



DEFEATING TERRORISM

STRATEGIC ISSUE ANALYSIS



Maintaining Strategic Balance While Fighting Terrorism

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Conclusions:

- While fighting terrorism, the Army must maintain its ability to remain engaged in the world, perform peace operations, fight and deter wars, and execute transformation.
- The service will quickly need an expanded and restructured active force with increased intelligence/CS/CSS/SOF assets.
- Reserve Component mobilization plans need to be reexamined with their forces reorganized for new missions and reapportioned with the Active Component.
- Reconfiguring the force to better combat terrorism should reinforce and accelerate transformation efforts.

The recent terrorist attacks on New York and Washington have focused the attention of the nation and its military on immediately combating this serious threat. The dominant National Military Strategy paradigm of the 1990s—"shape, respond, and prepare"—was in the process of being redone by the Bush administration prior to the attacks, but still provides a concise way of broadly describing the tasks the military must perform. Along with its sister Services, the Army is currently concentrating almost exclusively on responding and even more narrowly on actions to punish and prevent terrorism. President Bush and his cabinet have been clear that this will be a long struggle, however, and the Army must not neglect its many other important shaping and preparing missions during that time. A victory over terrorism will be meaningless if it is not accompanied by the continuing spread of peace, security, democracy, and free market ideas that those other military missions support.

U.S. needs and interests require a broad and balanced security focus. While the Army

will understandably place high priority on contributing to winning the war against terrorism, the service must simultaneously conduct operations along four other axes. It must continue its involvement in day-to-day engagement activities around the world, sustain its capability to conduct peace operations, remain ready to fight and deter major wars, and maintain momentum for transformation. The Army was already stretched by its operational tempo before September 11; the new demands will only exacerbate that situation. However, they must not divert the Service from accomplishing its other essential missions.

First, the Army must not allow an increased emphasis on force protection and other operations against terrorism to deflect it from supporting regional CINCs in their efforts to remain engaged overseas. Through its 150,000 forward-stationed and deployed forces, the Army provides over 60 percent of America's forces committed to engagement. Often such involvement can shape the regional environment to prevent conflicts or

facilitate responses when they occur. The U.S. ability to conduct current operations against Afghanistan was aided considerably by 82d Airborne Division exercises with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in 1997. Remaining engaged around the world now will similarly facilitate operations when the next unexpected crisis occurs and will also help prevent crises from occurring in the first place. The coalitions forming to combat different aspects of terrorism include a number of new partners and should provide even more opportunities for military-to-military contacts and other engagement activities.

Even while initiating new operations against terrorism, the Army will still have forces involved in numerous peacekeeping missions and must resist calls to withdraw from these missions to provide resources for the war on terrorism. The current Army missions in Bosnia and Kosovo remain important, though future similar assignments should not be lightly accepted because of the strain these seemingly unending deployments impose on existing forces. However, there will be times—even while fighting the war on terrorism—when national interests will require humanitarian assistance and secure peace operations that only American military forces can provide. Effective and efficient “peace-building” efforts must remain an important element of any national security strategy. The current situation in Afghanistan highlights again that post-conflict societies can become breeding grounds for crime and terrorism if some sort of order is not imposed.

To prevent peacekeeping assignments from dragging on and tying up scarce assets, the Army and supporting agencies must become better at nation-building. Though President Bush has again reiterated his resistance to that mission, long-term solutions to create a more stable world will require the United States to engage in it, and only the Army can really do it in an environment of questionable security. Success

in stabilization operations and success in the war against terrorism will be closely linked because of the cause-effect relationship that exists between them and because of the similarity of unit requirements. The service should be daunted by—and prepare for—the responsibilities it might assume to help stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan after bin Laden and his supporters are rooted out.

The Army must also retain its ability to deter and fight wars. Cross-border wars of aggression are not the most likely type of conflict predicted for the future, but they are certainly not impossible and clearly require forces ready to fight them. In fact, it is precisely because forces are ready to fight them that they are so unlikely. Even in the war on terrorism, where major combat forces will likely have only limited utility, they will still be essential if operations expand to take on states that support terrorism. The most powerful military force on the planet remains a joint force based around a heavy corps, and those units must not be allowed to atrophy. Cross border incursions remain a threat in Asia and the Middle East. The Bush administration’s stern warning to Iraq not to attempt to take advantage of America’s concentration on terrorism would not be an effective deterrent without the joint force—including landpower—to back it up.

While the Army must continue to emphasize the importance of a balanced joint force to fight and deter wars, it must also simultaneously maintain its focus on long-term transformation. The evolving requirements of the war against terrorism will highlight even more the necessity for lighter, smarter, more lethal, and more agile forces. As originally conceived, transformation was to prepare the Army for future wars. That concept needs to be shaped by the new geostrategic focus on terrorism and then probably should be accelerated to allow the new capabilities to bring increased levels of effectiveness to the war on terrorism.

Force Structure Considerations.

When combined with ongoing missions and responsibilities, the demands of the new focus on fighting terrorism will strain the Army considerably and highlight many shortfalls in its structure. The force that fought and won Operation DESERT STORM is long gone. The current Army is really too small to fight a major land war against a state like Iraq without even more coalition landpower augmentation than it received in the Gulf War, but it is also deficient in many elements necessary to fight terrorism, provide for homeland defense, and conduct peace operations. The number of active component intelligence, psychological operations, civil affairs, military police, and engineer units must be increased, not only to perform contemporary peacekeeping and stabilization functions, but also to meet the new demands of the war against terrorism, including significantly increased force protection requirements around the world.

Performing all these missions will also be very stressful on the National Guard and Army Reserve. They will be pulled between future significant and immediate requirements for homeland security, the recent demands of peace operations, and the need to support or participate in the overseas fight against terrorism. If more of the Reserve Components are committed to duties at home, deployment schedules for the Balkans could be affected, increasing the burden on active forces for peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo. The 50,000 reservists being called up and National Guard troops providing airport security are only the beginning of a long-term commitment to homeland security and consequence management which, if the mission remains with the Reserve Components, might seriously compromise their ability to support a major theater war. Current mobilization plans clearly need review and probably need significant revision.

The war against terrorism is only one of many essential missions the Army must perform. The service must be very forthright with Congress and the Bush administration about the additional forces needed to conduct its myriad of important duties. The HQDA staff should immediately develop plans and gather support to begin the process of expanding and restructuring the force. Recruiting, training, and equipping new soldiers and units will take time. While Reserve Component mobilization and some economy of force efforts might suffice in the short term to meet Army requirements, these arrangements cannot be maintained for a long period without debilitating the force and raising the level of risk for long-term missions.

In summary, maintaining strategic balance will require more than just better guidance, planning, and training. Increased force structure—accompanied by revisions in the makeup of that structure and by reallocation between the Active and Reserve Components—will be necessary to enhance the Army's ability to fight the war against terrorism while simultaneously keeping the peace in other areas. The simultaneous and ongoing demands for homeland security, anti-terrorist strikes, peace operations, and deterring war will require more land forces, especially in the Active Component, and mostly in the areas of CS, CSS, and SOF. Increasing intelligence assets will be especially crucial. Forces will need to be reapportioned between the Active and Reserve Components and reserve units reconfigured to handle new and existing long-term requirements. At the same time, the Service cannot become so focused on current operations that the momentum and direction of transformation is lost. The world changed on September 11, 2001, and the Army must adjust accordingly. But its long-term vision remains viable, and the course to reach it must be maintained.



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