

# Military reform: If you liked McNamara, you'll love Gary Hart

by Leo Scanlon

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## **America Can Win: The Case for Military Reform**

by Gary Hart and William S. Lind  
Adler and Adler, Bethesda, Maryland, 1986  
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There are two important features of the latest production of the "military reform movement" which recommend a detailed review of this title. By virtue of the prominence given to one of its co-authors, Gary Hart, this book will be widely read as a campaign statement by a contender for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination. The second point is that the authors of the book are partisans of a grand strategy, popularly called "New Yalta," which has broad support within a section of the civilian bureaucracy of the Pentagon. The book is therefore more insidious than garden-variety defense bashing.

It should be stressed that this book is not a "Democratic" political statement, despite Hart's party affiliation. The principal author is Hart's defense adviser, William Lind, who began his career in Washington writing defense white papers for former Sen. Robert Taft (R-Ohio), and is also currently defense affairs adviser to Paul Weyrich. Weyrich, the potentate of several neo-conservative fiefdoms in the realm of the Heritage Foundation, has declared that Lind is the person who has most influenced him on defense matters. Weyrich has also identified Gary Hart as the standard-bearer for the new "social conservatism," a movement which putatively backs the Heritage Foundation's efforts to forge coalitions of liberals and neo-conservatives united in opposition to spending to maintain the vital defense and infrastructure of the republic.

The sly, anecdotal arguments of the authors have been tailored for the speech writers of the neo-conservatives from both parties, who will be in need of rationalizations for their abysmal behavior during this recent session of Congress. Under the banner of "Gramm-Rudman," this amalgam of liberal and conservative networks is vigorously lobbying for different bits and pieces of the package of reforms presented in the book, and, as with many of the military reform crowd,

few involved would claim to be working from any particular notion of grand strategy.

William Lind, however, has been advocating a dramatic shift in U.S. policy, specifically that the United States pull out of NATO, and is on the record with this proposal in Senate Defense White Papers going back almost 10 years. Lind believes that this type of change will come when Congress becomes the dominant power in shaping defense policy, and that this can be accomplished through congressional control of the budget process. Each of the book's specific proposals flows from that strategy, although the authors take pains to conceal this.

## **The theoretical framework**

For example, Lind credits Edward Luttwak, of Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies, for the theoretical framework for his attacks on the American conception of a republican army, and other contributions. Luttwak, a Romanian-born academic, is the author of *The Pentagon and the Art of War*, a critique of the U.S. officer corps and defense establishment. Luttwak asserts that the United States must recognize the failure of our original foreign policies, oriented toward the development of republican allies, and should model itself on the Roman Empire, with a military capability matched to the task of managing a continuous series of satrapal wars. Hart and Lind repeat Luttwak's claims that the current officer corps lacks the flexibility to manage such a strategy, but you have to read Luttwak, or Lind's old white papers, to know what it is that these gentlemen expect of the officer corps. They never discuss the war planning requirements of a nation committed to the defeat of the Soviet strategy for global domination, and this point is the tell-tale which will guide the reader across the sea of sophistry that passes for military analysis among the "military reformers."

The name given to the grand strategy motivating the authors is "New Yalta"; its arrangements are currently being negotiated by the State Department and the White House staff. Under the terms of New Yalta, the United States will drop political and military commitments to most areas of the world outside of the Western Hemisphere, and will no longer need to support a land army in Europe. Likewise, naval and strategic air forces can be re-designed to support the limited mission of fighting "wars of maneuver" on our southern bor-

ders. Finally, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) need only be a point defense system under these conditions, and the President's program can be scrapped and replaced by the conventional technologies advocated by Gary Hart, Danny Graham of the Heritage Foundation, and Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle.

These men, who represent leading strata of what is called conservative among government bureaucrats, share a profound pessimism which induces them to reject any policy approach which demands the mobilization of national resources to achieve great political, economic, or scientific accomplishments. Richard Perle, for example, in popular perception a "hard-liner," is a zealous advocate of practical accommodation to Soviet strategic aims. Perle's open break with the President and Weinberger on the SDI, first signaled during his appearance in an ABC *Nightline* interview, and stated more forcefully to *Time* magazine, was preceded by months of diplomatic activity, documented in *EIR*, devoted to spreading the line among our allies, that the SDI would not survive as a program, beyond the Reagan years.

