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P. H. Liotta

Richmond M. Lloyd

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FROM HERE TO THERE

The Strategy and Force Planning Framework

P. H. Liotta and Richmond M. Lloyd

Several years ago, as one of the authors was making a formal presentation to the country team of the American embassy in Madrid, the senior political counselor (who was a graduate of the Naval War College) suddenly burst out, “Why should anyone *care* about strategy? It’s hard enough dealing with *policy*, going

from one crisis to the next!” To be fair to this foreign service officer, who had recently experienced any number of policy crises—from Haiti to the Balkans—there was a point to his objection. Why *should* anyone care about strategy?

Dr. Liotta is the executive director of the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy. Previous to this, he served as the Jerome E. Levy Chair of Economic Geography and National Security at the Naval War College. He has received a Pulitzer Prize nomination and a National Endowment for the Arts literature fellowship. His recent work includes Mapping Macedonia: Idea and Identity (2004, with coauthor C. R. Jebb), The Uncertain Certainty: Human Security, Environmental Change, and the Future Euro-Mediterranean (2003), Dismembering the State: The Death of Yugoslavia and Why It Matters (2001), and The Wolf at the Door: A Poetic Cycle Translated from the Macedonian of Bogomil Gjuzel (2001).

Dr. Lloyd holds the William B. Ruger Chair of National Security Economics and is a professor in the Security, Strategy, and Forces Course in the Naval War College’s National Security Decision Making Department. He has coedited nine textbooks on strategy and force planning. He is chair of the Naval War College’s Latin American Studies Group, which coordinates the College’s activities in Latin America. He lectures on contemporary national defense topics at various sites throughout the United States and South America.

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Strategy, after all, is not politically expedient; it is a long-term focusing instrument that helps shape the future environment.¹ Policy crises, on the other hand, always deal with the more immediate execution of initiatives to address critical needs and requirements. But if an argument could be made in defense of strategy, it would be this: In the absence of strategy, there is no clear direction for the future, and any road will take you there, bumping over crisis and change, and suffering through one knee-jerk reaction after another.

Perhaps what best illustrates this reality is the scene between Alice and the Cheshire Cat in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, when Alice asks, “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where—,” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

“—so long as I get *somewhere*,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough.”²

At its best, strategy will get you somewhere near where you intended to go. Strategy provides a systematic approach to dealing with change, with both what should and should not remain the same. Strategy, in short, is the application of available means to secure desired ends. One could approach the execution of strategy from various perspectives, but we prefer to offer here a “top down” approach. It begins with a series of questions we must ask and attempt to answer in the process:

- *What do we want to do?* (policy objectives)
- *How do we plan to do it?* (strategic execution)
- *What we are up against?* (threats, vulnerabilities, challenges, opportunities)
- *What is available to do it?* (unilateral or multilateral choices, alliances or coalitions or alignments, international institutions, viable defense forces, economic or political or diplomatic or informational instruments)
- *What are the mismatches?* (risks, deficiencies, unforeseen outcomes, cultural blinders).

We should end at a question with which we should always also begin, for strategy is itself the critical link in a continuous feedback loop:

- *Why do we want to do this?* (strategic goals, desired and demanded).

Further compounding the complexity of all these necessary questions, strategy attempts to strike a balance between answering today’s realities (the current security environment) and planning how to address tomorrow’s alternative possibilities (the future security environment).

Thus, the United States continues to reassess national priorities and fundamental elements of strategy over time. But doing so requires quality and clarity in decisions about strategy and force planning. Lacking a clear set of objectives and a focused, robust national security strategy, we will only be able to react to, rather than shape, events affecting our interests. Muddling through will not do.

Today’s decisions about strategy and force planning will fundamentally influence future strategy and force posture. Done well, such decisions and choices can prove a powerful investment in the future. Yet to avoid the consequences of planning errors in what is often an inherently complex process, it seems useful to revisit the basics of strategy and force planning in their fullest dimensions.

