

1985

## Mobilization for Low Intensity Conflict

Gregory D. Foster

Karen A. McPherson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Foster, Gregory D. and McPherson, Karen A. (1985) "Mobilization for Low Intensity Conflict," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 38 : No. 4 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol38/iss4/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

# Mobilization for Low Intensity Conflict

---

Gregory D. Foster  
Karen A. McPherson

On 22 July 1982 President Reagan revised US mobilization policy through NSDD 47.\* His goal was to develop an emergency mobilization preparedness capability that will ensure that government at all levels, in partnership with the private sector and the American people, can respond decisively and effectively to any major national emergency, with defense of the United States as the first priority. Key among the operating principles embodied in NSDD 47 are that preparedness measures should address the full spectrum of national security emergencies and emphasize a rapid and effective transition from routine to emergency operations. Further, they should be designed to make effective use of any periods of time that may be available following the receipt of strategic and tactical warning.

NSDD 47 stipulates that specific programs are to be implemented that will be directed initially at the development of a credible and effective capability to harness the mobilization potential of the US in support of the armed forces, while meeting the needs of the national economy and other civil emergency preparedness requirements. These programs, making use of existing programs where possible, will contribute to, among other things:

- deterrence of attack, especially nuclear attack, against the US, its allies and friends; and
- effective response to attempts at coercion, nuclear blackmail, and economic warfare.

Collectively, these and other provisions of NSDD 47 represent a salutary effort on the part of the US policy establishment to reinvigorate what for too

---

\*National Security Decision Directive 47 (NSDD 47), "Emergency Mobilization Preparedness."

---

Mr. Foster is a consultant specializing in international security affairs, civil-military relations, and futures research. He is the coauthor, with Adam Yarmolinsky, of *Paradoxes of Power: The Military Establishment in the Eighties*.

Dr. McPherson is an analyst at Science Applications International Corporation, McLean, Virginia. She specializes in civil-military relations, the politics of defense decisionmaking, and international security affairs.

many years has been probably the single most neglected dimension of our national security policy. To the extent that such a Presidential imprimatur gives mobilization the peacetime legitimacy and sense of urgency that previously were lacking, a critical void has been filled. However, it would be a mistake to impute an undue degree of sophistication to American national security planning based only on the above passages. To do so would belie a somewhat outdated conception of war and mobilization's role in prosecuting or avoiding war.

The American approach to mobilization has been, and continues to be, all or nothing in character. Rather than being viewed as a viable instrument of national power, mobilization is seen as something to be undertaken only under the direst of circumstances—a disruption of our entire social and economic fabric; the penultimate step toward war, involving the totality of the nation's commitment and resources. In the words of strategic theorist Thomas Schelling: "Mobilization of armed forces has typically been considered nearly equivalent to a declaration of war."<sup>1</sup>

But, no more than mobilization need be viewed as the final step toward war, need war be thought of as the only suitable pretext for mobilization. It is a demonstrated fact that war in the traditional sense has demanded far less of

---

**"Mobilization must come to be viewed not as an automatic war-inducing provocation subject to escalatory runaway, but as a manipulable tool of credibility, deterrence, and coercive influence."**

---

America's attention in the nuclear era than have the genre of highly prevalent crises commonly characterized as low-intensity conflict. Yet, mobilization for such lesser forms of conflict has been judged a *non sequitur*. Why, it might be asked, would one want to mobilize when there is no need to replenish high rates of resource expenditure?

Much of current American thinking about mobilization is based on recollections of how the country rose to the massive challenge of World War II. Thus, it is instructive to recall a few things about that experience. First, the weaponry of the day was relatively unsophisticated, so that someone pulled from the farm or the kitchen and thrust into the factory could be expected to be capable of producing these weapons within a short period of time. Second, even at that point in our history, the oceans were a sizable barrier; it was reasonable to expect our allies to hold an adversary at bay while we mobilized. Third, and most important, the industrial base—because of the Lend-Lease program and the initial construction of a two-ocean navy—already had been put well in motion prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Since World War II, the situation has changed dramatically. Weapons have become increasingly sophisticated and demand more precise production

standards; the oceans are no longer a barrier; and a sustained warning period leading to the outbreak of hostilities is a luxury unlikely to be realized under current conditions. Yet, the Korean War provides the only example of significant mobilization actions, including industrial involvement, since 1945. Almost 800,000 reservists were called to active duty for that conflict. Our involvement triggered an industrial mobilization that was designed not merely to meet the needs of that war but to establish a military power capable of offsetting Soviet designs of world domination. The stated objectives of the mobilization were not only to build military production capacity larger than that required for Korea, but to expand the overall industrial base and economy so that both the national standard of living could improve and military production could grow to whatever level necessary. The Defense Production Act provided wide-ranging authorities to accomplish the mobilization within the context of an expanded economy—wage and price controls, credit controls, priorities and allocation, import controls, and the expansion of production capacity. In addition, it was during this period that the mobilization base concept was instituted.\*

