
Defense Report

AUSA



Son Of Desert Storm—Could We Do It Again?

During the anti-draft protest marches of the 1960s, one sign often seen along the barricades read: Suppose they gave a war and nobody came? Now, one year after the dazzling victory in the Persian Gulf war, the question might be reworded: What if another Saddam rears up, COULD the United States Armed Forces come? A new report from the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service concludes that we "may not be able to terminate Desert Storm-style conflicts quickly on U.S. terms while limiting U.S. casualties."

Questions about America's ability to repeat the Desert Shield/Desert Storm success arc based on the accelerated reductions in military manpower and weaponry that began almost immediately after the war ended. Even greater doubts are raised by some on Capitol Hill where a mad scramble is on to see who can come up with the biggest peace dividend.

We got to the Desert after more than a decade of large investments of people, time and treasure. But the minute the war was won we reverted to our old ways by "bringing our boys home" and telling more than a few of them that they are no longer needed. We deactivated Army divisions, mothballed fighting ships, zeroed out air wings and closed weapons plants. That's just the way we have done it in wars past and that's just what would prevent us from conducting another successful Operation Desert Storm today. There is a better way.

The President has made clear our defense objectives in his *National Security Strategy*. The Defense Secretary and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (after consulting with all the field Commanders in Chief) have presented their *National Military Strategy 1992* and have devised a Base Force Plan to support it. Both the strategy and the plan have been laid on the congressional table with the fiscal 1993 Defense Department budget.

Now it is up to the Congress, which has the constitutional responsibility to raise and support armies to fully guarantee that all our armed forces are provided with the capabilities to execute the strategy.