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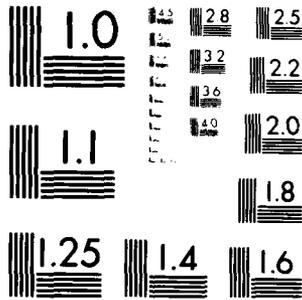
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**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania**

**THE CHALLENGE OF THE 1980's:
SOME TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS**

by

Keith A. Dunn

14 February 1981

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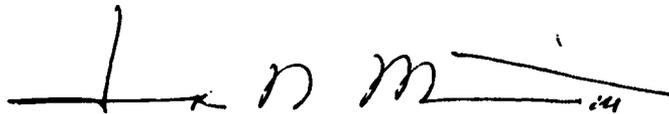
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FOREWORD

➤ This memorandum examines some of the major trends in international relations that should confront the United States during the decade of the 1980's and analyzes the implications of those trends upon US national interests. The author concentrates on five major trends: the likelihood that Soviet activity in the Third World will not abate but increase during the coming decade; the political, economic, and strategic importance of the Third World to the United States; the growing lack of cohesion and agreement upon objectives within US traditional alliances; the proliferation of arms transfers; and, the increasing potential for domestic conflicts and crises of internal authority within the Third World nations that are strategically important to the United States. The author concludes that, because it is impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy how these major trends will ultimately unravel, the United States will require a more flexible strategy and force structure than currently exists.

The Strategic Issues Research Memoranda program of the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, provides a means for timely dissemination of analytical papers which are not constrained by format or conformity with institutional policy. These memoranda are prepared on subjects of current importance in strategic areas related to the authors' professional work.

This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. N. Merritt', with a horizontal line underneath it.

JACK N. MERRITT
Major General
Commandant

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. KEITH A. DUNN joined the Strategic Studies Institute as a civilian in the summer of 1977. Prior to that time he was an Army intelligence officer. Dr. Dunn earned a master's degree and doctorate from the University of Missouri in American diplomatic relations, and has written and published articles on the interrelationships between detente and deterrence, the origins of the Cold War, and the Soviet military.

SUMMARY

As the United States enters the decade of the 1980's, it must cope with the reality that the environment which shaped US post-World War II strategic concepts has undergone significant changes. No longer is the United States the clear strategic nuclear power in the world. The 1980's will be an era of Soviet-American strategic nuclear equality in gross terms but with asymmetries in particular means of delivery. The United States is no longer the world's unchallenged economic and political leader. The growing economic strength of Western Europe, Japan, and the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf/Middle East region have caused those states not only to pursue more assertive, independent economic policies but also to challenge the United States in the international political arena. Given the factions and fissions which have occurred in the Communist world, containing the spread of monolithic communism no longer has the appeal that it did in the 1950's and 1960's. As a result, US alliances are less cohesive and some former enemies (e.g., China) are now closer to being friends and allies than adversaries.

While the strategic environment has been changing, there have been no essential changes in US national interests, nor probably should there be. US fundamental national interests continue to be survival of the United States as a sovereign, independent nation; preservation and security of US national territory; preservation of American values; and maintenance or, if possible, enhancement of the US standard of living. Changes in the strategic environment may not change US national interests. However, they will impact upon the ability of the United States to achieve its national interests, and, as a result, have significant implications for US foreign and defense policymakers.

This memorandum examines five major trends in international relations that will confront the United States during the decade of the 1980's and analyzes the implications of the trends for US interests. The trends examined are: the likelihood that Soviet political, economic, and military activity in the Third World will not abate but increase during the 1980's; the importance of the Third World to the United States; the growing lack of cohesion and agreement upon objectives between the United States and its traditional alliance partners; the proliferation of arms transfers;

and, the increasing potential for domestic conflicts and crises of internal authority within Third World nations that are strategically important to the United States.