Perle's actions are coordinated with those of Don Regan at the White House, and designed to ensure that the disastrous defense budget cuts negotiated by Regan will be passed by Congress. This faction of the executive branch is calling the shots behind the congressional revolt against the President's defense budget. Gary Hart and William Lind are providing the window dressing.

There are, of course, monumental problems besetting the the U.S. military. The McNamara team institutionalized a variety of horrendous policies, and, like our present military reformers, they also claimed to have no political purpose, only a desire to introduce "efficiency" to defense planning. McNamara's policies all operated under a strategic umbrella formed by the commitment to Mutually Assured Destruction. The new military reforms, like the New Yalta policy they are attached to, are the logical extension of that MAD policy, and have to be considered as a package, and judged by the strategic purpose that package is suited to.

To avoid this issue, the authors make use of a style of argument which mines the rich vein of horror stories—attached to every program run under the McNamara system—and then present the reader with two mutually exclusive approaches to solve the problem, carefully reducing the causality of the situation to the simplistic premises they have constructed for the reader. They begin by reporting on a variety of problems facing the Army, then assert that the wars which will be fought by the United States in the future will be limited wars (this emphatically excludes actual low-intensity warfare, which the Soviet Union is currently deploying). They close the circle with the remarkable assertion: "Because our conventional forces are relatively ineffective, we have adopted a doctrine of first use of nuclear weapons." You see, it is not the inherent fallacies of MAD which bedevil our military planners, it is rather that the deficiencies of our officer corps forced McNamara and company to adopt MAD!

One soon discovers that the term "reform," as used by the authors, has the same remarkable flexibility as their reasoning processes. They first inform us that the best examples of reform are: the upheavals which followed the 1806 defeat of the Prussian military by Napoleon, an event which sparked the reforms of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau; the U.S. Civil War, and its accompanying technological developments; and the World War II mobilization of U.S. industry (p. 24).

After all, the Prussian reforms were not limited to the creation of the institution of the General Staff, but incorporated the republican nation-building policies of vom Stein and the educational reforms of Humboldt; Lincoln implemented Hamiltonian banking reforms which created the greatest industrial expansion ever witnessed in history; and FDR, using similar credit policies, was able to implement the industrial mobilization policy developed by Douglas MacArthur and his staff before World War II. It is obvious, therefore, that "reform" will occur as the consequence of mobilizing the country to accomplish great industrial and technological feats which secure a republican peace. Right?

Wrong. "But even in the military, major changes driven by technology are rare. Despite all the talk about 'technological revolutions in warfare' by the advocates of complex technology, such revolutions occur very seldom. . . . Military reform consists of returning to the constants of the art of war, not moving in new and untried directions" (p. 257)! In the space of 200 pages, "reform" has demonstrated great "flexibility."

Not surprisingly, Lind dismisses the space program with the assertion, "The last 30 years have seen only one such major change, the spread of television." Another nice trick—if the space program didn't happen, and the only beam technologies in existence are cathode-ray tubes, we certainly don't have to worry about a revolution in war fighting caused by the deployment of relativistic beam weapons in near-Earth space. Lind has assured us that "these revolutions occur very seldom," and neglects to tell us why the military space program of the Soviet Union will not produce such a revolution.

The main areas of military technological development in the postwar period are grouped around a relatively few signal programs which have served as the drivers of larger broader efforts in the military and civilian economy generally. These are the NASA program, which in turn is the continuation of the Army Ballistic Missile program developed by Gen. Bruce Medaris; the aeronautical and weapons engineering feats accomplished by outfits such as the vaunted "Skunkworks" at Lockheed (developed the U-2, SR-71, etc.), or the Navy's China Lake facility (Sidewinder missile, etc.); and the tremendous effort of Adm. Hyman Rickover to develop the nuclear navy.

Each of these projects is characterized by the "crash program" approach (the weapons programs were not true "crash programs," but did run as "black" programs, unconstrained by the McNamara conditions), and provide the best recent examples of how to run roughshod over bureaucratic oppo-

sition to progress. Gen. James Abrahamson originally proposed to use the SDI program in such a fashion, and thereby re-establish standards of engineering performance consistent with the best traditions of the U.S. military. Do our reformers look to this possibility to junk the McNamara abuses? Not one word on the subject is to be found!

