

Testimony of Robert H. Scales

House Armed Services Committee

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The Creation of a Coalition of Enlightened States

Mr Chairman:

Many thanks for the opportunity to testify before this committee on the subject of a future U. S. Grand strategy. As you know I'm a military historian. Thus my testimony today will focus principally on the sort of strategy the United States should adapt in the years to come and what effect that strategy will have on the future course of America's military. I realize that the development of a new grand strategy will involve more than a vision of how American military forces should be changed. But given my background I believe that I am best suited to offer insights into the strategy from a soldier's perspective.

The American military has at last and at enormous sacrifices in lives and money begun to establish a semblance of stability in Iraq. The next challenge will be to accomplish the same objective in Afghanistan. I believe the lesson to be learned from the last seven years is that the United States cannot go it alone in the future. We simply do not have the resources, both human and material, to carry the burden of global security on our shoulders. Clearly our strategy is up for change. The centerpiece of a new global strategy must be to create new alliances among states willing to join us in a generational effort to

defeat the threat of emerging radicalism. To buttress a system of strong states the United States must return to a more traditional supporting role in partnership with nations threatened by ideological attack, versus reaching for unilateral, conventional operations as a first choice. As first among equals in global military power, the United States should over the long term form a "coalition of enlightened states" whose objective will be to unite against those who seek to destroy the traditional state system and thus the foundations of international peace. Success will be measured by the reduction over time in the strength, legitimacy and appeal of radical threats. Moslems in particular will come to realize that radical religious zeal can inflame their youth to kill with spectacular efficiency. But, over the decades ahead, a state of perpetual violence will offer only misery, subjugation and social stagnation. Our strategy must have as its principal aim the support of strong, friendly states and the discrediting of radical leaders and their ideals. Those leaders and organizations that persist in fomenting social atrocities must be isolated, pursued and ruthlessly attacked. But the lead in this coming campaign must be assumed by regional and local governments, who see a better future without radical threats than by the United States acting as the global cop of first resort.

The use of military force should be focused on supporting allies and preventing or responding to threats to our allies and ourselves. Historical currents of moderation will work in our favor, provided we can act as a bulwark to hold back the forces of state dissolution. But we must hold back with discretion, patience, empathy and a sublimated sense of global importance. All radical movements that rely on violence against innocents to achieve their ends contain within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. Over time radicals must attempt ever more shocking and extreme attacks to trump the last atrocity in order to force radicalization on all fronts. Confronting radicalism directly with episodic violent excursions inflames passions of millions of its followers. Such operations may produce more recruits than the violence destroys. Sometimes the stakes are worth the cost -- as in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. But usually containment and prevention are stronger medicines. An aggressive military strategy actually militates against the natural currents of history by inflaming and

prolonging religious zeal and eroding the very values of stability that we seek to reinforce.

This proposal suggests that instruments that proved useful in the Cold War -- collective defense, regional alliances for progress, economic development -- remain central for continuing traditional threats and for confronting destructive radicalism. U.S. defense strategy must reorient from short term, hard power "preemptive strikes" to a patient, nuanced and longer-term policy of reinforcement of our allies and containment of the threat. U.S. military strategy must provide preparedness across the full spectrum of threats to U.S. interests. Combat ready forces must still be prepared to deploy on short notice, but the main thrust of our strategy must be engagement forward over the long-term, with an enduring U.S. military commitment as advisors, trainers and suppliers in threatened regions, much as was the case in the Cold War.

Forward engagement provides for the strengthening of regional actors against this global insurgency. Military advisory and training groups in threatened regions, along with our existing bases in Germany, Japan, and Korea and elsewhere will provide immediate practical assistance to allies struggling in emerging states under threat from Islamic fundamentalism. These military commitments must go hand in hand with a vigorous, well-funded and thoughtful commitment by other agencies of government dedicated to supporting our friends in the developing world who are working for the health, economic well-being and educational advancement of their people. Forces forward will not only immediately support our allies, but also will play a vital role in affirming constructive American commitment to states vulnerable to aggression and terrorist attack, and to the support of the international order in its totality. For this commitment to be effective in preserving peace, the United States and its allies must be willing to cast a very wide net. Because the fundamental strategy is to reinforce statehood against attack, the "coalition" must be open to virtually any state fearful of Islamism's threat to its sovereignty.

