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## **Strategy, Forces and Budgets: Dominant Influences in Executive Decision Making, Post-Cold War, 1989-91**

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**STRATEGY, FORCES AND BUDGETS:  
DOMINANT INFLUENCES IN EXECUTIVE DECISION MAKING,  
POST-COLD WAR, 1989-91**

Don M. Snider

February 1993

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## FOREWORD

The successful application of national military strategy depends upon the existence of a balanced, flexible military establishment; a national force structured, manned, equipped, and trained to execute the broad range of potential missions that exist in the post-cold war world.

With this in mind, the national leaders of the previous administration developed a concept for a military that was considerably smaller; but well-equipped, highly trained, and capable of rapid response to a number of probable scenarios in the final decade of the 20th century.

The author's masterful assessment of the processes by which these plans for the future state of America's armed forces were developed is a valuable addition to the literature on strategy formulation. Working with a great deal of original source material, he is able to illuminate the critical series of events that resulted in the development of the *National Military Strategy of the United States* and the "base force." He comments upon the roles played throughout this process by the Secretary of Defense, by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and by the Service Chiefs. He assesses the extent to which the "build-down" has been achieved since the concept was approved, and how the process was affected by the Gulf War, domestic needs, and, to a lesser degree, by a change in administrations.

This study, prepared for the U.S. Army War College Fourth Annual Conference on Strategy, is a timely addition to the Professional Readings in Military Strategy Series.

WILLIAM A. STOFFT  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commandant

**STRATEGY, FORCES AND BUDGETS:  
DOMINANT INFLUENCES IN EXECUTIVE DECISION MAKING,  
POST-COLD WAR, 1989-91**

**Introduction.**

This study will present, using the process-tracking methodology of George and McKeown,<sup>1</sup> the executive decision making of the Bush administration during the 1989-90 period. During this period the administration decided "that by 1995 our security needs can be met by an active force 25 percent smaller than today's."<sup>2</sup> This early public statement was an indication of a set of major decisions made by the administration to effect a defense draw-down for the post-cold war era, decisions on both military strategy and the forces needed to execute it.

Most of this decision making took place during the fall of 1989 and the spring and summer of 1990. Within the executive branch the decision making to be investigated took place simultaneously at multiple levels, from the individual military departments at the lowest level to the executive office of the President at the highest level. During this same period, there were also important interactions with the Congress which had quite significant influences on the decisions taken within the executive branch.

From this period, four events, or series of events, have been selected around which to report the results of this research. These events are:

- Decision making by the Chairman and the Joint Staff, and the Joint Chiefs;
- Decision making within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) by the Secretary, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and his staff;
- Negotiations between the Executive and Congress leading to the Budget Act of 1990; and,
- Influences of the Gulf War on decision making for the defense build-down.

Recalling from George and McKeown that process tracking "involves both an attempt to reconstruct actors' definitions of the situation and an attempt to develop a theory of action,"<sup>3</sup> much of what is presented here is the result of personal interviews with individuals involved in the decision processes. In each case that an interview is cited, appropriate decision documents have been reviewed, either before the interview or subsequently, and the verbal responses correlated with the written documentation.

## **The New Military Strategy and Base Force.**

Before proceeding to the four events themselves, it will be helpful for purposes of context to present in some detail the final results of the decisions taken, both in terms of military strategy and the forces planned for its execution by the end of FY95. The results are known and documented in the literature, both professional and public, as the *National Military Strategy of the United States*, and the "base force." There are several renditions of the base force, owing to modifications over time, but the most appropriate for purposes of this study on decision making is the one documented in official testimony shortly after the executive branch decisions were completed in the summer and fall of 1990.

As the research for this case study makes clear, two challenges kept appearing before those planning the post-cold war defense restructuring and build-down: the need to answer the urgent calls for a "peace dividend," and the need to understand the rapidly changing security environment well enough to choose the strategy and forces needed in the future. Obviously, these challenges were inherently antagonistic, producing repeated tensions among individuals, decision-making processes and institutions. Wanting others to be aware of the risks involved if these tensions were resolved incorrectly, Secretary Richard Cheney often quoted during this period from Forrestal's first report to Congress in 1948:

We scrapped our war machine, mightiest in the history of the world, in a manifestation of confidence that we should not need it any longer. Our quick and complete demobilization was a testimonial to our good will rather than to our good sense. International frictions which constitute a threat to our national security and to the peace of the world have since compelled us to strengthen our armed forces for self-protection.<sup>4</sup>

It is worth noting that nowhere in the research conducted for this project have I come across the word "demobilization" used in any official statement by members of the administration, nor was it offered voluntarily in any interview. The mind-set was clearly not one of "demobilizing" after the cold war.

The decisions taken by the Bush administration to effect a build-down of defense capabilities produced a new military strategy quite different from that inherited from their predecessors, one which had been maintained largely intact throughout the cold war. As summarized in 1989 by Admiral William Crowe, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, U.S. military strategy coming out of the cold war was based on deterrence of Soviet aggression and coercion against America and its allies across the conflict spectrum.<sup>5</sup> The strategy was global in orientation, clearly focused on the military capabilities of the Soviet Union, and retained the basic features of containment as

envisioned in NSC-68 almost four decades earlier: a credible nuclear deterrent and large numbers of standing conventional forces, many deployed overseas in allied coalitions to provide a "forward defense" around the perimeter of Soviet expansion.<sup>6</sup> While noting "recent changes in Soviet rhetoric implying a gradual but fundamental change in doctrine and strategy," the strategy Crowe left nonetheless called for increases in defense expenditures of 2 percent real per annum for FY90-94, "following four years in which real growth has declined by 11 percent."<sup>7</sup>

In contrast, the military strategy designed by the Bush administration for the post-cold war transition period required fewer resources, was regional rather than global in its orientation, was no longer focused on the military capabilities of the Soviet Union and its former Warsaw Pact allies, and contained few of the strategic concepts of the former cold war strategy. The new strategy was built around four central strategic concepts: strategic deterrence and defense, forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution. Of these, only the first was a carryover from the cold war--a prudent necessity in view of the time it would take to dismantle the results of four decades of intermittent arms races.<sup>8</sup>

The remaining three concepts were new to U.S. military strategy. "Forward presence," as explained by administration officials, is quite different from the cold war idea of "forward defense," but the administration had a difficult time articulating the difference in a politically relevant manner. The administration understood early on that the fundamental changes in the Soviet Union meant that its ability to project conventional military power outside the former empire, and even outside the Russian republic, was in severe decline.<sup>9</sup> The need for forward defense in the context of the containment strategy no longer existed.

Even so, the uncertain future of the former Soviet Union, the changing nature of regional threats, the existence of global U.S. interests, and the necessity for U.S. leadership all required that some number of U.S. military forces be kept actively and visibly engaged in various regions of the world.<sup>10</sup> In early public statements this need was associated with the political objective of maintaining the existing, worldwide network of alliances, and the ability of the military (often, a "robust Navy") to lend credibility to those commitments.<sup>11</sup> After much internal debate as to the appropriate term to use--"forward presence," "active presence," and "peacetime engagement" were all candidates at one time--"forward presence" was selected.<sup>12</sup>

The second concept, "crisis response," was the central concept of the new strategy, as the Gulf War was demonstrating at the same time that administration officials were testifying.<sup>13</sup> Without using the words, the administration was articulating a power-projection strategy: the ability to deploy swiftly as needed from the United States to regions of U.S. interest a

formidable array of conventional combat power. In contrast to the cold war strategy, which focused on the reinforcement of Europe via a contested North Atlantic sea line of communication, this concept focused on multiple regions in the context of unthreatened air and sea lines of communication. Further, it was anticipated that there might not be U.S. "forward presence" forces in the crisis region to be reinforced. Thus forced-entry capabilities became more important.

The emphasis on the word "crisis" is also important, conveying the sense, as subsequently has been true, that U.S. military power should be available for a broad spectrum of regional situations, particularly those short of major regional war. It also implied that forces should be rapidly deployable to any of these regions--"strategic agility" in the language of the new strategy--creating increased demands for forces to provide global mobility.

Last was the concept of "reconstitution." Fundamentally it was, and is, the "hedge" against uncertainty within the strategy. It was designed to "forestall any potential adversary from competing militarily with the United States by demonstrating the capability to provide, if needed, a global warfighting capability."<sup>14</sup> It required the capability to form, train and field new fighting forces, initially from cadre-type units, as well as activating the industrial base on a large scale. As will be discussed in more detail later, this new element of U.S. strategy was the result of two factors: the need to hedge against the unknown future in Russia and the republics of the former Soviet Union; and the need to articulate a militarily valid, post-cold war mission for the very large and politically influential reserve forces of the United States.<sup>15</sup>

Along with these four central concepts, supporting principles of strategy were also articulated: readiness, collective security, arms control, maritime and aerospace superiority, strategic agility, technological superiority and decisive force.<sup>16</sup> Of these, only the last can be said to be new to U.S. strategic doctrine. And, as was demonstrated in the U.S. response for the Gulf War and subsequently in Somalia, to the leadership of the Bush administration it was more than strategic rhetoric.

To be able to execute this strategy with a defense "structure that is consistent with the budget guidance we have been given, consistent with our national security needs, and consistent with the need to make sure that our future forces are as proud, capable, and professional as the force (now) in Operation Desert Storm," administration decision makers ultimately arrived at the "base force" and presented it officially in January 1991 as part of the FY92-97 defense program to be authorized and funded by the Congress.<sup>17</sup>

In administration presentations the base force was



consistently subdivided into four conceptual force packages that were sized on major missions or regions of U.S. strategic interest--strategic forces, Atlantic forces, Pacific forces, and contingency forces.<sup>18</sup> As will be discussed later, each package was in fact derived from a thorough analysis of future U.S. interests in the mission or region in question, and known and anticipated changes in that specific security environment including anticipated results of the on-going Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations and the Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START 1). The intent was to demonstrate a strong linkage between strategic planning and requests for resources, particularly in a time of rapid and major change in the security environment.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to these four conceptual force packages (the word "conceptual" was used intentionally, but unsuccessfully, to preclude association of the packages with the real-world Unified Command Plan for the assignment of responsibilities to the warfighting Commanders-in-Chief), the administration also consistently articulated a need for four supporting capabilities: strategic mobility; the use of space for early warning and intelligence, surveillance, weather, navigation, and command and control; reconstitution of additional forces as needed; and research and development (R&D) to maintain the U.S. technological lead in critical military applications.<sup>20</sup>

As shown in Table 1, when aggregated, the forces from these conceptual packages represented a significant, somewhat greater than 25 percent, reduction in U.S. conventional forces by the end of FY95, the point at which the administration envisioned the build-down to be complete. Given this new military strategy and "base force" as final administration decisions, what decision-making processes lay behind them?

	<b>FY 1990</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>
Army Divisions	28 (18 active)	18 (12 active)
Aircraft Carriers	13	12
Carrier Air Wings	15 (13 active)	13 (11 active)
Battle Force Ships	545	451
Tactical Fighter Wings	36 (24 active)	26 (15 active)
Strategic Bombers	268	181

**Table 1. The Base Force: 25 Percent Reduction**

#### **Decision Making by General Powell and the Joint Staff, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.**

When Colin Powell returned to Washington to assume duties as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs on October 1, 1989, he had been out of the nation's capital for only 8 months since leaving the

White House as President Reagan's National Security Advisor. In that earlier position, he had participated directly in the U.S. interpretation of events surrounding the end of the cold war--glasnost, the election of President Gorbachev and the initiation of his domestic reforms, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, first elections in Poland, and the announcement and initiation of unilateral Soviet withdrawals from eastern Europe. He had also participated in arms control negotiations, both among the U.S. interagency committees as well as with the Soviets, that led to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and to two other Presidential summits to narrow differences in the START I and CFE talks.

