

US MILITARY POLICY IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

Michael T. Klare

The Persian Gulf War of January-February 1991 was the first major crisis of the Post-Cold War Era, and for many analysts represents a watershed in the evolution of US military strategy. 'The Second of August 1990 will be remembered for generations to come as a turning point for the United States in its conduct of foreign affairs,' General Carl E. Vuono of the Army observed in 1991 – 'the day America announced the end of Containment and embarked upon the strategy of power projection.' But while it is certainly true that the Gulf War will have a substantial and long-lasting impact on US military thinking, it is important to **recognise** that the process of reshaping US grand strategy for the Post-Cold War era began well before the onset of the Persian Gulf crisis, and arose as much for domestic considerations – in particular, from a need to articulate a viable rationale for maintaining a large military establishment in the absence of a credible Soviet threat – as it did from international developments. In evaluating this process, two key developments require particular attention:

First, the Gulf War institutionalised *a new paradigm of combat* that will in all likelihood govern US military planning for a generation to come. To describe this new paradigm, we can use the term 'mid-intensity conflict,' meaning conflict that falls below the level of 'high-intensity conflict' (or all-out global war between the United States and the Soviet Union), and above the level of 'low-intensity conflict' (or counter-insurgency and **small-scale** military operations such as those conducted in Grenada and Panama).

Second, the Persian Gulf war legitimised *a new assertion of Pax Americana*, or the discretionary use of US military power by the President to protect and enforce certain rules of international behaviour that have been dictated by Washington. This posture is often confused – sometimes intentionally – with the concept of a 'New World Order', but, as I will argue, these are two very different concepts.

Having introduced these two basic propositions, let me examine each in greater detail.

The *new* military paradigm:

Until 1990, the United States military had only two clear paradigms to guide its strategic thinking – the paradigm of high-intensity conflict (HIC), or all-out war with the Warsaw Pact on the plains of Europe, and the paradigm of low-intensity conflict (LIC), or counter-insurgency and police-type operations in underdeveloped Third World areas. The first, HIC, was developed in response to the threat posed by massive Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. This paradigm envisioned the use of heavy tank forces backed by artillery and **airpower** in sustained, massive battles stretching across Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and adjacent countries. Although the United States was prepared to fight such a war with non-nuclear weapons, it also reserved the right to employ nuclear weapons on a first-use basis to avert defeat in such a conflict.

The second paradigm was developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s in response to an upsurge of guerilla warfare (or 'wars of national liberation', as they were known at the time) in the colonial and ex-colonial areas of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The LIC or 'counter-insurgency' paradigm involved US military and economic aid to threatened Third World regimes and, in *extremis*, direct US military intervention (as in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic). The strategy of counter-insurgency was discredited by the US defeat in Vietnam, but was revived again in the Reagan era under the banner of low-intensity conflict. In line with current US military doctrine, LIC also includes counter-terrorism, narcotics interdiction, pro-insurgency (or support for anti-communist insurgencies in the Third World), and small-scale 'contingency' operations like those conducted in Grenada and **Panama**.²

These two paradigms effectively governed the organisation and 'armamentation' of US military forces (what the military calls force structure), as well as the strategies and doctrine governing the actual use of US forces, for most of the Cold War era. Thus, in response to the HIC threat, the United States maintained 'heavy' forces equipped with large numbers of tanks, rockets, artillery pieces, and support aircraft; for LIC, it established 'light' forces that could be rapidly deployed to distant locations. Each of these sets of forces, moreover, had their own sets of strategies, tactics, and doctrines.

This was where things stood in December 1989 when, for all practical purposes, the Cold War came to an end. For many people, the end of the Cold War was viewed as a great blessing, allowing for the reallocation of resources from the military to the civilian sector; for the US military establishment, however, it **was** seen as an unmitigated disaster. Why is this so? The answer lies in the fact that the two paradigms described above provided no rationale for the continued maintenance of large military **forces** in the post-Cold War era, and thus the Pentagon faced massive cutbacks in military appropriations. There was no such rationale because

the end of the Cold War swept away the likelihood of a high-intensity conflict in Europe, and with it, the sole justification for maintenance of heavy, well-equipped forces. All that was left, it appeared, was the LIC paradigm – and this mission can easily be performed by a force one-tenth the size of the existing US military establishment. And it doesn't take much imagination to realise that the reduction of the US military to a force one-tenth its present size would produce enormous pain and hardship for the professional military class, for US defence contractors, for the legions of think-tank analysts, and for all the other groups and institutions that depend for their livelihood on high levels of military spending.