International terrorism is an existential threat not only to states and their peoples, but also to the very idea that peace can be established in an international system that can

accommodate differing political and religious views. American power in the emerging security environment of the 21st century then will have three purposes. First, with members of the "coalition," we must assure support to weaker states when education, health and economic development can make headway against violent and reactionary insurgencies from whatever source. Second, our forces will defeat insurgencies at the very earliest stages possible before they can challenge directly the well being of coalition partners, whether by insurgency or direct attack. Finally, American military power must remain strong and flexible enough to deter and defeat more conventional threats to world peace posed by renegade states particularly those who threaten the use of nuclear weapons such as North Korea or Iran. This breadth of requirements has implications for our military with special emphasis on land forces. Equally important are implications for shifting focus away from technological to human approaches to solving military problems with a concomitant need to expand human capital development with a renewed emphasis on education and cultural awareness.

This change in strategy is likely to receive broad acceptance. Despite sometimes-serious differences between old former Cold War competitors, and more contemporary spats between the U.S. and its more traditional allies, all are concerned to one degree or another with encroaching Islamic insurgencies. As Islamic radicals become more radical and their conduct more horrifying they are beginning to trump any lingering resentment of American power. Indeed, our European allies, after a period of hesitation, now are more engaged than ever, most notably in Afghanistan, and with unassimilated Islamic communities in their own states. This trend is liable to continue as the nature of the challenge becomes ever more apparent. We must shape our engagement with the rest of the world to encourage this trend rather than frustrate it by unilateral action, however impatient we may be for action. We must do all we can to assist and accelerate the radical's propensity to destroy themselves. We must aggressively pursue them throughout the globe so that they will not be able to conclude the U.S. is decreasing its commitment to destroy them.

These policies of forward engagement on the ground with our allies, encouragement of developing states, prevention or deterrence of insurgencies and conventional conflict are all the more urgent because, in coming decades, nuclear weapons are likely to proliferate among potentially hostile states. The highest priority for defense planning must be the containment of proliferation, prevention of further proliferation and the aggressive strategy to keep nuclear materials and weapons out of irresponsible hands. Containment, prevention and deterrence must be equally grave concerns for our allies. The development and support of allied military capabilities to counter, contain and deter use of nuclear weapons by rogue states or by terrorist groups should be a high priority for the coalition.

The concept of "detering" nuclear weapons must be reshaped to accommodate coalitions of enlightened states. Cold War nuclear deterrence strategies assumed a rough symmetry of concerns. Deterrence strategies in the 21st century must be tailor-made to specific threats. We must greatly expand our intelligence cooperation with allied states and share sensitive information to a much greater degree if we are to receive in kind information about threats in their respective regions. Some potential nuclear powers may be deterred by tit-for-tat threats to highly valued targets. Others may not. Stateless terrorists, in particular, may not have conventional concerns. A 21st century deterrence strategy must include an intelligence establishment sufficiently informed to determine what, if anything, terrorists prize sufficiently to hold at risk. Coalition partners will be essential to this kind of intimate regional expertise, and information and intelligence barriers within like-minded states must be lowered.

The Shape of Tomorrow's Military

The American military's response to current threats is affected by the remarkable explosion in popular communication. The networked world changes military strategy at every level. Media perceptions influence the manner in which strategic goals are formulated and achieved. Information will be the glue that ties the Coalition together and gives it the courage and sense of common purpose to outlast its enemies. Force structures

must deter nuclear war, maintain the ability to fight the “Long War” and be prepared to dominate conventional conflict.

