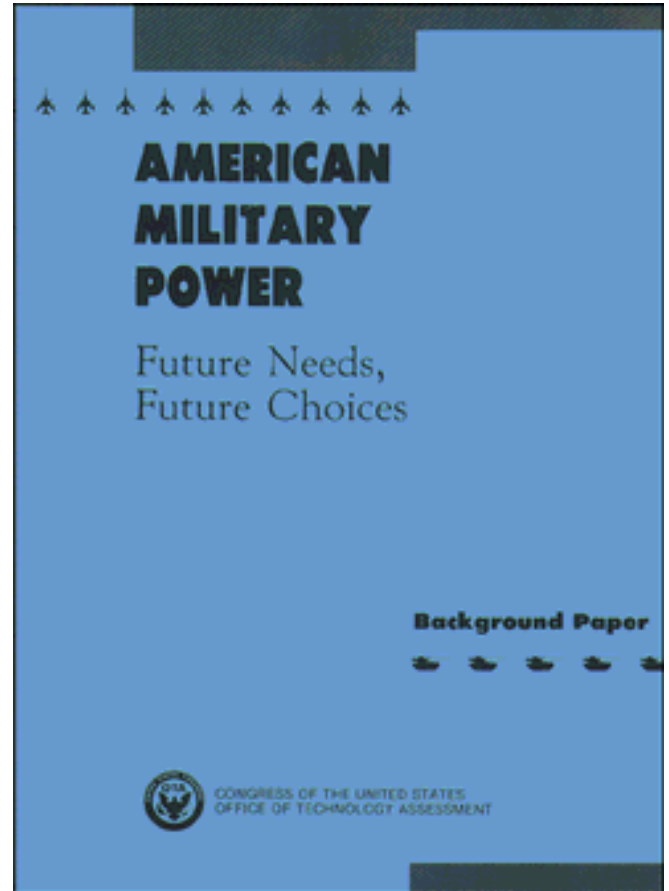


*American Military Power: Future Needs,
Future Choices*

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Foreword

America's global security environment is changing profoundly, pushing the country toward a fundamental reevaluation of its military requirements and those of the supporting defense technology and industrial base. If U.S.-Soviet relations do not deteriorate, defense procurement could accelerate its present decline through the end of the decade. The Office of Technology Assessment has been asked to conduct an assessment of what form the future defense technology and industrial base might take. An essential first step in any evaluation of the defense base is understanding what military forces it will support and what those forces may be called upon to accomplish. Many of the characteristics of the U.S. military forces and the defense industry that supports them arose because of the unique security requirements of the last 40 years. Given the extraordinary new environment, the assumptions that led to today's military and industrial structure requires careful and continuing review. What threats the Nation faces, the role of force, the context of regional conflict, even the definition of "security," must be reevaluated.

This background paper, part of OTA's ongoing assessment of the future defense technology and industrial base, outlines some of the issues of importance for making choices about the future nature and role of U.S. armed forces, and suggests how these choices will affect defense base requirements. The final report of the assessment, to be delivered in the spring of 1992, will address specific policy options arising from the strategic choices and tactical decisions discussed here.

In preparing this background paper, OTA sought information and advice from a broad spectrum of knowledgeable individuals and organizations whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged. As with all OTA studies, the content of the background paper is the sole responsibility of the Office of Technology Assessment and does not necessarily represent the views of our advisers and reviewers.



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NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

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