Obviously, he was strongly influenced by what he understood to be changing in the world, views that initially often put him outside the mainstream of thought of political appointees and other military leaders in the Bush administration.<sup>21</sup> In the early summer of 1988, several months before returning as Chairman, he had expressed some of these prescient views to Army colleagues:

There are those who see President Mikhail S. Gorbachev as some sort of a Machiavellian schemer, able to orchestrate the mammoth Soviet bureaucracy toward a clever plan to dismember the NATO Alliance . . . but I submit the real imperative for his programs is Soviet domestic and foreign policy impotence and failure . . . Mr. Gorbachev, who should know, has no more idea where the Soviet Union is headed than anyone in this room. He has hopes, he has a program, and as he said at Governor's Island last year, he is playing real politics. But he doesn't know the outcome. Politics is the art of the possible. The possible in the Soviet Union is very different from the possible in America . . . The Soviet system is bankrupt and President Gorbachev is the trustee. It's difficult to imagine anyone even envying his position, let alone actively pursuing it.<sup>22</sup>

His insights were not limited to the foreign security environment. Turning to the U.S. domestic scene, he continued:

What about our own country? What about the change in America--even before Mr Gorbachev came along? We've had a changing public consensus in America since about 1986 . . . With domestic problems well-publicized, procurement scandals, economic and trade problems, and an ever-increasing national debt, the public consensus began to change . . . By the mid-eighties, Congress could and did legislate negative growth in the defense budget. Congress reflected the national consensus, and all this happened before Gorbachev . . . The bottom line is that we can't act in the 1990s as if we had the same consensus of the early 1980s, or as if the

geopolitical situation is the same . . . I believe we are going to have to make some hard choices . . . (The American public will) support us, but not at any cost.

They don't see that as reasonable under the changed circumstances in the world . . . Remember, the future ain't what it used to be.

This effort "to scare the Army and its industrial partners" came to naught, however. When Powell arrived back at the Pentagon in October 1989, he found "No change. Even though I thought the greatest challenge facing us was the controlled build-down of U.S. capabilities, the services offered plenty of evidence as to why they didn't need to do it."<sup>23</sup>

Several quotations and a list of events in which he had personally shaped national policy do not convey adequately the scope nor the depth of strategic vision which General Powell brought to his new position.<sup>24</sup> Those who served with him daily in those positions, however, became well aware of how inquisitive he was as to what was really going on in the Soviet Union, how thoroughly he supplemented U.S. intelligence with extensive travel and insights from well-placed foreign sources, and how wide his network of personal contacts was, both in and out of government, both here and abroad.

In addition to a unique vision of what was transpiring in the Soviet Union and regionally, and what that meant for the nation's future, General Colin Powell also started his tenure as Chairman with significantly greater authorities (Goldwater-Nichols legislation of 1986) than any previous incoming Chairman.<sup>25</sup> Admiral Crowe had used some of the new authorities, but their arrival midway through his tenure, after he had established a collegial leadership style with the other Chiefs, left many to be used for the first time by Powell. This he did with alacrity.

Within weeks after his arrival he had the Joint Staff working intensely on three issues: revised staff procedures that implemented the independence of the Director and the Joint Staff under the Chairman, and which precluded service positions from holding up progress or forcing compromises on staff actions; a J/5-led review of the joint planning processes to shorten the cycles used during the cold war and to focus planning away from the declining Soviet threat;<sup>26</sup> and lastly, a closely held study by the J/8 that would flesh out Powell's "view of the 1990s," a phrase which shortly became the title for the briefing produced by the study.

Thus, in a series of rapid and complementary actions, Powell had freed the Joint Staff from service interference (some concerned officers would say even from service influence), placed planning for the transition from the cold war at the top of his action list, and placed himself to lead it. He was embarked on an effort to "plan for a future that was going to be

fundamentally different from anything we had seen for the preceding 45 years."<sup>27</sup>

External to the Pentagon, however, the pace of change in the world in the fall of 1989 would not allow much time for contemplative planning. After weeks of uncontrollable exfiltration, the Berlin Wall opened to the human exodus on November 9, a coup in the Philippines failed on December 1, the Central America peace accords were signed on December 12, and after an earlier "false start," U.S. forces invaded Panama in Operation JUST CAUSE on December 20. "Instead of being able to focus on the build-down, all I got was wars."<sup>28</sup>

For the purpose of this case study, the "View of the 1990s" study was the important item, since it became the "living" briefing that Powell used repeatedly to convey his strategic vision--first to his staff, then to Secretary Cheney, the Service Chiefs, the CINCs, and senior officials in OSD, then to the President, and, after the budget negotiations of 1990, to the Congress (see the chronology in Appendix B). By March 1990 it had become his text for repeated public statements, both in official testimony and in public fora, stateside and overseas.

Powell was well aware "that there is but one currency in the Washington policy process--consensus. With it you have a chance for effective policy, without it you have nothing but hollow, declaratory policy."<sup>29</sup> His view of the 90s was that around which he attempted, largely successfully, to build a politically effective consensus. But first the view needed to be fleshed out, and that was the task given to the J/8, Major General John Robinson, and his small group of analysts drawn from across the Joint Staff.

Powell's initial guidance to Robinson's group was quite expansive. He explained his understanding of the changes occurring in the world, and then asked them to determine the answer to an anticipated question from the Secretary or the President, "What will it take for the United States to remain a superpower after the cold war is over in terms of U.S. military capabilities, forces, and alliance relationships? What will the United States need to be able to do in the world, and how should our military capabilities contribute to that? And remember, we must be able to explain our needs to the American people--needs that must be well below today's levels."<sup>30</sup>

There were many iterations and refinements over the weeks and months, but the basic methodology remained the same: to examine each region of the world in the mid-1990s in the context of ongoing and anticipated change (e.g., a disintegrating Soviet empire with a massive nuclear arsenal, democratization in many regions of the world, rising ethnic nationalism, weapons proliferation) and what Powell called "enduring principles" (e.g., the necessity of future U.S. leadership among the community of nations, the need for world-class conventional

military capabilities) and "enduring realities" (e.g., Soviet nuclear weapons, continuing American political and economic interests in the Atlantic and Pacific regions). From these regional analyses, as well as from a concurrent review of the strategic nuclear competition with the Soviet Union, the study would identify "enduring defense needs," those answers to the original questions Powell had anticipated from the Secretary and the President.<sup>31</sup>

The results were new strategic concepts for regional conflict, and an array of forces for each region, mixed by capability (service), component (active or reserve), and location (overseas or stateside) into force packages to meet the security needs of the United States as a world power in 1995. (See Appendix A.) The number and type of forces in each package changed frequently, but not dramatically, as various views were considered, reconsidered and incorporated for the next 6 months until Cheney made the final decisions while negotiating with Congress for the budget agreement of October 1990. In all cases, however, the forces needed for Powell's "View of the 1990s" represented significant reductions beyond the FY91 program then being prepared within the Pentagon for presentation to Congress in January 1990.

By late October 1989, Powell had discussed his vision with the Secretary, and from November to January he gave briefings to the service Chiefs and the unified Commanders-in-Chief, usually in closed sessions. Initially, the service Chiefs disagreed with the necessity for such a major restructuring and downsizing. The idea of conceptual force packages for the Atlantic and Pacific regions--traditional Navy theaters--did not even appeal to the Navy Chief. However, after the Berlin Wall opened in November, the rapidly changing situation and Powell's ability to persuade, as well as "to hold the line," enabled him to lead the services to consider major changes in their force structure, and unequal changes at that.<sup>32</sup> In November, the Secretary had him present it to top defense policymakers at the Defense Planning and Resources Board (DPRB). In December, he and the Secretary briefed the President on the new strategic concepts and outlines of a potential "base force" needed to execute it.

Thus Powell's initial strategic vision, sharpened by the work of the Joint Staff and the give-and-take dialogues with other senior policymakers, quickly highlighted what he believed to be the "enduring defense needs" of the nation:

modern strategic nuclear forces that continue to deter any nuclear attack against this nation or our allies, an Atlantic force forward-deployed and here in the United States to protect our interests across the Atlantic, a Pacific force, modest in size, good return on our investment, to make sure that we do not disengage from the Pacific. And, finally, a contingency force for the unknown.<sup>33</sup>

In the fall of 1989, however, the uniformed military were not the only people in the Pentagon, or in Washington for that matter, anticipating important decisions on the future defense needs of the nation. Secretary Richard Cheney moved planning within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) into high gear shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall:

I wanted to get on top of the debate that was about to begin on the future U.S. defense needs. I had decided with Colin and the Chiefs that we needed to lead on the debate with Congress... we would not argue that no change was needed, but instead influence the coming reallocation of resources by defining the terms of the debate.<sup>34</sup>

### **Participation by the Service Chiefs and the Unified Commanders-in-Chief.**

Very early in the Bush administration, in February 1989 before Cheney or Powell were on board, the Joint Chiefs met in the Oval Office with the President and his economic advisors to discuss resources for defense for FY89.<sup>35</sup> Though not a formal meeting of the National Security Council, present were Sununu, Scowcroft, Brady, Baker, Darman, the President, and the Chiefs. The topic of the meeting was a "flat budget" for defense, an idea that the President's economic advisors had recommended earlier. The proposal meant an administration budget proposal to Congress with no real growth in the FY89-94 defense program, and under some interpretations, a real decline annually by the current rate of inflation.

The Chiefs objected adamantly to the proposal, arguing that it was too extreme for orderly change. They proposed instead defense budgets with 2 percent annual real growth, a continuation of their recommendation the last year of the Reagan administration.

The meeting did not go well for the Chiefs. If Baker and Scowcroft had not supported the Chiefs by citing uncertainties in the Soviet Union, the President's economic team would likely have carried the day. Instead, the President decided on a budget ramp of 0 percent, 1 percent, 1 percent, 2 percent, 2 percent, over the years of the defense program. This meant a "flat budget" for one year while the situation clarified, with subsequent years to be planned with small real growth. Perceptions varied among the Chiefs as to the impact of these reductions: the "order of anguish," as described by one participant was Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force.<sup>36</sup> But even then, few believed the proposal would hold after the first year.

The message of this meeting was clear: the Bush administration was going to decrease defense spending. The only

question was how fast. This was in contrast to the Reagan era, where the Congress was the one causing real decline in defense expenditure since FY86.

### **Air Force Participation.**<sup>37</sup>

Even prior to the "flat budget" meeting, the Air Force had been planning for the post-cold war build-down. Part of the Air Force plans had been implemented in the programmatic world-force structure had been cut in future years to pay for modernization programs that had also been reduced in scope and pace. Tactical fighter wings (TFW) had been reduced from 44 to 37 to accommodate reduced modernization of the Advanced Tactical Fighter, C-17, F-15E, B2 and the Peacekeeper missile.

With Gorbachev's announced withdrawals from Eastern Europe, Air Force plans for a smaller post-cold war posture accelerated.

They calculated that, after Soviet withdrawals, the reduced threat to U.S. global objectives would allow eliminating eleven TFW. This, in turn, would allow further reductions in the scope and pace of modernization, while protecting manpower priorities-- a pace of reduction that "did not do violence to people and the future quality of the force."<sup>38</sup>

In the fall of 1989, while Powell's view of the s was underway, Powell and the Chiefs held several executive sessions on how to present to civilian leaders and to the Congress the post-cold war requirements for conventional forces. With the canonical threat disappearing, the Air Force objectives in these discussions were three: don't let the Congress dictate a fast build-down so rapid that the future force is impaired; don't throw away the billions already invested in modernization; and, find a reasonable budget level, a "new peg," for the 2-3 years necessary for the global situation to stabilize.

The strategy arrived at was to offer a level and pace of reduction which met future military needs while responding to the political need for a substantial "peace dividend." (Concern with congressional "impatience" was real from the Air Force's perspective.) To the Air force, this could have been a 40 percent reduction in conventional forces, if the pace of reduction was acceptable, which their planning showed to be 7-8 years. The other services disagreed with the depth of reductions for different reasons, but all agreed that the pace of reductions was critical, drawing heavily on their different experiences coming out of the post-Vietnam reductions.<sup>39</sup>

From the Air Force perspective, Powell's "View of the 1990s" study, when completed, would be the "strawman" from which they would all work, even though it was being done by the Joint Staff with little service participation. It provided an authoritative approach to what needed to be done, freeing service leadership from internal criticism for reducing capabilities. And it worked

out about that way, with specific Air Force concerns being discussed later between the Service Chief and Powell. The Air Force basically supported the "base force" as planned by Powell's group, differing only over the scope of some modernization programs, differences which were accommodated initially but which lost out later in the continuing adjustments.

