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The importance of military power to the security of our people and peace in the world remains clearly understood by most Americans. The debate centers on how much military power, what kind, and how it should be employed. Answers depend on one's view of the world -- both now, and as it is likely to evolve in the future.

Two fundamental factors have combined in the modern era to make resort to war less likely as a deliberate act of national policy. One is the increasing economic interdependence of the globe, which makes war increasingly distasteful even for communist states. The other is the increasing destructiveness of modern weapons, particularly nuclear -- which an increasing number of states are likely to possess in the decades ahead.

These two considerations have affected the superpowers' attitudes toward the accumulation of military force in different ways, however.

The Soviet Union sees a large payoff in continuing to pile up weapons far beyond any legitimate defensive requirements. Its leaders frankly state that the USSR plans to continue its massive strategic and conventional armament programs in order to ensure that the global "correlation of forces" -- of which it considers military power the central element -- continues to shift to Soviet advantage. That "correlation," in the Russian view, controls the course of world events and translates directly into Soviet political power.

Their goal remains to shift the balance so decisively that their margin of superiority becomes unassailable. This is what Khrushchev meant when he said, "We will bury you." Today's sophisticated Soviet leadership puts it more subtly. Their aim, they say, is to "make detente irreversible." Since they view detente as a product of our own accommodation to Soviet power, its irreversibility implies a "correlation" that would give the U.S. no choice but to bend to Soviet will.

This illustrates the confusion that stems from two sides using the same terminology to reflect totally different thoughts. To the U.S., detente implies a relaxation of tension. In the Soviet lexicon it connotes a continuation of the East-West struggle by other means. Russian leaders have repeatedly emphasized that detente implies no diminution of the ideological conflict or lessening of the requirement to expand Soviet military capabilities. Indeed, since detente is the result of Soviet military growth, its perfection requires even greater emphasis on the USSR's military might.

We see this emphasis reflected in Soviet resource allocation which, in recent years, has increased spending on military power at an annual 5% rate. This contrasts with the steady decline in our own real military investment, reversed only in the budget which is now before the Congress.

In the strategic field, through a marriage of well planned weapons development and superb negotiating skill, the Soviets have laid the basis for strategic superiority in the years

immediately ahead. As they deploy their numerically superior and far heavier missile force, they lose no opportunity to emphasize the "role reversal" which has occurred between the superpowers since the Cuban missile crisis -- when unquestioned U.S. strategic superiority operated to the Soviets' distinct military and psychological disadvantage.

My travels have taught me that many free world leaders perceive this change and its significance. They recognize there is an answer to Henry Kissinger's plaintive question:

What is the meaning of strategic superiority?

What do you do with it?

That answer is that you do exactly what the Russians do with it: proclaim it, and use it to frighten opposition, weaken free world alliances, and foster new ties to Moscow.

In the conventional military field, the Soviet Union uses its massive armies and air forces to overawe its East European empire and ensure Soviet predominance on the Eurasian landmass, deterring a heavily populated adversary at the Asiatic end while aiming for "Findlandization" of the highly developed industrial powers on the European side.

Its proximity to the Mideast and Indian sub-continent makes its army and air forces relevant to the power balance in those areas as well -- a fact the Soviets have learned increasingly to exploit to their political advantage.

At sea, the dramatically growing Soviet Navy is used to extend Soviet power and influence around the periphery of Eurasia and in the great ocean areas beyond. The steadily growing number and size of Soviet exercises off Scandinavia has served to shift perceptions and morale in that peninsula's countries, as they increasingly find themselves behind the Soviets' maritime "front line."

Soviet exercise "OKEAN" conducted in April this year, possibly the largest peacetime naval exercise in history, demonstrated a capability to cut western sea lanes in all the major oceans, including the Indian Ocean where the Soviets have in recent years acquired a remarkable set of naval and air facilities. "OKEAN" saw the first employment of Soviet naval aircraft from bases in Somalia and Aden, in coordination with long-range "BEARS" which ranged over the key Persian Gulf oil routes from bases in the Soviet Union.

Perhaps one day the Soviets will set an upper limit on the amount of military power they consider useful. To do so would be inconsistent with their ideological bent, however. With control of public opinion providing the opportunity to hold down the aspirations of their people, the Soviet leadership experiences few countervailing constraints in pursuing its goal of overwhelming military superiority.