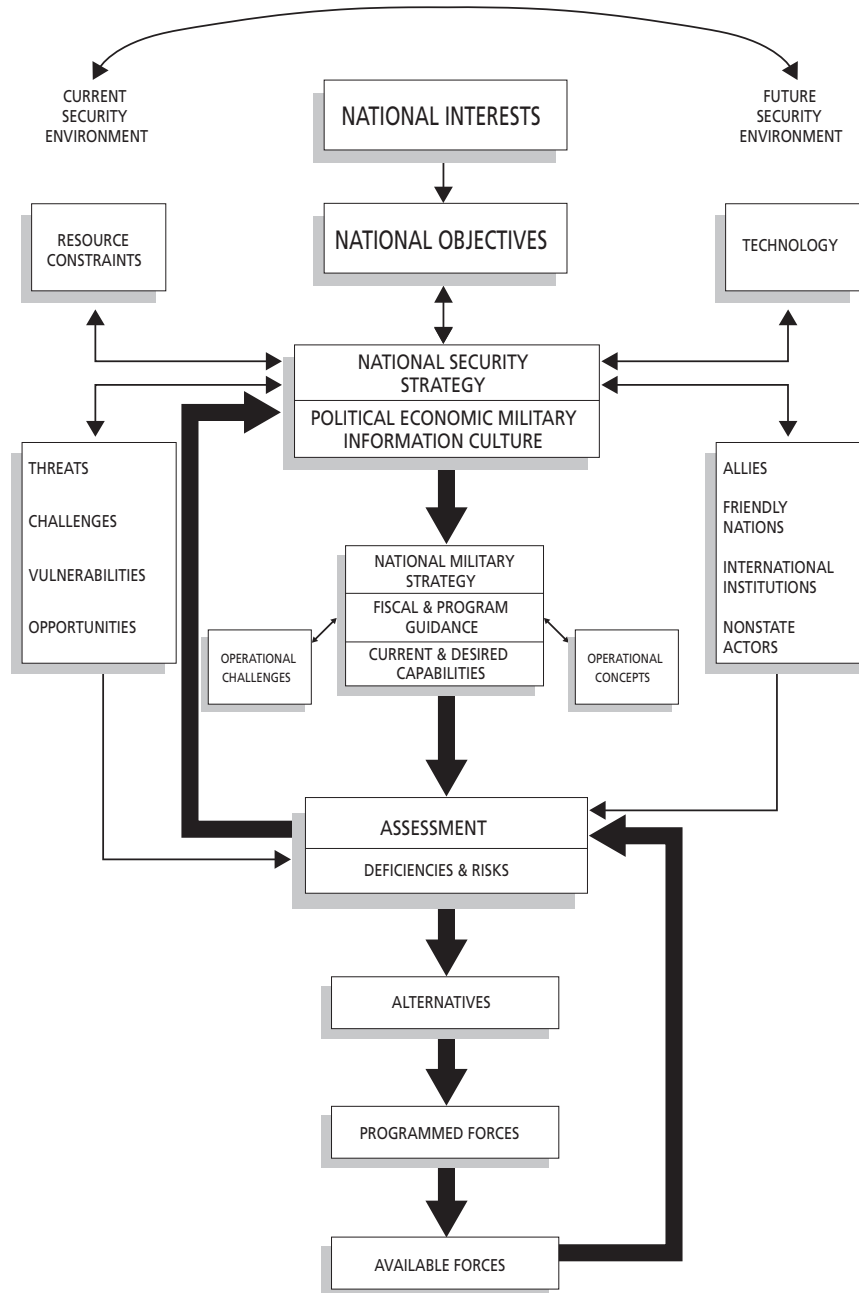
Admittedly, making solid strategic and force choices in a free society is a difficult and lengthy process. The strategist and force planner must consider numerous international and domestic factors, including political, economic, military, technological, and informational—and even cultural—influences. The sheer number of ideas, concepts, opinions, and differing points of view can often be overwhelming, all the more so if one lacks a systematic framework for organizing strategic concepts and executing strategic choices. Because planning involves preparing, often under conditions of uncertainty, there is considerable uncertainty and much room for disagreement about preferred strategy and how forces should be structured, organized, equipped, and designed for the future. Unfortunately, there rarely is a single right answer.

Equally valid arguments can be made for wildly different choices, with each choice dependent on *objectives desired* and *assumptions made* about threats, challenges, opportunities, technological advances, and future political and economic conditions. Thus, advocates who focus on single factors most important to their specific interests, such as a particular threat or the fiscal budget, often fail to understand—and therefore fail to deal with—the full dimensions of the strategic environment. In short, to execute strategy correctly, we must deal with today's reality and tomorrow's possibilities.

In an attempt to address the demands of both the current and future security environments, we offer here a framework that may help us ask the right questions, appreciate the complex dynamic of strategy, and address in a comprehensive way the important factors present in strategic decision making. While recognizing that organizational interests, bureaucratic behavior, and politics play significant roles in all strategic choices, our framework focuses on the formulation of national security requirements and the evaluation of alternative strategy and force choices.

Bearing in mind that we must always deal with today's problems and tomorrow's plausible outcomes, we begin our top-down approach with national interests and objectives, and then address more detailed aspects that can both assist and confound decision makers in the selection of future strategy and forces—strategy is a complex business. To this end we have found it useful to work with simple organizing mechanisms, such as the Strategy and Force Planning Framework (figure 1). We wish it to highlight the major factors that should be considered within these processes; accordingly, as we readily admit, it represents a compromise between the complexity of reality and the necessity for simplicity as an aid to understanding. The attempt to identify the most essential elements in strategy and force planning and illustrate their dominant (and often interdependent) relationships is nonetheless a valuable one.

