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Holding the Line: U.S. Defense Alternatives for the 21st Century

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mention violations of the NPT or to explain why nations would have joined Nato had there been no inequitable Soviet threat. Even those who share the author's beliefs in a smaller American defense structure or minimal deterrence would be confused by many of his supporting reasons. At one point, Steinbruner castigates the former colonial powers for not intervening quickly enough in the civil wars of their violence-prone former colonies. How would they do so without possessing superior military force? Steinbruner describes the internal conflict that plagues much of the world, including terrorism, as a "contagion"—as if it were a theoretical illness that had nothing to do with actions of actual people. As in the logic (some might say illogic) of the prisoners' dilemma and tit-for-tat games once used to describe the theory of nuclear deterrence, neither the magnanimity nor the fears of the human spirit play a role in this book's equation.

Despite the publisher's reputation and the implied support of influential (mostly retired) authorities, serious students of globalization or defense policy should avoid this book. It is not merely a weak argument; these are not principles of global security for the real world.

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Williams, Cindy, ed. *Holding the Line: U.S. Defense Alternatives for the 21st Century*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001. 289pp. \$21.95

This is the rare book that actually lives up to its blurbs. It should be required reading for U.S. defense planners, especially Bush administration officials for whom

increasing defense spending rather than "holding the line" is an article of faith. They would profit greatly from the volume's analysis of where *not* to look for the savings that might pay for the administration's promised transformation of the military. *Hint*: cutting infrastructure will not pay for military transformation.

Cindy Williams, a senior research fellow in the Strategic Studies Program at MIT and a former assistant director for national security at the Congressional Budget Office, has assembled an impressive group of contributors. In a focused, well integrated volume, they take on a range of pressing defense issues that converge on a central, critical question: how can the U.S. military be reshaped—transformed—while holding the line on defense spending? Holding the line means maintaining defense spending at about \$300 billion (in fiscal year 2000 budget-authority dollars) for ten years. That amount, it is argued, is sufficient for transformation if it is spent effectively and efficiently—which requires merely discarding outmoded strategy and force structure.

In her introductory chapter, Williams lays the foundation for what follows with an instructive discussion of the post-Cold War drawdown, the pressures generating rising defense costs, the reasons we should not succumb to those pressures, and the need to reconcile strategy and practice and to recalibrate the two-major-theater-wars yardstick that was used to size U.S. conventional forces after the Gulf War. An effective force-protection device, the two-major-theater-wars standard is both the source of rising defense costs and an obstacle to a fiscally responsible transformation of the U.S. military. Williams is especially struck by the fact that each service's share of defense

spending has been held essentially constant since the end of the Cold War. Strategy and force structure alternatives advanced by three of the contributors propose to take care of that problem.

Lawrence Korb develops Williams's account of contemporary defense planning with a critical appraisal of the Pentagon's three post-Cold War reassessments—the first Bush administration's 1990 "Base Force," which introduced the two-major-regional-wars construct; the Clinton administration's 1993 Bottom-Up Review; and the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, which also embraced the two-war view. Korb also delightfully exposes the misleading assumptions that inform the conventional wisdom about the inadequacy of current levels of defense spending.

The search for ways to utilize Department of Defense monies more effectively and efficiently begins with nonsolutions. Williams convincingly argues that infrastructure reform—eliminating functions, consolidating and collocating activities, privatization, and outsourcing—"will not be the miracle cure for the Pentagon's budget woes." Gordon Adams finds that for strategic, political, technological, and economic reasons, contemporary burden sharing by America's European allies can yield no more of a budgetary payoff than it did during the Cold War. Further cuts in nuclear forces will not result in significant savings either, according to David Mosher, who expects, not unreasonably, that "missile defenses will be the most likely cause of budget growth."