### **Army Participation.**<sup>40</sup>

Army preparations for the reduction of capabilities after the cold war began in earnest in 1988, drawing from a closely held internal effort known as the Antaeus study. By late 1987, it was clear to Army leaders that, given declining real defense budgets and the location of Army forces worldwide, the overseas forces were likely to be reduced or even eliminated. The focus of the Antaeus study was to provide options for future Army force postures for discussions with the regional CINCS<sup>41</sup> and with the various factions within the Army. This it did, also providing insights as to the rate of manpower reductions, 35,000 per fiscal year, that could be sustained without drastically reducing the readiness of Army units worldwide.<sup>42</sup>

However, as the Soviet withdrawals started in Eastern Europe and the wall opened a year later, the Army reduced funds for procurement and research and development in the FY90 and FY91 budget submissions rather than cut force structure. This was due in part to the uncertainty of the CFE negotiations which would subsequently define the limits of future U.S. forces in Europe, and due in part to the fact that much of the Army's research and procurement was then focused on providing continued "overmatch" to a Soviet threat that was receding, albeit uncertainly. The Army Chief, General Vuono, also believed that while threats may be abating in Europe, other threats and emerging regional instabilities necessitated a range of ready, conventional ground forces, as Operation JUST CAUSE (Panama) demonstrated in late 1989.

As the new strategy and the base force were developed in late 1989 and early 1990, most Army input into the decisions was done at the top by Vuono to Powell and the Army Secretary directly to Cheney or Atwood. While considering the Joint Staff's analytical work "not very good," Vuono could go "head-to-head" with Powell on the emerging base force since it was in the same range of options already analyzed by the Army and discussed with the regional CINCS. But he needed and received support from the European CINC to retain in the base force in Europe a "capable Corps" of 150,000 personnel, a force somewhat larger than originally proposed by the Joint Staff and Powell. But Vuono accepted and supported Powell's contention that consensus among the Chiefs and CINCS was essential to successful defense before Congress of the "floor" force structure they believed necessary for the future.



In the end, Vuono "got most of what he wanted," and considered the new strategy and base force, and particularly the pace of reductions from FY92-95, as a sound plan--providing for the build-down a good "way station in FY95" from which decisions could then be made with flexibility to continue or not. Unfortunately, Army leaders were not able to convince their reserve components that the plan was also good for them. Thus, during the subsequent FY93 budget process, the administration in the persons of Cheney and Powell would take on, again unsuccessfully, the politically powerful reserve interests in Congress.

### **Navy Participation.**<sup>43</sup>

Unlike the Air Force, in late 1988 the Navy did not see in Gorbachev's reforms and his announced withdrawals from Eastern Europe the indications of major changes in Soviet naval capabilities and aspirations.

In contrast, during Admiral Trost's visit to the Soviet Union in October 1989 (just as Powell was arriving in Washington), he found their shipbuilding program for the nuclear cruiser stopped, but other shipbuilding and modernization programs continuing for both carriers and submarines. He also confirmed for the first time that the MIG 29 was being adapted for carrier launches, and that the Soviet Navy had been given continued priority for Russian conscripts assuring the quality of manpower needed to achieve the Soviet goal of a fully modernized, but smaller, naval force by the mid 1990s. He left the Soviet Union with the clear impression that while the country was suffering major economic problems that would eventually affect their military capabilities, their naval forces would continue to modernize, presenting "massive capabilities" for the foreseeable future. They, the Soviet naval forces at least, had not yet "backed off" from the cold war.

When Powell presented to the Chiefs later in the fall his "View of the 1990s" brief and the initial outlines of the base force, Trost agreed with the strategic emphasis on forward presence, a traditional mission of U.S. naval forces. But he thought the naval forces recommended were somewhat too small for the long-run rotational base needed. Of equal concern to the numbers was the fact that the Navy had not been a part of the development of the force before it was "laid on the table" with the strategy, and thus was not privy to the analysis that validated its size and capabilities.

As the discussions continued over a number of weeks, Powell's contention to the Chiefs that the "base force" was all they collectively would be able to defend before Congress was reinforced by Trost's own soundings. While preparing to testify on the FY91 defense program in early March, both Senators Warner and Nunn emphasized to Trost that the Chiefs needed to "come up

here with a different story this year, its time to reduce." After his own testimony in April, which was less than well received, it was apparent that the base force was the best the administration was going to do, notwithstanding the potential for dangerous events in the Soviet Union. With "Powell and Cheney in sync" on the issue and defense supporters in Congress also seeking reductions, Trost reluctantly abandoned earlier plans for the Navy, concentrating on the defense of the base force.

Summarizing the services' participation in administration decision making, several points are clear. First, for various reasons their role in the major decisions was marginal. As one chief noted, "the planning for the defense build-down was a case of someone determining in advance what was needed, and then seeing that the result was produced."<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, all felt keenly the pressure from Congress to reduce, and for the Army and the Navy this was earlier than they judged desirable given the uncertainty remaining in Eurasia. Second, the existence and influence of unmotivated perceptual biases built up over the cold war about Soviet capabilities and intentions were abundantly evident as they interpreted unfolding events in 1988 and 1989. Last, other biases to defend the future of their services, some motivated by their responsibilities of long-term institutional stewardship, were set aside in a collective recognition that the administration was going forward united. "We knew if Cheney offered the Congress a 40 percent reduction, it would have been pocketed while they asked for more. Therefore we supported the 25 percent number."<sup>45</sup>

#### **Decision Making Within the Office of the Secretary of Defense.**

At the OSD level the process of decision making for the build-down began with the arrival of the Bush administration. When Ambassador Paul Wolfowitz was named in January 1988 as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, he brought a deep background in political-military strategy in the Asian region, having previously served as the Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia.

While the Tower nomination was being reviewed and ultimately defeated,<sup>46</sup> Wolfowitz led, as the senior member of the new defense team, the OSD group that participated in the initial national security strategy review of the administration. Known as the "NSR-12" studies, after the number of the presidential directive that initiated them, the review of defense policy was only a part of a larger series prepared for the National Security Council and covering U.S. security policy toward all regions of the world. All reviews were conducted from January to June 1989 by interagency committees, chaired either by a senior director of the NSC staff or by the senior leadership of the lead executive agency. In the case of the defense review there were two

principal committees, one for future arms control negotiations, strategic forces, and targeting, chaired by Arnold Kanter of the NSC staff; the other on defense policy, strategy, and nonstrategic forces, chaired by Wolfowitz.

Though never published in its entirety, at least six results of the NSR-12 review were influential later as accepted premises for strategic formulations by OSD, Powell, and the Joint Staff: (1) the acceptance that, as often stated by Brent Scowcroft, "this government is financially broke," and that, therefore, "huge reductions" would have to be made in future defense plans and programs; (2) the understanding that the anticipated defense reductions should be executed in a "build-down"<sup>47</sup> that provided assurance to both sides by linking force reductions to completed negotiations on both strategic nuclear and conventional forces; (3) that U.S. leadership would be paramount in producing such agreements, particularly among European allies; (4) that cold war alliances should be supported and maintained until the transition was clarified; (5) that future Soviet expansionism was very unlikely, and the eroding bilateral structure of global, international competition meant that strategic analysis should proceed on a region-by-region basis; and (6) an understanding that, at the regional level, the "distance between a superpower and an aspiring regional hegemon had been greatly foreshortened,"<sup>48</sup> making U.S. superiority in high-tech conventional weaponry a key competitive advantage for the decade ahead.<sup>49</sup>

Given the turbulence in the security environment during the early portion of the transition from the cold war, particularly in Eastern Europe, it cannot be said that there was unanimity among senior appointees on these premises. Neither was the open nature of the reviews, with all applicable agencies participating, conducive to rapid closure on differing views. One of the major benefits of the reviews, however, was the rapid and broad dissemination of these premises among the second and third level of political appointees, as well as among a portion of the permanent bureaucracy.<sup>50</sup> Ultimately these premises appeared in print in two places: the classified Defense Planning Guidance (revised) of November 1989, and the unclassified Presidential report to Congress in March 1990 51 on U.S. national security strategy.<sup>51</sup>

These premises also laid the foundation in early 1990 for development of a new defense strategy by Wolfowitz and a team of OSD staffers. Under Cheney's direction, the effort by Wolfowitz was to parallel that of Powell and the Joint Staff, but both were to be closely held, separated, and with no participation by outside agencies (a difficult feat indeed within the Pentagon). The only interaction between the groups until their efforts were completed was between Powell and Wolfowitz themselves.

The OSD planning effort, headed by Scotter Libby, Wolfowitz's principal deputy, and Dale Vesser (a retired

Lieutenant General, former J-5 of the Joint Staff) used a somewhat different and more broad methodology than did the Joint Staff under Powell. Rather than focusing essentially at the regional level, Vesser's group initially analyzed global trends and developed alternative futures for the global security environment. For each future they then developed a separate military strategy. In their view, the transition from the cold war would produce, by the end of the century, a relatively benign world of "competitive growth," a world dominated by a "troubled third world" particularly in the Middle East, or a world dominated by a turbulent Soviet Union (later, Russia) keeping Eastern Europe, and perhaps Western Europe, "tense and unsettled."<sup>52</sup>

For each of these future environments, defined by a unique set of assumptions as to progress on START and CFE negotiations, reforms in the Soviet Union, etc., a "best" strategy and derivative set of military capabilities were developed. For the world of benign competition, it was believed that a "crisis response/reconstitution" strategy to respond from the United States to regional crises was the major determinant of future military needs. In this future, significant reductions could be made from current overseas deployments, and much of the force structure in the United States could be placed in the reserves, to be "reconstituted" if needed. The "troubled third world" future would require larger capabilities, particularly for power projection, coupled with some continued military presence overseas in regions of vital U.S. interests. The world dominated by a "turbulent Soviet Union," which assumed little progress on internal economic and political reforms, required a significant U.S. presence in Western Europe as hedge to uncertainty produced by the Russians, and as a reassurance to allies in the region. Each future had, in addition, a unique set of strategic force capabilities designed for that particular future.

Since there was no longer one known threat against which to formulate strategy and develop military requirements, the analytic portion of the effort was focused on the three regions of future interest: Eastern Europe and Russia, the Middle East, and northeast Asia. The intent was to determine the military capabilities--the core competencies--needed to cope in an uncertain future with this range of potential contingencies.<sup>53</sup>

After developing each strategy and the needed military capabilities, the U.S. forces were gamed in each region against the military threat that the political military trend analysis had shown to be potentially strongest. Then, to isolate the risks involved in selecting one future, cross analyses were conducted gaming the best force for each future against forces anticipated in the alternative futures. Lastly, "wild cards" (low-probability, high-danger futures) were gamed against each best force, and sensitivity analyses were conducted on the capability of each force if key assumptions were relaxed or changed (e.g., strategic warning and call-up authorities for

reserve forces).

At this time cost was not a constraint on the OSD planning effort. In all three futures, however, the force capabilities needed were significantly less than had been requested in the FY91 budget submission only 2 months earlier. In fact, this analysis eventually became one part of the basis for Cheney's input to the budget negotiations in June 1990--the offering of an "illustrative reduction" in conventional capabilities of 25 percent, discussed in the next section of this study.

