

Come as you are war — with what?

MUCH of this country's military planning today is focussed on deterring, or repelling, a Soviet-led Warsaw Pact attack on NATO. The scenario that strategists consider most likely is a blitzkrieg-type attack, launched with little or no warning, by armor, artillery- and missile-heavy forces designed to smash the NATO defenders before reinforcements can be brought from the United States.

Many observers think the threat of such an attack is steadily growing, as the Soviets forge ahead of the United States in conventional military power.

The National Guard has a more-than-academic interest in the subject and in the on-going debate over the so-called "NATO short war scenario." Guard units, Army and Air, comprise a very sizeable share of the forces that must be ready for short-notice mobilization and hasty deployment to Europe to blunt such an attack.

It's also the short-war scenario from which the "come as you are" war emerged. Under that sloganized concept, U.S. military elements would rush to Europe to reinforce the NATO forces already in place, with whatever manpower, equipment and readiness they had at the outbreak of hostilities.

At stake for the Guard and Reserve in the current "short war" debate is the entire Total Force concept. Under that concept, Guard/Reserve forces were to receive more resources, more assistance and more consideration by the active forces. From that added support and resources, the Guard and Reserve was to produce readier units — units that could mobilize and deploy far more rapidly than in the past.

Now, the question that's being asked with greater frequency as the price tag becomes more apparent is: Can we do it? Can Guard and Reserve units attain the state of readiness they must have if they're to mobilize with a week's warning — or less — and deploy overseas in three, four, or five weeks?

The answer has not really changed much from last year. We pointed out then that Guard units can attain levels of readiness commensurate with their more urgent missions if they are given support, resources and assistance commensurate with those missions. Full-time

Army and Air Force units can't produce rapid-response readiness with inadequate equipment, virtually no recruiting inducements, etc. Neither can the Guard or Reserve. Yet the budget-makers and the comptrollers of DoD and OMB persist in nibbling away at our assets for the sake of nickel-and-dime savings, at the same time that the active military services are rightfully prodding us to improve our readiness.

There's another aspect to the "NATO short war — Can you get there?" debate that disturbs us. It's a belief, in some Congressional and Pentagon minds, that any Guard/Reserve units that cannot deploy to Western Europe in the initial stages of a conflict — you'll hear any requirement from six days to 60 from various sources! — are not essential and need not be retained. Such an assumption is not warranted and, if accepted, will increase the national risk.

If we fall too far behind Soviet Russia in quickly available conventional military power, we raise the probability that we will have to resort to battlefield nuclear weapons almost from the onset of combat — or capitulate!

Next, as Senator Nunn so eloquently pointed out not long ago;

"At some point, numbers do count.

"At some point, technology fails to offset mass.

"At some point, Kipling's 'thin red line of heroes' gives way."

Finally, if a NATO war erupts despite our efforts to deter such a catastrophic turn of events,

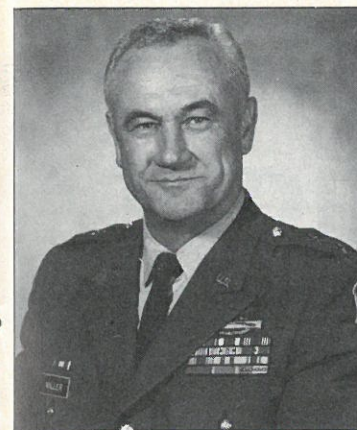
— Whether it's the predicted "short violent war" or a more protracted conflict,

— Whether it remains conventional or turns nuclear,

— Whether we successfully repel the Warsaw Pact forces, or fail to do so,

Far from needing fewer men and units, we'll be praying desperately for more!

Win or lose, the NATO army for all practical purposes will be destroyed. Modern technology, including Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs), almost guarantees unprecedented carnage, even if nuclear weapons are not used.



Maj Gen Richard A. Miller
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So the United States will be attempting frantically to reconstitute its forces, at home and abroad, to:

— Defend against further Soviet attacks.

— Deter, or cope with, contingencies that may arise elsewhere around the world, either under the auspices of Soviet allies, or launched by adventurist Third World nations taking advantage of the war of the titans to achieve some of their own objectives.

— Defend our homeland and our hemispheric allies.

There is a host of difficult problems to solve before our Armed Forces can rapidly augment NATO's forces. They include overcoming major airlift/sealift shortages; producing modern equipment in sufficient quantities for all components and restoring pre-positioned stocks in Europe; rebuilding and stabilizing the M-Day replacement pool of the Individual Ready Reserve; completely overhauling the Army's mobilization procedures and machinery to eliminate the flaws revealed by MOBEX '76; reviving a moribund Selective Service System; and creating a system that will stabilize the strength of both active and reserve components.

Those are problems that cannot be resolved by any component or agency acting alone. Only if all elements work in concert — Congress, the Department of Defense, the Services, such White House agencies as OMB, and the Guard and Reserves — can we hope to make our NATO capability credible, real and adequate.

The National GUARDSMAN

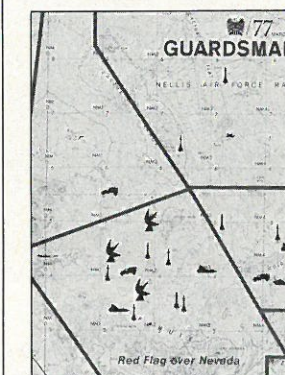
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Features

- Weekender's delight** 2
That comment summarized reaction to an Air Force combat training program for Air Guard fighter units called Red Flag.
- Jack Frost 77** 14
Unseasonable weather failed to hamper Arctic training for Army and Air Guardsmen during winter exercise.
- Mobility & Firepower** 18
Two new helicopters provide improved mobility and firepower for the active Army while allowing "fall-out" of additional resources for the Army Guard.



Departments

- Washington report 8
View from the Hill 8
NGAUS travel service 12
You ought to know 16
Letters to editor 22
People in the news 24
Recruiting newsmakers 26
Posting the Guard 28
Pentagon paragraphs 32

Cover: A scale map depicting a portion of Red Flag "order of battle" at southern Nevada range. Symbols represent enemy and friendly equipment. Red lines separate individual ranges. Map designed by 113th TFW Intelligence section.

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