



Six Steps to a Safer America

National Security and the 2005 Budget

**Lawrence J. Korb
Senior Fellow
Center for American Progress**

January 29, 2004

Six Steps to a Safer America: National Security and the 2005 Budget

Next week, President Bush will submit his budget for the upcoming fiscal year. That budget will define America's priorities at a time when we face unprecedented security challenges. Given the hard choices at hand, the president should take the six specific policy and budgetary steps outlined below. These six steps will dramatically strengthen our global military posture and maximize our ability to confront the greatest security challenge facing our nation: keeping nuclear, chemical and biological weapons from falling into the grasp of unstable nations or terrorists with global reach. To achieve these goals, we need a budget that will:

- Increase the size of the active Army to a 12-division force from the current 10 divisions, and field a division devoted to stabilization and reconstruction.
- Provide necessary but currently missing battlefield equipment and greater protection for both active troops and reservists.
- Stem the emerging retention crisis by supporting military personnel and their families with increased health and education benefits.
- Strengthen the capacity of the National Guard to protect our homeland from nuclear, chemical and biological attacks.
- Dramatically expand programs that secure or destroy nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, materials and technologies by increasing funding for Nunn-Lugar to \$2 billion from its current level of \$450 million.
- Broaden international efforts to hunt down and secure or destroy weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by ensuring that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has the resources it needs to do the job.

These are concrete initiatives the Administration can take immediately to better protect the American people – without increasing our nation's deficit.

The Bush Administration's National Security Strategy (NSS) of September 2002 is built on three pillars: the right to take unilateral preemptive military action; the need to maintain global primacy; and the need to spread democracy throughout the world. But events of the past sixteen months have demonstrated that this strategy is inconsistently applied, dangerously open-ended, divorced from existing military capabilities, destabilizing and unrealistic. Ultimately, it is detrimental to our long-term interests.

To deal with the threats we face, the United States needs a realistic, effective and sustainable national security strategy and a defense budget that reinforces our strategic goals. Over the next year, the Center for American Progress will outline a comprehensive national security strategy that addresses national defense and military transformation; curbs the spread of WMD; confronts terrorism and the conditions on which it feeds; and integrates local and federal resources and capabilities to improve homeland security. Our strategy is based on the clear need to harness all components of American power – diplomatic, economic and technological, as well as military – in order to protect our vital interests.

“Six Steps to a Safer America” outlines policies that can be implemented immediately to advance this strategy. Our new initiatives to strengthen our armed forces recognize that the United States must stay the course and meet its responsibilities in Iraq, despite the Administration’s specious motives for waging that preventive war. Our recommendations for ways to improve and expand programs, aimed at stopping the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, take aim at the primary threat to our national security. Taken together, these six steps will give our military the support it needs to execute successfully its missions anywhere in the world; advance stability and democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan; begin to re-orient the military to the kinds of missions it will face in today’s complex international environment; and expand critical programs that are proven to reduce the risk that terrorists or hostile nations will acquire deadly weapons.

Toward a Realistic National Security Strategy

In recent years, the United States has faced new and formidable challenges, including the tragic events of September 11, the war against Iraq and its bloody aftermath, the increase in global terror, continuing threats from countries such as North Korea and Iran, and failed states in the developing world. It is imperative today that the United States design and implement a comprehensive national security strategy that will safeguard our national interests; deter our enemies or potential adversaries; and enjoy the support of the American people and our allies.

The Bush policy of preventive war correctly argues that the most serious threats to the security of the American people come from the combination of terrorists, rogue states and WMD. And yet, the Administration’s actions do not add up to a coherent short- or long-term strategy capable of reducing these risks. Their arguments and actions fall short on five fronts.

First, as a recent U.S. Army War College study notes,¹ the Bush Administration has diverted our forces and energies from the primary threats to our security by conflating our enemies into a single monolithic threat and threatening preemptive action against all of them. Moreover, it has given rogue regimes precisely the justification they need to develop their own nuclear, chemical and biological weapons capabilities. In effect, the “Bush doctrine” legitimizes their disregard for international norms under the guise of defensive measures. This is true of North Korea, which resumed reprocessing of plutonium after the Bush Administration included it in its rhetorical “axis of evil.”

