The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 22
Number 1 *Parameters 1992*

Article 2

7-4-1992

At This Critcal Jucture...

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At this Critical Juncture . . .

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Every new State Department employee is given two rubber stamps. One is to be used when the department opposes a proposal. It says "Now is not the time . . . ." The other is to be used when the department is advocating a change in policy, and it says "At this critical juncture in history . . . ."

Surely in every period in history commentators have thought themselves to be at a critical juncture, a period of great moment, a time that future historians would long note and examine. Actually, however, there are not many periods in the history of the international order when significant change does occur. I offer a few nominees with the cultural bias of the European-American perspective:

- 1789, when the ideas of rule by the people were flowering in the French Revolution and in what Catherine Drinker Bowen called the "Miracle at Philadelphia," the American Constitutional Convention.
- 1815, when the ancient royal order of Europe was redrawn by Metternich and the Congress of Vienna.
- 1914, when, as Barbara Tuchman noted, the "Proud Tower" of the royal houses of central and eastern Europe began their fall into the cataclysm that was the First World War.
- 1945, when two great wars ended and, as Churchill said the next year, the Iron Curtain descended and froze the world into bipolar conflict.

1991, Unfreezing the World Order

I would nominate for consideration by future historians the years 1990-1991 as another watershed in history, a time when one era ended and another began. We know the period that closed, the Cold War. We do not yet know the name by which we will call the new world order. As in 1945, when the war in the Pacific and the war in Europe ended, two wars also concluded in 1991. Their conclusion and the way in which they were fought and won by the United States will shape the period ahead.

No doubt my nomination of 1991 is influenced by my own personal experience. For I was privileged personally to see some of the seminal events of 1990 and 1991 and to play a very small role in them. I recall standing in a crowd of Muscovites outside the Kremlin walls on a cold night in 1990 as they waited to see what the Supreme Soviet would do with President Gorbachev's proposal for a constitutional amendment ending the "leading role of the Communist Party." The meeting had run on for hours beyond its scheduled termination, but still the people waited. Finally, the narrow gate opened and the long black Zil limousines shot out. The word spread through the crowd: the Party was separated from the State. All around me the Muscovites said, "Demokratsiya."

Months later, in 1991, and a few blocks away at the Russian White House, the Party would come to a crashing end on the barricades, where it was born. The Iron Curtain had already been torn asunder, and the Warsaw Pact had dissolved owing to the courage and perseverance of the people of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Germany. In the weeks that followed the aborted coup, the Soviet Union itself came to an end, and with it the Cold War. That war had lasted 45 years, taking a toll not yet tallied but certainly amounting to trillions of dollars in opportunity costs and hundreds of thousands of dead in proxy wars and hot skirmishes in every theater of the world.

I also had the opportunity to fly around the Persian Gulf theater on the day the UN Security Council passed the resolution authorizing the use of all means necessary to liberate Kuwait. During that long day in the desert I spoke to airmen at an A-10 base, Marines at a forward artillery position, and troopers of the 101st Airborne Division. I was going to tell them "why we may have to fight," but they already knew why and just wanted to know when. They knew why—that was the critical difference between that war and Vietnam.

Some months later, I walked through the wreckage of Kuwait, a wreckage caused not from our attacks alone, but mainly from the sacking of Iraqi occupation and the pillage of Iraqi retreat. I stood amid the hulks of the

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Iraqi army on the road north of the city and knew it was there that the second war—the Gulf War—had ended in 1991. That war had been a triumph not only of our own military men and women, not only of their machines and technology, but of the nations of the world coming together to say about aggression and international lawlessness, as President Bush put it, "This will not stand."

The end of the Gulf War and the conclusion of the Cold War gave us hope that the postwar period would be one of good will and global consensus to prevent the mistakes of the past. Will it be?

Parallels Between Postwar Periods

In answering this question, it may be of value to look back at our last major postwar period, the years following World War II, and see if there are parallels and, dare I say, lessons to be learned. As Ernest May reminds us, there are dangers in reasoning by historical analogy, but let me suggest nonetheless that there are several significant parallels between the present and the earlier postwar periods.

