

2004

Debate & Response

The U.S. Naval War College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

War College, The U.S. Naval (2004) "Debate & Response," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 57 : No. 1 , Article 9.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol57/iss1/9>

This Additional Writing is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

DEBATE & RESPONSE

SMALL NAVIES DO HAVE A PLACE IN NETWORK-CENTRIC WARFARE

Rear Admiral Patrick M. Stillman, U.S. Coast Guard

In “Small Navies and Network-Centric Warfare” (*Naval War College Review*, Spring 2003, pp. 1–16), Paul T. Mitchell asked if there is a place for small navies in the world of network-centric warfare. From my perspective as the program executive officer for the U.S. Coast Guard’s Integrated Deepwater System (IDS), the answer is a resounding “Yes!” The price of admission, however, is a network-centric system for C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance), modern air and surface platforms, and a well-established relationship with the U.S. Navy.

Rear Admiral Stillman became the first program executive officer of the Integrated Deepwater System in April 2001. He leads the largest recapitalization program in the U.S. Coast Guard’s history. Prior to this assignment, he served as the first assistant commandant of the Coast Guard for governmental and public affairs.

Rear Admiral Stillman’s career includes numerous afloat assignments. He served as operations officer and executive officer of, and later commanded, the U.S. Coast Guard Eagle, and he was the first commanding officer of the 270-foot medium-endurance cutter Forward. Early in his career he also commanded the cutter Cape Cross, served on the cutter Valiant as a deck watch officer, and was an executive officer of the cutter Vigorous. Rear Admiral Stillman graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1972 with a B.A. in science. He holds a master of arts degree from Wesleyan University, as well as a master’s of public administration from George Washington University.

Naval War College Review, Winter 2004, Vol. LVII, No. 1

The U.S. Coast Guard’s experience in addressing the urgent need to recapitalize its inventory of patrol boats, cutters, aircraft, and supporting systems to meet twenty-first-century operational requirements is instructive.

Our situation today bears a striking resemblance to conditions faced by many navies around the world. With an average age of more than thirty years, the Coast Guard’s fleet of high and medium-endurance cutters is older than all but *two* of the thirty-nine worldwide fleets of similar size and mission. This aging and increasingly obsolete inventory of aircraft, cutters, and systems jeopardizes the service’s future ability to perform its multiple missions in such areas as maritime homeland security, national defense, the marine environment, and maritime safety.

At a time when mission demands are growing, our legacy assets (which are approaching block obsolescence by the end of this decade) are less reliable, more difficult to maintain and repair, and more expensive to operate. As Mitchell correctly emphasizes, the challenges of designing and acquiring a force structure suitable for today's network-centric age involve formidable technical issues as well as the policies and protocols governing joint and coalition operations with the U.S. Navy. The Coast Guard is tackling these challenges with a two-pronged strategy.

Past Coast Guard acquisition programs—based largely on the one-for-one replacement of hulls and airframes—have resulted in suboptimized interoperability in critical command and control capabilities. Yet as recent combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate vividly, seamless C4ISR is the sine qua non for success in the netted battle space of the twenty-first century.

The IDS, conceived several years before the terrorist attacks of 9/11, will address the Coast Guard's current dilemma. When fully implemented, the twenty-year, seventeen-billion-dollar (fiscal year 1998 dollars) Deepwater program will consist of three classes of new cutters and their associated small boats, a new and upgraded fixed-wing manned aircraft fleet, a combination of new and upgraded helicopters, and both cutter-based and land-based unmanned aerial vehicles.

Deepwater takes an integrated "system-of-systems" approach to upgrading existing surface and air legacy assets while developing new and more capable platforms—including highly improved systems C4ISR and advanced logistics capabilities.

Deepwater's C4ISR system warrants special mention. It will lead to more effective risk management and more productive force employment in all Coast Guard mission areas. The Coast Guard's reliance on a capabilities-based system design was based on broad C4ISR requirements established for the IDS contract award.

