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# Preserving the Balance

## A U.S. Eurasia Defense Strategy

Andrew F. Krepinevich

- Objective: Craft a defense U.S. strategy for Eurasia whose primary purpose is to prevent the emergence of a hegemonic power
- Constraints: The strategy must be limited by projected resource constraints
- Focus: Not a national security strategy; rather, a defense strategy
- Time Frame: 10-20 year planning horizon
- Detail: Far greater than the “classic” Cold War strategies, but not a detailed posture statement

*The regional approach remains, however, the best way to deal with political problems. The quest for universality that characterized the League of Nations only led to weakness. The Scandinavian states were not interested in the boundary and power problems of the La Plata region, and the Latin American states were not interested in the questions that confronted eastern Europe.*

Nicholas Spykman

- Return of **protracted** great power competition and **balance of power politics**
- Revisionist powers in three key regions along the Eurasian land mass—a **“strategic choice”** for the US
- **China** poses by far the greatest challenge, in both the near (and likely) long term
- Worrisome U.S. and ally fiscal position
- Absence of consensus on security matters creates tough choices
- U.S. should shift to a **forward defense posture in the Western Pacific Theater** of Operations, even at the expense of the European and Middle East Theaters
- A **“One-and-half” war posture** that also addresses the radical Islamist threat
- **Long-term competition** and **rapid advances in military-related technologies** suggest priority must be accorded to
  - Social dimension of strategy
  - Creating capability options
  - Developing new operational concepts
  - Time-based competition
  - Recalibrating horizontal and vertical escalation “ladders”

- An enduring national interest for a century
- Two major wars in Europe—and one Cold War
- One major war in the Pacific—and a Cold War
- Filling the final gap in the Middle East
- Underlying reasons still obtain
- **Issue:** Is such a strategy within U.S. means?

*The United States must recognize once again, and permanently, that the power constellation in Europe and Asia is of everlasting concern to her, both in time of war and in time of peace.*

Nicholas Spykman

*Any world balance of power means first and foremost a balance on the Eurasian land mass.*

George Kennan

*Soviet domination of the potential power of **Eurasia**, whether achieved by armed aggression or by . . . subversive means, would be strategically and politically unacceptable to the United States.*

NSC 20/4

*The loss of **Western Europe** or of important parts of **Asia** or the **Middle East** would result in a transfer of potential from West to East which . . . might have the gravest consequences in the long run.*

Dean Acheson

*If **Western Europe** were to fall to Soviet Russia it would double the Soviet supply of coal and triple the Soviet supply of steel. If the free nations of **Asia** and Africa should fall to Soviet Russia, we would lose the sources of many of our most vital raw materials . . . . And Soviet command of the manpower of the free nations of Europe and Asia would confront us with military forces which we could never hope to equal.*

President Harry Truman



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# Strategic Assessment

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# Strategic Assessment Geopolitical Sources of Revisionist Behavior

### Principal Objectives

Preserving the regime

Displacing the current international order

Legitimacy	China	Russia	Iran
The Vote	-	-	-
The "Vision"	-	-	?
Prosperity	X	-	-
Nationalism	X	X	?








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# Strategic Assessment Economic

Rival Power	Year	Pct of US GDP
Imperial Germany 	1917	35.6 percent
Nazi Germany 	1943	26.2 percent
Imperial Japan 	1943	13.5 percent
Soviet Russia 	1980	40.4 percent
Communist China 	2014	59.4 percent

Country	GDP (Millions of U.S.\$)
China	\$10,866,444
Russia	\$1,326,015
Iran	\$425,326
	<b>\$12,617, 785</b>
United States	\$17,946,996
Japan	\$4,123,258
Germany	\$3,355,772
United Kingdom	\$2,848,755
France	\$2,421,682
	<b>\$30,696,463</b>

**Item of Interest:** Who is better able to translate latent military **potential** into military **capability**?



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# Strategic Assessment Demographics

- Demographic trends have **important second-order implications** for military competitions and the military balance
- All the major powers save the U.S. and India are in “demographic decline”
- **U.S. competitive position is strong**; stronger still if India emerges as a reliable partner
- U.S. has an advantage in **quantity and quality** (education; tech literacy) over Russia and Iran; lacks same v. China
- Despite advantageous U.S. profile, demographic weakness of others could be a source of security problems (**China’s sex ratio imbalance**; “**Rich Millions**” and “**Poor Billions**”)

### Items of interest

- Substitution of “capital” for “labor” (such as robotics and AI)
- Geography and logistics will limit ability to project large ground forces

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# Strategic Assessment Military-Technical

The U.S. military remains the world's finest—but its advantages are diminishing

- Anti-Access/Area-Denial Forces
- Advanced Irregular (aka Gray Area") Warfare
- Blurring of Conventional, Cyber and Nuclear operations
- "New" Warfare Domains (space, cyberspace, the undersea infrastructure)
- The potential of emerging technologies (AI, Big Data, Bio, DE, etc.) to alter the competition

### Items of Interest

What is the "new normal?"

