remedial team attached to the medi-
l center; it provides help to men
ho want to join but do not meet the
ny's medical standards because they
e overweight or have some small
nporary disability.
The commanding officer, a lieuten-
t colonel, commands not only the
ection center, but is also responsible
some recruiting personnel in the
ea and holds the appointment of
mmander, Birmingham Garrison.
The experience gained in the first
perimental selection program has
n put to good use at Sutton Cold-
d. The system used has been copied
the two Army Youth Selection Cen-
s at Aldershot and Harrogate and
he Recruit Selection Centers pres-
y organized in Scotland to deal
l all men recruited 'north of the
der." Experience has proved that
t Scottish men wish to join their
hland or Lowland infantry regi-
ts and so are normally 'committed
uits" on arrival.
he Sutton Coldfield Center has
visited by senior representatives
ne US Army Recruiting Command
presented a plaque in thanks for
outstanding cooperation given to
when they were at the center
finding for their own selection
edures. The officers and NCOs un-
tedly take their duties very seri-
y and already have proved the
e of the system by reducing the
dropout rate. How successful the
m is in placing round pegs into
d holes will not be fully apparent
the men who have joined since
ened reach their extension dates
coming years. For the moment,
uture looks bright—though, to
extent, all recruiting must de-
upon the rates of pay offered,
hing not under the control of the
ion centers.

Thesis: Massive Retaliation Antithesis: Flexible Response Synthesis: The Nixon Doctrine?

Colonel Raymond R. Battreall Jr., United States Army

The Nixon Doctrine

BOTH the Soviet Union and the United States have acquired the ability to inflict unacceptable damage on the other, no matter which strikes first. There can be no gain and certainly no victory for the power that provokes a thermonuclear exchange.[1]

To this fragile balance of terror must be added the conventional might of the Soviet Union and its satellites; the less-sophisticated yet formidable land power of mainland China; the explosive potential of internal discontent exacerbated by "wars of national liberation"; and the ever-present possibility that one or another nation may upset regional stability through armed action as we have recently seen in Africa; Latin America; the Middle East; and South, Southeast and Northeast Asia. And there are other problems:

At home there was a growing mood of self-doubt. Our youth and other segments of our population were becoming increasingly frustrated over the war in Vietnam. . . . Despite the rising cost in human and material resources, . . . no clear end was in sight. . . .

Partly as a result of the Vietnamese war, high prices and growing taxes were threatening the living standards of the pensioned and the salaried. There was a clear need and a growing demand to put our Government's fiscal affairs back in order. . . .[2]

To counter these threats while recognizing economic problems and public frustration, the President declined

he temptations of neoisolationism.
Rather, he reaffirmed our treaty ommitments and our nuclear shield or threatened allies and promised fiancial and materiel aid to enable thers to sustain their own defenses.[3] 'e will remain the arsenal of freeom, but others will henceforth proide their own manpower. Still, this oes not mean an end to our need for eneral purpose forces or to the possility of further loss of US blood.

. . . a direct combat role for U.S. eneral purpose forces arises primar- when insurgency has shaded into ternal aggression or when there is overt conventional attack.[4]

. . . will maintain in peacetime eneral Purpose Forces that are adeate for simultaneously meeting a ajor Communist attack in either Eu-

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rope or Asia, assisting allies to cope with non-Chinese threats in Asia, and in addition, meeting a contingency elsewhere.[5]

Are these policies adequate to the challenge, and will our confused and frustrated people recognize that "there is an irreducible minimum of essential military security: for if we are less strong than necessary . . . there will be no domestic society to look after"?[6] To answer these questions, we must review how we got where we are and identify the roots of frustration and confusion.

Massive Retaliation

Emerging from World War II with an absolute nuclear monopoly and the best of intentions, Americans were shocked and puzzled to find that not everyone shared our intentions nor was overawed by our power. To our bewilderment, the Iron Curtain fell across Europe, and Communist expansionism required opposition in both Iran and Greece. These probes were blunted, NATO was formed, and all seemed well when North Korea invaded the Republic of Korea. Sadly depleted units from our army of occupation in Japan were dispatched in the confident expectation that North Korea would back down in the face of this show of force backed by the threat of nuclear extinction. But they kept coming, and we found ourselves unwilling to unleash nuclear horror. Thus began our first limited war. It dragged on amid growing frustration and angry arguments about the propriety of objectives and the meaning of "victory." At last, the yet-unnamed doctrine of massive retaliation was applied.

