

U.S. Army found unfit for combat

by Konstantin George

There is extreme concern in knowledgeable quarters that President Jimmy Carter may militarily intervene into the Persian Gulf crisis with a reliance on the "option of selective nuclear strike" against "Soviet forces or on Soviet territory." That is the language used in Carter's Presidential Directive 59, which has placed the United States under the doctrine of "limited" nuclear war.

The President has refused to rule out military action, and it is known that the United States is unable to mount any effective intervention using conventional forces.

If Carter decides to invoke his PD-59, it will be his first and last "selective nuclear strike," as the Soviet political and military hierarchy has repeatedly warned.

The latest Soviet warning to the Carter administration was conveyed Sept. 22 by Genrikh Trofimenko, foreign policy director of the U.S.S.R.'s Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada; "PD-59 is . . . extremely irresponsible and fraught with danger. . . . It is aimed at knocking out the bulk of the Soviet Union's strategic forces with a first 'counterforce' blow. The Soviet Union," Trofimenko warned, "will not curtail its own military programs, nor will it preoccupy itself solely with rebuffing counterforce."

Carter's official transition to the "limited" nuclear war doctrine did not occur without opposition from the professional military. In a recent series of articles on defense strategy, the *Daily Oklahoman* quoted a secret April 1979 letter from Strategic Air Command General Ellis to Defense Secretary Harold Brown.

Ellis denounced the "countervailing strategy" of "limited nuclear war" that later became codified as PD-59. As the *Daily Oklahoman* summed it up, "General

Ellis rejects the countervailing strategy of aiming at selected military and political targets in the Soviet Union . . . instead of relying on a strategy of annihilating the entire civilian population."

Collapse of readiness

That any Carter military move into the Gulf must either become nuclear, or abort under humiliating circumstances, is proven by even a cursory examination of the status of the U.S. armed forces.

General Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently issued a private memo assessing the U.S. forces' combat readiness. As quoted in the *Daily Oklahoman* of Aug. 31, Jones said: "The size and sustainability of U.S. conventional forces cannot ensure the success of the strategy they are required to support."

For added emphasis, Jones torpedoed the Carter administration's on-paper claims of divisions available for the Mideast: "In theory, four divisions are earmarked for the Persian Gulf Mideast region, but that is, of course, only if nothing happens in Europe."

These statements by Ellis and Jones are, of course, at great variance with public pronouncements by the same individuals. There has been a notable lack of public professional military attacks on Carter policies.

The dismal state of U.S. readiness, the product of the Kissinger and later Carter administration, is shown by the Army's own ratings of its divisions for combat readiness. According to official Army documents, at the end of 1977, all ten of the Army divisions stationed in the continental United States, were rated as C-1, the highest category, or, combat ready. By the end of 1979,



At Fort Dix, New Jersey, a major training base.

seven of the ten were rated as C-4, the lowest possible category, including two of the three divisions earmarked for the so-called "Rapid Deployment Force" (RDF). These seven divisions are now officially labeled "not combat ready."

This collapse of military capability has produced hysterical reactions from some policymaking circles, but so far the debate has merely added to the blundering of Messrs. Carter, Brzezinski, and Brown.

The latest gizmo Brzezinski, Brown et al. have come up with is known as "strategic forces regroupment," whereby B-52 bomber units are being rotated into a "forward-basing" mode. For the first time B-52 strategic units would be within quick flight striking-distance of the Persian Gulf and adjacent Soviet territory. B-52s are the vehicles for the "options of selective nuclear strikes" outlined in PD-59.

Strategic Forces units have never before been based in forward deployment.

Now, in addition to bases in the United States and Guam, B-52 basing capability has been established at the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, and will be set up in the near future at Ras Banas, Egypt, and Berbera, Somalia.

The administration's justification for this deployment is that the Soviets will know for certain that a U.S. bomber strike is limited, unlike a missile strike, where one is forced to assume that all missiles have been fired.