The changing strategic environment and the trends within that environment indicate that the United States will face significant challenges in the 1980's. Some of those challenges will be new and some will be a continuation of trends which will intensify and become more prominent given the world's inability to solve them in the past. The trends and challenges will probably cause some changes in US economic, political, and military commitments. However, since it is impossible to predict exactly how the current trends will ultimately unravel, it is necessary to develop US strategy and forces with sufficient flexibility to cope with a variety of potential options and circumstances.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE 1980's: SOME TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

The 1980's began ominously. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, 52 American hostages in Iran, the aborted attempt to liberate the hostages, double-digit inflation, and recession appropriately generated much concern and apprehension about the future. President Carter told Congress that the United States started a new decade facing some of its most new and serious challenges. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff projected that under the best of circumstances the 1980's would be a "turbulent decade" in which major changes in outlook and military strategy would have to occur, "if our national security interests—and perhaps our way of life—are to be preserved intact" Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's assessment of the future was even more bleak: the United States began the decade with world events "sliding out of control" where "the number of countries willing to stake their future on our friendship [was] dwindling."

While there is room to debate the accuracy of such statements, there is at least one element of consensus about the future international environment that cuts across the spectrum of political views. Namely, as the United States enters the 1980's, it must cope

with the reality that the environment which shaped US post-World War II strategic concepts has undergone significant changes. No longer is the United States the clear strategic nuclear power in the world. The 1980's will be an era of Soviet-American strategic nuclear equality in gross terms but with asymmetries in particular means of delivery. The United States is no longer the world's unchallenged economic and political leader. The growing economic strength of Western Europe, Japan, and the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf/Middle East region have caused those states not only to pursue more assertive, independent economic policies but also to challenge the United States in the international political arena. At the same time, the Chinese ideological break with Moscow and growing association with the United States, Eurocommunism, the independent foreign policy positions pursued by Romania, and the domestic economic experiments adopted by Hungary and Poland seriously have challenged the authority and position of the Soviet Union as the titular leader of a world Communist movement. Given the factions and fissions which have resulted in the Communist world, containing the spread of monolithic communism no longer has the appeal that it once did in the 1950's and 1960's. As a result, US alliances are less cohesive and some former enemies (e.g., China) are now closer to being friends and allies than adversaries.

While the strategic environment has been changing, there have been no essential changes in US national interests, nor probably should there be. US fundamental national interests continue to be survival of the United States as a sovereign, independent nation-state; preservation and security of US national territory; preservation of American values; and maintenance or, if possible, enhancement of the US standard of living. Changes in the strategic environment may not change US national interests. However, they will impact upon the ability of the United States to achieve its national interests, and, as a result, have significant implications for US foreign and defense policymakers. The purpose of this paper is first to discuss some of the major trends in international relations that will confront the United States during the decade of the 1980's and then to analyze the implications and impacts of those trends upon US national interests.

TRENDS IN THE 1980's

The first major trend facing the United States in the 1980's which

should be discussed is that Soviet involvement in the Third World will continue and probably increase. Part of the problem that exists today with our understanding of Soviet desires, behavior, and objectives in the Third World stems from an overselling of detente in the early 1970's. The Kremlin never accepted the US idea that detente meant the USSR should or would cease its political, economic, and military support of Third World national liberation movements. Except for the Stalin period, the Kremlin has always perceived the Third World to be its natural ally in the struggle with the capitalist world.

The Soviet ideological commitment to what we now call the Third World has undergone significant permutations, but its interest in the area is strongly rooted in history. Lenin in his 1916 epoch work, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, saw the preconditions for a global socialist revolution inexorably tied to the developing world. The imperialist powers' competition for colonies would inevitably lead to conflict and wars among the imperialists. This would advance the progress of socialism by hastening the demise of capitalism. Khrushchev saw the creation of independent, neutral states that did not want to join any military blocs as part of a worldwide "zone of peace" which was in the Soviet interest to support. The fact that Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser, and Ben Bella were non-Marxists was of little importance to Khrushchev. They had adopted independent "noncapitalist roads of development," which to Khrushchev's way of thinking made them anti-imperialists and pro-Soviet. As Khrushchev told the 22nd CPSU in 1961, there was a "harmony between the vital interests of the peoples of these states [emerging young national states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America] and the interests of the people of the socialist states"

During the Brezhnev period, the Soviet approach toward the Third World has changed to a degree. Whereas Khrushchev's approach was "oversimplified, overoptimistic, and oversold," the Brezhnev regime style has been "highly rationalist, realistic, pragmatic, and cautious." Nevertheless, the ideological underpinnings and the conceptual importance of the Third World as a part of the world revolutionary movement in the struggle against imperialism remains largely intact. Peaceful coexistence and avoidance of nuclear war are still Soviet objectives. But these objectives do not preclude the USSR from providing ideological,

social, political, economic, and military support for Third World nations in their struggle for national liberation. As Brezhnev said at the 25th Party Congress, the Soviet Union's "revolutionary conscience and our Communist convictions" compel the USSR "to support peoples who are fighting for their freedom" in the Third World.⁴

