

# Fighting Stupid, Defending Smart

Colonel Richard Szafranski, USAF, retired

*To bend the enemy's will, one must put him in intolerable circumstances; and the best way to do that is to attack directly the defenseless population of his cities and great industrial centers. It is as sure as fate that, as long as such a direct method of attack exists, it will be used.*

Giulio Douhet

Thousands of innocent Americans were attacked and murdered on 11 September 2001. The war that 'many of us feared and anticipated,' to use Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Dov S. Zakheim's words, has arrived.<sup>1</sup> The enemy abducted and used instruments of American global aerospace power – our own fuel – and passenger-laden long-range commercial airliners against us with hateful and perhaps strategic effect. The attacks seemed directed against our people, our most precious asset, and the enemy's objective appeared to be the destruction of the physical symbols of America's greatness. However, evi-

\* Published in *Aerospace Power Journal*, Spring 2002. <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/api/api02/spr02/-szafranski>

<sup>1</sup> Vernon Loeb, 'Not Just Writing Checks for the Military,' *Washington Post*, 2 January 2002, on-line, Internet, 8 February 2002, available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node+&contentId=A49428-2002Jan1>

<sup>2</sup> Tom Wheeler, *Leadership Lessons from the Civil War: Winning Strategies for Today's Managers* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1999), 195.

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dence is developing that the enemy intended more than symbolic attacks and mass murders: the real objective was to destroy America's economic strength.

The war is on. Americans, our friends, and allies must be determined that history will show that the enemy was stupid. That history can be written only if we hunt, capture, and bring our enemies to justice; ceaselessly work to eradicate terrorism; and successfully defend ourselves in the interim. Appreciating the enemy's aims is key to an intelligent defense.

## Early Warnings

Cicero recognized that money is the sinew of war. Europeans fought wars in Europe and in its colonies over possession of wealth. In America, taxation was a stimulus for the Revolution, and desire for wealth a primary motive driving westward expansion. America built and sustained a great navy to protect commerce. In the nation's Civil War, General William T. Sherman marched to the sea using 1860 census data on the South's economic centers to draw his *scientific* route of destruction.<sup>2</sup> Until

the advent of the airplane – as Brig Gen Giulio Douhet recognized and Col John A. Warden III elaborated – it was first necessary to engage and destroy an enemy's fielded forces before attacking his economic heartland. The US Air Corps Tactical School studied the industrial web with an eye toward understanding how airpower could strike deep and dismantle the production capacity of an enemy state. For decades and through many evolutions in the Cold War, the US Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) threatened the Soviet state with industrial and economic ruin and the loss of its hostage colonies.<sup>3</sup> Then the Cold War ended.

During the decade that followed, many analysts and pundits struggled to understand the underlying dynamics of a new world order. Some said the new enemy was instability. Many urged a revolution in military affairs to cope with the new threats or a transformation of military power to dominate them. Some envisioned and articulated the West's material and spiritual weaknesses to novel forms of attack. Most talked of asymmetrical warfare, perhaps failing to appreciate that the aim of all warfare is to create asymmetries to best an enemy. In 1993 Alvin and Heidi Toffler, in their book *War and Anti-War*, gave warning:

<sup>3</sup> Desmond Ball, 'Development of the SIOP, 1960-1983,' in Desmond Ball and Jeffrey Richelson, eds., *Strategic Nuclear Targeting* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 80-81.

<sup>4</sup> Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 149.

<sup>5</sup> Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: Assumptions on War and Tactics in the Age of Globalization* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999), 21-22, summary translation of *Unrestricted Warfare-Part One*, on-line, Internet, 12 February 2002, available from <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/unresw1.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Rowan Scarborough, 'Rumsfeld Eyes Global Command to Oversee Long War on Terrorism', *Washington Times*, 23 October 2001.

