
The Special Operations Challenge of the 1990s

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Berlin. Warsaw. Prague. Sofia. Moscow. This is the stuff of which the headlines of the late 1980s are made. The events taking place in these cities reflect a rapidly changing world order and improved prospects for peace.

Desert One. Beirut. Grenada. Locherbie. San Salvador. Managua. Medellin. This, too, is the stuff of headlines, but also the substance of the world less stable, less peaceful, and more threatening.

These two contrasting views of the world—one seemingly moving toward peace, the other apparently mired in violence—define the challenge of the 1990s. That challenge will, perhaps, be greater than any we have confronted in the post-war era. The fundamental doctrines of the last 40 years, reflecting a relentlessly aggressive and hostile Soviet Union, will be open to fundamental questioning. Our ability to sustain our national will in a time of change and ambiguity will be severely tested. We as a nation will be tempted to conclude that peace is a global phenomenon, which it clearly is not.

The coming decade will, in particular, place a major share of the responsibility for preserving our national interests squarely on the doorstep of those involved in special operations and low intensity conflict. It will be a time in which the special skills so often overlooked in the past will be needed like never before. It will also be a time of heightened expectations among the American people. They will be looking for a peaceful and stable world to emerge as we enter the next century. It is important, therefore, that we succeed.

Genuine peace has never seemed more possible since the end of World War II. Communism, as a way of ordering society, has been debunked. Its cancerous appendage—the Brezhnev Doctrine—has been thrown in the trash heap of history. The physical and political barriers that have separated East and West are being dismantled. The peoples of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are tasting, perhaps irreversibly, the first fruits of freedom.

Clearly, we must remain vigilant against the re-emergence of the kind of threat the Warsaw Pact has posed to our national security for the last four decades. But, if the forces (Soviet President Mikhail) Gorbachev has unleashed prevail, we can look forward to a decade in which the prospect of major conventional or nuclear confrontation will remain greatly reduced.

Equally clearly, however, these changes alone will not bring peace to the world. The promise of freedom remains unfulfilled in much of the Third World. Poverty persists. Post-colonial governments, not benefiting from the 200-year tradition of democracy that is the foundation of our republic, are still evolving and searching for the means of effective governance.

Centuries-old ethnic and religious animosities and border disputes remain unresolved. Some seek power or wealth for its own sake, without regard for the chaos they inflict. And while all this potential or actual instability can be exploited by our antagonists, it is, for the most part, not mitigated by improved prospects for peace between the superpowers.

Armed conflict continues in Afghanistan, Angola, El Salvador, the Philippines, Cambodia, and the Andean Region. While the last decade has seen a dramatic shift from totalitarian regimes to freely elected governments, more than 40 insurgencies continue around the world.

In the past 12 months, we have witnessed the murders of Colonels Nick Rowe and Rich Higgins and the deaths of 270 people in the destruction of Pan Am 103. In 1988, 658 people, including 192 Americans, were killed in acts of terrorism. And eight Americans remain the hostages of terrorists in the Middle East.

DRUGS AN OPEN SORE

Drug trafficking is an open international sore and a \$300 billion-a-year business. Between 1980 and 1988, the number of Americans killed by illegal drugs and violence rose by 500 percent. During the same period, drug-related emergency room admissions in the United States rose by 2,600 percent. In Colombia, the drug lords continue to murder and intimidate government officials in a brazen attempt to paralyze the democratic process and cripple the judicial system. And increasingly, largely as a matter of convenience, the drug traffickers are joining in mutual support with Third World insurgent and terrorist groups.

In short, despite reduced superpower tensions and past efforts, peace and stability are not at hand in the Third World. And they will not come from good intentions or wishful thinking. Achieving a peaceful world by the turn of the century will require sustained, appropriate action on our part. It is clear to this audience, but perhaps less so to the majority of the American people, that the action required will rely heavily on the capability we have been rebuilding over the last decade.

A decade ago, a gathering such as this would have been incongruous and no doubt poorly attended. Concern over the problems of the Third World was relegated to intellectual backwaters, at best an amusing novelty. Concurrently, our principal operations forces were moribund, suffering from pervasive neglect and repeated and, in large part, successful attempts to delete them from our national security structure.

The world, of course, refused to conform to our expectations. The hostage rescue attempt in Iran, more than anything else, demonstrated that we had unfulfilled needs, and, thus, we set out in the 1980s to meet those needs.

WHERE WE ARE AND WHY

We are all familiar with the progress of the 1980s, but we need to step back for a moment to understand its true significance.

First, the special operations and low-intensity conflict capability we are building today are a matter of law, thus ensuring that they cannot be simply written off as priorities change.