The most shocking feature of this policy is its tacit acceptance by the spectrum of leading figures who parade as policymakers. Criticisms totally miss the crucial point. A perfect example was the recent House

Foreign Affairs Committee hearings on the B-52 bases. Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) and a majority of the committee's members attacked Carter for wanting to station B-52s at Berbera, on the basis of Somalia's location. Diego Garcia, Ras Banas, or even Oman, looking directly out at the Gulf, were considered perfectly legitimate.

A no less incompetent debate is currently underway around the issue of the MX missile.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown wants to go ahead with the land-based MX, which will ultimately cost over \$100 billion and consume more water and cement than any other single project in national history, leaving the dry West devoid of water for any other use.

Former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, a Republican, rejects the land-based concept. In a recent article, Laird correctly became apoplectic over the ludicrous social and material costs associated with the project.

Laird's alternative? Keep the counterforce MX missile as a missile, but make it sea-based, "either in ICBM ships or in flotation collars."

Laird's fantasy missiles have been independently endorsed by such diverse elements as two former chiefs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Maxwell Taylor, Kennedy's former defense adviser, and Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, a Republican defense adviser based at Georgetown University.

These are the frightening calculations of an administration whose ostensible GOP policy-making opponents match it blunder for blunder, in the face of a potentially rapidly escalating, general crisis in the Persian Gulf. ■

U.S. army combat readiness

U.S.-based divisions	December 1977	December 1978	December 1979
1st Infantry Ft. Riley, Kan. . . .	C-1	C-3	C-3
1st Cavalry Ft. Hood, Tx.	C-1	C-2	C-4
2nd Armored Ft. Hood, Tx.	C-1	C-2	C-4
4th Infantry (mechanized) Ft. Carson, Colo. . .	C-1	C-2	C-3
5th Infantry (mechanized) Ft. Riley, Kan. . . .	C-1	C-3	C-4
7th Infantry Ft. Ord, Ca.	C-1	C-3	C-4
9th Infantry Ft. Lewis, Wash. . .	C-1	C-3	C-4
24th Infantry (mechanized) Ft. Stewart, Ga. (RDF)	C-1	C-3	C-4
82nd Airborne Ft. Bragg, N.C. (RDF)	C-1	C-2	C-2
101st Airborne (Air assault) Ft. Campbell, Ky. (RDF)	C-1	C-3	C-4

RDF—Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force

Key

- C-1 Fully combat ready
- C-2 Substantially combat ready
(minor deficiencies)
- C-3 Marginally combat ready
(major deficiencies)
- C-4 Not combat ready

Source

Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 14, 1980. Based on interviews with military officials in Washington, commanders in the field, defense specialists and top-secret documents obtained by the *Oklahoman*.

Another crisis and another committee

by Lonnie Wolfe

Deputy Energy Secretary John Sawhill proudly announced to the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee Sept. 22 that the Carter administration has formed yet another top-level committee—this one to deal with the energy crisis.

Sawhill stated that the administration has created a whole crisis management bureaucracy within the executive branch to deal with any emergency. The centerpiece is the Energy Coordinating Committee (ECC), a cabinet-level group that includes members of the National Security Council. Energy Secretary Charles Duncan, now formally the President's energy crisis manager in the federal government, heads the committee.

The ECC will make policy recommendations on the handling of an energy emergency, Sawhill told the senators. It will be responsible for deploying and coordinating the operations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the government agency created to manage all emergency or disaster situations. FEMA, created by executive order, is best described as a government within the government having broad-based powers to act in an actual emergency.

Sawhill's statements were designed to reassure Congress that the Carter administration is prepared for an emergency arising out of a disruption of Mideast oil supplies.

\$5 a gallon gas?

Sen. Charles Percy, the ranking Republican on the committee who called the hearings, expressed his grave concern over the United States' ability to withstand a new oil disruption.

The Illinois senator warned that the developments around the Iran-Iraq war could quickly lead to huge increases in the prices of gasoline, home heating fuel, and crude oil.

Percy said, "Let's suppose that a full-scale war breaks out between Iran and Iraq, cutting off oil from those two nations. . . . The free world would lose almost 20 percent of its oil. The oil glut today would rapidly vanish, setting in motion the same events that occurred