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National Security in the Twenty-First Century

*The Honorable Steve Buyer**

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel of the House Armed Services Committee, I have conducted numerous hearings on the growing problems facing our service men and women. Although pay and benefits are important, there are other issues confronting the Force: lack of spare parts, lack of adequate training time, aging equipment, high depreciation rates on our equipment, longer working hours, and above all else, prolonged family separation due to an increased operations schedule. Simply put, asking the military to do more with less is not a strategy for success. Both our civilian and military leaders have expressed concern about the current situation.

This past summer, Army Secretary Louis Caldera indicated the Army required an additional 20,000 to 50,000 soldiers to perform its Post Cold War mission.¹ The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James L. Jones has previously commented that the Marines could use an additional 5,000 personnel. Furthermore, organizations representing the National Guard and Reserves request lawmakers to stop the planned 25,000 reduction of Reserve components, as mandated by the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review.²

Why the focus on the structure of the Force? Because the military, along with diplomatic and economic mechanisms, represents one of the three basic elements of national power. Simply put, the structure of the Force is important because the purpose of the military is one of the three vehicles to achieve the political objectives laid out by the President with regard to our national security interests. As such, the military, through the national military strategy, is assigned the duty to protect our vital national security interests.

It is now evident that there is a conflict between the current operations assigned the United States Military and the Clinton Administration's national military strategy. While discussion in Washington has focused primarily on the Military's insufficient membership, policy-makers must first discuss the inadequacies of the national military strategy, which is no longer feasible or sustainable. In sum, our national military strategy reads:

For the foreseeable future U.S. forces must be sufficient in size, versatility and responsiveness in order to transition from a posture of global engagement to fight and win in concert with our allies two major theater of wars that occur roughly at the same time. In this context they must also be able to defeat the initial enemy advance

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1. Bradley Graham, *Military Services Considering Request for Additional Troops: Strains Caused by Increase in Peacekeeping, Other Missions Noted*, WASHINGTON POST, July 18, 1999, at A04.

2. WILLIAM S. COHEN, REP. OF THE QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW 5 (May 1997).

in two distant theaters in close succession and to fight and win in situations where chemical and biological weapons and other asymmetric approaches are employed."³

Why is this strategy no longer feasible? A strategy of adopting a posture of global engagement conflicts with the purpose of the Nation's military, which is to fight and with the Nation's battles. In short, President Clinton's national military strategy has our armed forces engaged throughout the world as quasi-diplomats. Today's military is engaged in peace-enforcement, peace-keeping, nation building, refugee relief, nation-to-nation military contacts and other humanitarian missions that are non-traditional in nature. While I initially supported nation-to-nation military contacts as a way to help Eastern Communist Block countries transition to democracy, the President has utilized this mission to excess.

Currently, there are over 265,000 military personnel serving in over 135 countries. Despite the presidential policy of "do more with less," Congress remains sensitive to the burdens of our young men and women serving in the Nation's military and has repeatedly funded the Department of Defense well above the President's request year after year. Unfortunately, in order for military planners in the Pentagon to meet operational demands, they have been forced repeatedly to divert money intended for the purchase of ammunition, spare parts, equipment and housing, and have used it to fund these "unfunded operations." This is assuming a great risk. In Fiscal Year 2000 alone, the unfunded shortfall in military funding requirements was over \$8 billion. Looking forward, the Service Chiefs have testified that in order to maintain force structure and readiness to implement the national military strategy, they will need more than \$80 billion over the next six years. These operations are exacerbating the problem. They are draining Department of Defense's budget and its ability to project accurately future spending requirements. For example, the Congressional Research Service estimates recent costs of U.S. military intervention to be:

Rwanda	\$145 million
Somalia	\$1.5 billion
Haiti	\$1 billion and rising
Bosnia	\$10 billion and rising
South West Asia	\$8.5 billion and rising
Kosovo	\$7 billion and rising ⁴

U.S. forces are stretched so thin, that during the Kosovo mission, the United States was forced to divert planes from their patrols over Iraq in order to support the ongoing campaign. In early April the Navy shifted its only aircraft carrier in the western Pacific and its 75 combat jets out of the region indefinitely to help support the Military's efforts in Yugoslavia. In addition, the Pentagon briefly suspended enforcement of the no-fly zone over northern Iraq while fighter-bombers and radar-jamming planes were also dispatched to the air-war over Serbia. The Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ryan, was so concerned about the rigors of the operations schedule, that he called for an Air Force-wide "stand down" after the operation.

