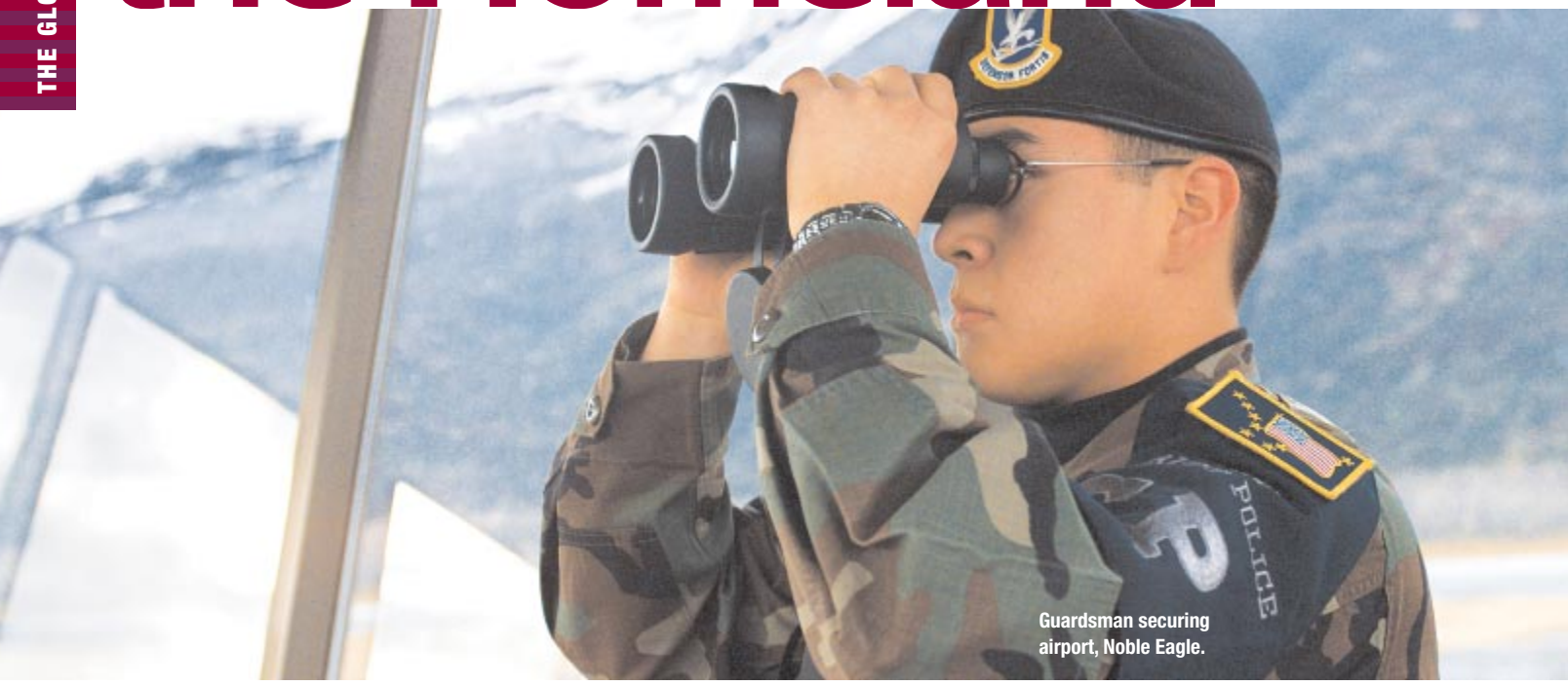
# Defending the Homeland




Guardsman securing airport, Noble Eagle.

168th Communications Flight (Kevin L. Bishop)

## An Historical Perspective

*By* JOHN S. BROWN

The emphasis on homeland security over the last year has generated intense interest in a range of possible threats. Understandably, the current focus has been on civil defense, with concern for protecting innocent populations from weapons of mass destruction. Planners today as in the past, however, recognize that civil defense is only one part of a larger issue. In analyses conducted for both the Quadrennial Defense Review and the global war against terrorism, the U.S. Army Center of Military History added rear area security, border security, aid to the civil authority, internment, humanitarian relief, economic intervention, and domestic disturbances to civil defense in its consideration of homeland defense—the military component of homeland security.