In contrast to our Korean experience, Vietnam witnessed no mobilization decree, no massive callup of reserves, no significant restrictions on the civilian economy, and no economic controls on wages, prices, profits, or materials. In fact, specific policy decisions were made which effectively invalidated all planning agreements between government and industry. Because there had been little interest in preparedness measures to upgrade equipment after Korea, the equipment that was available for use in Vietnam was in need of maintenance and obsolete. Consequently, the industrial base was asked to meet a greater demand for new equipment than it had been asked to meet for the Korean War; and yet, the government was unwilling to invoke extant authority to allow accelerated production. Equipment needs, therefore, frequently were met by drawing down available stocks in both Europe and the training base in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Since political exigencies precluded the massive callup of reserves, manpower “mobilization” was achieved through a variety of methods: stepped-up conscription; the alteration of rotation rules to manipulate the rate and time of reassigning veterans to combat; and the drawdown of manpower from Europe. It also was during this period that the ill-fated “Project 100,000,” which was designed to admit 100,000 previously unqualified men to the service, was attempted.

---

\* As defined in Defense Mobilization Order No. 23, dated 23 November 1952: “The mobilization base is that capacity available to permit rapid expansion of production, sufficient to meet military, war-supporting, essential civilian, and export requirements in event of a full-scale war. It includes such elements as essential services, food, raw materials, facilities, production equipment, organization and manpower.”

The US response to other crises since World War II has involved, virtually without exception, merely the shifting of existing resources from one place to another to meet immediate needs. In Lebanon in 1958, in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, active US military units were alerted on a large scale, air and naval forces were repositioned to forward locations, and, in the former two cases, American troops actually were deployed—14,000 at their peak to Lebanon and 23,000 to the Dominican Republic. In none of these instances, nor in any lesser crises that have erupted since 1945, was mobilization of either manpower or industry undertaken.

On the whole, American policymakers have demonstrated a remarkable propensity for dealing with contemporary conflicts as crises to be reacted to only after they threaten to get out of hand rather than as pretexts for positive, assertive strategic response. As a consequence, more often than not we have left ourselves little choice but either to entertain the direct application of military force or to do nothing. Without having realized it as such, we have demonstrated a distinct lack of appreciation for the sophisticated management of perceptions that is the essence of strategy.

Despite the considerable promise of NSDD 47, mobilization remains a much-neglected element of the nation's flexible response posture. Our purpose here is to explore mobilization as an instrument of persuasion for low-intensity conflict. The basic argument put forth is that low-intensity conflict provides a more or less ideal arena for undertaking various mobilization measures, thereby at one and the same time providing:

- advance preparation that will enhance US ability to support a particular conflict,
- demonstrable resolve that is more credible than strident rhetoric, yet less provocative than the actual commitment of military forces,
- practice for the eventual effectuation of larger-scale mobilization, and,
- a means for ameliorating many of the shortcomings evident today in America's defense industrial base.

### Defining the Terms

Low-intensity conflict is an elusive and complex phenomenon that does not lend itself to simple conceptual or definitional formulations. This analysis ascribes five defining characteristics to low-intensity conflict. First, it takes place in the Third World. Second, it does not involve the Soviet Union directly—although Soviet proxies may be involved. Third, it involves the pursuit of limited objectives—short of the permanent occupation of the adversary's territory or the total destruction of his forces. Fourth, it is more than a "show the flag" armed demonstration, but less than a traditional conventional campaign. Finally, it does not *necessitate* the mobilization of

additional resources beyond those otherwise maintained for peacetime purposes, although it may be found *desirable* to mobilize such resources.<sup>3</sup>

The true distinguishing feature of low-intensity conflict is that it is a "fishbowl phenomenon." Given the power of the electronic and print media, superpower response to a given crisis is judged by the entire world as a measure of the superpower's right to retain its established status. The military component gives way to the political; limited objectives and means are a *sine qua non* for success; and deterrence and coercion assume predominance over traditional military victory. What is important, and what determines success, is much less a function of the actual application of force at the locus of conflict than of how the overall situation is interpreted by the world at large. In a major sense, therefore, low-intensity conflict operates as much on the basis of symbolic significance and signal manipulation as on actual military performance. To the extent that political ends can be achieved without actual resort to force, strategy is most expertly applied.