- *There is the danger of too rapid demobilization.* In 1945, we could not get the boys home fast enough. As fast as they came home, they demobilized. Soon, we found ourselves with a hollow Army. And, as Chief of Staff Gordon Sullivan is wont to point out, we paid the price for it five years later with the debacle of Task Force Smith in Korea.

Today, we are building down our forces at a greater pace than at any time since 1945. US Army divisions that had been in Europe since D-Day have ceased to exist within recent months. Some units returning from the Gulf were demobilized upon their arrival back in the United States. Production lines are shutting just as fast. Only for foreign military sales will we be producing M-1 tanks or F-16s in the next few years.

Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney has called for a strategy based on reconstitution, the ability to rebound rapidly if the threat reappears. Congress, in its search for the peace dividend, will be wise to maintain that reconstitution capability in place both in our force structure and in our defense industrial base. For if there is one thing that recent history has taught us, it is that history can shoot off in new directions on very short notice. Things can change fast. We have just seen the course of history change for the better before our eyes, but that does not mean that such rapid change will always be an improvement.

Our predictive capability has been humbled by the rush of events of recent years. The intelligence community failed to foresee the fall of the Warsaw Pact, the collapse of communism, the demise of the Soviet Union, or the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. As someone who once had the responsibility for intelligence forecasting in the State Department, I must say that you cannot expect the community to have a crystal ball. No amount of money, satellites, computers, or smart analysts will provide that.

Thus, the answer remains that we must be prepared for change, including adverse change. We must be prepared for the unexpected, including prepared militarily.

• *There is the challenge of the economic condition of our former adversaries.* Germany and Japan lay in ruin after their wars in 1945. Churchill declared, "In victory, magnanimity." During his 1947 Harvard Yard speech, in the most magnanimous act of statesmanship in modern history, Secretary Marshall launched a plan to rebuild our former enemies. Even though there

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The Gulf War was "a triumph not only of our own military men and women . . . but of the nations of the world coming together to say . . . as President Bush put it, 'This will not stand.'" Above, Iraqi prisoners line up for transport to the VII Corps POW camp.

are those now who suggest that we did the job too well, they are wrong. That plan was the foundation of the security system that prevented disastrous war in Europe these last 45 years.

So, too, today we must help to rebuild our adversaries if we are going to lay the foundation for another period without war among the largest powers. The challenge now is greater, for in the former Soviet Union we are building where there has been no capitalism and no freedom before. We cannot assume that we will succeed. The task on which we and the peoples of our former enemies are embarked is one that has never been tried before.

Nor can it succeed on the basis of massive infusions of funds. Its success or failure is dependent largely on the people of the former communist republics. They have suffered and will continue to suffer during this transition. We can help and are doing so, but, as in the case of the Marshall Plan, our goal is to get them on their own feet and not to establish economic dependency.

• *There is a danger of proliferation of weapons developed during the war.* As Patton's army charged across Europe, with it and in front of it were the units of Operation Paperclip. They were tasked with finding the wonder weapons that the Nazis had under development and, in some cases, had deployed. They sought out ballistic missiles and embryonic nuclear weapons to prevent their falling into the wrong hands.

Similarly, we now must prevent the weapons of the Soviet Union from falling into the wrong hands. Again, people with interests inimical to ours are seeking ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. We have launched a program to work with the former Soviets to help them transport, dismantle, and destroy thousands of their nuclear weapons. We can report that most tactical nuclear weapons have now been withdrawn to Russia, where they are being readied for dismantling. Strategic weapons will also be destroyed, well in excess of the numbers called for in the START treaty. To facilitate those decisions by the Commonwealth of Independent States and because of the diminished threat, we are also destroying thousands of our own tactical and strategic warheads.

Working with Russia and the European Community, we have created a center to fund the peaceful activities of scientists and engineers who formerly made weapons of mass destruction in the USSR. Our goal is to keep them in the Commonwealth of Independent States and have them contribute to the economies of those new republics.

The challenge of proliferation, however, goes well beyond stanching the flow of weapons and weapon design expertise from the former USSR. In the Persian Gulf War, US and coalition forces faced the prospect of being hit with chemical weapons, biological agents, and perhaps even nuclear weapons. Saddam chose, wisely for once, not to use the chemical or biological weapons

he had. His nuclear weapon was not ready, but as the UN teams later discovered, it was on the way to being ready, far closer than US intelligence had believed. US forces were, however, hit by ballistic missiles. Not long ago the people of Pennsylvania dedicated a monument to their National Guard unit that suffered a direct SCUD hit in Dhahran with considerable loss of life.