Imagine . . . the World Trade Towers or the Wall Street district. The ensuing financial chaos – with bank transfer networks, stock and bond markets, commodity trading systems, credit card networks, telephone and data transmission lines, Quotron machines, and general commercial communications disrupted or destroyed – would have sent a financial shock wave across the world. Nor does one need such sophisticated weaponry to accomplish a similar effect.<sup>4</sup>

In China, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui daringly outlined numerous forms of unrestricted or 'no limits' warfare and their 'new weapons concepts':

New weapons concepts are completely different from new concept weapons. New weapons concepts is a broad conception of weapons that transcends the military field – whatever method can be used to fight a war is a weapon. In this view, whatever provides benefits to mankind can also be turned around to be a weapon to harm mankind. That is to say that there is nothing in the world that cannot become a weapon. This smashes our conception of just what a weapon is. Just as technology is multiplying the number of different kinds of weapons, new thinking breaks down the distinction between weapon and non-weapon. To our way of thinking, a planned stock market crash, a computer virus attack, making the currency exchange rate of an enemy country erratic, and spreading rumors on the Internet about the leaders of an enemy country can all be thought of as new concept weapons. This new way of thinking puts weapons into the daily lives of civilians. New concept weapons can make of war something that even military professionals will find hard to imagine. Both soldiers and civilians will be disturbed to see items in their everyday lives become weapons that can attack and kill.<sup>5</sup>

The events of 11 September 2001 were destructive and bloody, but they did not collapse the American economy. However, if we fail to approach the situation thinking smart, enemy

actions that are still unconsummated could write the very history we must avoid. It is easier to be smart against a stupid enemy, and perhaps we have one. Any enemy incautious enough to openly specify strategic and operational objectives provides us the opportunity to block those objectives.

### Fighting Stupid?

Stupid could easily refer to a particular person, but more importantly the term implies a way of fighting that isn't smart. For example, at the tactical level it is not smart to announce battles in advance of initiating them or to proclaim targets in advance of attacking them. Acknowledging that media attention is the oxygen of terrorism – a terrorist's objectives include inflaming media hype by creating visual drama – it is still unwise to telegraph major operations in advance or illuminate strategic objectives for an adversary. Napoleon once said that he would throw his cap in the fire if it knew what his head was thinking. In Chinese military classics the general is urged to be 'inscrutable,' and the key elements of strategy are described as 'mouth-to-ear' affairs. The US secretary of defense's (SECDEF) justifiable ire over leaks made it clear that he would be intolerant of fighting stupid.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, witness an enemy general with an ego so uncontainable that he was given to regular speech making and performing in front of camcorders. Do the speeches reveal strategy?

It would be stupid to underappreciate Sun Tzu's warning that all warfare is based on deception. Misinformation and misdirection are tools the strategist knows well and the best strategists employ well. Thus, when an enemy appears to have revealed a secret or a strategic direction, the skeptic looks for evidence of misdirection. When insufficient evidence is forthcoming, the strategist, ever paranoid, looks more closely and more broadly. If the secret is corroborated



**Smart or stupid?** (Bron: abc-press)

or if there is proof that a professed strategic direction may be an actual one, then the good strategist uses the enemy's incaution as a gift of knowledge. It pays to listen closely when an enemy speaks, even one as deceptive as Osama bin Laden. What was this enemy alleged to have revealed?

In congratulating the killers who brought down the World Trade Center, he said,

<sup>7</sup> 'Full Text' of Usama bin Laden Recorded Statement Aired by Al-Jazirah TV 27 Dec,' available in FBIS (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*) on-line subscription service (Document ID: GMP20011227000257, Entry Date: 27 December 2001, Version 2), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 7.

*'They shook America's throne and struck at the US economy in the heart. They struck the largest military power deep in the heart . . . This is clear proof that this international usurious, damnable economy – which America uses along with its military power to impose infidelity and humiliation on weak people – can easily collapse . . . those blessed attacks, as they themselves admitted, have inflicted on the New York and other markets more than a trillion dollars in losses.'*<sup>7</sup>

Osama bin Laden continued praising the murderers for

*'hitting the economic structure, which is the basis for military power. If their economy is destroyed, they*

*will be busy with their own affairs rather than enslaving weak peoples. It is important to concentrate on hitting the US economy through all possible means.'*<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, in case that wasn't clear enough, he added,

*'The economic bleeding is continuing to date, but it requires further strikes. The young people should make an effort to look for the key pillars of the US economy. The key pillars of the enemy should be struck, God willing.'*<sup>9</sup>

The source of these remarks is the transcript of alleged Bin Laden videotape that appeared on *Al-Jazirah*, a Qatar-based Arabic 24-hour news

satellite-channel, on 27 December 2001. I will set aside the important but tortuous process of proving the authority and veracity of attributing these utterances to Bin Laden, the accuracy of the translation, and other similar issues, to allow us to focus on the words. Note the steady repetition – seven times – of the word ‘economy’ or ‘economic’ in these remarks. The logic Bin Laden advances is that the United States is evil, ruthless, and able to do ill in the world because of its military power borne by its economic power. Key pillars underpin the US economic power: although its economy is ‘bleeding,’ future attacks must focus on striking these pillars.