. . . President Eisenhower decided in the absence of satisfactory progress in the stalemated talks to move de-

cisively and without inhibitions in our use of weapons. We would no longer be responsible for confining hostilities to the Korean Peninsula.

Word of his intention was dropped discreetly. . . . The results were very pleasing. . . . On July 27, 1953, the Korean truce was signed.[7]

There followed a sigh of relief, a firm resolve of no more Koreas, and a new look at strategy colored by attitudes from our recent experience. Preeminent among these attitudes, of course, was the commitment to a balanced budget at reduced tax rates. Another was:

. . . preoccupation with technological progress. . . . It was simply nonsense not to throw out 'out-moded' weapons . . . and incorporate the newest and most powerful weapons, changing strategy to allow the use of those weapons in the most efficient way. . . . Simply maximizing firepower at least peacetime cost—'more bang for the buck' . . . was deemed the overriding objective of military policy. . . .[8]

Republican campaigners . . . continually reiterated the theme that the Soviets, simply by giving the nod to a satellite, could 'tie us down' or 'bleed us white' in interminable struggles in out-of-the-way places. . . .

The New Look doctrine proposed to end all this. . . . Although the enemy could still determine the timing of war, . . . henceforth, we . . . would call the tune regarding how *and* where *the war was to be fought. . . . This idea of seizing the initiative, not the idea of retaliation per se, was the basic underlying theme of the 'massive retaliation' doctrine. . . .*[9]

While there was definite provision for conventional strategic reserves and a mobilization base, they tended to be overlooked. The strategy of massive retaliation as enunciated in 1954 by Secretary Dulles was widely understood as being:

. . . designed to deter an attack from the Sino-Soviet powers by drawing a line around their periphery and creating the pointed implication that instant devastation would rain upon Moscow or Peking if the line were violated. . . .[10]

That this narrow understanding of massive retaliation was in fact mistaken is evident in our conduct. During the period when it was our declared policy, we, nevertheless, dispatched specifically tailored multiservice conventional forces to deal successfully with the 1958 crises in Lebanon and the Formosa Strait. Appropriate responses at times and places of our choosing were not, apparently, limited to nuclear holocausts. Unfortunately, what a policy is *intended* to be is often less important than what people *think* it is.

Increasing costs of defense are . . . tending to freeze plans and strategy, to reduce numbers of men and units in order to save money, to concentrate on the 'Big Bang' at the expense of flexibility.

In the Western World—though not in Russia—costs are a more decisive factor in shaping defense than is military logic.[11]

These were indeed bleak days for general purpose forces. More important, there were strong indications that the security of the nation was being less than fully ensured.

Indochina provided a timely test of deterrence, and . . . deterrence was found wanting. . . . The threat was wrongly identified as being direct Sino-Soviet aggression, whereas the actual threat proved to be indirect expansion through civil war.[12]

East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Castro's 1961 success come

erican soldiers in Lebanon, 1958

Readily to mind

d as occasions when con- ower might well have been plied if it had been available. More- r, there are cogent moral and psy- logical factors to be considered.

Given the power of modern weap- a nation that relies on all-out war its chief deterrent imposes a fear- psychological handicap on itself. most agonizing decision a states- can face is whether or not to un- all-out war; all pressures will e for hesitation. . . . [13]

hus, there arose a call for balance. as realized:

he further we proceed into the nu- age, the more remote becomes likelihood of nuclear war. The So- aim is to rule the world, not to oy it. [14]

the nuclear age, flexibility de- s on the ability to meet the whole rum of possible challenges and nly the absolute one. [15]

A limited war . . . is fought for specific policy objectives which . . . tend to establish a relation between the force employed and the goal to be attained. It reflects an attempt to affect the opponent's will, not to crush *it, . . . to strive for specific goals and not for complete annihilation.* [16]

The key problem of present-day strategy is to devise a spectrum of capabilities with which to resist Soviet challenges. These capabilities should enable us to confront the opponent with contingencies from which he can extricate himself only by all-out war, while deterring him from this step by a superior retaliatory capacity. . . . Limited war is thus not an alternative to massive retaliation, but its complement. [17]

And so our thinking came full circle from the days when we believed it impossible to be prepared for any and all kinds of war.

