

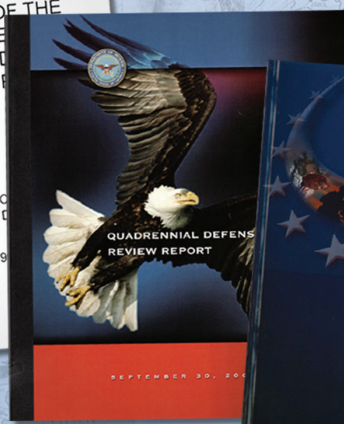
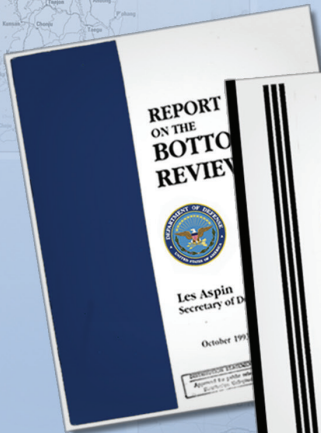
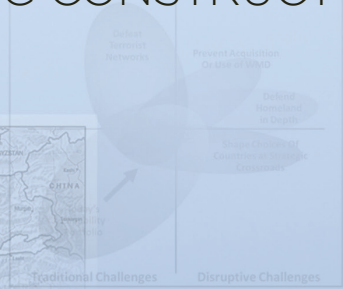
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Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments



SHAPING AMERICA'S FUTURE MILITARY

TOWARD A NEW FORCE PLANNING CONSTRUCT



MARK GUNZINGER

**SHAPING AMERICA'S FUTURE MILITARY
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BY MARK GUNZINGER

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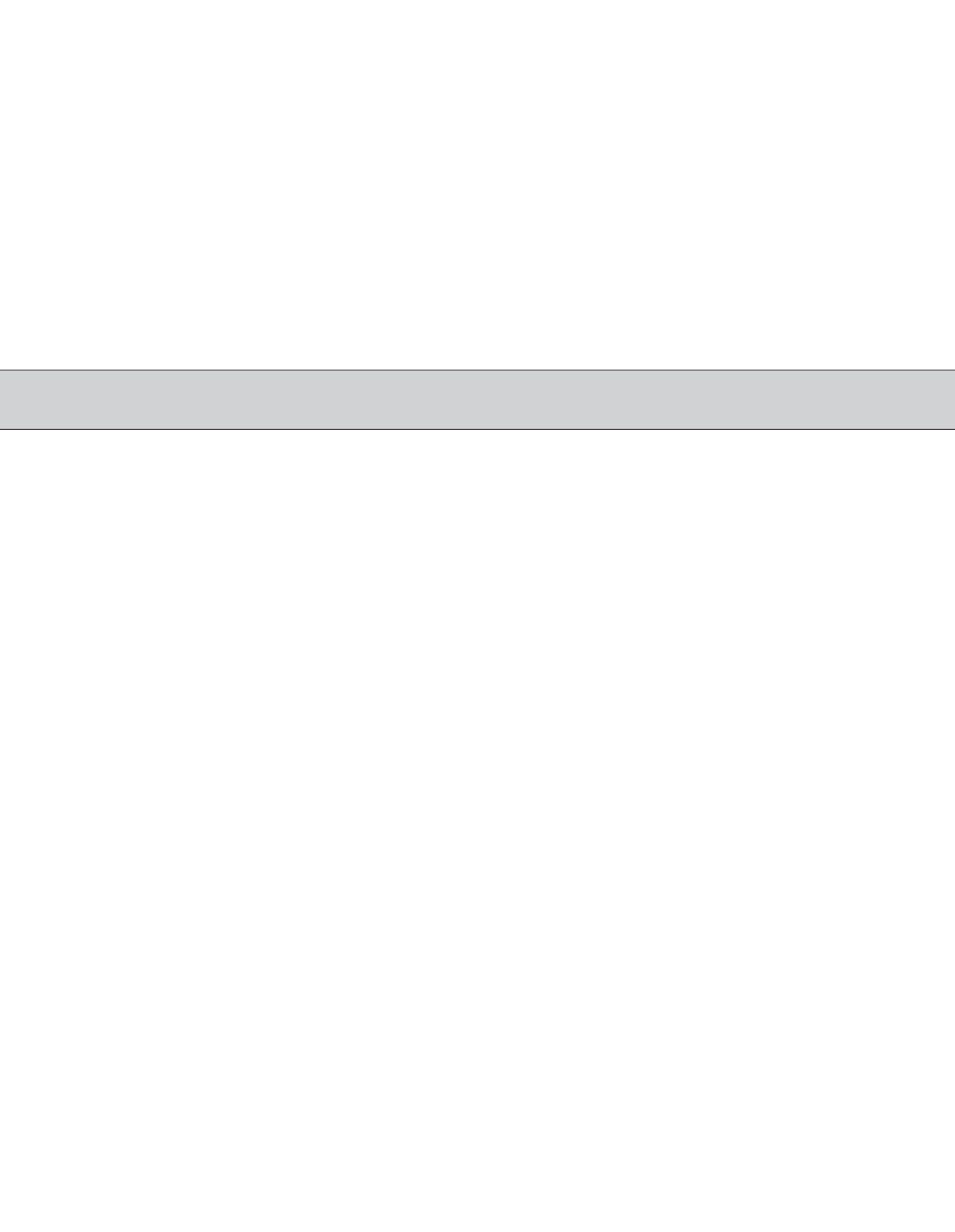
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We're at a strategic inflection point, where we find a different geopolitical challenge, different economic challenges, shifting of economic and military power. And what we're trying to do is to challenge ourselves to respond to that shift and to react to that strategic inflection point and adapt ourselves.

— General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff¹

Today, a serious debate is underway over the future of America's armed forces. This debate is fueled by the need to address a myriad of old and new challenges that will shape the kinds of defense capabilities the nation will require if it is to remain the world's preeminent military power. In the aftermath of nearly twelve years of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Department of Defense (DoD) is seeking to adapt its plans and capabilities to new threats that could stem from the global proliferation of precision-guided weapons, the rise of China's military, an Iranian regime that continues to pursue its hegemonic ambitions, and those who attempt to exploit our nation's vulnerabilities in the homeland. The Pentagon's efforts to address these challenges are complicated by the prospect of additional funding cuts and the reduced buying power of a defense budget that is increasingly dominated by unchecked growth in the cost of military health care and other personnel programs.

This year, DoD will conduct yet another Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of its strategy, plans, and programs. Similar to strategic reviews completed since the end of the Cold War, the QDR is expected to produce guidance for how the Pentagon intends to size and shape its future forces. This guidance, known as a force

¹ General Martin Dempsey, interview by Bob Schieffer, *Face The Nation*, CBS, January 8, 2012.

planning construct,² helps DoD to translate its strategy into its resource priorities. Force planning constructs address potential contingency scenarios for which the U.S. military should organize, train, and equip its forces. They also include major assumptions for the “supply side” of the planning equation, such as reserve component mobilization timing and rotation policies for military personnel supporting long-duration operations. Periodically refreshing its force planning construct is also a way for DoD to communicate its changing priorities to stakeholders in America’s defense posture, including America’s allies and partners, as well as potential adversaries the United States seeks to deter. Over time, it has become a key part of the strategic narrative used to substantiate the Pentagon’s budget requests.

Since force planning constructs have become major outputs of the Pentagon’s QDRs, it is no surprise that its elements are hotly debated. Much of this debate has been focused on the “how many wars” question, i.e., should the United States remain prepared to fight two major regional contingencies (MRCs) simultaneously or something less than two wars? Unfortunately, those who opine on the two wars issue rarely dig deeper to ask if force planning constructs have actually led to significant changes in the size and shape of the U.S. military.

This report contends that DoD’s 1993 Bottom-Up Review (BUR) may have been the last time the Pentagon created a new vision for how the U.S. military should prepare to meet the nation’s security challenges. Conducted at the end of the Cold War and under the mandate to produce a defense budget “peace dividend,” the BUR replaced preparing for a global war with the Soviet Union with a new planning construct that centered on defeating two major cross-border ground invasions in operations similar to the First Gulf War.

Since 1993, the Defense Department has completed four QDRs that each increased the types and combinations of contingency scenarios the Services must use to assess future military priorities. Rather than providing a fundamentally new baseline of planning scenarios to help bring the Pentagon’s strategy and resources into balance, QDRs have added new mission requirements to MRC scenarios that have allowed the Services to justify their existing programs of record. Evidence also suggests that real-world operational requirements and periodic defense budget cuts—not new force-planning policies—have driven the most significant changes to the Pentagon’s capabilities since the Bottom-Up Review.

² For the purposes of this report, a force planning construct provides guidance on the desired size and overall shape, or capabilities mix, of the U.S. military.

Thinking About the Problem

The Pentagon could follow a number of well-worn paths as it develops its next force planning construct. Similar to previous QDRs, DoD could layer additional mission areas and capability requirements on top of its existing force planning priorities. Alternatively, the Pentagon could craft a new force planning construct, one that prepares the U.S. military for the future, rather than wars of the past. The opportunity to take the latter path comes at a time when the Pentagon is facing challenges similar to those that influenced the BUR: the QDR process will occur at the end of a major conflict, under the pressure of defense budget cuts, and in a period when it must adapt to a new array of threats.

The purpose of this report is to develop insights from DoD's previous force planning constructs, and then build on them to identify elements of a new construct that could help the U.S. military to prepare for the future. It recommends a set of guiding principles that may help the Pentagon to avoid pitfalls that have limited the effectiveness of its previous force planning construct iterations. The report also suggests that the next force planning framework could have a greater impact on the nation's defense capabilities if it is complemented by the creation of new strategic concepts for the Services that describe how, when, and where each anticipates they will need to defend the nation against future threats.³

Guiding Principles for Developing a New Force Planning Construct

Establish priorities across the Pentagon's primary mission areas.

One of the most important tests of a force planning construct is the extent to which it helps translate the Pentagon's strategic guidance to its resource priorities. Instead of simply adding new requirements to existing planning policies, the next QDR presents an opportunity to define specific missions and capability areas where the Services should reduce risk, maintain the current level of risk, or increase risk.

Focus on shaping first.

DoD could direct its QDR force planning efforts toward getting the U.S. military's capabilities mix right first, and then determining the overall size of its future force structure based on available budget authority. Simply stated, it makes sense for the Pentagon to first develop an understanding of *what* it might need in the future before it attempts to figure out *how much* it may require.

³ Military strategist Dr. Samuel P. Huntington suggested that creating new Service strategic concepts is especially important during periods when there are "changes in the principal threats to the security of any given nation." Samuel P. Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," *Proceedings*, 80, No. 5, May 1954.

Develop forward-looking planning scenarios.

The Pentagon should adopt realistic assumptions for its planning scenarios that reflect the increasingly non-permissive nature of the air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace operating domains. During the 1993 Bottom-Up Review, DoD created planning scenarios that assumed its power-projection forces would have nearly unfettered access to bases that were located close to an enemy's borders, U.S. air dominance would be relatively unchallenged, American warships could safely operate in littoral areas, and military networks would be secure. These assumptions provided a foundation for developing capabilities that may be best suited to fight another Desert Storm, rather than operate in challenging environments now described in the Pentagon's own doctrinal documents such as the *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020 and Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC)*.⁴

The Pentagon's next force planning construct could also include scenarios where traditional concepts for decisive victory, such as the defeat of an opposing force, the overthrow of a hostile regime, or the occupation of an enemy state may have less meaning in the context of conflicts with large militaries that are equipped with anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities, or small, irregular enemy forces for whom territory does not represent a center of gravity.⁵ These scenarios might include projecting U.S. forces to support a theater campaign strategy designed to deny such enemies their war objectives and compel them to seek an end to hostilities on terms favorable to the United States, rather than culminate in a regime change or a major occupation of territory.

Develop new operational concepts that foster change.

Defense strategies should help the Pentagon to link its ends with its means, prioritize its objectives, and explain how it intends to achieve its objectives through relevant operational concepts. After twelve years of war against violent extremists, the QDR presents an opportunity for DoD to create new, innovative joint operational concepts as part of a new force planning construct that help defense planners to explore alternative ways and means of countering challenges to America's ability to project power. Although the *JOAC* and *AirSea Battle* may be a start

⁴ See Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, September 10, 2012), and Department of Defense (DoD), *Joint Operational Access Concept Version 1.0* (Washington, DC: DoD, January 17, 2012).

⁵ For a brief overview of anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) challenges, see DoD, *Joint Operational Access Concept*, pp. 6-7. For the purposes of this report, A2/AD strategies are intended to prevent the U.S. military from conducting effective power-projection operations. Anti-access capabilities, such as guided ballistic missiles and anti-ship weapons, are used by an adversary to delay or prevent the deployment of opposing forces to a theater of operations. Area-denial capabilities, such as advanced air defense networks and guided rockets, artillery, mortars, and missiles, are used to restrict the freedom of action of an opposing force once it is in a theater of operations.

at creating these new operational concepts, the Pentagon will need to ensure they are supported by its capability investments. This will be a challenging task in a time of decreasing defense budgets.

Maintain capabilities to deny multiple aggressors their objectives.

The U.S. military should organize, train, and equip to deny a second aggressor its strategic objectives or impose unacceptable costs on a second enemy while engaged in a major conflict elsewhere. Abandoning this policy as the bedrock of DoD's force planning policies could invite opportunistic acts of aggression and call into question our nation's willingness to meet its extended security commitments.

DoD as a whole should maintain full-spectrum capability.

Sustaining the capability to deny multiple aggressors their objectives in overlapping timeframes neither means the Pentagon will require capabilities to conduct two Desert Storm-like wars, nor does it mean that every Service should prepare to participate equally in every possible conflict scenario. For example, the Air Force and Navy may be the primary force providers for a future conflict with China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the Western Pacific, while the Army and Marine Corps could become the primary force providers in ground operations in the Middle East or Central Asia to secure WMD.⁶ In the same vein, it may not be necessary for each Service to remain capable of conducting the full spectrum of operations. Rather, the next force planning construct could clarify how DoD as a whole, instead of each Service, will provide a full spectrum of defense capabilities in the future.

Take full advantage of the indirect approach.⁷

DoD's next force planning construct should leverage the future contributions of allies and partners that have "hardened," with U.S. assistance, their own capabilities to deter and defend themselves against acts of aggression. With proper support from the United States, it is possible that partner militaries could eventually assume greater responsibility for sustaining stable postures in the Western Pacific, the Middle East, and other regions where the United States has enduring national interests.

⁶ Clearly, the Marines Corps and Army will have key roles in a future operation in the Western Pacific. However, a scenario involving a conflict with China may not be the most stressing case for sizing and shaping the Army and Marine Corps, while an operation that is ground-force-centric may not be the most stressing case for assessing future Air Force and Navy requirements.

⁷ The term "indirect approach" is most often used by DoD to describe activities that build the capacity of partner nations to defend themselves against internal challenges to their security and stability. Less frequently, it is used to describe initiatives to improve the capacity of U.S. allies and friends to counter high-end threats such as ballistic missiles, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and cyber attacks.

Add clarity to DoD's strategic narrative.

The Pentagon should include a clear, concise explanation of its force planning construct in the strategic narrative it uses to substantiate future defense budget requests. To add value, this narrative should summarize DoD's force planning priorities in a way that can be readily understood by Congress and other stakeholders in the U.S. defense enterprise.

