

Defense budget is for Third World wars—or World War 3

by Leo F. Scanlon

The Bush administration has submitted a defense budget to Congress which proposes to turn the U.S. military into an expeditionary force designed to fight imperial wars in the Third World. The Soviet Union and China—the nuclear-armed nations which actually have the capability to wage war against American territory and threaten the keystones of the Western alliance—will have little to fear from the stripped-down structure which will exist by 1995.

The budget, as described by the Department of Defense, is the “result of the Department’s rigorous analysis of the capabilities needed to support the new U.S. defense strategy, which has been formulated to counter the threats likely to concern the nation throughout the 1990s.” Force cuts proposed will eliminate one-third of the Air Force wings, cut one-third of the Army divisions, and hold the Navy to only 12 carrier battle groups with total battle force ships brought down from 545 to 451.

Under the scheme envisaged by the administration planners, the U.S. will impose what has been called “technological apartheid” by the French press, on countries which are militarily far weaker than Iraq, for example—since the current adventure, which is absorbing enormous military energy, will not be repeatable.

This new force will be designed “to project military power rapidly to areas of U.S. strategic interest,” but must be able to do this “within projected fiscal constraints.” The DoD public relations scribblers have replaced the term “national defense” with the buzz words “strategic interest.” Under such linguistic camouflage, in the New World Order, the U.S. military will do little more than guarantee favorable terms of trade and access to raw materials for the powers which dominate the U.N. and the International Monetary Fund, by rearranging borders and enforcing loan repayments.

During his budget testimony before the Congress, Gen. Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, departed from his prepared text, and explained that the force restructuring will mean permanently reducing U.S. troop strength in Europe to “about a little over one corps.” This confirmed that the Germany-based U.S. VII Corps, now stationed in the Gulf, will never return to the European Theater. Powell also confirmed that America will not leave the Persian Gulf once the war ends: “We will also need to maintain a presence in the Mediterranean and in the postwar Persian Gulf.”

Inevitably, this budget has buried the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program as well, limiting defensive weapons to point defense systems designed to protect the military forces of the U.S. and its allies.

Military not simply demobilized

The Pentagon posits a strategy based on “the reduced chance of global conflict.” What insanity! The Soviet Union has announced its intent to continue (de facto) the occupation of Poland and Germany; the State Department has officially announced that the START treaty is completely deadlocked; and the NATO allies have been informed that “there will be no business as usual” at the upcoming Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations. Nonetheless, Pentagon strategic force levels will “be scaled back in accordance with expectations regarding arms reductions agreements.”

So, retirement of the Minuteman II force will begin in FY 1992. Retirements of submarines with the aging Poseidon missile are to be sped up. During the 1990s the current mix of 34 Poseidon and Trident boats will be reduced to a force of 18 Trident submarines carrying Trident I (C-4) and Trident II (D-5) missiles. Strategic bombers will decrease from 268 in FY 1990 to 171 in FY 1993; as older B-52s are retired and

FB-111s are transferred to tactical use.

Funding for the Rail-garrisoned Peacekeeper (MX) is cut back, the ASAT program has been substantially reduced, and "major adjustments" have been made in the B-2 bomber, C-17 transport, and the Milstar communications satellite programs. Programs terminated include (besides the Trident): the P-7A anti-submarine patrol aircraft, Mark XV aircraft identification system, boost Surveillance and Tracking System and the Tacit Rainbow cruise missile. This is on top of the terminations made in 1991, which included the V-22 Osprey, the M-1 tank, new F-14D production, F-15E aircraft, the Apache helicopter, and the Army Helicopter Improvement Program.

The canceled aircraft programs leave U.S. forces flying planes designed in the 1960s and built in the 1970s. The cancellation of the F-14D aircraft remanufacture, Naval Advanced Tactical Fighter, A-12 stealth aircraft, and the Air Force Advanced Tactical Aircraft, coupled with the reduced rate of procurement of other advanced planes, means that there will be no new aircraft produced until late in the 1990s. While electronics upgrades may keep the aging fleet serviceable for battle against the non-threats in the Third World, it is a sorry picture next to the pace of Soviet production.