Economic attacks are not necessarily a new thought. In 1987 Paul Kennedy illuminated the relationships between economic power and military strength in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.<sup>10</sup> In its 1999 report, the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century also noted potential sensitivities in the evolving economic infrastructure:

*‘Even more portentous, as global and domestic infrastructures become indispensable to modern life, their disruption can have literally life-threatening consequences. Such infrastructures, including crucial transportation, health, sanitation, and financial systems, are bound to become targets of the disgruntled, the envious, and the evil – individuals, groups, and potentially hostile countries alike. They will be very difficult targets to defend.’<sup>11</sup>*

What is new, however, is the complexity of today’s economy and its volatility. Evidence of serious disruption and hurt in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks mounts: the airline industry,<sup>12</sup> tourism, commuter travel, insurance, construction, retail, layoffs in many sectors, and the worst year on Wall Street since 1973 or 1974. All this evidence suggests at least temporary ‘bleeding.’<sup>13</sup> But in a sense, by directing economic attacks, Bin Laden is proposing an impossible task for the young martyrs because neither he nor our best economists

really understand our economy well enough to identify with certainty the ‘pillars’ on which it rests.

The fact is that there isn’t a single American economy. There are a number of quite different economies at play, each with its own dynamics. There are agricultural; mineral-extraction, industrial-era, assembly-line; information- or knowledge-based; and entertainment<sup>14</sup> economies, each with its own unique needs and outputs. There are domestic and regional economies (both protected), and there are expansive and highly interactive global sectors. There are sectors with redundancy – and hence a degree of security – built in, and other sectors that are so lean that the loss of a single component would take them down and cause big ripple effects. The blunt fact is that we have much – almost everything – to learn about the fragility and the resilience of the twenty-first-century economy and the different sectors within it.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, terrorists realize that even random strikes could kill

<sup>10</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> ‘Supporting Research and Analysis,’ *New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century*, Phase 1, 15 September 1999, 151, on-line, Internet, 8 February 2002, available from

[http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nwc/NWR\\_A.pdf](http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nwc/NWR_A.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Frances Williams, ‘ILO Sees Huge Air Industry Job Losses,’ *Financial Times*, 20 January 2002. The International Labour Organization (ILO) notes in a report prepared for a meeting this week of governments, trade unions, and employers to discuss responses to the crisis, the ILO estimates that one operational aircraft supports 150–250 direct jobs and about the same number of indirect jobs. For every direct-flight job lost, at least four jobs are lost within the airport perimeter (catering, baggage, maintenance, and airport security) and about three jobs around the perimeter in hotels, transport, and other services.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Grunwald, ‘Terror’s Damage: Calculating the Devastation,’ *Washington Post*, 28 October 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 12 February 2002, available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=>

A63343-2001Oct27. Mr Grunwald details some of the hurt:

– New York’s total ‘lost human productive value:’ about \$11 billion.

– The airlines, which comprise the most prominent terror-damaged industry, have received a \$15 billion government bailout, announced 100,000 layoffs and slashed 20 percent of their flights.

– The Pentagon sustained about \$1 billion in damages.

– New York also sustained ‘business interruption’ costs estimated at \$21 billion, focused in the downtown neighborhoods that were inaccessible for weeks after the attacks.

– Reagan National Airport was closed for 23 days at a cost of \$330 million to the airport and Northern Virginia businesses and \$27 million to state and local tax revenue.

– The \$126 billion commercial insurance industry – facing a \$30 billion to \$50 billion payout – is clearly one that will never be quite the same. Insurers and reinsurers had never considered terrorism when pricing their premiums.

– A third of the nation’s 265,000 unionized hotel and restaurant workers have been laid off. Hotel expansion plans are on hold everywhere.

