

# Military Readiness Review

Written and produced by  
*Floyd Spence*  
Chairman, House Armed  
Services Committee

Volume 1, Issue 1

April 1999

## Kosovo and the National Military Strategy:

### *The costs of doing more with less*

*“The [U.S. military] must be able to defeat adversaries in two distant, overlapping major theater wars from a posture of global engagement and in the face of WMD and other asymmetric threats. It must respond across the full spectrum of crises, from major combat to humanitarian assistance operations. It must be ready to conduct and sustain multiple, concurrent smaller-scale contingency operations.”*

— **The National Military Strategy of the United States**

The National Military Strategy of the United States requires that the U.S. armed services be prepared to fight and win two major theater wars at the same time they conduct multiple, concurrent smaller-scale contingency operations and maintain a posture of global engagement around the world. The sustained reduction in military force structure and defense budgets since the end of the Cold War has seriously called into question whether the U.S. military is able to execute the national military strategy. Since 1989, the Army and the Air Force have been reduced by 45 percent, the Navy by 36 percent and the Marine Corps by 12 percent while operational commitments around the world have increased by 300 percent.

Strained by the already high pace of day to day operations, as well as on-going contingency operations in Iraq and Bosnia, the U.S. military now faces a rapidly escalating commitment in Kosovo. Indeed, the build-up of aircraft for Operation Allied Force in the Balkans will soon approach the size of the air fleet required in a major theater war - in essence, Kosovo has become a third major theater

of war. The U.S. military is already feeling the strain in critical areas:

- **Aircraft Carriers.** The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, originally scheduled for deployment to the Gulf region, has been assigned to the Balkans and arrived on station April 5. The gap in the Persian Gulf has been filled by the USS Kitty Hawk, normally stationed in the Far East. She arrived in the Gulf on April 1, and will be relieved by the USS Constellation in June. With no carrier deployed in the Far East in the foreseeable future, the Air Force has been compelled to put its fighter aircraft in the region on higher alert in an effort to partially compensate for the loss of the carrier-based Navy aircraft. The Navy has 12 aircraft carriers in the fleet to cover commitments world-wide. With five currently in shipyards and the rest either recently returned from deployment or just beginning pre-deployment training, Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig recently testified that the service's carrier fleet is “being stretched.”

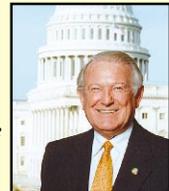
— continued on page 2—

## Congressional Views...

The crisis in Kosovo is revealing the results of more than a decade of decline in America's armed forces. While the immediate cost of Kosovo operations is high – the Administration estimates the costs of maintaining the current level of military operations just through September at greater than \$5 billion – the long-term and indirect military readiness, quality of life, and modernization costs will be much higher.

Policing the Balkans is far removed from the core mission of the armed services as envisioned in the national military strategy

Congressman Floyd D. Spence (R-S.C.) is in his third term as chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services.



– the ability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major theater wars in the Persian Gulf and on the Korean peninsula. The nation's military leaders never planned on Europe being a third major theater of war when they undertook a defense drawdown that reduced the Army and Air Force by 45 percent, Navy by 36 percent, and Marine Corps 12 percent. Nor did the White House, as it dramatically reduced defense spending over the past six years.

As this unplanned third major theater of war in the Balkans unfolds, the U.S. is risking its ability to protect national interests in other critical regions of the world where the threat of conflict is high and the consequences enormous. Over the past several weeks, the U.S. has moved its only Pacific-based aircraft carrier out of the region in order to maintain a carrier in the Adriatic, has transferred critical aircraft

— continued on page 2—

— continued from page 1—

• **Conventional Fighter and Attack Aircraft.** Including the aircraft aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, and the 82 additional aircraft just approved for deployment, approximately 500 total U.S. aircraft are currently involved in Operation Allied Force. This includes over 200 fighters and attack aircraft. General Wesley Clark, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, recently requested some 300 additional U.S. aircraft in order to intensify the air campaign. If approved, it will bring the total number of U.S. aircraft in the region to 800. In addition, the European Command recently removed 10 F-15 fighters and 3 EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare aircraft from Incirlik Air Base in Turkey and deployed them to Aviano Air Base in Italy. Press reports indicate that in an April 1, 1999, meeting, the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed concern that General Clark's growing requirements for aircraft and other equipment will mean higher risks in other hot spots around the world.

