
Defense Report

AUSA



Why 16 Divisions?

How much is enough? In little noted remarks before a group of Senators last fall, General Fred C. Weyand, Army Chief of Staff, laid out in very simple terms why the United States needs as an absolute minimum a 16 division Active Army.

In essence, he said that military power makes credible and therefore is the foundation of our foreign policy. The primary role of U.S. military power today is deterrence. To deter, this military power must be sufficient to fight successfully, and clearly visible so that it is perceived by both our friends and potential enemies.

General Weyand added that military power today is perceived more and more in terms of how well we could fight a conventional war. Nuclear power balance remains vital, but in view of this parity, conventional power is now necessary to deter war and the Army is the main element of our conventional forces.

The U.S. Commander in Europe says he needs more than 20 U.S. Army divisions in the event of war in Western Europe—a NATO war. The 21 division Army (13 Active, 8 Reserve Component) which was the Army objective until 1974 was marginally capable of filling this need *if* there were no slip-ups in strength, training, or logistics; threat estimates were reasonably accurate; and Army forces were not required elsewhere. There was no margin for error.

In view of the significant recent growth of Soviet conventional forces, Communist China's conventional power, and the worsening of turmoil around the World, a margin for error is clearly needed. An Army with 16 Active and 8 Reserve Component divisions will provide this margin.

This 24 division force can respond to a wide range of crises outside of NATO and still maintain, at least marginally, adequate forces for the early stages of NATO conflict. It provides therefore, a credible deterrent with "prudent risk." In addition, it makes more remote the need for early use of nuclear weapons.

This force is enough, although barel