Flexible Response

Accepting these arguments, the incoming Kennedy administration decided that:

. . . if a nation maintains a military capacity ranging from the delivery of thermonuclear weapons . . . to action by a squad of riflemen it has the inestimable advantage of freedom of strategic choice. It can decide how to react when its vital interests are threatened; it can utilize force graduated to the occasion; it can make the punishment fit the crime. [18]

The strategy of the flexible response means that for each enemy action there should be an appropriate response employing sufficient force to defeat the enemy but no more than is necessary for that purpose. *This does not imply that we must model our procedure on that of the enemy (for instance the response to a conventional attack might be defense using tactical atomic weapons or even a limited strategic nuclear attack); what it does mean is that each case will be treated on its merits and that one will only be driven to use massive retaliation in the last resort. . . .* (Emphasis added.) [19]

But how was this strategy to be implemented?

. . . the best way . . . would be to station limited forces in selected areas, combined with a centrally located, readily deployable reserve force which has adequate sea and airlift. Although this requires that the initial defense in most areas would be conducted by indigenous forces, it is advantageous to the US in that it requires less force in being and provides for flexibility and for the selection of forces to be used. [20]

Moreover:

Forces of the central reserve must be deployed to potential trouble areas at the first positive indication that a threat is developing.

When it becomes apparent that US interests are threatened, the timely application of adequate force will lend credence to our announced policy and will decrease tension. Delayed action normally requires that larger forces be applied for a longer period of time. [21]

The Cuban missile crisis of 1962 was classic. Every element of military power—strategic and tactical air, the Atlantic Fleet, armored and airborne divisions—was marshaled quickly. We announced our readiness to use nuclear retaliation if these measures failed. And the Soviets withdrew their missiles from Cuba in the face of this prompt and decisive checkmate at every level.

The US response to the Communist attempt at subversion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 was also marked by resolution, diplomacy, and a swift deployment of overwhelming conventional military force. The relatively short time in which we were able to bring our response to a successful conclusion suggests the value of a rapid and substantial reply. [22]

But all this was not radically different from our earlier post-World War II behavior. Under the cover of the great deterrent, we had responded flexibly and conventionally to Communist aggression in Iran as early as 1946, Greece and Berlin in 1948, Korea in 1950, and Lebanon and Taiwan in 1958. Indeed, John Foster Dulles had declared in 1954: "To deter aggression, it is important to have the flexibility and the facilities which make various responses available." [23] Apparently, as suggested earlier, massive retaliation had been misunderstood and prostituted by overemphasis on narrow selections and minimum

US Army convoy on patrol in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1965

costs until its originally intended meaning in fact changed to sole reliance on the big bang. Would flexible response be immune to similar misunderstanding?

Close political control over the use of military means and the necessity to limit those means to the minimum required to achieve our objectives are, of course, right and proper. The difficulty arises from the fact that political objectives which are actually attainable by military force, and the attainment of which will forestall the enemy from further escalation, are sometimes not easily defined, particularly by the leaders of a society unaccustomed to accepting any limitations at all once provoked to violence. We have had but few opportunities to practice the art of definition.

Cuba and the Dominican Republic offered reasonably clear-cut situations, in which military force was successfully employed to gain quick decisions. On the other hand, in Vietnam:

. . . the impression of extremely slow escalation cannot be overlooked. Repeated increases in the number of Advisors were followed by the covert introduction of Special Forces units, and then the overt introduction of combat support forces. . . . When . . . escalation to this level of assistance still did not accomplish our objectives, the US began the gradual introduction of ground forces supported by the slowly escalating and carefully controlled use of overwhelming air power. [24]

A full year later, Secretary McNamara was forced to report:

. . . that infiltration continues . . . more than twice the level of 1965.

It is important for two reasons: First, it is . . . sufficient to offset the very heavy casualties. . . . *This permits the VC and North Vietnamese forces to* continue to increase their strength.

Secondly, perhaps even more importantly, this very heavy rate of infiltration . . . is a clear indication of a political decision by them to continue to prosecute the war. . . . (Emphasis added.) [25]

Nevertheless:

Our strategy remains just what it was . . . a year ago . . . by concentration of military action in the south to prove to the VC and the North Vietnamese they couldn't win in the South. . . . (Emphasis added.) [26]

This approach was further illustrated by General Taylor:

The third reason for the air campaign may be the most important in the long run. It was to remind the leadership in Hanoi . . . that little by little *through the* progressive, restrained application of force *by bombing*, they would pay an ever-increasing price *for a continuation of their aggression in the South.* (Emphasis added.) [27]

. . . in South Vietnam we are merely trying to demonstrate the impossibility of military victory on the part of the Vietcong. . . . [28]

The next year, however, he recognized that:

. . . however praiseworthy this restraint may be from some aspects, this slow application of military force is antithetical to the American disposition. It requires too much time and patience to obtain results. [29]

It now seems clear that protracted, large scale interventions . . . do not conform to the developing US domestic and international political environments. . . .