**FIGURE 1
STRATEGY AND FORCE PLANNING FRAMEWORK**



In presenting this framework, our purposes are to provide a tool for understanding the fundamental concepts of strategy and force planning and to offer a systematic approach to organizing a decision maker's thinking. The framework could variously be used as a guide to developing alternative strategies and future forces; as an aid to evaluating the arguments of strategists or force planners; and

as a starting point for developing alternative approaches to structuring major force-planning decisions.³

SCARCITY AND NEEDS:

THE SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY AND FORCE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Two main themes underpin our discussion of strategic concepts: the allocation of scarce resources, and the relationship among ends, means, and risks. There will *never* be enough resources to satisfy all the nation's wants and needs. Thus, we must make strategic choices, establish requirements, set priorities, make decisions, and allocate to the most critical needs.

Strategy, as we see it, is the most important guide for sound force planning. To obtain the most from our limited resources (means), we need to understand what we want to do and where we want to go (ends), and how we plan to get there (strategy). Often the critical importance of this basic ends-means relationship gets lost in the quagmire of detailed assessments and specific weapon-system decisions. Yet forgetting the essentials of this relationship overlooks the prospect that we will more often than not be forced to adjust our security goals (ends) to fit within the bounds of our own ability to satisfy such objectives (means). A mismatch between ends and means poses real danger (risk) to overall security interests.

The Strategy and Force Planning Framework is divided into two sections: strategic choices (top half) and force choices (lower half). Strategic choices involve the identification of national interests, national objectives, and the national security strategy, incorporating traditional instruments of power (political, economic, and military) as well as emerging influences (such as information and culture). To the left of the framework we mean to assess factors affecting the current and future security environment by considering threats, challenges, vulnerabilities, and opportunities. To the right of the framework we have offered factors that are both means and influences: the roles and support of allies and friendly nations, the costs and opportunities that international institutions offer, and the undeniable presence of nonstate actors in the security environment. Equally, the framework acknowledges that resource constraints and technology are critical factors that frequently shape, sometimes distort, and ultimately drive the development of national strategy.

Accordingly, in the lower half of the framework the national military strategy, along with fiscal and program guidance and the influence of current and desired military capabilities, all dictate the sizing and selection of forces. (Equally, operational challenges that forces will likely face and emerging operational concepts to overcome these challenges will influence strategy, program guidance, and capabilities.) Force selection also involves an assessment of the ability of available forces to support national strategy. Deficiencies are identified that result when

specific fiscal constraints are applied to the acquisition of future defense forces. Alternative force choices are evaluated to address deficiencies and reduce risks resulting in forces programmed for the future. As these forces are fielded, they become available to support the strategy. Thus, the darkly shaded lines in the framework illustrate why and how constant assessment (and reassessment) is an essential part of making and executing strategy.

In the area of defense planning, examples abound that demonstrate the reality of strategy-to-force mismatches. The continued lack of adequate numbers of Navy ships to meet national commitments might be one case in point. The American national leadership, with its continued emphasis on global engagement, presumably wants to maintain a level of naval presence in the oceans roughly on a par with that of the past several decades; however, because of an insufficient number of ships, the U.S. Navy is unable to meet this requirement. The war on terrorism has exacerbated the demand for more ships. Since ships take years to design, fund, and build, the lack of adequate ships will be a predetermined element in many maritime-oriented scenarios for many years. Similar practical realities exist for any military system that takes years to build and field, whether space systems, missile defense systems, major aircraft programs, or other comparable projects.⁴

THE TOP-DOWN APPROACH:

USING THE FRAMEWORK TO MAKE STRATEGIC CHOICES

The national interest can be, admittedly, a slippery concept. Often, the term “interests” suggests specific policy agenda items, phrased in ambiguous terms. But the overriding national interest of any nation should be clear and specific—to ensure the security and prosperity of the state and its people. Normally, we see this vital interest couched in terms of national survival and well-being. Preservation of our territorial integrity, freedom, independence, political institutions, and honor are fundamental to our survival as a nation. Maintenance of the economic well-being and overall quality of life of the American people are also important interests, as is the survival of our allies.

