
Defense Report

AUSA



Welcome Home — Here's Your Pink Slip

Our soldiers are coming home to joyous receptions which properly recognize their outstanding accomplishments over the past nine months. In the Gulf War the United States armed forces demonstrated clearly that the investments of the last decade produced much more than the aberrant \$200 hammer. By their superb performance, they made it very clear that we had accomplished what we set out to do; that is, to build a modern, trained Army founded on the principles of excellence.

It is equally clear that the decisions to invest in that army were wise ones. While our major concerns had long been directed toward the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, those responsible for national security planning made it known that there were other potential challenges awaiting. They were proved correct when Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Now that the war is over, Congress is considering a defense budget that calls for a rapid dismantlement of the military force that took a decade to build. The problems lie not only with the overall reductions, but also with the speed with which they are to be executed.

For the Army, these too-rapid reductions mean that officers and sergeants — who have clearly demonstrated performance that meets this Army's exacting standards — are going to be forced to find careers elsewhere. That will be done by raising retention standards or by the more direct solution of elimination boards.

Because our world is hardly a model of peace and stability, the need for a robust and ready Army has not diminished. Even as we pare back our forces, we need to have due regard for the concerns of our splendid soldiers and their families. And as we shape a smaller force we need to preserve the capabilities of our Army to adequately protect our national interests. Failure on either count means that our soldiers and their families will be the first to be hurt, and the attraction to an Army career will be greatly diminished — a result the nation can ill afford.