- *Surveillance, detection, and monitoring:* Capable of determining what and who resides, enters, and exits in the Deepwater area of operational responsibility.
- *Internal information exchange:* Maintain simultaneous real-time voice, video, and data communications between all Coast Guard assets.
- *External information exchange:* Maintain simultaneous real-time voice, video, and data communications with the Department of Defense, other federal agencies, state and local government, NATO, and similar coalitions.
- *Situational awareness:* Maintain awareness of the operating environment, to include fusion of local tactical information with database information in near-real time.

C4ISR capability improvements—including improved sensors and systems to collect and transmit data and information—will give operational commanders the tools they need to develop better situational awareness and a common operating picture. This will lead, in turn, to higher levels of maritime domain awareness (comprehensive information, intelligence, and knowledge of all relevant entities within the U.S. maritime domain, and their respective activities, that could affect U.S. security, safety, economy, or environment).

Under current plans, Deepwater will begin deploying the Coast Guard Common Command and Control (CG-C2) system in 2005. It will be integrated with Deepwater's sensors, communication systems, and legacy interfaces. A common C4ISR architecture and software implementation across Deepwater's surface and aerial platforms will reduce operational costs and accommodate an imbedded "technology refresh" capability to obviate obsolescence in the future.

Tactical data from Deepwater platforms will be integrated into a common operating picture through CG-C2; timely and secure data exchange will be ensured by satellite communication data links available twenty-four hours, seven days a week. Sensor integration will be achieved on all assets through correlation of specific data and fusion into the common operating picture.

Deepwater's network-centric C4ISR architecture will contribute to improved maritime domain awareness through its provisions for disseminating shared tracks and real-time data streams, online intelligence, robust and seamless connectivity with continuous coordination, stand-alone capabilities, a combination of active and passive sensors, expanded surveillance and detection areas, and improved communications with all federal agencies and merchant shipping.

The IDS combination of upgraded and new surface and air platforms also will be more technically capable and designed for increased endurance and range, better sea-keeping, ease of maintenance, and smaller crews. These characteristics translate into added operational capacity, more presence, and lower life-cycle costs. Deepwater's combination of both manned aircraft and UAVs, for example, will deliver 80 percent more flight hours than today's legacy inventory of aging fixed-wing and rotary aircraft.

Turning from Deepwater's technical considerations, the second thrust of our acquisition strategy entails strong partnerships within the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, industry, and state and local agencies. New levels of public and private cooperation with Deepwater's systems integrator, Integrated Coast Guard Systems (a joint venture between Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman), allow us to draw on its vast experience in designing and developing market-edge systems that strike an appropriate balance between capability and affordability.

As one of the five branches of the U.S. armed forces, the Coast Guard strategy for Deepwater also is guided by its historically close relationship with the U.S. Navy.

The *National Fleet Policy Statement*, originally signed in September 1998, codifies this relationship. In July 2002, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Vern Clark, and the Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Thomas H. Collins, reaffirmed and updated the agreement to ensure that both services work together to synchronize our multimission platforms, infrastructure, and personnel to provide the highest level of naval and maritime capability for the nation's investment. This partnership—a model, possibly, for similar arrangements between the Coast Guard and some of the other twenty-one agencies in the Department of Homeland Security—allows an effective two-way flow of capability to meet both expeditionary and domestic-security imperatives.

One provision of this policy stipulates “all ships, boats, aircraft, and shore command-and-control nodes of the National Fleet will be interoperable to provide force depth for peacetime missions, homeland security, crisis response, and wartime tasks.”

Mindful of this guidance, my counterpart in the Department of the Navy, the Program Executive Officer Ships, Rear Admiral Charles Hamilton II, and I signed a memorandum of understanding in 2002 and formed a working group to specify common technologies, systems, and processes critical to both the Navy's future Littoral Combat Ship and the design and development of Deepwater's Offshore Patrol Cutter. This team holds regular meetings and exchanges at multiple staff levels to ensure that we will derive mutual benefits through a cooperative technical approach in areas of common interest.

The renewed cooperation exhibited between the Navy and Coast Guard reflects our awareness that there are necessary and unavoidable transformational intersections where each of our service's operational requirements overlap.