The programmed reduction of the carrier force to 12 battle groups has long been resisted by the Navy, which points out that this number of ships does not support a strategic presence in the world's oceans, and there is no indication that the Soviet Union has cut back its drive to create a "blue water" navy, or reduce the size and potency of its submarine force. In response, the Bushmen propose to scale back the SSN 21 attack submarine production to one per year, and no Trident submarines will be built beyond the 18th boat budgeted in 1991.

The new strategy anticipates "high airlift and sealift capacity . . . maritime and amphibious forces, a full and sophisticated array of combat aircraft . . . heavy and light Army divisions, and appropriate special operations forces." Sounds nifty, until we read that "U.S. conventional forces will be restructured so that they best support the new strategy"—the strategy of carrying out genocide in the Third World. "Compared to FY 1990 levels, by the end of FY 1993: the Army will have 6 (4 active) fewer divisions, the Navy will have 81 fewer battle force ships, and the Air force will have 9 (8 active) fewer tactical fighter wings." By FY 1995, reserve personnel levels will drop to 906,000, 21% below FY 1987.

Operational training for this reduced force will continue to run at the "deficit" levels characteristic since the defense budget began to collapse in 1985. "Active Army ground and air training operations will continue at 800 miles per year for combat vehicles and 14.5 flying hours per month for tactical aircrews. . . . Flying hours for active Air Force tactical aircrews will hold at about 19 hours per month." To visualize what these levels mean, note that the Army and Air Force

had to utilize the better part of six months from August to January, to conduct the intensive training needed to attack the *technically and materially inferior Iraqi military*. How could they confront the Red Army?

The budget request notes that the projected outlays do not include the eventual costs of Desert Shield and Desert Storm. "It is possible," says the Pentagon, "that some of the program decisions . . . will have to be adjusted in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis." That is, stocks will be refurbished at the expense of strategic deterrence.

SDI cuts define role of imperial military

Nowhere is the flight from strategic reality more evident than in the administration proposal to scuttle the SDI on behalf of defensive systems designed to protect expeditionary forces. According to the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, a 12-month review of "the revolutionary changes taking place in the international political and security environment" has concluded that the CFE, START, and related arms talks justify massive cuts in the advanced research and development component of SDI:

"In light of this review, the President has directed the Secretary of Defense to refocus the SDI program to provide Global Protection Against Limited Strikes, or GPALS.

"Such defenses could protect U.S. forces deployed overseas, U.S. power projection forces, and U.S. allies and friends. . . . At less than half the size of the SDI Phase I architecture, GPALS would provide an affordable defensive capability that satisfies legitimate security concerns."

The SDI program will be a research-only operation which will "investigate" the technologies which were originally envisaged as the base of a population protection system.

While the funding levels are touted as a victory by some SDI boosters, the reality is spelled out by the SDIO: "Overall, the severe FY91 budget cut imposed at least a two year delay in deploying any defense for the American people. Accumulated budget cuts over the past several years of nearly \$8 billion have caused years of delays. Unless this trend is reversed this year, America will enter the next century defenseless against ballistic missile attack."

Directed energy research absorbed 36% of the reduction. This resulted in termination of contracts related to the Army Free Electron Laser Program, Relay Mirror Experiment, and Neutral Particle Beam. Research in support of basic sensor phenomenology and components absorbed 17% of the reduction. This results in big reductions in investigation of new materials for focal plane arrays, cryocooler work, and Rad-hard batteries.

The bottom line is that the defense infrastructure planned by the Bush administration will have no depth in manpower, material production, or research capabilities. It will plunge the United States into a diplomatic era of "each against all." In that sense, it could be described as the defense budget for World War III.