Second, the Administration has inconsistently implemented its preventive war strategy and has created opportunities for our enemies. The Administration justified a preventive war against the Iraqi regime in large part by claiming that it was dangerously close to acquiring nuclear weapons. We now know this not to be true. Yet, when it comes to the rogue regime in North Korea, which is reported to have nuclear weapons capability, the Bush Administration has pursued an inconsistent course on both military and diplomatic fronts that has given North Korea the time to continue developing nuclear weapons.

Well before September 11, virtually all intelligence assessments ranked North Korea ahead of Iraq as a threat to our most vital interests. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, as chair of the Congressionally-mandated “Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States,” concurred with these assessments in a document produced by that group in 1998. In fact,

the current deployment scheme for the limited National Missile Defense capability being established this year in Alaska and California is designed to counteract the North Korea threat first, and only subsequently the Middle East. Yet, in the face of provocative and potentially destabilizing actions by North Korea, the Administration put North Korea on the back burner.

Third, as we have seen most vividly in Iraq, there is a mismatch between the Administration's policies and the resources it has devoted to carrying them out. The U.S. Army, which is the Administration's primary instrument for waging preventive war against rogue regimes, does not have the mix of capabilities required to carry out these tasks. To paraphrase recently retired Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, the Administration is trying to implement a twelve-division strategy with a ten-division Army.² Given the Administration's decision to invade Iraq – a “war of choice” without adequate international involvement or support – the U.S. Army cannot meet all of its commitments without “breaking the force.”

Fourth, by attempting to maintain military superiority and trying to impose democracy and free markets throughout the world, our country will ultimately over-extend itself and take on the trappings of an empire. President Bush claims that we do not have imperial ambitions, but our actions abroad have already unleashed a global anti-American backlash – especially in the Islamic world – that makes it ever more difficult to protect our people at home and abroad. At the same time, we are on the verge of losing track of our most important security priorities and suffering battle fatigue at home – a situation very similar to the war in Vietnam, when successive American Presidents committed national blood and treasure to a peripheral cause that was not essential to the overarching strategic goal of containing Soviet Communist expansion.

Fifth, by emphasizing military action as our primary strategic weapon, the Bush Administration gives short shrift to the threats to our national security posed by global poverty, growing international crime and the increasing isolation of the United States from like-minded states. Pursuing a unilateral foreign policy may make for effective partisan politics at home, but it has poisoned our relations abroad and increased the burden on our military and taxpayers. The result: more American deaths in Iraq since the President proclaimed “Mission Accomplished” than during active combat; a \$120 billion bill for hard-working Americans that will likely double over the next two years; and much less global influence as we seek help in combating threats that know no borders.

We advocate a different national security strategy – one based on reality, not ideology and false illusions. It agrees that terrorists with a global reach (as opposed to all terrorists), rogue states, and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and materials are the most serious threats to U.S. security and the American way of life. Our strategy is based, however, on a hard-headed analysis of each individual threat and on the knowledge that we cannot deal with these threats effectively in all places and every time through the unilateral use of U.S. military force.

Our strategy – and the initiatives we will advocate in the upcoming year – is based on these principles:

Focus on the primary threat to the security of the United States. The threat today is terrorists with a global reach, like Al Qaeda and its affiliates. While the United States must combat global

terrorism that threatens U.S. interests, the security of the United States is not threatened equally by all terrorists or tyrants. Therefore, the U.S. must give priority to minimizing the threat from Al Qaeda, and employ different tactics in order to reduce the support the network might receive from rogue regimes. The U.S. must also prevent such groups from obtaining nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, materials and technologies.

We must not underestimate this threat. The rapid dissemination of destructive technologies and sensitive information, combined with international capital flows, gives groups like Al Qaeda the power to strike more quickly and nimbly than ever before. Moreover, if and when these actors acquire the materials or expertise needed to build weapons of mass destruction, any attacks they carry out will be much more devastating. Disturbingly, there is a ready supply of these components in the former Soviet Union and other nations with porous borders and poor internal security. As the world's leading military and economic power, the United States is the most likely target of these terrorists and tyrants.