Second, the National Security Council Low-Intensity Conflict Board is unprecedented in its permanence and scope of responsibility. In the past, we have seen special bodies such as the Special Group-Counterinsurgency, the Washington Special Action Group, and the Forty Committee, among others, but each was designed to address a specific problem and was dismantled as the problem receded in importance.

Third, special operations and low-intensity conflict have never in the past had the level of representation within the Department of Defense that my office represents. There were precedents in the 1950s and early 1960s, but they were at substantially lower levels and largely *ad hoc*.

Fourth, special operations forces have never had the senior leadership we have now in the commander-in-chief of the U.S. Special Operations Command. We can draw many parallels with the Office of Strategic Services, but that was a combined civil-military contribution to the prosecution of World War II. By the same token, special operations forces have never been more joint in their outlook.

Fifth, we have never had stronger special operations components, with flag or general officer leadership in each of the services and major commands in the Navy and the Army. Nor have the forces been better trained, better equipped, or more capable of meeting their global commitments.

FAIR SHARE

Sixth, the certainty that special operations forces will receive a fair share of defense resources has never been greater. Program 11 is the first major change in the structure of the Defense Department's Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System since the mid-1960s, and the authority over the resources in that program granted to my office and the U.S. Special Operations Command is both unprecedented and unique.

Lastly, we continue to enjoy unparalleled Administration and Congressional support and look for that support to remain strong well into the future. Secretary (of Defense Dick) Cheney's commitment is simple and straightforward. Special operations readiness in his words, and I quote, "will remain one of our highest defense priorities." And Secretary Cheney recognizes that we cannot enter the 1990s with "minds frozen on one set of challenges or one kind of response."

SEVEN CRITICAL AREAS

All this, of course, is not cause for resting on our oars. We still have a great deal to do to complete the process begun in the Reagan Administration. We also have to remember that what we have created represents only a capability. The most important task of the 1990s will be to use that capability to achieve success. In that light, I believe we must focus our attention and our efforts on seven critical areas.

First, we must define our goals for the Third World with greater clarity. It is not enough to be opposed to, and prepared to respond to, violence, whether it comes from insurgents, totalitarian regimes, terrorists, or drug runners. Our ultimate goal is to achieve peace and stability in the Third World, and that means we must also address the underlying problems that either breed or accommodate violence.

Second, we must gain widespread acceptance within the U.S. government for the notion that addressing Third World problems is a legitimate endeavor. The prospect of engaging in conflict, low-intensity or otherwise, is foreign to most of our bureaucracy, but without the effective, coherent engagement of many federal agencies, our participation in any conflict is destined to fail. Similarly, we must avoid the perceptual trap that would lead us to believe that reduced superpower tension translates into peace in the Third World. All this is essential to the effective working of the Low-Intensity Conflict Board and to sustain our engagement over a period of years, as will be required.

Third, and as a corollary, we must integrate Third World considerations fully into broader national security policy and strategy. Just as we cannot afford to approach Third World social,

economic, and political problems and the violence of drugs, terrorism, and insurgency as unrelated issues, we cannot approach the Third World in a vacuum that fails to account for the realities of the world economy, our commitments to and the contributions of our allies, and our evolving relationship with the Soviet Union.

Fourth, we must preserve the hard-won gains of the 1980s, complete the revitalization of our special operations forces, maintain an appropriately high state of readiness, and undertake modernization. None of this will be easy in a time of austerity. Strong Administration and Congressional support notwithstanding, there will be no free rides. Our case will have to be clear and compelling, and we will have to fight like hell to achieve our objectives.

DOD AS NATION BUILDER

Fifth, we must give greater emphasis to the Department of Defense role in nation-building. It must, in fact, become a cornerstone of defense policy. We should, in particular, make nation-building one of the highest-priority missions for U.S. Special Operations Command elements such as special forces, psychological operations, and civil affairs, as well as for medical, engineering, and other conventional components. In the process, we will have to resolve thorny issues such as task organization and the role of the Reserve components.

Sixth, we must revamp our security assistance programs. For Fiscal Year 1990, 84 percent of the \$4.7 billion program is earmarked by Congress for Israel, Egypt, Turkey, and Greece. Less than 3 percent of the security assistance program is likely to be allocated for the American republics and for sub-Saharan Africa combined. Moreover, the program is heavily congested with actions such as the prohibition on training foreign police forces. It may be time for new legislation that establishes separate funding for the areas of the Third World challenged by low-intensity conflict. Or it may be time for an even more radical departure. It is clear, however, that it is time for change.