Create New Service Strategic Concepts

This report proposes that a fresh-look force planning construct may have a greater impact on the U.S. military's portfolio of capabilities if it is complemented with new strategic concepts that define how each of the Services intend to contribute to the nation's defense in the future. Almost sixty years ago, Samuel P. Huntington warned that Services lacking compelling strategic concepts risk losing their purpose and may end up wallowing about "amid a variety of conflicting and confusing goals."⁸ The creation of these strategic concepts during the next QDR would provide the Services with opportunities to assess where they have excessive overlap in forces and capabilities, and explore how they plan to implement the *Joint Operational Access Concept* and other new operational concepts that address challenges that threaten to erode America's ability to project power. They could also help break through barriers to change that have hamstrung previous QDRs and add impetus to a force planning framework that will shape the U.S. military for the future, rather than for the past.

For example, a new strategic concept for the U.S. Army might shift its planning toward developing a mix of land-based offensive and defensive capabilities that could help create a more stable military posture in the Western Pacific and the Middle East. The Army could also consider creating forward-based units that are equipped with precision-guided cruise and ballistic missiles capable of countering enemy missile batteries and supporting joint operations to control strategic maritime chokepoints.

Given the emergence of A2/AD systems that could threaten surface warships, the Navy could develop a strategic concept that informs its investments in new capabilities that would enable it to conduct effective combat operations early in a campaign. Similarly, the Air Force could create a new strategic concept that explains how it intends to operate from access-insensitive bases to strike the full range of fixed, mobile, relocatable, hardened, or deeply buried targets in the increasingly contested airspace of the Western Pacific. Together, the Navy and Air Force might flesh out how they could act as a global swing force capable of rapidly deploying across overseas theaters of operation to deter or thwart acts of aggression.

As for the Marine Corps, it could devise a new strategic concept that clarifies how it will move away from acting as a "second land army" toward a force that

⁸ Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," p. 483.

supports deterrence and crisis response missions in areas where the United States does not have a permanent military presence. The Marines Corps could also focus primarily on preparing for expeditionary joint theater entry operations to suppress A2/AD challenges and create conditions sufficiently permissive to enable follow-on deployments of U.S. forces.⁹

Report Organization

This report addresses four basic questions. First, have force planning constructs adopted by DoD over the last twenty years driven significant changes in the size and shape of the U.S. military? If they did, what factors contributed to their success? If not, what actually drove changes to the joint force over time? Finally, how could the Pentagon develop a new force planning construct that would help it to bring its strategy and resources into balance, and prioritize capabilities that will ensure the United States remains “the strongest military power in the world?”¹⁰

Chapter 1, “Force Planning Constructs in the Post-Cold War Era,” establishes a foundation for addressing these questions by summarizing force planning constructs created by DoD since the end of the Cold War.

Chapter 2, “Insights from Twenty Years of Force Development Planning,” assesses the impact of these force planning constructs and other factors that have influenced the size and shape of the U.S. military over the last two decades.

Chapter 3, “Toward a New Approach,” proposes guiding principles that could help DoD to break with the past and adopt a new force planning framework that could help close the gap between DoD’s strategic priorities and its capabilities mix. It also suggests the military Services could each create new strategic concepts that explain how, when, and where they will prepare to meet future challenges to our nation’s security.

⁹ For a summary of a notional joint theater entry operation, see Mark Gunzinger and Chris Dougherty, *Outside-In: Operating from Range to Defeat Iran’s Anti-Access and Area Denial Threats* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2011), pp. 69-73.

¹⁰ Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, interview by Bob Schieffer, “Interview with Leon Panetta,” *Face The Nation*, CBS, January 8, 2012.

CHAPTER 1 > **FORCE PLANNING CONSTRUCTS IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA**

Now that the Cold War is over, the questions we face in the Department of Defense are: How do we structure the armed forces of the United States for the future? How much defense is enough in the post-Cold War era?

— 1993 Report on the Bottom-Up Review (BUR)¹¹

In 1990, the Pentagon concluded the first major assessment of its strategy and force structure priorities for the post-Cold War era. Led by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, this “Base Force” assessment began to shift the U.S. military away from planning for global conflict with the Soviet Union in favor of preparing for conventional regional contingency operations, including scenarios where Iraq and North Korea launched massive ground invasions into neighboring states.

DoD’s subsequent strategic reviews expanded the number and combinations of contingencies that its planners were required to address as they assessed future defense priorities. The 1993 BUR and the 1997, 2002, 2006, and 2010 Quadrennial Defense Reviews (QDRs) considered trends in the security environment, new mission areas, and other factors that affect the size and shape of the U.S. military. Each review produced a force planning construct which provided guidance on contingency scenarios for which the Services should organize, train, and equip their forces. The Pentagon’s four QDRs added new mission areas such as smaller-scale contingencies and homeland defense while preserving the BUR’s baseline requirement of preparing for two major theater wars. They also incorporated major assumptions with respect to the “supply side” of the planning equation, such as mobilization time lines and rotation policies for military personnel supporting

¹¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *Report on the Bottom-Up Review* (Washington, DC: OSD, October 1993), p. 1.

long-duration operations. Force planning constructs also became part of the Pentagon's "political strategy to gain the support of key stakeholders" in the nation's defense, including Congress and America's foreign partners, as well as a means of communicating our nation's changing defense priorities to potential adversaries.¹²

The Base Force

In the waning years of the Cold War, the U.S. military's Joint Staff initiated an internal assessment of what DoD's future "strategy and force structure should look like in the absence of the Red Army and without the inevitability of World War III."¹³ The assessment produced a new vision for sizing and shaping the U.S. military. It led General Colin Powell, then serving as Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), to recommend the Defense Department sustain a "Base Force," a minimum force that constituted a floor below which the nation should not go if it was to remain a globally engaged superpower. Powell also recommended shifting DoD's strategy and planning priorities away from preparing for war with the Soviet Union in favor of developing joint expeditionary forces capable of responding to acts of aggression in Northeast Asia, the Middle East, and other regions where the United States had vital, enduring interests. Notably, the Base Force assessment provided the Pentagon with a rationale for cutting its nuclear and conventional forces in anticipation of post-Cold War defense budget reductions. During a speech to the Aspen Institute in August 1990, President Bush announced his decision to adopt the Base Force and reduce U.S. active military forces by 25 percent.¹⁴

Although the Base Force assessment was criticized by some as a budget-driven exercise intended to rationalize a defense spending "peace dividend,"¹⁵ it was the Pentagon's first attempt at realigning its strategy and resources to address post-Cold War challenges while avoiding reductions so severe they would create a "hollow" U.S. military.¹⁶ The Base Force assessment also informed the 1993 Bottom-Up Review, DoD's second major strategic review of the 1990s.

¹² Michèle A. Flournoy, "Did the Pentagon Get the Quadrennial Defense Review Right?," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2006, p. 68.

¹³ See General Colin L. Powell's foreword in Lorna A. Jaffe, *The Development of the Base Force 1989-1992* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 1993).

¹⁴ President George H.W. Bush, "Remarks at the Aspen Institute Symposium in Aspen, Colorado," Aspen, Colorado, August 2, 1990. President Bush declared the nation's "security needs can be met by an active force 25 percent smaller than today."

¹⁵ Les Aspin, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, declared the Base Force was "defense by subtraction." Kathleen H. Hicks and Samuel J. Brannen, "Force Planning in the 2010 QDR," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 59, 4th Quarter, October 2010, p. 138.

¹⁶ Powell, *The Development of the Base Force 1989-1992*, foreword.

The 1993 Bottom-Up Review Force Planning Construct

In the aftermath of the First Gulf War, the Defense Department conducted a self-described sweeping, “ground up” reassessment of its plans and programs.¹⁷ Similar to the Base Force review, the BUR adopted a force planning approach that focused on countering “aggression by regional powers” instead of preparing for a global Soviet threat.¹⁸ The review concluded that a building block of military forces roughly equivalent to a force sized for a Desert Storm-like war would be adequate for a future major regional contingency, or MRC.¹⁹ The baseline operational concept for this MRC assumed that DoD’s air and naval forces could rapidly deploy to a forward theater to help halt an armor-heavy enemy invading a U.S. ally or partner state, creating time for follow-on joint forces to arrive in theater and mount a decisive combined arms counteroffensive that could, if necessary, culminate in an overthrow of an enemy regime (i.e., “regime change”).

Overall, the BUR determined that a conventional force sized to conduct two MRCs in separate theaters nearly simultaneously (see Figure 1)²⁰ could also meet the needs of lesser contingencies, assuming that Congress funded enhancements to the U.S. military’s precision-strike, anti-armor, surveillance, and strategic mobility capabilities.

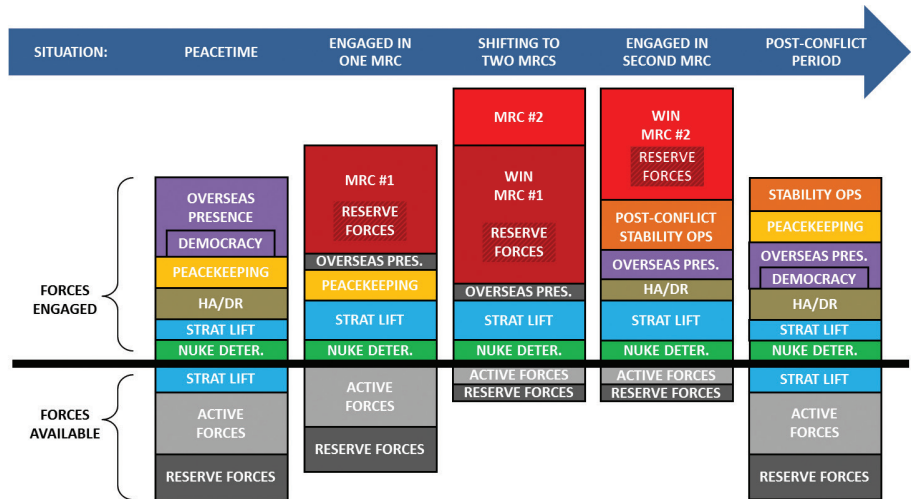
¹⁷ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review*, p. iii.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The MRC force structure building block was loosely based on an option proposed by Congressman Les Aspin before he became Secretary of Defense.

²⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review*, pp. iii, 27. BUR analyses “showed that we can maintain a capability to fight and win two major regional conflicts and still make prudent reductions in our overall force structure—so long as we implement a series of critical force enhancements to improve our strategic mobility and strengthen our early-arriving anti-armor capability, and take other steps to ensure our ability to halt regional aggression quickly.”

FIGURE 1. 1993 BOTTOM-UP REVIEW BUILDING BLOCK APPROACH AND FORCE STRUCTURE



ARMY	10 divisions (active) 5+ divisions (reserve)
NAVY	11 aircraft carriers (active) 1 aircraft carrier (reserve/training) 45-55 attack submarines 346 ships
AIR FORCE	13 fighter wings (active) 7 fighter wings (reserve) Up to 184 bombers (B-52H, B-1, B-2)
MARINE CORPS	3 Marine Expeditionary Forces 174,000 personnel (active end-strength) 42,000 personnel (reserve end-strength)
STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES (BY 2003)	18 ballistic missile submarines Up to 94 B-52H bombers 20 B-2 bombers 500 Minuteman III ICBMs (single warhead)

In other words, less stressing scenarios such as peacekeeping operations were considered to be “lesser included cases” for a U.S. military prepared to fight two MRCs, with the notable exception that additional specialized forces would be needed for a small set of missions such as sustaining the nation’s nuclear posture.

1997 QDR Force Planning Construct

Officially, the Pentagon’s first QDR sought to comply with the FY1997 National Defense Authorization Act’s requirement to conduct

a comprehensive examination of defense strategy, the force structure of the active, guard, and reserve components, force modernization plans, infrastructure, and other elements of the defense program and policies in order to determine and express the defense strategy of the United States and to establish a revised defense program.²¹

Unofficially, the Pentagon pursued a “BUR-light” approach, focusing on preserving the previous review’s force planning framework while creating a rationale for further cuts that would keep annual defense spending under the Clinton administration’s cap of approximately \$250 billion.²² Accordingly, while the QDR concluded that there was a need to size some of DoD’s capabilities for multiple, simultaneous smaller-scale contingency operations, it reaffirmed the U.S. military must maintain the ability to “deter and defeat large-scale, cross-border aggression in two distant theaters in overlapping time frames” if the United States was to remain a superpower.²³

In response to criticism that the post-Cold War defense procurement holiday was hollowing out the U.S. military’s readiness, the *1997 QDR Report* also announced the Pentagon’s intent to “strengthen the resilience of the force against [future] changes in the threat” by pursuing enhancements to selected capabilities, a theme that would be echoed in subsequent strategic reviews. In order to fund these enhancements without breaking the \$250 billion annual budget limit, DoD proposed major cuts to its personnel end strength (see Table 1)²⁴ and capped B-2 stealth bomber procurement at 21 aircraft, reasoning that a larger B-2 force would

²¹ *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997*, 104th Congress, 2nd Session, H.R. 3230, p. 2624.

²² \$250 billion in FY1997 constant year dollars is the equivalent of \$346 billion in FY2013 dollars. For a summary of factors that influenced the review, see Eric V. Larson, David T. Orletsky, and Kristin Leuschner, *Defense Planning in a Decade of Change* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2001), pp. 83-118. According to the authors, “as had been the case with the BUR, the strategy and force options available to the authors of the QDR were thus to be greatly constrained by the resources that were assumed to be available.”

²³ See Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: OSD, May 1997), Section 3. This report will hereafter be referred to as the *1997 QDR Report*.

²⁴ *1997 QDR Report*, pp. 30-31, for a discussion of the “procurement holiday” and DoD’s goal of modestly increasing its modernization funding.

not be needed to halt conventional invasions on the Korean and Arabian Peninsulas. This decision was partially based on the assumption that B-2s would make their greatest contributions in the first few days of an MRC before reinforcing fighters could arrive at their theater bases.²⁵ Once the fighters had arrived, it would enable the B-2s to “swing” to another theater, if necessary, to engage another enemy during the initial stages of a second war that would begin shortly after the first MRC. Thus the B-2 force would not be needed in two theaters at the same time.

TABLE 1. 1997 QDR FORCE STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL CUTS

	FY1997 PROGRAMMED FORCE	1997 QDR
ACTIVE PERSONNEL	1,450,000	1,360,000
RESERVE PERSONNEL	900,000	835,000
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL	800,000	640,000

		FY1997 PROGRAMMED FORCE	1997 QDR
ARMY	Active Divisions	10	10
	Reserve Personnel	582,000	530,000
NAVY	Aircraft Carriers (Active/Reserve)	11/1	11/1
	Air Wings (Active/Reserve)	10/1	10/1
	Amphibious Ready Groups	12	12
	Attack Submarines	73	50
	Surface Combatants	128	116
AIR FORCE	Active Fighter Wings	13	12+
	Reserve Fighter Wings	7	8
	Reserve Air Defense Squadrons	10	4
	Bombers (Total)	202	187
MARINE CORPS	Marine Expeditionary Forces	3	3

2001 QDR Force Planning Construct

Planners leading DoD’s next strategic review sought to break from the BUR and 1997 QDR by expanding the range of contingencies for which the U.S. military must prepare. This deviated from force planning priorities that primarily focused on defeating cross-border invasions similar to that which occurred when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Following the attacks of 9/11 on New York and Washington, homeland defense was added as another major mission area.²⁶ In addition to these changes, emphasis was given to posturing military forces in key overseas

²⁵ 1997 QDR Report, p. 46.

²⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: OSD, September 30, 2001), p. iv. This report will hereafter be referred to as the 2001 QDR Report.

locations to enhance deterrence and impose heavy costs against aggressors in the event deterrence failed. Moreover, the Pentagon adopted a planning approach that was intended to define capabilities that might be needed for future operations “rather than specifically whom the adversary might be or where a war might occur.” Finally, the 2001 QDR force planning construct accepted risk by specifying that the U.S. military would remain capable of conducting a single regime change campaign, rather than remaining postured to prosecute two regime change operations in separate theaters in overlapping timeframes.