Needless to say, this **powerful** collection of constituencies did not respond passively to this impending disaster. Rather, they sought to invent a new enemy and a new paradigm that would justify retention of large military units in the post-Cold War era. And, not surprisingly, they did discover a new enemy: emerging Third World powers equipped with large, modern conventional forces and the rudiments of a **nuclear/chemical/missile** capability. To combat these powers, they argued, we would need a new military paradigm – what they called 'mid-intensity **conflict**'.³

The selection of emerging Third World powers as America's new adversary was influenced to some degree by a number of studies conducted in the late 1980s on US strategy options in the 1990s. Most prominent of these was Discriminate Deterrence, the 1988 report of the US Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy. Although focused largely on the alleged threat from the USSR, the Commission warned against over-emphasis on the Soviet threat and called for greater attention to Third World threats. 'An emphasis on massive Soviet attacks lead to tunnel vision among defence planners,' the report noted. 'Apocalyptic showdowns between the United States and the Soviet Union are certainly conceivable . . . but they are much less probable than other forms of conflict.' Most worrisome of these other forms of conflict, the report argues, are regional conflicts in the Third World. Because future adversaries in such conflicts are likely to be armed with increasingly potent weapons, any American efforts to prevail in such encounters 'will call for use of our most sophisticated **weaponry**'.⁴

This image of US forces engaged in intense combat with regional Third World powers was explored in much greater detail by a task force assembled in 1989 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) of Washington, D.C. In their final report, Conventional Combat Priorities, the task force identified such encounters as the most significant contingency facing US forces in the 1990s and beyond. 'With the decline of the Soviet military threat to Europe, conflicts that might be termed "mid-intensity" will dominate US planning concerns,' the report noted. The growing likelihood of such encounters 'will provide a key justification for military budgets during the 1990s and will establish most of the threats against which US forces are sized, trained, and **equipped**'.⁵

The identification of emerging Third World powers as the new adversary had many attractions for the US military in 1990. These countries possess large forces with modern weapons, including ballistic missiles and high-performance aircraft, and thus any war against them would require the use of large, well-equipped American forces. Also, because they possess (or are thought to possess) weapons of mass destruction, they could be portrayed as a genuine threat to regional and international stability – and thus Washington could argue that military action is needed to crush their nuclear and/or chemical capabilities.

This perception of the new adversary was already fully entrenched in Washington prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Indeed, we can trace the emergence of the new paradigm to President Bush's first major speech on national security affairs, at the US Coast Guard Academy in May 1989: 'The security challenges we face today do not come from the East alone,' he noted. 'The emergence of regional powers is rapidly changing the strategic landscape. In the Middle East, in South Asia, in our own hemisphere, a growing number of nations are acquiring advanced and highly destructive capabilities – in some cases, weapons of mass destruction, and the means to deliver them.' In response to this threat, he argued, the United States must adopt new anti-proliferation measures and, if necessary, 'must check the aggressive ambitions of renegade regimes.'⁸

This notion of combat against 'renegade regimes' armed with modern conventional weapons and nuclear or-chemical capabilities became the new planning model for the US military. Thus, in January 1990, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney told Congress that the United States must 'recognise the challenges beyond Europe that may place significant demands on our defense capabilities.' In face of these challenges, he argued, the Pentagon must adopt strategies 'that rely more heavily on mobile, highly ready, well-equipped forces and solid, power-projection capabilities.'

