

## TEN QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL SHALIKASHVILI

General John Shalikashvili will be the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assume office since the end of the Cold War. His Senate confirmation hearings will be an opportunity to question the General on the defense principles by which the West won the Cold War: strong defenses, clearly defined national interests, and readiness to use force to protect them. In considering his nomination, Senators should ask of General Shalikashvili:

**1) What are—and how do you define—vital national security interests?**

The United States has used force in Somalia, but few believe that vital national interests are involved there. In fact, the U.S. has been reluctant to employ force in the Balkans precisely because no vital American interests are at stake. There seems to be confusion about what America's vital interests are, and when military force should be used to defend them. *What will you do to help develop a coherent approach toward defining and prioritizing national security interests?*

**2) What is your impression of the results of the Bottom-Up Review?**

General Colin Powell wrote in the January 1992 *National Military Strategy of the United States* that President Bush's Base Force would "maintain an acceptable level of risk," and that "faster reductions risk the danger of destroying the cohesion, morale, and military effectiveness of today's forces." The Bottom-Up Review Force announced by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin on September 1 embodies such reductions. *How does the Bottom-Up Review address the concerns raised by General Powell last year?*

**3) What lessons did Operation Desert Storm provide for future warfighting?**

The victory against Iraq has led to many assertions that are open to challenge. Among them: that the U.S. should avoid unilateral military action abroad; that future conflicts will be determined as decisively and quickly as the Gulf War; that the combat readiness of high technology forces will be easily maintained despite budget cuts. *Does Desert Storm provide the Pentagon with more exceptions rather than rules for future war-planning?*

**4) Is the Joint Staff organized to carry out the democratization and peacekeeping agenda spelled out in the Bottom-Up Review?**

Secretary Aspin reorganized his staff to add an Assistant Secretary for Democracy and Peacekeeping. The absence of a Joint Staff officer charged with similar responsibilities, especially in the face of the developing quagmire in Somalia, suggests a lack of sound military advice in the Secretary's new plans for peacekeeping. *How committed is the Joint Staff to Secretary Aspin's aggressive and risky peacekeeping agenda?*

**5) What potential threat is posed by the former Soviet Union to the U.S. and her allies in Western Europe?**

Joint Staff planning assumes that a hostile offensive military power capable of challenging Western interests in Europe is not likely to emerge from the former Soviet Union in the foreseeable future. Given the economic and political turmoil throughout the region and the large military forces remaining in Russia and Ukraine, this may be too optimistic. *Has the desire to cash in on a "peace dividend" colored the perception of the threat?*

**6) How important is it to prevent North Korea from developing a nuclear weapon capability?**

The Clinton Administration's concessionary approach toward Pyongyang has been ineffective, and has shaken confidence in America's defense commitments in the region. *Is it time for a less conciliatory approach toward the Kim Il-Sung regime, given North Korea's well-known involvement in worldwide weapons proliferation?*

**7) What are the Joint Staff's priorities regarding future arms control negotiations?**

The U.S. has achieved most of its Cold War arms control objectives. Seeking additional agreements and treaties may harm U.S. interests. For example, with ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the U.S. will be giving far more than it gets by permitting intrusive inspection of its sophisticated chemical industry. The Joint Chiefs of Staff resisted the treaty, given the low probability that, with 150 signatories, it could be effectively verified. Moreover, the treaty contains provisions that go beyond banning lethal chemical weapons, such as restricting battlefield use of riot control agents. *Is it not time to end Cold War-style arms control?*

**8) Does the Joint Staff endorse relaxing such so-called Cold War legislation as export controls on dual-use technology?**

Commerce Secretary Ron Brown wants to ease restrictions on technology exports to help U.S. manufacturers compete abroad. On August 26, the Commerce Department relaxed the criteria that determine whether computers are eligible for export. This seems contrary to the Clinton Administration's assertions that preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a high priority. General Powell has noted that the "information revolution" has made the development of sophisticated weapons easier for many potentially hostile but less developed countries. *If so, should not the Department of Defense's veto authority over overseas sales of dual-use technology actually be strengthened?*

**9) What did the U.S. learn from the Scud missile attacks during the Persian Gulf war?**

Desert Storm exposed three realities regarding missile defense: 1) ballistic missile proliferation is widespread; 2) the concept of ballistic missile defense is sound; 3) current technology is inadequate for future threats. Nevertheless, the Administration's fiscal 1994 budget reduced funding for ballistic missile defense programs by 40 percent. *Given the proliferation of ballistic missile technology, should not the United States be spending more for ballistic missile defense?*

**10) What is your interpretation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty regarding tactical missile defense?**

The acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the Secretary of Defense have said tactical missile defense systems such as the *Patriot* missile are subject to ABM Treaty restrictions. No reasonable reading of the treaty suggests that such battlefield systems are covered. *How committed is the Administration to giving U.S. forces the most capable means of defending themselves against the tactical missile threat?*



The first principle of national security is timeless: The nation that seeks peace should prepare for war. As a military professional, General Shalikashvili knows this. In his testimony, he can show that he is ready to share this knowledge with an Administration that seems less certain of it.

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