Based on these decisions, the 2001 QDR’s “1-4-2-1” force sizing construct, as it became known, directed the U.S. military to organize, train, and equip to:

- (1) Defend the United States;
- (4) Deter aggression and coercion forward in [four] critical regions;
- (2) Swiftly defeat aggression in overlapping major conflicts while preserving for the President the option to call for a decisive victory in one of those conflicts—including the possibility of regime change or occupation; and
- (1) Conduct a limited number of smaller-scale contingency operations.²⁷

Despite this new construct, the 2001 QDR did not propose major changes to the U.S. military’s force structure (see Table 2) or identify specific capabilities where the Services must reduce their investments. Instead, it was thought that a force planning construct that better focused DoD’s overseas posture and eliminated the need to organize, train, and equip forces for a second simultaneous regime change would help liberate resources that could then be used to transform the U.S. military to meet future challenges.²⁸

²⁷ 2001 QDR Report, p. 17. The four critical regions were Europe, Northeast Asia, East Asia, and Southwest Asia/the Middle East.

²⁸ Capability enhancements proposed by the 2001 QDR included accelerating unmanned aircraft procurement, enhancing chemical and biological weapons countermeasures, improving missile defenses at home and abroad, and developing systems to counter anti-access and area-denial threats emerging in the Pacific and other theaters. For a complete description of force enhancements, see the 2001 QDR Report, pp. 40-41.

TABLE 2. 2001 QDR FORCE STRUCTURE

	MAJOR FORCES (ACTIVE/RESERVE)	
ARMY	Divisions	10/8
	Cavalry Regiments	1/1
	Enhanced Separate Brigades	15
NAVY	Aircraft Carriers	12
	Air Wings	10/1
	Amphibious Ready Groups	12
	Attack Submarines	55
	Surface Combatants	108/8
AIR FORCE	Fighter Squadrons	46/38
	Air Defense Squadrons	4
	Bombers (Combat-Coded)	112
MARINE CORPS	(3 Marine Expeditionary Forces)	
	Divisions	3/1
	Air Wings	3/1
	Force Service Support Groups	3/1

The basic tenets of the 2001 QDR force planning construct are still echoed in DoD's current strategic priorities.

Many, if not most of the “transformational” capability enhancements proposed by the 2001 QDR were soon overtaken by the reality of supporting simultaneous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, while the 2001 QDR called for enhancing the nation’s special operations forces (SOF), it did not predict the dramatic increase in demand for SOF, unmanned air vehicles (UAVs), intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems, rotary wing aircraft, and other enabling capabilities needed for protracted overseas contingency operations. Nevertheless, the basic tenets of the 2001 QDR force planning construct are still echoed in DoD’s current strategic priorities, which include: adapting to key trends in the security environment; planning for uncertainty and surprise; deterring forward; and preparing to defeat anti-access threats such as cruise and ballistic missiles, advanced air defenses, and capabilities that could degrade U.S. command, control, communications, computers, and ISR (C4ISR) networks.²⁹

2006 QDR Force Planning Construct

The 2006 QDR was the DoD’s first post-Cold War strategic review to occur in wartime. Thus, it is no surprise that the *2006 QDR Report* described the Pentagon’s new force planning construct as a “refined wartime construct” that placed “greater emphasis on the war on terror and irregular warfare activities,” addressed long-

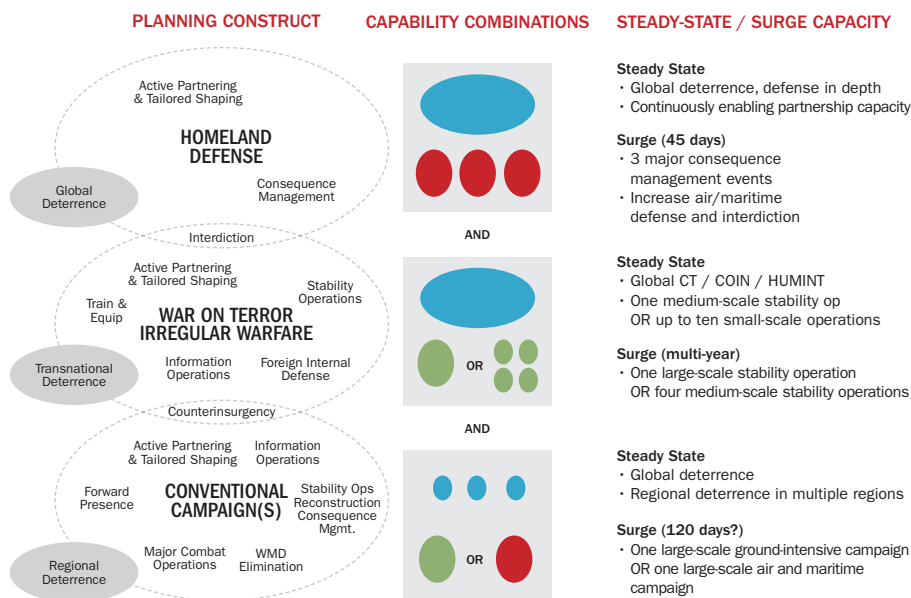
²⁹ See Department of Defense (DoD), *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: DoD, January 2012), pp. 4-7

duration steady-state and short-term surge demands for military capabilities, and better articulated DoD's homeland defense obligations.³⁰

Known as the "Michelin Man" due to the graphic used to explain its elements, the new force planning construct directed the Services to prepare for an expanded combination of operations (see Figure 2). The construct's major surge operations included

two nearly simultaneous conventional campaigns (or one conventional campaign if already engaged in a large-scale, long-duration irregular campaign), while selectively reinforcing deterrence against opportunistic acts of aggression. Be prepared in one of the two campaigns to remove a hostile regime, destroy its military capacity and set conditions for the transition to, or for the restoration of, civil society.³¹

FIGURE 2. 2006 QDR "MICHELIN MAN" FORCE PLANNING CONSTRUCT

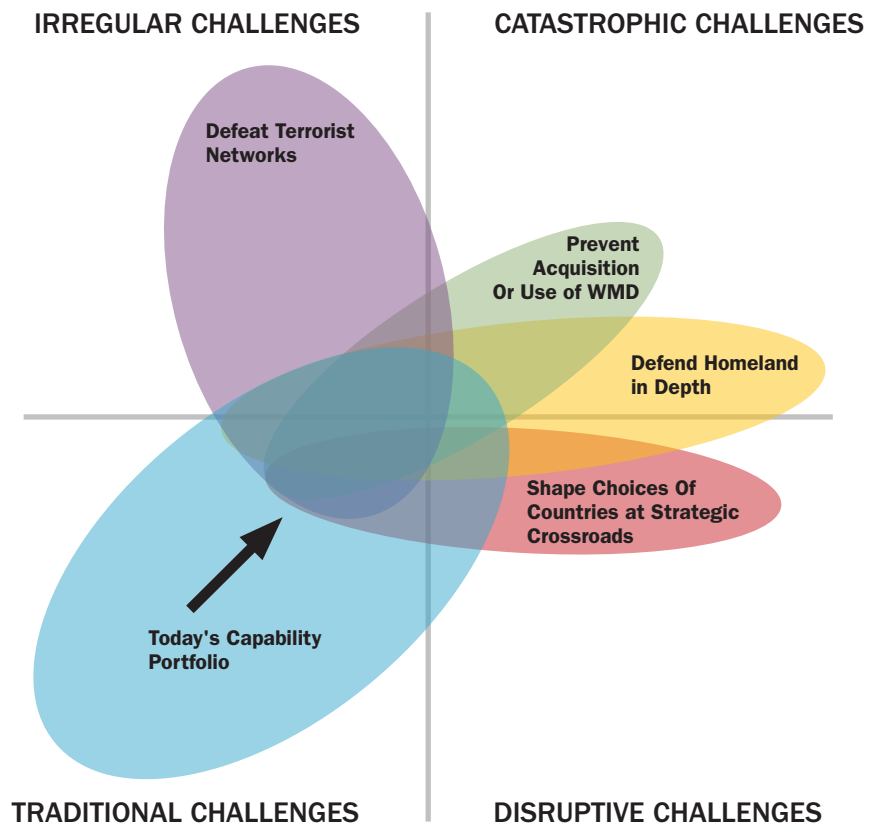


³⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: OSD, February 6, 2006), pp. 3-4. This report will hereafter be referred to as the *2006 QDR Report*.

³¹ *2006 QDR Report*, p. 48.

The Michelin Man's priorities were consistent with the 2006 QDR's objective of driving the center of mass of DoD's capabilities toward a mix that would be better capable of addressing four major challenges: defeating terrorist networks; defending the homeland; shaping the choices of rising powers such as China; and preventing non-state and state actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (see Figure 3).³²

FIGURE 3. SHIFTING THE U.S. MILITARY'S CAPABILITY MIX



³² 2006 QDR Report, pp. 3, 19. The Defense Department's adoption of the indirect approach was another major outcome of the 2006 review. The indirect approach explicitly acknowledges the need to "act with and through others to defeat common enemies—shifting from conducting activities ourselves to enabling partners to do more for themselves" to address critical challenges associated with the QDR's focus areas.

Unlike the BUR and previous QDRs, the 2006 review did not attempt to prescribe the size of DoD's future force. Rather, the Pentagon made an assumption that while the size of the force was about right, changes to the U.S. military's mix of capabilities were required to meet emerging challenges. Specifically, the QDR recommended increasing DoD's SOF capacity, surveillance assets, rotary wing aircraft, unmanned aircraft, and other enabling capabilities that were necessary to support long-term irregular warfare and counterinsurgency operations. The 2006 review also proposed initiatives to help correct major capability imbalances such as procuring new stealthy long-range surveillance and strike aircraft to balance the Services' land- and sea-based air forces that were heavily over-weighted toward aircraft best suited for short-range operations in uncontested airspace.

The priority accorded to supporting ongoing overseas contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan again had a predictable impact on initiatives intended to transform the U.S. military. For example, while the 2006 QDR prioritized the development of new capabilities³³ to counter threats emerging in the Pacific and other regions, these capability enhancements were not supported with additional funding. As a result, many of the QDR's proposed initiatives—other than capability enhancements needed to meet immediate urgent operational needs—were delayed or set aside.

2010 QDR Force Planning Construct

Although the incoming Obama administration also sought to break with the past during its first strategic review, the *2010 QDR Report* embraced many of the strategic choices made in previous QDRs.³⁴ Specifically, the 2010 QDR's focus areas were nearly identical to those in the 2006 review: countering persistent terrorist threats; addressing A2/AD challenges; preventing WMD proliferation; and enhancing the Pentagon's homeland defense capabilities. The 2010 QDR also affirmed the value of the indirect approach, emphasizing the need to work through America's partners and build their capacity to counter threats to their stability and security.

Thus, it is no surprise that the 2010 QDR force planning construct was largely an extension of its immediate predecessor. Despite DoD's assertion that its revised force planning construct (now called a force sizing construct) broke new ground by creating the need to prepare for a broader range of operations, it echoed the guidance of the 2001 and 2006 QDRs by directing the U.S. military to remain "capable of conducting a wide range of operations, from homeland defense and

The 2010 QDR Report embraced many of the strategic choices made in previous QDRs.

³³ These included capabilities for "persistent surveillance and long-range strike, stealth, operational maneuver and sustainment of air, sea and ground forces at strategic distances, and air dominance and undersea warfare." *2006 QDR Report*, p. 31.

³⁴ Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington DC: OSD, February 2010). This report will hereafter be referred to as the *2010 QDR Report*.

defense support to civil authorities, to deterrence and preparedness missions, to the conflicts we are in and the wars we may someday face.”³⁵ Moreover, the 2010 construct continued to require the U.S. military to prepare for two major theater conflicts—i.e., one large-scale combined-arms campaign and a second major campaign in another theater to deter or prevent an opportunistic aggressor from achieving its objectives.

One new feature of the 2010 QDR force planning construct was its bifurcation of guidance for the near term (5 to 7 years) and long term (7 to 20 years).³⁶ For each timeframe, the construct addressed various combinations of steady-state and surge scenarios for homeland defense crises; counterinsurgency, counter-terrorism, and stability operations; and multiple overlapping large-scale combat operations in disparate theaters. While details on these scenario combinations have not been made public, official testimony to Congress on cases used during the Defense Department’s 2010 Mobility Capabilities Requirements Study may shed light on a few specifics:

Case 1 evaluated two overlapping large-scale land campaigns occurring in different theaters of operation, concurrent with three nearly simultaneous homeland defense consequence management events, plus support to ongoing steady-state operations, to include Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Case 2 evaluated a large-scale air/naval campaign immediately followed by a major campaign in a different theater of operation, plus one large-scale homeland defense consequence management event, plus support to ongoing steady-state operations, to include OEF.

Case 3 evaluated U.S. forces surging to conduct a large-scale land campaign against the backdrop of an ongoing long-term irregular warfare campaign of a size and scale similar to the 2007 OIF surge force. Case 3 also included three near-simultaneous homeland defense consequence management events, plus support to ongoing steady-state operations, to include OEF.³⁷

Unlike force structures proposed by the Base Force review and the BUR, the force list published in the *2010 QDR Report* was extracted from DoD’s existing program of record.³⁸ Arguably, analyses of scenario cases during the QDR did not so

³⁵ *2010 QDR Report*, p. 42.

³⁶ An article written by two authors of the *2010 QDR Report* emphasized the value of bifurcated guidance for near-term and long-term force sizing. See Hicks and Brannen, “Force Planning in the 2010 QDR,” p. 140.

³⁷ Christine Fox, Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, statement before the Subcommittee on Seapower, Senate Armed Services Committee, *Hearing on the Required Force Level of Strategic Airlift Aircraft*, July 13, 2011, p. 4.

³⁸ *2010 QDR Report*, pp. 46-47.

much inform the defense program as validate it. Moreover, the 2010 review did not identify major capability tradeoffs and mission areas that should be deemphasized by DoD's planners. This may be due to the fact that Secretary of Defense Gates had directed \$330 billion in defense program cuts shortly before the QDR began.

Finally, while the 2010 QDR updated the Pentagon's force planning construct, the lack of a clear explanation of its elements appears to have weakened its value as part of the strategic narrative (or justification) offered in support of DoD's annual budget submission to Congress. This may have helped to create the impression that the QDR had "reinforced the status quo" by developing a force structure that was "built for the years we're in today when the purpose of the review is exactly the opposite: to prepare for the likely conflicts of tomorrow."³⁹ While this criticism may have rankled some in the Pentagon, the truth is that the QDR was conducted while the country was still engaged in simultaneous operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Its approach was perfectly consistent with guidance from Secretary Gates that placed "current conflicts at the top of our budgeting, policy, and program priorities."⁴⁰

2012 Comprehensive Strategic Review

In May 2011, Secretary Gates initiated a strategic review to ensure that DoD decisions to comply with the Budget Control Act's \$487 billion defense budget cut were driven by the Pentagon's strategic priorities, rather than a salami-slicing approach that risked a "hollowing-out of the force from a lack of proper training, maintenance and equipment—and manpower."⁴¹ The resulting defense strategic guidance expanded the 2010 QDR's list of DoD's six priority mission areas to ten missions that are believed will drive the shape of the future joint force, with a subset of four missions that will determine the U.S. military's capacity (see Table 3).

³⁹ Michèle Flournoy, Defense Undersecretary for Policy; Vice Admiral P. Stephen Stanley, Director for Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment, J8, the Joint Staff; and Christine Fox, Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Defense Department, statement before the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), *Hearing on the 2009 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)*, February 4, 2010. Chairman of the HASC Ike Skelton observed: "It's tough to determine what the priority is, what the most likely risk we face may be, and what may be the most dangerous. It seems that the QDR makes no significant changes to major pieces of our current force."