Any "new normal" may not last long . . . hence the search for the "next big thing(s)"

Need to balance maintaining **capability in the near term** with creating **options for the long term**

The background of the slide is a stylized, semi-transparent map of the Pacific region, showing the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Pacific Islands. The map is rendered in shades of blue and green, with a subtle grid pattern overlaid on it.

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# U.S. Resource Assessment





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# Resource Assessment Fiscal

- U.S. financial position has declined dramatically over the past 15 years
- U.S. fiscal woes primarily the result, not of imperial overstretch, but entitlement and debt overstretch
- Projected rapid and sustained growth in entitlement spending and in debt

	2015	2026 (CBO est.)	Change
Mandatory Spending	\$2,299B	\$4,412B	+92%
Net Interest Payments	\$223B	\$830B	+272%

- State and Local pensions unfunded liabilities: \$5,000,000,000,000
- Social Security trust fund projected exhausted in 2034; Medicare in 2030

- Sequestration doesn't address the problem, nor does it help U.S. defense
- DoD faces potential ~\$275 billion program-funding mismatch in FY 2018-22
- Defense spending projected to decline to 2.6 percent of GDP by mid-2020s

#### Items of Interest

- Little likelihood of “20-year boost”—even with rising threats
- Absent clear and present danger, steady downward pressure on budgets
- In major war, U.S. may be faced with defeat or undesirable escalation
- U.S. potentially on a path toward social instability as well

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# Resource Assessment Manpower

- Demography only tells part of the story—must consider the available manpower pool
- Anyone in the U.S. (and most major ally) manpower pools can avoid service
- Many in the manpower pool are unfit for service
- Thus despite large “raw” numbers, **manpower is difficult/expensive to access/retain**
- Small, elite force may be sufficient for the Talibans, al-Qaedas and ISISs of the world, but not likely against China, Russia and Iran
- **Longstanding major allies are even less capable**

### Items of Interest

- Capable manpower rich allies of increasing value; **India** a potentially attractive partner
- **Technologies** that reduce reliance on manpower increasingly attractive
- Find a way out of cost-imposing manpower intensive conflicts—**use of proxies?**

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# Resource Assessment Industrial Base

**Good News.** The U.S. is:

- Rich in raw materials
- Possesses a highly skilled labor force
- Produces more raw materials/industrial products than the “Arsenal of Democracy”

**Good News.** The U.S. Defense Industrial Base is:

- Able to produce highly sophisticated systems in large numbers—given sufficient lead time
- Able to produce a wide array of products—given sufficient lead time
- Moving to substitute capital for labor (“smart” robots) for declining manpower
- Exploring additive manufacturing

**Bad News.** On the other hand, there are areas of potential weakness:

- Great uncertainty over ability to surge and sustain production
- Base is highly concentrated
- No strategic materials stockpile
- Declining labor force
- FAR and environmental regulations could compromise industrial base mobilization

**Items of Interest:**

- Area of considerable importance yet not well understood
- Lack of surge ability may severely limit strategic options

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# Resource Assessment The Social Dimension



The level of human, material and technical resources devoted to the U.S. military ultimately depends upon the American people and their willingness to sacrifice, both in peace and war

- In the abstract, most Americans want to maintain or increase the country's military strength—but are far less willing to pay taxes or forego government benefits to achieve this
- Yet if the U.S. is to address the growing challenges to the balance of power along the Eurasian periphery, it will almost certainly need to augment the size and capabilities of its military

### Items of Interest

- Absent strong leadership, the **people** of the United States and most (and perhaps all) of its major allies are **not inclined to support a substantially greater defense effort**
- **Nor** is there any enthusiasm among the U.S. public or those of its allies in support of **compulsory military service**
- A **compelling strategic narrative** is needed to support the strategy

*If the men and women of America face this issue [communism] as squarely and bravely as their soldiers faced the terrors of battle in World War II, we would have no fear of the outcome . . . . If they can retain **the moral integrity, the clarity of comprehension, and the readiness to sacrifice** that finally crushed the Axis, then the free world will live and prosper, and all peoples, eventually, will reach a level of culture, contentment, and security that has never before been achieved.*

