



RAND Corp., as MAD as ever, plots Russia's downfall

Special to the AAS

On 24 April 2019, the RAND Corporation completed and published a war plan for bringing Russia to its knees. "Overextending and Unbalancing Russia" was a 12-page summary of a simultaneously released 325-page document, *Extending Russia*.

The press release announcing the longer study lied that it proposed a "range of nonviolent measures the US could take to stress Russia's military, economy, or the regime's political standing at home and abroad." But the recommendations were anything but "nonviolent".

What is more, the RAND study was not the work of a private non-profit think tank putting forth its own dangerously wacky scenarios for confrontation with Russia. It was produced under a contract from the US Army Quadrennial Defence Review Office, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff of the US Army G-8. The RAND unit that produced the study, the Arroyo Centre, is described as "a federally funded research and development centre sponsored by the US Army".

RAND is the Military-Industrial Complex

When President Dwight Eisenhower, in his famous farewell address of January 1961, warned about the growing power of the "military-industrial complex", he was aiming directly at RAND. (Box, p. 12)

The RAND Corporation was an outgrowth of the World War II Strategic Bombing Survey, which evaluated the impact of massive assaults against civilian targets in the closing months of the war, for breaking the morale of Germany and Japan. At the end of the war, Project RAND (Project Research and Development) was launched by the Douglas Aircraft Corporation to continue the work of the Strategic Bombing Survey for the new Cold War.

On 18 September 1947 the *National Security Act* established the United States Air Force (USAF) as a separate branch of the armed forces. The RAND Corporation was formally established in February 1948 as an "inside-outside" research and development arm of the USAF. Its status was formalised in Air Force Regulation 20-9.

While functioning as an arm of the USAF and, later, other branches of the armed forces, RAND was incorporated in 1948 as a private non-profit research think tank. Initial private funding, supplementing the Pentagon funds, was provided by the Ford Foundation. Attorney Rowan Gaither incorporated both Ford and RAND and served as president of both organisations at different times.

RAND assembled a collection of "utopian" nuclear war planners. They were so called not so much after *Utopia*, Sir Thomas More's 16th-century satire of an ideal society, as after the scheming of H.G. Wells, author of *The Modern Utopia* (1905). In *War in the Air* (1907), Wells promoted the ideal properties of "air power": the ability to lay waste to an enemy country's whole society by attacking from the air, without engaging boots on the ground.



RAND Corporation headquarters in Santa Monica, California. Right, Peter Sellers as Dr Strangelove in the Stanley Kubrick movie of the same name, which was based on real-life RAND personnel. Photos: Wikipedia

The RAND utopians took a page from Wells's subsequent work, *The World Set Free* (1914), which had anticipated military strategies of dropping "atomic bombs" from airplanes (three decades before such weapons came into existence). They devised and revised the US Government's posture of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). That is the notion that since there is no defence against an atomic weapon, the only alternative is a "deterrent"—a military capability on each side, to destroy the attacking side before itself being destroyed. Bernard Brodie, Herman Kahn, Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter, Thomas Schelling, John von Neumann, and Andrew Marshall were among the cast of nuclear war planners who made RAND synonymous with nuclear Armageddon throughout the Cold War. In 1973 Marshall moved directly to the Office of the Secretary of Defence, creating the Office of Net Assessments, an inhouse Pentagon think tank and contracting office that coordinated the work of scores of Washington think tanks on behalf of the Pentagon. Marshall ran the ONA until he retired in 2015.

The mad scientists and military men in Stanley Kubrick's 1964 movie *Dr Strangelove* were modelled on several of the RAND Corporation's real-life nuclear war propagandists.