⁴⁰ *2010 QDR Report*, p. i. The report incorrectly notes that the 2010 QDR was the first time the Pentagon had established current operations as its top resource priority. This was also the 2006 QDR's highest priority.

⁴¹ Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, "Defense Spending," speech presented at the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, May 24, 2011. The 2011 Budget Control Act cut the defense budget by a total of approximately \$487 billion over a ten-year period.

TABLE 3. COMPARING PRIMARY MISSIONS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

2010 QDR: KEY MISSION AREAS	2012 STRATEGIC GUIDANCE: DETERMINE THE SHAPE OF THE JOINT FORCE	2012 STRATEGIC GUIDANCE: DETERMINE THE CAPACITY OF THE JOINT FORCE
Succeed in Counterinsurgency, Stability, and Counter-terrorism Operations	Counter-terrorism and Irregular Warfare	Counter-terrorism and Irregular Warfare
Deter and Defeat Aggression in Anti-Access Environments	Deter and Defeat Aggression	Deter and Defeat Aggression
	Project Power Despite Anti-Access/ Area-Denial Challenges	
Prevent Proliferation and Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction	Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction	
Operate Effectively in Cyberspace	Operate Effectively in Cyberspace and Space	
	Maintain a Safe, Secure, and Effective Nuclear Deterrent	Maintain a Safe, Secure, and Effective Nuclear Deterrent
Defend the United States and Support Civil Authorities at Home	Defend the Homeland, Provide Support to Civil Authorities	Defend the Homeland, Provide Support to Civil Authorities
	Provide a Stabilizing Presence	
	Conduct Stability and Counterinsurgency Operations	
	Conduct Humanitarian, Disaster Relief, and Other Operations	
Build the Security Capacity of Partner States		

Interestingly, DoD's explanatory guidance for this expanded mission list includes a number of significant modifications to the force planning construct developed by the 2010 QDR only sixteen months earlier.

First, while DoD's new strategic guidance reaffirms the need to sustain capabilities to deter and defeat an opportunistic aggressor in a second theater, it also stresses the need for future forces to have "greater flexibility to shift and deploy" between theaters.⁴² Specifically, DoD components must prepare to

fully deny a capable state's aggressive objectives in one region by conducting a combined arms campaign across all domains—land, air, maritime, space, and cyberspace. This includes being able to secure territory and populations and facilitate a transition to stable governance on a small scale for a limited period of time using standing forces and, if necessary, for an extended period for mobilized forces.⁴³

Instead of waging a second full-up combined arms campaign, however, the new strategic guidance states that U.S. forces must remain capable of "denying the objectives of—or imposing unacceptable costs on—an opportunistic aggressor in a second region."⁴⁴ Although the guidance does not specify the kinds of forces that might support a campaign to punish a second aggressor, it is likely that air and maritime forces with small theater footprints⁴⁵ that are capable of rapidly swinging between regions would be tasked to carry the brunt of the effort.

Second, DoD's 2012 strategic guidance suggests that it is possible "that our deterrence goals can be achieved with a smaller nuclear force," indicating that another cut to the nation's nuclear triad may be in the offing.

Third, and perhaps of the most immediate import, the 2012 guidance stipulates that "U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations."⁴⁶ Although the Pentagon has not publicized details on what it considers to be "large-scale" and "prolonged," it is clear that it no longer intends to size its forces for major nation-building operations of the kind it conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan.

⁴² Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, "Major Budget Decisions," statement given at the Pentagon, Washington, DC, January 26, 2012.

⁴³ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, p. 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ In military parlance, a "footprint" refers to U.S. forward deployed forces and related infrastructure (e.g., bases) positioned ashore.

⁴⁶ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, p. 6.

Fourth, DoD's strategic guidance embraces the notion of "reversibility,"⁴⁷ which means the U.S. military must maintain the flexibility to make a "course change" in its plans, capabilities, partnerships, and even the defense industrial base in the event of unforeseen shocks or strategic surprises. For example, the Pentagon might choose to maintain certain skill sets in its Reserve Component to enable it to regenerate capabilities and forces that could be needed to deal with unforeseen threats. Reversibility could also drive investments to explore technologies that could someday lead to new capabilities for the U.S. military or counter an enemy's technological breakout.

Finally, the new strategic guidance announced the administration's decision to rebalance the U.S. military's forces, capabilities, and overseas posture toward the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions, areas "where we see the greatest challenges for [sic] the future."⁴⁸ For other, presumably lesser priority areas such as Africa and Latin America, the guidance directs DoD's components to pursue "innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches" in order to maintain forward deterrence and regional stability.⁴⁹ Although the Pentagon's report on the 2012 strategic review listed capability enhancements needed to support this rebalancing, the overwhelming majority of its proposed changes to the joint force entailed end strength reductions, force structure cuts, and modernization program delays that will help reduce defense spending by \$487 billion over a ten-year period.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Reversibility is a term the Defense Department uses to describe its "ability to make a course change that could be driven by many factors, including shocks or evolutions in the strategic, operational, economic, and technological spheres." Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, "Defense Strategic Guidance," statement given at the Pentagon, Washington, DC, January 5, 2012.

⁴⁹ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ For example, DoD announced its intent to retire 6 cruisers and 2 amphibious ships early, retire 65 C-130 cargo aircraft, eliminate 6 Air Force fighter squadrons, and reduce the Army and Marine Corps end strength by 72,000 and 10,000 personnel, respectively. See Department of Defense (DoD), *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices* (Washington, DC: DoD, January 2012).

CHAPTER 2 > **INSIGHTS FROM TWENTY YEARS OF FORCE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

Reshaping the U.S. military for the future requires developing a new construct for sizing and shaping U.S. forces in the near to mid-term, articulating a long-term vision of the portfolio of capabilities the U.S. military needs for the future, and identifying the shifts in investment required to achieve that vision.

— Michèle Flournoy⁵¹

This chapter assesses the effectiveness of force planning constructs adopted by the Defense Department over the last twenty years. Beginning by briefly summarizing their common elements and impact on the U.S. military's force structure and capabilities over time, this assessment contends that the 1993 BUR, driven by the need to adapt to the realities of a post-Cold War world, may have been the last time the Pentagon created a significantly different vision for sizing and shaping America's armed forces. Since then, periodic strategic reviews have mostly added new mission requirements and layers of complexity to DoD's force planning guidance while preserving the Bottom-Up Review's basic framework of preparing for two large-scale theater contingency operations against aggressor states occurring in overlapping timeframes.

⁵¹ Flournoy, "Did the Pentagon Get the Quadrennial Defense Review Right?" p. 73.

Chapter 2 concludes that an enduring focus on preparing for regional wars whose roots are anchored to the First Gulf War experience and the Services' desire to protect their established programs of record have greatly influenced the Pentagon's force planning priorities. Evidence also suggests that near-term operational requirements and pressures on the defense budget, rather than periodically updated force planning constructs, may have driven the most significant changes to the size and shape of the U.S. military since the Bottom-Up Review.

More Complexity Doesn't Equal More Change

There is a great deal of commonality between the multiple force planning constructs adopted by the Pentagon since the end of the Cold War. The 1990 Base Force review and the 1993 BUR created a new foundation for sizing and shaping the nation's military forces. Since then, DoD's strategic reviews have each added new mission priorities and scenario combinations to its force planning requirements, such as homeland defense, irregular warfare, and stability operations (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. TWENTY YEARS OF FORCE PLANNING CONSTRUCTS

	1993 BUR	1997 QDR	2001 QDR	2006 QDR	2010 QDR	2012 STRATEGIC REVIEW
FORCE PLANNING CONSTRUCT	2 Major Regional Conflicts	2 Major Theater Wars	1 - 4 - 2 - 1	Refined Wartime Construct; the "Michelin Man"	No Name	No Name
MAJOR ELEMENTS	Defeat 2 Regional Threats Nearly Simultaneously	Defeat Large-Scale Cross-Border Aggression in 2 Theaters in Overlapping Timeframes + Smaller-Scale Contingencies	Homeland Defense + 2 Swiftly Defeats (Win 1 Decisively)	Homeland Defense + 2 Conventional Contingencies or 1 Conventional + 1 Irregular Warfare Contingencies	Homeland Consequence Management Events + 2 Large-Scale Land Campaigns or 1 Large Air/Naval Campaign + Campaign in 2nd Theater or 1 Large Land Campaign + Long-Term IW Campaign	Homeland Defense, Provide Support to Civil Authorities + 1 Full Combined Arms Campaign Across All Domains + Deny Objectives or Impose Unacceptable Costs on 2nd Opportunistic Aggressor
FOCUS	Size for 2 MRCs, other contingencies are lesser included cases	Size for 2 MTWs plus steady-state SSCs; swing some forces to 2nd major conflict	Emphasize forward defense; focus on four priority theaters; accept risk in a 2nd major conflict	Shift capabilities to address 4 focus areas; long-duration irregular warfare; address steady-state and surge demand	Size as well as shape; multiple scenario cases for the near- and far-term; address surge and steady-state demand, including long-term irregular warfare	Do not size the force for large and protracted stability operations; rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region; reversibility
CONTEXT	Gulf War, demand for a peace dividend	Bosnia, peace dividend	Transform the force, support War on Terror	Long War, change capabilities mix, force is sized about right	Support for overseas contingency operations, defense budget cuts	Post-war budget and force structure cuts, prepare for future challenges

Despite the addition of new missions and scenarios to the Pentagon's planning priorities, many elements of the U.S. military are still best suited for operations that are reminiscent of the First Gulf War.

Despite the addition of new missions and scenarios to the Pentagon's planning priorities, many elements of the U.S. military are still best suited for operations that are reminiscent of the First Gulf War. The most compelling evidence of this may be DoD's current force structure, which still resembles the force prescribed by the 1993 BUR Report, albeit generally smaller in size (see Table 5).⁵²

TABLE 5. COMPARING 1993 BOTTOM-UP REVIEW AND 2010 QDR FORCE STRUCTURES

	1993 BOTTOM-UP REVIEW	2010 QDR AND NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW
ARMY	10 divisions (active) 5+ divisions (reserve)	10 divisions (active)* 3 divisions (reserve), 2 divisions (integrated)* (45 active brigade combat teams, 28 reserve brigade combat teams, 21 combat aviation brigades)
NAVY	11 aircraft carriers (active) 1 aircraft carrier (reserve) 45-55 attack submarines 346 ships	11 aircraft carriers 10 carrier air wings 53-55 attack subs, 4 guided missile subs 288 total active ships**
AIR FORCE	13 fighter wings (active) 7 fighter wings (reserve) Up to 184 bombers (B-52, B-1, B-2)	10-11 theater strike wing-equivalents 6 air superiority wing-equivalents 5 bomber wings (162 total B-52, B-1, B-2)
USMC	3 Marine Expeditionary Forces	3 Marine Expeditionary Forces
NUCLEAR FORCES	18 ballistic missile submarines Up to 94 B-52H, 20 B-2 bombers 500 Minuteman III (single warhead)	14 ballistic missile submarines 76 B-52s (convert some to conv. only), 18 B-2s 450 Minuteman III (single warhead)

* in 2010 ** as of 30 Sept 2010

This is more than a force presentation⁵³ issue; it is also a force composition issue. For example, today the vast majority of the Pentagon's combat aircraft are non-stealthy, short-range manned and unmanned systems best suited for Desert Storm-like operations in regions where close-in theater bases are available and airspace is relatively uncontested. Although the Pentagon's costliest acquisition program will field stealthy F-35s for three of DoD's four Services, the U.S. fighter force will remain dependent on non-stealthy air refueling aircraft and close-in land- and sea-based operating locations that may not be available early in a fight,

⁵² In late 2012, DoD's force of 3,029,000 military and civilian personnel was 23 percent smaller than the force serving in 1992. See Department of Defense (DoD), *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY2013* (Washington, DC: DoD, March 2012); and DoD, *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY1994* (Washington, DC: DoD, May 1993).

⁵³ "Force presentation" is a term used by the Pentagon to describe how it organizes its force structure.

as Secretary Gates warned.⁵⁴ Even the Defense Department's fleet of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), which has grown from approximately 170 aircraft in 2002 to well over 7,500 today, largely consists of short-range, non-stealthy designs that "would be extremely vulnerable" in contested airspace and may not be effective in the "vast expanses of the Pacific."⁵⁵ Moreover, the Air Force's aging B-52 and B-1 bombers remain the backbone of the nation's long-range strike force, although they are fewer in number than the bomber force originally sized to support the BUR's two MRCs and have lost their ability to penetrate contested airspace.

DoD's Marine Expeditionary Forces are similarly poised to respond to regional crises and conduct forcible entry operations in conditions that may be reminiscent of past campaigns. In a 2011 letter to the Secretary of Defense, General Amos stated that U.S. amphibious forces would continue to "provide the Nation with assured access for the force in a major contingency operation."⁵⁶ Few defense planners are likely to contest the need to sustain amphibious capabilities for operations in permissive threat conditions. Open to question, however, is the wisdom of deploying large-deck amphibious assault ships twenty or thirty miles offshore to support operations in areas defended by smart anti-ship mines, manned and unmanned aircraft, guided anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) and anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs).⁵⁷

Of all the Services, the U.S. Army may have undergone the most wrenching transition over the last decade in how it organized, trained, and equipped its forces. Rather than a response to a new force planning construct, this transition was driven by the real-world need to reshape the Army to support stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Following the president's decision that "U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations," the Army began to

⁵⁴ Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, "Air Force Association Convention," speech presented at the Air Force Association Convention, National Harbor, Maryland, September 16, 2009. Gates stated "cyber and anti-satellite warfare, anti-air and anti-ship weaponry, and ballistic missiles could threaten America's primary way to project power and help allies in the Pacific—in particular our forward bases and carrier strike groups. This would degrade the effectiveness of short-range fighters and put more of a premium on being able to strike from over the horizon."

⁵⁵ General Roger Brady, "USAFE Chief: Don't Rely on UAVs," *Air Force Times*, July 30, 2012. Brady also observed that "in contested airspace—a more plausible scenario for future conflicts—today's UAS would be extremely vulnerable." General Michael Hostage stated "the preponderance of our current fleet of MQ-1s and MQ-9s that are so effective in the permissive airspace over Afghanistan and other locations in the mid-east simply may not be transferable to the vast expanses of the Pacific or in contested airspace." See Robbin Laird and David Deptula, "Why Air Force Needs Lots Of F-35s: Gen. Hostage On The 'Combat Cloud,'" *AOL Defense*, January 10, 2013.

⁵⁶ Lieutenant General George Flynn, "The Future of Amphibious Operations and the Role of the U.S.," speech presented at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, June 9, 2011.

⁵⁷ Secretary Gates asked this question in 2010: "Looking ahead, I do think it is proper to ask whether large-scale amphibious assault landings along the lines of Inchon are feasible." Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, "George P. Shultz Lecture," speech presented at the World Affairs Council of Northern California, San Francisco, California, August 12, 2010.

search for a new rationale to guide development of its future capabilities.⁵⁸ Even as the Army transitions to a force that is more regionally aligned for partner building missions, it is likely to argue that it should maintain multiple brigade combat teams (BCTs) to defend against a major North Korean invasion of its southern neighbor, despite the fact that the Republic of Korea (ROK) now fields a modern, highly capable army of 520,000 active duty soldiers equipped with 2,300 tanks, 2,500 armored vehicles, and 5,000 pieces of artillery.⁵⁹ Simply stated, when U.S. air and naval forces are added to those of the ROK Army, the military balance on the Korean peninsula favors the South, and by a considerable margin.

There is no denying that the U.S. military increased its capabilities over the last two decades as it exploited technologies to enhance its precision-guided weapons, stealth aircraft, unmanned vehicles, and precision navigation and timing systems. It is also true that the Pentagon has expanded its special operations forces and added systems such as Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles and ISR systems to meet urgent operational requirements.

