

EIR Strategic Studies

Gramm-Rudman's impact on the U.S. military

by Bob Greenberg

Imagine the following. The Soviet Union is fighting undeclared wars against the West, and, in particular, the United States, on at least four continents. Utilizing their spetsnaz (special forces) and terrorist capabilities, as well as their political allies, they are committed to destroying U.S. influence in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East in the short term. The world has been hit with the most intense wave of "low intensity" conflicts in recent history.

Simultaneously, the Soviets have engaged in the most massive military buildup that history has ever seen. While the Soviets don't necessarily want to fight an all-out war, they are preparing to win such a war, if they cannot accomplish their goals by any other means.

Yet, while one would expect that, in the face of this immediate threat to the very existence of Western civilization, the United States would respond with some form of mobilization of its own, just the opposite is taking place. The Pentagon seems to be totally preoccupied with implementation of budget cuts and structural reforms.

Rather than re-enforcing our allies in Europe, the United States begins a troop withdrawal. Rather than accelerating the readiness and buildup of our armed forces, massive budget cuts are implemented, reducing our readiness to below that of the Carter era. Rather than increasing the funds for the strategic modernization programs and the Strategic Defense Initiative, major cutbacks in the programs are implemented.

Sound fantastic? The conclusions of an ongoing study being conducted by *EIR* on the effects of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings amendment on the U.S. military demonstrates

that what is described above in rather general terms, is precisely what has begun to take place. In essence, if the Gramm-Rudman bill, or something equivalent, continues to be implemented, we will see the destruction of effective U.S. military capabilities before the next Presidential election.

But, if this were true, you might say, wouldn't the Pentagon and various military organizations be yelling and screaming from the trees? And, anyway, the President would never allow this to occur. It would mean the end of the United States. *EIR* must be wrong.

Wrong again. In dozens of interviews and discussions with senior military personnel, they all acknowledge that implementation of Gramm-Rudman threatens exactly that described above. While the 4.9% across-the-board cuts in the military budget for FY 1986 are tolerable in the short term, they say, the cuts for FY 1987 would have a devastating impact on our overall military preparedness and our ability to fulfill our overseas missions and responsibilities.

Yet, most of them believe that, somehow, at the last moment, the President will step in and prevent this from occurring. Or they believe that the "automatic pilot" provisions of the bill, which activate automatic across-the-board cuts in every budget area without flexibility in implementation, will be declared unlawful before FY 1987.

However, the more astute of them know that this will not occur. "It's an election year. The best gimmick an incumbent congressman has, is to say what a good job they did in reducing the deficit by cutting those fat cats in the military. They're certainly not going to cut everything else and leave

the military untouched. Especially since the 1987 budget will be decided in October 1986, only one month before the elections.”

As to overturning the automatic-pilot provisions, all that does is to enable the services to defer the impact of the cuts for a limited period of time. They still have to make the cuts, and eventually the protected areas will have to be hit as well.

Faced with this dilemma, senior officials in the Pentagon have done the only thing they say they can do—live with it. “We have to accept a constricting universe,” said a spokesman for the Army. “We have to operate within a matrix of constraints.”

The result, according to senior Pentagon sources, is that strategic thinking in the defense establishment has practically ground to a halt. “Rather than think about how we can aid our friends in West Germany, the Pentagon is busy thinking about bringing our troops back and placing them on the U.S.-Mexican border. We’re moving into a fortress America.”

When questioned as to how they can tolerate such a disastrous situation, their only answer is, “All we can do is inform the Congress, but we have to accept whatever the Congress says.”

But you, the citizen, do not. It is for this reason that *EIR* is publishing a detailed picture of what the implementation of Gramm-Rudman will mean for the future of the United States and Western civilization.

Confused priorities

The flaw in the response of the military is that of accepting the premise that reduction of the federal deficit is a priority—that we live in a constricting universe. Our universe is constricting because the economic programs of the current administration have reduced the United States to a service economy, as real wealth—that is, industrial and agricultural products—is no longer being produced, and, therefore, our resources are constricting.