It is conceivable that . . . Vietnam will so discredit the use of our military power that even lesser interventions of the Lebanese kind will be proscribed by domestic and international opinion. . . . [30]

As a result of all this:

The strategy of flexible response will most likely be replaced soon with a more pragmatic approach to all confrontation situations. The US no longer has the national will to sacrifice manpower or resources for less than a clear cut victory. [31]

Can it be that MacArthur's much ridiculed, "In war, there is no substitute for victory" is not so obsolete after all?

The Road Ahead

The primacy of politics in war means, simply, that military operations should be conducted so as to achieve concrete, limited, and attainable security objectives, in order that war's destruction and violence may be rationally directed toward legitimate ends of national policy. [32]

Liddell Hart says the strategist's:

. . . true aim is not so much to seek battle as to seek a strategic situation so advantageous that if it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by a battle is sure to achieve this. *In other words, dislocation is the aim of strategy. . . .*

How is strategic dislocation produced? . . . it is the result of a move which (a) upsets the enemy's dispositions and . . . dislocates the distribution and organization of his forces; (b) separates his forces; (c) endangers his supplies; (d) menaces the route or routes by which he could retreat. . . . [33]

Hindsight

The Vietnam War has been the Joint Chiefs' most onerous millstone. The Chiefs never planned for a Vietnam war of the kind we have been fighting since 1965. . . .

'The Chiefs wanted the government to mobilize the reserves and apply maximum force in the shortest time to end the war quickly.'

'The Chiefs had three main options:

1) invade North Vietnam, (2) cut cross Laos with a barrier force to top infiltration, and (3) fight a war f attrition. Invasion was ruled out ecause of the danger of starting a igger war. The barrier across the MZ and Laos was too costly.' [34]

Accepting for present purposes the isdom of the decision not to invade ie North, let us look a little closer the possibility of physically block- g infiltration on the ground.

From a purely military standpoint, ch an operation would have been— id remains today—entirely feasible. oth Laos and the Republic of Viet- m are at their narrowest where ighway 9 runs just south of the de- ilitarized zone. It is no more than 0 miles from the sea to Thailand: o firm anchors for a barrier. Had followed our own sound example on Berlin, Cuba and the Dominican public, this barrier would have been ablished at the first sign of serious nger—long before the crisis of 65 [illegible] would assuredly have pre- te [illegible] massive infiltration of men l supplies described by Secretary Namara. Thus, the enemy would e been dislocated—his forces sep- ted, his supplies blocked, and his te of retreat cut off—and all this hout dropping a single bomb on rth Vietnam unless it were desired o so for other reasons. Faced with situation, the enemy might have doned his efforts. If he did not, grisly "kill-ratios" established y on by South Vietnamese forces ld have acquired real meaning e the enemy would have been un- to replace his losses. No human e could sustain combat for long in circumstances.

What would have been the cost? answer varies with time. As sug- ed earlier, the sooner one makes his decision and acts, the smaller the force and the shorter the time likely to be required. At whatever point we make our calculation, however, it is vital that we avoid repeating our fundamental error in Vietnam: confusing success with the avoidance of failure. The essence of flexible response lies in "employing sufficient force to defeat the enemy but no more than is necessary for that purpose." [35] Yet "in South Vietnam we were merely trying to demonstrate the impossibility of military victory on the part of the Vietcong. . . ." [36] From this shift in objectives sprang the creeping gradualism which permitted a small and underdeveloped nation to see our successive raises and stay in the game.

Careful analyses through 1965 concluded that a single four-division corps with an armored cavalry regiment and the usual combat support and combat service support troops would have sufficed to establish and maintain an effective barrier. At that time, the enemy had scarcely any combat units in the vicinity: certainly, nothing approaching the five divisions which defended against the thrust of three South Vietnamese divisions in Lam Son 719 in 1971. Lam Son 719, incidentally, was *not* intended to establish a permanent barrier. It was, rather, a raid designed to disrupt, destroy and then withdraw. Contrary to public opinion, it was quite successful. Today, no doubt, a full-fledged field army would be needed. Assuming, however, timely implementation as advocated here—not later than 1965—we have a proper and attainable mission for a single corps: seize and hold defensive positions just below the 17th parallel from the sea to Thailand; prevent the southward movement of troops and materiel.