This perspective was developed even more fully in an April 1990 article by General Vuono, the Army Chief of Staff:

Because the United States is a global power with vital interests that must be protected throughout an increasingly turbulent world, we must look beyond the European continent and consider other threats to our national security. The proliferation of military power in what is often called the 'Third World' presents a troubling picture. Many Third World nations now possess mounting arsenals of tanks, heavy artillery, ballistic missiles, and chemical weapons . . . The proliferation of advanced military capabilities has given an increasing number of countries in the developing world the ability to wage sustained, mechanised land warfare. The United States cannot ignore the expanding military power of these countries, and the Army must retain the capability to defeat potential threats wherever they occur. *This could mean confronting a well-equipped army in the Third World.*⁸ (Emphasis added.)

This prophetic statement is just one of **many** such remarks made by high-ranking US military officers in the spring of 1990, suggesting that senior officials had reached consensus on a new, MIC-oriented military posture

months before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Consistent with this posture, the Department of Defense and the individual military services began to reconfigure US capabilities from an HIS-oriented force to an MIC-oriented force. Moreover, in the spring of 1990, the Pentagon conducted an elaborate, computerised war game, 'Operation Internal Look '90,' featuring Iraq as the hypothetical **enemy**.⁹ Now, in reporting these developments, I do not mean to suggest that the United States was actively looking for a fight with Iraq, but I do believe that the adoption of this paradigm by US military officials led the Pentagon leadership to welcome a war with Iraq once the prospect of such an engagement presented itself. In the words of General Colin Powell, 'It was nice to have Desert Storm come along now,' before Iraq had fully developed its military capabilities. 'Not that it's nice to have a war, but if it was going to come, this was a good time for it.'¹⁰

Once the war began, US forces employed the strategies and doctrines that had already been developed for such a contingency – i.e., the use of superior firepower and technology to crush a numerically superior but technologically inferior opponent. This approach had originally been developed to ensure a NATO victory in any major conventional conflict with the Soviet Union. As spelled out in NATO's 'Follow-on Force Attack' (FOFA) strategy and the US Army's 'Airland Battle Doctrine' (ABD), the new approach called for simultaneous allied attack on the enemy's first, second, and third echelons of troops, along with the prodigious use of 'smart' weapons to destroy enemy communications systems, radars, air bases, road systems, and other vital facilities."¹¹

With the end of the Persian Gulf War, this strategic approach is now being standardised as the new US military posture for the 1990s. To quote Secretary Cheney from his testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 19, 1991:

The Gulf War presaged very much the type of conflict we are most likely to confront again in this new era – major regional contingencies against foes well-armed with advanced conventional and non-conventional weaponry. In addition to Southwest Asia, we have important interests in Europe, Asia, the Pacific and Central and Latin America. In each of these regions there are opportunities and potential future threats to our interests. We must configure our policies and our forces to effectively deter, or quickly defeat, such regional threats.¹²

In accordance with this outlook, Cheney urged Congress to support the maintenance of large, well-equipped US forces capable of overwhelming any future adversaries in the Third World. To satisfy this requirement, he testified, 'We must be able to deploy to regions of US interest sufficient forces with the capabilities needed to counter a wide variety of contingencies.' In particular, this will entail 'a high airlift and sealift capacity, substantial and highly effective maritime and amphibious forces, a full and sophisticated array of combat aircraft, both heavy and light Army divisions, and appropriate special operations **forces**.'¹³

In line with this outlook, senior US strategists have begun to hammer out a blueprint for the combination of weapons and forces that would best serve US needs for the mid-intensity conflicts of the future. Based on the record of Operation Desert Storm, and what is known of the Pentagon's evolving plans for MIC, we can identify some of the weapons and forces that are likely to dominate the Pentagon's 'wish list' for US military capabilities in the mid- to late 1990s:

★ *Strategic mobility*: If US forces are to prevail in future regional conflicts, they will have to arrive quickly and in sufficient strength to overcome formidable local forces – and this, in turn, means possessing adequate numbers of long-range ships and aircraft to transport and sustain a substantial US force in distant areas. 'The Army must be deployable,' General Vuono observed in April 1990. 'Even the most combat-ready land force cannot protect our national interests if it cannot deploy sufficient combat power to the fight in time to make a **difference**.'¹⁴ Arguing that existing US mobility assets are inadequate, Vuono and other senior officers have called for increased investment in air- and sealift capabilities. A likely beneficiary of this stance is the C-17 long-range transport plane, which has heretofore been a frequent target for Congressional budget-cutting.