Tomorrow's Navy's network-centric capability will reside in FORCENet and systems like cooperative engagement capability. They offer the Navy the means to transition to a twenty-first-century force that can share digital tactical information and sensor data seamlessly between ground, air, space, surface, and submerged platforms despite broad geographic separation across an operational theater.

The Coast Guard faces a similar requirement, and it is this network-centric vision that motivates the design and development of a Deepwater C4ISR system that will allow Coast Guard surface platforms to serve as nodes for shared information and operational knowledge with command centers ashore—a potent force multiplier that will contribute directly to the development of a common operating picture and maritime domain awareness.

Deepwater's incremental C4ISR approach to improve Coast Guard maritime domain awareness will complement the Navy's FORCENet initiative. Just as

FORCEnet will transform the Navy's operational capabilities by enabling more rapid decision making and massed war-fighting effects, Deepwater's interoperable C4ISR system will provide the means to communicate information and data quickly and securely between Coast Guard assets, the Department of Homeland Security, the Navy, and other federal, state, and local agencies.

What of the U.S. Coast Guard's many friends around the world? Faced with a widening gap in technical capabilities, they cannot dismiss out of hand the concern (voiced by one commentator cited by Mitchell) that the nature of the U.S. Navy's network-centric capabilities may ultimately result in more unilateral U.S. operations. Recent history, however, suggests that there are powerful incentives for the United States and its allies to develop compatible navies and to reach agreement on the means to share sensitive information in a networked coalition force of ships and aircraft.

The United States and its partners in NATO have a long history of such cooperation and common purpose. More recently, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, sixty-five ships from coalition nations joined 175 U.S. Navy ships and U.S. Coast Guard cutters assigned to the U.S. Fifth Fleet. This operation was patterned on similar cooperation demonstrated during combat operations in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002.

For its part, the U.S. Coast Guard encourages foreign partnering opportunities through its Deepwater International Office, my program's arm for international engagement and Foreign Military Sales (FMS). This office serves as an important link between the overall U.S. Coast Guard acquisition effort and the overseas community. The ultimate goals are to achieve heightened cooperation and interoperability with U.S. allies, increased efficiency of acquisition, and worldwide visibility of the technological superiority in maritime domain awareness that the Deepwater Program will bring to the twenty-first century.

During the past year, the Deepwater International Office has provided information to educate prospective international customers and the security assistance community. The Deepwater staff continuously studies potential foreign markets for Deepwater system and subsystem applicability. To this end, the staff works closely with defense attachés, embassy personnel, and security assistance officers.

In addition to promoting the Deepwater System's platforms and systems through foreign military sales, the IDS International Office focuses on building partnerships throughout the security assistance community. The Deepwater Office is presently working, for example, with the Director of Security Assistance and Arms Transfers in the Department of State. In the Department of Defense, the office works directly with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and the U. S. Navy International Programs Office (Navy IPO).

Deepwater International effectively leverages a memorandum of understanding between Navy IPO and the International Affairs Office (G-GI) at U.S. Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C., to pursue security assistance opportunities worldwide. G-GI is the nexus for international affairs policy guidance at Coast Guard Headquarters, and it provides Deepwater with superb support. When briefing security assistance officers at annual meetings hosted by the unified U.S. combatant commands, for example, the International Affairs Office and Deepwater staff follow a team approach to derive mutual benefits.

Deepwater staff officers maintain close ties with the Navy IPO for the explicit purpose of advocating the international market potential of the Coast Guard's IDS system of systems. As the lead implementing agency for maritime security assistance and associated support, Navy IPO functions as Deepwater's proponent in pursuit of foreign military sales opportunities. Interested nations route all international queries, informal "Requests for Information/Proposal," and formal "Letters of Request" directly to Navy IPO.

After appropriate review of the request for releasability and technology transfer issues, Navy IPO tasks the IDS International Office to provide information, pricing, and availability data and/or technical input to the U.S. Government Letter of Offer and Acceptance that will formally offer the requested Deepwater systems, subsystem, or asset to the requesting government. This relationship with Navy IPO provides the U.S. Coast Guard with the appropriate Department of Defense conduit for successful execution of FMS functions that will eventually help to reduce overall costs in the Deepwater acquisition through increased production runs and economies of scale.

