The Terrible Trade-off of Creditworthiness for Expediency

The Army National Guard has developed a rigorous training program to reduce readiness shortfalls that another serious threat has created almost overnight. It’s the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The Army National Guard is facing an unprecedented challenge: to reduce readiness shortfalls that have occurred due to the new requirements imposed by the terrorist threat. This challenge has been exacerbated by other factors, such as budget cuts and equipment shortages.

In other words, the Administration, Defense and Army apparently do not intend to buy additional equipment to accommodate the POMCUS expansion. Instead, they will have to find a way to cut away from units where readiness already is reduced by equipment shortfalls.

What has led us into such a predicament, that we must sacrifice long-term security to satisfy short-term requirements? The reasons are many, and on some of the views are widely at variance with those of Defense leaders in the current Administration. There was the Vietnam war, for example, with its protracted consumption of equipment and other essentials, including depletion of our reserve stocks. Then there was a succession of Middle East crises, prompting the U.S. to ship huge stores of replacement equipment to various participants. More recently, U.S. defense leaders have focused their efforts almost exclusively on military preparations for a short, extremely violent NATO war, that they have virtually ignored the possibility of a more protracted NATO conflict, or of other conflicts elsewhere in the world. It is that almost exclusive emphasis on a short-war concept, coupled with an unwillfulness to fund such a concept, places us in our present box.

Objective is to win

This Association, too, is concerned lest we and our NATO partners be unable to stand against a sudden, massive attack from the East. We, too, believe that our forward defense line in Europe must be strengthened. But what have we proposed? When we manage to survive those first few weeks of destructive, high-intensity combat only to find ourselves exhausted and lacking the ready, deployable, equipped Guard Reserve forces that would enable us to carry on as long as is necessary, to win? If this threat is as real and as serious as defense leaders say it is — and we think they are right — then we are not meeting the situation as accurately and better than many are willing to give them credit for — why can’t this nation afford the arms and equipment that are essential to its security?

Secretary Brown recently told a reporter that it’s a matter of priorities. "We are in a much better position with regard to the Army’s deployable forces that are contained in the Army Guard and Army Reserve!" The answer is plain. First, training will be weakened. Second, enlistments and re-enlistment programs will be hampered by what appears to be a degrading of Guard and Reserve units. Third, the time frame in which the Army can deploy its NATO will be lengthened still further.

(Impeccable and only partially negative predictions such as these should service a purpose and lead to a clear perception of how much better a look on life and pastel ranges from coast to coast)

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