The resources required for transformation can only be extracted from the conventional force structure. It is the Army, Air Force, or Navy (and Marines)—take your pick—that will bear the brunt of restructuring. Owen Cote advances the

alternative likely to be most popular among readers of this journal—a naval-centric strategy and force structure that features a significantly more innovative Navy. Under this alternative, a somewhat smaller Air Force and a more significantly reduced but more mobile Army would be the bill payers. James Quinlivan proposes what he considers a balanced future force structure centered on a reorganized, modernized Army. The Navy would lose two carrier battle groups under this alternative; the Marine Corps and the Air Force would be smaller as well. To support what he labels a "flexible power projection strategy," Karl Mueller would shift resources from the Army and Navy to a modernized, more capable Air Force. The Army would give up 30 percent of its active combat forces and two-thirds of its National Guard units, while the Navy would have to make do with nine rather than twelve aircraft carriers.

Cote, Quinlivan, and Mueller each identify the strategic assumptions upon which their respective force structures are built. Their assumptions about the future security environment differ significantly. Unfortunately, we do not know what that security environment will actually look like. Defense planners, by nature cautious and conservative in the face of uncertainty, will want to hedge against each set of problems the authors identify; one way of doing this is to acquire the full range of capabilities they describe. In the end, while we know we should look to the conventional force structure to resolve the resource dilemma, the dilemma remains unresolved. What we still need is a reliable means of choosing among the assumptions—no small intellectual challenge. A larger dose of grand strategy

than provided in Williams's introductory chapter is required for that undertaking.

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Brasher, Bart. *Implosion: Downsizing the U.S. Military, 1987–2015*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2000. 257pp. \$67

Bart Brasher begins his retrospective discussion of *Implosion* with a simple synopsis in chapter 1, “The Last 1,000 Days of the Cold War.” Mentioned in this chapter is a discussion of the period of the Reagan administration when Defense personnel numbers and budget authority reached their peaks. He includes interesting *USA Today* statistics about defense spending in the United States and in the USSR, as well as a breakdown of how many soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines were serving. He also discusses how each service recruits, tests, and promotes its enlisted and officer personnel. Brasher then proceeds to the topic of the security environment (primarily by describing where U.S. military forces are deployed and in what numbers), the demise of the Soviet Union, and various operations that the U.S. military was involved in through the end of the 1980s. He closes this chapter with a discussion of the base realignment process, military readiness at the end of the Cold War, and the size of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, reserve components, and nuclear forces.

The book's style is readable, and Brasher takes time to explain acronyms, even to describe how civilian control of the military is organized. His explanations about the military and government processes are clear even for the uninitiated.

However, it is clear well before the end of the first chapter that the author's approach consists primarily of stringing together information gleaned from various sources; the first thirty-four-page chapter contains 151 endnotes. Also, the book is replete with numbers and statistics; the average paragraph contains at least two or three. For example, the following is the concluding paragraph of the discussion of Operation JUST CAUSE: “Casualty figures for the invasion included 24 Americans dead, including two who were killed accidentally by their own forces. The number of U.S. wounded was 324, while the PDF suffered 314 killed, 124 wounded, and 5,313 captured. Serious estimates of Panamanian noncombatants killed ran from 100 to 202. Within a few years, Panama was a democracy and Noriega was in a stateside prison, convicted of the narcotics charges brought against him.”

The next several chapters fall into a pattern. For each year from 1990 through 1994, Brasher uses statistical tidbits to discuss human resources, the security environment, the “Base Force” (and other alternate force structures), military readiness, and downsizing. Each chapter sets forth the “security environment,” a chronological account of defense and military issues, primarily illuminated by force-deployment statistics. Subchapters cover in a clear and concise fashion such subjects as contingency operations, the Bottom-Up Review, the base closure process, modernization, and “topsizeing.” Chapter 7 covers the downsizing of the military from 1995 and 1996, and chapter 8 covers the “Quadrennial Defense Review and the Out-Years, 1997 to 2015.” Brasher's conclusions, which occupy two pages, include: “Although many equate the initiation of personnel and force structure