The Department of Commerce and the Deepwater International Office have signed an agreement with the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), under which BIS promotes Deepwater platforms to maritime forces around the world. BIS, in cooperation with the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, is exploring unique avenues to develop country and region-specific business plans.

The Department of Commerce and the Deepwater International Office also are working in tandem with the U.S. Export-Import Bank. Due to the Coast Guard's unique role as a multimission military service and law-enforcement agency, we see a real potential for many of the Deepwater platforms and subsystem components to be acquired by our allies through nondefense related loans guaranteed by the U.S. Export-Import Bank.

Clearly, as Mitchell indicates quite eloquently, many challenges exist if smaller navies around the world are to reverse their shortfalls in recapitalization by making suitable investments in network-centric systems. A failure to transform their forces in ways comparable to the U.S. Navy and its smaller partner, the U.S. Coast Guard, however, is *not* a feasible alternative. Antiquated

platform-centric navies—large or small—will be relegated to operational irrelevance.

The U.S. Coast Guard's Integrated Deepwater System provides smaller navies a model for recapitalization that will meet the demands of today's network-centric operations at an affordable cost. Is there a place for smaller navies in network-centric warfare? Absolutely.

STILL WORTH FIGHTING OVER? A JOINT RESPONSE

P. H. Liotta and James F. Miskel

Readers may recall that in the Autumn 2002 issue of the *Naval War College Review*, Professor James F. Miskel, of the National Security Decision Making Department, argued that the U.S. government often defines national interests in such general terms that its specific goals are not clearly communicated to the American public and to other governments.¹ In the Spring 2003 issue, Professor P. H. Liotta, also of the National Security Decision Making Department, responded with a counter-essay arguing that while distinguishing core strategic interests—those for which Americans would be willing to die—from significant interests is almost never easy, it is also essential. Liotta disagreed with Miskel that U.S. national interests are “vague platitudes” used by policy makers and argued that they are in fact long-term, enduring, abstract principles that are embedded in the U.S. Constitution. He disagreed as well with Miskel’s argument that national security strategies are simple expressions of national interests.² Rather, Liotta argues, national security strategies are presidential declarations of strategic interests and policy objectives, as well as explanations of the means offered to achieve these ends.

Dr. Liotta is the Jerome E. Levy Chair of Economic Geography and National Security at the Naval War College. A former Fulbright scholar, he has received a Pulitzer Prize nomination, a National Endowment for the Arts literature fellowship, the International Quarterly Crossing Boundaries Award, and the Robert H. Winner Award from the Poetry Society of America. His recent work includes The Uncertain Certainty: Human Security, Environmental Change, and the Future Euro-Mediterranean (2003).

Dr. Miskel is the Associate Dean of Academics at the Naval War College and a former professor in the College’s National Security Decision Making Department. Earning his doctorate at the State University of New York at Binghamton in 1977, he served in the Department of Health and Human Services before joining the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1984. He was the director for defense policy on the National Security Council staff in 1987–89, thereafter returning to FEMA as assistant associate director. He is the author of Buying Trouble? National Security and Reliance on Foreign Industry (1993) and of articles in numerous journals.

© 2003 by P. H. Liotta and James F. Miskel
Naval War College Review, Winter 2004, Vol. LVII, No. 1

In the end, we agree that when there is a need to articulate national interests, when it is necessary to do so (and we both are convinced that there are times when this must happen), it is no time to be half-hearted or vague.

After further consideration of each other’s views, we agreed to disagree on key issues that involve defining and declaring interests and the fundamental purpose of publishing a formal national security strategy (and we have promised to continue to argue with each other). There are areas, nonetheless, where our views are less contradictory than our respective essays might suggest. We thought it would be worth clarifying these areas of agreement because, in light of the latest *National Security Strategy of the United States*, there are issues where we have mutual concerns about how, when, and where the concept of national interests is used and abused.

