

DOMESTIC FACTOR AND US DEFENSE POLICY

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After the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States became the only military superpower and enjoyed the best security ever since its independence. Despite of this dramatic improvement of its security environment, American adopted a more expensive defense policy. It picked up the SDI idea raised by former president Reagan in early 1980s to develop National Missile Defense System (NMD) while it improves its offensive weaponry. Fighting two wars is still the strategic principle of Pentagon. America spends roughly \$300 billion annually on its military. What drives US policymakers to propose increases in the defense budget? What are the potential threats that justify the current level of military spending? Has America's military adjusted to deal with the realities of the post-Cold War? Do policymakers misread the public's attitude toward defense spending? Since we cannot find external factors to explain why the US continued its Cold War defense policy in post-Cold-War era, this paper tries to look into domestic factors for explanations. It is very obvious that American current defense policy including its NMD policy is a result of the combination of several domestic factors. This paper tries to argue that four of them play more important roles in American defense policy making than others. They are political culture, politics of congress and the interests of military itself and military industry, and elite monopoly of defense policy making,.

Political Culture

After the demise of the Soviet Union, the Russians could no longer afford a superpower military. Russian military spending decreased to less than \$65 billion a year and they've cut their armed forces from 5 million to 1 million. Yet, the US still keeps hundreds of thousand of troops stationed around the world. The Russians have not built new submarines, on the contrary, they've dry-docked most of their current fleet. Russia is regarded as a shadow of the former Soviet Union for historical threat to US security, US military policy has not yet reacted to change in the international climate. The United States continues to keep military spending at near-Cold War levels.

The United States now stands poised to dramatically increase military spending. The budget released by the Clinton Administration in February 2000 includes \$12 billion in additional funds for the Pentagon, the second successive year of military spending increase. While some of the additional funds are intended to attract and retain qualified personnel and ensure the readiness of the US military, most of the new spending is for expensive weapons systems designed to fight the Soviet Union. In all, the Administration plans to add more than \$110 billion to the Pentagon's budget over the next six years. Yet even though military spending is going up, there are those in Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, who believe that the budget increase is not sufficient. For example, while the Administration's Fiscal Year 2001 proposal reached the Pentagon's goal of \$60 billion dollars in annual spending for new weapons, members of Congress felt that even this was not enough.

Examining the cultural base of a large military budget in US, we found that belief in power plays a fundamental role. The paramount characteristic of American political culture is the belief in power. Over two hundred years of history has educated Americans to believe that the world only listens to the order from the strong power. This political culture makes American government rest the US security on its own military power but nothing else. Although there is no real threat to American security after the Cold War, American still regard it necessary to keep the strongest military troops in the world. The debate between policy makers is not whether the US should keep a stronger military power than other countries but how stronger it should be than others. The moderate group argues for a military capability stronger than American vital enemy and the conservatives advocated for a troop stronger than the total combination of all of American enemies. They even do not fully trust their allies. Therefore, the paranoia drove American leaders to spend as much as possible money on military to enlarge the gap between its military capability and the rest of the world. This political culture explains why the US insisted on National Missile Defense (NMD) plan even that plan was opposed by its military allies.

After the Cold War, many American politicians argue that the US military should play the role of world police. The role of world police is based on the concept of protection of human rights. The concept of human security goes back to the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which states: "Everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care, and necessary social services. Everyone has a right to education. By focussing on the wellbeing of individuals, this new concept of security reverses traditional notions of state sovereignty. The definition of national security and the use of military power have increasingly moved away from the state-centered doctrine of the previous era. For the war in Kosovo President Bill Clinton said: "We cannot simply watch as hundreds of thousands of people are brutalized, murdered, raped, forced from their homes, their family histories erased, all in the name of ethnic pride and purity." Some scholars are skeptical about using human security as a framework for future US foreign policy decisions. Some people questioned what is the definition of "human security." Does it mean there are certain crimes against humanity that the US cannot tolerate and it must send military force to intervene? That was the alleged rationale for bombing Kosovo and Serbia. But then if that's the standard, why didn't the US do something in Rwanda? Why the US didn't do something long before the present moment in Indonesia? This was not a secret. So far, the lack of consistency in deciding where to intervene has led to criticism that the concept of human security will not work as a framework for US foreign policy. It's a kind of phony rationale for selective use of military power when it suits the interests of US. That is neither a law nor principle. It's American government picking and choosing where it decides to engage.

