

INTRODUCTION

The world's strategic environment has changed in dramatic ways. Uncertainty and the growing world complexity cast a large shadow over any attempt by military planners to prepare for or predict the types of contingencies our forces may face in support of national objectives.

The national military strategy reflects the complexity of the changing world strategic environment and addresses appropriate planning required to meet varied contingencies. The strategy is built upon the four key foundations of the national defense strategy: *strategic deterrence and defense, forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution*. While still founded on deterring aggression and on defending the nation's vital interests against any potential foe, the national military strategy requires major revisions in the makeup of our forward-presence forces, our ability to project power to respond to crises, and our capacity to reconstitute the force.

The shift in focus is toward adaptive regional planning to provide more options for decision makers. The role of the combatant commanders continues to expand in driving the planning process. More than ever the strategy is based on developing forces that are ready to move either from the continental United States (CONUS) or forward-deployed locations to the scene of a crisis. Successful execution gives the combatant commander the strategic ability to mass overwhelming force to terminate the crisis swiftly and decisively.

History shows that the United States has been reluctant to maintain a large active or reserve military organization during peacetime. Before the Korean War, the mobilization of civilians continued to be used as the primary means to meet contingencies and crises. Put simply, when a war broke out, the United States hurried to mobilize and build up its forces only to dismantle its wartime organization immediately upon cessation of hostilities.

It was not until after World War II that the United States realized the risk of being unprepared could no longer be dismissed because of availability of time and "a benevolent geography." Responding to this realization, the US Congress passed the National Security Act in 1947. Through this legislation, the United States attempted to institutionalize governmentwide mobilization planning, linking it to support the national strategy. But these efforts fell short, as the strategic needs continued to be revised and real world requirements tended to exceed the means.

This unpreparedness exacted a toll when Task Force Smith failed to stop the aggression of a better trained and armed North Korean force. Emphasis on massive retaliation reinitiated the growth of neglect in the active and reserve forces.

In the early 1960s, the national strategy was revised from *massive retaliation* to *flexible response*. During this period considerable improvements were experienced as the Army, in response to the Berlin crisis, mobilized some 60,000 Army reservists in what the Department of Defense, in its 1962 report, categorized as the most efficient mobilization to date. This mobilization helped deter Soviet action.

The ensuing years have seen many changes in the mobilization posture of the United States. The ups and downs in the priority placed on mobilization planning can be explained best as driven by economic factors. In combination, exercises such as Nifty Nugget in 1978, Proud Spirit in 1980, and Proud Saber in 1982, together with the 1980 Defense Board studies, pointed to the unsatisfactory state of the nation's mobilization preparedness and deployment posture.

The US Government, using the lessons learned from the studies and exercises, took action to increase the ability of the United States to mobilize its resources and to enhance its capability to respond with military measures to wide-ranging geographical contingencies. These efforts were thwarted at times by the long-war/short-war debate; however, improvements continued, culminating with the successful mobilization of forces to meet the demands of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The long-war/short-war debate is now defunct in light of the events in Eastern Europe and the demise of the former Soviet Union. Now, although it is prudent to prepare for a long war, come-as-you-are crisis-response operations are the most likely actions the military will be required to undertake.

These operations are envisioned to be joint service actions. They will most likely be combined operations with allied or coalition forces that project the power to end the crisis quickly and decisively. More than ever the massing of such power will have to rely on the Army's ability to mobilize and deploy. Upon cessation of hostilities or when directed by the National Command Authorities, the Army must redeploy and demobilize its force in a state of preparation to respond rapidly to any subsequent requirements.