As with the case of Powell and his "View of the 1990s," the OSD group did not arrive quickly at a settled strategy or single recommended force.<sup>54</sup>

As he had done less than a year earlier when leading the OSD group in the NSR-12 study, Wolfowitz's habit was to work all day Saturday with the group, collegially exploring their work of the past week and guiding future efforts. Out of several of these long sessions, the concept of "reconstitution" was born as it was finally known in the military strategy, largely due to Wolfowitz's concern that the uncertainties and potential reversibility of reforms in the Soviet Union necessitated an explicit strategic hedge.<sup>55</sup>

In late May, these separate planning efforts under Powell and Wolfowitz were presented at the DPRB in a 2-day session. Under Cheney's leadership, the DPRB was the forum through which nonincremental change, as planned by Powell and Wolfowitz, was to be introduced into the Defense Programming and Planning System (PPBS) to facilitate service preparation of detailed programs and budgets.<sup>56</sup>

The presentations showed a remarkable similarity in their final analysis in both strategic concepts and in the range of forces needed to execute a new regional strategy. Most of those present who were interviewed for this study agree that after Wolfowitz's extensive discussion on the first day of historical examples of nonincremental changes, coupled with his staff's analysis of the emerging situation, general consensus existed on the regional strategy for the future. After Powell's presentation of his "Views of the 1990s" and the forces needed, a narrow range of force structure had been established for the future, a range significantly below what was then planned and very close to the 25 percent reductions later announced by the President.

Early in June, accompanied again by Wolfowitz and Powell, Cheney briefed the President in the Oval Office on the results of the studies--both the strategy and the narrow range of forces required. The President carefully reviewed the force structure recommendations, particularly those involving potential reductions overseas. Noting the historical nature of a regional strategy for the post-cold war era, Scowcroft recommended a

Presidential speech to highlight the change.<sup>57</sup> Shortly thereafter, NSC staffers began preparing the text of the President's speech for the Aspen Institute, which publicly announced the anticipated 25 percent reductions.<sup>58</sup> On June 19, Secretary Cheney briefed budget negotiators on an "illustrative plan" for savings that could be achieved by a 25 percent reduction in conventional forces (see next event).

Even with the President's approval, however, the Pentagon could not proceed in the PPBS process since there was no firm fiscal guidance for the next year, nor was any in sight owing to the gridlock between the White House and Congress.

### **Congressional Pressure on Executive Decision Making, January to October 1990.**

The decision making described thus far in the first two events took place from October 1989 to June 1990, covering executive branch development of the new military strategy and force structure to be submitted to the Congress in January 1991 (the FY92-97 defense program). During this same period, while Powell's group was fleshing out his view of the 1990s and Wolfowitz was assembling his group for the same purpose, the executive branch also submitted, in January 1990, the FY91 defense budget and FY92-96 program, requesting \$306.9 billion in new budget authority for FY91, but a decline of 2 percent per year over the program when adjusted for inflation, the first such negative request from an administration since 1974.<sup>59</sup>

Simply stated, the FY91 defense budget ran into a firestorm of congressional resistance, a storm of bipartisan political origin that eventually subsumed the defense debate and ended in utter budgetary gridlock, budget negotiations and summits, and eventually in the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990. There were three main reasons for this firestorm.

First, the FY91 submission had been built by the executive branch essentially on cold war planning assumptions. As the chronology shows (see Appendix B), this was very early in the series of events which define the end of the cold war (but 60 days after the dramatic opening of the Berlin Wall), and the administration, for reasons discussed earlier, was unwilling to proceed too rapidly with a build-down, particularly one that might out-pace negotiated reductions in both strategic and conventional forces. Additionally, as we have seen, planning assumptions based on other than the cold war simply did not yet exist within the Pentagon.

Second, the proposed reductions, even without a new strategy and force proposal, were in areas not acceptable to Congress. The annual 2 percent real reduction for the period FY91-96 was to be gained by omitting any new program starts, terminating 20 weapons programs, reducing some force structure, streamlining

management practices, and closing 67 bases in the United States and overseas. However, the base closures--an anathema to Congress anytime, but more so during a recession--coupled with continued high levels of requests for strategic nuclear programs (SDI, the B-2 bomber, and the MX and Midgetman ICBMS), didn't set well with those in Congress who already envisioned a hefty "peace dividend" coming from somewhere other than their district or state. Even defense supporters had strong messages to send to the Pentagon, including Rep. Les Aspin ("I think that you can now get an arms control agreement with the Soviets without having a robust defense program because what's driving them to arms control is a desperate economy, rather than what we're doing on our side"); Rep. Dave McCurdy ("It's clear we have an opportunity to make major cuts in strategic weapons, whether or not Gorbachev stays in office"); and Rep. Charles Bennett ("It is ridiculous to put all of those strategic programs in a financed position just so we can use them at the arms control table.").<sup>60</sup>

Third, the defense budget, which represented a major portion of the relatively few discretionary dollars Congress could still allocate each year,<sup>61</sup> became a major component (some would say the major component) in negotiations between the Bush administration and the Democratic Congress over larger fiscal priorities, principally debt reduction. Simply stated, the FY91 defense budget was caught between vastly differing views of how large the post-cold war peace dividend should be, when it should start to be paid out, and what it was to be used for--increases in domestic spending (Democrats), or deficit reduction (Republicans), or tax relief (both parties).<sup>62</sup>

Speaking for the administration, Cheney frequently and vigorously defended this cautious approach, contrasting it to the "slash-and-burn budgeting" being offered by individual Democratic members of the Congress:

We must never forget that whatever other changes they may have made, the Soviets retain enormous military capabilities, including a massive inventory of modern nuclear weapons . . . It is hard for me to look at that capability, to consider the possibilities of upheaval in the Soviet Union, and to remain peacefully sanguine as if we no longer need to be concerned about our own defense.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the firestorm of protest, through March 1990 Congressional Democrats were not united in an alternative approach to that of the administration. In the Senate, Nunn had not yet made his position known. In the House, there was broad division among the Democrats at a party caucus in mid-March. Liberals, such as Barney Frank, wanted rapid and massive shifts in FY91 funds from defense to discretionary domestic programs; more conservative members, such as Murtha, McCurdy and Spratt, argued for cuts only \$10 to \$12 billion below the administration's request.

While such differing, individual views among the opposition did not pressure the administration, the actions of the Democratic leadership certainly did. Aspin, in particular, put pressure on the administration by two separate actions. First, his staff determined the cost of a number of alternative reductions in defense manpower and weapons systems, demonstrating only small savings in FY91, but major savings by FY95.<sup>64</sup> This helped to create a consensus in the caucus that a multi-year basis for the build-down was preferable, if it was begun in FY91.

Conservatives could see a pace of build-down that did not threaten the all-volunteer force and postponed major reductions for another year while the situation in Europe clarified; and liberals could see specific and large dividends coming, particularly in the major weapons systems they opposed, albeit a few years into the future.

Aspin further laid the groundwork for defense cuts by holding a series of hearings in March to examine, and undercut, the administration's contention that events in the Soviet Union remained "reversible," and therefore sufficiently dangerous as to warrant the size and scope of the FY91 submission.<sup>65</sup> One of the witnesses called was the J-8 on Powell's staff, Major General John Robinson, who was at the same time helping Powell flesh out his "View of the 1990s."

While defending the administration's cautious approach, Robinson shared with the Committee the planning factors being discussed in the Pentagon for warning of a Soviet attack in Europe--factors at that time still similar to those used as during the cold war.<sup>66</sup> Based on the testimony of Robinson and others, Aspin immediately and publicly announced that since the FY91 submission did not take into account the drastically changed realities in Europe, "the defense budget is seriously out of date."

Later, this argument that the administrations's defense submission was consistently "out of date" or "one revolution behind" was recreated very effectively by Aspin during congressional consideration of the FY92 budget, as well as the FY93 budget.<sup>67</sup> While not exactly correct, this message was a constant thorn in the side of the administration, since it portrayed a Congress more aware of changing security conditions than the administration responsible for shaping them in America's interests. Such tactics induced equally effective responses from Cheney in the form of recession lists, selected program terminations, and suggested base closures to keep the Congress divided and defensive.

By April 1990, Senator Sam Nunn, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and perhaps the most influential defense specialist in Congress, also added considerable pressure to the administration to accelerate the pace of defense cuts. Nunn did this in a very deliberate style, using a series of four floor



speeches (March 22 to April 20) to link the changing world environment to a new military strategy for the post-cold war era, and then to recommend the force structure and defense policies necessary to execute the strategy.<sup>68</sup> Occurring at exactly the same time that Powell and Wolfowitz had begun the process of developing such a strategy, the effect was a clear warning to the administration:<sup>69</sup> "Congress would begin reshaping the Pentagon's request to its own design (Nunn's) unless the administration submitted a plan for an accelerated retrenchment and linked it to a cheaper budget."<sup>70</sup>

In fact, Nunn's speeches were more influential within the administration than reported in the press, largely because of the manner in which he related the recommended military strategy to a recommended resource level for defense. It was thorough, plausible to the public, and fully supportive of (in fact, explicitly built on) President Bush's National Security Strategy which had just been released publicly for the first time the month before. The clear message received by senior members of the administration was that they could lose control of the post-cold war defense build-down to the Congress unless they could produce an equally persuasive combination of military strategy and associated force structure.<sup>71</sup>

If the administration were to lose "control of the build-down"--which was loosely interpreted as retaining the initiative to propose the size and pace of the reductions, as well as the detailed policies needed for implementation--then it would be forced to accept several policies proposed by Nunn that the administration considered inimical to the nation's future interests. Most of these affected conventional programs and forces; Nunn offered few significant departures in strategic nuclear doctrines or forces. The recommendations of concern included a reduction of troop strength in Europe to 75,000 by 1995, greatly increased reliance after 1995 on reserve forces versus active duty forces, flexible readiness across the defense force structure, as well as a reduction in FY 91 defense obligational authority of \$16 to \$18 billion.<sup>72</sup> This Nunn-recommended figure was adopted a few weeks later in the Senate budget resolution, again marking his influence within the Senate on defense matters.

This ended the first phase of the Congress's influence on the administration's build-down plan, a phase in which each side not only stated its initial position, but attempted also to create leverage for the second, more serious phase of negotiations on the larger Federal budget. It was to be a phase in which defense would be little debated on its own merits, most often a pawn in a larger partisan battle over priorities for deficit reductions.

The second phase began later in the spring of 1990, as increasing economic sluggishness indicated that the Federal deficit, including the cost of bailing-out failed savings and

loan institutions, would be \$131 billion higher than estimated when the FY91 budget was prepared the preceding fall. Unless new revenue could be raised--and neither party wanted to be blamed for this, particularly the Republicans after Bush's "read my lips, no new taxes" campaign pledge--the Gramm Rudman law would go into effect, triggering automatic cuts of 25 percent from defense and 38 percent from domestic programs.<sup>73</sup> Since this was intolerable to both parties, negotiations on the larger issue of deficit reductions began between the respective leaderships in May.<sup>74</sup>

Among other packages designed to forestall the potential sequestration by finding \$50 billion in deficit reduction in FY91 and \$500 billion over 5 years, the negotiators agreed on June 6 to discuss several alternative approaches to reducing future defense expenditures.<sup>75</sup> Behind the scene, House and Senate staffers already were building options around their respective budget resolutions, and the President had earlier asked Secretary Cheney to prepare such an "illustrative option" to be used in the negotiations.<sup>76</sup> Cheney would later note it was a request he encouraged from the White House since by then he was prepared with the work done by Powell and Wolfowitz.<sup>77</sup> Cheney presented his "illustrative" option on June 19, a plan to reduce the size of U.S. combat forces by 25 percent, thereby "imparting considerable political momentum to the idea of cutting active duty Army divisions from 18 to 12, Navy ships from 566 to 455, and Air Force fighter wings from 36 to 25."<sup>78</sup> As noted by Senator Nunn, "Most of the budget exercise from here on is going to start with this force structure."<sup>79</sup> The similarity to the final administration "base force" should not be missed--in essence, the administration's decision on force reductions was presented to Congress via these negotiations, and accepted.

There was far less agreement, however, on what the fiscal implications of such a reduction might be. Cheney's presentation indicated that a 25 percent reduction in combat forces would not translate into a corresponding percentage cut in defense expenditures. Rather, he presented only a 10 percent cut in defense expenditures, adjusted for inflation, a cut surprisingly similar to the FY91 defense request already before Congress, and within a few billion dollars a year of the entire Bush administration 5-year defense program.<sup>80</sup> Unlike the House and Senate, Cheney assumed cuts in forces only, not in their modernization; as earlier noted, this was a major point of contention between the two institutions.

