

TESTIMONY ON NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member and other members of the committee, for the honor of being asked to testify on the critical subject of our nation's struggle against terrorism, and the administration's many strategies for countering this serious threat.

There are indeed a multitude of U.S. national strategies for countering terror. In fact, there probably are too many. It is hard to keep them straight, even for someone who tries to make it his business to follow them, and hard to know their relative importance and centrality in determining actual policy such as allocation of budget resources. There should be fewer.

For example, the national strategy for the physical protection of critical infrastructures and the national strategy to secure cyberspace could logically be part of the national strategy for homeland security. Also, one might merge the national strategy to combat weapons of mass destruction with the national military strategic plan for the war on terrorism.

But it is perfectly acceptable and reasonable to have several major strategy documents. Seven or eight seem too many, but three do make sense—a broad national security strategy, a national military strategy, and a homeland defense strategy. The specific purposes of each of these documents are different enough, and the key governmental players generally distinct enough, that some level of differentiation may be enriching rather than confusing.

That said, there are problems with each of the strategies on their own terms. My main points (some borrowed from coauthored work with Brookings colleagues) are as follows:

- On homeland security, the Bush administration’s basic strategy is a reasonable first effort, but fails to address several major national vulnerabilities, such as possible terrorist attacks against large private infrastructure, chemical facilities, and the trucking industry.
- Although the administration’s case for a greater emphasis on preemption has some merit, the decision to articulate it formally has caused us more harm than good. North Korea’s decision to accelerate its nuclear weapons program is probably exhibit A. (Other dimensions of the national security strategy are appealing, including the positive language towards China and the greater emphasis placed on foreign and economic assistance for developing countries.)
- Finally, in regard to military strategy, while many of Secretary Rumsfeld’s concepts are sound—revising the two-war framework, rethinking global basing, moving towards a limited national missile defense, encouraging joint-service experimentation, emphasizing “revolutionary” technologies and warfighting concepts—his plan has a major oversight in regard to the war on terror. Specifically, it does little to address the problem of failed states, where terrorists can take refuge or gain illicit resources that contribute to their strength and effectiveness. The U.S. armed forces cannot make nation building their primary task, but the United States does need to do more about quelling civil conflict and restoring stability to societies at war. For example, programs that help train and equip other countries’ militaries for conducting such missions need to be drastically expanded.

I now explore each of these issues in somewhat greater detail below.

HOMELAND SECURITY

This section draws on the preface to the second edition of our Brookings book, *Protecting the American Homeland*, that I coauthored with Peter Orszag, Ivo Daalder, Mac Destler, David Gunter, Jim Lindsay, Robert Litan, and James Steinberg.¹

¹ This book will be published by Brookings this spring.

Homeland security is daunting in its complexity, and in the sheer number of potential targets against which attack might be contemplated in an open country of nearly 300 million people. As such, it requires a conceptual foundation and set of priorities, if efforts are not to degenerate into a scattershot set of activities that leave many gaps and fail to make good use of available resources.

Recognizing as much, the Bush administration put forth a strategy for homeland security on July 16, 2002.² It was somewhat illogical that the strategy would be produced more than a month after the administration proposed a new department of homeland security, since the organization of the department should presumably be based on a clear sense of what it needs to accomplish. But as a practical matter, the strategy and the design of the department were designed largely in tandem, mitigating the downsides of this backwards approach.

The administration's strategy document recognizes that terrorists are themselves strategic, adaptive actors who will pursue new modes of attack and new weaponry. The administration's strategy makes particular reference to the further danger that terrorists will seek or obtain weapons of mass destruction. It emphasizes the necessary roles played by state and local governments as well as the private sector and individual citizens; indeed, according to administration estimates, the latter collectively outspend the federal government on homeland security efforts today (total national spending is about \$100 billion a year, of which the federal share is about \$35 billion).

The administration's strategy is similar in many ways to what Brookings proposed in April 2002. We suggested a four-tier approach to preventing terrorism in general, and catastrophic terrorism in particular: protect the country's borders, prevent attacks here at home by pursuing terrorists in the United States preemptively and keeping dangerous materials from them, protect key assets and population centers here at home as a final line of defense, and mitigate the results of any attacks that occur nonetheless. In short, our four-layered approach was border protection, domestic prevention, domestic protection, and consequence management.