The nature of the radical threat virtually guarantees that current and future land forces of the Army, Marines and National Guard will bear the brunt of operational missions. Contemporary experience has convinced all land components -- the Army, Marine Corps and special operating forces -- that their various missions have become intermingled to the extent that they can never again be viewed as separate and distinct. As the military service most forward-engaged during the Cold War, the Army was affected most by the decision to home-base most combat forces and to rapidly deploy them overseas in crisis through "lily pad" bases. To be sure early arrival in a threatened region is still necessary to halt aggression. But national interests important enough for immediate intercession are likely to be contested by opponents who have learned in Iraq and Afghanistan that the United States can best be defeated by prolonging every conflict. Thus future wars will demand ground structures that are robust and sustainable enough to fight extended campaigns.

The ground services must expand to accommodate greater US Government support to new coalition partners. This could take the form of support to expanded, more capable U.S. embassies worldwide and more permanently-based overseas advisory capabilities (similar to the structure of Military Advisory and Assistance Groups) in threatened states around the world. In consequence, total Army structure must be organized to support not only direct combat missions but also missions to train, advise and equip host country armies on a long-term basis.

The Army and Marine Corps have a long tradition of coalition making. During the Cold War they proved remarkably competent in the complex tasks necessary to stitch together coalitions by building, often from whole cloth, effective indigenous armies in such remote places as Greece, Korea, Vietnam, El Salvador and now in Iraq. During the early days of the Cold War Congress enacted the Lodge Act intended to bring into the service émigrés native to countries from behind the Iron Curtin. Sadly history has forgotten that

the Act proved to be enormously successful. Foreign born soldiers formed the soul of the 10th Special Forces Group in Europe during the Cold War. After the abortive Bay of Pigs operation Cuban émigrés found their way into American ground units and served with great distinction. We will not be able to meet the demands of the future unless Congress enacts something analogous to the Lodge Act. We must open enlistments to young men and women native to threatened regions of the world. After five years honorable service they (and their immediate families) should be given full citizenship. We have much to learn from the Cold War.

The unique skills required to perform coalition building have rarely been valued or rewarded within the services. Today's soldiers and Marines would prefer to be recognized as operators rather than advisors. This must change. If our success in coalition building will depend on the ability to create and improve partner armies then we must select, promote and put into positions of authority those who can do so. We must cultivate, amplify, research and inculcate these skills in educational institutions reserved specifically for that purpose. The Army and Marine Corps should create "universal foreign area officers", not a specialty but a service wide system of reward for excellence in the ability of individual officers and selected NCOs to perform these unique tasks. No officer should be allowed beyond the grade of lieutenant colonel without demonstrating a working knowledge of a language spoken in a region potentially threatening to the interests of the United States.

Naval forces have also broken old patterns of behavior and organization in the post-9/11 world. Gone is the clockwork pattern of six-month deployments that marked naval operations for decades; now naval forces sortie as needed to maintain a naval presence or to respond to crises worldwide. A farsighted concept to establish forward naval bases in areas of strategic importance is being developed and implemented. The continuing -- and improving -- capability of navies to operate together to secure sea lanes, interdict suspect shipping and control global oceans is enormously important for the future security of the U.S. and its allies. Where US forces are committed to a theater the Navy will be required to train the local brown water forces. Skills normally associated with the Coast Guard

will be in greater demand, especially with allies. Naval participation in Advisory groups will be required in coastal countries vulnerable to insurgencies and terrorism. Finally, the U.S. Navy's embrace of an antimissile role is a revolutionary step for the service and fills a vital national need unlikely to be provided any other way.

The United States Marine Corps remains a special service, but its combat units will be more integrated with Army forces than ever before. The experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq have buried the days when land operations were divided into autarkic Army-Marine sectors. The two dominant ground services must continue the efforts to build doctrine and battle command for seamless integration. Whatever service roles & missions say, the Marines have become, in effect, another essential ground force and will remain so. The Corps should play a proportionate role in the establishment of advisory groups, in advising and training allied forces and in other fields, and in other functions as they arise.