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## Rear Area Security

Warring nations have always sought to secure their heartlands from the depredations of the enemy. Prior to the 20th century, operations were intended to intercept enemy forces at sufficient distances to ensure that centers of agriculture, commerce, recruitment, training, and civil life could continue unmolested. With industrialization, the relevance to the war effort of protected territory became more pronounced, and with the mass armies of World War I the concept of a continuously defended front extending along an entire national border became feasible. During World War II, the continental United States became a consciously secured rear area where the so-called Arsenal of Democracy generated the material wherewithal to support its own war effort and that of its allies.

The United States adopted an isolationist posture during the interwar years. If necessary, it would defend itself without allies. The Navy and Air Force would intercept all comers far from American shores. A major fraction of the Army force structure was given over to coast artillery, assigned to fortifications carefully laid out to provide overlapping fires at extended ranges using the most modern technology to defend approaches such as Long Island Sound, the Chesapeake Bay, and estuaries on both coasts of the continent.

When the United States entered World War II, an actual invasion of the homeland seemed unlikely. Strategic bombardment was more probable. Film footage of the devastation wrought by Germany during the Battle of Britain galvanized America. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York City, for example, participated in elaborate air raid rehearsals with firemen, policemen, and other first responders. Industrial facilities undertook complex camouflage and concealment schemes. The Coast Guard seized Greenland, a possession of German-occupied Denmark, and discovered a *Luftwaffe* weather station, raising speculation that a larger enemy establishment might have been contemplated had America not acted. Threat of strategic bombardment from the Pacific seemed even more real, given the catastrophic destruction Japanese aircraft inflicted at Pearl Harbor. The fear faded after the dramatic victory at Midway crippled the enemy carrier fleet. The ultimately successful Battle of the Atlantic foreclosed German options as well. The Japanese did pursue a bizarre initiative to launch balloons with incendiary devices on prevailing winds across the Pacific in the hope of starting forest fires in the American Northwest. The balloons had little success but did cause the Army to divert a battalion of paratroopers—the famous 555th "Triple Nickel"—to duty as smokejumpers.

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Throughout the war the most realistic threats to homeland security were raids or sabotage against key facilities. The United States did suffer several Japanese submarine-launched shellings of Pacific coastal facilities, and German submarines released two teams, each with four saboteurs with explosives, across Atlantic beaches. The Federal Bureau of Investigation rounded them up, but not before they fueled public panic. Local authorities argued that police and state troopers were too few and that when the War Department federalized the National Guard it removed the only state means of securing themselves. The political give and take resulted in an overreaction, and 19 of 34 divisions then in training were diverted to domestic security. This disruption threw ground force mobilization timelines off schedule by as much as six months as guardsmen who should have been preparing to deploy were guarding beaches, dams, factories, and railway bridges.

The War Department realized it had to relieve deployable forces of domestic security duties to fight the war. Civil defense efforts soon attracted five million volunteers who could fulfill some security and surveillance functions. Newly organized state guard units, consisting largely of overage former guardsmen and other nondeployables, were also useful. The best solution to meeting specific installation

Army surgeon treating Filipino, 1899.

DOD

security needs was deputizing Federal Auxiliary Military Police, individuals who often worked at the sites. Most factories had security forces, which proved to be useful with modest investments in training and equipment when they were integrated into larger networks for coordination and reporting. As dictated by circumstances, these 200,000 auxiliary policemen could be reinforced by state guardsmen, who numbered 160,000, or 50,000 military police retained in the Zone of the Interior to secure Federal property and provide reaction forces. There was also the broader surveillance provided by the five million civil defense volunteers. Ultimately, 16,007 factories were deemed essential to the war effort and placed under this security mantle, as were critical bridges, roads, dams, and other infrastructure.

Guardsman screening traveler, Noble Eagle.

U.S. Air Force (Joe Pastre)

## Civil Defense

Many consider civil defense a secondary part of rear area security. For most of the history of the Nation that was the case. The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and shock of discovering that the Soviet Union had the atomic bomb in 1949 altered that subordination. Capabilities for strategic projection and weapons of mass destruction combined to create situations in which civilians could be targeted with virtually no notice. The Civil Defense Act of 1950 established the Federal Civil Defense Administration to work with state and local officials to avert such a catastrophe. Agencies and lines of authority have evolved over time, but the principle of a Federal-state-local partnership to protect the public from weapons of mass destruction has remained.

At the outset of the Cold War, Soviet planes rather than missiles were the practical platform for delivering nuclear weapons. Both American and Canadian air forces developed capabilities to intercept them, including radars across northern Canada for early warning. Washington was ringed by 27 antiaircraft gun and missile sites, and other cities were similarly protected. These sites could be quickly manned in an emergency because crews were drawn from local Reserve units. The prospects for intercepting attacking bombers were rather good.