Mobilization, although conceptually less ambiguous than low-intensity conflict, is probably less well understood because of its virtual neglect in recent years as an instrument of power. Simply stated, mobilization is nothing more than an act of preparation for war or other emergencies that involves the assembly and organization of manpower and materiel. This may include any of four graduated levels of activity.

Level I, the most basic, involves merely the shifting around of resources already on hand. The most obvious example of this is the redeployment of active forces from their normal peacetime location(s) to an area of crisis for demonstration purposes.

Level II involves the callup of manpower and/or materiel. The most commonly used resource available for this purpose is the manpower found in the Ready Reserve, which consists of Selected Reserve units and Individual Ready Reservists. Materiel resources beyond those maintained in the inventory of deploying forces may come from war reserve stocks, from specially configured sets of unit equipment prepositioned in overseas theaters, from residual equipment of deploying units, from drawdowns of equipment belonging to either late-deploying units or the training base, from depot stocks, or from other stocks, such as foreign military sales or commercial substitutes.

Beyond this, some form of industrial mobilization generally is required. This may consist of either increases in industrial production (Level III) or expansion of industrial base capacity (Level IV).

Increases in production may assume any of three general forms. First, increases may be made in defense production for operational readiness purposes, not initially a part of the annual budget decision process, using authorities and priorities normally available in peacetime. This is known as "surge." Second, surge production of a broader array of materiel needs may

be undertaken as a hedge against global conflict. Third, the industrial base may be mobilized under wartime rules for priority and allocation to secure the materiel needed for a major mid- to long-term conflict.

Similarly, industrial expansion may be achieved in a variety of ways. First, the laid-away production base may be activated. Second, production capacity may be enhanced by the procurement of more long leadtime components. Third, standby plants and equipment may be added to current defense suppliers. Fourth, production capabilities for planned critical items may be added to firms not currently engaged in defense production.

### Mobilization as Flexible Response

Beyond this basic level of definitional clarification, mobilization carries with it a number of both positive and negative strategic implications that affect its utility as an instrument of national power. These warrant careful consideration.

The most obvious effect of mobilization is that it is a means of signaling national resolve and of influencing the behavior of an adversary. It is a far more credible instrument than strident rhetoric, increased defense spending, or operational exercises, while being markedly less provocative than the actual commitment of military forces. The observation of the 1980 Defense Science Board study panel on industrial responsiveness is unusually insightful in this regard: "Industrial preparedness could be used as an effective element in support of the Nation's deterrent posture but is not. Warning signals of enemy intent can frequently be discerned long before strategic or tactical warning can be perceived . . . . The industrial and economic resources of the U.S. could be employed as an additional means of indicating credible intent to the Soviets and thereby inhibit their threatened actions. At present, there are no plans or programs by means of which the industrial base could be caused to respond in order to indicate to the Soviets our intention of deterring them from exercising various of their strategic options."<sup>4</sup>

There are other advantages that may be derived from mobilization. It is a means of exercising procedures that exist, if at all, only on paper and of highlighting problems that otherwise would remain more or less undetectable because they cannot be foreseen in the absence of real events. This is especially true of many support relationships—most notably those between the civil and military sectors—that lie in a near-constant state of dormancy because they are so remote from the combat arena. While it can be claimed that mobilization exercises also serve to exercise procedures and highlight problems, most exercise activities are so "canned" that there remains an entire order of problems that are unlikely to surface in the absence of realistic conditions.\*

---

\*One of the most nettlesome and enduring problems of exercises, for example, is the difficulty of getting key decision makers to participate. The use of surrogate players with different emotional and psychological makeups and different operating styles than the individuals charged with responsibility for acting in a real-world crisis may, and probably will, lead to spurious exercise results and findings.

A closely related positive effect of mobilization is that it improves preparedness by activating resources and thereby reducing the time that otherwise would be required to make them employable. The acts of alerting, mustering, and startup not only are the greatest consumers of time in converting resources to an operational state, they also are the most difficult activities to control.

Finally, mobilization provides a largely unrecognized means of generating public commitment. The operative premise here is that support of controversial international initiatives is more likely to come from a public that, in some measure, is actively involved in the situation. Whatever might otherwise be said about the wisdom of US involvement in Vietnam, it is reasonably clear that much of the public discord and fractionation that occurred during that conflict emanated from detached sectors of society that never had to make a psychic investment.

