Lowering food supplies near Maleel, Somalia.

Air Force officer treating injured Somali.

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New Contingencies, OLD ROLES

By SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON

Few issues are more important than the roles and missions of the Armed Forces in the post-Cold War era. We are in the midst of major changes in the structure of the international system and of serious challenges to national security. This is not, however, the first time the Nation has faced such challenges. At the birth of the Republic we had to establish the military and naval forces to deal with threats from Europe. With the end of the Napoleonic era our national defense changed dramatically as did the Armed Forces. This situation remained fixed in its essentials until the close of the 19th century when America emerged as a world power. At that time the Nation consigned the Indian-fighting Army and the commerce-protecting Navy to history and in their stead created an Army designed for big wars and a Navy for big battles. That system served us well throughout two world wars. But by the late 1940s with the advent of the Cold War we needed a new Defense Establishment. Now *that* conflict is over, and once again the Nation must debate the nature of our national interests and the roles of the Armed Forces, just as earlier generations did in 1784, 1815, 1898, and 1946. In effect, we have to move on to a fifth phase of American defense policy.

Nontraditional and Nonmilitary

The term *nontraditional roles* obviously implies a distinction between traditional and nontraditional military roles. The traditional roles of the Armed Forces will presumably continue, but in this fifth phase of American military history the services will perform new nontraditional roles. Some new roles

This article is based on an address delivered on December 1, 1992 to a symposium on "Non-Traditional Roles for the U.S. Military in the Post-Cold War Era" which was sponsored by the National Defense University in Washington, D.C.

have evolved, others have been promoted by the Congress, in particular by Senator Sam Nunn, the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. It is largely due to his leadership that the Defense Authorization Act of 1993 encouraged the Armed Forces to conduct an anti-drug campaign targeted at inner-city youths, to provide role models for youth and health care to underserved communities, and to address domestic ills by improving the environment and economic and social conditions. In a speech in the Senate, Senator Nunn stated:

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Unloading flour at Wajir, Kenya, during Operation Provide Relief.

> *While the Soviet threat is gone, at home we are still battling drugs, poverty, urban decay, lack of self-esteem, unemployment, and racism. The military certainly cannot solve these problems. . . . But I am convinced that there is a proper and important role the Armed Forces can play in addressing these pressing issues. I believe we can reinvigorate the military's spectrum of capabilities to address such needs as deteriorating infrastructure, the lack of role models for tens of thousands if not millions of young people, limited training and education opportunities for the disadvantaged, and serious health and nutrition problems facing many of our citizens, particularly our children.*[1]

These clearly seem to be nontraditional roles. But are they really? The fact is that there are almost no conceivable roles in this new phase of our history that the Armed Forces have not performed in the past. The distinction to be made is not between traditional and nontraditional roles but between military and nonmilitary roles or, more precisely, between combat missions and noncombat missions. The purpose of the Armed Forces is combat: to deter and defeat enemies of the United States. That is their principal role or *raison d'être*, the justification for expending the resources needed to establish and maintain them. Forces created to perform that role, however, can be—and have been throughout our history—employed in noncombat, nonmilitary uses.

For over three decades the United States Military Academy at West Point trained all of the Nation's engineers, civilian as well as military. Throughout the 19th century the Army engaged in the economic and political development of the country. It explored and surveyed the West, chose sites for forts and planned settlements, built roadways, and developed waterways. And for years the Army performed roles that now are performed by agencies like the National Weather Service and the Geological Survey. In the latter part of the last century, the Army Signal Corps pioneered the development of the telegraph and telephone. The Navy was equally active in exploration and scientific research. Naval ships explored the Amazon, surveyed the coastlines of North and South America, laid cables on the ocean floor, and gathered scientific data from around the world. They also policed the slave trade. Naval officers negotiated dozens of treaties and oversaw lighthouses, life-saving services, coastal surveys, and steamboat inspection. The Army ran civil governments in the South during Reconstruction and at the same time governed Alaska for ten years. It was, of course, frequently called upon to intervene in labor strikes and domestic unrest. The Army Corps of Engineers constructed public buildings and canals and other civil works including the Panama Canal. Soldiers helped to combat malaria in Panama and cholera, hunger, and illiteracy in Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua. They also established schools, built works projects, promoted public health, organized elections, and encouraged democracy in those countries. In the 1930s the Army took on the immense task of recruiting, organizing, and administering the Civilian Conservation Corps.

