



A MATTER OF RESOURCES: ARMY MODERNIZATION

The recent decision to increase production of the ultra-modern C-17 airlifter from 40 to 120 is good news for the force projection Army. The aircraft will enhance the capability of the Army to respond rapidly to crises worldwide which impact U.S. national interests. The resources devoted to the modernization of sealift will similarly give the Army the ability to project heavy forces and support materiel to operational areas where U.S. forces have been committed.

The U.S. Air Force is the most powerful in the world and has the capability to defeat any opposing

air force in a matter of hours. The United States has the largest Navy in the world, with the capability to defeat any adversary at sea in a matter of days, thus assuring U.S. access to all oceans. These capabilities are needed to ensure the success of America's first-class power projection Army in the conduct of land operations. All the services will operate jointly in almost any scenario visualized.

In projecting landpower, the Army (active and reserve) of today is a smaller force — only the eighth largest in the world — but one that is fully trained, ready and equipped with the best equipment and weapons in the world. More than 125,000 soldiers are forward stationed; two combat divisions are in Europe and one combat division is in South Korea.

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The Army is involved in numerous simultaneous ongoing operations — in such countries as Haiti, Macedonia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt (Sinai), and most recently the new U.S. commitment of forces to Bosnia in the Balkans. Soldiers are involved in counterdrug operations in 13 countries and on various training missions in 35 countries. Today, more than 22,000 soldiers are engaged in some type of operation in 70 countries. When completed, the Army's deployment

to the Balkans will more than double this. To accomplish these missions, many soldiers have had back-to-back deployments and extended

separations from their families. The average American soldier assigned to a troop unit now spends 138 days per year away from home.

The Army's successful role in future joint operations will be dependent on the commitment of adequate resources to retain a technological lead. This can be achieved *only* through a vigorous program of research, development and acquisition (RDA) — modernization — which requires predictable, long-term budget resources to make the necessary investments.

At the recent AUSA Annual Meeting, the Army Chief of Staff stated that the Army's modernization program "is currently at the irreducible minimum and badly in need of more resources." He went on to point out that the

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“Army allocation of the DoD modernization dollars is only 13 percent . . . the smallest piece of a small pie.” He pointed out that the Army’s overall buying power has decreased 34 percent since Fiscal Year 1989.

The drawdown of the Army since the Persian Gulf War and the precipitous decline in RDA funding make it less likely that the Army can retain its technological superiority into the next century. In constant FY 1996 dollars, Army funding for modernization has dropped steadily from a total of \$33.4 billion in FY 1985 to about \$12.7 billion in FY 1995. In real buying power (adjusted for inflation) this represents a drop of 62 percent over 10 years, and almost 50 percent since FY 1989.

The Army needs a predictable, vigorous and sustained modernization investment program to give the smaller Army of the 21st century the technological edge to complement the capabilities being brought to the theater of operations by its sister services. The long-term investments that are being made in submarines, aircraft carriers and advanced combat aircraft have to be balanced with similar investments in advanced landpower weapon systems.

Past trade-offs to maintain readiness within budget constraints have caused the Army to cancel programs and delay others since FY 1993. With the RDA funding now projected, the Army will not complete the modernization of key systems (Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, Apache attack helicopters, etc.) for its contingency corps until the middle of the second decade of the next century. This raises the specter of past conflicts when the Army had lost its technological edge and the result was increased U.S. and allied battle casualties.

In 1992, the national strategy stated: “The United States must continue to rely heavily on technological superiority to offset quantitative advantages, to minimize risk to U.S. forces, and to enhance the potential for swift, decisive termination of conflict. In war {technological superiority} enhances combat effectiveness and reduces loss of personnel and equipment.” This portrayal of how the future effectiveness of U.S. forces will be technologically enhanced still applies today.

How much money is needed for Army modernization above the currently projected level of over \$11 billion in FY 1996? War-game scenarios show that \$3 billion to \$4 billion more per year in Army RDA is about right to substantially reduce the impact of enemy modernization, energize the technology base, and start the process which leads to fielding the next generation of the Army’s weapon systems by the year 2010.

As pointed out in AUSA’s FY 1996 Army Budget analysis, the additional investment is in line with the technical enhancements originally planned for in the Defense Department’s Bottom-Up Review. That blueprint for the future of the armed forces espoused a rationale for a smaller and leaner force on the basis of technological improvements. The Army has in turn developed a modernization blueprint to employ a technologically advanced smaller force that can apply overwhelming force to achieve decisive victory while maintaining minimum casualties. Only the funding is needed to assure this outcome as a counter to our potential adversaries who are equipping themselves with modern weaponry available on the world market. The outcome will be a continuing credible and effective ground fighting force.

It is important to caution that trading off force structure reductions to recoup modernization resources will not work. A sufficient and continuing level of funding is necessary so that the Army can meet both its force modernization *and* force structure needs. The Army Chief of Staff made this abundantly clear at the recent AUSA Annual Meeting:

We must always have an Army of sufficient quality and size to deter potential adversaries and meet our international obligations. While the quality of today’s force is unquestioned, I must tell you in all candor that I am concerned that we have reached the limit on how small our Army can be and still credibly accomplish the tasks currently assigned to us.

To ensure a quality Army in the coming first decade of the millennium, sufficient budget resources have to be invested now and on a predictable, continuing basis.