Notwithstanding these changes, the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are indictments of force planning constructs that looked to the past to size and shape the U.S. military. While the 1993 BUR and QDRs in 1997 and 2001 stressed the need to prepare to defeat invasions on the Korean and Arabian Peninsulas, little thought was given to the potential that regime changes might be precursors to long-duration operations. The ensuing decade of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated that U.S. general purpose ground forces, while well-equipped and trained for classic maneuver warfare, were initially unprepared to wage effective counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations.

Why So Little Progress?

Why, despite the best efforts of Pentagon planners to develop and enhance force planning constructs, have they produced so little in the way of changes in the U.S. military posture? Several factors appear to be at work here, and are elaborated on below.

Planning scenarios have acted as a chokepoint for change.

The 1993 BUR established rapidly halting and then defeating two invading mechanized forces nearly simultaneously as a new template for sizing and shaping America's military. Since 1993 the threat posed by such forces has diminished dramatically, while new threats have emerged in the form of modern irregular warfare and

⁵⁸ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Anthony H. Cordesman with Andrew Gagel, Varun Vira, Alex Wilner, and Robert Hammond, *The Korean Military Balance* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2011), pp. 49-50.

anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) defenses.⁶⁰ Yet the Pentagon has continued to use a small number of planning scenarios for conventional contingencies in Southwest Asia and Northeast Asia. Scenarios framed in this manner have acted as a “choke-point” on efforts to develop forces optimized for a wider range of contingencies. In doing so they blocked investments in capabilities that may be better suited to operating in emerging A2/AD environments and overcoming the “tyranny of distance” in the Asia-Pacific region which, as a consequence of China’s ongoing military build-up, has emerged as a top priority of the Obama administration. Moreover, instead of emphasizing the development of new sources of military advantage such as directed energy weapons⁶¹ or advanced unmanned aircraft and underwater vehicles, scenarios that center on defeating traditional cross-border invasions lent weight to maintaining forces optimized for a contemporary “Desert Storm,” despite the absence of major conventional ground force threats.

To be sure, the last three QDR reports indicate that DoD is increasing the diversity of its planning scenarios to include multiple, complex “combinations of scenarios spanning the range of plausible future challenges.” Yet in doing so it may also have created opportunities for the Services to pick and choose scenario cases that support their program of record investments and preferred force structures.⁶²

Legacy operational concepts.

The basic operational concept underpinning Desert Storm-like scenarios assumes U.S. forces could deploy into permissive environments where unrestricted access to theater bases is assured, air dominance is quickly achieved, surface warships can operate in maritime areas close to an enemy’s shores with near impunity, and supporting C4ISR networks remain secure. Joint operational concepts based on these highly favorable assumptions helped drive DoD investments toward military capabilities that were similar, albeit more sophisticated and expensive, to the aircraft, ships, and ground combat vehicles described in the *1993 BUR Report*.

Unfortunately, potential enemies have taken note of America’s post-Cold War operational successes and are developing the means to challenge future U.S. force projection missions. According to the Pentagon’s latest strategic guidance:

⁶⁰ For the purposes of this paper, anti-access (A2) capabilities are defined as those associated with denying access to major fixed-point targets, especially large forward bases, while area-denial (AD) capabilities are those that threaten mobile targets over an area of operations, principally maritime forces, to include those beyond the littorals.

⁶¹ For a summary of directed-energy technologies that have the potential to transition to operational capabilities over the next decade should they receive funding, see Mark Gunzinger and Chris Dougherty, *Changing the Game: The Promise of Directed-Energy Weapons* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2012).

⁶² *2010 QDR Report*, p. vii.

Sophisticated adversaries will use asymmetric capabilities, to include electronic and cyber warfare, ballistic and cruise missiles, advanced air defenses, mining, and other methods, to complicate our operational calculus...the proliferation of sophisticated weapons and technology will extend to non-state actors as well.⁶³

China, in particular, is pursuing long-range guided weapons that can strike fixed targets on land and mobile targets at sea, including U.S. aircraft carrier strike groups (CSGs). These weapons, coupled with the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) advanced integrated air defense system (IADS), undersea warfare forces, and kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities to degrade C4ISR networks threaten to constrain the U.S. military's freedom of action in the Western Pacific.⁶⁴

Iran is also pursuing an A2/AD strategy, one that is tailored to its relatively modest resources and the unique characteristics of the Persian Gulf region. Iran's military could use its large arsenal of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles to threaten urban areas and large military targets that are concentrated on the western coastline of the Persian Gulf. Iran could also deploy smart mines and posture ASCMs in an attempt to choke off the vitally important Strait of Hormuz and slow or prevent U.S. force deployments and resupply operations into the region.

There are signs that the Pentagon is beginning to respond to the A2/AD strategies of China, Iran, and other state and non-state actors that seek to capitalize on the proliferation of advanced weaponry. Newly created operational concepts, such as AirSea Battle and the *Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC)*, may prove to be important steps toward prescribing how the U.S. military could maintain its freedom of action in A2/AD environments. However, it is still uncertain if these nascent concepts will lead to actual changes in DoD's investments and capabilities mix.

Reluctance to tackle roles and missions issues.

The Services' desire to preserve their existing roles and missions may be another reason why, despite multiple strategic reviews and force planning constructs, the defense program has experienced only modest change. Plainly stated, it is easier for the Pentagon to develop a consensus for new force planning guidance if it does not threaten the allocation of responsibilities that form the basis for the Services'

⁶³ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, p. 4.

⁶⁴ For more information on China's emerging A2/AD complex, see Jan van Tol with Mark Gunzinger, Andrew Krepinevich, and Jim Thomas, *AirSea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010). For details on Iran's A2/AD strategy, see Mark Gunzinger and Chris Dougherty, *Outside-In: Operating from Range to Defeat Iran's Anti-Access and Area-Denial Threats* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2011).

organizing, training, and equipping activities and, ultimately, their forces, programs, and budget requests.⁶⁵

It is no secret that tackling thorny roles and missions issues has been a difficult challenge for the Pentagon. The 2008 Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review (QRMR) proposed few changes that would help DoD to “better meet our institutional responsibilities and improve support to our national security partners.”⁶⁶ Rather than use the 2008 QRMR as an opportunity to resolve issues such as the division of Service responsibilities for new cyberspace missions, or Service plans to procure potentially redundant ISR capabilities and unmanned aircraft, DoD defaulted to the status quo. Similarly, the latest QRMR report (2012) offers little that suggests it was the outcome of “a fundamental review of America’s missions, capabilities, and our role in a changing world,” a fact that has been driven home by the continuing controversy over appropriate roles and missions for the U.S. military’s National Guard and Reserve forces.⁶⁷

Factors That Have Driven Change

If DoD’s top-level force planning guidance has not been the primary motivation for changes to its forces and capabilities over time, then what has been? Evidence suggests the most significant shifts may have been driven by two factors: the need to meet near-term operational requirements and fluctuations in defense spending.

Dominance of the near term.

By and large, proposed 2001 QDR initiatives to transform the U.S. military and “extend America’s asymmetric advantages well into the future”⁶⁸ were overtaken by the need for new and expanded forces and capabilities to support simultaneous operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The most significant capability enhancements that came out of the 2006 QDR, such as additional SOF units, increased UAS coverage, more rotary wing aircraft, and programs to build partner capacity, were intended to address urgent operational needs. In fact, in 2009 Secretary Gates reversed the 2006 QDR decision to develop a new penetrating bomber and cut short the procurement of stealthy F-22 fighter aircraft designed to survive operations

⁶⁵ DoD Directive 5100.1 enumerates specific functions for which the Services and USSOCOM are required to “develop concepts, doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures and organize, train, equip, and provide forces.” Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components* (Washington DC: DoD, December 21, 2010), pp. 25-35.

⁶⁶ Department of Defense (DoD), *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report* (Washington DC: DoD, January 2009), foreword. Gunzinger was a principal author of the report and co-lead for the 2008 QRMR.

⁶⁷ See President Barack Obama, “Obama’s Deficit Speech (Transcript),” *The Atlantic*, April 13, 2011. The 2012 QRMR report was a fourteen-page addendum to *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, which was published in January 2012.

⁶⁸ *2001 QDR Report*, p. iv.

Overcoming resistance to funding research and development of capabilities that may provide major new sources of competitive advantage for the U.S. military will require more than another force planning construct update.

against advanced air defense networks that are emerging in the Pacific and Middle East.⁶⁹ These actions were intended to free resources to help buy capabilities for overseas contingency operations and complete the Army's end strength buildup.⁷⁰

As Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley has stated, the dominance of near-term factors in determining budget priorities is neither unique to the post-September 11, 2001 era,⁷¹ nor is it an artifact of the more distant past. Today, potentially game-changing future capabilities such as directed energy weapons, stealthy land- and sea-based UAS with increased mission persistence and autonomy, and the next long-range strike family of systems are competing for increasingly scarce defense dollars with existing programs—some of questionable relevance—that are supported by large, well-entrenched constituencies.⁷² If the recent history of DoD's planning efforts holds true, overcoming resistance to funding research and development of capabilities that may provide major new sources of competitive advantage for the U.S. military will require more than another force planning construct update. It will require the direct and persistent involvement of the Secretary of Defense, Service leaders, and combatant commanders to ensure that investment decisions are driven by strategic priorities rather than “program momentum” and parochialism.

Strategy-driven or budget-driven?

Today, DoD is at the front end of another post-war drawdown. In response to fiscal guidance from the Obama administration, the FY2013 President's budget reduced the Pentagon's projected growth in spending by \$487 billion over a ten-year period. These savings are projected to be achieved by force structure and program changes that echo DoD's post-Cold War drawdown, which involved cutting end strength, shrinking the size of the Navy's surface fleet, retiring older fighter aircraft, and undertaking efforts aimed at streamlining organizations and business practices. Purportedly, DoD's FY2013 budget actions were the outcome of an internal comprehensive strategic review. Evidence suggests reality may be

⁶⁹ Secretary Gates also proposed reducing the Pentagon's contractor support and pursuing institutional efficiencies that could result in savings.

⁷⁰ For a summary of program cuts and capability enhancements, see Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, “Defense Budget Recommendation Statement,” speech presented in Arlington, Virginia, April 6, 2009.

⁷¹ “In the periodic [surge-and-starve] sine wave’ of defense spending since World War II, most resources during defense buildups have supported wartime operations in Korea, Vietnam, and more recently Iraq and Afghanistan.” Michael Donley, “Sec. Donley: Why the Air Force Can't Delay Modernization—Part IV,” *AOL Defense*, January 11, 2013. Donley also stated “the early-1980s build-up was the only one to focus on modernization without the burden of large combat operations, and to a significant degree we have been living off the investments from that era or even earlier.”

⁷² For an assessment of the next long-range strike family of systems, see Mark Gunzinger, *Sustaining America's Strategic Advantage in Long-Range Strike* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, September 2010).

somewhat different, considering that the Services followed normal processes and timelines to prepare and submit their budgets with proposed cuts to the Office of the Secretary of Defense before new guidance from the strategic review was available to fully inform their efforts.

If the Pentagon is now serious about transitioning its planning focus “from an emphasis on today’s wars to preparing for future challenges”⁷³ as indicated by its own strategic guidance, one would expect to see evidence of this in how its budget is apportioned. For instance, to counter A2/AD threats and support a strategic shift toward the Asia-Pacific region, it would be logical for DoD to increase its emphasis on Air Force and Navy capabilities such as stealthy, long-range UAS and electronic warfare aircraft, directed energy weapons to enhance air and missile defenses, undersea warfare systems, and additional stores of precision-guided munitions (PGMs).⁷⁴ This seems appropriate, as the Asia-Pacific is primarily a maritime/aerospace theater, and is also much larger than either the European or Middle East theaters that have dominated U.S. defense planning for much of the past century. The sheer size of the theater suggests a reliance on long-range systems, manned and unmanned aircraft in particular.

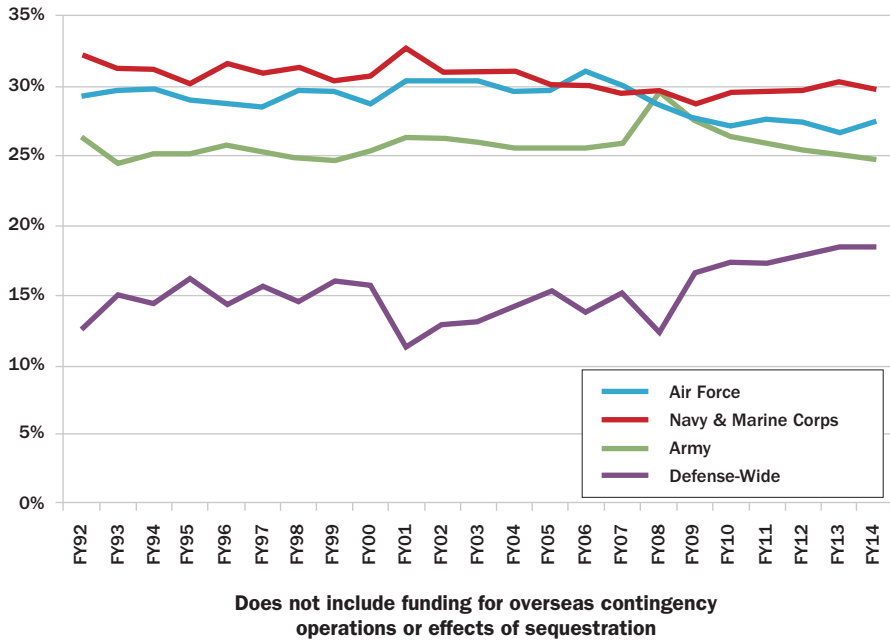
Apparently such a resource shift has yet to occur, since apart from funding to support military operations in Afghanistan, the base defense budget is still apportioned to the Services in roughly the same percentages as it has been since the end of the Cold War (see Figure 4).

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⁷³ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, p. 1.

⁷⁴ For a summary of cost-effective alternatives to current kinetic missile defense capabilities, see Gunzinger and Dougherty, *Changing the Game*.

FIGURE 4. SERVICE SHARES OF THE BASE DEFENSE BUDGET



In summary, these resource allocation shares do not make sense for a Pentagon that has stated it has shifted its priorities to place less emphasis on large-scale, protracted stability operations in favor of pivoting to the Western Pacific, a region where the principal challenge is an emerging and sophisticated A2/AD force and where air, space, cyberspace, and maritime forces will likely remain the dominant means of projecting U.S. power. Rather, it appears to be the product of a traditional planning, programming, and budgeting approach. In other words, the Pentagon’s own data reveals that its resource priorities may be set more by budget considerations than strategy. This also illustrates the larger point that DoD’s resource allocation over the last twenty years has remained relatively constant despite multiple QDRs, updates to strategic guidance, and the changing threat environment.

CHAPTER 3 > TOWARD A NEW APPROACH

After a decade of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States finds itself at a strategic turning point not unlike that at the end of the Cold War.

— General Norton Schwartz and Admiral Jonathan Greenert⁷⁵

The Pentagon could follow a number of well-trodden paths as it develops its next force planning construct. Similar to previous QDRs, DoD could add mission areas and capability requirements to its current planning priorities. Alternatively, Defense Department planners have the opportunity to create a new force planning construct, one that may have as great an impact on the U.S. military as the framework developed during the 1993 Bottom-Up Review—but that finally moves beyond it. The opportunity to craft this construct comes at a time when the Pentagon is facing challenges similar to those that influenced the BUR: the 2013 QDR will be conducted at the end of a major conflict, under the pressure of defense budget cuts, and in a period when the Services are concerned about how they should adapt to emerging threats. Combined, these realities could stimulate the creation of innovative force planning policies that help DoD to bring its strategy and resources into balance.