After recent hurricanes in Florida and Hawaii many people hailed the superb contributions of the Armed Forces to disaster relief as evidence of a *new* role. Nothing could have been more incorrect. The services have regularly provided such relief in the past. As an official Army history puts it, in the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, "The most conspicuous employment of the Army within the United States . . . was in a variety of tasks that only the Army had the resources and organization to tackle quickly. In floods and blizzards and hurricanes it was the Army that was first on the spot with cots, blankets,

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Destruction caused by Hurricane Iniki on Kauai, Hawaii.

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Guardsman securing a food distribution center in the wake of Hurricane Andrew.

and food."[2] This has been true throughout our history. It is hard to think of a nonmilitary role without precedent for such roles are as American as apple pie.

Future Roles and Missions

Throughout our history, however, nonmilitary roles have never been used to justify maintaining the Armed Forces. The overall size, composition, and organization as well as recruitment, equipping, and training of the services have been based on our national interests and the missions—the combat missions—to be performed. In this fifth phase of American defense policy the roles of the Armed Forces remain as important as ever. There are three roles that present themselves today.

Maintaining Superiority. For the first time in sixty years, no major power, no rival, poses a national security challenge to the United States. We need defense policy and the capability not to contain or deter an existing threat as was the case during the Cold War, but rather to prevent the emergence of a new threat. To accomplish this goal, we must maintain a substantial, invulnerable nuclear retaliatory capability and deploy forces in both Europe and Asia to reassure allies and to preclude German or Japanese rearmament. We must also maintain both technological and maritime superiority, and provide a base for the rapid and effective development of a new enhanced defense capability if a major threat should begin to emerge.

Regional Security. Significant threats exist to our national interests in Southwest and East Asia, and we must have the capability to deal with them as we did in the Gulf War. To deter or defeat regional aggression the United States needs light and heavy land forces, tactical aviation, naval and Marine forces designed to fight from the sea against enemies on land, and the sealift and airlift to deploy forces rapidly to the scene of combat. Ideally the United States should be able to fight the equivalent of the Gulf War. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's "Option C" purportedly would provide this capability. Whether in five years the Armed Forces will be able to mount an operation like Desert Storm against an enemy similar to Iraq remains to be seen.

Our decisive victory in the Persian Gulf, however, makes it unlikely that we will be able to repeat that victory. Major regional aggressors in the future are likely to possess and use nuclear weapons. This reality was reflected in the reply of the Indian defence minister who, when asked what lesson he drew from the Gulf War, said: "Don't fight the United States unless you have nuclear weapons."[3] Likely aggressors—North Korea, Iran, Iraq, et al.—are intent on acquiring nuclear weapons. But until they get them the probability of stability in their respective regions is reasonably high. Once they do acquire these weapons, however, the likelihood they will use them is high. In all probability the first sure knowledge the world will have that such powers possess a usable nuclear weapon will be the explosion

of a weapon on the territory of one of their neighbors. Such an act is likely to be accompanied by a massive conventional offensive to quickly occupy Seoul, Saudi oil fields, or whatever other target the aggressor has in mind. That is the most serious type of regional threat that we may confront, and perhaps the most probable.

Coping with that kind of aggression will place new demands—nontraditional demands—on the Armed Forces. They will have to fight an enemy who has a small number of nuclear weapons and little or no inhibition to use them. To deter this first use by a rogue state, the United States will have to threaten massive retaliation, possibly nuclear. The principal role of Strategic Command in the coming years will be to maintain nuclear peace in the Third World.