Instead of cutting ourselves to death, the priority has to be rebuilding the high-technology industrial and agricultural base that is the basis of our nation’s strength. We require a declaration of a national defense emergency, and the implementation of a crash program for the Strategic Defense Initiative.

To fully understand the effect that the Gramm-Rudman cuts have already had on the Army, and the projected impact if the FY 1987 cuts were to go through, it is important to understand the mission of the Army and how its budget is determined to fulfill that mission.

The Army’s mission, as described in the *Green Book* outlining the Army’s budget proposal for FY 1987, is to deter attack on U.S. national interests, and failing this, to be able to engage and defeat any enemy in any environment. To accomplish the defense of U.S. national interests specifically means to:

- Defend North America;
- Deter attack on NATO;
- Inhibit coercion of the United States and allies in the Mideast, Southwest Asia, and Africa;
- Deter Soviet aggression and maintain access to oil in the Mideast;
- Counter Soviet influence in Africa;
- Maintain balance-of-power stability in Asia and the Pacific; and,
- Deny expanded access by any hostile power to the Western hemisphere.

To accomplish this the U.S. Army is deployed as shown in the accompanying map.

Continental U.S.: 11 active divisions and 10 reserve-component divisions. (A division is made up of between 12,000-18,000 troops, depending on whether it is a light, medium, or heavy division.)

Alaska, Hawaii: 1 division each.

Europe: 4 divisions for U.S. Army Europe, and 2 forward-stationed brigades of Conus (continental United States) divisions.

Korea: 1 division.

This comes to a total of 28 divisions.

To accomplish its defined mission, the Army budget is broken down into the following components:

Thirty-six percent, or \$28.6 billion, goes to military personnel. This includes all the entitlement payments for the active, reserve, and civilian forces of the Army. This includes pensions for the retired community.

Thirty-one percent, or \$25.2 billion, goes to operations and maintenance expenses. This includes all basic operating expenses from base maintenance and operations, to basic training.

Thirty-three percent, or \$26.8 billion, is for investment. This includes research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E) of new systems. Fifteen percent of this goes for what some call the catalytic enabler, or the dynamic driver component. Simply put, that is the margin of extra training, testing, and maneuvers necessary to maintain a peak state of readiness for the Army. As described by senior Army officers, any cutbacks in this area will reduce the Army to nothing more than a barracks Army, virtually ineffective as a fighting force.

This defines a total FY 1987 budget request for the Army of \$80.6 billion. This is the bare bones minimum necessary to adequately service the Army to meet its mission requirements.

From this standpoint, despite the protestations of the Army, the 4.9% uniform cuts for FY 1986 already have a significant impact on the fighting strength of the Army. A review of the impact of the cuts for FY 1986 makes the point (see Table 1).

This means that the training tempo has been reduced by

2.5%, significant reductions in school and mobilization training, delays and stretchouts in RDT&E, reductions in procurement of ammunition, night vision equipment, transport vehicles, tanks, etc.

It should be noted that because of the lateness of implementation, Gramm-Rudman provided a flexibility for FY 1986 that will not be allowed at any other time. In particular, this enabled the Army to prevent any cuts from active or reserve military personnel (although not retired personnel, whose benefits were the first thing affected), and to double the cuts in one area, to protect another. Thus, the Department of Defense used this to protect the Strategic Defense Initiative from any cuts in 1986. The Army protected some of its more important systems in this way.

Although there were no direct cutbacks in personnel, the Army began a policy of encouraging "early outs"—that is, an early release from service—extensions of tour lengths, and a reduction of such things as ROTC scholarships. The result has been the beginning of chaos and morale problems.

For example, the extension of overseas tour lengths from three years to three and one-half years, creates a significant hardship on the soldier. Rather than he and his family returning to an area in the summer months (tours of duty normally end in the summer months) to enable the soldier and his family to adjust before the beginning of a new school year, now, only his family can leave at that time. The catch is that since the soldier is not traveling with his family, the Army doesn't foot the bill, creating a serious financial hardship for the soldier as well.