Finally, we must exploit our nation's technological advantage in assisting our friends in the Third World. We must, however, avoid the mistake of trying to create an army (or navy or air force) in our own image. We have to recognize that Third World requirements as well as the ability to absorb, maintain, and support high-technology equipment differ markedly from our own. The needs are comprehensive—from sensors to aircraft to individual equipment. The answers, however, must be relevant.

In conclusion, I am reminded of Thomas Paine's observation. As we declared our independence in 1776, he noted that, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it." For the men and women of the special operations and low-intensity conflict community, that translates into engaging the tools developed in the 1980s to achieve peace in the Third World.

There is, in this engagement, a critical task for the American Defense Preparedness Association. Our exertions will come to nought in the absence of the sustained support of the national security community and our fellow citizens. Those not engaged in this business on a daily basis must understand how we will achieve peace, what it takes to succeed and, most importantly, why it matters. This symposium exemplifies the leadership ADPA can, and I believe will, exert in this endeavor.

That will be the challenge of the coming decade.

International Narcotics Control Update

[The following is a reprint of an article in the Public Information Series, November 1989, published by the Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State.]

The use and trafficking of illicit drugs threaten the national security of the United States just as much as they threaten the health and well-being of the individual drug user. Industrial productivity is lessened when workers take drugs; military readiness is threatened by drug use among servicemen and women; America's image abroad is eroded by reports of American drug use; and money spent on drugs by individual citizens lines the pockets of drug lords whose violent tactics undermine the security of some of our most important friends and allies.

PRODUCTION AND USE

Illicit drugs are produced primarily in the developing world and used primarily by consumers in more affluent nations. Increasingly, however, producing and trafficking countries are confronting growing drug-use problems of their own. In the past, governments have pointed fingers of blame at one another—the consumer blamed the producers, while producer nations claimed that the problem rested with citizens of the developed world who use illicit drugs.

The illicit narcotics problem has assumed such global proportions that virtually no nation is immune. Leaders of nations on both sides of the equator and from across the ideological spectrum have declared an all-out war on drugs. Rhetoric and blame are being replaced by cooperative efforts aimed at breaking the vicious cycle of drug production and consumption.

The Soviet Union, which long denied the existence of a drug problem within its borders, is now engaging in major official and unofficial programs to curb drug use. The Government of Colombia—where most of the world's cocaine is processed—has declared war on drug dealers. Speaking at the UN General Assembly's 1989 session, Colombian President Virgilio Barco called Colombia's drug lords "international fugitives." "They do not have have a home," said President Barco. "Colombia is not their homeland."

President George Bush has declared a policy intended to confront drug consumers, producers, and traffickers alike. He told a meeting of U.S. drug enforcement officials in April 1989: "Let's face it: Americans cannot blame the Andean nations for our voracious appetite for drugs." Rather than blaming other countries, the United States wants to work with them to eliminate both supply and demand for international narcotics, for, in the words of Colombia's President Barco, "the only law that drug traffickers do not violate is the law of supply and demand."

As the lead federal agency responsible for America's international narcotics control efforts, the Department of State is implementing key elements of the 1989 national drug control strategy, in which the Bush Administration outlines a broad list of international priorities that include:

- Disruption and dismantlement of drug-trafficking organizations;
- Reducing cocaine supply by providing law enforcement, military, and economic assistance to Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia to isolate their major coca-producing regions, block delivery of chemicals used in cocaine processing, destroy cocaine labs, and dismantle the drug-running groups. This effort will also target drug transit areas in the Caribbean;

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- Reducing heroin supply through efforts to convince other countries to exert influence on opium growers to reduce heroin processing and distribution;
 - Reducing marijuana supply through strengthened foreign law enforcement and eradication and through efforts to discourage minor producers from becoming major producers; and
 - U.S. encouragement for European Community and other multilateral efforts aimed at source country and transit country production and distribution and at European consumption. European support against international and regional drug organizations will be enlisted.

Other international objectives include:

- Making anti-drug efforts a top priority in U.S. bilateral relations with virtually every other country.
- U.S. ratification of the UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and urging other nations to ratify the UN convention;
- Strictly enforcing existing U.S. laws that make foreign aid contingent on the recipient countries' compliance with anti-narcotics efforts; and
- Strengthening domestic and international efforts against the "laundering" of drug money.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

The global war on drugs is also an element of another key U.S. foreign policy objective—the preservation of the world's environmental resources. Growing and processing drugs causes substantial environmental damage and the loss of valuable natural resources in developing countries. In Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley, now the largest source of coca in the world, farmers use "slash and burn" techniques to clear land, [thereby] destroying forests, causing erosion, and eventually depleting soil resources. Coca leaves are processed by means of strong chemicals, such as kerosene and sulfuric acid, which pollute the valley's water supply.