Keeping the pressure on the administration, Aspin released within the next few days a study by the Congressional Budget Office<sup>81</sup> showing that Cheney's 25 percent reduction in combat forces should have translated into a defense saving of 17 to 27 percent, depending on how many functions were to be transferred to the reserves, whether new weapons systems were to be slowed, and so on.<sup>82</sup> Once again an administration attempt to set and maintain a course for the build-down had been quickly and effectively

countered by congressional leaders, leaving unclear just which institution was in charge of future U.S. defense policy.

A stalemate prevailed at this point with an unannounced consensus between the branches for a 25 percent reduction in combat forces, but no agreement on how fast that should be accomplished, and how that reduction should translate into a peace dividend for FY91 and beyond. This stalemate was only broken in the final stages of the negotiations when, as part of a larger deal on reducing the Federal budget deficit, defense expenditures became "a secondary consideration for both sides," with the Democrats' top priority being to minimize cuts in domestic programs, and the Bush team concentrating, unsuccessfully, on not raising taxes.<sup>83</sup>

The final agreement reached in October was expected to reduce the deficit by \$40 billion in FY91 and by \$500 billion in FY91-95.<sup>84</sup> Among the many major changes, separate annual ceilings were placed on the three categories of discretionary Federal spending (international, defense, and domestic) for the period FY 91-93, and an aggregate ceiling for all three categories of discretionary spending for FY94-95, as shown in Table 2.

	<b>FY91</b>	<b>FY92</b>	<b>FY93</b>	<b>FY94</b>	<b>FY95</b>
Defense					
BA*	288.9	291.6	291.8	--	--
OL"	297.7	295.7	292.7	--	--
International					
BA	20.1	20.5	21.4	--	--
OL	18.6	19.1	19.6	--	--
Domestic					
BA	182.7	191.3	198.3	--	--
OL	198.1	210.1	221.7	--	--
All Categories					
BA	--	--	--	510.8	517.7
OL	--	--	--	534.8	540.8

\*BA - Budget Authority

\*\*OL - Outlays

**Table 2. Discretionary Spending Limits,<sup>85</sup> FY91-95**

Compared to the President's initial request of \$306 billion in defense outlays for FY91, the agreement set FY91 outlays at roughly \$298 billion, \$296 billion for FY92, and \$293 billion for FY93.<sup>86</sup> The major concessions by the Republicans were to agree to new revenues and to take most discretionary reductions in FY 91 in the defense category, while the Democrats had to agree to give up a portion of their "power of the purse" for 3

years (no transfers among discretionary categories for the next 3 years, i.e., no reductions in defense to fund domestic programs) and to accept reductions in domestic programs such as Medicare and farm price- and income-support programs.

The legislation implementing the results of these historic negotiations, known as the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990, also restructured fundamentally the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction legislation of 1985, as well as the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 which apportions budgetary power between the two branches of government and defines congressional budget procedures. The Budget Enforcement Act doubtless will be the worthy object of many dissertations in the future, likely focusing on its effectiveness (or lack thereof) in controlling Federal deficits, or the manner in which it violated the Bush campaign pledge of "no new taxes," ultimately contributing to his political demise.

But for the purposes of this case study, a different point about this Act is of signal importance--it created for the first time in the Republic's history a period of three consecutive fiscal years within which a President and his civilian and military leadership could plan for the future confident of the level of defense appropriations they would receive. This stable environment for FY91, FY92 and FY93, at high but declining levels, provided the Bush administration time to plan and execute an orderly build-down of the nation's cold war military capabilities, with only a few further difficulties from Congress.<sup>87</sup>

The only major change to the administration build-down plan (as subsequently presented with the FY92 defense submission) was the refusal of Congress in the summer of 1992 to reduce the reserve component force structure. To be sure, several other factors in the next 2 years helped to sustain this agreement, notably Cheney's tactics of keeping Congress divided and defensive about members' pet projects, and the significant unemployment induced by the prolonged period of slow growth after the brief recession of 1991. But the budget agreement with the Congress was without doubt one of the most influential factors in administration decision making.

### **Influences of the Gulf War.**

The Gulf War started with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the same day President Bush was in Aspen announcing his plans for the 25 percent reduction in conventional forces. As we have seen, decision making on the basics of the new military strategy and the base force to be created by the 25 percent reductions was completed by then. In fact, it was completed before Cheney's presentation of the package to the budget negotiators on June 19. What influence, then, could the Gulf War have had on executive decision making?

In my judgement it had at least three influences, all of which served to confirm the decisions already taken internally by the administration, but not yet presented to the Congress, and to facilitate their subsequent acceptance by the Congress. Without these influences, it is doubtful that when the final decisions were presented to Congress in January to April 1991 (the FY92. defense submission), administration officials would have presented what they did.

The first influence was through fiscal channels. One very important result of the June-October budget negotiations, was the decision:

not to allow the buildup [and subsequent use] of United States forces in the Persian Gulf to reshape the defense budget dramatically. Instead, budget negotiators agreed to exclude the costs of Operation Desert Shield from the budget limits and to provide funds through supplemental appropriations when needed.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, by placing the funding for the conduct of the war outside the negotiated ceilings for defense for FY91-93, the administration could be assured that its plans for the build-down would not be affected by the unknown costs of the war. There would be no diversion of DOD funds from within the negotiated ceilings for the war effort, an eventuality that might have forced dramatic increases in the pace of the build-down in areas other than those capabilities being readied for the war.<sup>89</sup>

Second, the Gulf War validated the conceptual underpinnings of the new military strategy. After the Gulf War, it can fairly be said that there were no more real debates on the appropriate post-cold war military strategy, either inside the administration or between the administration and the Congress. There were many debates on what type and how many forces were necessary to execute the strategy, and where they should be stationed in peacetime, but none of substance on the national strategy itself (as distinguished from the CINCs' in-theater, operational strategy).

This is not to say that each element of the new strategy, in being validated in the minds of policymakers, succeeded in what it was designed to do. The first element, strategic deterrence and defense, was not really tested in the war, but surveillance capabilities designed for that element of the strategy were used and worked marginally well in identifying Iraqi SCUD launches in a timely manner.<sup>90</sup> The success of the second element, forward presence, and its ability to deter regional instabilities and war, will be debated for years to come. Obviously, Seldom was not deterred. But what would be required to deter in this or other regional crisis situations for which the strategy is designed?<sup>91</sup> Since the answer is not knowable, the debate will

continue. Nonetheless, the need for forward presence as an element of U.S. national strategy is not now in question, the Gulf War having shown its validity in regions of vital U.S. interests.

The third element of the strategy, crisis response, was also validated. Coalition forces, led by U.S. high-technology capabilities, decisively defeated the Iraqi forces in successive air and ground campaigns, while a maritime blockade effectively isolated the battlefield. That said, there were later controversies aplenty about which forces contributed most to the warfighting, arguments which need not be pursued for this case study. The point is that the "base force" performed quite well, helping to undercut anticipated congressional opposition to continued funding of high-tech capabilities in the post-cold war era. Not only was the strategy validated, but also the type of capabilities that executed it.

Further, the number of active forces deployed to the Gulf--427,000--and the amount of U.S. capability that would have represented in the administration's proposed FY95 base force--66 percent of the Army divisions, 50 percent of the Navy carrier battle groups and air wings, 66 percent of the Air Force fighter/attack wings, and 66 percent of the Marine divisions and air wings<sup>92</sup>--indicated to many that the administration's decision to retain capabilities in the base force for two simultaneous regional crises had been prudent. U.S. military participation in operations off Liberia and Bangladesh during the closing days of the Gulf War strengthened this perception.

The administration reinforced the connection between forces and strategy when it presented its decisions for initial consideration shortly after the end of the Gulf War campaign:

In all, we feel the FY92-97 defense program takes our conventional force structure down to a level in the mid-1990s that will be the irreducible minimum needed to support the strategic concepts outlined here and to protect our vital interests . . . I believe that our success in the Persian Gulf was a clear vindication of the central tenets of our new strategy, in particular the need to plan for robust regional threats.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, both the crisis response element of the strategy and the base force to execute it were validated in the Gulf War in a manner that tended to reinforce strongly in most policymakers' minds how the two, of necessity, went together.

But not all policymakers agreed with the administration's decision making, notably Les Aspin of the House Armed Services Committee. For the next 2 years he and his committee staff worked diligently to justify, based on a capabilities-based analysis, a smaller U.S. force structure for the crisis response element of the strategy.<sup>94</sup> In the end, hampered more by the

economic down-turn than by his staff's analysis, he was unsuccessful in persuading his colleagues in the House not to support almost all of the administration's recommendations.

The third way in which the Gulf War influenced administration decisions on the build-down was by the validation of the broad reorganization of the Department of Defense under the earlier Goldwater-Nichols legislation, particularly the issues of unity of command and jointness of combat effort. An earlier section of this case study discussed the influence of the legislation on the role of the Chairman. Here the influence was felt more through the new role and authorities of the unified commander, the CINC, in this case General Schwarzkopf.

In earlier conflicts, with the possible exception of the U.S. operations in Panama in 1988-89, each military service ran its own operations, with a weak central command phasing the operations and dividing them in physical space. Schwarzkopf used the CINCs' new authorities fully--some would say he even added to them. Coalition operations were planned and executed by his command in-theater, not by the Chiefs or individual military departments in Washington. Matters of command, employment of forces, hiring and firing of subordinate commanders, and an iron-fisted control over all logistics and support were the "norm" under Schwarzkopf.<sup>95</sup> And, most important, it succeeded.

The influence this created for administration decision makers was to dilute efforts within the Pentagon after the war to affect further the basic elements of the build-down decisions. To be sure, the services each tried to put the best spin possible in their record in the war, but in fact there were no subsequent changes in the numbers of active divisions, wings, or carrier battle groups requested of Congress for the base force. Nor were there changes in active manpower levels. Subsequently, neither were there any significant changes made by Congress, indicting no successful end-runs by military departments. Jointness and unity were as much respected on the Hill as they were by the senior decision makers who made the decisions within the administration.

### **Summary.**

What then were the major influences that created the Bush administration's post-cold war build-down plan, the new military strategy and the "base force" to execute it? What has been highlighted by this process of tracking the various events in administration decision making?

To answer that question, it should first be noted how well the decisions fared over time and to note whether the influences which created the decisions had any lasting power. With the arrival of the Clinton administration, it is clear that the build-down of U.S. military capabilities after the cold war will be divided into two phases, likely named for the respective Presidents responsible for each. The intent here is to note the

degree to which the intent of the Bush administration decisions on the build-down were followed through, at least to the end of his tenure (the execution of the FY93 budget, roughly until October 1993), or whether they were thwarted, changed, or modified in some substantial way.

In my judgement, the plan has fared remarkably well since its inception in the early spring of 1990. The new military strategy has not been seriously questioned in any of its conceptual underpinnings for the use of conventional forces, and has served quite accurately as the organizing concepts around which forces were arrayed and employed successfully in several regional crises, most notably in Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. The basic strategic concepts of "presence" and "crisis response" are unquestioned today, even though the means to be employed in any situation is always debatable.

This is not to say, however, that every concept within the strategy has received the same level of support, either from academic strategists, or for that matter from the administration and Congress. The concept of "strategic deterrence and defense" is a case in point. As the potential for nuclear confrontation has further decreased since early 1990, in large part due to the administration's aggressive pursuit of further strategic arms control measures,<sup>96</sup> support within both the administration and Congress for the means to implement the concept have changed significantly.<sup>97</sup> A second example is the concept of "reconstitution." It was originally conceived in early 1990 as a means to provide for the re-creation of wholly new combat capability if needed in the instance of global conflict. As that prospect faded in the external security environment, the concept is now considered much less necessary for that purpose, and much more for the purpose of maintaining an efficient and credible industrial base for the provision of high technology military hardware well into the next century.

