

Don't Forget the Infantry

As I write this, 150,000 American ground troops continue to wage violent counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. After ten years of war, our country's land forces are tired, much of their equipment is worn down, and they fear they are fighting for a cause America no longer concerns itself with. But here is the remarkable thing: If their country asked them to continue the fight for another ten years, they would salute and do their duty. For, when someone on Capitol Hill asks, "Why are the U.S. Army and Marine Corps in Afghanistan?" soldiers and marines have a simple answer: "You sent us."

Even as American soldiers and marines remain locked in mortal combat, debates rage over how deeply to cut the military. Cuts ranging from \$400 billion to \$1 trillion over five to ten years are on the table. As none of these discussions appear grounded in any determination of what our strategic needs might be in an uncertain future, I may be wasting my words in pointing out that this appears to be a particularly bad time to think about reducing our military capabilities. Rather, I wish to rail against the one thing that almost always happens when the country undertakes an ill-thought-out reduction of its military might: the senseless elimination of land forces.

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