Air and Space forces are undergoing a transformation in several dimensions. The theory of victory through strategic bombardment, the original rationale for an independent Air Force, is as dead as Douhet. But the need for command of the air-space envelope over the battlefield and over the theater is more vital than ever, given the increasing dependence on space for communications, intelligence and guidance systems for all armies. Missile defense will be increasingly important as more hostile nations get advanced missile technology; if the other side can launch missiles at vital targets, as Hezbollah did during the recent war in Lebanon, then "air superiority" has not been achieved, regardless of whether the enemy flies manned fighters or bombers.

Finally, airlift, the ugly duckling of airpower, will increasingly play a critical and increasing role in U.S. strategy. Insurgent enemies will continue to contest us in the most remote and inhospitable regions of the planet where only an aerial approach is possible. U.S. airlift not only flies troops and equipment to crises, but also delivers relief supplies to allies when disaster strikes, carries long-haul supplies and replacements to forces abroad, and generally goes anywhere where the U.S. has interests. The Air Force's major tailoring for the "Long War" should be to expand its ability to conduct aerial maneuver

over great distances and to place soldiers and Marines in “positions of advantage” in order to lessen the cost in lives of the ground campaign to follow.

The expansion of special operations forces (SOF) should continue at a pace consistent with training and equipping these forces. Service leaders, though, should work strenuously to insure that both SOF and conventional-force doctrines complement one another, and combat lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq are absorbed to ensure that command and control mechanisms are designed to insure unity of effort and accountability. The "big Army" and "big Marine Corps" will become more involved in the training and advising of foreign militaries. SOF should complement conventional forces with area skills and parallel training plans for indigenous or tribal populations. As the United States tailors its forces for the Long War, operations by conventional forces and SOF must inevitably move closer together to insure seamless operations.

The need for updated, accurate and reliable strategic nuclear forces to provide nuclear deterrence must not be neglected in the decades of the Long War. As long as nuclear weapons exist on earth, the United States must mount a credible deterrent to their use, and for the foreseeable future, deterrence requires a capability for in-kind retaliation for certain potential foes. Certainly future nuclear weapons must be more discriminate and reliable than their predecessors, and in so being some may be smaller in yield than the Cold War "city busters" of the '60s and '70s. Regardless of threat, nuclear weapons, the deterrence strategies derived from them, and doctrines for their use remain a vital part of any future U.S. defense strategy.

The Army and Marine corps are woefully undermanned to perform the function of coalition building. They need more manpower to be sure but not specialty units narrowly designed to perform non combat missions. The same flexible, full spectrum battalion and brigade building blocks, sufficiently modernized, to be capable of fighting kinetic wars will serve well enough for coalition building. However, a change in military strategy that focuses on coalition building will cause a shift in classical centers of gravity from influencing the will of governments and armies to changing the perceptions of

populations. Victory will be defined more in terms of capturing the psychological rather than the geographical high ground. Understanding and empathy will be important weapons of war. Soldier conduct will be as important as skill at arms. Culture awareness and the ability to build ties of trust will offer protection to our troops more effectively than body armor. Leaders will seek wisdom and quick but reflective thought rather than operational and planning skills as essential intellectual tools for guaranteeing future victories.

To achieve such a cultural shift in strategic emphasis the Army and Marine Corps will need many more individuals selected, trained and educated to perform human as well as warfighting tasks. We will need Soldiers and Marines capable of fighting an enemy one moment and offering humanitarian assistance the next. Many more officers, educated in our best graduate schools, and possessed with political and diplomatic skills will be needed to gain the trust of leaders from alien armies. In the man-on-man and small-unit dogfights of counterinsurgency operations, and in the countless interactions between U.S. combat forces and the inhabitants of threatened regions of the world, the training, professionalism and dedication of individuals will make the difference between success and failure.

Even a much expanded ground force will not provide the numbers to engage and defeat a numerous enemy dispersed across the globe. We need willing partners to succeed. To be sure we must be capable of fighting and winning when necessary. But our military must be able to expand its influence, to amplify its reach and power by building a body of dedicated capable fellow travelers sharing the burden of the long war. We must reshape and rebalance our military soon to optimize its ability to be the lead agent in forming a new coalition of enlightened states. The fate of the nation depends on it.