<sup>14</sup> Michael J. Wolf, *The Entertainment Economy: How Mega-Media Forces Are Trans-*

*forming Our Lives* (New York: Random House, 1999). Wolf’s thesis in 1999 was that ‘locally, globally, internationally, we are living in an entertainment economy’ (p. xxi). He noted on page 31 that while the rate of personal savings in the United States has declined to a sixty-three-year low of 2.1 percent, entertainment spending is at a high of 8.4 percent of total consumer expenditures. Soon the annual outlay for entertainment could surpass that for health care, household supplies, and home furnishings. Equally telling are the results of a number of surveys that gave consumers the choice of more free time or more money. Resoundingly, they chose more free time. Of course, we cannot simply find more free time just by wishing for it on a survey. More and more, we have to pay for it. Fun, entertainment, recreation, no matter what you call it, we have become a nation – make that a world – of fun-focused consumers. If the fun foreseen in 1999 is now over, the economy will manifest the loss.

<sup>15</sup> Allan Sloan, ‘A Year That Defied Forecasting,’ *Washington Post*, 1 January 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 12 February 2002, available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A46875-2001Dec31>

large numbers of people and damage parts of the system. More carefully planned strikes, they are likely to reason, could inflict grave damage. Thus there is every reason to believe that somewhere, sometime, the young martyrs will try another wave of attacks. Mounting a smart defense requires that we first accept that the robust US economy – or some critical contributing elements – constitutes a rich set of targets for the present enemy and an assuredly difficult set for us to defend.

### Winning Smart

A smart defense involves thinking within the adversary's frame of reference – from the obvious to the subtle. To learn what pillars the enemy would attack, we first have to advance a theory of the basis of US economic power. What ends does the American economy serve, how does it work, and where might be its vulnerabilities?

As young premartyrs, the enemies might start by reading the great economists. That would likely be unrevealing because the twenty-first-century economy is different from the one these economists described. Alternatively they could, and probably would, scrutinize the numerous public tomes, paid for by the US government, that expose our economic and other weaknesses. These might include reports of the President's Commission of Critical Infrastructure Protection and of the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century. They might choose to study our supply chains, study financial analysts' reports, or steal documents from insurers or reinsurers (who are usually well informed about risks and vulnerabilities).

<sup>16</sup> Clearly this notional target set is an expansive one, suggesting the need for massive investment and new thinking.

<sup>17</sup> Our actions have already reduced the size and reach of the enemy force, but we must find the forces already forward-deployed.

This may be too subtle. Behind the enemies' fanatic hostility lies a worldview that concludes the US economy is based on the exploitation of the weak everywhere to pay for evil American social and economic aggrandizement. America's physical infrastructure moves mass and electrons throughout the United States and the world, provides lines of communication, and furnishes gathering places for commerce and individual or public entertainment. Alongside this physical infrastructure is an American culture that includes freedom from guilt and a supreme confidence that Americans have the inventiveness to create nearly limitless wealth. In turn, that wealth sustains American military power and thereby compounds the potential for further exploitation of the weak.

As America's enemies look around the world for evidence to support these views, they see the enormous global divide between the rich and the poor. They see huge American financial dealings that, in their eyes, are unfair and usurious. They see the United States, the Great Satan, supporting both Christianity and the Jewish state of Israel in opposition to the Muslim community or *ummah*. Their frame of reference overlooks constitutionally guaranteed freedom for all religious expression, including that of Muslims, and ignores American support for Muslims in Kosovo and Bosnia. Instead, it despises the non-Talibanic, American *mores*—especially the equality of the role, status, and worth of women in American society. They are shocked by the dress of American women and the scandalous behaviour of many female celebrities. They see American entertainment as corrupt, polluting, and self-serving. They glare at American tourism, theme parks and sports stadiums (not used for beheadings, amputations, floggings, or other public torture) as corrupting activities and symbols. Worse yet, they see America flaunting its wealth and exporting all it can of this unclean culture from which it earns huge profits.