Foreign Internal Defense. The Armed Forces may have to intervene quickly and effectively in countries important to our national security interests in order to restore a government to power that has been overthrown, remove a hostile regime, protect American lives and property abroad, rescue hostages, eliminate terrorists, destroy drug traffickers, or engage in other actions which normally fall under the rubric of low intensity conflict. Whether or not a state is aggressive or pacific, reasonably decent or totally threatening, depends overwhelmingly on the nature of its government. President Clinton has appropriately said that the promotion of democracy should be a central, perhaps even the central, theme of U.S. foreign policy. In those areas critical to our national security, the United States has to be prepared to defend governments that are friendly and democratic and to overthrow those that are unfriendly and undemocratic.

This requirement also emphasizes a new role for the Armed Forces: targeting dictatorships and their leaders. In the Gulf War, the U.S.-led coalition degraded by more than 50 percent the capability of the Iraqi military, and also brought Iraqi society to a virtual standstill. But that tremendous use of force failed to eliminate the true villains of peace, Iraq's government. The elimination of Saddam Hussein was an established U.S. objective, although not one endorsed by the United Nations, and it was not achieved. Indeed, during the last decade, we have attempted to eliminate three hostile dictators: Khadaffi, Noriega, and Saddam Hussein. We only succeeded in the case of Noriega, and that took time and caused us some embarrassment because it involved a tiny country about which American intelligence must have been the best in the world. Targeting and incapacitating dictatorial governments will be an important role for the Armed Forces in the coming years, and it is one with respect to which our capabilities are now sadly deficient.

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Nontraditional Roles

What do the Armed Forces need in order to carry out nontraditional roles? More training, equipment? New doctrine? Different organization? Nontraditional roles are really crisis response roles. It is fine to call a role nontraditional, but one also ought to talk about crisis response.

The military is taught to respond to crises, to make decisions when all the facts are not in. This is what service schools teach: to take action under pressure, work as a team, and troubleshoot; to organize, reorganize, establish task forces, and do task reorganization and tailoring. So in many respects the military is already prepared, no matter what the service: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard. Some additional training may be needed, but one should not get hung up on the idea that somehow a whole new force is needed.

—General John R. Galvin, USA (Ret.)

Future Challenges

Besides the military roles which the Armed Forces can expect to perform in the post-Cold War world, what are the appropriate nonmilitary—or civilian—roles that loom on the horizon? As indicated previously, these roles have been historically numerous and diverse, and no reason exists to suggest that they will not be continued. Future missions could involve the following:

- ▼ domestic activities as highlighted by Senator Nunn and in the Defense Authorization Act
- ▼ humanitarian assistance at home and abroad when welcomed by local governments
- ▼ peacekeeping at the invitation of the parties involved in the conflicts.

There is another type of mission—one about which questions have arisen—illustrated by the crisis in Somalia. Should the Armed Forces provide humanitarian assistance in those situations where such efforts are likely to be opposed by one or more of the conflicting parties? Clearly some form of international authorization, presumably approval by the United Nations, is a prerequisite

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for action by the United States. This occurred with the precedent-breaking U.N. Security Council Resolution 688 that authorized intervention by U.S., British, and French forces in order to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq. The United Nations has also given approval to deploy outside military forces in Bosnia as well as in Somalia to assist with the provision of humanitarian assistance to the innocent victims of civil war and anarchy.

Defining the Limits

The goal of our involvement in such situations is presumably to ensure that relief supplies reach the intended beneficiaries. This means that the Armed Forces should be able to act militarily to prevent or eliminate hostile action against efforts to deliver relief supplies. While that is certainly an appropriate response, there is a need to define the limits of U.S. involvement in such missions, and this gives rise to two problems.

First, so long as the conditions in the country concerned remain violent, external military force will be required to ensure that food and medical supplies reach their intended recipients. If the United Nations is unable to provide those forces, this could mean an extended if not indefinite American commitment. This is not a Gulf War-type situation where it was possible to drive the invading Iraqi forces out of Kuwait and then pack up and go home. In the case of Bosnia it could mean waiting for the South Slavs or other conflicting parties to resolve their differences by political or military means before extricating ourselves. And that could take a very, very long time.