★ *Mobile firepower*: Once US troops arrive at distant battlefields, they must be capable of fighting and defeating well-equipped, professional armies. To prevail in such confrontations, US forces must come equipped with large numbers of potent weapons – weapons that pack a mighty punch, but that can be moved quickly to distant battlefields. The highest priority, in the view of many military experts, is for a light, air-transportable tank-killing vehicle. This can be a wheeled gun system like the Marine Corps' Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV), or some equivalent system. Given the difficulty experienced by the Pentagon in moving heavy M-1 and M-60 tanks to Saudi Arabia during the early weeks of Operation Desert Shield, it is likely that the armed services will accelerate the development and procurement of light armoured vehicles in the years to come.

★ *Advanced tactical aircraft*: To back up American ground forces in future MIC engagements, the Pentagon will continue to rely – as it did in the Persian Gulf – on tactical **airpower** to ensure control of the skies above the battlefield and for strikes against enemy ground forces. Because many Third World countries possess modern fighters and air-defence systems of Soviet or Western European manufacture, US combat planes must be capable of overcoming enemy defences and delivering their ordnance when and where needed. Thus, while the existing US inventory includes many late-model fighters along with the newly-introduced F-117A 'stealth' aircraft, Pentagon officials insist that the United States must acquire a host of newer and more capable aircraft in the decade ahead. To perform the

'**tac-air**' mission in the twenty-first century, the Air Force is proceeding with developing of a new combat plane, the F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighter (ATF).

★ *Advanced 'standoff' missiles:* Given the growing sophistication of Third World artillery and air defence systems, it is considered essential that American forces be able to fire highly accurate missiles at critical enemy targets (air bases, command centres, military factories, tank formations, and so on) from distant, out-of-sight locations. To accomplish this, the Pentagon is rushing development and production of an assortment of advanced 'standoff' missiles – so-called because the launch platform (whether aircraft, helicopter, or ship) can stand back and fire its munitions from well beyond the range of enemy defences. These weapons – many of which witnessed their first combat use in the Persian Gulf conflict – employ sophisticated sensors and **onboard** microcomputers to locate, track, and strike their intended target. Examples of such systems include the *Tomahawk* sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM), a Navy weapon used for precision attacks on heavily-defended targets; the GBU-24, a laser-guided bomb used in precision strikes against Iraqi military installations; and SLAM (Standoff Land-Attack Missile), a derivative of the Harpoon anti-ship missile used by carrier-based aircraft to attack Iraqi port facilities and military targets.¹⁵

★ *'Middleweight' combat formations:* Ultimately, the successful conduct of MIC operations will require the introduction of new combat formations (brigades, divisions, and so on) that can be sufficiently powerful to defend themselves against well-armed Third World adversaries. At present, the US Army has both 'heavy' divisions designed for massive tank battles in Europe and 'light' divisions intended for police operations in the Third World. As became apparent during the early weeks of Operation Desert Shield, neither of these two formations is ideally suited for MIC – the heavy divisions because they cannot be moved quickly to distant theatres of operations, and the light divisions because they are essentially defenceless against enemy **armour** and artillery. What is therefore needed, in the view of many strategists, is a class of 'middleweight' forces configured specifically for MIC. Such forces, according to military analysts at CSIS, should possess 'the firepower, mobility, and survivability of heavy divisions, but [be] as rapidly deployable as light infantry **divisions**.'¹⁶

These, and other such systems, are likely to dominate Pentagon spending programmes in the 1990s. And while **total US** military spending is likely to decline, spending on MIC-oriented programmes can be expected to increase.

The Reassertion of Pax Americana

The second major outcome of the Persian Gulf conflict that merits our attention is the renewed assertion of Pax *Americana*, which I would define

as the unbridled use of military force in the protection of strategic US assets abroad and in enforcing certain rules of international behaviour deemed beneficial to America's continued political and economic paramourncy.

Here, too, one can see the emergence of this outlook in US military thought before the outbreak of the Persian Gulf conflict. In essence, this outlook holds that the United States is a global power with vital economic interests in many parts of the world—interests that are shared in many cases by the Western industrial powers with which the United States is closely aligned. This outlook further holds that these interests are threatened by social, economic, and political disorder in the Third World, and that, for lack of any suitable alternative, the United States must shoulder responsibility for the protection of such interests and for the maintenance of global law and order.