People may also doubt military power is the right tool to solve the problems of human security. Globalization has made the rich and poor closer to each other. The rich will not be able to live securely in a world like ever for a variety of reasons. With military power a country won't be able to deal with climate, won't be able to deal with corruption, won't be able to deal with the drug trade, will not be able to deal with diseases. Diseases are now coming across borders -- drug-resistant TB, drug-resistant infections, malaria and other tropical diseases that move with climate change. We live in a world where the threats don't respect borders. As the leading power,

the United States absolutely cannot ignore these security threats but it's clear that the US need to act cooperatively with the rest of the world rather than rely on its military equipment in an era of globalization,.

Congress Orientation

After the Cold War, the US defense policy was criticized as unilateralism. Theoretically speaking, American unilateral defense policy is mainly caused by its sole superpower position. But we can't ignore the role of political orientation of legislature sectors in American defense policy making. The domination of neo-conservatism in Congress and Senate pushed American government to adopt unilateral defense policy.

The neo-conservatism shifted to anti-authoritarianism from anti-communism but its basic strategy did not change. That is to say the neo-conservatism stresses military containment policy against those countries that are regarded as American enemies. The neo-conservatism stresses that the military might is the base for protecting American strategic interests. The thought of neo-conservatism helped the republicans gaining advantage in both Congress and Senate. This is not only indicated by the fact that the republicans have more seats in these two legislative sectors but also by that many Democrat congressmen and senates share the neo-conservative views in security policy. Therefore, the Congress and Senate often attacked the Clinton's Administration in terms of security policy and require more military appropriation.

Between 1995 and 1997, Congress added more than \$21 billion in unrequested spending to the Pentagon's budget as members of Congress vied to fund their favorite programs. Money was added for such things as the purchase of costly high-tech weapons, like the DDG-51 destroyer and the V-22 Osprey, and development of a national missile defense system. Special supplemental spending bills also provided money for operations in Bosnia and the Persian Gulf. September 1997 marked a turning point in the debate over increasing military spending. Responding to growing concerns in Congress about the readiness of some US military units, President Clinton for the first time indicated his willingness to put more money into the Pentagon's regular budget request. Another area where Congress is requiring the military to spend more money is the US nuclear arsenal. The United States currently spends at least \$25 billion annually to maintain and enhance the ability to wage nuclear war. Under current congressional restrictions, the Pentagon cannot reduce the current arsenal below the levels called for in the START I treaty. In terms of NMD, the republican congressmen and senates severely attacked Clinton's hesitation on deployment of this system and they pushed for increase of military expenditure.

Theoretically, neo-conservatism believes that jungle law governs international relations. Therefore, republicans never trust international norms and even advocate the US to withdraw from ABM treaty. They are arguing that ABM treaty is a piece of unreliable paper. Besides the conceptual explanation why Congress required for a large military budget, there is another political reason. Congressmen have personal interests and want to do political show to the public. Many members of Congress these days don't have any military experience. They don't want to be

seen as soft on defense or opposing the military. The political game funded the increase of American military budget and NMD and TMD projects. President Clinton and Republicans in Congress are playing political games with US national security and American taxpayer money by launching a new bidding war to see who can throw more money at the Pentagon that it doesn't need.

Interests of Military and Military Industry

The interests of military itself and military industry can never be ignored when we discuss about American defense policy. No matter what peaceful environment American enjoys, the US military can always find external threat to the US. Without external threat the military will lose their job and incomes. An American said: "I think today in America much of the defense industry has become a jobs program. That is, we're spending money on defense not because we have vast enemies in the world that we need to defend ourselves. America is the world's only military superpower. But we're spending it because we haven't figured out a plan for what to do with these people who are working in the military sector."