It can be said in a similar manner that the "base force" as originally designed by the administration has fared equally well, with one notable exception. Both the size of the active component forces and their relative disposition around the globe have turned out to be remarkably similar to that originally envisioned by Powell and the other planners within the Pentagon, both civilian and military. While the original intent has held, residual U.S. forces in Europe will likely be reduced further early in the Clinton phase of the build-down.<sup>98</sup> Even then, however, from the strategic perspective, the adjustment will be in means, rather than ends.

The only major exception to the Bush plan for the "base force" has been the refusal by Congress to reduce U.S. reserve forces by anything close to the plan offered by the administration.<sup>99</sup> In this case it is clear that the external influence (end of the threat of global war) which created this part of the plan was not nearly so strong on congressional



opinions as the contrary influence to preserve jobs in members' states and districts during a period of an economic slowdown and a national election.

Turning now to the major influences, it appears, without reference to intensity or priority, that the following were dominant in the minds and actions of administration decision makers as the events unfolded.

*The Changing External Security Environment.* Obviously fundamental changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe drove the decision-making processes within the Bush administration. It is, after all, supposed to happen that way! Events described earlier detail the extent to which the analysis of the NSR-12 review in the White House, and the individual study groups under Powell and Wolfowitz, were focused precisely on responding to and further influencing these events.

*A Like-Minded View of Changing Circumstances by Senior Members of the Bush Administration.* Even though external events were strongly influential, important also is the fact that they were interpreted in remarkably similar manner by the very small and somewhat closed group of individuals that made the major decisions in the administration's build-down plan.<sup>100</sup> There does not appear to have been any significant disagreements among administration officials on interpreting external events as they apply to decision making for the build-down (this does not include crisis decision making by the same group during the same period). This does not imply that all of the like-minded perceptions were correct by some criteria (the common, but cautious view of the reversibility of changes in Russia and Eastern Europe may be one that was not), but simply that they were quite similar, even when arrived at independently. More important, the commonality of view also extended to what the administration needed to do in response to these changes, perhaps best documented publicly in general terms in the President's strategy report to Congress of March 1990. Such common view facilitates dealing with Congress as well as with the various power baronies of the Pentagon, notably the military departments.

It is not clear why so much commonality of perception prevailed. The type of closely-held decision process used clearly helped, but beyond that we must speculate.<sup>101</sup> Likely causes would be common sources of intelligence (even though all of these people had independent access to other sources, especially foreign ones), and, except for Scowcroft, common experiences in senior positions in previous administrations dealing with the same foreign actors and issues.<sup>102</sup>

*Congressional Views of External Changes.* Until Senator Nunn's March-April speeches, the administration did not really have to be too concerned about the proposals of individual members of Congress, who naturally took quite different views from one another as to the size and pace of the anticipated

build-down and where the peace dividend was to be applied. Nor could the administration respond in any detail, since it had not yet finished its own planning. But with Nunn's presentations, it was apparent that even defense supporters in Congress were willing to consider steeper reductions than the administration thought prudent. In the interbranch context, which institution was going to be in the lead in the build-down also became an issue. Cheney, in particular, was keenly aware of the political dangers involved for the administration, as well as for his department, and sensitive to the need to "have a good story to tell to the members of Congress."<sup>103</sup> Even a casual reading of the administration's testimonies for FY92 (January-April 1991), particularly those of Cheney, Powell and Wolfowitz, shows the unusual degree to which they reacted to these concerns, all the more unusual because these testimonies were prepared and delivered simultaneous to the conduct of the Gulf War. But the fact remains, administration decision makers were keenly aware of, and influenced by, the potential of independent, and undesirable, congressional action.

*Domestic Economic Influences.* There can be no doubt that executive decision makers, as well as leaders in both institutions party to this issue of building down America's defenses, were very strongly--perhaps most strongly--influenced by domestic economic problems. The influences varied over time.

As the Bush administration came in office in early 1989, they brought a consensus that "this government is financially broke," and priority must be placed on reducing the twin deficits of budget and trade. Later in 1990 it was the ballooning Federal deficit and the likelihood of sequestration that was unacceptable for both branches. Still later in 1991, after the negotiated Budget Act, the job losses and slow recovery in the domestic economy made the Congress reluctant to fight for further defense reductions in FY92, or even to authorize some of the administration's planned reductions for FY92 and FY93.

Even after the Budget Act of 1990 defused this issue for a time, the influence from Congress continued as was noted earlier in the section on the Gulf War. The subsequent Aspin-Powell debate (summer 1992) over capability- versus threat-based force structures was in one sense a continuation of the "who is in charge of the build-down" issue. More fundamentally, however, it was a replay of the differing partisan views on deficit reduction and early posturing for the national campaign--identifying differences in the party's approaches to defense, with the Democrats displaying a less expensive option. As such, it maintained continuing pressure on the administration, however successfully countered, to review the original decisions.

*A Strong Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.* The post-World War II history of attempts by both administrations and congresses to impose some form of unity and centralized direction on the America's military departments shows few successes until 1986.<sup>104</sup> This is all the more true in periods of declining resources for

defense. However, for the executive decisions that are the object of this case study, that history changed dramatically. Powell's influence, both personally and institutionally, in the shaping of these decisions by a unified military response was remarkably strong.

Obviously the various aspects of the influence of a "strong Chairman" on executive decision making cannot be separated one from another. But further identification of how this influence was manifested is possible, and helpful for these conclusions.

First was Powell's unique strategic vision. As we have seen, Powell had extensive experiences with the changing world scene well before becoming Chairman. Never before has the nation had a Chairman who had served as National Security Advisor to the President, much less during a period such as 1987-89. He had a strategic vision that assigned a role to the nation in the future world, and which included many of the means to fulfill that role--continuing alliances, deepening economic interdependence with other democracies, negotiating a smaller nuclear umbrella, keeping superior maritime capabilities and ready fighting forces to project power when needed, and producing a "much smaller force" that will cost "much less money."<sup>105</sup>

In particular, this vision allowed him, more quickly than most of his uniformed contemporaries, to move beyond the Soviet threat as the basis for force planning, and to arrive at a new strategy, new force level, and pace of build-down that were appropriate to the changing world and had a chance of being supported in Congress. While their limited vision caused many in uniform to remain in the risk minimization mode, Powell realized the nation had quickly discounted future risks coming from the cold war, and he moved on with a vision to minimize costs consistent with the reduced capabilities of a residual superpower.<sup>106</sup>

Historians will debate the accuracy of his vision, but the importance for this case study on decision making is that it existed, with clarity, and that he effectively used it and its further development within the Pentagon to create "that picture of future changes desired by government elites."<sup>107</sup>

Second, Powell's influence was manifested through the strengthened institutional role of the Chairman. Historians correctly remind us of the "symbiotic relationship between strategic vision and decisive authority,"<sup>108</sup> each insufficient without the other, even more so in the policy processes within the executive branch. But in this case Powell also had the "decisive authority" in terms of the strengthened institutional role mandated in the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. Relationships between the Chairman and the other Joint Chiefs were simply different than they had ever been before, with the service Chiefs now unable to use an institutional role to force incorporation of their views. Given the differences in recent

professional experiences, as well as Powell's standing in the Bush administration, there was a understandable inclination toward nonconfrontation. And, Powell needed to balance the Chiefs' views with those of the Unified Commanders-in-Chief, who also received via the Goldwater-Nichols legislation greatly strengthened positions. The service Chiefs' views were now considered in this broader context on the merit of their content, with the Chairman's advice to political leaders remaining singular, except as their views were incorporated into his.<sup>109</sup>

Third, and last, Powell's influence was manifested in a unified strategy with which he avoided the problem he had observed so closely while serving as Weinberger's military assistant during the Reagan era buildup of U.S. defense capabilities--the autonomy of the services manifested in separate military strategies for which each justified and built forces largely unintegrated with each other. This was also the means by which they effectively communicated their needs to parochial supporters on the Hill.<sup>110</sup>

By the time the first crisis of the post-cold war era arrived, actually only a few months into the era, Powell and the Joint Staff had developed the new, unified military strategy, which was executed forcefully by the unified commanders involved, particularly Schwarzkopf in Central Command. As we have seen, these events in the Gulf War validated, both within the military profession and to the general public, the conceptual underpinnings of the new military strategy and the enhanced role of joint, unified commanders waging theater campaigns.

Shortly thereafter, the White House published an outline of the new defense strategy in the Bush administration's second report to Congress on national security strategy (August 1991). Powell and his staff subsequently published an unclassified version of the complete military strategy in time for administration testimony for FY93 (January 1992). This intentional declassification of the strategy for more effective public communications was the last step in the series of events that effectively ended the era of individual service strategies.

Of course, the early relief by the Secretary of Defense of one of the service Chiefs for publicly advocating his service's role in the Gulf War at the expense of the joint effort only reinforced the joint approach Powell and the unified commanders had taken. It is not by coincidence that the post-Gulf War strategies" of each service now reflect most strongly their contribution to joint warfare, rather than the unintegrated approach of the 1980s, the last era of service autonomy in such matters."<sup>111</sup>

Having discussed the major influences on executive decision making, it would also be helpful to discuss those influences that research did not show to be as strong as hypothesized. The first is the role played by the traditional decision-making process of the Pentagon, the PPBS. It was not influential because these

decisions were of a planning nature, whereas the PPBS is designed for the primary purpose of programming and budgeting, not planning. Sound cost-effectiveness analysis cannot be done until the missions for which military force is to be used have been identified and their scope delineated. And that was being done for the first time in the post-cold war era by the study groups under Powell and Wolfowitz.

Concluding this does not mean the PPBS was not used during this period. To be sure, meetings were scheduled and the right people attended, guidance was issued and revised as the budget negotiations came to fruition, and the services and defense agencies did produce the programs and budgets necessary to implement the plans. But the point is the decisions were the plans, which preceded the use of the PPBS for their implementation. As one attendee put it, "The DPRB meetings were rather anti-climatic, a time for expected speeches for or against decisions already made. Really, we could have done without most of them."<sup>112</sup>

The second decision-making system that was not influential was that of the National Security Council. The system implemented early in the Bush administration called for a hierarchy of interagency committees to work crises and policy issues requiring Presidential involvement, culminating with the Deputies Committee, chaired by Scowcroft's deputy, Robert Gates, and the National Security Council itself, chaired by the President.<sup>113</sup> There appears to have been no meetings of these groups to consider the strategy and force structure decisions associated with the build-down of U.S. forces during this period.

Two factors contributed to this. The first was the pace of events already transpiring within the NSC system. It was simply jammed with issues from several sets of arms control negotiations (START, CFE, CSCE, and the Chemical Weapons Convention to note but four) and other issues flowing from the end of the cold war (reunification of Germany, reorientation of NATO), as well as the military crises in Panama and later in the Gulf. The other reason is seen in the nature of the decisions being made--centered within one cabinet department and viewed by some of the senior decision makers as part of a larger domestic economic problem, which are not the type decision normally taken to the NSC.<sup>114</sup>

Again as with the PPBS, not too much should be made of this conclusion. The right people made the decisions, and all the research shows they made them for what they perceived to be the correct reasons.

#### **ENDNOTES**

1. Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making" in *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, JAI Press,

Inc., 1985, pp. 21-58.

2. President George Bush, Address to the Aspen Institute, Aspen, Colorado, August 2, 1992, White House Press Office, mimeograph, p. 2.

3. George and McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," p. 35.

4. Richard Cheney, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1991, p. x.

5. Admiral William Crowe, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *1989 Joint Military Net Assessment*, Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, May 1989, pp. ES-1 through ES-12.

6. Paul Y. Hammond, "Origins of NSC-68" in *Strategy, Politics and Defense Budgets* by Warner Schilling, Paul Hammond, and Glenn Snyder, New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, pp. 300-326.

7. William Crowe, Chairman, p. ES-2.

8. General Colin Powell, Chairman, JCS, *National Military Strategy of the United States*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992, p. 6.

9. Richard Cheney, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, February 21, 1991, *Reuter* transcript, p. 9.

10. Lewis Libby, "Remarks on Shaping U.S. Defense Strategy: Persistent Challenges and Enduring Strengths," in *America's Role in a Changing World*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Adelphi Paper 257*, Winter 1990/91, pp. 64-76.

