Evolving Strategic Realities:

Implications for U.S. Policymakers

edited by Franklin D. Margiotta

the national defense university

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Implications for US Policymakers

Edited by

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Foreword

The international system is undergoing rapidly accelerating and destabilizing change, vastly complicating the conditions under which policy choices must be made and managed. It is difficult to comprehend the trends underlying these complex unfolding events, and therefore to select the optimum policies for dealing with this changing world order. Yet, it is essential to attempt to understand the nature of these evolving issues, and to re-examine our strategic postulates in light of them, if we are to adapt our policies and programs to ensure our national security in these turbulent times.

The seminars which were the genesis of this volume were designed to identify and address some of the evolving issues which appear to have significant implications for the security of the United States. A few of the topics, such as US-Soviet relations, have long been the focus of policy concern; others, such as perceptions of declining US power, have more recently become part of the decision equation of policymakers. But all the issues we addressed raise questions about the validity of the more traditional views of the reality which shapes the formulation of policy choices. In our discussions we were not seeking unanimity on solutions to problems, but informed debate to focus thinking on means of managing these issues in a changing world political and economic order.

With the varied points of view we sought among the seminar participants, it is not surprising that we did not reach consensus on the policies we should adopt in addressing these new realities. There was, however, implicit agreement that there is validity in the somewhat trite notion that vision and steadfastness are required if we are to meet the challenges, and profit from the opportunities, presented by these events.

This volume contains the papers on which we based our seminar deliberations and a summary of our discussions of the issues. We hope that the insights will continue to stimulate debate; for in responding to events crucial to the national welfare, and even survival, we must not permit illusions to obscure the evolving realities of our strategic environment.

R. G. GARD, JR.
Lieutenant General, USA
President

Preface

The National Security Affairs Institute of the National Defense University is a governmental institution with a unique mission. It was established in response to the National Defense University's charter to provide creative thinking and research on major policy issues faced by the United States as our government defines and defends US security interests. The University has several other research programs that take advantage of the unique capabilities of its student body and faculty; the Institute endeavors to bring objective scholarship and thoughtful commentary to bear directly upon relatively short-term national security policy problems and issues.

In seeking to accomplish this formidable task, the University has been fortunate to cosponsor cooperative efforts with several staff agencies of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Through these joint undertakings, the National Security Affairs Institute provides various forums in which responsible civilian and military policymakers may join in candid, informal discussions with knowledgeable citizens from academe, private industry, the Congress, the media, and other sectors of our society. Papers are sometimes commissioned to stimulate dialogue on selected issues. These issues are then discussed by relatively small groups (led by a chairman) who assess implications and, oftentimes, suggest policy initiatives. Normally, the results of these meetings are published and circulated to select policymakers and others interested in security policy issues.

One such jointly sponsored enterprise generated the ideas contained in this volume. From November 1979 to April 1980, the Institute hosted a series of six monthly dinner seminar meetings. The Seminar Series, in its third year, focused upon "Evolving Strategic Realities: Implications for US Policymakers." This theme and its constituent parts were selected to focus attention upon national security policy issues which were evolving from past social and environmental trends. Particular emphasis was given to recently recognized strategic realities or to those that had received little public or intellectual attention and debate. We sought to stimulate further understanding of these issues and their influence as catalysts to action or constraints upon policy for those US policymakers concerned with choices about national security.

Papers were developed to provide a basis for discussion by a

group of selected citizens. A core group of "regulars" was invited to participate in each meeting; they were supplemented at any one seminar by others who represented particular expertise or the agencies charged with making policy in the subject area to be discussed at that seminar. Normally attended by approximately twenty individuals, these seminars served as a forum for mixing the diverse views, disciplines, educational backgrounds, and experiences of our participants. This volume presents the papers that stimulated thoughtful discussion at this series of meetings. The final chapter in this book represents my attempt to sift through the collected wisdom displayed during these evening discussions and to provide a summary of the themes that emerged in these intellectual exchanges.

However, this volume represents more than the excellent efforts of the several authors who prepared chapters based upon their research and experience. Unique credit must be given to Lieutenant General R. G. Gard, Jr., President of National Defense University, who not only initiated and supported the meetings from which this book evolved, but also chaired each meeting and led our discussion groups through their task of critiquing and contributing to further understanding of the issues raised in each chapter of this book. This was no mean task, given the divergent perspectives of our participants.