The US weapons procurement policies are little impacted by the changed world. For example, America has the finest fighter aircraft in the world, but the Pentagon is still considering the purchase of the F-22 "Raptor" at a cost of \$188 million an aircraft. Even though there are no new fighters rolling off any assembly line in American adversaries' or potential adversaries' countries, the Pentagon still argue they need more advanced planes. Another example, the Navy is currently required to operate 18 Trident nuclear missile submarines. Deploying the additional four submarines costs the Navy \$500 million extra each year. The Pentagon spends almost \$400 million for 600 VIP aircraft to ferry their folks around, to take a helicopter instead of a 15-minute cab ride from Andrews Air Force Base to the Department of Defense.

In order to get more money from government the military never stop exaggerating external threat to American security. Although the United States has ratified the START II treaty, which reduces the number of strategic nuclear warheads deployed by the United States and Russia to 3,500 each, the Pentagon still want to keep thousands of unneeded warheads. With the so called external threats, Pentagon argued the US must modernize its weapons systems in order to preserve the technological edge that has served the US so well in the Persian Gulf war. The Pentagon kept replacing its weapons system. In fact, in some cases, perfectly good weapons systems are being taken out of service so that the military can afford to buy these costly, unnecessary new weapons. For example, nobody else in the world has a credible underwater fleet, yet the Pentagon has begun decommissioning "Los Angeles" class submarines, which remain the best in the world and have a lot of years of useful life. Pentagon seeks to replace them with thirty new "Virginia" class submarines at a cost of \$64 billion. Another weapon system being retired before the end of its useful life is the Navy's Ticonderoga class of cruisers, which are being cut up into razorblades to make room for additional purchases of the DDG-51 destroyer. And the Air Force plans to retire a portion of its fleet of F-15s, the premier fighter aircraft in the world, so it can afford to buy and operate its next generation fighter, the F-22. Both supporters of reducing military spending and those who want to give more money to the Pentagon recognize the role of

Congress in deciding future budgets.

Cold War has been ended for years, but the Pentagon still has a requirement to fight two major theater wars nearly simultaneously. Ivan Eland is the director of Defense Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, a public policy research organization located in Washington, D.C. He describes the budgetary implications of the Pentagon's requirement that the United States be able to fight two major wars without the assistance of allies. The real function of the two-war strategy is primarily to justify the current force structure of the US. The questions about the rationale behind the two-war strategy raise a very fundamental issue about one reason the Pentagon says it needs more money. Mr. Eland said: "What that means is they have given two examples of the Persian Gulf and also an attack of North Korea on South Korea. And there are probably not enough resources in the Defense Department to conduct this type of a strategy. That is to say, there's a mismatch between the resources and the strategy itself." According to Eland, the defense industry and members of Congress with major contractors in their district are providing the momentum for continued purchase of weapons designed to replace systems that are already the best of their kind or to meet a threat that does not exist.

Military industry is the strong support to Pentagon's requirement for a large military budget. If there is less military budget the military industry will suffer the same as the military itself. In 1995, President Clinton issued Decision Directive 34, which outlined his administration's policy on weapons exports. In it he urged Cabinet agencies to consider the economic benefit to American companies when deciding whether to grant a license for a military sale. The profit motive became a valid policy basis for selling weapons, and American diplomats were urged to find new markets for US weapons, just as they would do with any other products. Since President Clinton took office, the size of the federal government has slowly come down. But the number of federal workers engaged in promoting, financing, or otherwise facilitating weapons exports has increased from about 5,950 employees in 1993 to more than 6,300 in 1997. The largest single agency devoted to the arms trade is the Pentagon's Defense Security Assistance Agency or DSAA, where 5,900 personnel in 74 countries administer roughly \$12 billion annually in weapons sales. Since DSAA receives most of its funding from a 3% fee charged to all major sales, the agency has a strong incentive to maintain, or even increase the current level of arms exports.

Much of the military funding which was a subsidy for the weapons industry appears in the United States federal budget under the heading of "Security Assistance." Consuming more than \$6 billion dollars per year, Security Assistance accounts for about half of America's total budget for foreign operations. In fact much of this money never really leaves the United States. What the arms trade is becoming is just another form of government subsidy for Lockheed Martin and Boeing and this money is not going to Poland, it's not going to Israel, it's not going to Egypt. So essentially, US military aid stops briefly at the Pentagon, then heads direct to Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, one of the big military contractors.

