

# Defense Report

from AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare



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## NEEDED: A BALANCED DEFENSE PROGRAM

The Army Chief of Staff has made it clear that in the short term there is not an army that can match the capabilities of the U.S. Army. However, he went on to say that the situation could change in the longer term. By 2015 or earlier, the Army will be faced with "close competitors." To meet this longer-term threat, he stated, the Army must modernize faster.

The Army is expected to win on any battlefield as part of a joint operating team composed of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps and organized in a fashion to optimize their respective capabilities. This team can win in the short term; but success on the battlefield of the future may become increasingly more difficult as a result of insufficient investment in longer-term readiness through modernization. The Army needs to get better recognition of its modernization needs in the Department of Defense (DoD) requirements priority list.

What will this additional investment in Army modernization do? It will assure success on the joint battlefield, where the complementary capabilities of each service contribute to the success of the joint operation but the Army is ultimately responsible for bringing final defeat to the opposing force on the ground. And most importantly, soldier lives will be saved. With the additional funding, the Army could accelerate the introduction of the Comanche helicopter, equipment upgrades and selected materiel acquisition. It could also make a more solid

commitment to research and development which would keep the Army technologically ahead in the future.

The current track record is not encouraging. Army modernization -- research, development and acquisition, or RDA -- is down 55 percent since FY 1989. The procurement portion is down about 64 percent. When the longer-term DoD modernization investment situation is examined, the inadequacy of projected Army modernization is striking. A recent chart used by the Army in discussing future long-term modernization projections across defense programs sums up the Army's dilemma. Comparing the top 20 defense investment programs on a cost basis, as projected for the period FY 1996 to FY 2003, the Army would garner only seven percent of the RDA funding with its three top projects -- the Crusader self-propelled howitzer, Comanche scout helicopter and Abrams tank upgrade. By comparison, the Air Force could expect a 36 percent share, the Navy 37 percent and the Marine Corps eight percent, with the rest allocated to other defense agencies. Unless there is some shifting in priorities, the Army is at risk of losing its technological edge over potential adversaries.

Tactical aircraft modernization alone would absorb 45 percent of projected DoD investments in the top 20 modernization programs. Ship construction would account for about 21 percent. The comparison with

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Army ground capabilities is striking. Increased commitment to land power capabilities should be made.

A sound balance of the capabilities across all services is required. Air power and sea power alone do not win a war. We learned this most recently in Bosnia where the NATO Intervention Force (IFOR) was organized around air, sea and ground forces. Importantly, only ground forces could enforce the boundaries agreed to by the warring factions. And we learned it in Desert Storm -- bombs alone did not win the war. A telling statistic: Of 5,000 smart bomb sorties flown, only about 500 resulted in successful destruction of a target. The Army could not have won the ground war alone and the destruction of those 500 targets was important to the success of the overall joint operation. But for the total operation to be a success, overwhelming ground forces were required to occupy Kuwait and physically eject the Iraqis.

The military threats which may emerge into the 21<sup>st</sup> century justify an in-depth review of priorities in the DoD budget. A significant air challenge is all but nonexistent. Our Air Force's tactical capability is over 20 times that of Iraq and North Korea. Also, naval superiority is not at risk. But against this background, the U. S. Army today is only the eighth largest in the world. The DoD budget is clearly focused on air and sea modernization to meet any emerging threats of the future. But the Army, under the current modernization forecasts, will become increasingly vulnerable as other armies obtain advanced weapons technology.

To meet its modernization needs for the longer term, the Army needs adequate and stable research, development and acquisition funding in order to pursue technologies that will assure battlefield success against increasingly sophisticated adversaries. Modernization programs should be accelerated, particularly for the Abrams tank and Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The Comanche helicopter should be fielded sooner. Modernization of antiarmor munitions and capabilities, artillery and aviation assets should proceed aggressively. Procurement should be accelerated, particularly for the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), the Javelin antitank system, the Longbow HELLFIRE antiarmor missile, and the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS). To achieve this the Army RDA level must be increased by at least \$4 billion annually at inflation-adjusted rates.

Modernization funding is the key barrier to the Army's ability to carry out projected missions while keeping ahead of the technological power curve to remain superior to any potential adversary. Seven of the world's ground forces are larger than that of the United States. This, coupled with the rapid worldwide proliferation of sophisticated weapons, poses a major problem. Failure to keep up will mean longer and more costly operations and more casualties in the future.

DoD should conduct a continuing in-depth review of all modernization priorities from a joint warfighting point of view and adjust budget priorities as appropriate to provide balance across the board. We cannot afford to let landpower become a weak third leg for our joint air, ground and sea warfighting capabilities.

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