National Interests

President George H. W. Bush summarized our national interests in the 1991 *National Security Strategy of the United States* in this way:

The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure[;] . . . [a] healthy and growing U.S. economy to ensure opportunity for individual prosperity and resources for national endeavors at home and abroad[;] . . . [h]ealthy, cooperative and politically vigorous relations with allies and friendly nations[;] . . . [and] a stable and secure world where political and economic freedom, human rights, and democratic institutions flourish.⁵

President W. J. Clinton, in his 1996 *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, stated:

Protecting our nation's security—our people, our territory and our way of life—is my Administration's foremost mission and constitutional duty. . . . The preamble to the Constitution sets out the basic objective: "to provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." The end of the Cold War does not alter these fundamental purposes. . . . In all cases, the nature of our response must depend on what best serves our own long-term national interests. Those interests are ultimately defined by our security requirements. Such requirements start with our physical defense and economic well-being. They also include environmental security as well as the security of our values achieved through expansion of the community of democratic nations.⁶

In his 1980 State of the Union address, President Jimmy Carter indicated that free-world access to foreign oil was a vital interest of the United States. Such judgments have important influences on strategy and force planning. Throughout the 1980s, a Southwest Asia focus was used, among others, to determine the level and mix of future American power-projection capabilities and as a reason to establish the U.S. Central Command. These investments paid off when the United States with its allies and friends expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

More recently, the administration of President George W. Bush—while emphasizing the need to wage the war on terrorism on a global scale and to use preventive war if necessary—intentionally linked national interests to national values, suggesting that it would be difficult, even impractical, to separate the two:

The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity. . . . Freedom is the nonnegotiable demand of human dignity; the birthright of every person—in every civilization. Throughout history, freedom has been threatened by war and terror; it has been challenged by the clashing wills of powerful states and the evil designs of tyrants; and it has been tested by widespread poverty and disease. Today, humanity holds in its hands the opportunity to further freedom's triumph over all these foes. The United States welcomes our responsibility to lead in this great mission.⁷

National Objectives

Whereas national interests define the basic, nonnegotiable needs of a nation, national objectives support the larger execution of strategy and interests. National objectives are the *specific* goals a nation seeks in order to advance, support, or defend national interests. They are generally described in three broad categories—

political, economic, and security—although other categories, such as social, ideological, or technological, are also used.⁸

If national interests (which represent the *highest* level of abstraction) do not radically shift from administration to administration, national objectives can vary tremendously. In 2001, for example, a hypothetical Gore administration would likely not have pushed for national missile defense as aggressively as the Bush administration did after coming into office. Yet while a Gore administration and the actual Bush administration would have very different national objectives, their essential perspectives on national interests would vary little. In fact, while national interests have not strayed far from the principles set down in the U.S. Constitution, there can be wide variance—and disagreement—on what objectives best support national interests and strategy. Accordingly, the 2002 *National Security Strategy* broadly outlines the following desirable objectives:

- Champion aspirations for human dignity
- Strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends
- Work with others to defuse regional conflicts
- Prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction
- Ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade
- Expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy
- Develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power
- Transform America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.⁹

These brief examples provide only a starting point for the strategist, nonetheless. Detailed objectives must be formulated and prioritized for each region and particular situation in which U.S. interests are involved. Too often, stated objectives are vague, misdirected, overambitious, or miss opportunities. It is essential that they be focused and clearly stated. Echoing the words of the Cheshire Cat, John Collins has written, “If you don't know what you want to do, you can't plan how to do it.”¹⁰

National Security Strategy

“Strategy” is a word often used but little understood. It has taken on so many meanings in different publications that it is important to set the context for its use here. André Beaufre defines strategy as

the art of applying force so that it makes the most effective contribution toward achieving the ends set by political policy. . . . The aim of strategy is to fulfill the objective laid down by policy, making the best use of the resources available. . . . The art of strategy consists in choosing the most suitable means from those available and so orchestrating their results that they combine to produce a psychological pressure sufficient to achieve the moral effect required.¹¹

National strategy constitutes the master plan for executing national objectives through a combination of political, economic, military, informational, cultural, and even psychological means. These tools are the basic instruments of national power. Strategic choices indicate how a nation will employ all of these instruments in the pursuit of national objectives. These strategic choices and the assumptions made about them provide guidance and establish limits on lower-level decisions. The framework in figure 1 explicitly shows national military strategy flowing from, and in support of, the national security strategy. Thus, a top-down strategy and force-planning approach allows national strategy to set the bounds by which successive force choices are made.

National Military Strategy

A nation's military strategy should flow from its objectives and overall national security strategy. Sometimes it is useful to view elements of this strategy as comprising fundamental choices concerning alternative courses of action. These elements, or "descriptors," outline how we intend to use our military means to achieve our ends. Some of these fundamental choices are: a coalition strategy versus a go-it-alone strategy; deterrence versus war fighting; forward-deployed forces versus U.S.-based strategic reserves; benign versus forcible entry; globally flexible forces versus regionally tailored forces; and active versus reserve force components. The demands and influences of each of these factors fundamentally determine the size and structure of future forces.