Chapter 3 builds on insights from previous chapters to recommend guiding principles to inform development of a new force planning construct. It argues that DoD may be better served by crafting planning guidance that focuses on balancing the U.S. military's mix of capabilities to meet future challenges, rather than prescribing the size of the joint force for the next twenty years.⁷⁶ This approach also

The opportunity to craft this construct comes at a time when the Pentagon is facing challenges similar to those that influenced the BUR.

⁷⁵ General Norton A. Schwartz and Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, "Air-Sea Battle," *The American Interest*, February 20, 2012.

⁷⁶ Congress requires the Defense Department to assess capability and force structure requirements for a twenty-year future planning period during its QDRs.

helps spread risk by creating access to a broad set of capabilities. In this way a “capabilities mix first” approach enhances the prospects of developing new sources of competitive advantage for the U.S. military rather than continue to sustain capabilities and forces that are best suited for past conflicts.

Chapter 3 also argues that a new force planning construct may have a greater impact if it is complemented by the creation of new “strategic concepts” for each of the Services. In the words of Dr. Samuel P. Huntington, a strategic concept explains a Service’s “purpose or role in implementing national policy” and includes a “description of how, when, and where the military service expects to protect the nation against some threat to its security.” Services that lack such concepts may risk losing their purpose and may end up wallowing about “amid a variety of conflicting and confusing goals.”⁷⁷ Creating new strategic concepts in conjunction with the next force planning construct could help the Services to focus on the future rather than the present or past, address emerging challenges such as A2/AD threats, and resolve seemingly intractable roles and missions issues. In other words, they could help break through barriers to change that have hamstrung previous QDRs and add impetus to a new force planning framework that will shape the U.S. military for future threats, rather than for old, “comfortable” contingencies.

Breaking with the Past: Candidate Guiding Principles

This section recommends principles that should guide the development of a new force planning construct. Combined, they outline an approach for how to think about the problem while avoiding pitfalls that have plagued earlier force planning constructs.

Establish priorities across the Pentagon’s primary mission areas.

The most critical test for a force planning construct is whether or not it helps translate DoD’s strategic guidance into resource allocation priorities. The Pentagon’s 2012 guidance lists ten mission areas that should determine the size and structure of the joint force (see Table 5), four more than the 2010 QDR’s primary missions and six more than the 2006 QDR’s focus areas. Some priorities are established within this list. For instance, the guidance stipulates, “U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations” and “our deterrence goals can be achieved with a smaller nuclear force.”⁷⁸ While these qualifiers are a start at translating broad guidance to specific priorities, clearly much more in the way of truly *strategic guidance* is needed.

The upcoming QDR presents the Pentagon with an opportunity to link its strategy more clearly to its resource priorities by providing guidance on mission

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⁷⁷ Huntington, “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy.”

⁷⁸ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense*, pp. 5-6.

areas where the Services and other defense components should reduce risk, maintain the current level of risk, or increase risk.

The next QDR, for example, could assess the potential to reduce risk by placing the highest priority on capabilities that can operate in environments that are becoming increasingly contested as identified by DoD's own *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations* and *Joint Operational Access Concept*.⁷⁹ By focusing on emerging challenges to the U.S. military's freedom of action in all domains, the Pentagon could accelerate its shift away from weapons systems that are optimized for permissive conditions of years past. DoD might also begin to add substance to its declared intent to rebalance its capabilities and forces toward the Asia-Pacific region. This could better position the U.S. military to prevent crises before they occur in the region, rather than follow the Bottom-Up Review model of preparing to respond to acts of aggression.

The QDR could also assess both the relative value and its ability to maintain a constant level of risk for homeland defense and strategic nuclear deterrence priorities during a period of declining defense spending. Doing so will likely require the Services and other defense components to reduce their capacity to address other mission areas.

While the U.S. military must remain prepared to deter and defeat state aggressors, DoD could assess the need to further reduce ground forces and capabilities that are primarily oriented toward defeating traditional cross-border invasions. Such contingencies have become far less likely over the past twenty years. Moreover, in the one instance where they might occur—on the Korean peninsula—South Korea clearly has the resources to field an effective ground defense. Shifting emphasis away from such contingencies would free resources that could be reallocated to capabilities that now cannot be provided by U.S. allies in quantity, such as air-, land-, and sea-based long-range precision-strike systems, C4ISR battle networks, undersea warfare systems, stealthy manned and unmanned aircraft, strategic lift, and new counter-WMD technologies. The Pentagon might also reduce planned investments in systems that are unnecessarily duplicative or are only capable of supporting a narrow range of missions in permissive conditions.⁸⁰

DoD could assess the need to further reduce ground forces and capabilities that are primarily oriented toward defeating traditional cross-border invasions.

⁷⁹ Department of Defense (DoD), *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Washington, DC: DoD, September 10, 2012).

⁸⁰ This is in keeping with Secretary Gates' pronouncement that "the old paradigm of looking at potential conflict as either regular or irregular war, conventional or unconventional, high end or low—is no longer relevant. And as a result, the Defense Department needs to think about and prepare for war in a profoundly different way than what we have been accustomed to throughout the better part of the last century. What is needed is a portfolio of military capabilities with maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict." Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, "Defense Budget Recommendation Statement," speech presented in Chicago, Illinois, July 16, 2009.

It makes sense for the Pentagon to first develop an understanding of *what* it might need in the future before it attempts to figure out *how much* it may require.

Focus on shaping first.

Rather than attempting to prescribe a force structure that is sized for an uncertain future, DoD could direct its force planning efforts toward creating the right mix of capabilities needed to address its strategic priorities. This approach acknowledges that it may be more effective for the Pentagon to get its future capabilities mix right first, and then determine the overall size of its force structure based on available budget authority. In other words, it makes sense for the Pentagon to first develop an understanding of *what* it might need in the future before it attempts to figure out *how much* it may require. This would represent a departure from force planning constructs developed during multiple QDRs, which have had little impact on changing how DoD has sized its forces. Encouragement might be found in the 2006 QDR, which focused on shaping rather than sizing, and enjoyed modest success in changing the U.S. military's capability mix.⁸¹

Develop forward-looking planning scenarios.

Over the last twenty years, DoD has expanded its planning scenarios to include combinations of contingencies that stress most, if not all elements of the U.S. military. While this is a welcome trend, DoD's planning scenarios must focus on real-world challenges. For example, to the extent DoD continues relying heavily on scenarios that assume hundreds of thousands of U.S. military personnel will be able to mass and operate with near impunity from theater bases that are located close to enemy states similar to the conditions that existed in the First and Second Gulf Wars, they do more harm than good. Simply put, expanding the number and combinations of scenarios is not particularly useful if the scenarios assume an unrealistically favorable conflict environment for U.S. military operations. Based on DoD and independent assessments of the evolving security environment, the Defense Department would benefit from developing scenarios that incorporate the following characteristics.

Planning assumptions for scenarios in non-permissive environments.

The next QDR is an opportunity to create new planning scenarios that address how state and non-state actors will seek to deny operational access and impose disproportionate costs on U.S. power-projection forces. These scenarios should acknowledge that future military operations, wherever they occur along the conflict spectrum, may occur in environments where PGMs are highly proliferated, WMD threats exist, non-state proxies with guided weapons are employed, and where the U.S. military's freedom of action is challenged across the global commons—space, cyberspace, the air and the seas. In recognition of this “diffusion of advanced tech-

⁸¹ Over time, DoD's 2012 strategic guidance may have a similar impact on the U.S. military's overall capabilities mix.

nology that is transforming warfare,”⁸² the Pentagon’s force planning construct should increasingly include scenarios with the following assumptions:

- In some regions, particularly the Western Pacific (and the Persian Gulf should Iran continue to mature its A2/AD capabilities), U.S. power-projection forces will need to fight for regional access;
- Until enemy A2/AD threats are suppressed, U.S. aircraft carriers and other naval surface forces will rely on extended-range strike aircraft and missiles, respectively, to offset enemy forces equipped with maritime exclusion capabilities such as ASBMs, ASCMs, smart mines, and attack submarines;
- Due to enemy threats and/or political constraints, close-in regional bases to support early deployments of U.S. forces such as combat aircraft and large troop formations will not always be readily available;
- Until they are suppressed, enemy IADS with modern, mobile systems and advanced, extended-range surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) will place non-stealthy, penetrating aircraft and standoff attack PGMs at risk of unacceptably high levels of attrition;
- Given the growing threat to U.S. assets in space and cyberspace, enemies can be expected to degrade or temporarily deny command, control, communications, surveillance, and precision navigation and timing support to power-projection forces; and
- WMD, including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, will be a constant threat in a growing number of contingencies, particularly in Asia. It should not be assumed that these threats will be limited to state actors.

Challenging scenarios to assess future capabilities.

Rather than optimize the U.S. military for contemporary versions of the First Gulf War, the Services might focus their force planning assessments on capabilities needed for future, nonlinear operations where deployed forces lack rear area “sanctuaries” to resupply, and where WMD are a constant threat or have been used. These scenarios might require air, ground, and special operations forces to find, track, and render safe or destroy loose nuclear weapons in a failed state or in support of a friendly government that has lost positive control over part of its nuclear weapons inventory. They might also find U.S. forces conducting operations

⁸² Department of Defense, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*, p. 2. For a more detailed discussion of planning assumptions for non-permissive operating environments, see Jan van Tol et al., *AirSea Battle: A Point of Departure Operational Concept*, pp. 50-52; and Gunzinger and Dougherty, *Outside-In: Operating from Range to Defeat Iran’s Anti-Access and Area-Denial Threats*, pp. 53-55. Also see Mark Gunzinger, *Sustaining America’s Strategic Advantage in Long-Range Strike*, pp. 12-13, 26-27.

in the wake of WMD use, to include nuclear weapons use. The Army and Marine Corps in particular should assess how they could lead joint theater entry operations against a range of A2/AD defenses. These operations could create lodgments for follow-on force deployments, or secure littoral areas adjacent to strategic maritime chokepoints to deny enemies staging areas to attack shipping with ASCMs and guided-rockets, artillery, mortars, and missiles (G-RAMM).

Different concepts of victory.

The Pentagon's next force planning construct could include scenarios that acknowledge traditional concepts for decisive victory—such as the defeat of an enemy force, the overthrow of a hostile regime, or the occupation of an enemy's territory—may not be viable. These war outcomes are almost certain to be far less achievable, and desirable, in cases where the enemy has a highly capable A2/AD weapons complex that may also include nuclear weapons.

In such cases a new definition of victory may be needed. Accordingly, rather than seek a regime change that may involve a long-term major occupation of an enemy's territory, the Pentagon might adopt planning scenarios where U.S. forces conduct “spoiler” operations that are designed to prevent an enemy from achieving its campaign objectives while compelling it to seek an end to hostilities on terms favorable to the United States. Such campaigns may include “horizontal escalation” operations that move the conflict's focus to areas where the U.S. military has a clear advantage, thus helping create conditions that compel the enemy to seek an end to hostilities. In the case where enemies are dependent on energy resources and raw materials that must be transported by sea, for example, U.S. naval and air forces could establish distant maritime blockades to help achieve these objectives.

Combat operations against major regional powers such as the People's Republic of China, and operations such as distant blockades may require a considerable amount of time before U.S. forces can achieve their objectives. Planning scenarios like these that account for the possibility of protracted, high-intensity combat operations would help the Pentagon to better understand its capability requirements and the implications for its manpower base and industrial base capacity—including the latter's ability to surge production of major weapons systems as well as PGMs and other expendable supplies.⁸³

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⁸³ According to the *2010 QDR Report*, “operations over the past eight years have stressed the ground forces disproportionately, but the future operational landscape could also portend significant long-duration air and maritime campaigns for which the U.S. Armed Forces must be prepared.” See the *2010 QDR Report*, p. vi. This reinforces the point that DoD's assessments of its future capability needs should include scenarios where joint combat operations do not terminate after a short campaign similar to the First Gulf War.

Long-term competition planning scenarios.

As part of its next force planning construct, DoD could adopt planning scenarios that account for long-term competitions between the United States and rising or resurgent authoritarian military powers such as China, Russia, and possibly Iran. These scenarios would require the Services to conduct net assessments⁸⁴ of technology trends (net technical assessments)⁸⁵ as part of an overall assessment of the military balance between the United States and prospective major rivals. By identifying key military competitions along with prospective areas of U.S. advantage and rival weakness, net assessments could help refine priorities for DoD's science and technology investments, leading to the fielding of future weapons systems that will sustain the U.S. military's technical edge.

Develop new operational concepts that foster change.

Defense strategies should help the Pentagon to link its ends with its means, prioritize its objectives, and explain how it intends to achieve its objectives through relevant operational concepts. Unfortunately, QDRs have tended to jump from outlining the Defense Department's security goals to explaining its program priorities without clarifying *how* the latter helps to secure the former. Stated differently, the defense program should provide capabilities to execute operational concepts that support a strategy designed to achieve national security objectives. Thus, the creation of new, innovative joint operational concepts that address emerging threats to the nation's vital interests is a key step in the development of a force planning concept that will shape America's future military.

After twelve years of war against violent extremist groups, the QDR presents an opportunity for DoD to take a much broader look at the emerging strategic environment. Today, the U.S. military is facing challenges that may be both far greater in scale and different in form from those it has encountered in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. While DoD will likely continue counter-terrorism operations well into the indefinite future, it is not planning on conducting another major stability operation any time soon. Instead, the Pentagon is confronted with the need to prepare for new challenges such as the emergence of A2/AD networks and the proliferation of nuclear weapons that could pose serious threats to future U.S.

The creation of new, innovative joint operational concepts that address emerging threats to the nation's vital interests is a key step in the development of a force planning concept that will shape America's future military.

⁸⁴ DoD has defined a net assessment as the "comparative analysis of military, technological, political, economic, and other factors governing the relative military capability of nations. Its purpose is to identify problems and opportunities that deserve the attention of senior defense officials." See Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5111.11, *Director of Net Assessment* (Washington, DC: DoD, December 23, 2009), p. 1.

⁸⁵ For example, Michael Vickers and Robert Martinage have described the U.S. military's continuing development of increasingly sophisticated stealth technologies and competitor's efforts to develop counter-stealth sensors and defensive weapons as a "hidiers versus finders" competition. See Michael G. Vickers and Robert C. Martinage, *The Revolution In War* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, December 2004), pp. 109-114.

If AirSea Battle and other operational concepts devolve into narratives that are used to defend existing programs against cuts, they could lose much of their value as tools to foster change.

power-projection operations. Yet DoD has not developed new, mature operational concepts and doctrine that address these challenges, let alone use new concepts to significantly alter the defense program. The Service-created AirSea Battle concept may be a good start, but continuing defense budget reductions could crowd out new thinking and program adjustments that are badly needed. Furthermore, if AirSea Battle and other operational concepts devolve into narratives that are used to defend existing programs against cuts, they could lose much of their value as tools to foster change and improve DoD's ability to project forces "in smarter, more cost-effective ways."⁸⁶

Finally, as the Defense Department develops operational concepts that explore alternative ways and means of countering emerging threats, they should be reconciled with theater war plans that are created by its geographic combatant commanders. Major disconnects between the two could force choices between investing in current capabilities to meet combatant commanders' immediate operational needs and new capabilities that could provide future commanders with a competitive edge.

Maintain capabilities to deny multiple aggressors their objectives.

The U.S. military should preserve its ability to deter a second adversary that might otherwise seek to exploit a situation where the United States is already engaged in conflict somewhere else in the world. Every post-Cold War DoD strategic defense review has determined that abandoning "two wars" as the bedrock of its force planning policies could invite opportunistic acts of aggression and call into doubt our nation's willingness to meet its security commitments.⁸⁷

DoD as a whole should maintain full-spectrum capability.

