



R. Thomas Buffenbarger  
International President

## Commentary

# ***SURGE Roundtable***

SURGE means increasing the tempo of combat operations and industrial production in times of national emergency. It is an old idea.

To President Franklin D. Roosevelt, surge meant “a swift and driving increase in our armament production.” That definition came eleven months and one day before Pearl Harbor.

Today, such a conventional war seems unthinkable to some policy makers. Others hedge their bets. At the Pentagon, the new Quadrennial Defense Review invokes surge to meet an uncertain future.

But can America’s shrinking industrial base produce the means of our defense a decade or so from now? When we no longer make main battle tanks, when a third of the bullets used in Iraq and Afghanistan are made overseas, when a handful of new destroyers are launched each year, and when F-22 and F-35 orders are trimmed, that remains an open question.

As this *IAM Journal* points out, many of the unique tooling and workforce skills needed to surge will not exist in seven to ten years. And that realization should set off alarm bells at the Pentagon and across Capitol Hill.

America’s industrial decline is neither inevitable nor unavoidable. With new defense industrial policies and high tech institutes for future generations – ideas explored during the IAM SURGE Roundtable – we can turn this around.

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