

**POLS 572 U.S. Defense Policy  
Spring 2006 Midterm Exam Answers**

Grade distribution

Grade:	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	
# exams:	10	10	3	8	6	2	0	4	3	
Average:	82.6	Stdev: 13.0								

**PART I** (15% for each question; total **60%**)

1. *Briefly describe three ways in which the contemporary U.S. military differs in its social or political characteristics from U.S. society as a whole or from U.S. political elites (indicate whether the difference is with the mass public or only elites).*

From pp 338 – 343 in BCS (as well as lecture)

From public

More Republican

More skeptical of human nature

More concerned about “moral health” of civilian society; view civilian society as decadent

More Roman Catholic

More opposed to gays in the military

More male

Better educated

Enlisted personnel are disproportionately from minority groups (officers are representative) and disproportionately from the South

From elites

More politically conservative (but they are not substantially more conservative than the public as a whole; while they are dominantly Republican, they are generally moderate Republicans)

More religious

More likely to be from lower socioeconomic background

Political elites increasingly have not served in the military

2. *Briefly describe the four “grand strategy” options outlined by Posen and Ross—give the name of the strategy and a sentence or two about what it involves.*

Pretty much everyone got this...

1. Isolationism

2. Cooperative security

3. Selective engagement

4. Primacy

3. *Briefly describe three components of the approach that Kenneth Pollock’s Atlantic Monthly article suggests that the U.S. can use to win the war in Iraq*

Directly from the article:

1. Make protecting the Iraqi people and civilian infrastructure our highest priority.

2. Shift the strategic emphasis from offensive to defensive military operations.

3. Emphasize population security in the south and center of Iraq.

4. Train Iraqi forces properly. A showy "acceleration" is worse than useless.

5. Create a unified command structure.

6. Decentralize power and oil revenues.

7. Bring in the international community.

[Note: in a few cases, the answer outlined in detail Posen’s *withdrawal* argument: I gave partial credit on this if all of the major points were there]

4. *The readings present a number of different arguments both in favor and opposed to the US deploying a ballistic missile defense system. Briefly describe three of these arguments, including at least one on each side (that is, two in favor and one against, or two against and one in favor)*

In favor (BCS pp. 405-408)

Russia and China have ICBMs

Various "rogue" states such as North Korea and Iran seem intent on developing them

Various technologies seem to be coming along, even if progress has been a bit rocky at times

We need to maintain technological leadership, particularly on space-based weapons

There are an assortment of new technologies coming available that will make things even better

PAC-3 ground-based interceptor has performed "with high probability of intercept" in Iraq

Against (BCS pp. 409-414)

Systems being deployed in Alaska haven't been tested sufficiently well

Negative results from tests that have been done have been ignored and program has proceeded anyway

Requirements have been reduced to reflect what the system can do, which is unrealistic—it wouldn't actually defend the US

Ground-based PAC-3 system only worked about 50% of the time in realistic tests

Systems haven't been tested against realistic counter-measures

Existing system will be deployed (in 2004) before assorted radar systems are ready for it

Given that Bush has abrogated the 1972 ABM Treaty, we could actually deploy a lot of things that weren't under development earlier

Some of the reported intercept accuracy figures presuppose we will be given advance warning by North Korea or Iran, which is a bit unlikely

The current deployment seems primarily driven by politics

[Note: I also accepted the variations on BMD undermining MAD that I presented in lecture]

## **PART II -- ESSAY (40%) -- Answer only one**

**Note:** These answers were written by students; additional comments by me are in *italics*. They are not necessarily perfect but they are "A" examples.

**Note:** *On each of these, I'm looking at the quality of the argument and the extent to which you can bring in relevant arguments and evidence, not whether you take one side or the other.*

5. *Agree or disagree with the statement that the current US involvement in Iraq marks a major departure from past U.S. military policy.* [26 answers]

### **Agree**

When the Bush administration released its National Security Strategy in October of 2002, it contained basic principles that would change American foreign policy significant from the past. The strategy led to the invasions of Iraq in March of 2003 and military policy took a completely different shape.