This outlook is clearly articulated in President Bush's important address on national security policy of February 7, 1990. America's post-Cold War strategy, he noted, assumes that 'new threats are emerging beyond the traditional East-West antagonism of the last 45 years.' These threats must now receive the same attention once accorded to the Soviet threat. 'Clearly, in the future we will need to be able to thwart aggression, repel a missile, or protect a seaplane, or stop a drug lord.' To do so, moreover, 'we will need forces adaptable to conditions everywhere. And we will need agility, readiness, sustainability. We will need speed and stealth.'"

Essential to this mode of thinking is the conviction that the United States must be prepared to use force when necessary to carry out the missions described by President Bush. As suggested by General A.M. Gray, the Commandant of the Marine Corps,

The international security environment is in the midst of changing from a bipolar balance to a multipolar one with polycentric dimensions. The restructuring of the international environment has the potential to create regional power vacuums that could result in instability and conflict. We cannot permit these voids to develop through disinterest, benign neglect, or lack of capability if we are to maintain our position as a world leader and protect our global interests. This requires that we maintain our capability to respond to likely regions of **conflict**.¹⁸

For students of history, this will read a great deal like the concept of 'world policeman' espoused by President Teddy Roosevelt and other American policymakers at the turn of the century. And while current US leaders are reluctant to employ this particular term, it is clear that they were beginning to think this way in 1989 and early 1990, months before the outbreak of the Persian Gulf crisis. Thus, in a January 1990 article on US Strategy in 'The New Postwar Era', Senator John **McCain** of Arizona wrote that:

If anything, the global conditions that led us to make these uses of force [in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, and Libya] are likely to be even more important in the future. 'Glasnost' does not change the fact that there has been an average of more than 25 civil and

international conflicts in the developing world every year since the end of World War II [and that] the US economy is critically dependent on the smooth flow of world trade. . . .

Our strategy and force mix must reflect the fact that our friends and allies are even more dependent on global stability and the free flow of trade than we are. At the same time, it must reflect the fact that no other allied or friendly nation will suddenly develop power projection forces, and that it would not be in our interest to encourage other nations to assume this role. *The US may not be the 'world's policeman', but its power projection forces will remain the free world's insurance policy.*¹⁹ (Emphasis added.)

Essential to this outlook is the belief that the United States – and *only* the United States – has the capacity to employ military force on a global basis in the protection of vital Western interests. This, in fact, has become the central premise of America's post-Cold War military posture. As noted by Dick Cheney in a remarkable speech before the National Press Club on March 22, 1990, what distinguishes the United States from other Western powers, 'is that we're willing to put US troops on the ground. The message to friends and enemies alike is that *Americans are willing to risk their lives to insure the security of our friends and allies.*'²⁰ (Emphasis added)

Again, this perspective was well developed in Washington prior to the outbreak of the Persian Gulf conflict, but there is no doubt that the Kuwait crisis gave it much greater legitimacy. Thus, in a statement typical of the language used by many in Washington in the autumn of 1990, former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitrage observed that the US decision to send troops to the Gulf demonstrates that 'There is absolutely no substitute for decisive, clearheaded American leadership.' Those pundits who until recently were predicting the decline of **American power**, he noted, 'must now acknowledge that the United States alone possesses sufficient moral, economic, political and military horsepower to jump-start and drive international efforts to curb international **lawlessness.**'²¹

With the successful outcome (at least in military terms) of Operation Desert Storm, this principle has become fully enmeshed in US strategic thinking. Thus, in a speech before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 6, 1991, Secretary of State James Baker affirmed that 'more clearly than we could have ever imagined a year or even six months ago, the world emerging from the end of the postwar era will be shaped by the United States of America and by its international **allies.**'²² General Colin Powell put this in more vivid terms: 'I like to say that we're not the superpower or super-policeman of the world, but when there is trouble somewhere in the world that we least expect, it's the United States that gets called on to perform the role of being the cop on the **beat.**'²³