Given these views, the enemy would strive to meet many goals simultaneously. First, do economic damage to a 'damnable' economic apparatus that none of us understands. Next, humiliate and chastise America: make us conscious of our vulnerability, create fear, unweave threads of our social fabric, and make us lose faith in our government's and our armed forces' ability to protect us. America, the enemy would reason, is vulnerable to perturbations in its economy, and attacks of any kind would erode our confidence and hurt our morale. From the enemy's frame of reference, which targets satisfy what Bin Laden called the 'key pillars' of the US economy? With the enemy's postulated understanding of our economy, there are many potential targets, but five would likely top the list (see table next page). Given these 'pillars', a notional target set emerges for those young terrorists committed to, and perhaps already walking, the road to martyrdom.<sup>16</sup>

### Defending the Pillars

Thinking as the enemy might think, a large return on investment would appear very important since each transaction deliberately liquidates part of his human capital.<sup>17</sup> The enemy would also strive to mitigate this liability by recruiting an abundance of would-be martyrs and allies – hence the many training camps. He would strive to arm the martyrs with weapons of mass destruction and employ them in ways that would create mass destruction or mass disruption. We would be stupid to think the enemy does not have a large and well-distributed presence in the Americas already. I have heard the number '150,'<sup>18</sup> but we should think in terms of much larger numbers, including the additional witting and unwitting accomplices aiding and abetting the enemy.<sup>19</sup> Some of these may be the homegrown variety of terrorists that plague every nation. Witness the bombing of abortion clinics, the Oklahoma City bombing, a light-air-

### Pillars

American financial and currency markets

American interior and global lines of communications

American mass points of sale

America's confidence in its inventiveness to create and expend wealth

America's confidence in its government, including its armed forces and law enforcement agencies, to protect American institutions and values

### Targets

World Trade Center, Wall Street, World bank, and overseas economies

Airlines, telecommunications, ports, Internet, and mass transport

Stadiums, theme parks, malls, theaters, and main streets

Malls, wealthy heroes, labs, Silicon Valley, and Fortune 50 companies

Pentagon, US Capitol, White House, FBI Headquarters, Supreme Court

### Economic Pillars and Potential Targets

craft suicide, and at least one American caught fighting on the side of the enemy. Al-Qaeda, Inc. has been in business long enough to have products everywhere. The enemy most likely has a large number of combat, combat-support, and combat-services-support troops in the Americas. Prudence dictates we not think otherwise.

In addition, we must assume our enemies have access to – or will try to get

access to – radiological, chemical, and biological weapons.<sup>20</sup> Surely they must, because they need a high return on investment in martyrdom and will aim at doing permanent damage to American morale and institutions by striking 'the key pillars' of the American economy. Hijacking airliners and flying them into buildings is horrific and unforgivable, but poisoning water or food sources or contaminating many square miles of a city rich in government buildings or financial

centers could rise to the level of an unrecoverable tragedy.<sup>21</sup> Exploding a container ship or a tanker in port or beneath a bridge, detonating a truck's cargo in a tunnel, rendering many hospitals unusable simultaneously, disrupting emergency services, hijacking airliners and flying them into nuclear power plants, or engaging in massive information attacks – all are within the logic of the enemy's model. The model? Do massive and demoralizing destruction while attacking and reattacking the key pillars until they collapse. While the enemy strives to pull the pillars down, we must be vigilant and active to ensure that the enemy goes down but the pillars stay up.

<sup>18</sup> Dan Eggen and Michael Dobbs, 'Danger Persists after Hobbling of Al Qaeda,' *Washington Post*, 14 January 2002, n.p., on-line, Internet, 12 February 2002, available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A40815-2002Jan13>

The authors write: 'Since Sept. 11, the United States has frozen more than \$33 million in assets of more than 150 groups and individuals allegedly involved in funding terrorism. A similar amount has been frozen by 142 nations cooperating in the effort, and teams of US experts have been sent to help countries such as the United Arab Emirates plug holes in financial systems that terrorists exploit.'