Fragile ecosystems in South America, Southeast Asia, and other drug-growing areas can survive only when narcotics crops and drug trafficking are eliminated.

THE NARCO-RICH AND THE DRUG ECONOMY

The international drug economy runs on cash—lots of it. Worldwide drug profits, about 80 percent of the total narcotics trade, were estimated to be as high as \$240 billion in 1987. Drug trafficking is profitable because illegal narcotic crops are relatively cheap to cultivate and process, while their ultimate street value is extraordinarily high.

Although typical drug trafficking operations have several layers of intermediaries, most of the gains go to a newly formed rich, small elite that has come to wield impressive economic and political power. Some kingpins are believed to have a personal worth that exceeds their country's national debt. They buy land and other assets for investment purposes and control numerous domestic businesses. They also are able to bribe and intimidate local politicians, judges, police, and military, who in turn allow illegal activities to continue in an ever-widening circle of corruption.

Although some traffickers have engaged in token philanthropic projects, the vast amount of their profits do not stay in the countries where narcotics are produced. They are usually transferred abroad and transformed into a more manageable form to conceal their illicit origin. "Laundering" schemes include electronic funds transfers, depositing funds in international tax shelters, or setting up dummy "shell" corporations. Such capital flight rarely benefits the developing countries where most drugs originate.

ENFORCING U.S. INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS POLICY

Effective enforcement of international narcotics control programs involves interdiction, criminal penalties against traffickers, and eradication. As U.S. health and education officials seek to curb drug use at home, the State Department's first priority is to apply pressure against drug smugglers and traffickers through cooperation with other countries.

In August 1988, 30 countries joined in a month-long cocaine-control project under the auspices of the International Drug Enforcement Conference. Thirty countries (from Europe and North, Central, and South America) participated in a cooperative, coordinated, multinational law enforcement operation to improve capabilities to seize cocaine and cash, track down fugitives, and crack down on the "laundering" (or disguising) of drug money. The United States committed National Guard units in four states to work side by side with the U.S. Customs Service in inspecting cargo.

Currently, in South and Central America, the Department of State and the Drug Enforcement Administration work with law enforcement officials in a cooperative effort called "Operation Snowcap" that targets illegal laboratories, processing facilities, and airstrips for destruction. Most Snowcap activity is in Bolivia and Peru. Since this operation began in 1987, results have included the destruction of cocaine laboratories and the seizure of thousands of pounds of cocaine

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The United States cannot assume all the responsibility for the war against drugs, nor can it expect to win the war without support from other countries. A cornerstone of U.S. international drug policy is encouraging other countries to assist the United States in combating drug trafficking while it addresses serious drug-use problems at home. President George Bush will attend a summit meeting on the drug war with his counterparts from Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru in early 1990.

Since most cocaine comes to the United States through the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico, the U.S. Government is strengthening anti-drug programs in those transit areas. Joint Information Coordination Centers have been established in the Caribbean areas to develop and disseminate information that will result in more arrests. Twenty-six Caribbean countries have improved their ability to communicate with one another, and with U.S. law enforcement agencies through INTERPOL (an international organization that coordinates the work of police forces). In Latin America, the U.S. Government is supporting law enforcement activities through training and technical assistance. Nine of the 11 countries with which the United States has major narcotics control programs are in the Caribbean and Latin America.*

U.S. Government officials aim to achieve international consensus on the drug threat. During the July 1989 economic summit of industrialized nations, Secretary of State James A. Baker, III, urged Canada, France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and West Germany to take more aggressive actions against the laundering of drug money. The seven summit partners created a

* The United States has major narcotics control programs with The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, and Venezuela.

financial action task force, which met during the Fall of 1989 and is to make recommendations by April 1990. A new U.S. financial crimes center will collect, analyze, and disseminate information to law enforcements agencies to combat money laundering.

During the September 1989 meeting in Wyoming with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Secretary Baker discussed implementation of a U.S.-U.S.S.R. agreement that has been in effect since January 1989. The agreement provides for Soviet-American cooperation in combating illegal narcotics. In meeting with other world leaders such as Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Secretary Baker offered U.S. support to reduce drug production and trafficking.

An important milestone was reached on December 19, 1988, when an international conference in Vienna adopted the UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Signatories are required to provide assistance in the investigation and prosecution of narcotics cases by other signatories. International cooperation in the war on drugs becomes obligatory; 67 countries have signed the convention, including the United States.

U.S. officials also work with UN agencies and other international organizations on drug-related issues. The UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control, located in Vienna, is the key multinational organization in the global struggle against drugs. The UN General Assembly is planning to convene a special session in 1990 to consider how to improve international cooperation in the war against drugs.