² See Office of Homeland Security, *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (July 2002), available at www.whitehouse.gov.

The Bush administration proposes a six-tier approach, involving six “critical mission areas.” The first is intelligence and warning, followed by border and transportation security, domestic counterterrorism, protecting critical infrastructures and key assets, defending against catastrophic threats, and emergency preparedness and response. The administration also proposed four key methods or “foundations” for enhancing all six tiers of defense: law, science and technology, information sharing and systems, and international cooperation. One can always quibble with specifics; for example, the Bush administration’s critical mission area of intelligence and warning seems more of a foundation or method than a separate tier of defense. But the taxonomy serves its main purposes well.

Although the administration’s strategy makes a start, it leaves out several key priorities for action. They can be organized into three broad categories. One concerns major infrastructure in the private sector, which the Bush administration largely ignores. A second concerns information technology and its proper uses; despite rhetoric about using IT aggressively to promote homeland security, the Bush administration budgets and programmatic activities to date do not match the rhetoric. A third concerns the presently unrecognized need to greatly expand certain specific capacities for homeland security such as the Coast Guard and Customs.

Regarding the private sector, the Bush administration is too willing to take a free-market approach, trusting owners of large buildings, factories, and other facilities to deduce what protection they need and provide it largely on their own. But the business of American business is business, not homeland security. It is therefore not surprising that, for example, the chemical and trucking industries have not moved adequately on their own to improve safety, leaving their assets vulnerable to theft or sabotage.

In regard to information technology, the administration still has no plan for quickly improving real-time information sharing not only in the national law enforcement community, but among the broader set of public and private actors who are vital to preventing and responding to homeland attacks. And its investments to improve information sharing throughout the government fall woefully short of what is needed. Investments of more than \$10 billion will be

needed if government at all levels is to be capable of “connecting the dots” the next time around. We can share databases on terrorist suspects quickly today, a considerable accomplishment since 9/11, but that is not enough.

Finally, while the administration plans to modernize the Coast Guard and adopt a new approach to Customs, it does not recognize the need to increase the overall size and capacity of these organizations. The former was already undersized for a wide variety of missions it performed before 9/11, when homeland security imperatives then demanded more than half its fleet (and continue to employ perhaps a quarter of it). The latter still only inspects less than 5 percent of all cargo entering the country, even if it has become savvier about small percentage to examine. The container security initiative, and placing U.S. inspectors in many overseas ports where cargo can be monitored before reaching the United States, is a very good idea, but it is underfunded by an order of magnitude in the 2004 budget proposal. Indeed, all of the shortcomings of the administration’s homeland security plan are reflected in not only the homeland security strategy document, but the administration’s budget proposal for 2004 and its critical infrastructure and cyberspace strategies as well.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY AND PREEMPTION

The new shift in emphasis on preemptive and preventive uses of force is a response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, which brought home the necessity to address potentially catastrophic threats before the country can be attacked. The first manifestation of this more forceful attitude was the president's seminal Sept. 20, 2001, speech to a joint session of Congress vowing to hold responsible the terrorists as well as those who harbor them. It paved the way for a largely successful military campaign in Afghanistan and sent a clear warning to other state sponsors of terrorism.³

³ This section focuses on the Bush administration’s so-called doctrine of preemption and is drawn largely from a Brookings policy brief coauthored late last year with James Steinberg and Susan Rice.

The preemption concept was further elaborated in the president's West Point speech and then more formally in the National Security Strategy. It threatens to attack so-called rogue states, which pose a danger to the United States, whether or not they are demonstrably linked to terrorist organizations of global reach. The administration argues that the continued spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) technology to states with a history of aggression creates an unacceptable level of risk, and presents "a compelling case for taking anticipatory actions to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack."

However, a broad-based doctrine of preemption carries serious risks. The Bush administration was right to take a strong stand against terrorists and extremist states, but it had already accomplished this goal with its early words in the period after the September 11 attacks and its actions in Afghanistan. It did not need a formal doctrine of preemption to drive the point home. Rather than enunciate a formal new doctrine, it would have been better to continue to reserve the preemptive military tool for a narrow, rare class of situations where inaction poses a credible risk of large scale, irreversible harm and where other policy tools offer a poor prospect of success. Given that the doctrine has now been promulgated, the Bush administration should clarify and limit the conditions under which it might be applied.

