
Defense Report

AUSA



Changes In The Real World Require Rethinking The Future Army

Few would disagree that current politico—military trends in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have lowered substantially the threat of a big war. This fact of life is daily reflected in the world political arena and, more conspicuously, in the U.S. defense budget now being debated in Congress. Support for maintaining our forward deployed forces in NATO and in Korea seems to be eroding. So it becomes imperative that our immediate long-range planning be as realistic as we can make it.

It seems essential that the Army's long-term capabilities for a big war be maintained to the extent we can do so in the face of declining budgets. Research and development, modernization and, more importantly, a high quality leadership cadre should have the highest priorities. For the time being, operations and maintenance support will be stingy at best.

This course could help us maintain our industrial base and permit an orderly mobilization if needed. If the big war threat is perceived as being much lower than in the immediate past, it follows then that warning times would be longer, allowing for more adequate preparation.

Big wars have not been our foremost threat for the past three decades, primarily because we have maintained our military strength and projected it forward and we have maintained strong alliances. But the lower scale conflict threats have grown substantially. Thus, the Army must look carefully at the adequacy of its light forces both in numbers and types of equipment. If these forces are to be capable of intervening in a timely fashion, they should be air-deployable. Further, there is an urgent need to beef-up their firepower.

In the present climate, it is essential that our light intervention forces be kept in a high state of readiness. This suggests a readjustment of current training and procurement outlays to give greater allotments of resources to the lighter forces.

The Army will be best served by taking the initiative for change rather than having it forced on itself by those less knowledgeable of our strategic needs.