“The Long War—Strategy to Hardware”

A Presentation for the Expeditionary Warfare Conference

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What is the long war?

- A grim reality
- Prolonged, word-wide *irregular campaign*
- A long term effort against terrorist networks and other extremists
- A struggle between violent extremism and moderation
- Direct military force is required, but we cannot kill or capture our way to victory
- A patient accumulation of quiet successes over a long time
US Defense Strategy

- Defining principle of US Defense Strategy is **balance**
  - Not the same as treating all challenges equally
  - Means setting priorities
  - Cannot expect to eliminate risk by bigger budgets

- Unlikely to repeat another Iraq or Afghanistan any time soon
  - That is: forced regime change and nation building under fire

- Strategy is use indirect approach when possible
  - Capacity building
Balance What?

- Prevailing in wars we have while preparing for future contingencies
  - Next-war-itis versus today’s fights

- Institutionalizing counter insurgency, stability and capacity building while maintaining our traditional edge against other militaries
  - Don’t treat these capabilities as exotic distractions

- Retaining traditional service expertise while being open to change in order to accomplish today’s missions
  - Like it or not the new American way of war will include irregular war
The Obligations We Have Today

• Iraq will not simply “go away” with new administration
  • Success so far remains fragile
  • Some element of U.S. military power will continue to be involved

• Success in Afghanistan will be a focus for new administration
  • Shift in focus for USMC

• Deterrence of Iran, China over Taiwan, and North Korea

• Hunting down terrorists

• Support for Israel, plus other treaty obligations

• The Caribbean basin
  • Uncertain Cuban future
  • Weak governments, failed states, drugs, illegal immigration
  • Assisting Colombia
Open Security Questions—Neither Obligations Nor Trends

- Security implications of financial crisis
  - Credibility of US leadership
  - Willingness of US act
  - Ability of US to act

- What about Russia?

- Will a major ally or friend collapse (Pakistan, Saudi Arabia)?

- Will preserving access to West African oil (Gulf of Guinea) generate a new presence requirement?
Trends--Translation of China’s Economic Strength into Global Influence

- Broader trend than military modernization
  - Global economic interests = global political interests

- But military modernization creates requirement for capability competition
  - US credibility in East Asia at stake
  - Access versus anti-access
  - Finger still on the trigger vis-à-vis Taiwan

- Attractiveness of “China Model” to authoritarians
  - Generates political systems competition

- Ambition to field premier military force in Asia
  - Not trying to pick a fight with Washington, but Taiwan remains a serious issue
  - Worries our allies
Trends--Demography and Anti-Americanism in Muslim World

- Youth Bulge Phenomena
  - When 30 to 40% of a nation's males are in “fighting age” cohorts
  - Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Gaza, Yemen
- Demographic “armament”
  - Second, third, or fourth sons generate huge recruitment pools
  - Asymmetric advantage
- Public Opinion (predominately Muslim countries)
  - 15% favorable
  - 75% unfavorable
- Growing pool of Jihadist recruits
  - Many nations where cells can hide and survive
  - Limits range of political options available to friendly Islamic states

Long War will Indeed be Long
Trends--Enrichment of Energy Producing States that have anti-American Grievances

• Petrodollar surge in Iran, Russia and Venezuela

• Russia a longer term concern
  • Ability to revitalize conventional forces thanks to “warm” industrial base
  • Wealth underwrites restoring national pride

• Iran’s wealth offsets its “demographic” disarmament
  • Engaging in proxy wars—Hezbollah and Hamas
  • Funding not an issue for nuclear weapons ambitions
  • Can support substantial anti-US insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan

• Is Chavez a threat to long term stability?

Intersection between hostile states with money and terrorist organizations, a special concern
Trend--An Incomplete Proliferation Agenda

- Short of regime change “counter-proliferation” not a credible policy
  - Determined leaders will develop bombs
  - India, Pakistan, North Korea and probably Iran
  - Perception that Iraq and Afghanistan have removed regime change from “US table”

- Can deter use by regimes, but can we deter transfer?

- The most serious future problem is transfer to non-state actors

Need explicit, credible policy that deters transfer to, and use by non-state actors
Trend—Global Climate Change

- Move beyond skeptics and believers debate
- Must consider as low-probability/high consequences
- Some effects of GCC are likely to be permanent and be very bad for some regions
  - Life and death situations
  - Adapt or migrate
- Developing nations least able to cope
- Implications:
  - Next administration will inject a sense of urgency
  - Expeditionary role in HA/DR will grow
  - Arctic Northwest passage

Threat Multiplier for Some of Most Unstable Regions in the World
What Does This All Mean?

• If forcible regime change off the table; and responding to aggression is low probability, accepting risk by not growing high end forces a likelihood
  • “Holding our own” more likely
  • Afloat missile defense a probable exception

• Ability to redirect most of these trends is remote
  • Coping rather than shaping the order of the day

• Speaking softly, and carrying a big stick is an effective coping mechanism
  • Peacetime expeditionary operations will remain in demand
  • Peacetime forward presence enables “coping”
  • Presence also enables Maritime Security Operations

• High demand for U.S. engagement, capacity building, irregular forces, and deployable naval power projection for deterrence and alliance credibility