Twitter Thread by David B. Larter



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We could make our Defense cheaper. We could reinstate conscription. We could transfer large portions of our standing forces into guard and reserve units. We could stop invading central and southwest asian countries. We could increase direct military aid to our allies.

The other good ideas include more unmanned and uninhabited systems (WHERE APPROPRIATE, and nobody has convinced me yet that naval presence is worth a damn unmanned), as well as investing more in the dark arts of gray zone warfare.

Now, all that wouldn't be very efficient were we to need to go to war in a hurry. But maybe... And this is crazy... We shouldn't be in a hurry to go to war?

But our adversaries -- Russia, China and Iran -- all invest heavily in the dark arts, all use conscription, are all investing in unmanned. They ain't crazy. They know if WWIII was about to kick off they'd need time to boost readiness and train conscripts.

And I know what folks would say: "Sometimes you don't have a choice of when you got to war. Think of 9/11."

And, good point. But my recollection of that time period was that in Afghanistan, the CIA and SOF had the Taliban and al qaeda just about licked within a few months.

Then we decided on making Afghanistan a democracy. Sure the Taliban would probably have come back. Maybe. The Northern Alliance was pretty tough with US backing. We probably could have left and we would have made our point.

But increasing direct military aid to our allies makes sense if we want to keep them in our orbit while we draw down. Good for them, good for us, good for interoperability, and we don't have to pay their personnel tab.

Two things: You want to lay off 1/2 the military, David? By no means! I want to enable the success of the country by unleashing the best and brightest on our economy, while offering them the security of monthly guard and reserve income and regular activation opportunities.

Would Congress go for it? Of course they would, because we're not stopping the war machines, we're just giving more of them directly to our allies. Your two weeks per year might be spent in Lithuania training them how to operate Patriot, made in the USA.

I'm also not convinced this model would reduce the need for all the civilian support infrastructure in the localities that host bases. Same rough number of troops, only not all there at once.