On the negative side, mobilization may precipitate escalation and further destabilize not only the situation at hand but the global balance of power as well. This at least is the popular mythology, based largely on the historical legacy of World War I and the events that precipitated that conflict. But that experience, as well as more contemporary historical examples in which the mobilization of comparably empowered adversaries contributed to an outbreak of hostilities, provide unconvincing analogs to a situation in which the US would be responding to low-intensity conflict against a lesser power.

A second negative aspect of mobilization is its "cry wolf" effect, by which, given the popularly held view of mobilization, the act of mobilizing heightens anticipation and expectations of things to come. For those who draw the causal link between mobilization and war, the dissonance that may result from attempting to dissociate the two phenomena actually could become a self-fulfilling prophecy in which an artificial momentum toward war is produced, or in which a valid momentum toward war is ignored as "just another mobilization exercise or alert."

A similar negative effect is that mobilization may lead to self-deterrence. In other words, the initiation of particular actions may uncover problems and create bottlenecks sufficiently significant to discourage decision makers from executing other necessary and more assertive military measures.

Mobilization also may be a costly undertaking. Obviously, there is no such thing as a no-cost mobilization measure. In fact, it is not inappropriate to suggest that where the US has declined to apply mobilization measures in the past, the decisions (or nondecisions) implicitly have reflected cost considerations. The diversion of existing resources for a show-the-flag demonstration, for example, involves active troops and materiel that already have been paid for. Thus, there could be considerable return on investment because the input side of the ledger consists of already-sunk costs. Mobilization, in contrast,



relies on the generation of new costs involving either additional appropriations or the transfer of resources targeted for other purposes. Although a particular mobilization measure might be equated to the procurement costs of a carrier or the life cycle costs of a tank battalion, for example, the latter represent quantifiable additions to US force capabilities, whereas the effects of the former are far less amenable to quantification.

Finally, it may be argued that the obverse of the public commitment argument has validity. By this line of reasoning disruption of the domestic status quo actually could aggravate disaffection, rather than fostering support. Considering the speculative nature of the argument on both sides, success will be largely a function of specific circumstances and the degree of orchestration that can be managed by executive branch decision makers.

What emerges from this exercise are several principles that should be taken into account before one undertakes any mobilization measures. First, provocation should be minimized—the actions taken should be those which are least likely to be perceived by the adversary as so threatening that he will be prompted to escalate. Second, national resolve should be demonstrated clearly, so that the immediate adversary and the world at large are convinced of US determination to take all actions necessary to ensure success. Third, public commitment to the US response should be generated. Fourth, overall preparedness in both the near and the long term should be enhanced. Fifth, costs should be minimized, consistent with the attainment of established objectives. Lastly, the actions taken should have a demonstrable impact on the situation at hand; in other words, in terms of timing, leverage, and the perceived balance of military capabilities, US ability to control and benefit from the situation should be improved.

As desirable as it might be for all of these objectives to be compatible, tradeoffs will be inevitable where multiple objectives are sought. For example, it is reasonable to presume that those measures which demonstrate the greatest degree of resolve also may be the most costly. Ultimately, the perceived value of any mobilization measure will be a function of the public climate of the time, the nature of the situation, the personal preferences of key decision makers, and, most importantly, the particular objective (or set of objectives) sought. Given this, it is useful to assess the various levels of mobilization in terms of each of the aforementioned objectives.

**Provocation.** Expansion of the industrial base promises to be the least provocative mobilization measure. In terms of proximity to the locus of conflict and immediacy of employment, it is likely to be perceived as least threatening to an adversary. For the opposite reasons, the shifting of existing resources, specifically military forces, is the least preferred alternative. It is likely to be seen as a more aggressive, interventionist move.

**Resolve.** Industrial base expansion, because the mobilization of civil assets is involved and because costs promise to be considerable, is likely to be

perceived as the ultimate manifestation of resolve. Expansion creates the image of being involved for the long haul. The mere shifting of already existing resources (equipment stockpiling or troop repositioning) does not convey an especially strong image of commitment; if anything, it may signal an unwillingness to become more involved.

**Public Commitment.** Industrial base expansion is likely to engender the greatest degree of public commitment because it will involve larger segments of the populace than otherwise would have been involved. In so doing, it will create jobs and career opportunities, even if only for a limited period of time. The shifting of resources and the surging of production will generate little public support because only existing resources will be at stake. A callup of reserves, on the other hand, will require the involvement of personnel outside the active military establishment; consequently, even with the disruption of careers and the increased possibility that other than professional military lives could be at risk, public commitment can be expected to increase, but not as much as for industrial expansion.

