



AUSA BACKGROUND BRIEF

THE FUTURE U.S. ARMY: OUTLOOK FOR THE 1990's



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Cutting the Forces of the U.S. Army:
The Strategic and Human Impact

SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY

HONORABLE JOHN McCAIN
(Senate Committee on Armed Services)

The remarks of Senator McCain were delivered on 14 June 1990 at the eighth and final guest speaker presentation to be held for members of Congress and their staffs. The program was cosponsored by the AUSA Institute of Land Warfare and the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis. The overall theme of the series was "The Future U.S. Army: Outlook for the 1990's." A separate Background Brief has been issued on each of the eight topics presented.

In an era of substantial defense budget reductions, Senator John McCain is concerned both about the strategic and human impacts these cuts are likely to cause. Reckless force reductions driven only by the search for solutions to the budget crisis could leave the United States Army unable to meet its missions (a "hollow" Army), and leave former servicemen and women unable to support themselves in the civilian economy.

On the strategic side, choices about restructuring should be built upon a zero-based review of roles and missions. They should be built upon an understanding of our strategic priorities, contingency requirements and capabilities. Strategic choices such as these should be made by our nation's military leadership and not by a congressionally-driven budget process.

Although the United States should not rush any forces out of Europe in advance of CFE, our present commitments to Europe must be cut as soon and as quickly as we can prudently do so. The time has come to shift more of the burden of Europe's defense to Europe, while the United States focuses more on maintaining its future power projection capabilities.

The United States needs flexible power projection forces. Army contingency forces must, among other things, be equipped and capable of projecting power against third world adversaries possessing 1000 or more main battle tanks and other sophisticated weaponry. Such forces can also be used to provide reinforcement to the European theater. Support and strategic lift functions for power projection forces can be in the reserves, and reserve forces can provide additional combat elements to deal with mid-intensity conflict.

In examining the human side of force cuts, it is absolutely necessary that the United States structures personnel reductions in a way that provides an adequate transition from military to civilian life. We cannot wait for the present budget crunch to create a crisis that will have devastating effects on the men and women who volunteered to serve our nation. We need to offer our military decent unemployment benefits, and a decent amount of severance pay to reflect the fact that they are forced to leave the service before they would otherwise retire. We need to ensure they will retain their health benefits long enough to find another job, and that they will be able to relocate where they can find employment. We need to ensure that they and their families will have the counseling they need to find new jobs and deal with civilian life. These people must not be made the victims of the coming force cuts.