

Collapsing Empire: China and Russia Checkmate US Military

By Kit Klarenberg

On July 29th, **Pentagon-funded** “think tank” RAND Corporation published a **landmark appraisal** of the state of the Pentagon’s **2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS)**, and current US military readiness, produced by a Congress-created Commission of “non-governmental experts in national security.” Its findings are stark, an unrelentingly bleak analysis of every aspect of the Empire’s bloated, decaying global war machine. In brief, the US is “not prepared” in any meaningful way for serious “competition” with its major adversaries - and vulnerable or even significantly outmatched in every sphere of warfare.

The **2022 NDS** was released in October that year, with much fanfare. Its contents bombastically proclaimed to offer a bold, comprehensive roadmap for how the US national security state, and all its divisions, would evolve and adapt to “dramatic changes in geopolitics, technology, economics, and our environment.” Promising to safeguard Washington’s hegemony for “decades to come,” the Strategy’s introduction loftily declared that the Pentagon was obligated to the US military and public alike:

“To provide a clear picture of the challenges we expect to face in the crucial years ahead - and we owe them a clear and rigorous strategy for advancing our defense and security goals...From helping to protect the American people, to promoting global security, to seizing new strategic opportunities, and to realizing and defending our democratic values.”

Fast forward to today, and the RAND Commission’s appraisal of the NDS couldn’t be more scathing. The Pentagon’s comprehension of the economic, military, and political threats to “US interests” posed by China and Russia, and the pair’s emergent, world-defining partnership - to the extent they were even acknowledged at all - is found to be hazardously defective, if not non-existent. **And the NDS’ proposals for overcoming these issues, and maintaining the Empire’s worldwide dominance, are judged to be at best woefully inadequate, at worst outright delusional.**

RAND’s income sources in 2023

‘Multiple Adversaries’

The NDS did get one thing right - China and Russia represent major threats to the Empire, and actively “seek to undermine US influence” worldwide. Beijing particularly was branded a “pacing challenge” economically and militarily, given the extraordinary speed and scale of its scientific and technological innovation and growth. However, the NDS assumed Washington maintained

major ‘edges’ over its rival, and widening those gaps further was promptly and readily achievable. To say the least, the RAND report begs to differ:

“We believe the magnitude of the threats the US faces is understated and significantly worse...In many ways, China is outpacing the US...in defense production and growth in force size and, increasingly, in force capability and is almost certain to continue to do so...[Beijing] has largely negated the US military advantage in the Western Pacific through two decades of focused military investment. Without significant change by the US, the balance of power will continue to shift in China’s favour.”

This dire situation is greatly magnified by China’s “no limits” partnership with Russia, signed in **February 2022**, and explicitly “aimed at challenging US leadership internationally.” The pair’s burgeoning alliance with the Global South, specifically Iran and North Korea, exacerbates things yet further. Alliance and collaboration between these countries means they are all growing “bolder”, in turn undercutting Washington’s “force planning and force structure...designed to deter aggression by others, when the US is involved in conflict elsewhere.”

This ever-germinating union of disaffected states - stultifyingly dubbed “An Axis of Growing Malign Partnerships” by RAND - means “efforts to isolate and coerce these countries through international means - such as sanctions, embargoes, and censure - will be far more difficult.”

Even more gravely, it “increases the likelihood that a conflict with one would expand to multiple fronts, causing simultaneous demands on US and allied resources”:

“At minimum, the US should assume that if it enters a direct conflict involving Russia, China, Iran, or North Korea, that country will benefit from economic and military aid from the others...This new alignment of nations opposed to US interests creates a real risk, if not likelihood, that conflict anywhere could become a multi-theater or global war...As US adversaries are cooperating more closely together than before, the US and its allies must be prepared to confront an axis of multiple adversaries.”

Partnership between Beijing and Moscow has only deepened since February 2022. **In the words** of Stockholm’s **Institute for Security and Development Policy**, “the world order has become much more unfavourable and hostile in the Russian and Chinese conceptions, and has warranted closer ties and unwavering mutual support.” Their alliance’s revolutionary geopolitical ramifications were abundantly clear when the NDS was published that same year. **Yet, that document made zero reference to the “no limits” relationship whatsoever.**

The obvious prospect that the US waging war against one of the pair would inevitably mean war with the other - a threat now all the deadlier due to their alliance expanding - was similarly unconsidered. The Empire is extremely

fortunate no such conflict has come to pass in the two years since the NDS was published. As the Commission report spells out in forensic detail, Washington would be almost completely defenceless in such a scenario, and likely defeated nigh on instantly.