Fiscal and Program Guidance

In one sense, the strategy and force planning process is a resource allocation problem. Two levels of resource allocation affect the amount of resources applied to defense. At the highest level, there is the consideration of the nation's total resources and how they will be shared between the private and public sectors. This is an integral part of the debate over the choice of grand strategy and the allocation of resources to implement it. The focus of debate at this level is concerned with growth, employment, inflation, budget and trade deficits, and the overall productivity of the economy.

The second level of resource allocation occurs between defense and nondefense programs within the federal budget. Competing political, economic, and security objectives strongly influence these resource allocation decisions. Thus,

defense planners must articulate their legitimate needs to meet the nation's security objectives. Realistic appraisals must be made of the future availability of defense funds. Too often, defense plans assume that budgets will rise in the future to correct current deficiencies.

CURRENT AND DESIRED CAPABILITIES:

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES, OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

At the turn of the twenty-first century, American defense planning intentionally shifted from *threat-based* planning to the more conceptually challenging—but operationally necessary—process known as *capabilities-based* planning. In part this intentional shift was a recognition of multiple dynamics that were making the security environment far more complex and challenging than during the Cold War. Further, many saw the “2MTW” scenario—the two-major-theater-war policy by which defense forces were nominally sized and selected—as a “strategy killer.”¹² Finally, the horrific attacks of 11 September 2001 only intensified the strategic need for lighter, more flexible, more mobile, and more responsive defense forces, able to possess and operate with a wide array of capabilities. We have thus included in our framework the systemic driving forces of operational challenges and operational concepts, along with the continuing process of improving current force capabilities and achieving desired ones.

Optimally, these operational influences steer military strategy, fiscal and program guidance, and the understanding of current and desired capabilities. Conversely, strategy, fiscal guidance, and capabilities push toward the further refinement of operational concepts and ways to overcome operational challenges, such as area denial, anti-access, and force interoperability. The framework portrays a two-way arrow, indicating the multiple and interdependent influences of strategy, fiscal guidance, concepts, and capabilities.

ASSESSMENT AND INTEGRATION:

USING THE FRAMEWORK TO MAKE FORCE CHOICES

Having selected a national security strategy and national military strategy, we need to assess our ability to carry it out with the available forces and against the background of projected threats and challenges. These latter assessments take various forms, from detailed analytical treatments of opposing forces to intuitive judgments about nonquantifiable aspects of war. Whatever the form, any strategy and force assessment must address objectives, strategy, threats, vulnerabilities, available force, and risk. The fundamental standard is simply this: Do the military forces support the national security strategy in such a way that national objectives are achieved, at acceptable risk, in face of the threats?

The entire force choice process should be dynamic, in order to adapt to changing conditions. Different force planning elements are considered to varying degrees both inside and outside the Department of Defense. By design, the entire process must come together at least once a year, for the preparation of the Future Years Defense Program. The “FYDP,” however, is not the final word, as Congress will modify choices to reflect its evaluation of the proposed strategy and forces, as well as the public and political moods of the time. The framework considers each of the force-choice elements.

Threats, Challenges, Vulnerabilities, Opportunities

An essential task for the strategist and force planner is to assess the security environment in terms of future threats, challenges, vulnerabilities, and opportunities. At some point, however, the force planner must consider the full spectrum of conflict, ranging from weapons of mass destruction, cyber attack and other informational or infrastructure degradations, major conventional war, regional conflicts, and protection of the homeland to peace operations, terrorism, drug trafficking, humanitarian assistance, and presence. Henry Bartlett, Paul Holman, and Timothy Somes of the Naval War College have suggested that the most important task is to evaluate fully the nature of such conflicts, their likelihood of occurrence, and their consequences for the national interests.¹³ Ultimately, such judgments lead to better decisions about how to structure and apply military forces.

Traditional threat assessments continue to have an important, though modified, role in the strategy and force planning process. Consideration of a specific nation’s capabilities, intentions, and circumstances, as well as vulnerabilities, is important.¹⁴ The intentions and plans of a potential adversary are usually more vague and uncertain than knowledge of opposing force capabilities. Yet specific circumstances of the time can alter a nation’s capabilities and intentions in unexpected ways, and identification of vulnerabilities allows weaknesses of a threatening nation to be exploited in the development of strategy.

Allies, Friendly Nations, International Institutions, Nonstate Actors

A major strategic choice is the extent to which our strategy will be linked to other nations, either through broad alignments or through specific alliances such as NATO, cooperative security and multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations, or ad hoc coalitions. The expected contributions of allies and friendly nations are critically important to our ultimate strategy and our allocation of limited resources. Finally, the influence and importance of nonstate actors—both positive and negative—have only gained in importance in the twenty-first century.