Of equal importance was the cosponsorship, support, interest, and intellectual stimulation provided by the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Mr. David E. McGiffert, and several other members of the staff of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In July 1979, while assessing the conclusions of the annual conference organized by the Institute, Secretary McGiffert suggested further exploration of two themes which emerged as seminar topics and chapters in this book: "Managing US-China Relations" and "Perceptions of American Power." As world events evolved in late 1979, and US interests were threatened by developments in Iran and Afghanistan, the focus on US-China relations and on "Perceptions" became increasingly important for US policymakers. The insights provided in this book are also indebted to the support and understanding of other key members of the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Planning, Mr. Walter Slocombe; Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Dr. Lynn E. Davis; and Director, Policy Research, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Mr. John P. Merrill.

The dinner seminar meetings, which provided the focus for each contributor's paper, would not have been possible without the organizing skills and devoted efforts of Colonel Gayle Heckel, Lieutenant

Colonel Verna S. Kellogg, and Ms. Joe Anne Lewis. Their attention to detail made the meetings a pleasant experience for each of our guests and permitted us to focus upon the challenging issues.

A special note of thanks is due to the staff of the National Defense University Research Directorate who made rapid publication of this volume possible. Ms. Evelyn Lakes and Mr. George Maerz gave invaluable assistance in editing and administering the production of this book. Mr. Al Helder assisted in preparing the seminar notes which provide the basis for the concluding chapter. Our word processing technicians, Ms. Dorothy Mack and Ms. Laura Hall, carefully typed the manuscripts at each stage of the drafting and editing process.

We must naturally express our sincere appreciation to those who define the ultimate quality of this effort. The authors who contributed did so on relatively short notice and sought to tailor their approach to, and focus their insights upon, the rapidly changing world that challenges US policymakers today. Thus, the value of these papers resides not only in their scholarship and their policy prescriptions, but also in their value as catalysts for an interchange of informed, but diverse, views which lead to new perspectives on the present national security environment. We hope that their insights will also stimulate those who study and are interested in US national security affairs. Our contributors' published thoughts speak to the quality of their response to our challenge.

Finally, we must thank that splendid group of seminar members—policymakers, lawyers, staff members from Congress, editors of learned journals, professors, and those from other sectors of our society—for the serious and thoughtful spirit that they brought to our series of deliberations. As they put each paper through the test of careful and open inquiry, the implications of each study and the qualifications surrounding it became that much clearer. The final results of their efforts are collected in the concluding chapter of this book. In many respects, this volume represents more than a series of meetings and bits of research. It represents the efforts of a conscientious, concerned group who came to know each other during the course of these meetings, and who expressed their respect for each other and for our Nation's concerns by carefully challenging each other's ideas on policy issues. It was a unique privilege to participate in such a series which made this book possible; for this experience, and for everyone's contribution, we at the National Defense University are sincerely grateful.

FRANKLIN D. MARGIOTTA

Contents

Evolving Strategic Realities

1

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As the United States enters the decade of the 1980s, new realities are emerging in the international and domestic environments within which US national security will be determined. The more clearly we understand the nature of these realities, the more likely it is that our democratic society and its responsible policymakers will be able to develop rational stratagems for dealing with an increasingly complex and uncertain world. An important purpose of this volume is to aid understanding of and focus attention upon the implications of evolving strategic realities. These realities will act as catalysts that drive the United States toward hard choices, and as constraints that limit our national ability to achieve desired outcomes.

This volume presents chapters on discrete issues with implications for US policymakers. Subjects worthy of attention surfaced from many directions. The emergence of some realities was only being broadly recognized as we prepared for the National Security Affairs Institute Dinner Seminar Series. Other issues seemed to be deserving of greater public exploration than they had previously received.

The Issue Areas and International Events

The topics of the Dinner Seminar Series were chartered in August 1979, but the issue areas selected have moved to the forefront of public debate in the United States after recent developments in military manning, in the Persian Gulf, and in Afghanistan. Two topics were suggested by Mr. David E. McGiffert, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. He proposed that it would be useful to examine where the United States stood in managing its relationship with the People's Republic of China. This topic proved fortuitous since we discussed it after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and after our Vice President and our Secretary of Defense had traveled to China to develop new areas of cooperation with that important nation.

Secretary McGiffert also reinforced a theme that had surfaced at the July 1979 National Security Affairs Conference held at the National Defense University; he thought that a further exploration of perceptions of power might make a contribution to US national security policymakers. This subject became even more relevant after the November 1979 seizure of the United States Embassy in Iran and the crisis in Afghanistan. At the February seminar, US initiatives in response to these two destabilizing events made for a lively discussion about the real, or perceived, decline in US power as measured by the capability of the United States to influence events in Iran and Afghanistan.