In addition, Soviet economic interest in the Third World is increasing. Third World nations are important markets for Soviet goods and provide significant types of food stuffs which cannot be grown in the USSR. But more importantly, Third World sources increasingly provide critical raw materials for the Soviet Union and its East European allies. By the year 2000, it is projected that the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe will be importing 6.8 million tons of bauxite and 6.7 million tons of alumina per year, mostly from Third World nations. Even though the USSR is the second leading producer of tin in the world, the USSR imports 30 percent of its requirements and Eastern European nations import 90 percent of their consumption requirements, primarily from Southeast Asian nations. The USSR imports all of its sheet mica which is an item necessary for the production of critical insulators for electronic appliances. The USSR and Eastern Europe import 100 percent of their natural rubber requirements from Southeast Asian nations. In recent years, Moscow has imported larger quantities of beryllium for toughening metal; tantalum for use in electronic components; and lithium which is needed in aluminum production. Moreover, the Soviets have begun to cut back the production of chrome, platinum, titanium, and vanadium and to import larger quantities of these items.⁵

Finally, particularly the Middle East/Persian Gulf region should grow in its economic importance to the Soviet Union. During the late 1980's and 1990's, it is expected that the Soviet Union will become a net importer of oil. While the USSR will hardly be as dependent upon foreign sources of oil for its economic survival as Western Europe and Japan currently are, the requirement to have a level of assured access to foreign oil, as well as other critical raw materials, should further increase the importance of Third World nations to Kremlin leaders.

The Soviet Union's desire to be treated as a great power will also continue to drive the USSR toward an active role in the Third World. Moscow believes that it is one of the rights of a global

power to participate in decisions which shape events in other parts of the world. Historically, all other world powers have played such a role in international politics, and, since World War II, Moscow has increasingly emphasized that it sees this as one of its legitimate rights.

Any attempt to analyze future Soviet behavior in the Third World must take into consideration that a major change in the Soviet leadership is a virtual certainty during the 1980's. Exactly when the leadership change will occur and who or what group of individuals will assume positions of authority is unclear at this date. However, enough information on possible Brezhnev successors does exist to speculate about the future orientation of Soviet foreign policy.

Will the new Soviet leadership be more aggressive and adventuresome than its predecessor regime? If historical precedent holds true, during the active successor struggle, the Soviet Union may enter a more quiescent period of foreign policy as the new leaders attempt to consolidate their domestic positions. While one should not completely discount the possibility of a new orientation of Soviet policy, current analysis of the backgrounds and known attitudes of the emerging leadership group suggests fundamental continuity in Soviet policy through the midrange. Their memories of the Great Patriotic War and considerable pride in the USSR's postwar rise to superpower status, as well as their 20-year tutelage under a political leadership that has emphasized stability of personnel and policy, "businesslike" caution, and consensus-seeking decisions, suggests that the new Soviet leader(s) will be primarily nationalistic and pragmatic rather than ideological in their approach to world politics. It is unlikely that the Kremlin will directly attempt to challenge the United States in areas of the Third World where the Soviets perceive US interests are vital or where the United States has the military capability and will to respond. However, the new Soviet leadership will most likely continue to pressure, probe, and test US will in the Third World. The main risk of such an approach is that the new Soviet leaders, who will be inexperienced in foreign affairs, may provoke a crisis before they discover the limits of translating superpower strength into usable political influence.

A second major trend confronting the United States is the increasing potential for conflicts and disorders in the world which

are, as the International Institute of Strategic Studies has said, "immune to military force, yet whose outcome could have significant strategic implications for the United States."⁶ These are domestic conflicts and crises of internal authority, particularly within nations of geostrategic importance to the United States. In recent years, the Iranian revolution was the most significant of these conflicts. While there are analysts who have argued that a show of US force in the fall of 1978 may have bolstered the Shah and prevented his fall from power, such a military action would not have solved the problems which caused the Iranian revolution. By 1978, the Shah clearly was not in touch with the society that he ruled. His attempts to force Iran into the 20th century impinged upon traditional Islamic values. But, maybe of more importance, the growing middle class, which was created as a result of the ongoing modernization process, was stifled. Within 20 years the Iranian middle class more than doubled and made up over 25 percent of Iran's population. However, the Shah made few attempts to incorporate this group into the Iranian political process. Rather, as one expert on Iran has said, the Shah attempted "to encourage enormous economic change and some social change (primarily in land reform and improved literacy) in order to prevent any basic political change" in Iran.⁷