Elevating the preemptive option to a policy doctrine can have serious negative consequences. For one, it reinforces the image of the United States as too quick to use military force and to do so outside the bounds of international law and legitimacy. This can make it more difficult for the United States to gain international support for its use of force, and over the long term, may lead others to resist U.S. foreign policy goals more broadly, including efforts to fight terrorism. Elevating preemption to the level of a formal doctrine may also increase the administration's inclination to reach for the military lever quickly, when other tools still have a good chance of working.

Advocating preemption warns potential enemies to hide the very assets we might wish to take preemptive action against, or to otherwise prepare responses and defenses. In this tactical sense, talking too openly about preemption reduces its likely utility, if and when it is employed.

Finally, advocating preemption may well embolden other countries that would like to justify attacks on their enemies as preemptive in nature.

One can argue that a more explicit policy of preemption actually reinforces deterrence by putting other countries on notice about America's seriousness of purpose in addressing threats such as the possession of weapons of mass destruction by rogue regimes. It also allows the administration to argue that its focus on Iraq is part of a broader security concept and does not represent preoccupation with a specific regime. However, linking the real problem of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to a broader doctrine of preemption (defined to include preventive war) complicated the administration's task in gaining international support for its preferred policy last fall, and may be contributing to our diplomatic difficulties at present as well. Bizarrely, many countries seem to worry as much about restraining the United States as about disarming Saddam—not a defensible position on their part, but a reality nonetheless, and one that the preemption doctrine may have helped create.

Many countries worry that the Bush administration will take a similar preemptive and largely unilateral approach in dealing with other cases such as North Korea or Iran or Syria. Further, other countries' frustration with the United States' decision to grant to itself, (though not to others), a right of preemption may chill their willingness to cooperate fully with the United States in the war on terrorism. To date, that does not seem to be a major problem, but the situation could change.

THE NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY AND FAILED STATES

Finally, the administration's strategies for dealing with terror do not have a strong plan for helping failed states—the current or future Afghanistans where al Qaeda could find refuge and resources.

There are many tools needed to reduce the prevalence of failed states. But some have to do with the physical capacity to forcibly stop or mitigate conflict in some situations, and to help keep the peace after parties to a war have agreed to a ceasefire on their own in others.

Today, unfortunately, most countries besides the United States do not have the wherewithal to deploy well-equipped troops quickly and effectively to trouble spots, and then to keep them there once they have been deployed. Surveying the world's conflicts, both those now underway and those of the recent past, it would be desirable that the international community have roughly double its current capacity to deploy and sustain forces abroad. It has been averaging about 100,000 forces in various peace and stabilization missions in recent years, but a survey of the world's hotspots suggest that it would often be useful to be able to deploy and sustain 200,000 troops for such missions.⁴ As noted, these missions are important not only for humanitarian reasons, but for national security ones as well—to deprive terrorists of sanctuaries and sources of income (from diamonds, drug trading, and the like) that they can often obtain in failed or failing states.

Since some countries will choose not to participate in any given operation, and since troops will need to be rotated to avoid exhaustion and burnout, a total pool of perhaps 600,000 personnel would be desirable. That number is not exact; it is hard to know how troop rotations would work in advance. But a three-to-one ratio of available forces to deployed forces has generally been considered appropriate by the U.S. military. If anything, it is optimistic, and even more than 600,000 could be required to maintain 200,000 on deployment.⁵ The international community already has about that number of military personnel who can be rapidly deployed and then sustained in overseas theaters. The problem, however, is that two-thirds of the total number now comes from the United States. But there is no reason the United States should be expected

⁴ See my recent book, *Expanding Global Military Capacity for Humanitarian Intervention* (Brookings, 2003).

⁵ In fact, on average the United States maintains no more than 10 percent of its forces on deployment, away from home station, at a time—somewhat more than 100,000 out of a total active-duty personnel strength of 1.4 million. Indeed, it considers that level of effort rather onerous. But that aggregate figure of 1.4 million includes many non-combat troops, so the ratio may be misleading. As another means of estimating availability, note that most U.S. military services have a policy of not having individual personnel be absent from home for more than 120 days a year, essentially revalidating the 3:1 rule. See Michael O'Hanlon, *Defense Policy Choices for the Bush Administration* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2001), pp. 22-58.

to provide most forces for such missions, and as a practical matter, this country will not be willing or able to do so in any event.

