



OF MEN AND MATERIEL: THE CRISIS IN MILITARY RESOURCES

Edited by Gary J. Schmitt and Thomas Donnelly

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Most Americans believe that the response to the September 11 terrorist attacks brought with it a new expansion in military capacity. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The core strength of American military forces has in fact continued to erode. The closer one looks at this problem, the greater the strains and potential problems appear. In the just-released *Of Men and Materiel: The Crisis in Military Resources* (AEI Press), editors Gary J. Schmitt and Thomas Donnelly bring together essays by AEI scholar Frederick W. Kagan, Lexington Institute military affairs expert Loren Thompson, Robert Work of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and Francis G. Hoffman of the U.S. Marine Corps Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities to examine the state of each branch of the military, underscoring a range of shortfalls in force strength, structure, and equipment.

Schmitt, Donnelly, and the authors explore a problem that has been building for years: the military's responsibilities have been expanding without a commensurate expansion of the active-duty force, which is now stretched thin by the grinding pace of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Billions of dollars have been spent on the operational costs of these wars and the costs associated with the all-volunteer force, but too little of this money has been available to add new planes or ships or to increase the size of the Army and the Marine Corps. The result has been a "hollow buildup."

A simple truth emerges from each of these essays: a military that has less will do less. This is a dangerous situation for a nation with expansive foreign-policy goals and global-security commitments. The American military may well be the finest fighting force in history, but it cannot escape the fact that numbers matter. This is not the first time the United States has been confronted by a gap between its strategic ends and its military means, but the stakes in this battle have hardly ever been higher.

Of Men and Materiel: The Crisis in Military Resources is the authors' and editors' contributions to the debate about how to implement effectively the national-security strategy of the United States. In particular, they address:

- the costly ramifications of the cuts in the defense budget that occurred during the Clinton administration;
- the inadequacies of the Bush administration's response to the military "that help is on its way";
- the end of the so-called "strategic pause" with the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent American-led War on Terror;
- the implications of the new counterinsurgency, reconstruction, and stabilization duties imposed on U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- the threat of proliferating states, including North Korea and Iran, and an ambitious, rising China; and
- the long-standing character of U.S. security strategy, including its necessary emphasis on global interests and obligations.

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