To begin, *we agree* that national interests should express the goals of the nation. While there are, often,

occasions when it pays to be ambiguous in terms of articulating exactly what those goals are, there are also specific times and events where ambiguity is inadvisable. Miskel argues that ambiguity about the national interests is most often the inadvertent product of the domestic political process rather than a deliberate choice made by statesmen. In his view, ambiguity is usually the path of least resistance for policy makers and their spokespersons, not the result of a conscious judgment that ambiguity best serves the goals of the nation. Liotta acknowledges that interests are occasionally defined in ambiguous terms but argues that the ambiguity is more often deliberate than Miskel maintains. There are times, he suggests, when policy makers really have to rely on interests and objectives that build in latitude for action—in other words, “wiggle room”—for specific policy circumstances.

We also agree that ambiguity, even inadvertent ambiguity, is often “good enough.” It is not, however, good enough when the issues require long-term, persistent commitment of national resources. The current post-9/11 security environment *may* be one of those times.

Miskel argues that some security issues that the nation faces today (the war on terrorism, or nation building in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans, and elsewhere) cannot be resolved without years of concerted effort. Further, this effort cannot be maintained without a clear understanding of national interests on the part of the American public. *Liotta counters* that despite the evident truth of such an argument, there are at least two problems. First, it is not clear that such goals can be elevated to sustained and long-term, high-level commitments that the public would support, except in rare circumstances—such as the Cold War. Second, it is not clear that the American public has the kind of stomach for imperial involvement on a global scale not known since the United States occupied Germany and Japan.

Perhaps, intriguingly, administrations will end up committing themselves to such interests in the absence of public support or understanding. Notably, former secretary of state Dean Acheson is said to have remarked to Edmund Muskie during his failed bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, regarding foreign policy decisions and national interests, “Why should we care about the American public?”³ *Miskel suggests* that Acheson’s reputed advice is particularly ill suited to long-term projects like the war on terrorism or security building in states and regions.

The Bush administration’s early disavowal of nation building, particularly in the Balkans, is a good example for exploring the differences between the perspectives of Professors Miskel and Liotta. *Liotta notes with dismay* that the current president has reduced U.S. commitment to stability-building measures in the Balkans and that this is a result of what he believes is the administration’s misperception of the national interests at stake in southeastern Europe—among

other regions. *Miskel* argues that the problem is not misperception but rather a predictable consequence of the failure of previous administration(s) to engage the public in a serious dialogue about the national interests in Balkan stability.

Liotta agrees that statesmen may sometimes choose not to engage in such dialogues for sound strategic reasons but holds that avoidance of public discussion and debate cannot last forever. In the case of the Balkans, the previous administration simply refused to consider the Balkans as an issue in the national interests of the United States—or the NATO alliance—until 250,000 people had died and two million refugees had fled the wars of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Even as the various versions of the Clinton administration's national security strategy of *Enlargement and Engagement* to 1995 claimed, as matters of the national interest, the significance of the advancement of human rights and the promotion of democracy, these issues involved neither vital national survival interests nor economic interests and were largely ignored. In November 1995, however, following the Dayton Accords, President Clinton suddenly declared that Bosnia was indeed in the "vital" interest of the United States—although nothing on the ground had essentially changed. Yet the United States, not Europe, acted, rightly or wrongly, to preserve "the vital interest" of the North Atlantic alliance as a credible, meaningful alliance in a time of crisis. Today, we are faced with even more challenges in more places. We can win the war but cannot win the peace alone. We cannot ignore (but likely will, according to *Miskel*) all the necessary aspects of nation building—or, more appropriately, "security building," or whatever term one chooses to consider for sustaining communities and regions that cannot sustain themselves by themselves. If we ignore that and fail to admit it in our open declarations, what we face in the future is decades and decades of military engagement and political frustration, with little accomplished.

