
Defense Report

AUSA



“To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.” — President George Washington, January 1790.

The history of our young nation has borne out the truth of those words even though our national policy has always opposed the maintenance in peacetime of an Army at full war footing. We have found our freedoms under attack only when we were lacking in either adequate military capability or a national consensus of will to use the capability, or both. World War II is an excellent example of how we heightened the threat by being unprepared. Winston Churchill called it “the unnecessary war”. In his view it was the easiest war in history to avoid and it took almost malign incompetence on the part of the democracies for it to happen.

In its deterrent role, the political impact conveyed by a military force is as important as the sheer destructive power that it can wield. We maintain the peace by being strong and by letting any potential aggressor know that we stand ready to fight to keep our values and visions alive. In the application of this strategy of deterrence we must continue to make it known that wherever our national interests are at stake, we have the means and the will to protect them.

A recent poll of our citizens showed that seventy-one percent believe that promoting the security of the United States should be the most important pillar of our national policy. What is needed to support that pillar? Simply stated:

— We need the capability, in conjunction with our allies, to deter warfare at all levels and the will to defend our interests should deterrence fail.

— We need to maintain United States technological superiority over our most logical adversary, the Soviet Union.

— Above all, we need to provide the military and economic strength from which lasting peace negotiations can be pursued.

It is imperative that our adversaries as well as our friends and allies recognize that Americans are proud of their freedoms — and that they would fight to protect them.