

SUMMARY

Within days of the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, the President made the war on terrorism the nation's top priority. It was immediately clear that this shift in priorities would have sweeping implications for the United States Army. Much less clear was their specific nature. A group of Arroyo Center researchers engaged in a series of structured intellectual explorations to determine what the implications of this new global war or terrorism would be for the Army. Those sessions were augmented by other relevant research in the Arroyo Center. This briefing presents the results of their efforts. Researchers addressed two primary questions: what demands would the war on terrorism place on the Army and what responses might it consider? They concluded the following:

- Repetitive deployments will continue—the Army needs to manage people accordingly.
- More than ever, the Army needs a range of force capabilities—special operations to conventional forces for major wars.
- Leveraging the transformation for the war on terrorism means more capable yet mobile light forces that can be easily tailored and special operations forces (SOF)-conventional hybrids.
- The Army needs to address the issue of scarce specialty skills that are in high demand to meet competing demands from the war on terrorism and homeland security.
- The Army has a large stake in any revised global basing arrangement, and the global war on terrorism adds another essential dimension to the basing issue.

More Deployments

The Army already has long-term commitments in such places as Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Sinai, and in all likelihood these will continue. It is in the U.S. interest to ensure that these areas remain stable. The Army is also currently carrying out combat operations against the remnants of al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, employing about 6,000 soldiers in the process. Indications are that operations will continue there for some time. In addition, the war with Iraq and the subsequent occupation of the country represents a sizable commitment of ground forces there, likely for an extended duration.

Because it is the stated intention of national policymakers to carry on the war on terrorism across a wide front, the Army can expect to find itself conducting operations elsewhere as well. These will run the gamut from extended combat operations to training of foreign military forces to a host of counter-insurgency/foreign internal defense activities. Some of these may be comparatively short-lived. However, others will last for years. All will require additional deployment, further raising the tempos for Army forces.

The Army has dealt with increased deployment and operational tempo before. At the height of operations in the Balkans, it had about 30,000 troops committed to temporary assignments overseas. Techniques used to dampen the effects of the increased pace of deployments included cross utilization; use of reserve components, allies, and contractors; and modified personnel policies. These remain available. The Army could also cross-train units or modify the skill mix of the active forces to address some of the imbalances in demand. It could also attempt to increase its end strength.

Current peacetime personnel management goals, such as stability after deployments and before permanent change of station moves, limit the Army's flexibility. These policies could be further modified although at some cost to soldiers' quality of life and combat readiness for major contingencies. Unrelated to the war on terrorism, the Army is also exploring a unit rotation system for its currently stationed forces in Europe and Korea. Adopting this system would also affect deployments for the Global War on Terrorism, although pending further analysis it is unclear how significant those effects would be, either positive or negative. One concern is that moving stationed units to unit rotations could reduce the total number of readily available active force personnel for short-notice assignments related to the war on terrorism. This could reduce the Army's overall flexibility in the counterterrorism venue.

Range of Capabilities

The new policy for waging the war on terrorism envisions taking the war to the terrorists—wherever they may be. This offensive orientation, and the strong emphasis on relentless pressure in this regard, is markedly different from past counterterrorism efforts. Therefore we have defined this new policy as Offensive Counterterrorism (OCT) to distinguish it from more traditional doctrinal counterterrorism. This form of overseas OCT we believe will require new combinations of joint capability and responsiveness. For example, it may be necessary to launch a rapid attack against a large, well-defended terrorist installation on inhospitable terrain. Or the Army might have to attack simultaneously several sites spread over a large area. The national civilian leadership will want the ability to carry out a short-notice operation anywhere in the world with high confidence of success. Such operations may now have to

take place on a continuous basis to maintain the necessary level of pressure, another break with past activities in this regard. The ability to seize and neutralize weapons of mass destruction (WMD) under a variety of circumstances will be especially important. Terrorists have proven themselves resourceful, and we can expect them to adapt and make important targets difficult to attack, denying the United States low-risk options, such as bombing. These efforts may also be designed to heavily tax or exceed the capabilities of existing U.S. special operations capabilities. Thus, the Army must develop new combinations of combat power and responsiveness as part of a joint force undertaking.

Leveraging the Transformation

The Army is in the process of transforming itself, in part to address the long-standing trade-off between the time to deploy forces and the amount of combat capability delivered. Light forces get there fast but lack combat power; heavy forces are quite capable but take a considerable time to arrive. The war on terrorism is likely to require greater combat power for a given response speed than the Army has traditionally been able to provide. The Army's new Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) addresses part of the new demands of the war on terrorism, but as a full brigade it still lacks the responsiveness needed for many rapid strike and raid operations. Furthermore, an additional requirement exists at the low end of the combat spectrum for added special operations capability. This demand could be met simply by adding more special operations forces (SOF). It could also be met by increasing the cooperation between SOF and light regular forces. A third option would be to increase the special operations capabilities of light units, perhaps by adding limited skill sets, to reduce the burden on SOF units.

The higher-end capability could be met by tailoring units drawing on assets embedded in the SBCTs. For example, portions of its capability (e.g., infantry, protected mobility, and situational awareness) could be combined with other light or SOF elements to form a very capable unit but one that could deploy much faster than could a complete Stryker brigade.

High Demand for Scarce Skills

One of the problems the Army faces is soldiers with scarce specialty skills that are in high demand, such as special operations and military police. The counterterrorism mission will increase the demand on SOF across the board, but such specialties as psychological operations and civil affairs could come under particular pressure if stability operations become a regular feature of the war. Civil affairs teams will also be committed for extended time in Iraq as part of the postconflict stability activities there, as will military police. Homeland security will also impose its own set of demands, both on a routine and an as-needed basis.

Some of the techniques for dealing with increased deployments apply here as well. Cross-utilization, reserve component forces, substitution of allies and contractors for U.S. forces, cross training in related skills, and modifying the active component skill mix all provide ways to address the shortfall. Each option offers different benefits and entails different costs.

Global Support Basing

The need to deploy worldwide will exert stress on the Army's ability to sustain itself. Likely trouble spots do not align well with the Army's current basing structure. Therefore, support assets would have to figure into any deployment, increasing the number of troops and amount of materiel that would be required to deploy. Thus, the Army needs to rethink the nature and location of its overseas basing, working with the Defense Department to ensure that its needs are addressed. It could also alter or expand the locations of its prepositioned materiel, and it could adopt more Spartan operational concepts that demand less in the way of deployed support. The war with Iraq will likely lead to significant changes in the disposition of U.S. prepositioned forces in the Gulf region and the status of the U.S. ground presence there. The effect of these changes on the war on terrorism must be taken into account.