Obviously, the unique conditions which led to the fall of the Peacock Dynasty cannot be recreated in other areas of the world. Where else in the world does such a dynamic and respected religious leader as Ayatollah Khomeini exist who can obtain almost uninhibited access to international radio and television from which he can fuel dissension and dissatisfaction in a country that is hundreds of miles from his temporary residence? However, Iran should not be treated as an isolated example. The conditions which galvanized the Iranian radical left, middle class, extreme right, and fundamentalist clerics were internal problems of modernization: unfulfilled expectations, disparity of wealth, destruction of traditional values, corruption, a gap between economic reality and expectations, restricted participation in the process of government in a society which was monarchical and authoritarian, and a politically fragile government.

These conditions—maybe not to the same degree or in the same exact combination—exist today in other nations of strategic importance to the United States. Saudi Arabia, the Philippines,

Pakistan, and Egypt are good examples. Whether an Iranian type situation will occur in any one of these countries in the 1980's is extremely problematic. It is important, however, to recognize that sources of conflict and instability exist which are internal and indigenous and are unrelated to the matrix of Soviet-American or East-West competition. If the USSR attempts to take advantage of such situations, the United States may employ military force in an attempt to deter the USSR. However, if the USSR does not become directly involved, as it did not in Iran, it is unlikely that the United States would or could successfully employ military force in many of these areas. Without a clear external threat, US domestic support for such operations would probably not exist.

The Third World's economic and geostrategic importance to the United States and its allies is a generally accepted truism. Significantly, there are no indications that this trend will decline during the 1980's. In fact, in some areas of the Third World, particularly the Persian Gulf and Africa, US dependence upon the Third World should grow.

The economic importance of the Third World to the United States has been recognized for some time now. Currently, the United States imports 46 percent of its oil needs. Most of those imports come from Third World areas; excluding the spot market, the Persian Gulf/Middle East region supplies 32 percent of total US imports. Western Europe imports 87 percent of its oil needs of which more than 70 percent comes from the Persian Gulf/Middle East region. Japan is even more dependent since it has to import all of its oil and over three-fourths of its needs are supplied from the Persian Gulf/Middle East region. The oil-consuming nations have already begun steps to diversify imports and implement conservation procedures. However, for the foreseeable future the United States and particularly US allies will continue to be dependent upon Persian Gulf/Middle East oil, and, therefore, vulnerable to any interruption in the supply of oil. This situation has the potential to create significant tensions within the US alliance structure during the 1980's.

The United States is also dependent upon Third World sources for many other critical raw materials. The Department of Defense considers 18 materials to be of strategic importance for national security. The United States must import more than 50 percent of 14 of those strategic materials.⁸ But what is more important is where

some of those strategic materials are located and the degree of US dependence upon a few sources, which are primarily located in politically unstable areas. For example, the United States imports over 90 percent of its needs of chromium, cobalt, manganese, platinum and bauxite. The United States acquires these materials from the following major suppliers: 80 percent of ferrochrome from South Africa; over 60 percent of cobalt from Zaire; over 60 percent of manganese ore from Gabon and Brazil and 30 percent of ferromanganese from South Africa; 42 percent of platinum from South Africa; and 64 percent of bauxite from Jamaica and Surinam.⁹ Projections show that US dependence upon these and other materials will remain high and in some cases continue to increase between the 1980's and the year 2000.¹⁰

In addition to economic importance, the geostrategic location of some Third World countries gives them added significance to the United States. Third World nations border on most of the world's major naval chokepoints. They flank 23 of the 31 essential US trade routes. Moreover, because Third World nations are near potential world trouble spots, or in some instances are the trouble spots, access to military bases or facilities in such countries can enhance US power projection capabilities. It is in the latter area that the importance of the Third World to the United States should significantly increase during the next decade.