**Cost.** The shifting of existing resources promises to be the least expensive mobilization option because primarily sunk-costs are involved, i.e., the personnel, operations and maintenance costs of sustaining the active military establishment. Expansion of the industrial base, in contrast, is unquestionably the most costly option, although over time it may be expected to stimulate economic forces that will produce considerable return on investment.

**Preparedness.** A reserve callup is most likely to improve preparedness in the short term because it involves increasing both the size of the military forces available for deployment and the aggregate firepower that could be brought to bear against an opponent. In comparison, the shifting of existing assets is more temporary and perishable. Surging the production base may be seen to enhance sustainability in the midterm but, because sustainability is a relatively inconsequential consideration in a low-intensity conflict, this option may offer less than meets the eye.

**Impact.** Without question, shifting existing resources will have the greatest impact on events at the locus of conflict, since timing will be a crucial factor. A callup, even though influencing the overall balance of forces, will require time for mobilization, movement, and training. Expansion of the industrial base, as the most time-consuming activity, will have the least impact on the immediate situation.

### Current Mobilization Authorities and Capabilities

To accept the logic presented above is not, *ipso facto*, to accept the legitimacy of a link between mobilization and low-intensity conflict. But, if one acknowledges that low-intensity conflict provides a global showcase for testing the sophistication of strategic response by large powers, and that

reliance on traditional instruments of war in the modern era has shown itself to be outmoded, then the marriage of these two domains of action assumes a more compelling cast.

In a situation of low-intensity conflict, it is assumed to be in the best interest of all parties concerned to keep the intensity of the conflict at a relatively low level. Clearly, therefore, in order to be able to respond incrementally to crisis, and thereby control its intensity, one needs to have authority in place to act quickly and in proportion to the level of conflict. A review of current laws, executive orders, and regulations makes it clear that the authority to mobilize incrementally and proportionally already exists and can be activated, in many cases, without resort to additional legislative or executive action. Thus, the conceptual and legal foundation that would facilitate graduated mobilization response to low-intensity conflict is surprisingly robust.

Current statutes provide powers to the President during an emergency that may not call for a formal declaration of national emergency by either the President or the Congress. In addition, the National Emergencies Act of 1976 authorizes the President to declare a national emergency formally in crisis situations for the purpose of exercising other special or extraordinary powers authorized by acts of Congress. However, power or authority made available by statute for use in the event of a Presidentially-declared national emergency may not be exercised unless and until the President specifies the provisions of law under which he proposes that he or other officers will act in the period for which the emergency is formally declared. These specifications may be made at any time concurrent with or subsequent to the declaration of national emergency. National emergencies formally declared by the President terminate if (a) Congress terminates the emergency by concurrent resolution; (b) the President issues a proclamation terminating the emergency; or, (c) the President does not publish in the Federal Register and transmit to the Congress within 90 days prior to each anniversary date of the declaration of national emergency a notice stating that the emergency is to remain in effect. At a minimum, each house of Congress is required to meet every six months following the formal declaration of a national emergency to consider a vote on a concurrent resolution to determine whether that emergency should be terminated.

There exist three levels of authority by which emergency actions may be undertaken. The first concerns those powers specified by the National Emergencies Act that do not require a formal declaration of national emergency. The second concerns those powers gained under a Presidential declaration of national emergency. The third concerns those powers gained by a congressional declaration of emergency and not available by Presidential declaration. The specific actions authorized at each level are shown in the adjacent table. What should be noted is that an extraordinary range of powers not requiring formal congressional action is vested in the President. Alone or

## Statutory Mobilization Authorities

Foster and McPherson: Mobilization for Low Intensity Conflict

### Powers Not Requiring A Formal Declaration Of National Emergency:

Arming of American vessels or aircraft.

Callup of 100,000 Selected Reservists.

Recall of retired Regulars.

Secretary of the Navy authority to order any retired officer of the Regular Navy or Marine Corps to active duty.

Authority to order any member of the Fleet Reserve or the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve to active duty.

Detail of members of Armed Forces to assist other countries in military matters.

Acceptance of American Red Cross cooperation and assistance.

Employment by the Army Surgeon General, with Secretary of the Army or Secretary of the Air Force approval, of as many contract surgeons as may be necessary.

Coast Guard to operate as a service of the Navy.