American technologists attempted to keep pace as a ballistic missile threat began to supplant aircraft. Advances allowed friendly missiles to destroy incoming missiles in flight. The feasibility of interception generated controversy then as now. Today the aim is to identify a warhead among decoys and debris and destroy it with a direct hit. The antiballistic missile technologists of the 1960s only aspired to get close enough with a nuclear explosion of their own to immolate decoys, debris, and warheads based on the not unreasonable assumption that a nuclear explosion outside the atmosphere and hundreds of miles away was preferred to one inside the atmosphere and possibly in a friendly city.

Few believed it was possible to intercept all incoming strategic weapons, so civil defenders attempted to protect the American people from the effects of those that did get through. Successive administrations sought to create a nationwide fallout shelter system, with state and local help. The Army Corps of Engineers and Navy Facilities Engineering Command identified public shelters for the entire populace. This massive survey was followed by efforts to stock shelters with food and water, ensure ventilation, and mark their location clearly with black and yellow signs.

Contingency plans of the Office of Civil Defense (a successor of the Federal Civil Defense Administration) were updated by reinforcement training units from the Individual Ready Reserve, who came on active duty once a year to review and amend the plans. Each state adjutant general had plans and resources to assume responsibility in the event of a collapse of civilian authority, and Federal assets deployed to assist would be assigned to adjutants general under such circumstances. Though imperfect, civil defense appeared to be robust enough to protect substantial proportions of the population through the early 1970s. But when the concept of mutual assured destruction and the Antiballistic Missile Treaty were embraced as policy, these capabilities began to shrivel.

Unfortunately, Moscow did not remain the only strategic player with the potential to attack using weapons of mass destruction. Terrorism by nonstate actors became more ugly and lethal in the 1970s and 1980s. If terrorist prospects for acquiring nuclear weapons seemed remote, their capability to acquire chemical, biological, or

radiological weapons became more worrisome. After years of neglect, civil defense reemerged as an issue with the XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles in 1984. The Army was designated as DOD executive agent, assisting law enforcement in securing the games. Other counterterrorist interventions, simulations, and exercises followed. The Defense Authorization Act for FY97 established the Domestic Preparedness Training Initiative within DOD. It focused on assisting municipalities and law enforcement authorities in preparing for chemical or biological attacks with emphasis on training. Americans are rediscovering civil defense, although their efforts have not yet matched the scope of the 1960s.

**since before the Revolutionary War, Americans have been suspicious of military intrusion into civilian affairs**

### Securing the Borders

Border defense has not been an essential feature of homeland defense since the first half of the 19th century. The War of 1812 ended in peace with Great Britain and its Indian allies on the northern frontier, and by 1823 some 750 soldiers were stationed along a border that was becoming increasingly somnolent. The overwhelming American victory in the Mexican War of 1846–48 also removed any serious military threat to the southern frontier. If border defense faded as an issue in the Southwest, however, border security remained a military proposition for another century. Cross-border lawlessness waxed and waned depending on economic circumstances, political turbulence, and the proclivity of hostile Indians and bandits for using this unsettled region to their advantage. The Army and the Texas Rangers engaged in the Cortina War in 1859–60, clearing Brownsville of a renegade band and chasing it deep into Mexico. This doctrine of hot pursuit would be invoked many times over the next several decades.

The most dramatic case of hot pursuit involved Pancho Villa in 1916–17. The revolution in Mexico that began in 1910 had dangerously inflamed the frontier, and the situation worsened as President Woodrow Wilson maneuvered to support constitutionalist Venustiano Carranza against less acceptable local factions. Villa eventually retaliated against the United States for its support of Carranza by raiding Columbus, New Mexico, and killing 17 people before being repelled. Within a week, 6,000 troops assembled for the punitive expedition, and 161,664 National Guardsmen and Reservists mobilized to secure the border and back the regulars. Brigadier General John Pershing pursued Villa deep inside Mexican territory, killing 251 and wounding 166 while losing 15 killed and 31 wounded. These operations continued through 1929, with several brigades of cavalry and more than 200 camps and outposts which secured pumping stations, bridges, railways, and border towns. By the 1930s turbulence in Mexico abated and the border became increasingly civilianized. When the military was next called on to participate in a border mission, it was under the guise of assisting the civil authority.