In the face of, and in response to, these imminent dangers, our nation has not only the duty but also the legal and moral right to act preemptively and unilaterally if necessary. But we also have a duty not to forget the lessons of history. Contrary to the assumptions behind the Bush approach, the fundamental precepts of U.S. national security policy did not change as a result of September 11. Decisive action in the face of emerging problems is necessary, but containment, deterrence and international support are as vital to our security today as they have been for the past six decades. Ironically, the fact that weapons inspectors now say that no actual weapons of mass destruction will be found in Iraq demonstrates that the containment policy with respect to Iraq actually worked.

Ensure that our armed forces are strong enough to carry out their missions. The debate over military transformation must go far beyond battlefield technology. It must focus on the people who fight our battles. We need a military that is large and well-equipped enough to carry out multiple tasks in many theaters across the globe. Iraq and Afghanistan are only two such locations. And we must also support active duty forces and citizen soldiers from the National Guard and Reserves on many fronts – from making sure they know their missions abroad to helping their families at home.

Use every weapon in our arsenal – diplomatic, economic, technological and military. Force as the centerpiece of a national security strategy will not by itself be able to address all transnational threats. Military power makes important contributions to U.S. security, but there are dangers in relying on it too much. Preventive attacks against established states, even rogue nations, are but one possible tactical response to a strategic threat, not a strategy by itself.

The United States must emphasize diplomatic and economic cooperation – from strengthening treaty regimes to increasing development assistance – as well as military force. We need to remain the strongest military power on earth, but we should also lead collective efforts to gather intelligence on threats that extend beyond borders; prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction; confront health, humanitarian, environmental and other catastrophes that can lead to failed states; and undertake many other tasks that contribute to our security.

Work with allies and international institutions to best advance our national interests. This does not mean giving other nations a veto over America's pursuit of its security, nor does it naively hold that the national interests of others can always be set aside to achieve consensus in favor of U.S. interests and values. But alliances provide a vital framework to achieve a shared perception of common threats and a shared responsibility for the cost of action. They enhance rather than detract from our power and ability to succeed in today's complex threat environment.

While the short-term threats to the American people come from terrorists with a global reach, rogue states, and WMD, our country is also threatened by the longer-term effects of global poverty, the nexus of terrorism and international crime, and the increasing isolation of the United States from like-minded states. The best way, if not the only way, to address these threats is by using all forms of American power in conjunction with international support.

Yes, the United States alone can inflict military defeat on just about any state in the world, as we have seen in Afghanistan and Iraq. But we do not have the capacity to turn a battlefield victory into a political one or to counter the threats from global terrorists adequately without broad-based international cooperation. The United States must take a leadership role in, and increase its financial commitments to, organizations that try to solve the economic, social, and health problems that help create a climate in which radicalism can flourish.

Fighting global terrorism requires us to take advantage of new synergies in global law enforcement, intelligence sharing, and efforts to thwart money laundering. U.S. power and technology must be used to strengthen these norms and institutions designed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the biological and chemical weapons conventions, the comprehensive test ban treaty, and the IAEA, which we rely on to verify that countries like Iran and Libya are meeting their treaty obligations.

At the same time, existing cooperative security agreements, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), should be further adapted to deal with the new threat environment. New security enhancing mechanisms with our friends in Asia must also be explored. Former adversaries, such as Russia and China, should be integrated into an international system that supports U.S. values, and preventive diplomacy must be used to quell conflicts before they erupt into major crises.

Promote an integrated international and domestic strategy. We must better integrate our military options with our diplomatic, economic and intelligence-gathering priorities. We need a single, unified national security budget to replace today's complex, sprawling mix of categories. We must pursue an integrated homeland security strategy – working to make sure that it matches our international priorities and programs, and reflects and supports the needs and capabilities of states, cities and local communities. And in Washington, we must reach across the partisan divide in order to promote more effectively policies that help every American.

These principles underlie our more realistic national security strategy. They offer a stronger path to combating the many threats we face, chief among them the deadly combination of a terrorist or rogue regime armed with a nuclear, chemical or biological weapon. Our strategy will help support

our men and women in uniform and provide them with more of the resources and capabilities that we need in a dynamic global security environment. But it will go beyond a reflexive reliance on military power, and exploit to the maximum every international and domestic capability we possess. By integrating alliances and international institutions, responding to local needs, and matching resources to risks, our strategy offers a better path to protecting the American people and advancing our national interests.