One of the positive outcomes of the Gulf War has been the reinvigoration of the global anti-proliferation effort. More nations have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the year since the war than in any recent year. We are moving closer to a chemical weapons treaty that will ban chemical weapons and make intrusive verification possible. The missile technology control regime is growing both in the number of countries adhering to it and in the scope of its coverage. With China and Russia now adhering to its guidelines, only North Korea is exporting ballistic missiles.

North Korea's behavior on the proliferation issue is a reminder that we have not been totally successful. While we have been able to sponsor efforts that resulted in the North signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and agreeing to bilateral inspections, these steps have not been implemented and we have great concern with stalling by Pyongyang. If North Korea were to become a nuclear weapon state, it would endanger all of northeast Asia and vital US interests.

• *There is a need for an international peacekeeping structure.* In 1945 in San Francisco, the victorious Allies attempted to create an organization that could do what the League of Nations had failed to do in the interwar period, i.e. keep the peace. The United Nations envisioned an international organization that could field a military force to stop aggression. Five years later, they employed that concept in Korea. It was the last time they did so on a significant scale until recently. The UN and even some of the regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, are employing peacekeeping forces today at an unprecedented pace. As the proxy wars of the 1980s die down, the Blue Helmets are going into El Salvador, Nicaragua, Angola, Namibia, the Western Sahara, Kuwait, and Iraq. Two large-scale forces are being readied for Cambodia and Yugoslavia. The combined strength of these two deployments alone will be almost 30,000.

These forces will be successful only if the world community is unswerving in its support. The UN forces will fail, and with them the renewed hope of international peacekeeping, if support is divided or if UN soldiers are not allowed to employ force to achieve their objectives. In the final analysis, however, their success depends upon the good will of the countries to which they are sent, for they cannot transplant peace into a soil that rejects it.

• *Finally, there is the challenge of maintaining our wartime alliances.* The peace of 1945 had hardly been achieved when the wartime Allies broke asunder. The Soviet Union went its own way and became the new

enemy. China fell to a new elite, joining the ranks of those fighting the wartime Allies. During the Cold War, our alliance was that network consisting of NATO, Australia, Japan, and Korea, together constituting the bulwark of the Free World. It is a victorious alliance and it needs to stay together.

For a while in 1990, there were those who asked why we still needed NATO when the Warsaw Pact went away. That question was put to rest at the NATO summit at Lancaster House in London on 5-6 July 1990. There the allies agreed that a military alliance could and should exist even if it did not have an identifiable enemy. Months later, the machinery of the alliance was used to deploy coalition forces to the Gulf. Now the North Atlantic Council has been supplemented by the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, which meets at NATO Headquarters with former Warsaw Pact states as members.

With the end of military competition, however, there is renewed attention to economic competition. And it is among the allies that the greatest economic competition occurs, a tripartite race among the European Community, Japan, and North America. This economic competition is having its military spin-offs already as Europe wastefully plans to spend billions on its own version of the C-17 cargo aircraft and its own version of a photographic satellite, as Europeans propose to establish elaborate command structures for a European defense identity in parallel with NATO. Similarly, Japan is wasting billions in seeking to develop its own weapon systems and produce them at rates that bring new meaning to diseconomies of scale.

We must guard against the three poles of the wartime alliance becoming three competing loci of military power in the next century. While that possibility seems far removed today, it will stay that way only with our vigilance and with continued cooperation and maintenance of the alliance.

Conclusion

If these lessons from the last postwar period have validity, let us heed them and not be forced, as Santayana would have it, to repeat the history that occasioned them. Words spoken at the onset of the postwar period in 1945 are worth rehearsing again as we enter a second great postwar era:

> We may pause for a moment, we may rejoice, but it must only be for the purpose of regathering strength. There may be danger that people will feel after this long struggle and this great and undisputed victory over a formidable antagonist, that we can relax. I cannot give the word for that. Our unity must be complete. Shoulder to shoulder we must face the task. We must finish . . . and complete the process of unwinding that which has been so tightly wound up in these past years.

Good advice, from Winston Churchill. ❑