

"REBUILDING AMERICA'S DEFENSES:
STRATEGY, FORCES AND RESOURCES FOR A NEW CENTURY"

A SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS
PREPARED FOR PHYSICIANS FOR GLOBAL SURVIVAL

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The purpose of this report is (a) to highlight the importance of the document, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century* (RAD); (b) to set forth the main principles of the document; (c) to draw attention to elements of the document that are crucial for our understanding of the impending war with Iraq. Since I have written the report with the likely Iraq war in mind, I have made no attempt to cover other important topics, such as proliferation of military bases, the challenge of East Asia, and the role of anti-ballistic missile defense.

My own reading of this document was prompted by Jay Bookman's September 29, 2002 article, "The President's Real Goal in Iraq," in *The Atlantic Journal-Constitution*. Bookman's article can be found at: www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/opinion/0902/29bookman.html. This site also gives access to RAD itself.

Where quotation marks are used in this report they indicate direct quotation from RAD.

Importance of RAD

RAD was published about one year before the 2001 attack on New York and gives us access to pre-9/11 strategic thinking associated with an important faction in the Bush government.

The report (c. 40,000 words in 85 pp.) was produced in September, 2000 by the Project for the New American Century, a private U.S. organization established in 1997 to create strategy for "American global leadership." Crucial to such leadership, in the view of members of the Project, is "American military dominance." American military dominance, which the Project wishes to see extend over every major region of the globe, is the topic of RAD: the document considers how it can be achieved and how it can be maintained throughout the 21st century, which the Project sees as the "new American century."

There are 27 Project Participants listed at the end of RAD. Bookman points out that six currently serve in the Bush Administration, most of them with responsibilities for

military and foreign policy. Four have doctorates and two have law degrees. Paul Wolfowitz is the most prominent of the six. Although arms-length distance is established between the report and the listed participants, RAD gives its own lineage in a way that makes such associations clear. It announces itself as built upon the Defense Policy Guidance drafted in 1992. Since the DPG was authored by Wolfowitz for the Cheney Defense Department, it is clear that Wolfowitz and Cheney are deeply associated with the ideas set forth in RAD. It is very likely, in fact, that Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Vice-President Cheney, as well as a host of less central figures, all subscribe to the basic ideas of RAD. Since this faction has enormous power in the military thinking of the Bush administration, the importance of the document is clear.

Bookman has given further reasons for accepting RAD's centrality to the Bush administration. He points to approximately five major initiatives of the Bush administration (such as the raising of defense spending to 3.8% of the GDP and the decision to opt out of the ABM treaty) that appear to have been taken directly from RAD. He also claims that the Bush administration's position on Iraq is easier to understand after a reading of RAD. I believe he is right.

Main Principles of RAD

Some of the following principles are stated explicitly in RAD, while others are assumed.

(i) The existing world order is a "benevolent order," characterized by relative peace and prosperity.

(ii) This world order was created, and is held in place, through preeminent American military power and can therefore be referred to as "Pax Americana" or "the American peace" (the Latin form is used 3 times in RAD and the English form 14 times).

- Pax Americana is good for America because it allows the fulfillment of American ideals ("freedom" and "democracy," though the meanings of these terms are not explored) and "interests" (neither defined nor explored)
- what is good for America is good for the world; hence Pax Americana gives its "blessings" to the world at large (there is no attempt to explore ways American interests might clash with American ideals and no attempt to explore ideals and interests among non-American peoples that might be legitimate and might not be served by Pax Americana)

(iii) The only alternative to Pax Americana is a bad world order characterized by the disorganized clash of states and the rise to power of states and imperial orders inimical to American interests and ideals.

