



The U.S. Army at the Dawn of the 21st Century: Overcommitted and Underresourced

Warfighting is job #1. But in addition . . . the Army is globally engaged, heavily committed to meeting the daily requirements of the National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy.

General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the Army,
in testimony before Congress, 27 September 2000

The mismatch between strategy, resources, missions and manning, a result of this nation's security strategy of engagement, has had the greatest impact on the United States Army. Since 1989 the Army has been cut by more than 34 percent while undergoing a 300 percent increase in mission rates. Indeed, the Army has provided most of the forces used in the 35 major deployments in which it has participated since then. The average frequency of Army contingency deployments has increased from one every four years to one every 14 weeks. During the same period that the Army lost a third of its force structure, it also lost 21 percent of its infrastructure and 37 percent of its budget authority. The Army currently has more than 140,000 soldiers deployed or forward-stationed in 101 foreign countries, including:

- The Sinai: The Multinational Force & Observer (MFO) mission supporting the Egypt and Israel peace agreement requires one infantry battalion and one support battalion at all times.
- Kuwait–Saudi Arabia: U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) missions usually require a heavy battalion task force to be deployed in Kuwait. Also required are an air defense brigade and from a company to a battalion of light infantry for force protection deployed to Saudi Arabia. For the last few years Army National Guard (ARNG) infantry companies have provided the latter.
- Bosnia: Since December 1995, the Army has provided the vast majority of U.S. troops to the peacekeeping force, including an increasing number of reserve component (RC) units, including the 49th Armored Division, Texas Army National Guard, Task Force Eagle Headquarters for Stabilization Force (SFOR) 7.
- Kosovo: Following the air campaign over Serbia, the Army deployed the first U.S. ground troops into Kosovo and has 5,700 soldiers currently in-country.
- Macedonia: More than 1,100 soldiers support the Kosovo mission.
- Domestic counternarcotics support: Army units, including ARNG and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) units, especially the California Guard, that support border patrol and customs forces along the U.S.–Mexico border.
- Central America: Army forces provide critical support to the nation building and forward engagement activities of the US Southern Command's Joint Task Force Bravo, including the 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, engineer support and numerous rotations of ARNG and USAR units.
- Colombia: U.S. Army units provide training support to Colombian counternarcotics efforts.

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- Africa: U.S. Army special operations units train African troops in support of the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) and for the Sierra Leone peacekeeping effort.
- Hungary, Turkey, Moldova, East Timor, Micronesia, Australia, Japan, Haiti: Thousands of soldiers do the day-to-day work of engagement.

Army forces forward-stationed outside the continental United States (CONUS) include:

- Germany: V Corps, 1st Armored Division, 1st Infantry Division;
- Korea: 2nd Infantry Division;
- Italy: Southern European Task Force (SETAF) and the 173rd Airborne Brigade;
- Hawaii: 25th Infantry Division (Light);
- Alaska: 172nd Light Infantry Brigade (Separate).

The Army also provides units for dozens of training exercises and military-to-military contacts annually. Among those activities are Partnership for Peace (PfP) exercises—which include ARNG and USAR units—in Europe with former Warsaw Pact forces and engagement and training missions throughout the Pacific. Army Special Operations Forces are especially stretched as Special Forces, Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) and Civil Affairs (CA) units are critical components of these missions. PSYOPS and CA units are disproportionately represented by the USAR, and these units have been heavily utilized over the last decade.

The National Military Strategy and Two Major Theater Wars

Since the Cold War, the national military strategy has been to retain the capability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major theater wars (MTWs), each roughly the size of Operation Desert Storm. In keeping with the two-MTW capability, Army force structure was reduced from 18 active divisions and three separate armored cavalry regiments (ACRs) to ten active divisions and two separate ACRs with commensurate cuts to the ARNG and the USAR. However, the national strategy of engagement has stretched the Army beyond the number of smaller-scale contingencies (SSCs) it was designed to absorb—to the point that its ability to fight two nearly simultaneous wars has been placed at risk. In recent testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, General Shinseki stated,

“There is moderate risk associated with fighting the first MTW and higher levels of risk associated with the second MTW.”

This situation has forced the Army to rely more heavily on the Guard and Reserve to help alleviate the strain on the active force, despite the cuts to the RC noted above. While these citizen-soldiers have done an outstanding job, it has had the effect of shifting some of the stress of high operations tempo (OPTEMPO) and personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) to the reserve components. Furthermore, General Shinseki recently announced at the 2000 National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) annual meeting that the eight ARNG divisions will now be paired with active duty corps, increasing the likelihood that they will be utilized for real-world contingencies, including MTWs. The effects on recruiting and retention on the ARNG and USAR from increased deployments due to family strains and difficulties with civilian employers may make this strategy unsustainable.

The Army: Overcommitted and Undersized

The national strategy of engagement was implemented to help the United States shape the post-Cold War international environment. While this is the right strategy for the United States as the world’s only superpower, the consequences for the Army have been significant. Deploying a unit to Bosnia or Kosovo, for example, involves not only the deploying unit but the unit that must train up to relieve it six months later, as well as the unit it is replacing which must train back up to its warfighting level of readiness—thus tying up three units at one time.

A 1999 General Accounting Office (GAO) study identified only three of the Army’s ten divisions that did not have forces deployed somewhere in the world. That meant the Army could readily deploy only three divisions to a no-notice MTW without having to abandon ongoing commitments or wait for reserve formations to mobilize. Undermanning exacerbates this situation. While General Shinseki’s manning initiatives have been successful in filling the Army’s ten active divisions at 100 percent, that has, of necessity, taken place at the expense of the training base and some critical nondivisional combat units, such as corps-level Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) battalions.