Since the early 1970's, US worldwide military presence and overseas military bases have declined in significant numbers. At the same time concern about Soviet power projection capabilities has grown to the point within the defense community that Andrew Marshall, Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, has said that it is not a question of *if* the USSR will use its military forces in areas that are noncontiguous to its homeland. Rather, "the big question" for the 1980's, as Marshall sees it, "is *in what circumstances* the Soviet Union will be willing to commit her forces in combat at a distance."¹¹

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan intensified an already existing concern about Soviet power projection capabilities and limitations upon US abilities to project its military power, particularly to the important Persian Gulf/Middle East region. As a result, since 1979 the United States has taken a number of initiatives to enhance American power projection capabilities in the region. US representatives have negotiated access to naval and air

facilities in Somalia, Kenya, and Oman and are negotiating with Egypt for access to similar facilities. Also, the Defense Department has decided to deploy Army and Marine equipment on Maritime Preposition Ships near future Third World trouble spots, particularly Southwest Asia. All of these actions have the objective of reducing the amount of time it takes to deploy US forces. But, at the same time, the actions have increased the importance of many Third World countries to the United States and demonstrate a growing US dependence upon Third World nations for basing, access, and overflight rights.

Another trend which the United States faces is not necessarily new. Rather it is a continuation of a phenomenon that has been ongoing for some time. This is the fact that the United States will not be able to take for granted that alliance unity and consensus will underscore American foreign policy. As the world has become more multipolar and America's primary allies in Europe and Asia have transitioned from nations rebuilding war destroyed economies to nations with global economic and political interests, their national interests have more frequently come in conflict with US interests. A classic case of this conflict is the current tension within US-Europe relations over what is the proper approach to take in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Generally, Europeans want to follow a selective linkage approach in Europe's relations with the USSR. Much like the early Carter administration, which tried to separate SALT II ratification from Soviet activity in the Third World and argued that SALT ratification was too important to US interests to sacrifice because of Soviet meddlesome behavior in the Third World, Europeans want to insulate European detente not only from crises in the Third World but also from bilateral Soviet-American relations. The invasion of Afghanistan has presented Europeans with a difficult situation which they seem to recognize.

Nevertheless, Europeans—particularly West Germans—are not ready to sacrifice the benefits of detente. This has nothing to do with Europeans being less concerned about the Soviet threat than the United States. They have been willing to spend money on defense and to support America's (albeit reluctantly in the case of Belgium and the Netherlands) tactical nuclear weapons modernization program. The point is that European detente, and more normal relations with the USSR have been beneficial to

Europe. In the last seven years, FRG exports to Eastern Europe and the USSR have increased by 55 percent and imports by 39 percent. Detente has also resulted in practical political benefits for West Germany. Since 1973, more than 50,000 Germans have been repatriated from East Germany. Travel back and forth between the two Germany's is significantly easier than in the past. In 1978 alone more than eight million West Germans were able to travel to East Germany to visit friends and relatives. Small as these accomplishments might appear in the American perspective they are significant achievements, which no West German politician is willing to sacrifice.

The problem facing the United States and its European allies in the 1980's is how to handle divergent national interests and how well a common approach, particularly toward the Soviet Union, can be developed that accommodates both the national interests of the United States and individual European states. These are traditional problems of any alliance. But, as the Theo Sommer of *Die Zeit* has recently argued, the questions over European detente, linkage, and US relations will probably become even more important alliance issues in the aftermath of Afghanistan.

It is a safe bet that, contrary to the expectations of most Americans, the rape of Afghanistan will not put to rest the old argument between US policymakers and Europeans about the use of detente, about linkage, or about the necessity of keeping on speaking terms with the East in stormy weather. In fact, the argument is likely to be exacerbated in the alliance. A French-German axis of interest is emerging whose leaders are intent not on cancelling detente in Europe but extending it to the outlying areas, on continuing the dialogue with Moscow across the endangered European front while containing Russian transgression and aggression in Asia and Africa.