Six Steps to a Safer America

No national security strategy, no matter how well conceived, can be effective unless adequate resources are provided to carry it out. Today, the United States is engaged in a multi-front and multi-faceted campaign against terrorism. Military assets, particularly the U.S. Army, are a central component in this effort, and the country requires new kinds of capabilities to succeed in the threat environment of the 21st century. Transformation of our weapons and tactics is part of the solution, but without the ability to retain the forces we have and recruit more of what we need, the military will develop serious problems that could take a generation or more to fix. The effectiveness of our armed forces depends not just on smart bombs, but on smart, well-trained, and highly motivated people.

To begin this effort in the year ahead, we recommend the following changes to the defense budget.

Step One: Increase the size of the active Army to a 12-division force from the current 10 divisions, and field a division devoted to stabilization and reconstruction. This action, as suggested by former Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki,³ will enable the Army to provide adequate security in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as meet its global commitments without undermining its long term readiness, relying unduly on the Reserve component or jeopardizing the all-volunteer army. It will increase the size of the active duty force to 520,000 from 480,000. The Administration's existing plan for personnel transformation – expanding civilian responsibilities for duties that do not require military personnel – is not enough. While these changes are useful, the Administration exaggerates the impact they will have.

Put simply, more Army troops with different capabilities are required – in particular, those specialties that are critical in the kind of post-conflict situations that we are confronting in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army should create an active duty division dedicated to stabilization and reconstruction that can help turn battlefield victory into political and economic stability. It also needs many more military police, civil affairs, engineering and medical personnel in the active force. We estimate the cost of this additional force structure to be \$4.8 billion (\$1.2 billion for each additional 10,000 soldiers).⁴

Step Two: Provide necessary but currently missing battlefield equipment and greater protection for both active troops and reservists. One of the most pressing military challenges is protecting our people and maintaining high retention rates even with today's increased operational tempo. Additional efforts to enhance our ability to deploy ground forces rapidly and enable them to operate in urban environments must be taken. Soldiers must have more predictable rotation schedules. We must supply the best equipment to our active duty troops and citizen soldiers,

regardless of their status or unit. For example, all soldiers should be equipped with ceramic body armor, which has been so scarce that families have taken to providing it for their loved ones overseas.⁵ Furthermore, the equipment soldiers regularly use, such as Humvees, should have armor sufficient to protect against rocket propelled grenades.⁶ All helicopters, even those in the Reserve component, should be equipped with anti-missile devices.⁷ The estimated total cost of protecting our forces with necessary equipment would be \$1 billion.

Step Three: Stem the emerging retention crisis by supporting military personnel and their families with increased health and education benefits. Both active duty forces and reservists deserve our country's support on and off the battlefield. First, reservists and their families should be able to enter the military's health care system.⁸ The military should reimburse reservists who elect to maintain health coverage through their civilian jobs when they are mobilized. The total cost of these steps would amount to about \$2 billion a year.

Second, the Administration should provide consistent quality education for military families, since spouses and families factor significantly into reenlistment decisions. With a defense budget request this year of about \$420 billion, there is no reason that schools on military bases should be closed. This service will cost about \$363 million (33,000 students at \$11,000 per student).⁹ The total estimated cost of supporting military personnel and their families off the battlefield would be \$2.4 billion.

Step Four: Strengthen the capacity of the National Guard to protect our homeland from nuclear, chemical and biological attacks. The Administration should increase the number of WMD support teams in the National Guard to 100 from its present level of 32 to assist local authorities in the event of a biological, chemical or nuclear weapons attack on the United States. The 2002 Hart-Rudman task force on homeland security drew a similar conclusion.¹⁰ Given the nature of the threat to the American public, key infrastructure and defense industries, and the existing capabilities of local and state officials, this nation needs at least 100 of these teams as soon as possible. Since the one-time cost of forming each team is about \$8 million, adding these additional 68 teams would come to about \$0.5 billion.¹¹

Step Five: Dramatically expand programs that secure or destroy nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, materials and technologies by increasing funding for Nunn-Lugar to \$2 billion from its current level of \$450 million.¹² Nunn-Lugar helps the states of the former Soviet Union protect their nuclear weapons, materials and delivery systems. Despite the Administration's reluctance to provide adequate resources, this program has deactivated 5,990 nuclear warheads, destroyed 479 ballistic missiles and employed more than 22,000 scientists who worked previously in weapons of mass destruction programs.¹³ In addition to increasing funding for the program, the Administration should propose expanding Nunn-Lugar in and beyond the former Soviet Union by initiating an international program that secures and destroys weapons of mass destruction-related materials and technology, and makes provisions for relevant scientists. This would require an increase in the defense budget of \$1.5 billion.