The first tier in the National Security Strategy is the willingness to start a pre-emptive war to protect U.S. interest. This occurred in Iraq. The major change to military policy was that the military was used pro-actively in a region rather than reactively. The United States has gotten into conflicts since the end of WWII as a response to specific actions, but rarely or at all to prevent actions. The invasions was meant to remove Saddam's regime from power and to eliminate it as a threat. Contrast that with the first Gulf War which sought to expel the Iraqi army from Kuwait after they had invaded. The United States has acted preemptively in the past like in the Bay of Pigs invasion, but never to the scale of the Iraq War.

Furthermore, the NSS stressed the desire for multilateralism, but not its necessity. The United States would be willing to act unilaterally if need be. In Iraq, the United States does have a coalition of country assisting it, but the vast majority of troops and casualties are American. This is a significant change from the past two administration which saw Clinton as a staunch supporter of international institutions and multilateralism as seen through the Bosnia and Kosovo conflict and which saw the first Bush administration support alliances as seen in its large coalition in the first Gulf War. The current policy in Iraq, in contrast, assumes that we can go it alone if we have to, a significant change.

In addition, the Bush administration's motives in the invasion of Iraq have a strong element of Wilsonian liberalism. President Bush has made the argument that a democracy in Iraq makes the world safer, this is directly connected with the liberal theory of democratic peace. The Bush administration has changed military policy so that now forces are used to create direct political change. This has been done at a small level before through the CIA, but never through the military. While it is arguable about whether or not the Bush administration is realist or idealist, idealist values have surfaced as a justification for the war as well as military implementation as regime changers.

Further, in order to make a regime change successful, the military has been deployed to state-building and act as a guardian while the new state democracy is instituted. This is a new role for the military as such an action hasn't been done since the democratization of Japan and Germany after WWII [Note: actions in the former Yugoslavia also had this objective, as did Haiti and Panama].

There have been three different major military policy changes that the Bush administration has enacted through the Iraq war. First, the use of a pre-emptive attack; second, the willingness to act unilaterally; and third, promoting democracy and state-building through the military.

### **5. Disagree** [note: very few essays took this position, but this is a nice example of how it can be done]

I would tend to disagree with the statement that our Iraq involvement is a major departure from past policy. Looking back, we can find many occasions where the US has stepped in to protect an oppressed people, such as Yugoslavia and even to an extent, Nazi Germany. The US has an ideology that leads us to become the protectors of human rights. Actually, stepping in and overthrowing a leader such as Saddam was a bit unprecedented, but it easily falls under the US idea and policy of protecting peace. Look at our efforts in Somalia, in Korea, in Haiti and Kosovo. The US policy is to promote peace, and that is what we are trying to do in Iraq. Hussein was accused to genocide, our policy does not tolerate that, as shown in our Yugoslavia intervention. Iraq was also thought to be a threat because of WMDs, though none were found.

If we try to apply one of Posen's "Grand Strategies" to the US, past and we likely fall between "cooperative security" and "primacy". We have had an interest in promoting peace, condemning genocide, and have a record that supports this. We also have a national interest in remaining hegemonic. We don't want another great power that could challenge us, we want to be the dominant power. Taking that approach, we can see that Iraq was a threat to both of these. The way Hussein treated the citizens was not something we could continue to accept, and the possibility of Iraq with WMDs, given its unstable history and Hussein's hatred towards the US, posed a threat to US security and hegemony.

Some would argue that the length of time we have been there, and the possible likelihood of a stalemate, as proposed by Posen in the "Exit Iraq in 18 months" article, are not consistent with past policy. I would argue against this by noting that it is not the US policy, nor has it ever been, to give up, to tuck our tails and run. The US has a history and reputation as victors, not losers. As Bush stated, "The road home is through victory." The US has always had a "in it to win it" attitude, and our involvement in Iraq in Iraq has had the same approach [Note: Vietnam would be an exception here]

Departing slightly from that, when we say things like "The road home is through victory", we need to define victory. The current policy in Iraq is a slight departure in the fact that our original objective was to get rid of Hussein. We did that. This is just like any other involvement where we moved in, did our job, and left. In this situation, in order to maintain the peace, we had to stay. This is where things get cloudy. What is our current objective? To make them democratic? To beat all of the insurgents back? How do we know when we have won? I think this area is still well within past policy, maybe just a bit grey. Similar to how our "police action" in Vietnam was grey. [Note: right—the pattern of the US getting involved in operations that go far longer than expected—Vietnam, Korea, former Yugoslavia—or where the objectives change—Lebanon, Somalia—is actually a point of continuity with past policy]

To conclude, the history and ideology of the US involvement in Iraq is not a major departure by any means. We promote and protect peace, that what we are doing in Iraq as we've done before. We also protect our self-interests, such as we've done before; Iraq is just another example of the US's commitment to our ideal and human rights.