Pentagon and military industry become natural allies in terms of identifying external threat. They argue that the US needs to improve its intervention capability and deploy TMD and NMD system against rouge states.

Elite Monopoly of Defense Policy Making

The US is a democratic society and government must give enough consideration to public opinions during policy making. Nevertheless, defense policy making is an exception and monopolized by elite only. (In fact, the situation is similar in many countries. But that is not a reason to deny its important role in American defense policy making.) In General American people have no knowledge why the military budget should account for 3-4% of GDP.

Current thinking in Washington on US military spending is largely shaped by an elite policymaking community, which includes the president and the executive branch, the Pentagon, Congress, policy analysts and, of course, the media. Meanwhile, the American public has been largely a silent partner in this debate. Meanwhile, American opinion leaders feel that the United States should play a first-among-equals role among the leading nations, more assertive than other leading nations. The US policymakers favor reliance on the military as a force for peace in the world. As such, US troops have been sent to the Persian Gulf to deter Saddam Hussein from aggression, to help the starving in Africa, to keep the peace in Bosnia, and to protect US citizens in Liberia. Increasingly, US policymakers seeking to play the role of a global policeman, as policing internal civil wars in Bosnia, sustaining a force in Iraq or around Iraq indefinitely, sustaining troops on the border of North Korea on the other side of the globe. And these are all missions, and many more, that policymakers have on their agenda that makes them want to have a much bigger military and to spend a lot more money than perhaps the public were prefer. Worldwide military spending has steadily declined from a high of \$1.3 trillion in 1987 to \$840 billion in late 1990s. US military budget is a staggering one-third of the worldwide total. A quick look at the top ten military spenders reveals that the United States far outspends the rest of the world and most of the countries in the top ten are US allies.

Meanwhile, the American public has been largely a silent partner in this debate. There is a significant gap between what policymakers think and what the American public actually feels. American public thinks that America should not play a more influential role than other leading nations but should just be one of the leading nations that deals with global problems. American public has a different view from policy-makers. They questioned those threats to US security that justifies increased military spending. Policymakers often point to the so-called "rogue states," such as Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Libya, Syria and Cuba, as potential adversaries. However, when compared to the military budgets of potential adversaries, US military spending dwarfs the spending of all of them combined. In the 1990s the rogue nations collectively spend about \$15 billion on their military each year. The US spent over \$250 billion. None of them, except perhaps Cuba, have a weapon that can even reach American shores. They cannot find the real threat that justifies huge military spending when they concern the national defense.

The public also has a different view on what America's place in that world and what America's leadership in that world should be. They don't really feel that the US needs to have as robust a military as it presently has. Overall, when you ask them how they feel about defense spending, they lean in the direction of wanting it to be less. The average American wants to cut defense

spending about 10 percent. How much should the United States spend to defend itself each year? Steven Kull asked people for their answer to this question, taking into consideration spending by six potential enemies: Russia, China, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea. Forty-eight percent of them said that the United States should spend a bit more than the strongest potential enemy. Twenty-nine percent said that the US should spend as much as all of them combined. Only 7 percent said that the US should spend twice as much as all of them combined. Well, in fact, the United States does spend about twice as much as all of them combined. In addition, 63 percent of those surveyed said that US military spending "has weakened the US economy and given some allies an economic edge." Sixty-nine percent felt that it is not necessary for the Pentagon to improve US military technology and building expensive capabilities. And 89 percent agreed that "countries that receive protection from US military capabilities...rely too much on the US."

Military is regarded as top secret and people seldom question what kind of military capability they need for their security. This tradition gives elite a free hand to increase military budget. Meanwhile, military strategy is regarded as a technical thing and people leave it to security experts. Therefore, policy makers can find all kinds of reason to support new weapon R&D programs. Although many scientists doubt about the reliability of NMD system, people in street responded very little to the debate on NMD plan. The monopoly of defense policy making by political elite makes the US government able to increase its military budget in improved security environment.