Second, there is the problem of becoming an active participant in the conflict in the country concerned. One or more parties in that conflict may perceive any outside involvement as a hostile act. Thus by deploying American troops, from the viewpoint of the local combatants, we become the enemy. Inevitably while we are there for humanitarian purposes our presence has political and military consequences. The United States has a clear humanitarian interest in preventing genocide and starvation, and Americans will support intervention to deal with such tragedies within limits. When Somali clans or Slavic factions fight each other, we may attempt to mitigate the horrendous consequences that flow from the violence. Under such circumstances the Nation may even accept some American casualties. But the United States has no interest in which clan dominates Somalia, or where boundary lines are drawn in the Balkans. Americans will not support intervention which appears to be directed towards political goals. It is morally unjustifiable and politically indefensible that members of the Armed Forces should be killed to prevent Somalis from killing one another.

The Armed Forces can and should, if it is appropriate, be put to a variety of civilian uses, including domestic social and economic renewal, humanitarian and disaster relief both at home and abroad, and peacekeeping operations. The military should only be given military missions which involve possible combat, however, when they advance national security interests and are directed against a foreign enemy of the United States.

The possible nonmilitary roles of the Armed Forces have recently received a good amount of attention. Arguments have been made that the military should be organized and trained in order to perform such roles. A proposal has been made, for instance, that a

Relief mission arriving in support of Operation Provide Relief.

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Roles, Missions, and Functions

The terms *roles, missions,* and *functions* are often used interchangeably, but the distinctions among them are important. Roles are the broad and enduring purposes for which the services were established by Congress in law. Missions are the tasks assigned by the President or the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commanders in chief (CINCs). Functions are specific responsibilities assigned by the President and the Secretary of Defense to enable the services to fulfill their legally established roles. Simply stated, the primary function of the services is to provide forces that are organized, trained, and equipped to perform a role—to be employed by a CINC in the accomplishment of a mission.

—From the Chairman's "Report on the Roles, Missions, and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States".

Marine aiming at a weapons cantonment of Somali warlord General Aideed.

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unified command should be established for humanitarian assistance operations. In a somewhat similar fashion, a commission of former government officials has proposed creating a military command headed by a three- or four-star officer to provide support for U.N. peacekeeping operations and to develop doctrine, carry out planning, and train U.S. forces for such operations. The United States, another group argued, "should retain and promote officers whose expertise includes peacekeeping, humanitarian administration, and civilian support operations. . . . "[4]

Such proposals are basically misconceived. The mission of the Armed Forces is combat, to deter and defeat enemies of the United States. The military must be recruited, organized, trained, and equipped for that purpose alone. Its capabilities can, and should, be used for humanitarian and other civilian activities, but the military should not be organized or prepared or trained to perform such roles. A military force is fundamentally antihumanitarian: its purpose is to kill people in the most efficient way possible. That is why nations have traditionally maintained armies and navies. Should the military perform other roles? Absolutely, and as previously stated they have done so throughout our history. Should these roles define the Armed Forces? Absolutely not. All such roles should be spillover uses of the Armed Forces which can be performed because the services possess the organization, training, and equipment that are only maintained to defend the Nation. **JFQ**

NOTES

[1] Public Law 102–484, October 28, 1992, sections. 376, 1045, and 1081; Sam Nunn, *Congressional Record,* vol. 138, no. 91 (June 23, 1992), p. S 8602.

[2] Maurice Matloff, editor, *American Military History* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 413.

[3] Quoted in Les Aspin, "From Deterrence to Denuking: Dealing with Proliferation in the 1990s," Memorandum, February 18, 1992, p. 6.

[4] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Institute for International Economics, Memorandum to the President-Elect, Subject: "Harnessing Process to Purpose" (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1992), p. 17; Thomas G. Weiss and Kurt M. Campbell, "Military Humanitarianism," *Survival,* vol. 33 (September–October 1991), p. 457.