Another topic, dealing with energy and US national security, also was made more relevant by the Islamic revolution and the potential future challenges to Western oil supplies portended by developments in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Our earlier choice to have the January 1980 seminar focus upon the growing importance of economics and the ability of the United States to manage this phenomenon was put into sharper relief by the attempts of the United States and its allies to bring to bear economic sanctions, boycotts, and, possibly, military force against a hostile Iranian government and a truculent Soviet Union.

Our first seminar in November 1979, on changing US military manpower realities, met under the cloud of the failure of all four military services to meet fiscal year 1979 recruiting goals—the first such failure in the history of the all-volunteer force. By the spring of 1980, serious doubts had surfaced about the quality of the manpower the US military is attracting and about the ability of the US military to retain qualified and experienced technicians within its forces. A swelling chorus of public questions was being raised about manpower registration and the draft.

Finally, our obvious early luck in scheduling persisted through the year; in August 1979 we left our April session open, in order to compensate for the vagaries of Washington weather which had sometimes caused us to postpone dinner seminar meetings. After a relatively mild winter, we were able to complete our series with an analysis of new dimensions of Soviet foreign policy in an attempt to understand what recent Soviet initiatives in Afghanistan and elsewhere meant for US national security policy choices.

The April meeting, thus, contributed appropriately to the purpose of our series. But this very purpose somewhat defeats the ambition of anyone editing a collection—to assemble a coherent set of papers around a single theme. While the relevance of our meetings unfortunately profited from the world's miseries and excesses, this turbulence

did not provide an easily identifiable, overarching theme for this volume. Nevertheless, as the year progressed and as we addressed the separate issue areas that we and the staff members of the Office of the Secretary of Defense had agreed were worthy of research, one could discern at least a minimal logic for presenting the seven papers prepared by our contributors.

Catalysts and Constraints to Action

The papers examine issues which will act as both catalysts and constraints. They are not presented in the order in which the seminar groups addressed them. Rather, the three chapters on Soviet policies, US-China relations, and energy-related issues can be clustered primarily around a focus on catalysts for US national security policy formulation, or, viewed alternatively, as major challenging issue areas that will require significant attention and choice in the near term. The chapters on the economic, military, and psychological instruments of statecraft can be suitably grouped together as representing constraints that will be operative in limiting US policy options.

Because of events in late 1979 and early 1980, the US relationship with the Soviet Union may have again emerged as the central concern of US policymakers as they deal with a turbulent and dynamic world. The next chapter in this book examines "New Dimensions of Soviet Foreign Policy" by Professor Vladimir Petrov. We wanted the seminar to review Soviet foreign policy in an attempt to focus more closely upon recent Soviet international behavior and to determine whether this behavior represented a tactical shift or a major change in strategic objectives. We examined the factors that motivated recent Soviet foreign policy initiatives and sought to understand their implications for US national security policy.

In his chapter, Vladimir Petrov provides Americans with a unique and challenging perspective—an uncritical reconstruction of Soviet foreign policy over the last few years from the Soviet point of view. He suggests that the rulers of the Soviet Union know their own weaknesses and that current Soviet policies emanate from views developed in the 1950s. Since that time, the Soviets have sought to break out of containment by the United States and the West, build an international following of anti-Western Third World states who seek to balance the power of the West, and accumulate strength by means of these policies and increases in military power. All this was to lead to recognition of the Soviet Union as a coequal superpower, with the ultimate purpose of achieving a US–USSR condominium that would protect each "em-

pire's" interests and permit struggle at the periphery while maintaining at least a minimum world order.

In Petrov's view, the interests of the Soviet state today take priority over those of the Communist world revolution and Soviet rulers are extremely sensitive to any deterioration of their personal or governmental power, especially within their perceived empire or in the developing world. Petrov declines to grant the Soviet Union a grand strategy and notes that Soviet tactics eventually become strategy if they meet with success. He believes that inconsistency is normal in any government's foreign policy and that perhaps the only element of grand strategy discernable in Soviet foreign policies may derive from reactive moves by the Soviets to a historic and still residual US containment policy. After reviewing the numerous shortcomings the Soviets perceived on the part of the United States, Petrov suggests the Soviet leadership decided that detente had failed.

