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The 'Post-Modern' Military

Shemella, Paul

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The 'Post-Modern' Military

Lesson Objective: To examine the broad changes that have taken place in the field of national security and discuss what these changes mean to nations wishing to restructure their defense forces.

I. Introduction. To restructure defense forces effectively, a government first must project what future defense needs will be. Forecasting what defense needs will require a vision regarding where the nation wishes to be – five, ten, or twenty years in the future.

- A. Define principles.
- B. Design system of governance.
- C. Elect leaders.
- D. Examine threats to national security ('net assessment').
- E. Understand regional security issues.
- F. Structure alliances, international profile.
- G. Identify and collect resources.
- H. Allocate some resources to national defense.

II. How Much is Enough? In order to determine how much is needed, nations must also forecast what the nature of war will be. One challenge is that wars are not what they used to be. Armed forces are being used for many purposes other than war, and that drives how governments structure them. **What Kinds of Armed Forces?**

A. What does war mean to your country? Is war even a possibility? What is the next most important defense need? Do you even *need* military forces? Every country is unique.

- 1) Hungary has recently taken on NATO membership (and the responsibilities that go with it).
- 2) Bulgaria and Latvia hope to be invited to join later this year (different strategic situations).
- 3) Indonesia has more than 15,000 islands (territorial integrity is an enormous challenge).
- 4) Papua New Guinea is a country with hundreds of distinct languages (national identity?).
- 5) Thailand lies between Myanmar and Cambodia, with a large a narco-trafficking challenge.
- 6) Suriname has a boundary dispute with Guyana and wilderness exploited by narco-traffickers.
- 7) Tanzania has seen two major wars on its borders – and faces environmental degradation.
- 8) The Dominican Republic is being over run with Haitian refugees and drugs bound for North America.
- 9) Bosnia has two military forces - but less threatening neighbors.

- 10) Slovakia demonstrated how nations can split into pieces without violence (now it wants to join NATO).
- 11) Georgia has Russians, separatists, and maybe Chechen rebels.
- 12) Panama (not represented here) has no armed forces – but might need them again. Wants the U.S. back!
- 13) The U.S. has the most complex forecasting challenge of all: Six ‘futures’ to structure U.S. defense forces for:
 - ‘Legacy’ war
 - ‘Systemic’ war
 - ‘Cyber’ war
 - ‘Peace’ war
 - ‘Dirty’ war
 - ‘Homeland’ war

B. Moving to the ‘post-modern’ military. History is not over, but militaries are changing (at different rates) to reflect new political circumstances and changes in national security needs.

- 1) ‘Modern’ (before the Cold War)
- 2) ‘Late Modern’ (during the Cold War)
- 3) ‘Post-Modern’ (after the Cold War)
- 4) ‘Globalization of Everything’ (now)

C. Defense establishments that do not change become obsolete or ineffective – at best, a waste of public funds. How do you change the culture of the military?

D. Changes in the armed forces mean changes in the relationships between armed forces and the societies they serve.

E. Questions to consider:

- 1) Is the world becoming more united – or more divided?
- 2) Is ‘legacy war’ becoming obsolete as a means to solve disputes between nations?
- 3) Do regional and global collective security organizations change the ways in which individual countries structure their armed forces?
- 5) What is the future of civil-military relations for countries moving into the post-modern era?

III. Conclusion. The ‘post-modern’ military is different than any in history. Nations each occupy different places on the spectrum of change – but all nations are changing the ways they structure their defense establishments.

