

Extracts from an address by General Maxwell D. Taylor, Chief of Staff of the Army, before Quantico Conference of Defense Leaders, Quantico, Virginia, Saturday, 16 July 1955

ROLE AND CAPABILITY OF THE ARMY WORLD-WIDE

Required Military Strength

The United States must develop and maintain the military capability necessary to prevent the outbreak of general war and to deter or defeat local wars, since the latter if not quickly checked may lead to the general war which we seek to avoid. This capability must include:

a. Ready forces which, with our allies, can deter, or, if the deterrent fails, can punish local aggression without broadening the hostilities into total war. These forces must be versatile, must be suitably deployed, must be highly mobile, and must possess an integrated atomic capability, if they are to respond with the speed and forcefulness appropriate to the needs of each situation.

b. Properly proportioned forces to deter general war, and to defeat the enemy if the deterrent fails.

The Role of the Army

The Army is an essential part of America's deterrent force. Its deployment in overseas areas is a declaration of national intent which encourages our allies and gives warning to potential aggressors. It is essential as a bulwark against aggression, large or small.

In the event of general war, the Army is a decisive instrument in the attainment of a victory compatible with post-war national objectives. It is a force which has the strategic and tactical flexibility, and the versatility, required to gain control of the resources derived from the soil of the enemy. It can proportion its blows to fit the case--from the force of the M.P.'s truncheon to the kilotons of atomic weapons. It can temper its destructive power to the aims and needs of the post-war peace.

We should not lose sight of the fact that America's potential enemies are land powers. Communist bloc forces are so deployed that, even if the Communist homelands were devastated, the impact on the armed forces of the bloc probably would not be felt for a considerable time. If, during that time, Communist bloc forces were occupying the land of friendly or potentially friendly countries, ultimate victory would be of comparatively little consequence to the free world. This bleak possibility makes it abundantly clear that the enemy's ground force must be defeated as close to the Communist periphery as it is possible to do. America must, therefore, develop its own armed strength, along with that of its allies, so that the nation can defeat the enemy's initial aggressive moves, including his aggressive advances on the ground. To provide this indispensable American contribution is an important part of the role of the Army.

The Army's role must be considered in the light of both deterrent and winning strengths. The deterrent strength is that of the active Army in being. The winning strength includes both the active Army and those reserves of men and materiel which become available upon mobilization.

Ideal Active Army

The ideal active Army would include forces that would be readily available to carry out separately any of our various missions, such as a ready force to meet our NATO force goals and a ready force to resist local aggression elsewhere. This, of course, would permit the Army the flexibility required to meet successfully aggression in any of its various forms. Recognizing, however, that this ideal is exceedingly difficult to attain, the Army is intent upon doing its best to approximate the ideal within the available means.

Modernization of the Army

Preparation of modern Army forces receives the unremitting attention of our Army planners. They are bent on exploiting realistically the new weapons, devices, materials, and equipment developed by science and industry. They are evaluating these elements with respect to their wartime application, and are developing and testing the necessary doctrines and organizations for their employment. An army without atomic weapons on the battlefield of the future will be more helpless than the French Knights at Crecy before the English cannon. In estimating the nature of future combat, we in the Army consider four significant factors to be overriding: Superior firepower, greater mobility, flexible communications, and adequate logistics systems.

MAAGs, Missions and Mutual Defense Assistance

The importance of the international role the U.S. Army is playing cannot be presented solely in terms of the U.S. forces which are deployed abroad. We are actively engaged in helping other nations to develop their own defenses. If we are to stop local aggressions, local indigenous forces must provide the first line of resistance. To this end, we are maintaining or participating in a world-encircling system of Military Assistance Advisory Groups and Training Missions.

Reserve Forces

As you know, expanded Army forces to permit later operations in a general war will have to come from our reserve forces and from general mobilization.

After D-Day, our reserve forces must be capable of accomplishing four important tasks: First, they must provide certain combat and support units immediately to reinforce our active forces. Second, they must provide antiaircraft units to augment our active units. Third, they must provide forces to expand our mobilization and training base in order to permit the rapid expansion of the Army. And, fourth, they must provide a large pool of qualified individuals needed in the expansion of our active forces and to provide early loss replacements.

The most pressing problem confronting our reserve forces is the shortage of trained, participating enlisted men. Examination and study of this problem in all

its aspects, in the light of various proposed solutions, have led to the conclusion that fully manned, adequately trained, reserve forces, of the strength required to meet mobilization and deployment schedules, cannot be achieved or maintained under the present voluntary participation basis. The solution to the manpower problem lies in legislative action to provide a sound and equitable system for the compulsory basic training and active participation of non-veterans, and mandatory assignment and active participation of obligated veterans, backed up by realistically enforceable measures.

Conclusion

In concluding this rapid scan of the Army's horizon I must emphasize my feeling of the need for versatility and flexibility in the arsenal of weapons which constitutes our means for national security. If we are to assure that the disastrous big war never occurs, we must have the means to deter or to win the small wars. If we fail to avert the big war, we must win it through the application of a flexible military strategy integrating political and economic considerations, freed of any preconceived conception of a single, predestined course of events. Such a strategy requires the participation of an Army with versatility to cope with any form of aggression. Such an Army requires the knowledge, training and resources to apply military force of any intensity at any time and place for the duration required for victory. This is the Army which we build.