Sustaining the capability to deny multiple aggressors their objectives in overlapping timeframes does not mean that DoD should center its force planning on two Desert Storm-like contingencies, nor does it mean that every Service should prepare to participate equally in every planning scenario. For example, the Air Force and Navy would likely be the primary force providers for preserving sta-

⁸⁶ Schwartz and Greenert, "Air-Sea Battle."

⁸⁷ For example, the 1997 QDR determined: "If the United States were to forego its ability to defeat aggression in more than one theater at a time, our standing as a global power, as the security partner of choice, and as the leader of the international community would be called into question. Indeed, some allies would undoubtedly read a one-war capability as a signal that the United States, if heavily engaged elsewhere, would no longer be able to help defend their interests." *1997 QDR Report*, p. 12. Secretary Panetta affirmed that this requirement remains a cornerstone of the U.S. defense strategy: "We must always remain capable of being able to confront and defeat aggression from more than one adversary at a time anywhere, anytime." See Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, "The Force of the 21st Century," speech presented at the National Press Club, Washington, DC, December 18, 2012.

bility in the Western Pacific (and defeating aggression should deterrence fail), while the Army and Marine Corps could become the primary Service force providers in operations involving locating and securing WMD in the Middle East or Central Asia.⁸⁸

In the same vein, it may not be necessary for each Service to remain capable of conducting the full spectrum of operations. Simply put, the next force planning construct should clarify how DoD *as a whole*, instead of each Service, will provide the necessary capabilities to address challenges across the full spectrum of conflict.⁸⁹ This approach could provide the added benefit of helping Defense Department efforts to reduce expenditures on force structure and capabilities fielded by multiple Services that may be excessively redundant, a luxury that will be increasingly difficult to justify in the face of projected budget cuts.

Fully exploit the indirect approach.

DoD's next force planning construct should more fully account for the contributions of allies and partners. With proper support, U.S. allies and security partners could assume greater responsibility for sustaining a stable military posture in key regions, reducing the strain on the U.S. military. In particular, U.S. allies with highly capable armies, particularly the Republic of Korea, could assume nearly complete responsibility for providing general purpose ground forces needed to defeat conventional, cross-border invasions.

Add clarity to DoD's strategic narrative.

The Pentagon should include an explanation of its force planning construct in the strategic narrative it uses to explain its budget requests. To add value, this narrative should clearly summarize DoD's force planning priorities in a way that can readily be understood by Congress and other stakeholders in the U.S. defense enterprise. As two architects of the 2010 QDR pointed out, the challenge of doing this successfully becomes increasingly difficult as force planning constructs add scenario combinations and address new variables that affect the size and shape of the U.S. military.⁹⁰ Despite the growing complexity of force planning constructs,

The next force planning construct should clarify how DoD as a whole, instead of each Service, will provide the necessary capabilities to address challenges across the full spectrum of conflict.

⁸⁸ Clearly, the Marines Corps and Army will have key roles in a future operation in the Western Pacific. However, a scenario involving a future conflict with the PLA may not be the most stressing case for sizing and shaping the Army and Marine Corps, while an operation that is primarily ground-force-centric may not be the most stressing case for assessing future Air Force and Navy capabilities.

⁸⁹ During an interview on the Marine Corps' future direction, General Amos addressed this point: "As we start getting into budgets and roles and missions, it's important to understand that I don't want the Marine Corps to do the roles of the other Services. For instance, the Air Force's domain is in the air, space, cyber, and it's the greatest air force in the world, second to none. The Army's domain is the land, half a million strong, and they're pretty damn good. The Navy's domain is the sea, both on it and below it."

⁹⁰ Hicks and Brannen, "Force Planning in the 2010 QDR," p. 142.

a clear explanation of its elements can be “a useful tool for explaining the defense program” as well as a “powerful lever that the Secretary of Defense can use to shape the Defense Department.”⁹¹

Create Strategic Concepts for a New Era

Shifts in the international balance of power will inevitably bring about changes in the principal threats of any given nation. These threats must be met by shifts in national policy and corresponding changes in service strategic concepts.

— Dr. Samuel P. Huntington⁹²

It may be time to complement an updated force planning construct with new strategic concepts for each of the Services that redefine their roles in the new security environment.

One of the most significant shortfalls of previous QDRs may have been their failure to complement the development of revised force planning constructs with the creation of statements that explain the central purposes of each of DoD’s four military Services.⁹³ During the Base Force assessment and Bottom-Up Review, the Pentagon grappled with the challenges of how it should adjust to the realities of a post-Cold War world while under the pressure of cuts to its budget. The result was an overall vision for shaping the U.S. military that endured for the better part of twenty years. Since the Pentagon is now at the intersection of a similar set of circumstances, it may be time to complement an updated force planning construct with new strategic concepts for each of the Services that redefine their roles in the new security environment.

An approach for developing new strategic concepts.

In 1954, Huntington defined a Service’s strategic concept as a statement of its core purpose or “role in implementing national policy.”⁹⁴ Ideally, a strategic concept provides a unifying purpose for a Service’s organizing, training, and equipping activities by describing “how, when, and where the military service expects to protect the nation against some threat to its security.”⁹⁵

⁹¹ The congressionally mandated 2010 QDR Independent Panel concluded “a force planning construct is a powerful lever that the Secretary of Defense can use to shape the Defense Department. It also represents a useful tool for explaining the defense program to Congress. The absence of a clear force-planning construct in the 2010 QDR represents a missed opportunity.” See Steven J. Hadley and William J. Perry, *The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America’s National Security Needs In the 21st Century* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2010), pp. xii-xiii.

⁹² Huntington, “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy.”

⁹³ Michèle Flournoy criticized the 2006 QDR for this failure. See Flournoy, “Did the Pentagon Get the Quadrennial Defense Review Right?” p. 72.

⁹⁴ Huntington, “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy.”

⁹⁵ Huntington, “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy.”

Today, the development of new Service strategic concepts is complicated by the fact that the United States lacks as clear-cut of a threat to its security interests as it had in 1954 or even in 1993. The Pentagon does not need to prepare for a global conflict with the Soviet Union, and the threat of two nearly-simultaneous, cross-border invasions as described by the Bottom-Up Review has greatly diminished following the invasion of Iraq. Drawing on Huntington's methodology, one approach for developing new Service strategic concepts could begin by acknowledging that the threats to our nation's security are growing in scale as well as shifting in form. A number of existing and prospective enemies appear intent on acquiring PGMs and WMD, as well as the ability to threaten U.S. interests in "new" domains such as cyberspace and space. These developments, along the planned substantial cuts in U.S. defense spending, suggest the need to craft a new defense strategy and force planning construct during the QDR.

Given this elaboration of existing and emerging strategic challenges, each Service should inform senior DoD leaders as to how it intends to exploit its unique attributes to prepare for future threats—and, ideally, to exploit opportunities as well. At its core, strategy involves setting priorities—identifying what roles and missions are within a Service's means to undertake and those that are not. Consequently, rather than advancing overly broad and general statements such as "securing command of the air" or "dominating the seas" the Services' strategic concepts should describe how they will address *specific* threats within a *specific* geographic focus. In this way the Services can avoid developing long and unrealistic "laundry lists" of missions that appear designed more to protect their budget shares and program preferences than to best apply limited resources to address vital security priorities. For example, in 1954 Huntington described how the Mediterranean Basin was replacing the Pacific as "the geographical focus of attention" for a U.S. Navy that could operate within it to launch a "knock-out punch" deep into the Soviet Union.⁹⁶ Correspondingly, today the Asia-Pacific region—which is witnessing the rise of great powers and which is primarily a maritime/aerospace theater of operations—seems very likely to emerge as the United States' principal geographic focus.

The following sections offer ideas intended to inform the development of Service strategic concepts in an era where the threat of multiple, cross-border invasions and large-scale, prolonged stabilization operations no longer represent the central focus of DoD's planning. Although the sections address each Service individually, ideally the Services would develop their strategic concepts in close consultation with each other. Unlike a traditional approach where Services create their visions in isolation, a cooperative development effort could help them assess how they might each use their capabilities to fill other Services' known shortfalls and reduce capabilities for mission areas where they collectively have excessive overlap. A cooperative effort

Each Service should inform senior DoD leaders as to how it intends to exploit its unique attributes to prepare for future threats—and, ideally, to exploit opportunities as well.

⁹⁶ Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy."

may be all the more important considering the prospect of additional funding cuts and the fact that all of the Services are fielding capabilities such as long-range strike platforms and cyber weapons that are blurring the lines between their traditional operational domains. The prospects for success in this endeavor would improve substantially if senior Defense Department leaders demonstrate their willingness to make major changes in the defense program in the absence of a serious effort among the Services to integrate their efforts.

What's next for the Army?

The Army is in the process of transitioning from a force that adapted to conduct protracted stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to one that is capable of fulfilling a different mix of missions as its involvement in those wars comes to a close. The Army's Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno, has indicated the Army's brigade combat teams (BCTs) will become more regionally aligned, scalable, and better prepared for a broader spectrum of operations than in the past.⁹⁷ The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) has also released a new "capstone concept document" to help guide the development of the future Army. It states "The future Army provides decisive landpower through a credible, robust capacity to win and the depth and resilience to support combatant commanders across the range of military operations in the homeland and abroad."⁹⁸

These broad pronouncements fall short of a strategic concept as envisioned by Huntington, one that provides a clear explanation of specific threats the Army intends to prepare for, and missions where it will reduce its emphasis in the future. Rather than reassert that it must remain ready to do everything—particularly in a time of diminishing budgets and high manpower costs—the Army could use the QDR to create a new strategic concept that identifies specific priorities it seeks to establish and how it can best support, and be supported, by the other Services. Given the U.S. strategic "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific and the implied prioritization of preserving stability in that region in the face of China's military buildup, the Army might consider the following priorities.⁹⁹

In lieu of orienting a substantial portion of its BCTs to counter ground forces conducting a traditional cross-border invasion, the Army should accept that this is

⁹⁷ General Raymond Odierno, "The Future of the United States Army: Critical Questions for a Period of Transition," discussion at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, November 1, 2012.

⁹⁸ See TRADOC Pam 525-3-0, *The U.S. Army Capstone Concept* (Fort Eustis, VA: Department of the Army, December 19, 2012), p. 11.

⁹⁹ This is not to imply the Army should completely divest skill sets that have been hard won during counterinsurgency, stability, and security force assistance operations over the last twelve years. Rather, the intent here is to identify how the Army might best support efforts to preserve stability in a region of vital interest to the United States that appears likely to confront a major military challenge over an extended period of time; for example, in the Western Pacific.

highly unlikely to occur in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁰⁰ For example, the Army could emphasize creating U.S. ground-based A2/AD complexes in the Western Pacific that help preserve a stable military posture in the region and, should deterrence fail, support AirSea Battle operations as part of a joint and combined force.

Focusing on the QDR's twenty-year planning horizon, Army ground-based A2/AD complexes might include a more affordable mix of kinetic and non-kinetic (e.g., high-power microwave and high-power laser) defenses against ballistic and cruise missile threats to theater airfields and sea ports that are needed by deploying U.S. forces. The Army could also explore the value of creating batteries of mobile cruise and ballistic missile launchers to conduct standoff strikes against enemy anti-access threats. These forward-based batteries might provide joint commanders with the means to rapidly suppress strikes from enemy mobile missile launchers that are able to "shoot and scoot" to safe locations before Air Force and Navy strike aircraft can respond. Army units equipped with ASCM launchers could support joint operations whose mission is to control strategic maritime chokepoints, thereby limiting enemy maritime access and reducing sea-based threats to U.S. warships.¹⁰¹

The future Air Force: fly, fight, and win?

The U.S. Air Force has released a central mission statement—"to fly, fight, and win...in air, space and cyberspace"—and a very broad vision statement:

The United States Air Force will be a trusted and reliable joint partner with our sister services known for integrity in all of our activities, including supporting the joint mission first and foremost. We will provide compelling air, space, and cyber capabilities for use by the combatant commanders. We will excel as stewards of all Air Force resources in service to the American people, while providing precise and reliable Global Vigilance, Reach and Power for the nation.¹⁰²

The Service has also published lists of its three core competencies, six distinctive capabilities, three core values, and five "enduring contributions."¹⁰³

The Army could emphasize creating U.S. ground-based A2/AD complexes in the Western Pacific that help preserve a stable military posture in the region and, should deterrence fail, support AirSea Battle operations.

¹⁰⁰ The possible exception would involve a North Korean attack on South Korea. However, given Seoul's huge advantages over Pyongyang in both manpower and material, South Korea is fully able of providing for its own ground defense.

¹⁰¹ For additional context on how the Army could support an operational concept for countering anti-access threats, see Gunzinger and Dougherty, *Outside-In: Operating from Range to Defeat Iran's Anti-Access and Area Denial Threats*, pp. 69-73.

¹⁰² See the official website of the United States Air Force at <http://www.af.mil/main/welcome.asp>.

¹⁰³ The Air Force's three core competencies are: developing airmen, technology-to-warfighting, and integrating operations. The Air Force's six distinctive capabilities are: air and space superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority, and agile combat support. The Air Force's three core values are: integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. The five enduring contributions are: air and space autonomy, ISR, rapid global mobility, global strike, and command and control. See U.S. Air Force, *A Vision for the United States Air Force* (Washington, DC: U.S. Air Force, January 2013), p. 3; and the official website of the United States Air Force.

These myriad statements, competencies, capabilities, and core values do not constitute a strategic concept as defined by Huntington. The Air Force needs to focus on how it will bring its unique capabilities to bear in support of the United States' shift in focus to the Asia-Pacific and emphasis on countering A2/AD challenges to America's access to the air, space, and cyberspace domains.¹⁰⁴ Toward this end the Air Force might consider shifting from relying predominately on short-range fighters and non-stealthy platforms toward employing a mix of capabilities designed less for the passing era characterized by permissive access to one of contested access exemplified by growing A2/AD challenges (see Figure 5). This new capabilities mix could enable the Air Force to project an effective density of sensors and strike systems to hold at risk the full range of fixed, mobile, and hardened or deeply buried targets in future air campaigns.

As it develops a new strategic concept, the Air Force, in cooperation with the Navy, could also assess how it could better conduct "swing" operations between geographically distant theaters to deter opportunistic acts of aggression or deny a second aggressor the ability to achieve its strategic objectives. For example, a swing force consisting of a larger force of long-range bombers, unmanned aircraft, aircraft carriers, and supporting air refueling tankers could rapidly swing from a major operation against the PLA to create an enhanced deterrence posture in the Persian Gulf. Although the concept of joint air and maritime "swing" operations is not new, a strategic concept that explains the geographic focus and key assumptions (e.g., base availability, permissive/non-permissive airspace, etc.) for its employment will be important to the size and shape of the future Air Force.