Dwight D. Eisenhower

*Having gotten the issue well defined in my mind, I try in the next step to determine what . . . solution we can get that will best conform to the long term interests of the country and at the same time can **command a sufficient approval in this country so as to secure the necessary Congressional action.***

Dwight D. Eisenhower

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# Resource Assessment The Defense Budget

Defense program in this strategy is based on two options

- President’s budget for FY2018-FY2022, projected along a second FYDP (FY2023-2027)
- “Middle Way” budget; halfway between the FY2012 defense projection and the President’s budget
- Both see a decline in defense funding to 3 percent of GDP—or less

Failure to enact the President’s (PB 17) budget creates significant near/long-term risk

Failure to transition to the “Middle Way” budget likely poses severe long-term risk

Budget Option	FY2018-2022 Pct. GDP	FY2023-2027 Pct. GDP	FY2018-2027 Pct. GDP Average
PB 17	2.75	2.44	2.57
“Middle Way”	3.10	2.85	2.88

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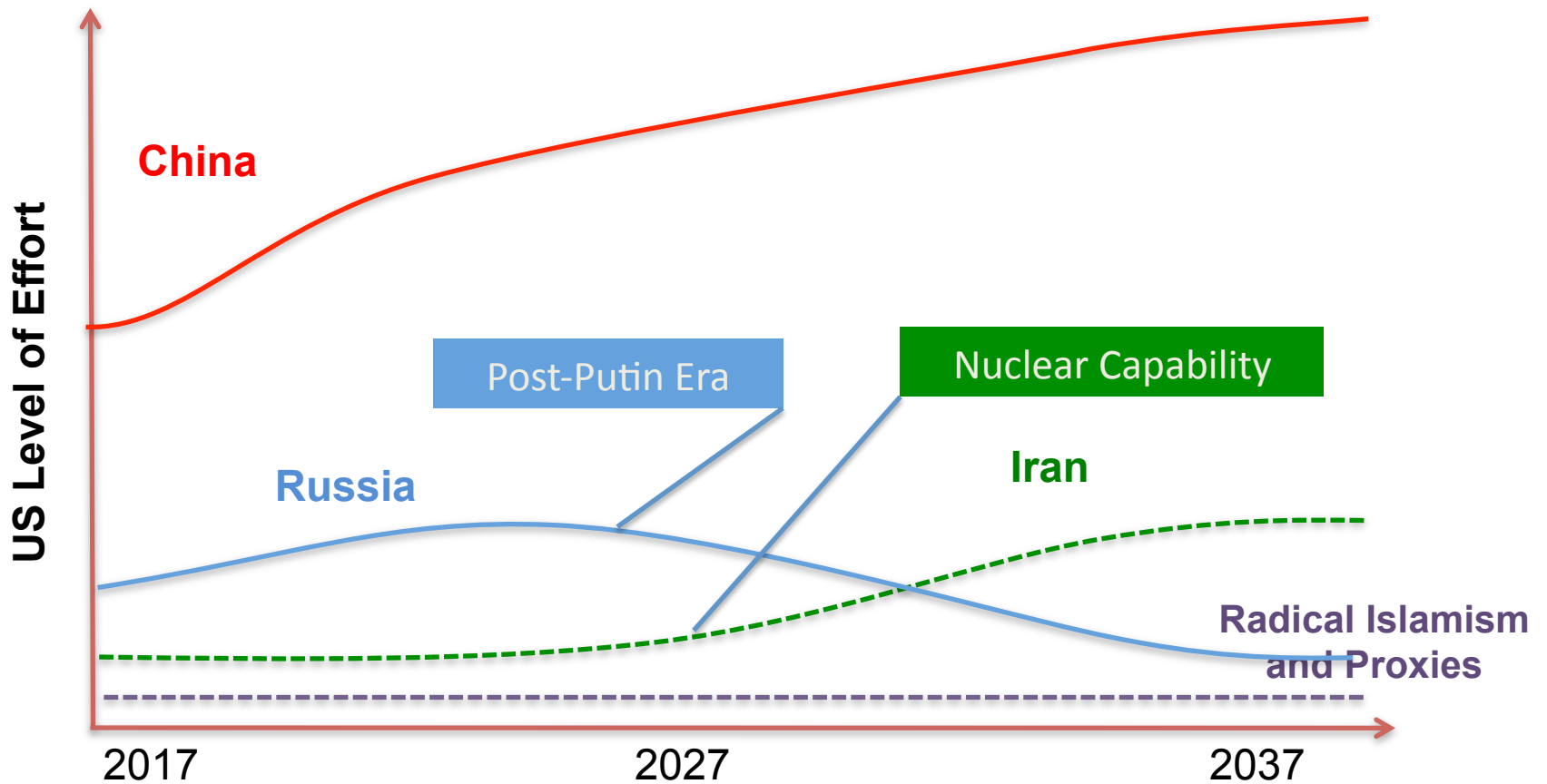
## The Strategy