### Aid to Civil Authority

Since before the Revolutionary War, Americans have been suspicious of military intrusion into civilian affairs, but the boundary between civil and military authority was nevertheless fluid on the frontier. The state of relations with Indian tribes was often in the gray area between war and peace, and much of the activity by the Army with respect to both Indians and settlers was akin to law enforcement. The closing of the frontier in 1890 lessened fluidity between civil and military authority, as did the Posse Comitatus Act in 1878. Former Confederate states had strong feelings about martial law, having experienced it during the Reconstruction era. In return for conceding victory to Rutherford B. Hayes, a Republican, in the disputed election of 1876, the South extracted the promise to end Reconstruction, the passage of Posse Comitatus to exclude the Army from local law enforcement, and other concessions to local sovereignty.

Pershing in Mexico, 1916.

DOD

Inspired by an alarming increase in drug traffic, the Military Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Agencies Act of 1981 (reinforced by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986) reversed this pattern of exclusion and established a National Border Interdiction System by combining Federal agencies to interdict the flow of narcotics into the United States. Such criminal activity exceeded the capabilities of local law enforcement to counter them without Federal assistance. The military role was providing equipment such as aircraft, vehicles, weapons, and night vision devices; loaning or granting matériel such as protective vests and consumable supplies; and training in the use of this equipment.

The military role in aiding civilian law enforcement broadened under the mounting pressure of the war on drugs. In 1989 Congress designated the Department of Defense as lead agency for detecting air and maritime transit of illegal drugs and the integration of Federal command, control, communications, and intelligence assets. Joint Task Force 6 (JTF–6) was formed to support four areas of activity: operational,


Japanese-Americans in Santa Clara, 1942.

DOD

intelligence, engineer, and general. Operational support involved day and night aerial reconnaissance, border surveillance, dive operations, and transport. Intelligence support provided specialists to assist in analysis. Engineer support involved construction such as roads, border fences, lighting, and training facilities. General support included training, canine support, communications, and certain military skills. To this point the focus of JTF–6 has been the war on drugs, but the enormous mobilization of military assets for airport security and surveillance functions to support the war on terrorism presage a more permanent involvement of organizations like JTF–6 or similar efforts to assist civil counterterrorism efforts as well.

## Internment

One aspect of border security and the war on terrorism that has excited major controversy is internment of foreign nationals and their rights while interned. This is neither a new development nor a new debate. Since the 18th century civilized nations have interned or deported enemy aliens within their borders at the outset of war, not only to prevent them from spying or committing acts of sabotage, but also to protect them from being assaulted or killed because of the passions of war. The Federal Government pursued internment policies as early as the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 and has expanded this role to address illegal immigrants or refugees. When the task exceeds the capacity of civil authorities, the military has been called upon to undertake internment of aliens. During World War I, for example, the War Department held 2,300 Germans and Austro-Hungarian citizens seized in the United States, 1,356 German naval personnel seized from war vessels bottled up in American harbors, and 2,300 merchant marine crewmen seized in America, Panama, and the Philippines.

The Army role in internment expanded to include large numbers of illegal immigrants and refugees who could not be accommodated by civil authorities without threatening disruption. During the Mexican Revolution of 1913–14, soldiers of both the Federalist and the Constitutionalist forces fled the battlefield and crossed the border into the United States. The Army disarmed and interned them for eventual repatriation. On one occasion an entire Federalist division of 3,300 men (with 1,300 women and children) entered the United States and surrendered. Similarly, large scale internment was necessitated by 43,700 refugees from Cuba during the Mariel boatlift in 1980, and 12,500 Haitians were detained at Guantanamo Bay from 1991 to 1993. In each case, DOD cared for the refugees until immigration authorities could determine individual dispositions.

A particularly controversial episode involved the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt issued an executive order with the avowed purpose of protecting the Nation against espionage and sabotage. The order allowed military commanders to exclude persons of Japanese ancestry from certain areas and led to the evacuation and internment of over 100,000 people from the west coast. Unlike the relatively few Germans and Italians interned at that time, and prior use of the Alien Enemies Act, most of the Japanese-Americans interned were either U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens. In retrospect, neither fear of sabotage and espionage nor the notion of protective custody could justify this massive internment of Americans. One must appreciate the traumatized mindset of the public in 1942 to understand this overreaction.

