

# The Shifting Strategic Balance

The Position Paper adopted by our Executive Council, stating the views of the National Guard Association of the United States, takes the place, this month, of the observations usually presented on this page. —James F. Cantwell, President

**H**ISTORY offers ample evidence that it is military weakness, not strength, that most often leads to armed conflict between nations. That is one of the realities of World power relationships which great nations ignore only at terrible risk.

There is a growing body of evidence that, despite the harsh lessons of history, the United States is permitting World strategic superiority to shift to its chief adversary, the Soviet Union. Members of a Blue Ribbon Defense Panel which exhaustively studied the U.S. defense posture cited an unmistakable trend in that direction in a supplementary statement to the Panel Report, and declared that "if these observable trends continue, the United States will become a second-rate power incapable of assuring the future security and freedom of its people."

The Soviet Union is the most powerful nation in the Communist system and is still expanding its great military strength. It already has overtaken the United States in a number of areas and has surpassed it in such critical measures of strategic power as long-range missiles and nuclear megatonnage. It is moving steadily toward the first-strike capability that U.S. leaders often have said we cannot permit. Moreover, it has never swerved from its avowed determination to create a World dominated by the Communist system.

The United States for a quarter of a century has been the most serious obstacle to Communist attainment of their objective of global hegemony. Other nations large and small look to us as their shield against aggression and subjugation. Yet today, Americans are witnessing with apparent unconcern the most rapid contraction of their Military Establishment since World War II, along with a reduction of our relative strategic power vis-a-vis the major Communist powers.

The Nixon Doctrine of strength through international partnership and our National security policy of realistic deterrence are sound, but they are viable only so long as we maintain enough projectable military power and strength of purpose to make the deterrence both real, and credible to others.

There are many indications that we are rapidly approaching the point where both our military strength and our National will can be questioned. The strategic balance is being altered to our disadvantage and many Americans, including some in positions of national influence and power, not only are accepting this dangerous trend but are actively advocating further reductions in our armed might.

President Nixon very clearly outlined the perils of military inferiority when he said:

"There is an absolute point beyond which our security forces must never be allowed to go. That is the level of sufficiency. Above or at that level, our defense forces protect National security adequately. Below that level is one vast undifferentiated area of no security at all. For it serves no purpose in conflicts between nations to have been almost strong enough."

We are confident that when Americans fully understand the perils of strategic inferiority, they will insist that National security again be given the highest priority among the many difficult tasks confronting our society.

We endorse the Nixon Doctrine and the policy of realistic deterrence, but strongly believe that the present trend toward an unfavorable strategic balance must be reversed.

We are deeply concerned over the drastic reductions in the strength of the Active military forces. The Army, for example, must drop to a strength of little more than 850,000 by 30 June 1972 if it is to meet the man-day ceiling imposed by Congress, and we believe that such a ground force is woefully inadequate under today's circumstances.

We support the Total Force concept on which Secretary of Defense Laird has laid such great stress, and agree that it must be implemented rapidly and fully so that the Nation's Reserve Components may play the more important defense role of which they are capable.

We pledge our best efforts to achievement of a zero Draft as rapidly as possible. We offer the reminder, however, that the National Guard and Reserves in all probability will not be able to maintain their authorized strengths in the absence of Draft pressures unless new membership incentives are forthcoming. Motivated, qualified manpower is the most vital ingredient of military readiness, for the Reserve Components as well as for the Active Forces. The drastic reductions in the Active Forces mean that the United States no longer possesses the military strength to honor its international defense commitments with the Active Forces alone. Additional responsibilities, therefore, have been assigned to the National Guard and Reserves.

If such concepts as self-determination, democratic rule and individual freedom are to survive in this dangerous and imperfect World, it will be because this Nation maintained the strength and the will to continue acting as their chief guarantor. Without that guarantee, backed by adequate defense forces, freedom will not survive and America will be in jeopardy. ♦



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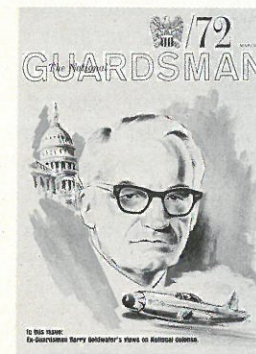
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Cartoonist Bill Canfield captures the essence of Senator Barry Goldwater, veteran Air Guard, Air Reserve and civilian Pilot, the subject of twin "cover stories" in this issue.

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