American attitudes toward military power are altogether different. We have learned that there are clear limits to the amount of military power which the American people will underwrite, and to the patience with which they will support its use.

In World War II, the attack at Pearl Harbor brought massive support for total victory. In Korea -- a war entered with well articulated but limited aims -- initial public support had eroded by 1954 to impatience, contributing to Eisenhower's election in the expectation that he would bring an early end to the conflict.

The Southeast Asia war was already on the brink of failure before Watergate as a result of a decade of debate over both the wisdom of our entry and the selected military strategy. Our experience in that war produced widespread, but misplaced, cynicism about the utility of military power generally and seriously eroded support for an adequate defense.

The vigorous popular support for President Ford's action in the MAYAGUEZ incident demonstrated that there are still issues which will galvanize public opinion behind a President's use of military force; and the results of Congressional action on the fiscal 1976 Defense Budget show that, when properly informed, the people's representatives will support measures to slow the rate of deterioration in our relative military strength.

We go by fits and starts, however, while the Soviets -- freed from the vagaries of public opinion -- purposively chip away at all the key areas where we once enjoyed predominance.

At the same time, fundamental changes on the international scene are further diminishing our ability to maintain a reasonable balance with the military power of the Soviet Union. The recent erosion of confidence among our allies -- only partially offset by the President's visit to Europe -- combined with the loss of bases in areas of strategic

importance, significantly shrinks the range of military options available to us in support of foreign policy.

What is the role of U.S. military power in the kind of world we are facing?

Clearly, we must maintain a survivable strategic retaliatory capability so that the Soviets -- their superiority notwithstanding -- will continue to view the initiation of war, or measures with a high risk of leading to war, as not worth the candle.

Less clear to some, but equally certain in the minds of those who have been closest to it, is the requirement for improved accuracy in our own strategic missile force, to demonstrate that a U.S. President has responses to Soviet aggression short of actions which are certain to bring down a holocaust on the Soviet and the U.S. populations.

In an era of weakened alliances and shrinking access to overseas bases, an increasing percentage of U.S. conventional military capability must go into maritime systems. The realities of international life drive us toward greater dependence on sovereign facilities. We can and must exploit U.S.-controlled real estate such as the Marianas and the United Kingdom's unpopulated and strategic atoll in the Indian Ocean, Diego Garcia. But increasingly ships and aircraft at sea are going to have to carry the load as our

policy of retrenchment and the consequent uncertainty of our allies work to reduce our flexibility in overseas land areas.

The Army and Air Force will continue to have vital roles to play, particularly in maintaining balance on the central front in Europe, and -- for the foreseeable future -- in Korea.

With regard to the Navy, I foresee essentially a continuation of the functions it has performed in the past, but in an international environment which will put an increasing premium on the availability of naval power. This is not only because of the continuing growth of Soviet seapower, which must be countered and deterred; but because of the growing importance of seaborne commerce in this economically interdependent world; because of the increased importance of the seas as sources of food, resources and energy; and because naval forces will continue to be the most flexible instrument at the disposal of the President for the management of international crises which have the potential to escalate to major war.

Our Navy, almost halved in size over the past five years and now at pre-Pearl Harbor levels, must be rebuilt. It is both ironic and a source of grave danger to the country that the need for naval forces has peaked at a time when our Navy's force levels are at historic lows. For this island nation, control of the seas remains the sine qua non

of our economic vitality and national security. Without it, the rest of our conventional forces become useless, isolated overseas or immobile inside a Fortress America.

Regaining our predominance at sea must rank at the top of our conventional military priorities. It can be accomplished by investing a fraction of one-percent of GNP -- about \$10 billion annually -- in new ship construction. The financial cost is low as federal budgets go in these inflationary times. The potential cost to the nation of failure to ensure our ability to use the seas is incalculable.

In general, our future military programs should concentrate on forces that are highly mobile, so that our limited assets can deter hostile action over a wide geographic range. They should avoid excessive dependence on foreign facilities; and they must be capable of assuring that access to our overseas allies, key markets, and sources of essential raw material cannot be threatened by a hostile power.

Such forces will let us capitalize on our superior technological capabilities, reduce manpower costs, protect both U.S. and alliance interests, and provide for an adequate inventory of long lead-time equipment (such as ships and advanced combat aircraft) around which to expand our military capabilities in time of conflict. The net result will be a more rational and efficient defense structure for the long haul.