The invasion of Afghanistan is seen as reflecting Soviet weakness inasmuch as the situation in Afghanistan had so deteriorated that the Soviets believed it was in their vital national security interests to intervene—a drastic move. Afghanistan was viewed as a strategically vital, nonhostile buffer state that was being threatened by Chinese support of Afghan rebels. The Soviets were emboldened to move because the United States was distracted by the hostage crisis, Iran was in turmoil, and US military action and presence in the Persian Gulf had increased. Inhibitions normally provided by a Soviet interest in completing SALT, in reducing NATO defense budgets, and in limiting improvements in NATO nuclear technology had been overtaken by events. With these inhibitions behind them, the Soviet Union moved into Afghanistan. This major act of open aggression naturally forced the United States to reconsider its policies toward the People's Republic of China.

Any serious discussion of US-Soviet relationships must necessarily consider US-China relations as a major corollary of that relationship, but one with an inherent importance and dynamic of its own. "Managing US-China Relations" was addressed in a seminar which attempted to understand better the changing relationships emerging between the United States and China since normalization. We tried to develop appropriate objectives that should be sought in US policy toward China to insure that the United States maximizes its national interests within its triangular relationship with the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union.

In Chapter 3, Professor Harry Harding provides insights into the choices facing the United States as it calculates its national security interests relating to the People's Republic of China. He indicates that

the United States faces a major strategic issue which involves clearly defining a long-term US relationship with China and integrating that relationship into regional and global concerns. The immediate challenge of the 1980s, on the other hand, is viewed as tactical—the problem of managing a fragile relationship. These strategic and tactical concerns flow from the aftermath of normalization which had five aspects: the formalization of the 1970 agreements; the extension of normalization from political to economic matters; the consolidation of normalization through the formation of private and governmental networks of relationships and cooperation; the furtherance of Chinese development in civilian areas; and the beginnings of limited military and strategic cooperation.

On the strategic side, Dr. Harding feels that there is insufficient discussion about the fundamentals of our long-term goals in our relationship with China. He proposes that the United States has several, not mutually exclusive, options: the United States could become an adversary with cool relations, or a diplomatic colleague, or an economic partner, or a military and strategic quasi-ally against the Soviet Union.

He cautiously suggests that the appropriate long-range strategic role of China will be relatively minor in the overall US global posture and US strategy. As we seek to integrate our Chinese relationship into regional concerns, Harding proposes that we should attempt to incorporate China into the Pacific economic community which must include Japan, Northeast Asia, and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He also recommends a strategic dialogue with China on Pacific matters, remembering that Japan remains the cornerstone of our Pacific strategies.

As Harding reviews the appropriate option for the United States, he notes that any further playing of the "China Card" against the Soviet Union could be counterproductive. Further, the United States should avoid forming an immediate military relationship with China, since it would not contribute to a solution of current US global problems, but could exacerbate US relations with the Soviet Union.

Harding believes that the tactical side of the US-Sino relationship may be the most productive one to develop, despite the difficulties. China is emerging as an economic colleague of the United States, but Taiwan will remain a contentious issue. He suggests that while encouraging negotiations between China and Taiwan, we should continue to maintain our Taiwanese relationship, sell arms to Taiwan, and carefully monitor the Taiwanese response to internal political pressures. In managing the US-Sino relationship, the United States must beware of an arrangement in which the Chinese set up a student-teacher

relationship with the United States. This could be dangerous, because the United States would tend to oversell its solutions to unique problems that are rooted in Chinese culture. Should this situation develop, it could lead to ultimate distrust and a feeling of betrayal on the part of the Chinese. Because of the increasing network of governmental, private, and commercial ties that are rapidly developing, the problem of merely monitoring US-China relations will become increasingly difficult.

The third major catalyst to action and choice is examined in Chapter 4, where Melvin A. Conant summarizes "The Global Impact of Energy on US Security Interests and Commitments." The seminar focused upon analyzing the implications of current energy problems for the national defense of the United States. We attempted to define the role of energy in defense efforts short of war and during a limited or more encompassing war. Fortunately, Mr. Conant broadened our perspectives to a more global view of this important issue and also reinforced our intuition that energy issues would be as much a constraining factor as a catalyst.

Mr. Conant notes that serious concerns about energy are a relatively recent phenomenon and that only a few years ago we would not have held a meeting and written papers on this subject. He points out that there are serious questions about whether military forces developed for past requirements will meet the energy-related security needs of today. His assessment is that energy is a dominant security issue and that the allocation of petroleum resources will remain the most important energy issue for at least the next twenty years.