A similar situation, but for different reasons, exists in future US Japanese relations. Japan has become quite sensitive to the Soviet threat in the Pacific region. Historically, Japanese Defense White Papers never specifically discussed the foreign threat to Japanese interests. Rather, they vaguely referred to the "enemy." Now, however, Japanese perceptions are much clearer and recent Japanese White Papers clearly spell out the Soviet Union as Japan's main threat. Japanese defense analysts openly worry about the Soviet air, ground, and naval buildup in the Far East. The discovery of at least a full Soviet division with over 300 APC's and several hundred medium tanks on the islands of Etorofu,

Kunashiri, and Shikotan was particularly troubling in 1979 to both Japanese politicians and military personnel. At the same time, *there is some concern within Japan that, while the USSR is building its forces in the Far East, the US capabilities are on the decline.* The net effect of these two trends has been to create a growing interest within some Japanese defense circles for Japan to do more for itself in the area of national security, while at the same time maintaining the US-Japan security relationship and the US nuclear umbrella.

However, at the same time that Japan has become sensitive to the Soviet military threat, Tokyo has also become increasingly aware of its economic vulnerability within the world, particularly to Third World resource denial actions. A constant flow of Middle East/Persian Gulf oil is critical for the economic survival of Japan. As a result, basic Japanese economic interests in that region are much more vital than those of its main alliance partner. To the extent possible during the 1980's, Tokyo will continue its post-World War II policies of keeping economics and politics separate in its efforts to maintain maximum access to the world's raw material resources (particularly oil) and markets. US efforts to encourage Japan to take a more active political role in international relations and to accept greater political responsibility for events in the Pacific regime will have to be coordinated closely with Tokyo. As Robert Scalapino has said, "the future of US-Japanese relations promises to be one of competition and cooperation. Despite its vital importance, our harmonious cooperation can no longer be taken for granted." *

A fifth and final major trend facing the United States in the 1980's is the proliferation of arms transfers to Third World countries. Even though a major objective of the former Carter administration was to lower the volume of US arms sales, it is unlikely that the trade in weapons will decrease dramatically in the coming decade. As long as there has been conflict and war, nations and individuals have been willing to provide or sell weapons of war. In sub-Saharan Africa, many nations continue to obtain surplus, out-of-date, or technologically inferior weapons. Nevertheless, the quantity of such weapons and the relative increase in technology over weapons systems previously held often represent a significant increase in combat capability. On the other hand, there is also a trend which points to an increased willingness of suppliers to provide first-line, high technology weapons to the Third World.

For example, the United States has agreed to sell Israel the F-15 and F-16; Saudi Arabia has purchased the F-15, and Egypt has decided to buy the F-16. France has sold or agreed to sell its latest model Mirage to Jordan and Morocco; and Britain, in 1978, agreed to sell 40 more Jaguars to India. The Soviet Union has also been willing to provide first class equipment to its recipients. Within recent years it has provided Ethiopia, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), and Cuba with the modern MIG 23. In addition, Moscow has sold the SU-20 (an export version of the fighter-bomber SU-24) to Algeria and PDRY.¹⁵

The number of arms suppliers is another major change in the arms transfer arena. The United States and USSR still are the dominant suppliers; respectively supplying nearly 40 and 30 percent of the total arms sold in the world. However, France, United Kingdom, and the Federal Republic of Germany are significant suppliers and they now control over 16 percent of the share of the arms sales market. It is significant also that developing countries such as Israel and Brazil now produce and sell sophisticated weapons to a number of international buyers. In addition, with an increasing number of nations signing coproduction and licensing agreements with the traditional major arms suppliers, there is a growing potential that more nations will not only be able to supply weapons to other nations, but also build their indigenous military capabilities and contribute to the spread of sophisticated and nonsophisticated weapons technology. While many of these coproduction and licensing agreements exist between the United States and its NATO allies, numerous other agreements exist. For example, South Korea and Taiwan have signed agreements with the United States to coproduce the F-5. India has a licensing agreement with Great Britain to produce a medium battle tank. Brazil produces an armed jet trainer aircraft under license by India. Pakistan produces antitank missiles under a license from France and Germany. Currently the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency has indicated that "23 developing nations participate in the license production of warships, 20 in military aircraft, 10 in missiles and 7 in armored vehicles."¹⁶

The proliferation of conventional weapons systems also applies to nuclear weapons. To date, at least six nations (Great Britain, France, Soviet Union, United States, China, and India) have exploded nuclear weapons. However, it is generally assumed that at

least another dozen or more nations could produce nuclear weapons within a few years if they decided to do so. For countries like Israel, Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa, and Brazil, the technology of making nuclear weapons is only a small inhibition. Rather, the biggest problem is the ability to acquire sufficient fissionable material to make nuclear weapons. This problem should become less of a constraint as nuclear plants for peaceful means increase and nations begin to accumulate sufficient amounts of plutonium as spent fuel.