Accomplishment of this mission would have led to achievement of our national goal: preservation of the freedom of choice of the South Vietnamese people by ensuring the defeat of those externally supported and directed forces already present and attempting to subjugate them. More important, it would have done so without involving additional US and Allied units in the struggle. South Vietnamese forces with advisors, close air support and the maritime blockade could and would have carried the full burden of ground combat in accordance with the Nixon Doctrine. A successful conclusion would have been reached in a reasonable period of time, and the war would have remained "Vietnamese" from the beginning without an intermediate "Americanization" and subsequent "*re*-Vietnamization." The total US and Allied effort would have been eight entire divisions less than that actually made on the ground and less in the air by the full amount expended over the years against infiltration routes and against the North. We would have been spared the agonizing moral questions associated with bombing the North, and the expenditure of treasure and lives—US, Allied and both North and South Vietnamese—would have been orders of magnitude less because the war would have been kept limited in size, scope and duration and a smaller US force would have been operating defensively rather than offensively.

There would, no doubt, have been cries of outrage about so-called Laotian neutrality, but these could have been no more intense and insurmountable than those which actually arose over the alleged violation of neutrality in Cambodia in 1970 and Laos in 1971. Had the enemy not already trampled upon Laotian neutrality by establishing major supply routes on Laotian soil, we would not be considering how to stop the flow in the first place. There can be no valid concept of neutrality held by only one belligerent: either both sides must honor the concept or it cannot exist.

Conclusion

My purpose has been not to second-guess the Vietnam War, but to show that there *are* practical and effective ways to apply military force to such situations. As has been pointed out, there is real danger that public frustration resulting from Korea and Vietnam may lead to a disastrous unwillingness to take up arms in the face of similar future threats. Our leaders must not accept such a decision. Rather, they must properly evaluate the temperament of the people they lead, analyze and learn from both our successes and our failures and face the future positively. That they are still inclined to do so is heartenningly demonstrated by the late-1973 worldwide alert of US forces which served so well to warn the Soviets away from direct involvement in the Mid-East.

It does not matter what we *call* our strategy. The labels have been different, but the substance has been remarkably constant since World War II. It is abundantly obvious that we shall continue for the foreseeable future to need the full spectrum of military capabilities: the great nuclear deterrent; conventional forces deployed in support of allies; and a mobile reserve of balanced land, sea and air forces to deal with specific contingencies.

It is important, however, that we better understand what these forces can and cannot do. They cannot defend "freedom and the right of self-determination"—the concept is too

ethereal to be located on a map and seized and held on the ground. They cannot sustain a seemingly endless war of attrition—our people will not stand for it. They *can* strike swiftly and decisively to seal an area, seize an objective, destroy a specified target, or any other *finite* task. Political control and limited objectives are essential under the existing balance of terror. But there must be a closer meshing of military and civilian minds in the definition of clear, concrete and *attainable* military objectives, the achievement of which will contribute to our national goals and will constitute what our people can recognize as "victory." In this sense, the Old Soldier stands exonerated: in war there *is* no substitute for victory.

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LOGISTICS — A NEW POTENTIAL

Colonel Linwood B. Mather, United States Army

For generations to come, all will be told of the mir[acle] of the immense planes from the United States that m[ade] life for our people.

ISRAELI Premier Golda Meir's statement, made shortly after the beginning of a truce in the 1973 Mid-East War, is strong testimony to the critical importance of logistics in waging modern warfare. Although Israel has gained worldwide recognition for the valor, daring, aggressiveness and military competence of its fighting men, its survival as a nation was in dire jeopardy until the arrival of arms, ammunition and equipment via a massive US airlift permitted a counteroffensive that stopped the Arab armies.

When the USSR showed its interest in keeping Syria and Egypt supplied, the United States provided essential support to Israel. But there will be no nation standing in the wing to which the United States will be able to turn in any future confrontation of the major world powers. The United States must be prepared to support its fighting forces in combat fully and, possibly, to provide extensive materiel support to its allies as well. To carry out this mission, the United States must achieve and maintain, as never before in peacetime, a high state of readiness to deploy and support its military forces.

Although considerable time and effort is spent developing tactics and the tools of combat—and rightly so