Target Russia

Now RAND has been tasked to devise a regime-change plan for Russia. In fact, seemingly non-military, irregular warfare has been part of the RAND package from the start. In the 1960s original RAND team member Schelling provided funding through his Department of Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) grant to Gene Sharp, the author of *The Politics of Non-Violent Action* who became known as the genius of "colour revolutions".¹

One of RAND's press releases touting its war plan

1. Rachel Douglas, "Destabilising Russia: The 'democracy' agenda of McFaul and his Oxford masters", *EIR*, 3 Feb. 2012. Esther-Mirjam Sent, "Some like it cold: Thomas Schelling as a Cold Warrior", *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 14:4, 2007, described Schelling's design of war simulation games for incoming President John F. Kennedy in 1961, gearing up for the potentially nuclear showdowns with the Soviet Union over Berlin (1961) and (1962). This same Thomas Schelling was co-recipient of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics for his "vision of game theory as a unifying framework for the social sciences".

against Russia made clear that it is part of the Pentagon's execution of the January 2018 National Defence Strategy, which focused on Russia and China as "near-peer rivals" who threaten America's global leadership. It said:

"As the 2018 *National Defence Strategy* recognised, the United States is currently locked in a great-power competition with Russia. This report seeks to define areas where the United States can compete to its own advantage. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data from Western and Russian sources, this report examines Russia's economic, political, and military vulnerabilities and anxieties. It then analyses potential policy options to exploit them—ideologically, economically, geopolitically, and militarily (including air and space, maritime, land, and multidomain options)."

The RAND release continued:

"The maxim that 'Russia is never so strong nor so weak as it appears' remains as true in the current century as it was in the 19th and 20th. In some respects, contemporary Russia is a country in stagnation. Its economy is dependent on natural resource exports, so falling oil and gas prices have caused a significant drop in the living standards of many Russian citizens. Economic sanctions have further contributed to this decline. Russian politics is increasingly authoritarian, with no viable political alternative to the highly personalised rule of President Vladimir Putin. Militarily and politically, the Russian Federation wields much less global influence than the Soviet Union did during the Cold War, a condition Putin is trying to change. In addition to these real vulnerabilities, Russia also suffers from deep-seated anxieties about the possibility of Western-inspired regime change, loss of great-power status, and even military attack. Yet these problems belie the fact that Russia is an extraordinarily powerful country that, despite its systemic weaknesses, manages to be a peer competitor of the United States in some key domains. While not the superpower that the Soviet Union was, Russia has gained economic strength and international weight under Putin and now boasts much greater military capabilities than any country with similar defence spending—to such a degree that it can exert its influence over immediate neighbours. Moreover, while still conventionally inferior to the United

States and its North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies when they are judged as a whole, Russia can and does threaten the United States and its allies through other means—short of conventional conflict."

The RAND study set forth 18 specific actions the USA should take to bring down Russia, many of which match up with measures being implemented now:

- Expand US energy production to keep prices lower and deprive Russia of a vital source of revenue.
- Expand sanctions and trade restrictions.
- Work with the European Union to develop alternative sources of energy, including US liquid natural gas (LNG).
- Increase lethal aid to Ukraine.
- Establish a significant US protected zone in east Syria.
- Liberalise Belarus.
- Compete for influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.
- Encourage domestic Russian protests.
- Re-deploy USAF strategic bombers in range of Russian territory.
- Deploy more tactical nuclear weapons to the European theatre.
- Re-target US ballistic missile defences to target Russia.
- Expand the fleet of B-2 stealth strategic bombers.
- Withdraw from nuclear arms reduction treaties, forcing Russia into a costly arms race.
- Increase US and NATO naval presence in Russian areas of operation.
- Increase the number of US submarines with SLBMs to play the leading role in the US nuclear triad.
- Develop NATO anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) in the Black Sea.
- Increase NATO forces deployed near the Russian borders.
- Develop new intermediate-range ballistic missiles but hold back on deployments to Europe.

The RAND study acknowledges that some of their proposed actions could produce a costly backlash from Russia and could also provoke actions by China, which recently has been demonised even more than Russia.

In truth, their agenda is for World War III.

Eisenhower on the military-industrial complex

An excerpt of the final public speech of US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, delivered by television broadcast on 17 January 1961.

Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defence; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defence establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognise the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil,

resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. (Emphasis added.)

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defence with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.



President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Photo: Wikipedia