• **F-117 Fighters.** The Air Force has deployed 24 F-117 aircraft to the Balkans to support Operation Allied Force. Because of their stealth capabilities, F-117s are in high demand for the type of operations currently being conducted over Yugoslavia. However, the United States has a total of only 59 F-117s to cover all requirements world-wide.



• **Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (Joint STARS).** JSTARS is a modified Boeing 707 aircraft equipped with a long-range air-to-ground surveillance system designed to locate, classify and track ground targets in all weather conditions. Currently, the United States has just five JSTARS in the inventory. Two are supporting operations in the Balkans, placing a strain on the remaining three aircraft that must respond to all other commitments around the world.

• **EA-6B Prowler.** The EA-6B is used to collect tactical electronic information on enemy forces and to jam enemy radar systems. It is also equipped with the HARM anti-radiation missile that is used to destroy enemy radar systems. The EA-6B is found in Navy, Marine Corps and joint Navy/Air Force squadrons. With a total of only 123 in the inventory, nearly 20 are currently deployed to support operations in Yugoslavia. Combined with the on-going deployments in support of Operations Northern and Southern Watch in Iraq and other commitments around the world, the EA-6B fleet is considered by DoD to be "fully committed" at the present time.

• **KC-135/KC-10 Aerial Refuelers.** Currently the Air Force has over 50 KC-135 aircraft and approximately 15 KC-10 aircraft supporting operations in the Balkans. The refueler fleet is heavily committed on a day-to-day basis during normal peacetime operations. As a result, the active Air Force relies heavily on the Guard and Reserve, who fly 56% percent of the refueling missions for the Air Force. Normally, the Air Force meets its world-wide commitments using volunteers from the Guard and Reserve. However, as the operation intensifies, Air Force will be unable to meet commitments with volunteers alone. The pending Presidential Guard and Reserve call-up is likely to contain a high percentage of KC-135/KC-10 crews. On April 26, 1999, the Secretary of Defense announced that an additional 30 KC-135/ KC-10 aircraft and crews, both active and Reserve, will deploy to the region.

• **Conventional Air Launched Cruise Missiles (CALCM).** Prior to Operation Desert Fox against Iraq in December 1998, the Air Force had approximately 250 CALCMs, the non-nuclear version of the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) that are launched from U.S. bombers. The Air Force fired 90 against Iraq during Operation Desert Fox. In Operation Allied Force, 78 have been fired during the first three weeks of operations leaving approximately 80 in the inventory. The Congress recently approved an emergency reprogramming of \$51.5 million in FY 1999 funding to convert an additional 92 ALCMs to CALCMs. In the White House's recent emergency supplemental budget request, CALCMs were designated as the Air Force's number one shortfall.

• **Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM).** The TLAM has become the Administration's weapon of choice to strike heavily defended or high value targets while posing no risk to American pilots. During Operation Desert Fox strikes against Iraq, 330 TLAMs were fired from Navy ships. To date, approximately 178 additional TLAMs have been fired against targets in Yugoslavia. The type of TLAM that is being depleted most rapidly, the Block IIIC model, is the most advanced and therefore the most in demand by military commanders. Further, the U.S. shut down the last remaining TLAM production line in fiscal year 1998 and production of the follow-on missile system is not planned until fiscal year 2003. The White House's emergency supplemental appropriations bill identified TLAM shortfalls as an urgent priority, and included funds to convert older cruise missiles to the more advanced Block IIIC model.



— continued from page 1—

to the Balkans from their missions over Iraq, is running out of certain preferred munitions and is calling up reserve forces to address personnel shortfalls created by the air war over Kosovo. What we are witnessing is the debilitating cost of and increased geopolitical risks associated with an undersized, underfunded and overextended U.S. military having to "do more with less."

However one views America's security interests in the Balkans, they cannot be considered in isolation from the broader context of U.S. interests around the world or the ability of our nation's military to respond. Bosnia is the latest example of the reality that if ground forces are committed, the troops are likely to remain committed for a long time. Unless some balance is restored between the nation's diplomatic and foreign policy

commitments and the ability of U.S. armed forces to back them, history is likely to look back on the post Cold War world "peace dividend" as resulting in a more dangerous world in which America's credibility and resolve were put to the test with alarming frequency.

*Excerpted from "Limits to our Leadership," by Floyd D. Spence, The Washington Post, April 22, 1999*