When and where will the United States next serve as 'the cop on the beat'? That is, of course, very hard to predict in advance. When questioned on this point in April 1991, General Powell replied, 'Think hard about it. I'm running out of demons. I'm running out of villains. I'm down to Castro and Kim Il **Sung.**'²⁴ The fact is, however, that the United States is not likely to 'run out of villains' at any time soon. Given the likelihood of political and social disorder in a world of grossly uneven economic development

and resurgent ethnic and religious loyalties, there is no end to possible threats to US interests around the world. As suggested by General Vuono in the Spring 1991 issue of *Foreign Affairs*:

The United States clearly need not, and indeed should not, insert itself into every regional squabble. But it does not have the luxury of treating warfare in the developing world with indifference. The archaic concept of 'fortress America' simply retains no strategic relevance for the United States in the 1990s. Military strategists and military leaders must anticipate that US forces will be called on to advance and protect American interests in regional conflicts ranging from insurgencies to full-scale conventional wars against powerful land armies.

This view is clearly shared by Secretary of Defense Cheney and other senior Pentagon officials, and is certain to govern the organisation and deployment of US military forces in the post-Cold War era. There are, however, a number of potential impediments to the full implementation of this strategy.

The first of these impediments is largely economic in nature: the costs of fighting high-tech wars keep going up, while the ability of the United States to sustain such costly endeavours appears to be going down. President Bush was able to sidestep this contradiction in the Persian Gulf crisis by arm-twisting US allies into paying most of the costs of the war. It is unlikely, however, that the allies will always be willing to do this in the future – Iraq was an unusual adversary in that Saddam Hussein's designs on Kuwait and the Gulf threatened the interests of so many countries, and it is unlikely that future Third World adversaries will arouse such universal fear and loathing. When contemplating military action against an enemy considered less threatening by the world community, therefore, the United States may find that its allies will balk at providing the necessary cash, and thus, faced with the prospects of going it alone, may conclude that the financial costs (if not the costs in human lives) are just too high.

The second major impediment is more of a conceptual – or if you will, of a moral nature. To appreciate this, it is necessary to recall that the reassertion of *Pax Americana* is occurring at the same time that President Bush and Secretary Baker are attempting to articulate the concept of a 'New World Order' based on international peace and cooperation. Although admittedly vague, the concept does entail certain idealistic goals and themes that are probably shared by a large proportion of the world's population. In a belated effort to define this concept, Mr Bush noted on April 14, 1991 that the New World Order 'refers to new ways of working with other nations to deter aggression, and to achieve peace. It springs from hopes for a world based on a shared commitment among nations large and small to a set of principles that undergird our relations – peaceful settlement of disputes, solidarity against aggression, reduced and controlled arsenals, and just treatment of all peoples.'¹⁸

Clearly, this articulation of a 'New World Order' overlaps to a degree with the concept of *Pax Americana* as I have described it, and, indeed,

many in Washington are trying to squeeze the two concepts into the same conceptual box. I would argue, however, that the two concepts are *not* interchangeable, and that the pursuit of one automatically precludes the pursuit of the other. The concept of a New World Order, however trivialised by Mr Bush, does imply important changes in the way the United States will conduct its international relations; *Pax Americana*, on the other hand, entails a return to the imperial behaviour of the early twentieth century.

Consider the President's words: The New World Order, he says, implies 'the peaceful settlement of disputes, solidarity against aggression, reduced and controlled arsenals, and the just treatment of all peoples.' As I understand these words, this would mean the use of sanctions and diplomacy to end the Persian Gulf crisis, not the use of force as implied by *Pax Americana*; it would mean solidarity against all aggressions, including those by America's friends (e.g., Morocco in the Western Sahara, Indonesia in East Timor, Israel in southern Lebanon), and not just those by its long-term adversaries; it would mean a moratorium on US arms transfers to the Middle East, not the current US rush to sell billions of dollars' worth of new high-tech weapons to America's allies in the region; and it would mean respect for the human rights of all oppressed peoples, not just those in countries ruled by America's adversaries.