## Humanitarian Relief

The military has a long tradition of helping Americans in danger or under duress because of natural or manmade disasters. The potential of such catastrophes rose as the population grew and concentrated in cities. The Chicago Fire of 1871 was a case in point, killing hundreds and leaving thousands homeless. The Army supplied food, water, and tentage to the stricken inhabitants. After the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, the local commander mobilized 6,000 soldiers and marines to fight fires, provide medical care, patrol streets, and shelter the homeless. A War Department regulation in 1917 codified the Army flood relief role, which steadily expanded. Only the Army—specifically the Corps of Engineers—had interstate capabilities, command and control, transportation, stockpiles, and hydrological expertise to extend relief efforts across entire drainage basins such as those of the Mississippi and Columbia Rivers. In addition, National Guardsmen in each state immediately provided local governments disciplined manpower with inherent means of command, control, and supervision. The Secretary of the Army was designated executive agent for military support to peacetime emergencies in 1973, and all Federal responsibilities were pulled together under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 1979.

Neither nature nor FEMA ever sleeps. In winter heavy snow isolates communities, closes roads, and endangers travelers and the aged. In spring the snow melts and combines with rains to cause flooding. Summer dries out the ground and inhibits flooding but introduces vast brush and forest fires. And temperature differentials bring hurricanes in the autumn.

The military, and the Army in particular, can anticipate committing a portion of its manpower to public relief. Even during World War II, divisions were pulled out of training to assist their stricken countrymen. Requirements of up to 30,000 personnel have ample precedent. From September 23 to October 7, 1992, for example, Florida and Louisiana reeled from Hurricane Andrew, Hawaii from Hurricane Iniki, and Guam from Typhoon Omar. Military personnel restored power, removed debris, and provided food, water, sanitation, tents, medical support, and transportation. Meanwhile, the California and Idaho Army National Guard fought forest fires, the Wisconsin Army National Guard reacted to tornadoes, New Mexico required military assistance to deal with water table contamination, and Rhode Island needed emergency water relief when sewage backed up into municipal water supplies. Humanitarian relief strains technical capabilities that are in short supply: water purification units, deployable medical assets, and horizontal engineers. All told, this array of emergencies required the services of 29,317 military personnel. Whatever else soldiers are doing, it can be anticipated that they will also be involved in the humanitarian relief at home.

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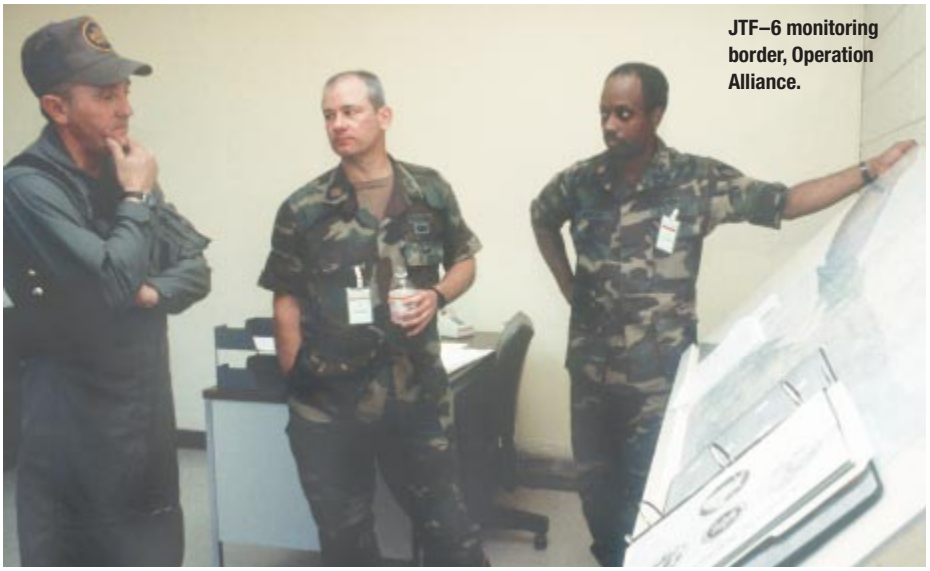
## Economic Intervention

Beyond humanitarian relief in the wake of disasters, there are long-term efforts conducted by the military to ensure the physical well being of the public. Intervention in the economy can be characterized as collateral, programmed, and crisis. Frontier Texas offers an example of collateral intervention. In performing its security mission, the Army spent $70 million in the state between 1847 and 1900. Military pay supported merchants, commercial ventures, and real estate, while Army logisticians contracted for construction, provisions, livestock, water, and transport. Some historians believe that the Army jumpstarted economies in Texas and other frontier states, a pattern that continues to this day. The military annually spends $4 billion in Texas and another $1 billion in Georgia, Colorado, and Washington.