Recall of retired Coast Guard officers.

Recall of retired Coast Guard enlisted members.

Detention of armed vessels during a war in which US is neutral.

Right of first refusal to purchase natural resources.

Stockpiling of critical and strategic materials.

Placement of mandatory orders for prompt delivery of material or articles for use by Armed Forces.

Expansion of productive capacity and supply.

### Powers Gained Under A Presidential Declaration Of National Emergency:

Order up to one million members of the Ready Reserve to active duty for not more than 24 months.

Extension of Reserve active duty agreement without consent of reservist.

Retention and promotion of Regular officers.

Extension of Coast Guard enlisted personnel.

Use of Public Health Service commissioned corps as a branch of the land or naval forces.

Restrictions on the transfer of shipping facilities.

Waiver of requirement to ship 50 percent on privately owned US flag vessels.

Authority to requisition or purchase, or to charter or requisition the use of ships, owned by US citizens.

Release of stockpiled strategic and critical materials.

Authority to control ocean-going vessels in US waters.

Authority to seize non-US owned vessels lying idle in US waters.

Exemption of national defense contracts from certain statutory limitations.

Suspension of restrictions on chemical and biological agents.

Use of ships in the National Defense Reserve Fleet.

### Powers Requiring A Congressional Declaration Of Emergency:

Extension of terms of enlistment for Reserve components.

Extension of term of service for an enlisted member transferred to a Reserve component.

Extension of temporary enlistments in an armed force.

Authority to order a member or unit of a Reserve component to active duty for the duration plus six months.

Authority to order members and units of the Standby Reserve to active duty.

Suspension of ceilings for Regular Marine Corps officers.

Suspension of ceilings for Regular Marine Corps enlisted members.

Order Fleet Reserve or Fleet Marine Reserve members to active duty for duration plus six months.

Extension of National Guard enlistments for the duration plus six months.

in combination, these actions carry a great deal of both substantive and symbolic significance that, if properly orchestrated, can be turned to considerable strategic advantage.

Military doctrine, although not fully developed in this sphere, at least acknowledges the need for graduated mobilization response by distinguishing between partial, selective, full, and total mobilization.<sup>5</sup> Partial mobilization, which is conceptually most applicable to low-intensity conflict, is defined as expansion of the active armed forces resulting from action by Congress or the President to mobilize Ready Reserve component units, individual reservists, and the resources needed for their support to meet the requirements of a war or other national emergency involving an external threat to the national security.

It is noteworthy that the principal emphasis for this level of mobilization is clearly on the use of the Ready Reserve, with no direct provision made for the application of industrial mobilization measures. This emphasis is reflected in the contribution of Selected Reserve units to the total force capability of the US. For example, the Reserves provide one-third of the Army's combat divisions, four roundout brigades to bring short-manned active divisions to combat strength, about half of the Army's infantry, tank, and field artillery battalions, and almost two-thirds of its logistical support units. One-quarter of the Marine Corps' divisions and supporting aircraft wings are in the Reserves, as are two-thirds of the Navy's mobile construction battalions (Seabees), all of the Navy's combat search and rescue capability, half of the Air Force's wartime strategic airlift crews, and almost two-thirds of the Air Force's tactical airlift aircraft. Today, Navy, Marine, and Air Force Reserve units are generally up to strength, while the Army remains well short of meeting full wartime requirements.

Industrial preparedness is guided by the Defense Production Act of 1950, which gives the President authority to strengthen the industrial base and to control and stabilize the economy to meet defense needs. The Act states that "the facilities, machines, tools, production equipment and skilled workers necessary to produce the requirements of the Secretary of Defense shall be maintained in a state of readiness." Facilities include those already producing at full capacity; those that are active but producing at less than full capacity; inactive facilities that must be reactivated; and those that must be built or expanded to meet projected requirements. The dedicated peacetime defense production base, along with the stockpile of war reserve materials, is intended to provide the necessary sustainability to satisfy defense requirements until such time as essential expansion produces additional quantities of military equipment and supplies. It includes government-owned, contract-operated facilities; government-owned, government-operated facilities; and government-owned equipment either in the hands of defense contractors or retained in an inactive reserve status under the provisions of the Defense Industrial Reserve Act.