Rickover is given credit for his prowess as a master military engineer, Lind writes that this personality type is unsuited to modern, "maneuver war," and it is precisely the over-abundance of engineers in the officer corps which inhibits the study of the "art of war." The authors can barely contain their hatred for the rigorous thinking which characterizes true military planning.

The authors are noted for their thesis which asserts that there is a contradiction between "maneuver" and "firepower" as strategies of war fighting (engineers favor the dull use of "firepower," and eschew maneuver, of course), yet they present examples of military actions which show that there is no such dichotomy in the mind of any successful commander. This attack on the engineering bias among the officer corps, and the related criticism of the high ratio of officers to soldiers of the U.S. military, is an argument directed against the classical American model of an "expandable army" developed by Hamilton and Calhoun.

As the founding of West Point as an *engineering* school shows, the American system is oriented toward creating a large base of trained military engineers who can be called upon to lead the country in times of military-industrial mobilization. The large ratio of officers to soldiers in peacetime is the precondition for any mobilization call-up of civilians in time of crisis. In short, those aspects of the officer-corps structure which Luttwak and Lind abhor, are the *sine qua non* of republican military reforms, as seen in both the Prussian and American examples!

## Criticisms of the Navy

Gary Hart's criticisms of the Navy is about as valid as his officer's commission—both have been acquired for political reasons. Nonetheless, he presents himself as somewhat of an expert on naval affairs, and has written extensively on naval strategy. The gist of his argument, summarized in this book, is that the aircraft carrier is no longer the "capital ship" of the fleet, and has been superseded by the Soviet employment of large numbers of submarines. Therefore, we must abandon the "too-expensive" aircraft carrier, and emulate the Soviets in constructing large numbers of relatively cheap submarines.

There is no gainsaying the awesome power of the Soviet submarine threat, but let's look at what the Soviet navy is actually doing. First, they are embarked on a program of building large aircraft carriers of the type that Hart and Lind recommend we forego. Second, the Soviets have recently introduced a very large missile-carrying submarine, the *Oscar* class, which has no direct counterpart in the West, but is of a type and size which Hart and Lind demand we abandon.

So in the strange world of military reform, we should abandon aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines because the Soviets have superseded them by building aircraft carriers and large nuclear submarines!

The Soviet naval strategy happens to be highly competent, and as they move their strategic missile fleet out of "European" territory and onto their submarines, they will make use of the large-scale offensive and anti-submarine warfare capabilities inherent in a carrier action group. Soviet missile submarines will become no less deadly to troops in Europe if the United States reduces itself to a coastal navy, as Hart proposes. Once again, Hart and company demand we abandon the European battlefield, and any of our allies who depend on our ability to counter Soviet strategic pressures.

Hart does propose to build standardized military/merchant ships, which are necessary to revitalize our merchant marine, and in an expanding economy there is no conflict between this necessity and our other strategic naval obligations. But he again counterposes the two issues, and demands that we accept his strategic goal of confining our naval operations to the Western Hemisphere.

The criticism of the Air Force is based on a similar sleight of hand. The authors build an argument which sees a conflict between the air-intercept role ("dogfighting"), and interdiction bombing (the disruption of the enemy supply lines and rear area by fighter-bombers). The latter function is characteristic of an air war which is supporting the advance of large land armies, such as would occur in Europe.

The authors dredge up the usual anecdotes, drawing on the large stock of fiascos which have attended every high-technology weapons development effort conducted under "McNamara rules." These electronic warfare devices are heavy and expensive, explain our authors, and would be unnecessary if we confine ourselves to intercepting enemy fighters in surprise attacks conducted in good weather. This, in turn, would allow us to abandon the expense of research into the margins of electronic battlefield technology, freeing our limited resources to build lots of light, cheap fighters.

Of course, these fighters would not be able to fly in the overcast which characterizes European weather, and they would also be unable to penetrate the dense electronically sophisticated air defenses of the Soviet armies, and they would lack the heavy and expensive radars necessary to counter cruise missiles, but these are European problems, after all. And why should we worry if such a fighter is unusable as a patrol aircraft over the Arctic wastes? It can't counter the waves of cruise missiles carried by Soviet bombers in the first place.

This argument again ends at the unstated premises of the authors. Each of the weapons systems they propose is characteristically useless in Europe, and designed to fight border wars in the Western hemisphere. This is the strategic world of New Yalta, it is the military philosophy of a nation which has abandoned its responsibilities as a global power. It is a prescription for surrender to the Soviets.