Economic intervention can be more deliberate. The premier military agency responsible for such programmed intervention is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In the pursuit of strategic infrastructure, the Corps of Engineers has surveyed railroads, dug canals, erected public buildings, built roadways and bridges, constructed dams, improved ports and rivers, and reclaimed wetlands. Its enormous responsibilities include operating and maintaining some 12,000 miles of commercial waterways, 925 harbors, and 276 locks—two in operation since 1839. Taken together, these facilities handle $700 billion in foreign commerce and generate 13 million jobs. In addition to waterways, railroads are indebted to military engineers, while the interstate highways began as a strategic initiative of the Eisenhower administration.

In economic crises, the large scale organizational capacities of the Army have made it useful in getting reservoirs of manpower to quickly execute national policies. During the Reconstruction era, the Freedmen's Bureau—an autonomous agency of the War Department—provided 21 million rations



JTF–6 monitoring border, Operation Alliance.

DOD (Joseph Garrison)

to indigents, sponsored vocational education, acquired title to land and redistributed it, and moved 30,000 people into areas where they could support themselves. In the Great Depression, the Army diverted 3,600 officers and 13,000 enlisted men to manage the Civilian Conservation Corps, putting thousands of young people to work on public projects. Peak enrollment was 459,000, and three million cycled through the program, an enormous relief in a period of massive unemployment. During both World Wars I and II, the War Department was given authority to take over plants essential to the war effort if production was at risk. Perhaps because of this authority, it was seldom used. Labor and management generally behaved well, and the Army only took over nine of the 16,007 plants considered vital during World War II.

Crisis economic interventions often draw on specific skills in trying circumstances. During the postal strike in 1970, the Army identified personnel from all services with relevant experience and organized them to keep the mail moving until the strike was resolved. Similarly, during the air traffic controller strike in 1981, the military kept airports functioning to avert domestic paralysis.

## Domestic Disturbances

Preserving domestic tranquility is a constitutional mandate. From the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 to the Los Angeles riots of 1992, soldiers have more frequently been involved in restoring law and order than contending with foreign enemies. The vast majority of such missions have gone to the National Guard under state control, but the Calling Forth Act of 1795 has been invoked to bring Federal troops or Federalized National Guard to play as well. The Army approach to such missions was captured in a field manual published in 1953: "the suppression of violence without bloodshed or undue violence is a worthy military achievement" and must thus involve "a maximum application of manpower and a minimum application of force." One can control the streets with manpower or firepower.

Federal intervention in civil disturbances has almost always been mounted in response to requests by the states. Exceptions occurred during the civil rights movement. Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson mobilized Federal troops to protect the rights of black Americans on five occasions. The integration of James Meredith, who had served as a staff sergeant in the Air Force, at the University of Mississippi reveals that overwhelming presence can suppress violence without bloodshed. Over 30,000 members of the active Army and Federalized Mississippi Army National Guard were involved. Meredith was physically protected by an inner core of 536 U.S. marshals. Four battalions patrolled the university campus, broke up disturbances, and secured property. Another three provided similar services in the city of Oxford, Mississippi. Rioting tapered off as the Army posted daily security for over six months. Only two deaths occurred during the disturbance, both arguably accidents. Eventually all parties saw reason and school integration became less difficult across the South.

Anti-war protests and the New Left led to domestic confrontation in the 1960s. The worst case of violence at home was racially motivated, however, and erupted after the murder of Martin Luther King in April 1968. Riots erupted in 125 cities across the country. Some 37,014 Federal troops and Federalized National Guardsmen were sent into Washington, Baltimore, and Chicago. The Army identified 18 on-call brigades, each of which could dispatch 200 soldiers in 6 hours, 600 in 12 hours, and 2,400 in 24 hours—altogether 43,000 assisted beleaguered law enforcement agencies within a day. The total inventory of troops available for domestic crises included 316,000 National Guardsmen, 192,000 Reservists, and 90,000 members of the active component. And this was possible at the height of the Vietnam War.

Americans have a long tradition of defending the homeland from diverse threats. Proposals for future security should take that history into account. Requirements for rear area security, civil defense, border security, military aid to civil authority, internment, humanitarian relief, economic intervention, and domestic disturbances are likely to continue. Taken together, they describe the broad range of what homeland defense has been in the past and what it is likely to remain in the future. JFQ