These are important distinctions, and they are increasingly evident as such to significant segments of the American population. True, there is a large reservoir of jingoism in the population that can be tapped by the President to mobilise support for adventuristic military operations abroad, as demonstrated by the Panama invasion and Operation Desert Storm. But the US public also expects Washington to behave in an ethical and even *noble* fashion abroad, and increasingly the dictates of morality seem to imply the superiority of negotiations over combat and of collective action (via the United Nations) over unilateralism. While US behaviour in the Persian Gulf can be seen as a triumph of unilateralism, it is also true that Bush worked very hard to cloak US action through a barrage of UN resolutions. And, having established this precedent, it will be very hard for Washington to intervene abroad – even in the manner of the Panama operation – without first gaining international support. The need to act in accordance with the presumptions of a New World Order (or to give the *appearance* of doing so) could, therefore, act as an inhibition on the adventuristic use of force by the US government.

At this point, it is still too early to predict how these contrary trends – the reassertion of *Pax Americana* on one hand and the inhibitory pressures of economics and morality on the other – will play themselves out in the years ahead. Nevertheless, it appears that the paradigm of mid-intensity conflict is firmly entrenched in official thinking, and that the principle of presidential war-making has received a significant boost. It is also apparent

that these precepts enjoy considerable support in the US Congress and among those Americans who take comfort in America's status as a military superpower at a time of declining economic vigour. In the absence of any substantial challenges to these two precepts, therefore, it is likely that they will dominate US foreign and military policy for the indefinite future.

NOTES

1. Carl E. Vuono, 'National Strategy and the Army of the 1990s,' *Parameters*, Summer 1991, p. 12.
2. For discussion of US doctrine of counter-insurgency and LIC, see: Michael Klare and Peter Kombluh, eds., *Low-Intensity Warfare* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), esp. chaps. 1-4.
3. The author first discussed the concept of MIC in 'The New Military Paradigm,' *Technology Review*, May/June 1991, pp. 28-36.
4. US Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, *Discriminate Deterrence* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988), pp. 10, 13, 33-34.
5. *Conventional Combat Priorities: An Approach for the New Strategic Era*, Report of the CSIS Conventional Combat 2002 Project (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 1990), p. 23.
6. Presidential address at US Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., May 24, 1989 (White House transcript).
7. *Department of Defense Annual Report*, January 1990. p. v.
8. Carl E. Vuono, 'Versatile, Deployable, and Lethal,' *Sea Power*, April 1990, pp. 57-63.
9. See *Atlanta Constitution*, Oct. 25, 1991.
10. Quoted in *Air Force Times*, April 15, 1991.
11. For discussion of the new NATO strategy and the weapons technologies involved, see Klare, 'NATO's Improved Conventional Weapons,' *Technology Review*, May-June 1985, pp. 34-40, 73.
12. Statement of Dick Cheney before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 19, 1991 (Dept. of Defense transcript).
13. *Ibid.*
14. Vuono, 'Versatile, Deployable, and Lethal,' p. 63.
15. For further discussion of the high-tech bombs and missiles used by Coalition forces in the Persian Gulf War, see: Klare, 'High-Death Weapons of the Gulf War,' *The Nation*, June 3, 1991, pp. 722, 38-42; and Dave Walker and Eric Stambler, '... And the Dirty Little Weapons,' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May 1991, pp. 20-24
16. *Conventional Combat Priorities*, p. xx.
17. Speech before the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, Feb. 7, 1991 (White House transcript).
18. Gen. A.M. Gray, 'Defense Policy for the 1990s,' *Marine Corps Gazette*, May 1990, p. 18.
19. John McCain, 'The Need for Strategy in the New Postwar Era,' *Armed Forces Journal* (January 1990), p. 44.
20. Statement of Dick Cheney before the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., March 22, 1990 (Dept. of Defense transcript).
21. Richard Armitage, 'To Lead and Pay,' *Washington Times*, Aug. 16, 1990.
22. Statement of James Baker before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Feb. 6, 1991.
23. Quoted in *Dallas Morning News*, March 3, 1991.
24. Interview in *Air Force Times*, April 15, 1991.
25. Carl E. Vuono, 'Desert Storm and the Future of Conventional Forces,' *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 54-55.
26. Statement at the Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., April 13, 1991 (White House transcript).