While not yet having an intolerable impact on readiness, these cuts are a ticking timebomb. In the words of one Army official, "While we may be able to get away with this for now, we are going to have to pay the piper shortly down the line."

Bad as the effects of the FY 1986 cuts are, the cuts demanded for FY 1987 could be devastating for the entire Army mission in the short term. While no one yet knows how high the budget deficit will be for 1987, everyone rightly assumes that unless Congress makes enormous cuts in the overall budget, and reaches some kind of compromise with the President on this, Gramm-Rudman will have to be implemented in some fashion. Unless overturned, Gramm Rudman automatically goes into effect if the budget request is \$10 billion over the legal ceiling, which for FY 1987 is \$144 billion. The question of how, whether by automatic pilot, or in some more "flexible" fashion, is really not that important.

It should also be noted that any hope of avoiding the activation of Gramm-Rudman through compromise, is simply replacing one disaster with another, as evidenced already by recent proposals in both the House and Senate. If the House and Senate reached a compromise on their proposals (\$285 and \$301 billion, respectively, cut from a proposed total \$320 billion) the cuts would likely equal the approximate 9% figure demanded by Gramm-Rudman. In either

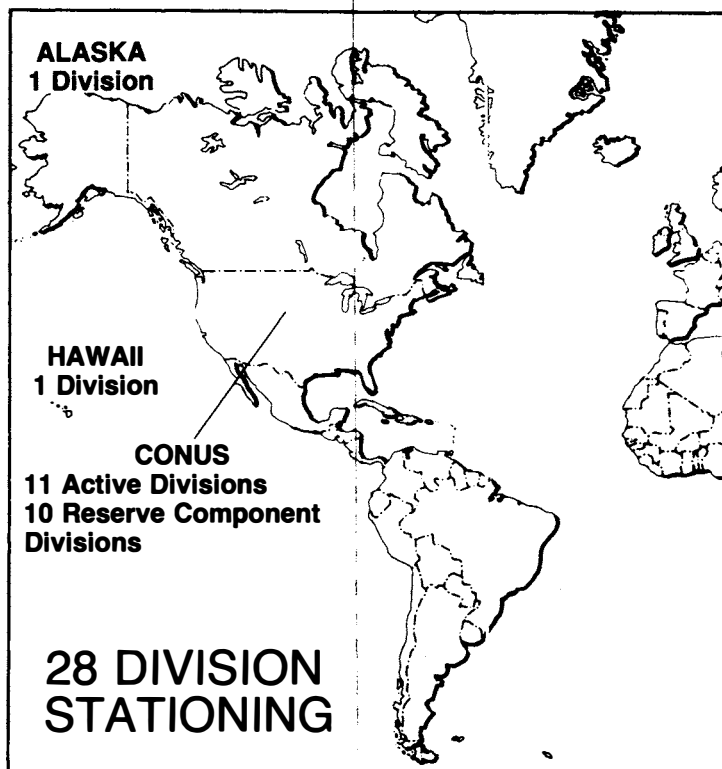
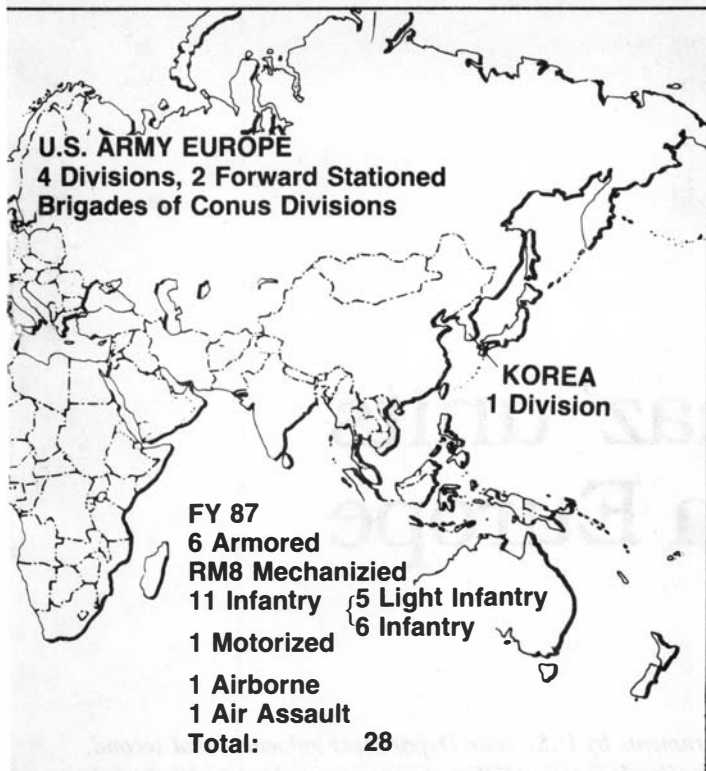