Such complex interrelationships inevitably raise the issue of the effectiveness of such relationships as well as those of the division of labor and overall burden

sharing. Other nations' capabilities, intentions, circumstances, and vulnerabilities may not always align with our interests and objectives. Nevertheless, weighing and understanding these relationships will prove critical to the choice between a coalition strategy and going it alone.

Available Forces

Another major input to the continuing assessment process is a description of the military forces that would be available for future conflicts. These forces include: existing forces (active and reserve) minus those scheduled for decommissioning or disbanding; forces programmed to become operational during the time of interest; and force contributions that can be expected from allies and friendly nations in specific situations.

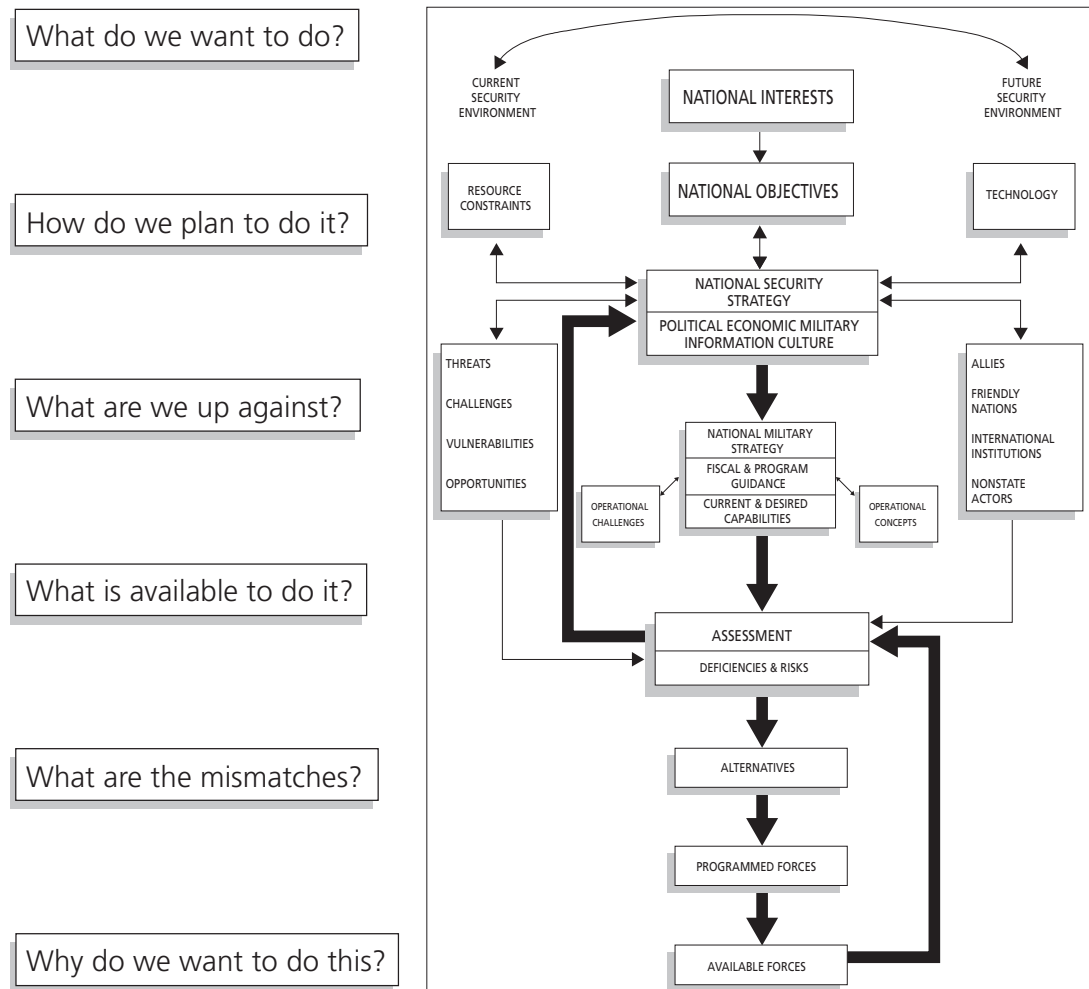
Existing forces provide a baseline to which additions, and from which deletions, are made. Given the extended life and long procurement lead-times for many weapon systems, existing forces inevitably form a major part of the force structure far into the future. Since our force structure is not built from the ground up each year, force-modernization choices are most often made "on the margin." Thus, although national security objectives and military strategy should determine our selection of forces, existing forces largely determine today's strategy and our ability to meet today's contingencies.

Operational planners tend to emphasize readiness and sustainability, since they must plan for the possibility of fighting with today's existing forces. Force planners tend to focus on modernization and force structure issues, since their goal is to create future forces capable of supporting the nation's future strategy and objectives. Both perspectives are important, and the best strategist and force planner strikes a balance between operating existing forces and investing in future capability.