- "United Nations" and "UN" occur altogether four times in the document: each mention is brief and three of the four references are negative and dismissive

- the term "Security Council" does not occur
- the expression "international law" does not occur
- the terms "treaty" and "treaties" occur altogether 9 times, referring to non-proliferation treaties, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty: every reference is negative, stressing the inconvenience of treaties for Pax Americana
- the possibility of using, strengthening or developing institutions of global cooperation, whether related to policing, law, culture or anything else, is otherwise entirely ignored
- the importance of friends and allies is acknowledged, but it is assumed that the U.S. will exert dominance in such relationships

(iv) Although the United States is already the world's preeminent military power (for example, "the U.S. Navy enjoys a level of global hegemony that surpasses that of the Royal Navy during its heyday"), this preeminence should be increased. With the defeat of the Soviet Union the U.S. faces an opportunity for global dominance that might not come again. Far from permitting a "peace dividend" or military "procurement holiday," the U.S. must maintain its military spending at high levels, extending its control over regions of the world where such control is now weak and preparing to face rising military powers that may wish to exert dominance in their own regions.

- U.S. dominance in space (which reinforces all other forms of dominance and is by no means restricted to matters of defense) is crucial to Pax Americana and must be drastically increased; otherwise new technology may erode current American preeminence
- the U.S. must also dominate cyberspace
- the U.S. must remain in the forefront of all research relating to the "art of warfare," including "the world of microbes" ("advanced forms of biological warfare that can 'target' specific genotypes may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool")

(v) Global dominance requires long-term planning, massive funding, the ability to take anticipatory action, the ability and willingness to intervene militarily anywhere in the world when it is needed, and constant innovation and research so that no other state power can extend its own control through technological developments that might "level the playing field."

Using RAD to Understand the Impending War with Iraq

(i) RAD affirms that U.S. military intervention in many regions of the world will be required for the foreseeable future. Defense of the homeland (i.e., what most people in the world probably understand by the word "defense") is listed by RAD as one of three major aims of the U.S. military, and my guess is that it is the cheapest aim to achieve. The other two major aims of the military are: to "fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars" wherever required and to "perform the 'constabulary'

duties associated with shaping the security environment of critical regions." In other words, global policing, in the interests of the United States and with accountability to no supra-national organization, as well as the fighting of wars on foreign soil for whatever motive, are central tasks for the U.S. military system. I suspect that these tasks can be expected to consume the lion's share of "defense" spending.

(ii) The Persian Gulf region is a "region of vital importance" to the United States. The U.S. has longstanding "interests" (not explained in the document) in "the Middle East and surrounding energy-producing region." Because of these interests, a long-term U.S. presence in the area will be needed, probably extending beyond the passing of Saddam Hussein (Iran, for example, is a concern). More military bases should be acquired to service the region.

(iii) States that violate the principles of Pax Americana may have to undergo "regime change," the two most likely short-term candidates being Iraq and North Korea. After regime change the U.S. military would need to "conduct post-combat stability operations." These two states are the most obvious cases where "petty tyrants" "defy American interests and ideals."

(iv) Weapons of mass destruction are a worry. "Regimes deeply hostile to America-- North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Libya and Syria--'already have or are developing...ballistic missiles' that could threaten U.S. allies and forces abroad. And one, North Korea, is on the verge of deploying missiles that can hit the American homeland."

(v) The reason RAD gives as to why WMDs possessed by weak states are worrisome is not, however, the reason currently given by the Bush administration. RAD is not primarily worried about the initiation of violent action against the U.S. or its allies by weak states with WMDs; rather, it is worried about the power such weapons confer on weak states to deter action by the U.S. "In the post-Cold War era, America and its allies, rather than the Soviet Union, have become the primary objects of deterrence and it is states like Iraq, Iran and North Korea who most wish to develop deterrent capabilities. Projecting conventional military forces or simply asserting political influence abroad, particularly in times of crisis, will be far more complex and constrained when the American homeland or the territory of our allies is subject to attack by otherwise weak rogue regimes capable of cobbling together a minuscule ballistic missile force."

In short, WMDs allow enemies of the U.S. to prevent the U.S. from carrying out actions, typically military actions, that these states perceive as threatening. This power to deter the U.S. is intolerable within the framework of Pax Americana.

(vi) As for nuclear weapons, they "remain a critical component of American military power." "U.S. nuclear superiority is nothing to be ashamed of;" and "there may be a need to develop a new family of nuclear weapons designed to address new sets of military requirements, such as would be required in targeting the very deep underground, hardened bunkers that are being built by many of our potential adversaries."

