

New Iklé-Wohlstetter reports urge U.S. strategic suicide

by Kathleen Klenetsky

Last January, the U.S. government threw its allies into a panic, when it released the first report of a commission established last year to draw up a new American strategic doctrine.

Issued by the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, informally known as the Iklé-Wohlstetter group after its two co-chairman, former Pentagon muckety-muck Fred Iklé and Albert Wohlstetter, a “former” Trotskyite and a key figure at the RAND Institute, the *Discriminate Deterrence* report stated in no uncertain terms that the United States was preparing to lift its nuclear umbrella from its allies.

Coming on the heels of the signing of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) accord—which was correctly seen in saner European and U.S. circles as a significant blow to the unity of the NATO alliance—the Iklé-Wohlstetter report sent a clear message that Washington was reorienting its strategy in a direction clearly consistent with Soviet aims: Despite the fact that Moscow’s immediate strategic objective is the “Finlandization” of West Germany, as a first crucial step toward the rapidly ensuing “Finlandization” of the entirety of Western Europe, the report called for the United States to deemphasize both its nuclear deterrent and its commitment to European defense, and to divert military resources into developing techniques for waging “brushfire wars” in Third World countries.

The strategic shift advocated by the Iklé-Wohlstetter group plays right into Moscow’s gameplan. Back in 1983, then-Soviet President Yuri Andropov gave an interview to a West German magazine in which he offered the United States a deal: You can have the Western Hemisphere, and we’ll take everything else. The Iklé-Wohlstetter report showed that Washington had fallen for this Soviet deception, hook, line and sinker.

Main delusion: Soviet power waning

Despite widespread criticism of its initial study, the Iklé-Wohlstetter group has refused to abandon its delusions. Over the past few months, the Long-Range Strategy Commission has issued three new reports, which only reinforce its fundamental strategic stupidity.

Produced by two subcommittees, the Regional Conflict

Working Group, chaired by Gen. Paul Gorman, former head of the U.S. Southern Command, and the Working Group on Future Security Environment, the studies attempt to provide further justification for the original report’s suicidal recommendations.

Of the three, the most conceptually important is *Sources of Change in the Future Security Environment*, which was published in April of this year. This is intended as a guidebook for policymakers on what contingencies or discontinuities affecting strategic planning might arise over the next 25 years or so.

For credibility’s sake, the report’s authors take care to concede the possibility that the Soviet Union might produce a military-technological “surprise” in the future, most likely the deployment of a high-energy weapons system, or that its internal political and economic difficulties might cause it to become more aggressive.

But they are clearly determined to convince their audience that exactly the opposite will take place: They paint a picture of a Russian empire so torn by domestic turmoil that it could not possibly make any significant thrust beyond its borders.

Moreover, the report predicts that the Soviet Union’s relative power and influence will inevitably and inexorably decline, as “three, or four, or possibly even five major powers”—including a possible China-Japan alliance—emerge.

“Over the longer term,” the authors state in section V, “Implications for Planning and Long-Term Strategy,” “the position of the Soviet Union is highly uncertain. For the next decade and probably more, it remains our most formidable military-technological competitor. But in the longer run, unless the Soviets can significantly relieve their economic difficulties and move toward a new period of substantial economic growth, they will gradually become less salient in U.S. policy and strategy. . . . In the face of these uncertainties, the U.S. needs to develop a strategy for management of its relations with the Soviet Union in the transition from a bipolar to a predominantly multipolar world. Widely different developments are possible for the Soviet Union—ranging from major reductions in Soviet active forces to free resources for

economic revival, to persistent economic stagnation that constrains military modernization, to successful economic reform that positions the Soviets to compete effectively with the United States in the military-technical revolution they anticipate.”