Assessment

Strategy and force planning assessments comprise a complex series of analyses that evaluate the capabilities of U.S. and allied forces to support national security strategy in the face of potential threats. Yet just as operational challenges and emerging operational concepts deal with more than just threats, valid forms of assessment must address vulnerabilities and opportunities as well. These richer assessments point out deficiencies in available forces and suggest risks inherent in current programs. These assessment exercises help formulate changes to programmed forces. This appraisal process leads to the decisions that eventually re-allocate funds among various programs, within fiscal guidelines. Revised programs are then used as the basis for future force posture. In making these assessments, defense planners must consider the basic questions we asked in introducing the Strategy and Force Planning Framework (see figure 2).

FIGURE 2
ASSESSMENT



Both qualitative and quantitative assessments are useful in comparing opposing forces and strategies. Qualitative factors include such things as leadership, doctrine, training, morale, logistics, intelligence, technology, and initiative. Quantitative factors include order of battle, firepower, mobility, survivability, accuracy, range, weapons effects, and a host of other measurable quantities. The analysis of quantitative factors makes use of counting, modeling, and gaming. Because they add the human element, political-military simulations, war games, and exercises also provide useful insights to the strategist and force planner.

Deficiencies and Risk

Both qualitative and quantitative assessments of objectives, strategy, forces, and threats help identify deficiencies in our strategy or force posture. The net result

of such deficiencies is that risks must be assumed to arise from them until improvements can be made.

“Risk,” nonetheless, is an ambiguous term with numerous definitions. In the broadest of terms, risk is the *ability or willingness to expose oneself to damage during a period of change*. In the Strategy and Force Planning Framework, risk is the gap between desired ends (national security objectives) and available means (strategy and forces). In particular, strategy must address both the likelihood and the potential consequences of failure. Moreover, until systemic improvements can be made to minimize their effect, particular risks must be accounted for and recognized in any strategic analysis.

Risk requires management if its impact is to be minimized. Additional information on crucial uncertainties may be necessary before deciding on a course of action. Budgets may be raised to lessen the overall risk of failure. Limited resources may be re-allocated among mission areas, accepting increased risks in some areas in order to reduce the risk in others. At the highest level of planning, a nation may tolerate higher levels of security risks to achieve other political or social development objectives.

Alternatives and Programmed Forces

The next step in force planning is to select from alternative forces the number, type, and mix of military capabilities needed to correct deficiencies and minimize risks, keeping in mind fiscal realism and the need to balance force levels. However fiscally constrained, the programmed force must satisfy the most critical aspects of the national military strategy.

Three general levels of resource allocation occur at this stage of force planning. All three must be addressed from joint and combined perspectives. The first takes place when defense fiscal and policy guidance is refined and each service’s share of the defense budget is determined. Concerns over roles, missions, and functions can surface at this time. Changing defense priorities could also have an important effect. Within each service a second major resource allocation must be made among each of the appropriation accounts. Here the question is how much should be allocated respectively to force structure, modernization, readiness, operational tempo, and support infrastructure.

A final level of allocation occurs when alternative force choices are made within and among mission areas of each service. Should Army divisions be heavy or light? Should the Navy emphasize carriers, submarines, strategic sealift, or amphibious lift? Should the Air Force modernize fighter/attack aircraft or strategic airlift? What should be the mix between active and reserve forces? What will be the influence of networked operations and unmanned systems on force integration? Will “fire-ant warfare,” biogenetic engineering, and self-replicating mechanisms present true revolutionary advances in warfare? Will autonomous

warfare, the “need for speed,” and progressively smaller warfighting systems dissociate humans to some extent from future initial policy and combat decisions? Should U.S. armed forces take the lead in developing new operational concepts that draw from biological science, advanced manufacturing, microelectrochemical systems, and information processing?

THE CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK LOOP: ITERATION AND REITERATION

Strategy and force planning is not a rigid, sequential process; feedback and iteration must exist at all levels. The heavy lines in the upper portion of figure 1 emphasize the need for feedback and iteration in making strategic choices. Military, political, economic, technological, and even basic value assessments may suggest a need to revise the initial choice the better to meet national objectives. It may also be necessary to review the national objectives to ensure that more has not been attempted than the strategy can accomplish with available resources and technology.

The thickly shaded lines in the lower portion of the framework indicate a need to reassess, after the selection of programmed forces, the ability of available forces to carry out the national military strategy. Alternative force consideration can also help determine the best choices within resource limits.