It is a well-documented fact that the defense industrial base is in a state of serious disrepair. In addressing itself to the problem, a special 1980 panel of the House Armed Services Committee found that the general condition of the defense industrial base has deteriorated and is in danger of further deterioration in the years ahead; this because of declining productivity growth, aging facilities and machinery, shortages in critical materials, increasing lead times, skilled labor shortages, inflexible government contracting procedures, inadequate defense budgets, and burdensome government regulations and paperwork.<sup>6</sup>

Numerous other study groups and panels, before and since, have echoed these findings. Most recently, the Air Force-sponsored "Blueprint for Tomorrow" study by 60 aerospace company officials sought, among other things,<sup>6</sup> to identify shortfalls and bottlenecks to rapid, sustained production increases under surge or mobilization conditions. The study concluded that the aerospace base cannot surge and sustain without extraordinary measures; that comprehensive plans for surge and mobilization do not exist; that the subcontractor base and the availability of skilled personnel are critical bottlenecks; and that substantial additional facilities, equipment, and tooling would be required for mobilization.<sup>7</sup>

Whatever might be said about recent corrective initiatives, it is clear that much remains to be done to reinvigorate the defense industrial base. Unfortunately, given the uncertainties in national and international economic conditions, there is little impetus or incentive for industry voluntarily to undertake the normal, peacetime measures that have been proposed for ameliorating the problem. Consequently, there would seem to be considerable justification for stimulating the industrial base "artificially" through the introduction of selective mobilization measures under conditions sufficiently realistic to induce industrial involvement without the imposition of Draconian corrective measures.

In addition to the various manpower and industrial resources available for mobilization, procedures and programs exist for the augmentation of Defense capabilities in time of war or national emergency with resources from other Federal agencies—such as the Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—and from the civil sector. In the latter case, the Civil Reserve Airfleet (CRAF) and a number of sealift allocation options are particularly noteworthy.<sup>8</sup>

The CRAF program is a civil-military partnership in which the civil air carrier industry commits selected airlift resources to DoD in time of emergency. This partnership has been in existence since 1952 but has never been formally activated. CRAF may be activated incrementally at three stages to meet ascending levels of military requirements. Stage I consists of aircraft committed by contract to callup by the Military Airlift Command and is sized to accommodate a minor conflict or crisis. Stage II (airlift

emergency) aircraft provide augmentation during an emergency not requiring national mobilization. This stage is activated by the Secretary of Defense. It represents a balance between the Department of Transportation's requirement to maintain adequate support of the civil sector and the needs of DoD in a situation not calling for mobilization of reserve forces nor for substantial deployment. Stage III may be activated by order of the Secretary of Defense in time of war or during a defense-oriented national emergency declared by the President, or in time of national emergency declared by the Congress. This stage also may be activated in a national security situation short of a declared defense-oriented national emergency; however, its activation presumes that the Secretary of Transportation has been authorized to exercise Presidential priorities and allocation authority. This stage is sized to support the reinforcement of Europe, including Atlantic Fleet missions.

Sealift capability may be obtained from the Military Sealift Command (MSC)-controlled fleet and voluntary ship charters; the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF); the Sealift Readiness Program (SRP); requisitioning of US-owned ships; and Nato ships. The MSC-controlled fleet consists of onhand assets that are immediately available in all situations. This fleet is composed of chartered and government-owned vessels that are operated by civil service mariners or contractors. They are used to meet peacetime DoD cargo movement requirements and have a limited surge capability.

The NDRF consists of inactive merchant ships and former Navy ships owned by the government and maintained in "wet storage." These ships purportedly could be placed in operational condition within 60 days. The most capable and modern portions of the NDRF have been upgraded to a higher state of readiness and placed in the Ready Reserve Force, which is intended to be available for service within 5 to 10 days.

The SRP provides a means, under less than full mobilization, whereby the MSC sealift capability can be augmented by US flag ships in a timely manner. SRP is a standby contractual arrangement provided for under law and shipping/container agreements between the MSC and private ship operators for provision of ships under charter for defense use. When a joint call is made by the Secretaries of Defense and Commerce, some 33 ships could be made available within 10 days of notification, an additional 50 ships within the next 20 days, and 82 more ships within another 30 days.

Finally, the Secretary of Commerce is authorized to requisition US-owned ships and watercraft, whether registered under US flag or foreign flags, whenever the President proclaims that the security of the nation makes it advisable, and in time of national emergency. Ships may be requisitioned for title or for use (charter). Foreign ships lying idle in US waters may be requisitioned when authority to requisition US ships has been given.