*The goal is not to hold equally everywhere [but to] hold in enough places, and in sufficient strategic places, to accomplish our general purpose.*

George Kennan

*We must avoid dispersal of our forces when concentration appears to be the wisest cause, especially in view of our present limitations.*

George C. Marshall



Three theaters of operation: Western Pacific (WPTO); European (ETO); and Middle East (METO)

1. What revisionist power has the **greatest military potential** in the near term? Long term?
2. In which theater of operations do we **lack strategic depth**? Where is it most severe?
3. In what theater(s) of operations are **major power frontline allies at risk**?
4. In what theater(s) of operations are **U.S. allies least capable** of mounting an effective independent defense?

Theater of Revisionist Power Greatest Military Potential	Theater Lacking Strategic Depth	Great Power Frontline Ally at Risk	Local Allies Least Capable of Mounting an Independent Defense
Western Pacific	Western Pacific	Western Pacific	Western Pacific
European			Middle East
Middle East			European



Country	GDP (Millions of U.S.\$)
China	\$10,866,444
Japan	\$4,123,258
South Korea	\$1,377,873
Taiwan	\$529,600
Subtotal	\$6,030,731
India	\$2,073,542
Total	\$8,104,273

**Item of Interest:** The gap is widening. Could India prove a valuable partner? Is India a de facto partner? How to exploit India's potential?

Country	GDP (Millions of U.S.\$)
Russia	\$1,326,015
<b>Frontline States</b>	
Baltic States	\$90,969
Poland	\$474,783
Subtotal	\$565,752
Germany	\$3,355,772
United Kingdom	\$2,848,755
France	\$2,421,682
Grand Total	<b>\$9,191,961</b>

**Item of Interest:** “Old NATO” can protect itself, but doesn’t need to; “New NATO” needs to protect itself, but cannot.

Country	GDP (Millions of U.S.\$)
Iran	\$425,326
<b>Frontline States</b>	
Egypt	\$330,778
Israel	\$296,075
Saudi Arabia	\$646,001
UAE	\$370,292
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,643,146</b>

**Item of Interest:** See ETO. Does the U.S. provide the mortar—and the bricks as well?

One **forward-deployed force** capable of waging a major regional war against a great power (WPTO)

One theater-size **“Expeditionary Force”** capable of deploying to ETO or the METO in the event of war; alternatively can reinforce the WPTO

**“Counter-Offensive Force”** capable of retaking lost ground in the WPTO or executing forcible entry options in the METO

**“Strategic Reserve Force”** capable of operating promptly at extended ranges in any of the three theaters; includes nuclear; global precision strike; cyber strike and air/missile defenses

**N.B.: Shift will not occur overnight.**



# Force Sizing Construct

	WPTO Forward Defense	ETO Defense in Depth	METO Advise and Assist
Major War Force	First Priority Forward Deployed		
Principal Air/Naval Force	First Priority Forward Deployed		
Theater Expeditionary Force		First Priority	Second Priority
Counter-Offensive/Forcible Entry	First Priority	Third Priority	Second Priority
Strategic Reserve	First Priority	Second Priority	Third Priority

Primary Mission: Defense of the First Island Chain employing “AirSea Battle” and “Archipelagic Defense” operational concepts

### Geographic Priorities

- Transition to forward defense of the First Island Chain
- Japan primary responsibility in northern sector
- U.S. primary responsibility in southern sector

### Forces

- Cross-domain ground forces forward deployed
- Advanced irregular forces in Philippines and Taiwan (“ArcDef” and “Hard ROC 2.0”)
- U.S. forcible entry forces (USMC; Airborne; Ranger; SOF; Air Assault)
- Distant blockade force (primarily land forces)
- Air and maritime forces serve as mobile operational reserve (“counter-concentration”)
- Global strike and cyber forces act as strategic reserve (“counter-concentration”)

Infrastructure Priorities: base hardening; base dispersal

“Bill payers:” BCTs (Korea War Plan); large surface combatants; non-stealthy tactical recon and strike aircraft

Key Prospective Partners: Australia; India; Indonesia; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Vietnam

Primary Mission: Defend NATO's frontline states

Posture (“Defense in Depth”)(“Tripwire”)