Finally, assessment forms the link between choices about strategy and force structure. Limitations or deficiencies of a military strategy may become apparent only after the forces needed to carry it out are already in place. Where a strategy-force mismatch exists, either the forces must be adjusted, the strategy strengthened, the objectives revised, or additional risks accepted. André Beaufre characterizes this dilemma as the force planner’s ultimate challenge: “The most difficult military problem to resolve is that of establishing a security system, as inexpensively as possible in time of peace, capable of transforming itself very rapidly into a powerful force in case of the danger of aggression.”¹⁵

Political, bureaucratic, and organizational factors often obscure the important rational elements of strategy and force planning decisions. In light of today’s dynamic security environment and increasing competition for scarce resources, choosing the best strategy and defense forces is more crucial now than ever. Errors made today will produce strategy and defense forces ill suited to our nation’s future needs.

Because of the complexities involved and the numerous uncertainties that make precise evaluation difficult, clear-cut choices are seldom possible. Consequently, final decisions are often made in an atmosphere of political bargaining and organizational advocacy. Those involved in national defense must

nonetheless employ some form of rational approach as they consider the numerous planning elements and attempt to make timely and informed judgments on complex strategic and force choice issues. Moreover, it is essential that decision makers communicate, clearly and concisely, their reasoning to the American public.

NOTES

1. Although this article represents a major and significant revision of earlier conceptual approaches, there is a narrative history to the development of the strategy and force planning framework. Earlier iterations of this framework approach include: Richmond M. Lloyd, "Strategy and Force Planning Framework," in *Strategy and Force Planning*, ed. Strategy and Force Planning Faculty, 3d ed. (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2000), pp. 1–17; Richmond M. Lloyd, "Strategy and Force Planning Framework," in *Strategy and Force Planning*, ed. Strategy and Force Planning Faculty (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1995), pp. 1–14; Richmond M. Lloyd, "Force Planning for the 1990s," in *Fundamentals of Force Planning*, vol. 1, *Concepts*, ed. Force Planning Faculty (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1990), pp. 105–26; and Richmond M. Lloyd and Dino A. Lorenzini [Lt. Col., USAF], "A Framework for Choosing Defense Forces," *Naval War College Review* 34, no. 1 (January/February 1981), pp. 46–58.
2. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*, chap. 6, "Pig and Pepper," Millennium Fulcrum 3.0, at www-2.cs.cmu.edu/People/rgs/alice-ftitle.html.
3. This diagram extensively modifies one that originally appeared in Lloyd and Lorenzini, "A Framework for Choosing Defense Forces," which was itself an adaptation of the Force Structure Assessment Methodology given in NWP-1 (Rev. A), *Strategic Concepts of the U.S. Navy* (Washington, D.C.: Navy Dept., 1978). This framework is intended to include the most important strategy and force planning factors. Within each broad category, many concepts, principles, ideas, and methods may be used. Clearly, certain factors will be more important than others, depending on the circumstances. Quite often, alternative approaches give greater emphasis to specific factors, such as the threat, vulnerability, technology, or the budget. Ultimately, the better strategists must review and synthesize multiple factors in a comprehensive manner. See Henry C. Bartlett, G. Paul Holman, Jr., and Timothy E. Somes, "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning," in *Strategy and Force Planning*, ed. Security, Strategy, and Forces Faculty, 4th ed. (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2004), pp. 17–33, for an alternative framework—less detailed but perfectly useful and valid—as well as an extended discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative approaches to strategy and force planning.
4. For further thoughts on some of these planning dilemmas, see P. H. Liotta and Timothy E. Somes, "The Art of Reperceiving: Scenarios and the Future," in *Strategy and Force Planning*, ed. Security, Strategy, and Forces Faculty, 4th ed. (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2004), pp. 139–50, also appearing in *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 4 (Autumn 2003), pp. 121–32.
5. George H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: White House, August 1991), pp. 3–4.
6. William Jefferson Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, D.C.: White House, February 1996), pp. i, 3, and 11.
7. George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: White House, September 2002), available at www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.

8. John M. Collins, *Grand Strategy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1974), pp. 2–3.
9. George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy*.
10. John M. Collins, *U.S. Defense Planning: A Critique* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1982), p. 6.
11. André Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy* (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 22 and 24.
12. See, in particular, Eliot Cohen, “Defending America in the Twenty-first Century,” *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000), pp. 40–56.
13. Henry C. Bartlett, G. Paul Holman, Jr., and Timothy E. Somes, “The Spectrum of Conflict: What Can It Do for Force Planners?” in *Strategy and Force Planning*, ed. Security, Strategy, and Forces Faculty, 4th ed. (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2004), pp. 497–505.
14. See Frederick H. Hartmann, *The Relations of Nations* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 259–62, for a discussion of why military officers prefer to focus on capabilities while diplomats tend to concentrate on intentions and circumstances.
15. André Beaufre, *Strategy for Tomorrow* (New York: Crane, Russak, 1974), p. 71.