Elsewhere, the report says, “A significant change in this future world is likely to be caused by the slow absolute growth (and the relative decline) of the Soviet Union’s economy. The Soviet Union will remain the major military competitor of the U.S. because of the size of its past investments and the likelihood that only the U.S. and the Soviet Union will be at the leading edge of military technology. Soviet economic difficulties will, however, raise questions about whether the Soviet Union will be able to maintain its current military position 20 or more years from now. Soviet economic difficulties open up a broad range of possible developments that would be important to U.S. strategy.

“It is conceivable that the Soviets could make major reductions in military spending in order to devote more resources to capital investment and work incentives, or to compensate for economic disruptions associated with major changes in the economic system. Reductions in Soviet military spending could be associated with arms control proposals and could diminish the military threats we face in the near future.”

Abandoning Europe

This outrageous misestimate of the Soviet threat provides the key pretext for the report’s insistence that the greater danger to U.S. national security will come from the Third World, especially in the Western Hemisphere. Section IV, “Shocks and Discontinuities,” predicts that freedom from “significant security threats close to home” which the U.S. has enjoyed so far, “may be seriously disrupted over the next 20 years.” Retailing a key component of the Andropov deal cited above, namely, the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Western Europe to the Western Hemisphere, the study predicts that if this comes to pass, “leadership attention and military resources could be diverted from overseas to defense within the Western Hemisphere.” The corollary, that such a shift would leave Western Europe vulnerable to the Soviets, is not even mentioned.

Instead, the authors prefer to spin out one scare scenario after another. “For example,” they write, “major political instability could occur in Mexico over the next 20 years. Such instability could create several new security problems for the United States. Prolonged political unrest could conceivably result in partial anarchy.” In these circumstances, “U.S. resources, and even U.S. troops to guard the border, might have to be diverted to handle this problem.”

“Against the backdrop of such events in the Western Hemisphere,” the report continues, “political pressures on the American government to reduce or withdraw overseas deployments would be strong. Even if those pressures were

resisted, the time and attention required for managing domestic opposition to overseas deployments would probably increase and the willingness of the U.S. government to take on any new responsibilities would diminish” (emphasis added).

The same theme, that Third World disturbances, and not a frontal Soviet assault against Europe, are the main strategic danger, is echoed in the two other new Iklé-Wohlstetter reports, *Supporting U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict*, and *Commitment to Freedom: Security Assistance as a U.S. Policy Instrument in the Third World*. They maintain that “integrated long-term strategy requires a much greater consensus, within Congress and among the electorate, on what to do about U.S. interests in Third World conflicts.”

“More political violence is portended, for it is likely not only that underlying tensions will remain unresolved, but also that available weapons will be more numerous and more destructive,” *Supporting U.S. Strategy* states.

The report does not identify the source of the “underlying tensions,” other than to say that “aided and abetted by the U.S.S.R. they “had origins in, and derived from, indigenous political or social tensions.”

The authors fail to note that those “indigenous political or social tensions” were not inevitable, but were the product of looting by global financial interests, whose austerity policies have systematically stunted the growth of Third World economies and brought them to ruin.

No mention of IMF

The International Monetary Fund, which has probably done more to destabilize the Third World than any other single institution, is not mentioned at all—even though the IMF’s conditionalities have helped create the conditions for the proliferation of AIDS and narcoterrorism in the Third World, which the new Iklé-Wohlstetter reports correctly identify as major threats.

Instead, the report blames “destabilizing overpopulation and overurbanization,” “radical nationalism,” and the inability of these nations to adapt to rapid technological progress, for the “voracious forces of societal change tearing at the fabric of developing economies.”

The prospect of abandoning Europe to put down brushfire wars south of the U.S. border does not seem to faze the Iklé-Wohlstetter commissioners at all. And that is what proves them to be either terribly naive, terribly stupid, or terribly treasonous.

The fact is that the Soviets are out to conquer Western Europe. Since its productive base is larger than that of the United States, once Western Europe becomes a large-scale supplier of advanced technology and agro-industrial goods to Moscow, the Soviets achieve absolute economic and military strategic superiority over an isolated United States. In that case, Moscow’s world domination by about the year 2000 is assured.