Geographic Priorities

- Baltic States and Poland
- U.S./major NATO allies train, advise and assist frontline states in deterring/countering Russian gray area aggression; developing infrastructure for rapid reinforcement

Forces: U.S./major NATO allies

- Advise/assist frontline states to establish A2/AD “high-low” mix
- Advise/assist in creating UW “G-RAMM” resistance forces
- Support frontline states with extended-range C4ISR/strikes
- Provide expeditionary forces to execute counter-offensive operations
- Provide global strike and cyber forces as strategic reserve

Infrastructure Priorities: Frontline state POMCUS facilities

“Bill payers:” BCTs (adapt to “New Model” BCTs); non-stealthy tactical recon/strike aircraft

Key Allies and Prospective Partners: Frontline States; France/Germany/UK; Finland/Sweden

### Primary Missions

- Assist local states resist Iranian proxy force aggression/subversion
- Support local states in defeating overt Iranian aggression
- Assist local states against various forms of radical Sunni Islamist warfare
- Defend energy infrastructure and transit routes

### Posture (“Light Footprint”)

Geographic Priorities: Persian Gulf and “Iranian Crescent”

### Forces

- U.S./allied/partner forces train, equip, advise and assist local forces
- U.S./allied/partner forces provide recon and strike /direct action capabilities
- Reduced U.S. air and naval forces serve as operational reserve
- U.S. provides expeditionary and forcible entry forces
- U.S. global strike and cyber forces act as strategic reserve

Infrastructure Priorities: Encourage local efforts to harden energy production and transportation infrastructure

“Bill payers:” Reduced air and maritime presence

Key Prospective Partners: Israel; “Conservative” Arab States; France/UK





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# The Long-Term Competition

## Geopolitical/Geostrategic

- Engage existing allies/partners with **time-phased, adaptive approach** to establishing the regional defense postures (**executing strategy confers advantage**)
- Cultivate Allies/Partners: India, Indonesia; Vietnam, along with Finland and Sweden (**mitigate manpower weakness; recover scale advantage; gain positional advantage**)
- **Divest INF Treaty** (**Eliminate negative asymmetry; impose costs**)
- **“Flip” Russia** (**Enabled increased focus/optimization on WPTO; gain positional advantage**)

## Operational

- Planning against a **contemporary set of Color/Rainbow Plans** (**orient and optimize around “new normals”—the correct “diagnosis”**)
- **Intensive field exercises/experimentation** to operate in the “new normal” environment and search for the “next big thing” (**enhance effectiveness; increase probability of identifying the “next big thing”**)

## Institutional

- Analysis on new **horizontal/vertical escalation ladders**; competitor views/ calculations on warfare; innovative operational concepts; persistent war gaming (ID sources of competitive advantage/weakness; strengthen deterrence)
- Protecting S&T and R&D “seed corn” to **develop options** that can be exercised as the long term comes into focus (reduces uncertainty/enhance time-based competency; impose costs on competitors)
- Develop a core competency in **time-based competition** (create options for U.S.; create uncertainty among rivals; impose costs)
- Identify current ability (and what is needed) to wage successfully a **protracted war** with China (transform a weakness into a strength)

## Social

- Must **develop a compelling strategic narrative** on multiple levels—for the American people; allies and (prospective) partners; and adversary publics (stem erosion of US economic foundation; generate support for necessary defense expenditures; undermine revisionist power ability to translate military potential into military capability)

- Strategy is about **making choices, setting priorities**, deciding what to do and *what not to do*
- Strategy is also about **apportioning risk**; must understand when risk is such that the strategy is “**a strategy of bluff**”
- If “diagnosis” is correct, this strategy **requires increased resources** over time
- Failing that, objectives/commitments will likely need to be **divested, in inverse order of priority**

The defense strategy presented here:

- **Addresses an enduring strategic interest** of the United States by providing a strategy designed to minimize the overall risk to this interest and to maintain risk at an acceptable level
- **Explicitly addresses the relationship between ends and means**; in so doing it allocates risk among the three theaters of operation
- Tailors the defense posture and resources in line with strategic priorities
- Is supported by a **force posture** that is sufficiently **flexible** to address unanticipated threats to (or opportunities to advance) U.S. interests in any of the three theaters
- Calls for the United States to develop a core competency in **time-based competition**, buying capability **options and** identifying promising **new operational concepts**
- Places heavy emphasis on the social dimension of strategy, according high priority to **developing strategic narratives**
- Explicitly identifies those theaters where U.S. interests will have to be **divested** if the resources required to execute the strategy are not made available



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# Questions?