For these reasons, if there is to be additional effort in humanitarian and peace operations in the future, most is likely to come from other countries. That means that of the desired pool of 600,000 deployable military personnel, non-U.S. countries should provide about 500,000 of the troops. In other words, countries besides the United States should more than double their aggregate power projection capabilities.

That number should be sobering for those who consider humanitarian military operations to require only relatively modest amounts of force. But it should be within reach for the international community, if not right away, then over time. To begin, not all troops need be equally well trained and equipped. Some missions will be less demanding than others. Some will not require rapid response or long-range transport. Either the peace accords that precede them will be negotiated over an extended period, allowing ample time for preparations, or the operations will be close to home for countries contributing troops. Even if 200,000 forces might be needed at a time, it is unlikely that it would be necessary to deploy more than 50,000 urgently, and unlikely that more than half to two-thirds would need to operate in extremely austere surroundings.

Although their situations vary greatly from region to region and country to country, developing countries face many common budgetary challenges in any effort to expand military capabilities. The costs would follow from the need for more rigorous training and for better equipment.

Particularly in Africa, a continent facing many acute economic problems, the western powers will need to provide many of the resources required to expand and improve regional military capabilities. Programs now underway, such as the U.S. Africa Crisis Response Initiative (recently renamed the African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance program, or

ACOTA), are important steps in the right direction. But they do not involve nearly enough troops or provide sufficiently rigorous training and sufficiently capable equipment.

The need for more rigorous training is evident. Under current assistance programs, exercises and classes typically take no more than a few weeks. Yet creating a highly ready military, competent across a broad spectrum of operations including combat, typically takes many months if not longer.⁶ As a U.S. Army field manual puts it, “The most important training for peace operations remains training for essential combat and basic soldier skills”—underscoring the scope of the challenge for preparing good troops for such missions.⁷ In addition, troops conducting peace and humanitarian interventions also must work with nongovernmental organizations that provide relief and other services, adding further complexities to any mission.⁸ The United States and other foreign militaries cannot be expected to build other countries’ armed forces up from the ground level; nor would any such offers necessarily be well received. But months of training, as opposed to weeks, are needed. So are refresher courses every one to two years. At least a doubling in the intensity of training per unit is appropriate. Exercises are also needed to practice coordinating operations at higher and larger levels of effort—notably, for missions involving brigades and divisions. Most of these exercises can be headquarters and staff efforts, as opposed to full-scale field training, but they are critical.

To get a handle on the costs of serviceable equipment for such countries, two different approaches can be taken. One is to examine the costs of a country such as Turkey or South Korea—a country that has typically tried, and succeeded, to field strong ground forces with fairly low defense spending. This approach tends to produce cost estimates that are somewhat too low, perhaps, since such countries do not typically buy large amounts of strategic lift or deployable logistics support equipment.

⁶ For a good explanation of how hard the U.S. military needed to work to improve its own standards after Vietnam, see Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 1994), pp. 1-38.

⁷ U.S. Army, *Field Manual 100-23: Peace Operations* (Washington, D.C., 1994), available at www.adtdl.army.mil/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/fm/100-23/fm100-23.htm, chapter 3, p. 8.

⁸ See for example, Chris Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College Peacekeeping Institute, 1996); Byman et al., *Strengthening the Partnership*.

Another way is to examine the U.S. Marine Corps budget. Since the Marines are very sustainable abroad, their budget does cover the costs of deployable logistics (though not the costs of strategic transport, which are provided for them by the Air Force and especially the Navy). Cost estimates produced in that way may wind up high, however, given the more costly equipment usually purchased even by the most frugal of the U.S. military services. But it explicitly accounts for support forces of various types—medical crews, engineering and construction companies, firefighting units, communications specialists, and so forth—that are just as critical in many operations as infantry soldiers themselves. An international effort to improve African capacities should aspire to attain levels as close to those of the Marine Corps as possible, given the desirability of possessing organic logistics support capabilities and combat capabilities in regions far removed from the domestic infrastructure of the country in which a conflict occurs. But useful benefits can be attained at lower levels of effort as well.