In Fiscal Year 1989 a Desert Storm-sized deployment of 261,000 active troops would have required 53 percent of the Army’s deployable endstrength and only a sixth of its forward-stationed troops. Today, that same deployment would require 86 percent of deployable endstrength, including all CONUS-based deployable personnel, all overseas-deployed personnel, and most forward-stationed

**Deployments and Commitments as of September 2000:
Selected Army Combat Units (Divisions, Brigades, Armored Cavalry Regiments)**

Unit	Deployments	Other Commitments
1 st Armored Division Germany and Fort Riley, KS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade (+) in Kosovo with Task Force Falcon • Battalion task force from Fort Riley in Kuwait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO/PfP engagement
1 st Cavalry Division Fort Hood, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battalion task force just returned from Kuwait • Units just returned from fighting fires in western United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing to convert to Division XXI structure and receive new equipment • Providing support to TXARNG's 49th Armored Division in Bosnia
1 st Infantry Division (Mechanized) Germany and Fort Riley, KS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate Ready Force (IRF) just returned from Kosovo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO/PfP engagement
2 nd Infantry Division Korea and Fort Lewis, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 brigades forward-stationed in Korea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd Brigade, at Fort Lewis, is the Army's first Initial Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) and is nondeployable as it undergoes transformation
3 rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) Forts Stewart and Benning, GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade-sized unit preparing to deploy to Bosnia to relieve the 49th Armored Division in command of Task Force Eagle • Another brigade to Kosovo in six months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will support the PAARNG's 28th Infantry Division (Mechanized) when it takes command in Bosnia in 2002
4 th Infantry Division (Mechanized) Fort Hood, TX and Fort Carson, CO		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force XXI Experimental Force (EXFOR); is currently undergoing transformation to Division XXI design as well as conducting Force XXI experiments
10 th Mountain Division (Light) Fort Drum, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will deploy units to Bosnia in October 2001 under command of 29th Infantry Division (L) • Will also deploy units to Kosovo in November 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing to support the VAARNG's 29th Infantry Division (Light) as it deploys to take command in Bosnia in 2001 • Engaged in military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) and light force digitization experiments • Has only two maneuver brigades
25 th Infantry Division (Light) Hawaii and Fort Lewis, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will provide a battalion for the Sinai in January 2001 • Relieves 29th Infantry Division (Light) in command of Bosnia mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous training and engagement deployments throughout the Pacific Rim • 1st Brigade at Fort Lewis is preparing to become the Army's second IBCT
82 nd Airborne Division Fort Bragg, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battalion in the Sinai • Scheduled to send a battalion to Kosovo in February 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One brigade prepared at all times to deploy within 18 hours of notification; other two brigades either training up to be the ready brigade or supporting the ready brigade
101 st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Fort Campbell, KY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battalion task force in Kosovo • Units just returned from fighting fires in western United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units to Kosovo in June 2001
2 nd Armored Cavalry		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) • Involved in Advanced Warfighting Experiments (AWEs) and other experiments
3 rd Armored Cavalry Regiment Fort Carson, CO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has units deployed to Bosnia under command of 49th Armored Division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Army's only heavy ACR
28 th Infantry Division (Mechanized) PA ARNG		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing to assume command of Bosnia mission in 2002
29 th Infantry Division (Light) VA ARNG (also MD, CT, NJ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units deployed to Bosnia supporting 49th Armored Division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing to assume command of Bosnia mission in 2001
35 th Infantry Division (NE, KS, KY, IL ARNG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units deployed to Saudi Arabia as Security Force (SECFOR) for Patriot Air Defense units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing to assume command of Bosnia mission in 2003
49 th Armored Division TX ARNG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployed to Bosnia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will send units to support 29th ID (L) in Bosnia in October 2001
41 st Infantry Brigade (enhanced Separate Brigade) OR ARNG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units just returned from Saudi Arabia (SECFOR) 	

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personnel.* In short, we have fewer deployable soldiers covering more deployments and an Army that cannot meet its requirements without extensive use of its reserve components. Not only are we wearing out our active forces, but we are now in danger of doing the same to our reserve components.

Conclusion

The United States Army's combat divisions, separate brigades and ACRs have been stretched so thin with deployments that responding to the outbreak of a single major theater war would be problematic. To add to the burden, the Army must, within its current force structure and endstrength, also begin the process of transforming itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century. At the same time, there is still a 25,000-soldier cut to the Army's reserve components pending from the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) mandate and insufficient full-time support to the RC for the new requirements being placed on the ARNG and USAR.

With current Army endstrength and force structure, our nation can still fight and win two nearly simultaneous MTWs, but it cannot do so while meeting the commitments of our strategy of engagement without serious risks. It is neither likely nor desirable to abandon either strategy. The inescapable conclusion is that Army endstrength and force structure must be adjusted upward and must be funded accordingly. The current defense budget of less than 3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) is insufficient to pay for the important role America plays in the world today. To assure this nation's continued ability to influence global events in our favor will require increasing the defense budget well above projected spending levels. ***The Association of the United States Army strongly urges an increase in endstrength of 10 to 12 percent and a commensurate increase in defense spending.*** This country must fund its national security strategy or our preeminent position in the world and, indeed, our security and way of life, will be jeopardized.

*U.S. Army 2000–2005 Program Objective Memorandum, p. 5.