

for combating it
second."

ties, one of which is for targeted reductions in readiness." Robert R. Soule, Lind's principal deputy, "elaborated that these [cuts in readiness accounts] could be in depot maintenance, RPMA [real property maintenance], Op Tempo [operational tempo], even MilCon [military construction], which is not really readiness."

"One example," continues the memo, "would be to program all National Guard divisions at C-4," a low level of readiness that would save

Chiefs of Staff have said that weapons-buying account must reach \$60 billion and stay there to keep their forces modern. Where the money will come from to finance the desired increase of slightly more than 36 percent is the big question.

In this presidential campaign, neither Dole nor Clinton has, in the words of former presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson, "talked sense to the American people" about national defense, and certainly not how he is going to

ought to determine the threat first and buy the weapons for combating it second. How much is enough, and why, should be the questions, not how many jobs are at stake. It's time to get realistic rather than jingoistic about our national defense.

George C. Wilson is a former national defense correspondent of The Washington Post and author of several books on military affairs.

By Robert B. Adolph Jr.

The sentinels

The outposts are called patrol observation bases (POBs). These POBs are sprinkled over a 15 kilometer-wide demilitarized zone (DMZ) between Iraq and Kuwait.

Each POB is manned by eight multinational officers, ranging in grade from captain to lieutenant colonel, representing 33 different countries. The United States provides 11 officers for this mission, representing all branches of service.

These are the sentinels, the soldiers of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission. They patrol night and day, by vehicle and helicopter, the approximately 260 kilometer long border area in some extremely harsh environmental conditions. Soldiers who served in the Gulf War need no reminders of the bleak conditions found in the Iraqi desert, especially in the summer months.

Peacekeeping can be lonely duty. No two Americans are permitted to serve on the same POB. Trying to communicate with multinational POB members can be a challenge. Although English is the official language of the mission, many officers have limited experience with the language, making clear and concise communications a chore at times.

Peacekeeping can be dangerous duty. I was introduced to scorpions and sand vipers early in my tour. But the remaining uncleared mine fields and unexploded ordnance are even more dangerous. While patrolling the DMZ, it is an excellent idea to

stay on the marked roads – those that have been cleared by our engineer unit. This is not a good place for those of an adventurous nature.

Peacekeeping can be boring duty. Once you have patrolled a given area a dozen times, especially in the most featureless desert, the ride can get mind-numbing. Viewing the same landscape, day and night, over the same patrol routes is extremely unexciting.

For those who have not experienced it, I will tell you that with boredom comes a kind of emotional and physical fatigue that drains just about anyone of both energy and good sense. Staying alert and fully engaged in the work is a full-time job by itself.

Still, this is the third time I have volunteered to serve with United Nations peacekeeping forces. Something keeps drawing me back. The extra pay is pretty good. The opportunities to travel during periods of leave are great. But these reasons don't tell the whole story. There is more.

I am speaking of the opportunity to serve something of greater importance than self. American soldiers need little explanation of this. We serve our nation, and perhaps more importantly, what our nation stands for – liberty and equality. These are two of the most prominent ideals we hope to maintain through our service. But, what of peace?

Peace is worthy of committed pursuits as well. I do not view peace as subordinate to the ideals of liberty and equality, but the

two help bring the former to fruition. Serving the cause of peace seems especially worthwhile. In some small way, to have served the cause of peace is something to feel good about as one grows older.

Some view peacekeeping efforts as wasteful and inefficient. From hard-won experience, I can tell you that this is sometimes the truth. Yet peacekeeping missions continue to be implemented worldwide.

Something else is at work here. Something else that is perhaps more important than the all too obvious waste – the overwhelming appeal of the symbolism of peacekeeping.

Man responds to symbols more than any other creature. The very powerful symbolism of peacekeeping has gained a global constituency. Essentially, the lives of the unarmed military observers of many nations serving here and elsewhere are held hostage to the peace process, which represents the desires, hopes and aspirations of most of the peoples of the earth, including most Americans.

Despite the heat, loneliness, danger and boredom, a tour in peacekeeping as a sentinel is something to feel good about. The slowly evolving world community of nations thinks it's important, and so do I.

Lt. Col. Robert B. Adolph Jr., Special Forces, currently serves with United Nations peacekeeping forces in Iraq. He retires next year after more than 25 years of enlisted and officer service to attend law school.



"Despite the heat, loneliness, danger and boredom, a tour in peacekeeping...is something to feel good about."