TABLE 1
FY86 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings appropriation reductions

(Total of Appropriations—\$ in millions)

Appropriations	Before G-R-H	G-R-H cuts
Military personnel, Army	\$22,491	\$ 74
Operation & maintenance, Army	20,211	961
Procurement	18,842	924
Aircraft	(3,524)	(173)
Missiles	(2,904)	(142)
WTCV	(4,677)	(230)
Ammo	(2,497)	(122)
Other	(5,240)	(257)
Research, Development, Test and Evaluation	4,841	235
Military construction, Army	1,603	79
Army family housing	1,430	70
Reserve components	8,093	169
Natl Guard personnel, Army	(3,196)	(10)
Operation & maintenance, ARNG	(1,683)	(80)
Military construction, ARNG	(102)	(5)
Reserve personnel, Army	(2,271)	(33)
Operation & maintenance, USAR	(780)	(38)
Military construction, Army Reserve	(61)	(3)
Stock funds	393	19
Total	\$77,907	\$2,531



Sen. Phil Gramm, the "conservative" whose budget-slashing madness is now destroying the U.S. military services.

case, the result is likely to be a disaster, and the beginning of the end for a United States faced with an increasingly growing and active Soviet threat.

The dismantling of the Army

The single most destructive fact for the U.S. security posture is that, assuming a middle-case scenario of a \$179 billion budget deficit in FY 1987, and a 9% uniform cut, the Army would be forced to reduce its troop strength by nearly 19%, or about 145,000 soldiers. This would hit the officer corps particularly hard, forcing reductions of about 40%; 15% of the non-commissioned officers would also be forced out.

Aside from the obvious problems of reducing U.S. troop strength by one-half, and having to field divisions without effective leadership, this level of troop reductions would force withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe, leaving Europe undefended. As explained by a senior Army officer, "With two-fifths of our troops stationed overseas, and with it being more expensive to base them there, we will simply have no choice but to begin to bring them back. This won't be a political question. We simply won't have the money to keep them there, period!"

At a time when the Soviets have declared war on West Germany, such a withdrawal would have momentous consequences for the future of the NATO alliance. It would be the beginning of the end. Unfortunately, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger made a back-handed reference to this probability during his last trip to Europe. When questioned as to whether the United States was going to withdraw troops from Europe, Weinberger stated that we are totally committed to keeping all our *combat* troops in Europe. But less than 40% of our troops in Europe are combat troops. The majority are for support and logistics, without which the combat troops are worthless.

Other sources indicate that the United States, through the Defense Department's Richard Perle, is preparing for such an eventuality by pushing forward a little known clause of the Nunn amendment, which would make that legislation's withdrawal of troops from Europe seem more palatable. This clause provides for joint U.S. and European funding of the development of tactical weapons systems for the defense of Europe. "At least we would leave them with something they could use to defend themselves," a senior officer remarked.

Accompanying this would be a cut of about 45% in recruiting, elimination of 30,000-40,000 civilian jobs necessary for operations and maintenance, cuts and stretchouts in all areas of RDT&E, further serious reductions in operations and training tempo, and further cuts in other areas already affected by the 1986 cuts.

The overall impact would be the destruction of the mission of the Army. Within a few years, the Army would be no better than a "Home Guard," acting as a supplement to the U.S. Border Patrol.