Whether the potential nuclear nations will decide in the 1980's to join the nuclear club is a moot point. The decision to go or not to go nuclear will depend upon domestic political pressures, regional threat assessments, a desire for status, security concerns, and, in the case of US allies, an interpretation of how willing and capable the United States is to fulfill its alliance commitments. As in the case of the proliferation of conventional weapons systems, the United States will be able to exert some influence on the potential nuclear nations' decisions. However, it will not be able to control those decisions because the technology for building nuclear weapons is readily available and the United States is only one of many actors in the present nuclear club.

IMPLICATIONS OF TRENDS

The international trends confronting the United States indicate that the strategic environment in the coming decade will be more diverse, more complex, and more fragmented than in the past and that the United States will face significant challenges in its ability to support and defend fundamental US national interests. At the present, it is commonplace to hear critics accuse the United States of being weak and unwilling to face up to the global Soviet threat, as it has been manifested in Angola, Ethiopia, Vietnam, and Afghanistan. There is no doubt that the Carter administration was vulnerable to such changes and it is not clear that the former administration could stick to a policy once it had been enunciated (e.g., witness the maneuvering and backsliding on the Soviet brigade in Cuba). Nevertheless, too many of these criticisms are based upon a desire for a "high noon style of international diplomacy, a nostalgia for big sticks and heroic strikes" They are often founded in the belief that military force is the best

(maybe even the only) method for solving the Soviet challenge of the Third World.

This type of thinking has significant implications for US foreign and defense policy, particularly if the projections about continued active Soviet involvement in and US dependence upon the Third World are accurate. Within US policymaking circles, there is a tendency to view an increase in Soviet presence in a given area, the willingness of a Third World nation to accept Soviet arms, or Soviet sponsorship of a proxy's efforts as the start of an irreversible dependency relationship. Even though Soviet failures in the Third World are significant and numerous, US policymakers are often under a considerable amount of self-generated pressure to offset a supposed improvement in Soviet "influence" when Soviet presence increases in an area of the Third World.¹⁸ This very attempt to offset Soviet "influence" can create situations that allow the United States to be manipulated by Third World nations and to take short-term actions which may be in conflict with other more general and long-term US national interests.

For example, former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance defined one US objective as the ability to promote "peace in troubled areas of the world" which "reduces potential threats of wider war and removes opportunities for our rivals to extend their influence."¹⁹ A recognized and proven ability of the United States to project and sustain its forces in areas distant from its borders is one method to deter the Soviet Union from taking advantage of upheavals in the Third World. However, as the recent crises in Iran and Afghanistan indicate, there are many areas in the world where US force projection capabilities are lacking and the United States needs access to facilities to increase its surge capabilities. To the extent that improved access to facilities in the Third World and the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) enhance US force projection and rapid response capabilities, these actions will be positive steps. However, there are other less positive implications associated with these recent actions.

An American attempt to obtain access to facilities in the Third World will not be provided free. Depending upon the particular nation and region of the world, the "return" or "quid pro quo" for improved access will cover a wide range of potential options. In some cases, Washington may simply be able to buy the desired access. Or, at the other extreme, a nation may ask for sophisticated

weapons with the intention of using those weapons against domestic opposition factions or to begin a conflict with a neighboring nation. Therefore, it is important to recognize in many parts of the world that while US interests with a potential "client" may be coincidental (e.g., to deter the USSR), they may not be completely compatible (e.g., to promote peace in unstable regions of the world). If the payment for increased US access builds a nation's military capabilities, it very well may use those capabilities to pursue its own national interests which are in conflict with those of the United States. The Soviet-Somalia relationship from 1969-77 is instructive and should be studied as the United States negotiates for access to facilities in Somalia.²⁰

Moreover, it is important to recognize that once the United States enters into agreements with other countries for access to facilities that it loses some degree of leverage over the "client." By the very nature of the agreement the "client" is providing the United States something which is important to US national interests. In addition, once access is obtained, formal status of forces agreements are signed, and some level of US presence is established, it is difficult to withdraw from those commitments. US allies and potential adversaries may view such a reduction as part of an overall decline in US commitment or diminution of political will, and such a perception could have an adverse impact upon the United States achieving its other national interests.

