

# Pentagon Moving Swiftly to Become “Globocop”

By Jim Lobe | June 12, 2003

Much like its successful military campaign in Iraq, the Pentagon is moving at breakneck speed to redeploy U.S. forces and equipment around the world in ways that will permit Washington to play “Globocop,” according to a number of statements by top officials and defense planners. While preparing sharp reductions in forces in Germany, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, military planners are talking about establishing semi-permanent or permanent bases along a giant swathe of global territory—increasingly referred to as “the arc of instability,” from the Caribbean Basin through Africa to South and Central Asia and across to the North Korea.

The latest details, disclosed by the *Wall Street Journal* on June 10th, include plans to increase U.S. forces in Djibouti on the Horn of Africa across the Red Sea from Yemen, setting up semi-permanent “forward bases” in Algeria, Morocco, and possibly Tunisia, and smaller facilities in Senegal, Ghana, and Mali that could be used to intervene in oil-rich West African countries, particularly Nigeria. Similar bases—or what some call lily pads—are now being sought or expanded in northern Australia, Thailand (whose prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, has found this to figure high on the bilateral agenda in talks in Washington, DC this week), Singapore, the Philippines, Kenya, Georgia, Azerbaijan, throughout Central Asia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Qatar, even Vietnam, and, Iraq.

“We are in the process of taking a fundamental look at our military posture worldwide, including in the United States,” said Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz on a recent visit to Singapore, where he met with military chiefs and defense ministers from throughout East Asia about U.S. plans there. “We’re facing a very different threat than any one we’ve faced historically.”

## Victory for Wolfowitz

Those plans represent a major triumph for Wolfowitz, who 12 years ago argued in a controversial draft “Defense Planning Guidance” (DPG) for realigning U.S. forces globally so as to “retain preeminent responsibility for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our own interests, but those of our allies or friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations.”

The same draft, which was largely repudiated by the first Bush administration after it was leaked to the *New York Times*, also argued for “a unilateral U.S. defense guarantee” to Eastern Europe “preferably in cooperation with other NATO states” and the use of pre-emptive force

against nations with weapons of mass destruction—both of which are now codified as U.S. strategic doctrine. The same draft DPG also argued that U.S. military intervention should become a “constant fixture” of the new world order. It is precisely that capability toward which the Pentagon’s force realignments appears to be directed.

With forward bases located all along the “arc of instability,” Washington can pre-position equipment and at least some military personnel that would permit it to intervene with overwhelming force within hours of the outbreak of any crisis. In that respect, U.S. global strategy would not be dissimilar to Washington’s position vis-a-vis the Caribbean Basin in the early 20th century, when U.S. intervention from bases stretching from Puerto Rico to Panama became a “constant feature” of the region until Franklin Roosevelt initiated his Good Neighbor Policy. Indeed, as pointed out by Max Boot, a neoconservative writer at the Council on Foreign Relations, Wolfowitz’s 1992 draft, now mostly codified in the September 2002 *National Security Strategy of the USA*, is not all that different from the 1904 (Theodore) Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted Washington’s “international police power” to intervene against “chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society.”

Remarkably, the new and proposed deployments are being justified by similar rhetoric. Just substitute “globalization” for “civilization.”

## Pentagon Filling Globalization’s Gaps

The emerging Pentagon doctrine, founded mainly on the work of ret. Adm. Arthur Cebrowski, chief of the Pentagon’s Office of Force Transformation, and Thomas Barnett of the Naval War College, argues that the dangers against which U.S. forces must be arrayed derive precisely from countries and regions that are “disconnected” from



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the prevailing trends of economic globalization. “Disconnectedness is one of the great danger signs around the world,” Cebrowski told a Heritage Foundation audience last month in an update of the “general loosening of the ties of civilized society” formula of a century ago.

Barnett’s term for areas of greatest threat is “the Gap,” areas where “globalization is thinning or just plain absent.” Such regions are typically “plagued by politically repressive regimes, widespread poverty and disease, routine mass murder, and—most important—the chronic conflicts that incubate the next generation of terrorists.” As he wrote in *Esquire* magazine earlier this year, “If we map out U.S. military responses since the end of the cold war, we find an overwhelming concentration of activity in the regions of the world that are excluded from globalization’s growing Core—namely the Caribbean Rim, virtually all of Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and Southwest Asia, and much of Southeast Asia.”

The challenge in fighting terrorist networks is both to “get them where they live” in the arc of instability and prevent them from spreading their influence into what Barnett calls “seam states” located between the Gap and the Core. Such seam states he says include Mexico, Brazil,

South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Seam states, the logic goes, should play critical roles, presumably including providing forward bases, for interventions into the Gap. At the same time, if states “loosen their ties” to the global economy, “bloodshed will follow. If you are lucky,” according to Barnett, “so will American troops.”

On the eve of the war in Iraq, Barnett predicted that taking Baghdad would not be about settling old scores, or enforcing disarmament of illegal weapons. Rather, he wrote, it “will mark a historic tipping point—the moment when Washington takes real ownership of strategic security in the age of globalization.”

Observers will note that Barnett’s arc of instability corresponds well to regions of great oil, gas, and mineral wealth, a reminder again of Wolfowitz’s 1992 draft study. It asserted that the key objective of U.S. strategy should be “to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power.”

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Published by Foreign Policy In Focus (FPiF), a joint project of the Interhemispheric Resource Center (IRC, online at [www.irc-online.org](http://www.irc-online.org)) and the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS, online at [www.ips-dc.org](http://www.ips-dc.org)). ©2003. All rights reserved.

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### Recommended citation:

Jim Lobe, “Pentagon Moving Swiftly to Become “Globocop”,” (Silver City, NM & Washington, DC: Foreign Policy In Focus, June 12, 2003).

### Web location:

<http://www.presentdanger.org/commentary/2003/0306globocop.html>

### Production Information:

Writer: Jim Lobe

Editor: John Gershman, IRC

Layout: Tonya Cannariato, IRC