<sup>19</sup> David Ignatius, 'The 'Sleepers' among Us,' *Washington Post*, 18 November 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 12 February 2002, available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=>

[A43725-2001Nov16](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/allison_binladen_bomb_wp_111801.htm)

<sup>20</sup> Graham Allison, 'We Must Act as if He Has the Bomb,' *Washington Post*, 18 November 2001, n.p., on-line, Internet, 12 February 2002, available from [http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/allison\\_binladen\\_bomb\\_wp\\_111801.htm](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/allison_binladen_bomb_wp_111801.htm)

<sup>21</sup> In *Biological Warfare in the 21st Century: Biotechnology and the Proliferation of Biological Weapons* (London: Brassey's, 1994), 198, Malcolm Dando writes that examples of hypothetical attacks put forward in the open literature include a ship attacking New York with aerosolized anthrax and perhaps causing 400,000 deaths, and the deliberate contamination of milk supplies with botulin toxin at a commercial processing plant. Moreover, though it is possible to think of policy responses which would help alleviate the danger . . . it would be very difficult to prevent a determined terrorist group from using biological weapons effectively.

### Imposing Our Will

The smart move is to accept that we will be at grave risk until the enemy is eradicated – wherever he is found. Whether or not official threat alerts are issued, we must remain vigilant and remember that we are in a fight for our lives. The fight will be expensive. It will entail tangible and intangible costs we cannot see today. Since we became actively engaged on 11 September 2001, the war against terrorism is reportedly consuming more

than \$2 billion each month.<sup>22</sup> There are many months of fighting ahead, and even after holding the line, we will have to cope with the longer-term financial and social implications of these huge costs. The Social Security and medical care accounts likely will suffer. Our country will accrue debt that our grandchildren will have to pay. There will be longer-term constitutional issues. We must deal with these as best we can now but without becoming distracted. If we do not endure, then none of these issues required our attention.

Many of the remedies under way appear to be appropriate, as long as we also explicitly defend the 'key pillars' of our economy. The president – or the SECDEF, or the homeland security chief, or the secretary of commerce, or the director of central intelligence – should commission separate (and perhaps secret) studies that determine what pillars of our economy must survive, their vulnerabilities to attack, and ways we can defend them. The president must deal with additional challenges: the smoking gun of anthrax, our energy dependence and associated vulnerabilities, and other nations that host terrorists. Simultaneously, the SECDEF and the services, even while fighting enemies abroad and going through the processes of transformation at home,

<sup>22</sup> 'Pentagon Seeking a Large Increase in Its Next Budget,' *New York Times*, 7 January 2002, 1.

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*Wise men refuse to move until they are wronged, but brave men as soon as they are wronged go to war, and when there is a good opportunity make peace again. They are not intoxicated by military success; but neither will they tolerate injustice from a love of peace and ease.*

Thucydides

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must ask what each can do to protect the US economy from attack. How can land power help? How can sea power help? What does 'force protection' mean now? What ought to be the future mission of the North American Aerospace Defense Command?

Aerospace power is airpower plus space power plus the economic power of the American aerospace industry. Aerospace power can and will help; certainly more than providing combat air patrols. It will contribute more than keeping the aircraft-production lines of the major vendors alive and well, and more than helping to eradicate the enemy abroad. We must begin by accepting that in a complex world of multitudinous and multidimensional threats, authentic airpower expertise precludes advancing single, simple solutions to complex problems. Airpower is not just about simplistic thinking: 'kicking down the door' of the enemy, or 'rapid decisive operations' or 'rapid halt,' or even the 'five rings.' Clearly, none of these frameworks stimulated the thinking

that preempted or deterred the attacks that rendered thousands of Americans 'defenseless,' to use Douhet's word, on 11 September 2001. Yet, the advantage of airmen ought to give them the advantage to systematically think through the complex problem of attacking economic 'pillars' and 'red-teaming' (role-playing the enemy during simulated planning and execution) our own economic infrastructure to envision what we must defend and how aerospace power can contribute. How do we preserve the strength and competitiveness of our aerospace industry? How do we protect all the contributing elements of it from attack or even from vulnerability?

The Commission on the Future of the US Aerospace Industry is seated and may help, but military aviators and planners cannot be excused from thinking of both attack and defense in new ways. Who among us can break the shackles of buzzword and buzzphrase thinking and conceive of new ways to use aerospace power in defense against the new threats to our country? Defending the notional target set offered here is only a beginning. And these issues and questions only scratch the surface.

There is much to do – and the time is limited. Before us is either our finest hour or what the enemy intends as our last hours. We must be smart, impose our will, and prove that the enemy has made a profoundly stupid mistake.