The flow of petroleum relates directly to US national security interests because of the vulnerability of the United States. Seventy to eighty percent of US petroleum imports come in through the Caribbean where the straits are narrow; these supply a few, very large off-loading terminals. In Mr. Conant's view, protecting these lines of communication in the Caribbean and diversifying our off-loading facilities in that area may become important national security priorities.

As he reviews other areas of the world, Mr. Conant questions whether the United States will become the watchdog of the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf since there appears to be no regional power that will insure the security of oil supply. Another concern which will become more important stems from the traditional approach of the oil companies to supplying petroleum. They seek to keep oil moving with virtually no reserves; the margin for error or interruption remains very small.

Finally, the future may bring oil-reserve shortages—a vulnerability that could have divisive effects upon US alliance structures. Merely

reviewing a world map provides us with valuable insights into our allies' problems. The United States is relatively remote from the major oil-exporting regions of the world; our allies are geographically much closer and require a much higher percentage of their petroleum imports from these regions than the United States requires. The threatening proximity of the Soviet Union to the crucial oil basin of the Persian Gulf does not go unnoticed by Western Europe and Japan. There will be a normal tendency for our allies, who are vitally dependent upon Middle Eastern oil, to view issues and events in the Middle East differently than does the United States.

The evolving strategic realities emerging in the energy area, and in US relations with the Soviet Union and China, will have important implications for US policymakers. As we have noted, these three issue areas will generally force hard decisions, and developments within any one area might also constrain US freedom of choice. In our seminar program we also tried to examine some of the important constraints that will limit the potential effectiveness of any US policy options. Papers were developed which examined aspects of three of the classic "instruments of statecraft": the economic, the military, and the psychological.

Again, we must caution—every "constraint" has areas where action might change or moderate the effect of a particular restraint. Thus, when we turned to the growing importance of economics on the world scene, we sought to understand whether the United States was organized adequately to manage this phenomenon. We examined the increasingly important role that the economic instrument of statecraft plays in the international relations of the United States, and the relative importance of economic power in comparison with the more traditional measurement of national influence, that of military power. We attempted to analyze whether, and how well, the United States Government is organized to understand and manage economic relationships in a rapidly changing world.

Chapter 5, by Professors James K. Oliver and James A. Nathan, addresses these issues. The authors suggest that there have been two relatively polar images of international reality for the past decade. These images, based upon general perceptions of international reality and economic relationships, shaped the approach of numerous US intellectuals and policymakers as they considered national security issues.

One school of thought subscribes to a view of the world as a complex, interdependent system in which the compellent aspect of military force has declined in utility and in potential for influence. In

general, this intellectual school views economics as increasingly more important than military power.

Recently resurgent, but always an alternatively held view, is the more traditional approach that subscribes to the view that the complex interdependent scenario, focusing upon economics, is premature. This more traditional school of thought does not believe that international relations are dominated by international economics and believes there might be danger in the United States defining its national interest as a stable world order which has not yet come into being.

When assaying the utility of economics as a major instrument of national power, the authors conclude that there appear to be limited possibilities for inter-state leverage in the economic realm. In fact, they submit that the American political system may be a weak base of support for *either* of the above world views. Oliver and Nathan note that one must realistically conclude that in our democratic society it is difficult for any government establishment to extract sacrifices from a society that is based upon self-interest, which, at its extreme, leads to something approximating narcissism. In addition, there is rarely the requisite consensus or institutional cohesion available to make a unified approach feasible.

While recognizing the increasing importance of international economics, the authors feel that the potential utility of economic leverage in furthering US national security interests should not be overdrawn and we should have few illusions about the efficacy of this approach.

Another major constraint upon the ability of the United States to deal with the changing realities of our relations with the Soviet Union and China, and with the oil-producing nations, may be the evolving nature of US military manpower realities. When the seminar reviewed this issue, we explored the increasing difficulties encountered by the US military in recruiting and retaining quality personnel. We attempted to assess the possibility that the US military might decline significantly in size over the next five years. Our group also examined the interesting notion that the current all-volunteer force might be merely an interim phenomenon providing a transition period to a new concept of national service which will emerge over the next decade.

Chapter 6 (which I authored) examines recent evidence that may suggest that the all-volunteer force is already in, or headed for, serious trouble. Two theoretical or abstract concepts are proposed as organizing devices to help explain and summarize the underlying factors causing recruitment and retention problems.

A military identity crisis and the declining legitimacy of military service are viewed as being reinforced by several major factors or