The problem remains that since the end of the Cold War, we have enforced national interests primarily through the military arm and practiced far less commitment to sustaining security in unstable regions through other means. To be blunt, we are able to "kick in the door in" quickly in hot spots but have trouble putting the door back on and instead tend never to close the door (whether in Korea, the Sinai, the Balkans, or the Greater Near East) but just leave. There are ways to change this practice and actually save precious resources over the long term. But to do so requires radically different thinking that begins with radically different rethinking of national interests.

Confusion or lack of clarity about national interests is not just the by-product of the post-9/11 environment. In truth, the environment we entered after the Cold War—which was, and was not, a large international war in the traditional sense—is radically different from any other experienced in our history. In terms of military power, the United States remains preeminent; in terms of economic

and political power, however, it is strategically dependent on any number of institutions, regions, and realities. Thus, while the Asia-Pacific may offer future economic opportunity (and military threat), the United States remains bound by alliance relationships in Europe and committed to engagements in Central and South Asia (where it would seem to have no vital interests at all). Equally, the slow but certain emergence of the Western Hemisphere leaves unanswered whether or not U.S. strategic priorities will shift from an exclusive East-West orientation to a North-South dynamic as well. Until 11 September 2001, most in the United States largely believed that we were nestled in a period of uncertainty that we uncomfortably and most often referred to as the “post-Cold War era.” (The ironies, of course, persist: the United States and much of Europe remain *driven* by post-Cold War uncertainties while still having to address the demands of the so-called War on Terrorism.) We are still in the “post-Cold War era,” just as we are locked into the “post-9/11” environment. But—aside from telling us what phases of history we are not in—such “post” phrases do not at all help us define the exact time and issues we face. One could think of these phrases as code for the reasons why it is seemingly so preferable to fail to define national interests precisely, to fail to distinguish convincingly between what Liotta calls “core strategic” and “significant” national interests.

Both of us acknowledge that the formulation of national interests cannot be divorced completely from the political process. *Miskel goes farther* in arguing that they should not be divorced at all when the issues require long-term investment of national resources. He also maintains that by ambiguously defining national interests, strategists and statesmen may actually be attempting to effect the divorce indirectly.

We agree that there is a difference between interests and objectives—interests being the end states that the nation hopes to achieve over the short and long terms, and objectives being the steps or milestones on the way to those end states. Interests are long-term and abstract (yet fundamental to strategy); objectives *should* always be clear and precise for the execution of policy. That, sadly, almost never proves to be the case. Thus, interest and objectives become confused, muddled, and perhaps inadvertently ambiguous as well.

We further agree that policy makers do not always recognize the difference, or that if they do recognize the difference, they do not invest enough time and energy in explaining the difference to Congress and the public.

Although the two terms may overlap, there is also a difference between interests and values. A value is not an end state or a goal; it is either a characteristic or attribute of the end state/goal or a principle that may or may not guide the actions that are taken in pursuit of the end state/goal. As an idealized example, the Clinton administration envisioned a world in which democracy was the norm.

Thus it defined as a national interest an “enlarged” family of democratic nations. Democracy was the value to which nations were encouraged to adhere, and strategy was the game plan for actually increasing the size of the family.

Of course, not just the Clinton administration but all administrations from the end of World War II until today have come to recognize the value of an enhanced family of democratic states as a national interest, one (in the words of John Ikenberry) that suggests that the promotion of democracy “reflects a pragmatic, evolving, and sophisticated understanding of how to create a stable and relatively peaceful world order.”⁴ Indeed, as Ikenberry and others have noted, the great Wilsonian of our age—the champion of a free world, of democracy, of self-determination—is not William Clinton but rather Ronald Reagan. As hopelessly idealistic as it seems, there are many—including many in the current administration—who believe that we secure our interests by spreading our values.

Liotta and Miskel agree that interests and values are occasionally conflated in official documents like national security strategy reports. *To Miskel* the conflation results from the fact that the documents maintain such a high level of generality that the distinctions between interests and values remain obscure. *Liotta agrees but rejects* Miskel’s judgment that the political nature of such documents virtually guarantees their too-general tenor.

Interests, of course, are subjective, based on judgments that come from different perceptions of reality. Policy makers should carefully weigh those perspectives and consider alternative criteria before leaping to the declaration of vital interests.

