, 43, 47, 48
 Powell, General Colin L.: 7, 12, 43, 49
 Cheney, debate with: 18
 decisive force concept: 48
 Defense Planning and Resources Board briefing: 31-34
 force structure: 11-12, 18-19, 29-30, 41-42
 Fulda gap: 26, 29
 post-Vietnam cutback: 11
 public relations: 28-30, 37-38
 Service Chiefs, relations with: 14, 18, 32
 Southwest Asia planning strategy: 19-20
 Soviet Union, views on: 12, 14, 15, 17-18, 20, 27, 29, 33, 39
 speeches: 24, 38, 44, 45, 47
 strategic vision: 11-14, 18-19
 "supporting capabilities": 45
 Washington Post interview: 32-33
 Program Assumptions Memorandum (PAM): 42

"Quiet Studies" on force reduction: 9-11, 14, 15

Reagan, President Ronald: 11

Robinson, Brigadier General John D.: 13, 15, 19, 24, 31, 38

Roundtable on Warning (ROW): 6-7

Schwarzkopf, General H. Norman: 18

Scowcroft, General Brent, (Ret): 36

Secretary of Defense, Office of (OSD): 4, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 29, 35-36, 37, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48-49

Program Analysis and Evaluation (PA&E): 24

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy: 5, 19-20, 24, 31-32, 34-35, 36, 37, 46, 49

Soviet Union

Butler position: 8-9

changes in: 8-9, 11, 17, 18, 20, 31, 33, 39, 46, 48-49

Powell position: 12, 14, 15, 17-18, 27, 29, 33

threat from: 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16-18, 19-20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29-30, 32, 33, 36, 38, 43, 45

Stevens, Paul: 5

Stiner, General Carl L.: 41

Strategic Forces: 12, 21, 25

Strategic nuclear arsenal reduction: 14-15

Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate: See J-5.

Strategy, national military and security

Bush speech: 36-37

Butler position: 6-9

Cold War: 1, 2

Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG): 45-46

decisive force concept: 48

defense budget influence: 1, 3, 9-11, 12-13

forward presence and defense concepts: 3-4

Illustrative Planning Scenario (IPS): 4-5

Meigs analysis: 24-26

minimum force concept: 19

"A National Military Strategy For the 90's": 28

National Strategy Review (NSR) 12: 3

OSD and J-5 differences: 45

overwhelming force concept: 48

Powell vision: 11-14, 18-19

"Quiet Studies" on force reduction: 10

regional planning emphasis: 2, 3, 9

Roundtable on Warning (ROW): 6-7

Southwest Asia planning strategy: 4-5, 19-20, 45

Soviet coup influence: 48-49

strategic agility concept: 48

threat-based analysis: 22, 23

"A View to 1994: The Base Force" briefing: 26-28, 29, 31

"A View to the 90s" briefing: 16-17, 18, 19, 39

warning concept: 2, 4, 6-7

see also Force structure

Thurman, General Maxwell R.: 22

Trost, Admiral Carlisle A.H.: 23

Vesser, Lieutenant General Dale (Ret): 31, 32

"A View to 1994: The Base Force" briefing: 26-28, 29, 31

"A View to the 90s" briefing: 16-17, 18, 19, 39

Vuono, General Carl E.: 12, 23, 40, 43-44

Warning concept: 2, 4, 6-7

Welch, General Larry D.: 23, 32

Wickham, General John A., Jr.: 2

Wolfowitz, Paul D.: 3, 5, 19-20, 24, 31-32, 34-35, 36, 37, 46, 49