Multiple passages slam the US military's lack of "readiness" for a major, multi-theatre global conflict. Recent "crises", including the Zionist entity's genocide in Gaza, "have led to unplanned force deployments to Europe and the Middle East, creating high demand for 'stressed' force elements with multiple requirements across theaters, such as air defense and aerial refueling." In tandem, "constant demand for presence operations, exercises, and security cooperation activities has exacerbated readiness challenges, especially when paired with the training requirements to prepare for great power competition and conflict." Meanwhile:

"The US Navy is also suffering from readiness issues stemming from its high operational tempo, aging ships, shipyard backlogs, and crew fatigue. Continued mishaps at sea and in military aviation pose risks to troop safety and are symptomatic of a decline in readiness, reflecting both a lack of experience and the increased complexity of the future warfighting mission. The steady demands of campaigning on a smaller military force - and an even smaller number of responsive, modernized, and combat-credible forces - has stressed force readiness."

'Affordable Cost'

It's not just being spread too thinly across the Grand Chessboard that means the Empire's military "lacks both the capabilities and the capacity required to be confident it can deter and prevail in combat." Munitions, or lack thereof, are a fatal susceptibility. "Extraordinary" levels of "consumption and demand" for US weapons "by allies and partners in Europe," combined with the Zionist entity's rapacious appetite for heavy bombs, have left Washington's stockpiles "already inadequate for a high-end conflict."

Per *Wall Street Journal*, just one of the fields in which the Empire is way behind China and Russia militarily

Renewing those stockpiles, let alone equipping the Empire for future war, won't be easy. The RAND Commission found Washington's "defense industrial base" is completely "unable to meet the equipment, technology, and munitions needs" of the US, let alone its allies. "A protracted conflict, especially in multiple theatres, would require much greater capacity to produce, maintain, and replenish weapons and munitions" than is currently in place, the report observes. Rebuilding that capacity "requires greater urgency and resources," and "should remain a top priority" for the Pentagon.

For decades, the US military "employed cutting-edge technology to its decisive advantage for decades." This "assumption of uncontested technological superiority" on the Empire's part meant Washington had

“the luxury to build exquisite capabilities, with long acquisition cycles and little tolerance for failure or risk.” Those days are long over though, with China and Russia “incorporating technology at accelerating speed,” and “even relatively unsophisticated actors” such as Yemen’s Ansarallah “able to obtain and use modern technology (e.g. drones) to strategic effect.”

The Empire already isn’t keeping up, and in any future war, will need “to continue to develop, adopt, and iterate new technologies at greater speed and scale and at an affordable cost,” while simultaneously replenishing “existing munitions” for a “protracted” period, “to keep pace with war-fighter needs.” Current Pentagon research and development and procurement systems were judged by the Commission to be wholly inadequate for the task. And America’s “defense industrial base” is today crumbling, riddled with a myriad of deleterious issues:

“These shortcomings include the deteriorating condition of defense depots, contract maintenance performance issues, and underproduction of spare parts, among many others. The result is a US military that is minimally operationally ready today but is unlikely to be ready for tomorrow....[The US] is unable to produce the weapons, munitions, and other equipment and software needed to prepare for and engage in great power conflict. Consolidation and underinvestment have led to too few companies, gaps in the workforce, insufficient production infrastructure, and fragile supply chains.”

To address these problems, the Commission calls for enormous amounts of money to be spent on “the capacity to build” munitions domestically, “the recapitalization of armories,” and “advanced manufacturing and further stockpiling of munitions.” In other words, to reindustrialise the US after years of outsourcing, offshoring and neglect. No timeframe is provided, although it would likely take decades. Meanwhile, the Pentagon simultaneously “needs to work with other countries to expand production capacity for munitions,” while ensuring “it can buy all munitions at sufficient scale to deliver the desired operational effects.”

Of course, the Empire already wastes exorbitant sums on keeping its existing out-gunned, out-numbered, out-produced military machine, which wouldn’t survive first contact with an actual war, operational.

Doing so requires printing astonishing volumes of dollars, in turn producing such **high inflation** that arms suppliers are now rejecting Pentagon contracts and tearing up existing deals, as they have become “money-losers”. Washington’s response? The US defense budget now allocates over \$1 billion annually in yet more freshly-printed money, **to compensate them for inflation-related losses.**

We have entered a strange, late-stage Empire era, comparable to the Soviet Union’s *Glasnost*, in which elements of the US imperial brain-trust can see with blinding clarity Washington’s entire hegemonic global project is stumbling

rapidly and irreversibly towards extinction, and announce so publicly - but their insight does not translate into evasive governmental action at home. The RAND Commission report elicited no mainstream coverage or comment whatsoever, proof positive there isn't a concomitant effort to manufacture consent for its radical, far-reaching prescriptions.

Were the Commission's recommendations remotely plausible, a multipronged PR campaign would've immediately ensued to convince Americans of the righteousness of the Empire's mission, and the necessity of investing in US "defense" to the tune of trillions. Media silence on the report's damning findings definitionally reflects an omertà among the US political class. The well-known American reindustrialisation can't happen. So, the fatal "disconnect" between Pentagon operational and industrial planning identified by RAND will endure, and with it ever-intensifying US military impotence.

We're spectating the Empire's final acts in real-time.

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