11. General George Butler, "Adjusting to Post-Cold War Strategic Realities," *Parameters*, Spring 1991, pp. 2-9.

12. Colonel Mike Hayden, USAF, Director, Defense Policy, NSC, and Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, interview by author, December 11, 1992, Washington, DC.

13. The bulk of the administration testimony occurred during the presentation of the FY92-97 defense plan, January through April of 1991. Testifying in addition to Cheney and Powell were Paul Wolfowitz, the Under Secretary for Policy; Donald Atwood, the Deputy Secretary; R. Lewis Libby, Principal Assistant Secretary to Wolfowitz for Resources and Strategy; Shawn O'Keefe, DOD Comptroller; and Admiral David Jeremiah, Vice Chairman, JCS, as well as the Service Secretaries and the ranking military Chief of each service.

14. Colin Powell, *National Military Strategy*, p. 7.

15. For a review of this aspect of internal DOD decision making on the base force, see Leslie Lewis, C. Robert Roll, and John Meyer, "Assessing the Structure and Mix of Future Active and Reserve Forces: Assessment of Policies and Practices for Implementing the Total Force Policy," Washington, DC: Rand Corporation, National Defense Research Institute, 1992.

16. Colin Powell, *National Military Strategy*, pp. 8-10.

17. Colin Powell, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, February 21, 1991, *Reuters* transcript, p. 23.

18. See Appendix A for a diagram of the various force packages arrayed by mission and geographic focus.

19. Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, testimony before the Senate Committee on the Armed Services, April 11, 1991 (mimeographed), pp. 1-3.

20. Colin Powell, *National Military Strategy*, pp. 24-25.

21. Colin Powell's views put him at odds with the service Chiefs who in the early fall of 1989 saw no need to reduce forces yet, and to a lesser degree with Secretary Cheney who genuinely was concerned before the fall of the Berlin Wall not to respond too precipitously to domestic calls for a peace dividend. General Colin Powell, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, interview by author, February 23, 1993, Washington, DC.

22. Colin Powell, "National Security Challenges in the 1990's: The Future Ain't What It Used To Be," speech given at the Army War College, May 16, 1989, later published in *Army*, July 1989, pp. 12-14.

23. Colin Powell, interview.

24. Further insight was given by Powell to another military audience at Annapolis almost 2 years later. As reported in the *Proceedings* of the Naval Institute (July 1992), Powell described his experiences at the NSC, 1987-89, as follows:

In the course of those two years, I participated in three summit meetings with Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev. With each new meeting it became clearer to me that President Gorbachev was deadly serious about restructuring the Soviet Union. He convinced me that he had come to the realization that the Soviet Union was broken. It was not ready for the 21st century, and only the most fundamental sort of change would make it ready. I recall two particular meetings with Mr Gorbachev. In one with Secretary of State Schultz

present in Moscow, Mr Gorbachev said, "I'm not playing a game. This is for real. I'm going to work as hard as I can for as long as I can to bring these changes about, and whenever I step off that stage, what I do at that point will be irreversible-they will not be able to go back."

Then in December 1988, a few weeks before the end of the Reagan administration, Mr. Gorbachev came to New York and gave a historic speech at the United Nations to announce-unilaterally, without concessions on our part that the Soviet Union would reduce its armed forces by 500,000 troops. Then he came over to Governor's Island to meet with President Reagan and President-elect Bush. He looked across the table and said: "Some of your advisors think this is a game, but it is not a game, it is for real. It is real revolution. People cheered when I announced the revolution in 1986. The cheering was not so loud in 1987. Now it's 1988, and the cheering has ended. The people don't like the revolution. It is here. It is going to be difficult and you will see that I am playing real politics and I am going to change my country in a way that no one could have imagined."

At that point I became convinced that he was deadly serious.

25. The Goldwater-Nichols legislation (Public Law 99-433, October 1, 1986) gave the Chairman a number of new authorities which altered fundamentally the previous relationships among the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The most important changes made the Chairman alone (rather than the corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff) the "principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense"; provided the Chairman with a Vice Chairman (which meant that individual Service Chiefs would no longer serve as acting Chairman in his absence); gave the Chairman singular "authority, control and direction over the Joint Staff"; and gave the Chairman significant new authorities in the defense PPBS, including setting priorities among the CINCs' requirements and evaluating for the Secretary of Defense the proposed service programs, recommending changes where needed to conform to the CINCs' needs. For further detail see, Don M. Snider, "DOD Reorganization, Part 1, New Imperatives," *Parameters*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, September 1987, pp. 88-100.

26. Some closely-held work planning for an unexpected future had been initiated in 1988 by Admiral Crowe and the J-5, Lieutenant General Butler, along with a small group of "trusted agents" from the services and the Joint Staff. It had focused initially on the implications for U.S. strategic forces of the ongoing START I negotiations, branching out later to consider also future needs for conventional capabilities after the



anticipated CFE agreement. These players and their work were quickly folded into the new J/5 and J/8 efforts.

27. Colin Powell, "Dealing With the Changes," *Proceedings*, July 1992, p. 12.

28. Colin Powell, interview.

29. This was an often repeated phrase in the Carlucci-Powell NSC staff. Powell most often amplified the idea with examples of Reagan-era policies toward the Contras developed both within the administration and by the Speaker of the House-- ineffective policies without the necessary inter-branch consensus.

30. Colin Powell, interview.

31. The theme of "enduring principles, realities, and defense needs" was used often by Powell to convey his view of the 1990s to the public during this period of decision making, especially as Congress was asking for more rapid reductions in defense. See his speech at the National Press Club, Washington, DC, June 22, 1990.

32. This was a common theme from the senior decision makers interviewed, including the uniformed military. However, it is not a unanimous view.

33. Colin Powell, interview.

34. Richard Cheney, after-dinner remarks, Conference on Strategy in Periods of Transition, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, February 25, 1993, author's notes.

35. General Larry D. Welsh, USAF, Ret., interview by author, January 28, 1993, Washington, DC.

36. *Idem.*

37. Larry D. Welch, interview.

38. *Idem.*

39. The Air Force experience after the Vietnam War was positive, since they ended with an experienced pilot force second to none. They did not want to now lose this force. The Army experience was quite different, coming out of Vietnam essentially without a non-commissioned officer corps in its combat arms. After taking 15 years to rebuild that corps, the Army also placed priority on a pace of build-down that would preserve those investments in human capital.

40. General Carl Vuono, USA, Ret., interview by author, January 21, 1993, Washington, DC.

41. The Army leaders were keenly aware that after Goldwater-Nichols legislation their chances of retaining the forces needed overseas to defend future U.S. interests would be greatly enhanced if the regional CINCs could be brought on board to support the need.

42. Because of its manpower training and replacement policies, the Army, much more than the other services, considered the pace of reductions as the critical variable in planning for the build-down. Air Force and Navy combatant forces are build around major items of equipment and tend to rotate to and from the continental United States with that equipment, e.g., an aircraft carrier or a tactical fighter squadron. In contrast, Army combatant forces are manpower intensive, with even small units having a large range of individual military specialties, e.g., crew-served weapons operator or anti-aircraft missile repairman. In peacetime, each of these specialties is managed on a worldwide basis, with individual soldiers rotated among the "training base" and combat units in the United States, and units overseas. The balance in this worldwide rotational scheme, which exists uniquely for each military specialty, is particularly fragile to nonincremental changes.

43. Admiral Carl Trost, USN, Ret., interview by author, February 8, 1993, Washington, DC.

44. This quote is intentionally unattributed, and refers more to decisions on the major components of the base force than to the tens, and even hundreds, of billions of dollars the services still allocated after these initial decisions were made.

45. *Idem.*

46. Richard Cheney was not confirmed as the Secretary of Defense until March 17, 1989.

47. The term "build-down" gained prominence during the multilateral negotiations leading to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, December 1987, connoting controlled, step-by-step, simultaneous reductions by both sides, assuring stability and no advantage during the reductions.

48. The phrase came from Wolfowitz at the time. A similar concept has subsequently been elaborated by Charles Krauthammer in "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, America and the World edition, 1991.

49. This last understanding demonstrates the continued strong influence of a line of strategic thinking within the defense community, most recently called the "discriminate deterrence" school, highlighted in 1988 by the Ikle-Wholstetter Commission on Integrated, Long-Term Strategy. For a review of this school of thought, and Wolfowitz's association with it, see

*On Not Confusing Ourselves: Essays on National Security Strategy in Honor of Albert & Roberta Wohlstetter*, Andrew W. Marshall, et al, eds., Boulder: Westview Press, 1991, especially Chapter 12.

50. Don M. Snider, *The National Security Strategy. Documenting Strategic Vision*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992, pp. 5-6.

51. The Goldwater-Nichols legislation also established a statutory requirement for the President to report to the Congress early each year on national security strategy to be pursued with the resources requested in the administration's annual budget submission. This was an attempt, primarily by Senator Nunn, to force a visible, coherent linkage between strategy and resources in the hopes of elevating the attention of his colleagues to strategic issues worthy of the Senate. The first Bush report was drafted in the summer of 1989 from the results of the early interagency reviews, including NSR-12, but was not published until March 1990 due to the very rapid changes occurring in Eastern Europe.

52. Lieutenant General Dale Vesser, USA, Ret., interviews by author, October 30 and November 12, 1990.

53. Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, interview by author, February 2, 1993, Washington, DC.

54. For examples of early formulations of what eventually was folded into Powell's publication, *The National Military Strategy of the United States*, see Wolfowitz's testimony on strategic warning before the Senate Armed Services Committee, December 12, 1989; his testimony on NATO before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May 9, 1990; or his testimony on the new defense strategy before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, April 11, 1991.

55. Wolfowitz, interview.

56. Mr. Mike Donley, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management, interview by author, October 27, 1992.

57. Wolfowitz, interview.

58. Michael Hayden, interview.

59. Stephen Daggett, "The FY1991 Budget Debate: How Much for Defense?" *CRS Issue Brief IB90061*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 17, 1990, Archives, CRS-1.

60. Mark Morrow and Robert Ropelewski, "Peace Dividend Elusive in FY 91 Defense Budget," *Armed Forces Journal International*, March 1990, pp. 9-15.

61. For an excellent analysis of the trends and causes leading to the situation where "claims on the budget are so powerful that they cannot be denied despite the inadequacy of resources to pay for them and when guardians of the public purse are so weak that they cannot ration spending," see Allen Schick, *The Capacity to Budget*, Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press, 1990, especially Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

62. Stephen Daggett, "The FY 1991 Budget Debate. . ."

63. Richard Cheney, speech to the United Jewish Appeal, as reported in Pat Towell, "House Democrats Jockeying: Save Deep Cuts for Later," *Congressional Quarterly*, March 17, 1990, pp. 843-844.

64. The examples and numbers used within the caucus were later published in Towell, p. 843.

65. Dr. Clark Murdock, Special Assistant to Rep Les Aspin, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, interview by author, November 2, 1992, Washington', DC.

66. Major General John Robinson, interview by author, December 26, 1992, Washington DC.

67. For a representative example of this theme, see "National Security in the 1990s: Defining a New Basis for U.S. Military Forces," speech by Representative Aspin before the Atlantic Council of the United States, House Armed Services Committee, mimeograph, January 6, 1992.

68. Senator Sam Nunn's speeches were reprinted from the Congressional Record in a separate volume, *Nunn 1990: A New Military Strategy*, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1990. His recommended military strategy was the third speech, April 19, 1990, pp. 41-60 in the referenced volume.

69. Notwithstanding some of the condescending language, it was considered a "helpful message." Paul D. Wolfowitz, interview.

70. Pat Towell, "Nunn Weighs in With a Call For New Planning, Cuts," *Congressional Quarterly*, April 21, 1990, p. 1206.

71. Mr Robert Howard, Associate Director for National Security, OMB, interview by author, December 1, 1992, Washington, DC. Other senior officials interviewed expressed the same view, e.g., Powell noted, "I knew that defending the new strategy and base force was going to be very tough—we were like a tight rope walker trying to dance between the poles without falling off."

