

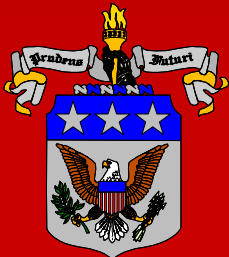
The American Perspective on the Future Conflict Environment: Consensus and Contention

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U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute

at the "Divergent Perspectives on Military Transformation" Colloquium

Berlin, December 2004



Points of Consensus



Key Ideas or Themes



- The world will remain a dangerous place with multiple sources of armed conflict
- Asymmetric, ambiguous, cross-culture conflict will dominate
- Internal conflicts or collapses will have external effects
- Resolution of conflict will require addressing "root causes"
- Most armed conflict will occur in Africa and Asia
- Important regional states may fail or face catastrophic internal conflict
- Armed conflict will increasingly take place in urban settings
- Technology will continue to disperse
- The U.S. will continue to play a major global role

Points of Contention



The Re-Emergence of Conflict Between Great Powers

- Will China continue to improve its military capability? If so, how will it use this—only to seek traditional interests or to become a regional or global power?
- Will some other state or coalition of states undertake conventional military aggression?
 - *A revived, aggressive Russia? India?*
 - *Van Creveld's argument that nuclear proliferation has obviated large scale conventional war between great powers*

Viability of Traditional Alliances



- Can traditional alliances, particularly NATO, be redirected and resuscitated or are they obsolete?
- Will formal alliances be superseded by temporary and shifting coalitions?

Geoeconomic and Environmental Wildcards



- Will the world remain dependent on fossil fuels?
 - *Ending dependence on petroleum would dramatically alter the global security landscape?*
- Will there be conflict-producing shortages of food, water, some other resource?
- Will there be conflict-producing climate changes?
- Will there be conflict-producing pandemics?

Outcome of the War on Terrorism



- Can a strategy which defines the opponent by choice of tactics be sustained?
- Is democratization and effective economic reform in the Islamic world possible?
 - *In other words, are there insurmountable cultural impediments to modernization and stability?*
- If reform is possible, would it undercut the Islamist radicals?
- Is Western disengagement from the Islamic world possible?
- How could the acquisition of nuclear weapons by terrorists affect the global security system?
- Are the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq models of the future or unique events?

The Next Wave of the Revolution in Military Affairs



- Will there be a follow-on military revolution to the current one?
- If so, what will drive it?
 - *Robotics, nanotechnology, nonlethality, artificial intelligence, biotechnology?*
 - *Who will have the new technology?*

Acceptance of America's Dominant Role



- Even if the United States seeks to remain a dominant global power, will the world allow this?
 - *Might the United States be excluded from some regions?*
 - » If so, which ones?
 - *Is there potential for a coalition or coalitions to counterbalance American power?*

Viability of Technological Solutions to Security Problems



- As in industry, the past century has seen a steady trend of substituting technology for labor in warfare
- Has the potential for this been exhausted?
 - *Can small, high-tech militaries be effective at stabilization, peacekeeping, and counterinsurgency?*

Effects of Information Saturation



- What form will future information operations take?
- Are traditional information and psychological operations feasible in an information-saturated environment?
- Is non-proliferation feasible in an information-saturated environment?
- Will it be possible to sustain public support for military operations in an information-saturated environment?

Continued Political Support and Funding for Security Transformation



- Is public and political support for security transformation nearing exhaustion?
- Will the public in the United States and other advanced nations provide the funding for transformation in the absence of state enemies?
- What will happen if support ends?
 - *Will conventional war between states again become common?*
 - *Will other forms of armed conflict become more common?*
 - *In other words, has transformation brought greater security to the world?*

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