Step Six: Broaden international efforts to hunt down and secure or destroy weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by ensuring that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has the resources it needs to do the job. We encourage continued engagement of and support for the IAEA, especially as the Agency is called on to play a central role in managing challenges like verifying the disarmament of Iran and Libya. The IAEA's Regular Budget for FY 2004 is \$268.5 million, of which the United States, through the Department of State, contributed \$54 million. The United States Department of Energy also contributes several million dollars directly to the Agency's verification efforts. This marks the first time in over a decade that IAEA member states approved a real budget increase for the agency. This is an important step forward in closing the resources-expectations gap that has beleaguered the world's leading nuclear surety and security agency. We support the Administration's targeted support for the IAEA's important safeguards programs, but these contributions should be made a permanent part of the Agency's budget to ensure that funding for these important programs is predictable and stable.

Budgetary Offsets

Our recommendations will require adding about \$10 billion in new programs to the FY 2005 defense budget, but this does not mean that the Pentagon budget has to be increased from its level of \$420 billion. Costs can be offset through the following adjustments to existing or projected major procurement programs in the defense budget. We recommend the following:

- Continue a robust research and development program on a limited national missile defense capability, but postpone operational decisions, including deployment in Alaska and California, until the technology is fully tested and proven effective. Funding could thus be reduced from its level of \$10 billion to \$5 billion.¹⁴
- Accelerate the retirement of strategic nuclear weapons consistent with existing arms control agreements with Russia and cancel research on the new nuclear "bunker buster" weapon. This would not only save \$2 billion a year, but would reinforce America's commitment to the global non-proliferation regime.
- Fulfill President Bush's 1999 pledge to skip the next generation of Cold War era acquisition programs in favor of new technologies that meet the needs of the more dynamic battlefield of the 21st century. Just two examples:
 - Cancel the \$73 billion F/A-22 fighter program,¹⁵ which is behind schedule, over budget and plagued by technical problems. The Defense Department should continue its commitment to the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) – which will improve U.S. inter-operability with international forces at about 25 percent the cost of the F/A-22 – and continue production of the F-16 Block 60's (about one-sixth the cost of the F/A-22) as a bridge to the JSF. Based on current funding levels, canceling the F/A-22 and buying the F-16s will free up at least \$3 billion a year.
 - Cancel the \$74 billion Virginia class submarine program, while extending the service life of Los Angeles class submarines. This will save \$2 billion annually.

By following these offset recommendations, which alone total \$12 billion, the Administration could meet the budgetary needs of the “Six Steps” and better ensure the safety and prosperity of the American people.

¹ <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/2003/bounding/bounding.pdf>

² General Shinseki made this comment in his June 2003 retirement speech.

³ <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/02/28/iraq/printable542345.shtml>

⁴ <http://www.roundupnews.com/news/2004/01/22/News/Rumsfeld.Says.More.Troops.Are.Unnecessary.Costly-585922.shtml>

⁵ <http://www.msnbc.com/news/1000971.asp?cp1=1;>

⁶ <http://www.sunherald.com/mld/sunherald/news/politics/7337968.htm>

⁷ <http://www.news8.net/news/stories/1103/109127.html>

⁸ <http://www.senate.gov/~leahy/press/200304/041003b.html>

⁹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A13363-2003Dec18?language=printer>

¹⁰ http://www.cfr.org/pdf/Homeland_Security_TF.pdf

¹¹ http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Jan2004/n01202004_200401201.html

¹² http://64.177.207.201/pages/8_296.html

¹³ http://lugar.senate.gov/nunn_lugar_program.html

¹⁴ http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=317&Month=9&Year=2003

¹⁵ Selected Acquisition Report, Department of Defense, Dec 31, 2002.