72. See Chapter 3 of *Nunn 1990* for details of these proposals.

73. Bob Woodward, "Making Choices: Bush's Economic Record," third of three articles, *The Washington Post*, October 6, 1992, p. A 14.

74. Any time the negotiators were discussing the defense appropriation, the administration was represented by the President's National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, and by Secretary Cheney. Usually accompanying them were Richard Darman, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and his Associate Director Bob Howard, and Arnold Kanter from the NSC Staff (Howard interview, December 1, 1992, Washington DC).

75. Pat Towell, "Cheney's Latest Plan Shows Only Part of the Ax Blade," *Congressional Quarterly*, June 23, 1990, p. 1975.

76. Richard Darman suggested various budget reduction packages, as well as "revenue enhancers," to the President for his cabinet departments to refine for presentation at the negotiations. In addition to Cheney's proposal, Democratic negotiators from the Senate pushed Nunn's plan, while House members presented several options, the most prominent by Bill Kaufmann of Brookings. (Howard, interview.)

77. Richard Cheney, remarks at U.S. Army War College.

78. Towell, "Cheney's Latest Plan. . ."

79. *Idem.*

80. Daggett, p. CRS-7.

81. Michael Miller and William Meyers, "Savings from a 25 Percent Reduction in the Defense Department's Forces," CBO Staff Memorandum, mimeograph copy, Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, June 1990, pp. 1-6.

82. Daggett.

83. Towell, "Cheney's Latest Plan...", p. 1974.

84. An initial agreement was reached on September 30, but rejected in the House on October 5, throwing the federal bureaucracy into a "necessary services only" mode until another agreement could be hammered out on October 27. By then lawmakers had been forced to stay in session closer to the fall elections than any time since World War II. See George Hager, "One Outcome of Budget Package: Higher Deficits on the Way," *Congressional Quarterly*, November 3, 1990, pp. 3710-3713.

85. Stephen Daggett, "The FY 1991 Budget Debate...", pp. CRS 10-1 2.

86. The final numbers used for defense (budget authority and

outlays) in the October agreement were those proposed by Senator Nunn on the floor of the Senate back on April 20, some 5 months earlier! At a press conference after the final agreement, Richard Darman credited Nunn as the source and discussed a complex set of compromises that led to their use, the principal ones being the exclusion of DESERT SHIELD costs from the defense ceilings (the Democrats gave) and the acceptance of a 3-year period of set levels for defense rather than 5 years (the administration gave).

We had wanted five-year numbers fixed in defense. The price we would have had to pay for five years fixed would have been too low a defense number. We decided consciously that we would rather take three years at the outer limit of what we find acceptable and then allow for a fair competition for resources in the fourth and fifth year within the discretionary overall cap-that's right, within the overall cap-rather than settle at this stage for what would have had to have been a defense number that the President could not have supported as consistent with his judgement of our national security interests.

Mimeograph copy of Nunn letter to Mitchell and Dole, October 2, 1990, and transcript of Darman press conference, received in Howard interview, OMB, December 2, 1992.

87. Cheney would later note in response to this author's question, "The agreement really held for only two years. In FY92 we had to offer further reductions and threaten a Presidential veto of the entire appropriations bill to get it passed, which reminds us all once again that a future Congress cannot be bound by prior agreements." Cheney remarks at U.S. Army War College.

88. Daggett, "The FY 1991 Budget Debate. . .," p. CRS-8.

89. Fortunately, through an immense diplomatic effort by the administration, ably supported by the Congress, foreign nations picked up the tab for the majority of the war's costs. Of the estimated \$61 billion cost of the war, allied contributions paid for \$54 billion, leaving only \$7 billion to come from U.S. sources. See *Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense*, Department of Defense, May 1992, p. 2-C.

90. Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, Final Report to Congress*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1992, pp. 775-776.

91. For two views on this issue see: Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence and Compliance in the Gulf, 1990-1991: A Failed or Impossible Task?", *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2, Fall 1992, pp. 147-179; and Chapters 2-4 of Michael Mazarr, Don Snider, and James Blackwell Jr., *Desert Storm: The Gulf War and What We Learned*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1993.

92. John M. Collins, "US Force Reductions: Capabilities versus Requirements," Congressional Research Service, Report for Congress, 92-43-S, January 8, 1992, p. 12.

93. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993*, 102d Cong., 1st sess., testimony by Paul D. Wolfowitz, April 11, 1991, pp. 560-561.

94. Les Aspin, "An Approach to Sizing American Conventional Forces for the Post-Soviet Era," January 24, 1992, and "Four Illustrative Options," February 25, 1992, both distributed by the House Committee on Armed Services, mimeographed.

95. These findings are repeated in several official studies of the Gulf War, as well as in the flood of memoirs it produced. For example, see the report of the House Armed Services Committee, *Defense for a New Era*, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992, pp. 41-42; Department, of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict. Final Report to Congress*, U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1991, Chapters 5 and 8.

96. For a brief review of these efforts see *Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993, pp. 14-16 and 67-69.

97. As demonstrated by the Missile Defense Act of 1991, a limited strategic defense program initially enjoyed relatively widespread support on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers. (See "Key Votes of 1991," *Congressional Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 52, December 28, 1991, p. 3765, pp. 3774-3775.) Within one year, however, this support for a limited national strategic defense system had been significantly eroded. During the FY93 Defense Authorization process, both chambers acted to significantly reduce SDI spending from \$5.4 billion to \$4.0 billion and to shift its focus away from the national system envisioned in the Missile Defense Act to a theater missile defense system to protect U.S. crisis response forces when deployed overseas.

98. For one proposal, see Don M. Snider, "U.S. Military Forces in Europe: How Low Can We Go?", *Survival*, Winter 1992-1993, pp. 24-39.

99. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, "FY93 Defense Authorization Act, House-Senate Conference, Summary of Major Actions," Washington, DC: House Armed Services Committee, October 1, 1992, pp. 17-20.

100. That small group would include Cheney, Powell, Wolfowitz, and perhaps O'Keefe, in the Pentagon; Baker, Bartholomew, and Ross at State; Scowcroft, Gates and Kanter on

the NSC; and, of course, the President.

101. Wolfowitz attributes this to "process," in that the very close-hold nature of the two initial studies allowed administration officials to examine issues and change positions.

102. Cheney supports this idea, noting previous, mutual experiences in the Ford and Reagan administrations.

A lot was unstated in our work [in the Bush administration] since Brent, Jim and I had all worked together over the years. Brent was in Ford's White House when I was chief of staff there. I hired Jim Baker to run Ford's reelection campaign. And I was the minority leader in the House during the Reagan years when Jim was in the White House and Treasury, and Bush was the Vice President. Colin was in there for a time also as the National Security Advisor.

Cheney, remarks at U.S. Army War College.

103. Howard interview, Wolfowitz interview, and Cheney remarks, U.S. Army War College.

104. The best, recent treatment of attempts to harness service autonomy, especially as it pertains to conflict in the 21st century is C. Kenneth Allard, *Command, Control, and the Common Defense*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991, especially Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

105. Powell made several speeches early in his tenure in which he "gazed into the crystal ball" to share his vision. References here are from a speech to civic leaders on March 29, 1990, the Broadmoor Hotel, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

106. The historical alternation of emphasis in U.S. defense policy between risk-minimization and cost-minimization is amplified in David Jablonsky, "Strategic Vision and Presidential Authority in the Post-Cold War Era," *Parameters*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, Winter 1991-1992, p. 2.

107. *Ibid.*

108. *Idem.*

109. Of course, the Goldwater-Nichols legislation created the option for any service Chief to request through the Chairman to present his views directly to the Secretary of Defense or to the Commander-in-Chief (the President). During the decisions on the new military strategy and the base force, the Chiefs met frequently with the Secretary of Defense as a group, normally weekly. There appears to be no record of any Chief asking to meet with the President to present views separate from those of the Chairman.



110. For an example of policies designed, and partially implemented, to correct this problem of excessive service autonomy in strategy formulation, see Chapter 1 of President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, *A Quest for Excellence-Final Report to the President*, Washington, DC, White House printing, June 1986, pp. 9-31.

111. During 1991-92 each of the services published a new, unclassified service "strategy": "Global Power, Global Reach" by the Air Force; "From the Sea" by the Navy; and "Strategic Response" by the Army.

112. Welch, interview.

113. Each administration designs the decision-making system of the National Security Council to fit the needs of the President and his style of leadership/management. The Bush administration published unclassified guidance for their approach in NSDD#1, January 20, 1989. For a discussion of different approaches of other administrations, see Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, *Decisions of the Highest Order. Perspectives on the National Security Council*, Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1988.

114. Powell offers an alternative view, "There was no NSC system then." Powell, interview.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DON M. SNIDER is Deputy Director, Political Military Studies, at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He joined the Center in March 1990 when he retired from active duty. Since 1980 he has specialized in assignments related to military strategy and defense policy, serving consecutively as Chief of Plans for the Theater Army in Europe; Joint Planner for the Army Chief of Staff; Deputy Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy on the Army Staff; and Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution. He then joined the staff of the National Security Council in the White House in 1987 as Director, Defense Policy, serving in both the Reagan and Bush administrations. Within the Center, he specializes in national security strategy, defense policy and programs, military strategy, and European security issues. His publications include: a CSIS Panel Report, *A New Military Strategy for the 1990s: Implications for Capabilities and Acquisition*, and *The Gulf War. Military Lessons Learned*.

# APPENDIX A

## ATLANTIC

- Underwrites Stability/Vital Interests in EUR, ME and SWA
- Alliance Commitments
- Primarily Heavy Forces
- Bulk of Reserves
- Available to Other Regions

### FORWARD PRESENCE

#### Europe/Southwest Asia

1 Corps/2 Div.  
3.6 TFW  
2 CVBG  
2 ARG



- prepositioned material

### CRISIS RESPONSE

#### CONUS

3 AC/6 RC div.  
2 AC/11 RC TFW  
4 CVBG  
MEF (-)



### RECONSTITUTION

2 Cadre Div.  
Frigates

## PACIFIC

- Economy of Force Theater
- Major Pacific Power and Key Stabilizing Influence
- Protect U.S. Interests in Pacific Region to Include SEA and Indian Ocean

### FORWARD PRESENCE

#### Korea

1 Div. (-); 1-2 TFW

#### Japan

1-2 TFW

MEF (-)

1 CVBG; 1 ARG



### CRISIS RESPONSE

#### Hawaii/Alaska

1 Div. (+)

TFW

CONUS=5 CVBG



## CONTINGENCY

- Initial Response for Some Crises
- Responses to Unexpected
- Crisis Limited in Scope and Time
- Response for LATAM/SubSah AF/Islands
- Rapidly Deployable/Flexible Forces
- Mostly Active Forces: Limited Reserves

### CRISIS RESPONSE

5 Div.

7 TFWs

ATL & PAC Naval Forces

MEF (-)

Special Ops Forces



Agency/Event	1989					1990					1991										
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	
Congress							FY 91 Defense Budget Submitted		Mar. 21, '92 Hum Speeches Published	Apr. 19, '90 Aspin Memo on 2510	May 18 Congress EX Budget Negotiations			Aug. 2 President Aspin Speech	Sep. 30 Agreement	Oct. 5 House Rejection	Nov. 5 President sign BA 1990	Dec. 21, '92 Aspin Speeches	Jan. 8		
White House					Chairman, Brief Bush Strategy/Force Concepts					Chairman, Brief to Congress	Chairman, Brief to Congress	Chairman, Brief to Congress									
OSD					Powell Brief "View of 1990's"			Planning Phase						Aug. 5 OSD DPA			Budgeting				
CJCS		45 J8 Out Study	30 Powell to CJCS				OSD (dsm) develops Times Strategy Times Forces			DRPA Mgrs - Force Options											
CINCS					CJCS, J8 "View of 1990's Study"					Apr. 14-15, 21-22											
SJCS																					
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	
	1989					1990					1991										

Decision on FY'91 Strategy

Decision on the JINMA, No Planning Scenario

Decision on N.M.S. Response to Japan

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