Because established mobilization authorities are so rarely invoked and available capabilities so rarely used, it is a somewhat surprising picture that

emerges. There exists already an extensive range of measures that, if instituted either singly or in combination, could greatly enhance the nation's flexible response posture. By merely appreciating the full range and scope of these measures, one can begin to realize the potential utility of mobilization in situations short of total war. Ultimately, however, the question that must be addressed is whether the application of such measures can be orchestrated in a sufficiently sophisticated manner to exact desired behaviors from the adversaries of the moment and thereby provide a suitable surrogate for the use of force (actual or threatened).

Contemporary trends strongly suggest that low-intensity conflict is the wave of the future—an increasingly pervasive phenomenon that can be neither ignored nor avoided. Experience has shown it to be a serious game of threat and counterthreat, of intimidation and one-upmanship, in which success goes to the party most adept at manipulating symbols and controlling escalation without diluting the capability to deal with concurrent crises elsewhere.

At the same time, advances in the lethality of conventional military technologies and the looming specter of nuclear weapons threaten to render the US militarily impotent—afraid of the consequences of employing that which it has been instrumental in creating. The need, therefore, is for an intermediate option between the use and nonuse of force that mobilization provides. The key to understanding and accepting such an approach is to recognize that what is called for is the *selective* application of particular mobilization measures under particular circumstances. As an added element of flexible response, this will provide the intermediate option needed; furthermore, by enhancing preparedness—something typically not accomplished short of the actual use of force—it will materially improve the ability of our forces to succeed, if committed.

Judged in another light, there are major problems in the defense industrial base that beg rectification. Mobilization exercises conducted to date have served primarily to highlight recurring shortcomings and discrepancies. Ironically, the effect has been to subordinate more than to stimulate the impetus for reform. Economic conditions have exerted a dampening effect that has diluted any incentives there might have been for the system to self-correct. What it would appear is needed is a set of environmental conditions sufficiently realistic to stimulate corrective action. Low-intensity conflict—cloaked in the garb of crisis—provides such a realistic stimulus.

For the approach suggested here to work, it will be necessary, but difficult, to induce a complete conceptual reorientation among US planners and decision makers—to divest them of their preconceived notions about the dynamics of mobilization. Mobilization must come to be viewed not as an



automatic war-inducing provocation subject to escalatory runaway, but as a manipulable tool of credibility, deterrence, and coercive influence.

It will be no less important to consider the perceptions of Soviet decision makers in our calculations. As Robert Jervis has cogently pointed out: "Unless statesmen understand the ways in which their opposite numbers see the world, their deterrence policies are likely to misfire."<sup>9</sup> Even a cursory reading of Soviet doctrine leads one ineluctably to the conclusion that the Soviets are little different from their American counterparts in their views of mobilization.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, if the US is to mobilize selectively to meet low-intensity conflicts—and thereby to reap the broader strategic benefits that may be obtained—it will be necessary to do so initially in a situation highly unlikely to provoke Soviet involvement, and thereafter to regularize the link between mobilization and low-intensity conflict by repeated use.

In the final analysis, strategic success will depend on the extent to which what traditionally has been an extraordinary response—mobilization, in any form—can be made a routine instrument of national power.

### Notes

1. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 268.
2. For an especially illuminating history of US industrial mobilization, see Roderick L. Vawter, *Industrial Mobilization: The Relevant History* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1983).
3. For a representative example of the difficulties of defining low-intensity conflict see Sam C. Sarkesian and William L. Scully, eds., *U.S. Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict* (New York: National Strategy Information Center, Inc., 1981).
4. Defense Science Board, *1980 Summer Study Panel on Industrial Responsiveness* (Washington: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, January 1981), p. 1.
5. US Dept. of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, JCS Pub. 1, (Washington: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1 April 1984), p. 238.
6. US Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Defense Industrial Base Panel, *The Ailing Defense Industrial Base: Unready for Crisis* (Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 31 December 1980).
7. US Air Force Aeronautical Systems Division, *Blueprint for Tomorrow*, Executive Brochure, (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio), pp. 46-48.
8. The increased use of peacetime civil assets to support military operations, a marriage that worked quite effectively for the British in the Falkland Islands conflict, has been explored in some detail by Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey (Ret.), "An Unconventional Approach to Defense Resources," *Survival*, November/December 1982, pp. 252-259.
9. Robert Jervis, "Deterrence and Perception," *International Security*, Winter 1982/83, pp. 3-30.
10. For example, see the term MOBILIZATSIONNOYE RAZVERTYVANIYE (Mobilization Deployment) in US Air Force, *Dictionary of Basic Military Terms: A Soviet View*, Soviet Military Thought, no. 9 (Washington: US Govt. Print. Off., 1977), p. 125.