As noted earlier, the competition and tensions which already exist among US alliance partners and the United States could have significant impact upon US foreign policy in the 1980's. The most significant implication of this trend may be a growing reluctance upon the part of many Americans to support military expenditures for the defense of NATO and Japan. For a long time, a group of Americans have believed that the Europeans, particularly the West Germans, have not taken enough initiatives in their own military defense and have been too willing to rely upon American forces and the US nuclear umbrella. In the early 1970's, this attitude manifested itself in the various Mansfield Amendments which called for a reduction in US forces in Europe and for Europeans to assume more of the burden of their defense.

Current tensions within the alliance structure may create an impression within the United States that its allies are unwilling to defend their own vital interests, particularly in the area of access to

oil and other raw materials in the Third World. If this does occur, there very well could be a revival of the sentiments expressed in the earlier Mansfield Amendments. Namely, if US allies are unwilling to shoulder the major part of the burden in the defense of their national interests, why should the United States bear the cost? There are some indications that such an attitude may already have emerged.²¹

Finally, the proliferation of weapons will have several impacts upon US interests. When conflicts between smaller nations do occur, they may be more destructive and possibly easier to start and fight than in the past. As a result of coproduction and licensing agreements, major suppliers may have less control over "clients" because the clients can produce their own arms or obtain arms and spare parts from other nations. Moreover, if Soviet arms shipments exceed a recipient's capabilities to absorb the new arms, Soviet opportunities to introduce proxy forces as advisers, support personnel, and combatants may be enhanced. Moreover, the proliferation of sophisticated weapons will increase the risk that either superpower will have to accept if it intends to initiate military actions in the Third World during the 1980's. Soviet and American military planners will increasingly have to become concerned with not only how the other superpower will react to some military initiative but also military capabilities Third World nations or proxy forces have at their disposal.

REFLECTIONS

The changing strategic environment and the trends within that environment indicate that the United States will face significant challenges in the 1980's. Some of those challenges will be new and some will be a continuation of trends which will intensify and become more prominent given the world's inability to solve them in the past. The trends and challenges will probably cause some changes in US economic, political, and military commitments. Unfortunately, it is impossible at this point to detail exactly what these changes in commitments may be and how they might specifically evolve.

It is possible to project that the Third World, particularly the Middle East/Persian Gulf oil regions and the resource rich Africa south of the Sahara region, will continue to grow in strategic

importance to the United States. Likewise, it is fairly safe to suggest that the potential for Third World conflicts which are either indigenous or Soviet-initiated in origin will probably continue and this will impact upon US interests. However, to go the next step and say what specific actions and commitments the United States will initiate is no more than conjecture. US responses will depend upon the situation, the scenario, who is specifically involved, and the US domestic political environment.

By far the most important requirement for the 1980's will be an effort to obtain strategic flexibility. The military services must be planned, programed, and budgeted so that they have the capabilities to respond to a variety of possible contingencies. Currently, the US military is predominantly planned, programed, and budgeted for a European contingency. Most active Army divisions are now heavy and some of the remaining nonheavy divisions are being considered for conversions to increase their antiarmor capabilities. While they may be appropriate for a European contingency, heavy divisions are less suitable for numerous other non-NATO contingencies. Also, by their very nature, heavy divisions are not rapidly transportable and the United States has been driven toward forward positioning of equipment, supplies, and material in Europe to support those divisions in case of conflict. As a result, the divisions, as well as their supporting units, supplies, and equipment cannot easily be deployed to other contingencies. The 1973 Middle East War illustrated how prepositioning could limit US flexibility.

But heavy divisions and prepositioning are only part of the problem. US strategy needs to become more flexible, less myopic, and not so single European scenario-oriented. Generally US military strategists have begun to recognize this problem. However, force programers continue to build forces based upon the European scenario, and, as a result, constrain the strategist's options. The defense of Europe will continue to be a US vital interest. However, the complexity of the international trends and wide range of potential conflicts facing the United States will ultimately require a more flexible strategy than has been within US capabilities in the past, if the United States is to successfully handle the challenges of the 1980's.

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potential for domestic conflicts and crises of internal authority within the Third World nations that are strategically important to the United States. The author concludes that, because it is impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy how these major trends will ultimately unravel, the United States will require a more flexible strategy and force structure than currently exists.

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