These missions also required considerable and growing support from the National Guard and the Reserves. Over the last several years, National Guard and Reserve units have been asked to assist in operations in Haiti, Bosnia, Hurricane Mitch relief efforts,

3. WILLIAM S. COHEN, ANN. REP. TO PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS at 17 (1999).

4. NINA SERAFINO, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICES REPORT, MILITARY CONTINGENCY FUNDING FOR BOSNIA, SOUTHWEST ASIA, AND OTHER OPERATIONS: QUESTION AND ANSWERS N. 98-823F, at 3 (1999).

and Kosovo. In addition, National Guard units have been used in the rotation of the Sinai Peace-keeping mission, and now military leaders are planning to use National Guard "Enhanced Brigades" to ease further the burden of the active duty force in the Balkans. Although the Reserve Components are supposed to act as a combat multiplier in time of war, they have assumed a post-Cold War role as surrogates and substitutes for the active Force. While integrating the active and reserve components is the right strategy, the United States must exercise restraint in the employment of its forces.

Equally important, soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines routinely question the "mission credibility" of these operations. In fact, when U.S. forces intervened in Haiti and Bosnia they were ultimately employed to perform the functions of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of government. This same scenario holds true in Kosovo. As a result, the time spent in non-combat military operations seriously undermine a unit's combat readiness. According to Army Commanders, combat units assigned to these operations have reported that it requires anywhere from six months to one year to retrain personnel for their intended combat purpose: to fight and win the nation's battles.

Clearly, the post-Cold War environment represents a period of considerable turmoil. In early 1991, after a victorious conclusion to the Persian Gulf War, the United States enjoyed unipolar military dominance without any prospect of an immediate military rival. Despite overwhelming victory, the struggle for peace and security continues. The question for those of us that serve on the House Armed Services Committee, and for those who appropriate funds on its behalf, is: could we today fight and win a conflict of similar scale as the Gulf War? Most military planners, including the Service Chiefs, would respond with caution and alarm. Yet, the United States has had a significant number of forces in Korea, Iraq, and most recently, the former Yugoslavia and the Balkans.

These regions exist as potential flash points that could easily erupt in the near future, requiring the commitment of sizeable force. Despite possessing a force structure barely capable of committing to two near simultaneous major regional conflicts, the United States has both strategically and operationally committed military forces to three potential major theaters of conflict, and is engaged in numerous other countries. This Administration's appetite for foreign military intervention has employed U.S. forces more than any other President in recent history. As required by the War Powers Resolution, President Clinton notified Congress that he was placing U.S. forces in harms way 50 times, far more than the last four Presidents combined (seven under President Bush, fourteen under President Reagan, one under President Carter, and four by President Ford).

Furthermore, the United States has incurred a great financial and geopolitical burden for each of these major contingencies. Realistically speaking, as long as our allies know the United States will be there to provide military forces and financing, there is little incentive for them to accept responsibility for ensuring the security and stability of their own region. While the United States does have a responsibility to provide certain types of support (intelligence, communications and possibly logistics), it is time our allies assume a greater security role in the post-Cold War world. The utilization of U.S. combat forces should be reserved for the critical times when the balance of power in a region, or the world itself, is in jeopardy.

So what is the appropriate function of United States military forces in light of our national military strategy? In order to properly answer the question, we must conduct a global assessment, define or redefine our vital national security interests, determine existing and potential threats to our national security, review our economic, diplomatic and military resources, identify a national strategy based on the resources available, and then formulate a national security strategy to meet our political goals. Once this process is complete, we can then develop a viable national military strategy. This is the current

mission of the United States Commission on National Security in the 21st Century. While the Commission's work is aimed toward assessing the future of national security twenty-five years and beyond, current policy-makers need to recognize that the present national military strategy undermines the Nation's military forces' performance of protecting and responding to the Nation's vital security interests. That is the message I will deliver to the next commander-in-chief. I encourage my colleagues and the American people to join me.