Despite our differing views about the value of recent national security strategy reports in terms of their specificity on national interests, *we agree in principle* that *National Security Strategy* reports can serve a highly useful purpose. That useful purpose is informing the public and Congress about the nation’s main goals or end states (as perceived by the executive branch) and the major policy initiatives and courses of action that the president intends to pursue in furtherance of those goals. In his article *Miskel maintains* that recent security strategy reports have, in their ambiguity about national interests, largely forfeited the opportunity to inform the public or engage it in a dialogue about the grand purposes of foreign and security policy. *Liotta counters* that the national security strategies of the 1990s were remarkably consistent in their statement and became increasingly clear in their relevance to specific regions, priorities, and issues of strategic interest over time.

We also share mutual concerns about the latest *National Security Strategy of the United States* (September 2002, available online at www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html). Specifically, while the strategy itself is grand in purpose and expansive in its lofty and ambitious goals, it sometimes distinctly conflates interests and objectives, often sees interests and values as the same thing, and offers few

specific details as to what are the most pressing priorities—other than the obvious goals of protecting American citizenry and territory from attack—versus those that are merely important to embrace. Indeed, the conflation of these issues appears intentional. In the introductory passage of the strategy, for example, we see the declaration, “The U.S. national security strategy [is] based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. . . . Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity” (page 1). But these goals are in some ways in conflict with each other even in their immediate declaration and are not specific in their emphasis. Even subsequent declarations of interests do not help clarify these goals. Nowhere in the document is there a clear, definitive distinction made between “core values” and “strategic priorities.”

It seems significant, then, that the Bush strategy does not precisely define national interests in its introductory session, “Overview of America’s National Strategy.” Indeed, not until pages 10–11 of the document, in a description of problems in Africa, is there a distinction made between values and interests; specifically, the document refers to “preserving human dignity” as a core value while “combating terrorism” is a strategic priority. Does this distinction recognize a core value as a national interest or only suggest that a *strategic* priority is one? It never becomes clear in the document itself; by the time some distinction is attempted in the national strategy, the differences between interests and objectives, between interests and values, and between the need sometimes to be ambiguous and sometimes deadly precise may have already been lost on most readers.

In sum, we agree that national security strategies should be published—and revised—but perhaps only when they reflect a definite “rudder shift” for the nation rather than to meet the chronology of congressional mandates. The requirement to *state*, *define*, and *defend* national interests in a public national strategy should remain. *According to Liotta*, for the United States, stating, defining, and defending interests in the national security strategy both demonstrates a commitment to democratic process and explains how America see its role in the world. *According to Miskel*, many forms of public debate can (but rarely ever do) generate the necessary clarity about interests that long-term national commitment requires. *For both Liotta and Miskel*, the important point is that the debate takes place. The national security strategy document would then be revised or rewritten to reflect the results of the debate. National security strategies that do not follow such a debate will be often steeped in ambiguity about national interests or will fail to address adequately the needs of a nation to declare its goals, its purpose, and its place in the world.

NOTES

1. James F. Miskel, "National Interests: Grand Purposes or Catch Phrases?" *Naval War College Review* 55, no. 4 (Autumn 2002), pp. 96–104.
2. P. H. Liotta, "Still Worth Dying for: National Interests and the Nature of Strategy," *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 123–38.
3. In defense of Acheson, nonetheless, it does seem that the American public is not always well informed or interested in issues of national security and foreign policy, especially over the long term. Even as American opinion increasingly came to favor intervention in Iraq, for example, regardless of whether or not the United Nations approved intervention or allies objected, a survey poll taken by Fox News on 13 March 2003 that asked, "What is your assessment of Prime Minister Tony Blair, French President Jacques Chirac, and Chancellor Gerhardt Schroeder?" revealed some interesting results. Seventeen percent of those surveyed did not know who Tony Blair is, 24 percent did not know Jacques Chirac, and 46 percent could not identify Gerhardt Schroeder.
4. John Ikenberry, "Why Export Democracy?" *Wilson Quarterly* (Spring 1999), p. 56.