### *6. Agree or disagree with the statement that the current US military is appropriately configured to implement a unilateralist national strategy. [20 answers, about evenly split between the two alternatives]*

**[answer on next page]**

## Agree

I believe that the US military is appropriately configured to implement a unilateralist national strategy based on their primary role in the world, the size and spending of the US military, and technological advances of the military and its logistics capability.

The US post-WWII hegemonic role in the world is important in this argument. The US military has been in recent years, becoming more specialized. In the 2006 QDR, a call was made to cut overall forces and replace them with smaller but more specialized forces. This is important for maintaining stability in areas of conflict. The US need to quickly defuse issues, replace specialized forces with occupational forces, and move on is useful in this area. The current configuration allows for this type of strategy.

Second, the current US annual defense budget is around \$500-billion. Our current air power and sea power is incomparable to any combined forces of other nations. The current configuration also allows us to implement the British Royal Navy's idea of possessing twice the military power (if not more) of any opponent, as pointed out in Posen's "Exit Strategy". If the US were to develop a unilateral national strategy, this would be a main factor in that.

Also, with the development of nuclear deterrence, advances in technological warfare beyond the capability of any other nation, and the use of SLBMs, ICBMs and ALCMs, the US has a "triad" of unstoppable nuclear power, and a solid nuclear deterrent.

Finally, the US is the only country with a global logistics capability and the ability to deploy troops anywhere in the world. Whatever geographical region we choose to involve ourselves in, we are able to place and maintain forces there. Due to these factors, the US military would definitely be prepared to implement a unilateralist national strategy.

## Disagree

The current US military is likely to be incapable of implementing a unilateralist national strategy. Many have suggested that with the US's overwhelming military superiority it is capable of "going it alone" However, this assessment may be premature. Unilateral national strategies are likely to fail because of the US's need for coalitions and the blessings of international law.

The US military would be severely undermined by a unilateral strategy. Such a strategy would require too much work from a military that is too small. The current situation in Iraq demonstrates this point. The US does not have enough troops to effectively keep the peace in Iraq, and it is politically impossible to send more. Without the support of allies and coalitions, the US would quickly run the risk of overstretch, where it would not have the troops and equipment to complete its missions. Although the US military is large, these numbers can be misleading because each soldier in the field requires several more support staff, and not all soldiers can be deployed at once, since some are training for deployment, and others are resting after it. The US's power projection capability also relies on bases in foreign countries. Turkey's refusal to allow the US to operate its attack on Iraq from Inrirklik air base [*and more importantly, send ground troops into Iraq across the Turkish border*] demonstrates the difficulties that could arise.

Unilateral national strategies would also be detrimental in their flaunting of international law. The US has had a difficult time building coalitions for action, especially in Iraq, because many nations will not participate unless the operation has the approval of the UN. Large multilateral coalitions under the UN have proven to be effective in the first Gulf War, and can reduce costs and increase support for the US. The US's determination to attack Iraq in 2003 without UN backing undermined its relations with many needed allies, and inspired resentment of its power. This resentment, if pushed far enough, could snowball into coalitions aimed at counterbalancing US hegemony.

Even if it did not go that far, unilateralism could also make it more difficult for the US to gain support for its actions. Working within the bounds of international law and international organizations can provide a basis for justifying US actions to the world (for example, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait justified actions by the international community under US leadership). Respecting and upholding international law also protects the US—for example the Geneva Convention protects US soldiers from abuse if taken captive. Pursuing a unilateral strategy could often bring the US into conflict with international norms and laws, and thus undermine their credibility and effectiveness when the US flaunts them. This would be an unfortunate outcome, because maintaining these laws protects the US and its continued leadership. [*Another approach along these lines would be to note that the US did pretty well using the multilateral approach used during the Cold War and during Bush I and Clinton, and moving away from that would require a lot of change*]