(vii) Terrorism is not a major concern of RAD. Indeed, the word "terrorism" does not occur once in the document. The term "terrorist" occurs three times, but clearly refers to a threat of minor importance. Reading RAD today, therefore, one faces the question as to whether the events of 9/11 radically changed the views of the Wolfowitz faction or whether these events provided an opportune moment and a "cover" for a military strategy, with accompanying budget, that had already been formulated and that has relatively little to do with terrorism.

It is certainly reasonable to expect changes in the approach to terrorism within this political faction after the events of 9/11, but it is also true that the terrorist attack on New York provided a convenient opening for the Wolfowitz group. It has been reported elsewhere that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was finding the U.S. military establishment resistant to his ideas for transforming the military before 9/11 and that this resistance largely crumbled after the attack on New York. ("Right after Labor Day in 2001, Rumsfeld declared 'the Pentagon bureaucracy' a mortal enemy of the U.S. The next day, the Pentagon was attacked by terrorists...Rumsfeld and the services put aside their feud for a real war." *Time* [Canadian edition], January 27, 2003, p. 28.) In RAD this possibility had already been envisioned. The document notes that major transformation of the U.S. military is necessary and that "the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event--like a new Pearl Harbour."

(viii) Although RAD asserts that there are crucial American ideals, it makes no serious effort to explain what these are or to show concretely how American military policy aims, has aimed, or will aim to assure the fulfillment of these ideals.

The expression "human rights," so important to the current discourse on Iraq, does not occur in the document.

(ix) RAD shows awareness of resistance to American military bases by people in several parts of the world, but it does not recommend closing the bases. There is no acknowledgment of levels of hostility to American military presence and intervention (among Muslims and others) so extreme that they may doom RAD's entire strategy. This is probably both because of willful blindness and because such hostility (as evidenced in the Pew Global Attitudes Survey of 2002) has increased significantly since the document was written.

Concluding Remarks

"Pax Americana" is not a new term. It was at one time commonly used for the post WWII global dominance (economic, political and military) of the U.S. It is modeled on "Pax Romana" or "Roman Peace," which refers to the condition of relative stability in the Roman empire from Augustus, the first Roman emperor, to Marcus Aurelius. The authors of RAD find "Pax Americana" useful because it indicates beneficent dominance (in

effect: our domination of you will be good for us and good for you too). This is, of course, the usual claim of imperial intellectuals.

RAD says little about economic matters, being focused on military affairs, so we are not given access to the ideas of these thinkers on the precise relations between the economic and military spheres. American economic dominance of the world has eroded significantly since the post-WWII period. I assume (reading a certain amount into the frequent references to American "interests") that these thinkers regard military dominance as the key to winning back lost economic dominance.

What are the implications of RAD for our understanding of the invasion of Iraq? Currently, an atmosphere of fear is being induced in the American populace (duct tape, plastic sheeting, and the rest of it) through the claim that the government of Iraq--an evil human rights violator and proponent of terror--possesses weapons of mass destruction with which it may carry out aggressive actions against the United States. Substantial numbers of Americans (and non-Americans in the English-speaking West) have become convinced that defense of the American homeland is required, and that, under the extreme threat posed by WMDs, this defense may reasonably take the form of preventive military action.

RAD supports an entirely different interpretation of events. It suggests that Iraq is a case where routine "constabulary action" must now be permitted to escalate briefly to the level of minor "theatre war" in order to bring about "regime change," followed by "post-combat stability operations." All this is necessary because Iraq, a key player in a region of geo-political and economic importance to the U.S., is not sufficiently compliant, not prepared to take its place within Pax Americana. Human rights, terrorism, and possible aggression against the U.S. are largely irrelevant.

It would be difficult to argue that the Wolfowitz faction of the Bush administration is unaware of the difference between what it is telling its population and how it understands the situation.

RAD is sufficiently rich to provide the Western peace movement with a good part of its agenda for the 21st century. I will not pursue this idea here except to say that it is essential that the movement work to demonstrate the possibility of a world order that is neither the mindless and chaotic clashing of states nor the imposed, imperial order envisaged by U.S. planners.