South Korea has, over the past couple of decades, averaged spending some \$10 billion to \$12 billion on its military, with about \$3 billion to \$4 billion typically going to procurement.⁹ With that budget, it fields half a million active-duty ground forces, most of them light infantry but with substantial numbers of armored and mechanized formations as well. In other words, the types of units in South Korea's military are probably a good model for what one would want to create in the way of global intervention capacity. Since South Korea's equipment inventories have been built up over two to three decades, given the normal lifetimes of most weaponry, and since a good deal of its procurement budget has gone to its air force and navy, its ground forces probably field about \$50 billion in equipment. Since they number 450,000 troops, the value of their equipment is roughly \$10 billion per 100,000 soldiers.

As for the U.S. Marine Corps, over the past 20 years it has typically spent \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion procuring ground-combat equipment for nearly 200,000 Marines. So it has acquired

⁹ See various issues of the International Institute for Strategic Studies' *Military Balance* (current issues are published by Oxford University Press), as well as Ministry of Defense, *Defense White Paper 1997-1998* (Seoul, 1998), pp. 136, 190.

\$30 billion to \$35 billion in equipment for 150,000 Marines focused on ground combat. These numbers suggest a cost of about \$20 billion per 100,000 ground troops.

Suppose that the world's developing countries chose to develop well-equipped deployable ground forces including 100,000 soldiers, as well as comparable numbers of well-trained soldiers with somewhat less equipment and more limited capabilities. The cost for the first 100,000 soldiers might then be \$10 billion to \$20 billion, and the cost of the second group perhaps half as much. (If the purchases were not done in a coordinated manner, unit costs might go up somewhat, as would subsequent maintenance costs. On the other hand, if second-hand equipment were sometimes acquired, costs could be less.)

Poor countries, principally in Africa, might receive such equipment as aid. The donor community might spend up to \$20 billion to make such an arrangement work. The U.S. share might be \$7 billion to \$8 billion, assuming that Europe would provide an equal amount and that countries such as Japan would contribute significant assistance as well. If provided during a ten-year initiative, annual U.S. aid would be about \$750 million for this purpose; operating and training costs could drive the total close to \$1 billion. Including support from all donors, annual costs would total \$2 billion to \$3 billion a year.

The proposed U.S. assistance figure is dozens of times higher than past spending for the Africa Crisis Response Initiative plus Operation Focus Relief combined, and comparable to the entire U.S. assistance budget for Africa. But it is several times less than current U.S. military aid to the Middle East. Total assistance under this proposal from all donors would be several times less than what Africans themselves spend on their armed forces (about \$10 billion a year) and almost ten times less than total economic aid to Africa (about \$20 billion a year). Moreover, such levels need not be attained overnight, if at all, for an effort of some substantial type to be desirable. This calculation is an estimate of what it would cost to create an idealized intervention and peacekeeping capability for the international community. Much more modest, and politically realistic, efforts would themselves be highly useful.

Substantial numbers of U.S. personnel might be needed to carry out the associated training. For example, 150 special forces personnel were involved in Operation Focus Relief in 2001, for a program training just 4,000 troops.¹⁰ Were that program increased by a factor of ten, more than 1,000 special forces troops might be needed, out of a total of only 30,000 active-duty special forces in the U.S. inventory. However, such a large number of special forces could not realistically be provided, so private contractors such as MPRI would probably have to be hired, adding several tens of millions of dollars to the required annual budget. Such an additional expense is well worth it given the severity of the problem of civil violence in the world today.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, the Bush administration has made important progress on a number of fronts in the struggle against terrorism. But there are holes in its homeland security strategy and its national military strategy, including poor protection for the chemical industry and for skyscrapers in the first case, and insufficient attention to the problem of failed states in the second. There are also unfortunate aspects, notably the doctrine of preemption, to its national security strategy. The Congress needs to provide oversight and pressure to help the administration with its task. Unfortunately, the proliferation of counterterror strategy documents makes the job somewhat harder. But if one thinks in terms of three broad areas of effort—homeland security, military strategy, and broader foreign policy/security policy—the conceptual challenge becomes more manageable. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

¹⁰ Segun Adeyemi, “Special Forces Teach Peace Support Skills,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, May 23, 2001.