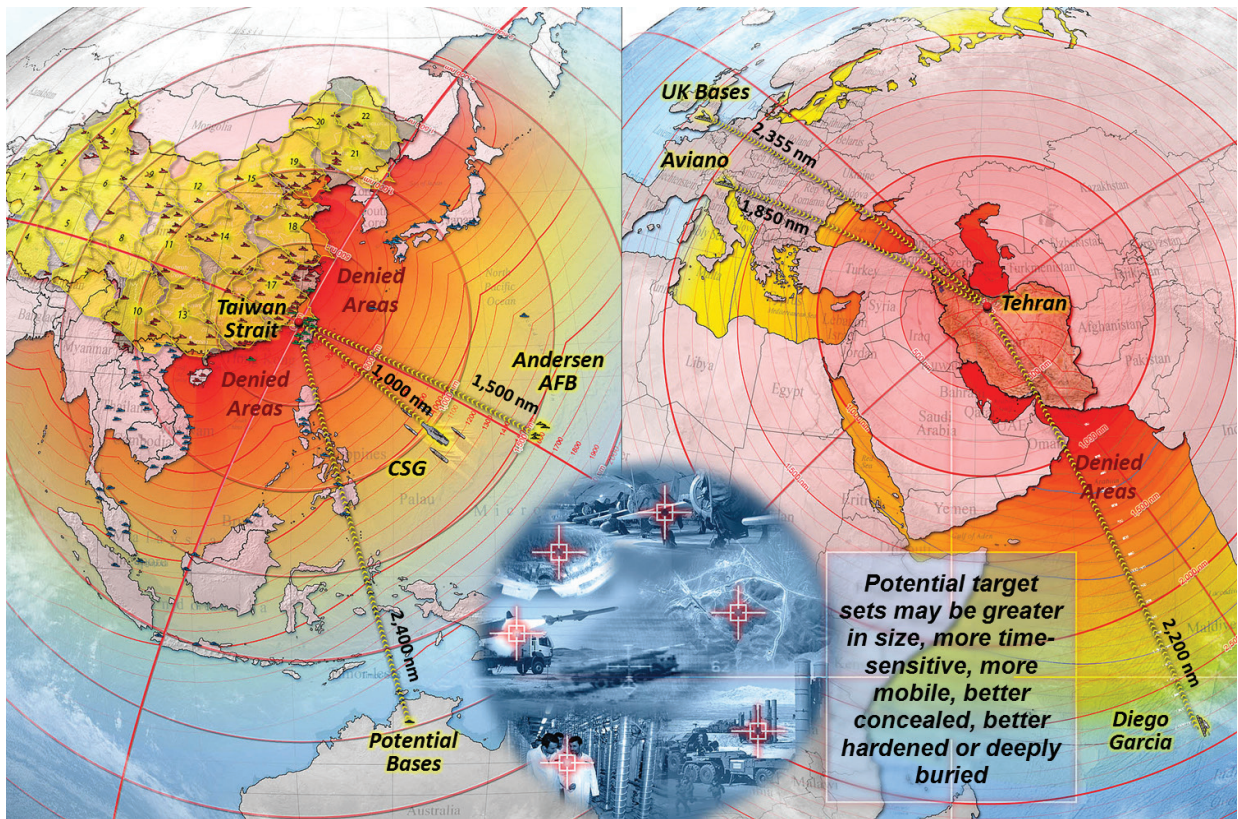
The Service might also explore how to adapt key elements of the U.S. battle network, such as space-based systems and cyber networks, against the kinds of anti-satellite and cyber weaponry being developed and fielded by the PLA which currently represent the pacing threats in both of these areas of military competition.

How will the Navy prepare for the future?

In 2007, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Commandant of the Coast Guard co-signed a "unified maritime strategy" titled *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* that broadly described

¹⁰⁴ In 2012, the Air Force sponsored a study that traced the evolution of its culture since it first acted as a tactical adjunct to expeditionary land forces during the First World War. The study concluded that many Air Force airmen may now see their Service as one that provides "enablers" for other forces conducting counterinsurgency and stability operations, rather than as an organization that provides decisive warfighting capabilities in its own right. See Paula G. Thornhill, *Over Not Through* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012). This perception may be reinforced by the fact that the Air Force now spends less than 22 percent of its annual budget on combat capabilities, while joint enabling capabilities such as ISR, space, and mobility systems receive more than twice as much funding.

FIGURE 5. ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OF POTENTIAL AIR CAMPAIGNS IN A2/AD ENVIRONMENTS



The Navy is faced with a critical strategic choice: it can continue to prepare to project power ashore as it has in relatively permissive conditions over the last twenty years, or it can explore alternatives that will permit it to do so against future enemies.

“how seapower will be applied around the world.”¹⁰⁵ More recently, the current CNO, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, signaled his intent to update this strategy to “reflect changes in the geostrategic and fiscal environment since 2007” and “define how American seapower supports the U.S. defense strategy.”¹⁰⁶ In advance of this new strategy, Greenert announced that CSGs and Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs) will remain the Department of the Navy’s “main instruments to deter and defeat aggression and project power” in future combat operations.¹⁰⁷

As the Navy updates its maritime strategy, it has the opportunity to embed within it a new strategic concept that will guide its force development. Since the Cold War ended, the Navy has faced no serious challenges to its supremacy in the open oceans, while the Marine Corps has found itself functioning as a second Army in Iraq and Afghanistan. With the U.S. shift in focus from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific and the A2/AD challenge posed by China, both Services will need to address how they can bring their unique capabilities to bear to meet challenges to their ability to control the seas and influence operations ashore.

For example, a modern aircraft carrier’s combat punch is now provided by fighters that are “best suited for striking targets at ranges between 200 and 450 nautical miles (nmi) from their carriers.”¹⁰⁸ In order to project power ashore, these fighters depend on the ability of their mobile seabases to operate close to an enemy’s coastline, much as carriers did during the First and Second Gulf Wars. Given the proliferation of air and maritime threats that are intended to deny operational sanctuaries to U.S. warships, it may not be feasible for CSGs and ARGs to operate as they have in the past, especially early in a fight before these threats have been suppressed.

Thus, the Navy is faced with a critical strategic choice: it can continue to prepare to project power ashore as it has in relatively permissive conditions over the last twenty years, or it can explore alternatives that will permit it to do so against future enemies that are “working on asymmetric ways to thwart the reach and striking power of the U.S. battle fleet.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ See General James T. Conway, Admiral Gary Roughead, and Admiral Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, October 2007).

¹⁰⁶ Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, *Sharpening our Maritime Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, June 5, 2012). This is perfectly consistent with Huntington’s view that a Service should create new strategic concepts to address changes to the threat environment and a nation’s security policies.

¹⁰⁷ Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, *CNO’s Navigation Plan 2013-2017* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, April 2012), p. 2; and Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, *CNO’s Position Report: 2012* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, October 2012), p. 2.

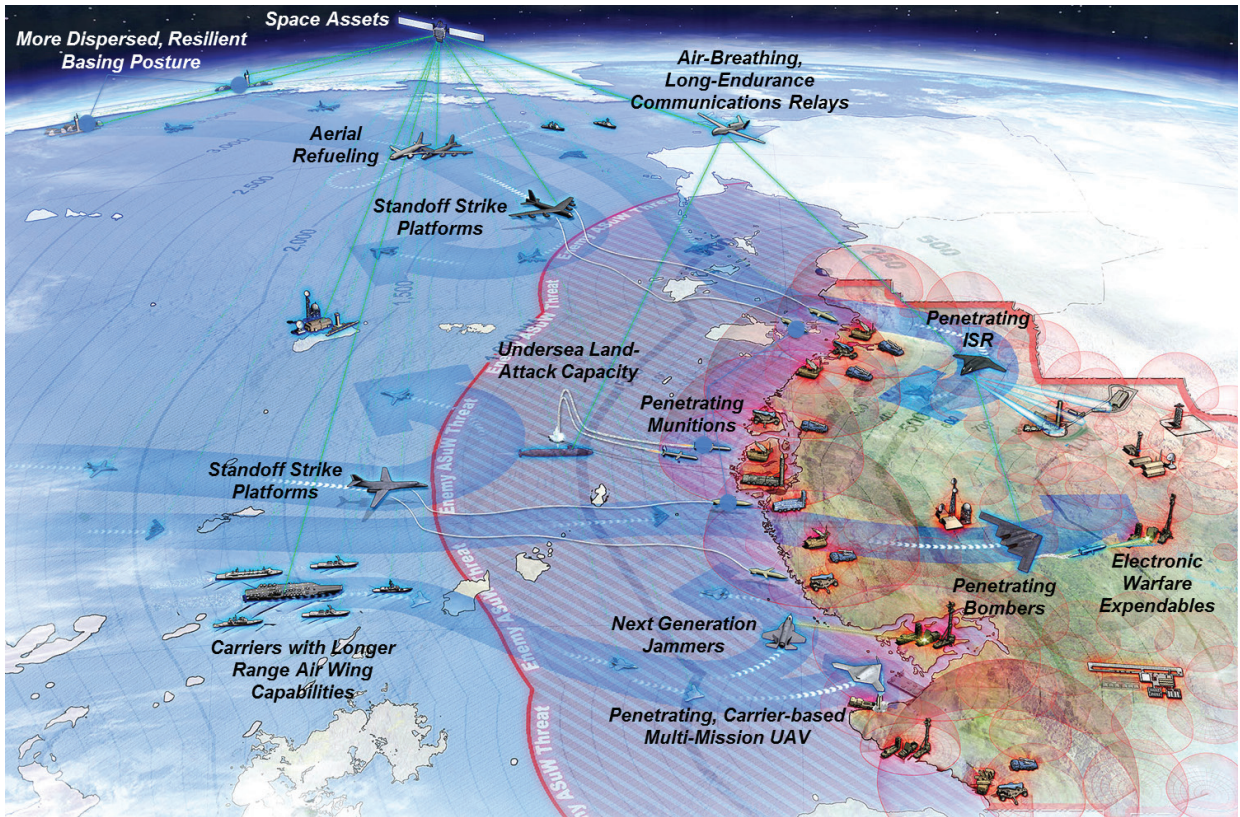
¹⁰⁸ Thomas P. Ehrhard and Robert O. Work, *Range, Persistence, Stealth, and Networking: The Case for a Carrier-Based Unmanned Combat Air System* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2008), p. 3. Although air refueling can extend the range and persistence of carrier-based fighters, non-stealthy refueling aircraft such as the Air Force’s KC-135 do not operate within the effective range of an enemy’s air defenses.

¹⁰⁹ Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, “Navy League Sea-Air-Space Exposition.”

As part of a new strategic concept, the Navy could define how it plans to shift its priorities toward preparing to operate from access-insensitive areas to suppress long-range ASBMs, ASCMs, and other anti-access threats that are emerging in the Western Pacific. This could add impetus to the development of new sea-based capabilities as part of the Pentagon's next long-range strike family of systems (see Figure 6), such as multi-mission, stealthy carrier-based UAS that have longer ranges and unrefueled mission persistence compared to manned fighters.¹¹⁰ They could also lend greater weight to expanding the Navy's capacity to launch stand-off strike weapons from undersea platforms that are less sensitive to an enemy's long-range air and missile threats.

¹¹⁰ For example, the Navy could develop an unmanned aircraft with a combat radius of 1,300-1,400 nmi and all-aspect, broad-band stealth characteristics that will increase its survivability against advanced air defense networks. See Ehrhard and Work, *Range, Persistence, Stealth, and Networking: The Case for a Carrier-Based Unmanned Combat Air System*. A stealthy carrier-based UAS could also support the full spectrum of military operations, as compared to non-stealthy UAS that would not be able to operate in high-threat areas.

FIGURE 6. THE NEXT LONG-RANGE STRIKE FAMILY OF SYSTEMS (NOTIONAL)



The future Marine Corps: not a second land army.

Over twelve years of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, Marine Corps forces were tasked to function as a second land army. This created the perception that the Marine Corps had “become too heavy, too removed from their expeditionary, amphibious roots and the unique skill sets those missions require.”¹¹¹

Today, the Marine Corps sees itself as a “middleweight force” capable of responding to crises across the range of military operations with enough organic capabilities to “buy time for the national leadership to determine what the next step is.”¹¹² Like the visions advanced by the other Services, the vision of the Marine Corps fails to meet the criteria set by Professor Huntington.

Given the shift in focus toward the Asia-Pacific and the emerging A2/AD complex that could threaten future U.S. military power-projection operations, the Marine Corps might address how it can bring its unique attributes to bear in addressing these challenges. For example, a new strategic concept could find the Marine Corps focusing principally on preparing for joint theater entry operations in A2/AD environments. This change in focus could drive investments in a different mix of expeditionary capabilities, such as additional standoff strike PGMs and STOVL stealth aircraft that can operate from expeditionary airfields around the periphery of China to suppress anti-access threats and create conditions that will permit amphibious operations. It may also require developing new operational concepts and capabilities to insert expeditionary forces by air and over-the-shore into areas that bypass an enemy's strongest defenses.

¹¹¹ Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, “George P. Shultz Lecture.”

¹¹² “An Interview with General James F. Amos,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 64, 1st Quarter, January 2012, p. 15.

CHAPTER 4 > CONCLUSION

The Quadrennial Defense Review presents an opportunity for the Pentagon to continue its transition from a force planning approach that narrowly focuses on defeating large-scale, conventional aggression along the lines of what the U.S. military prepared for in the Cold War and experienced in the First Gulf War.

A new force planning construct should address scenarios that reflect a world where challenges to U.S. power-projection forces stemming from the diffusion of PGMs, WMD, and other capabilities (e.g., cyber weaponry; anti-satellite systems) are part of an emerging “new normal.” In other words, DoD’s planning could address how to meet threats to its power-projection operations that are growing in scale as well as shifting in form. This will need to be accomplished with fewer resources as the Pentagon confronts major cuts to its defense budget in the coming years.

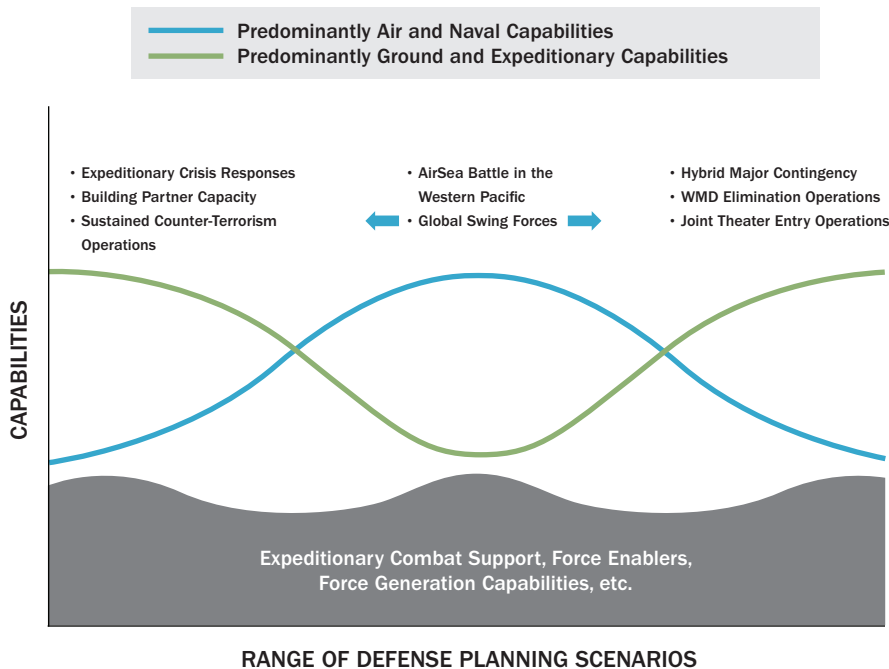
In light of these operational and fiscal challenges, the Pentagon can ill afford to postpone making critical strategic choices regarding those core mission areas its planners should prioritize—and deemphasize—in the future. An essential element in this endeavor, as Professor Huntington reminds us, centers on the Services developing strategic concepts that define how each will adjust to the new strategic environment by determining how best they can bring their unique capabilities together with one another at the point of decisive action. During the Cold War the site of that action was Western Europe, and more recently the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia. Today a point of decisive action, as reflected in the Obama administration’s “pivot,” is the Asia-Pacific. A collaborative, Service-led effort informed by clear and insightful strategic guidance toward this end could lead to the creation of innovative joint operational concepts that integrate existing and future capabilities to counter threats that cross-cut the Services’ traditional operating domains. It would also create opportunities for the Services to explore how they

The Pentagon can ill afford to postpone making critical strategic choices regarding those core mission areas its planners should prioritize—and deemphasize—in the future.

could better leverage each other's capabilities, rather than pursue programs to field excessively redundant and increasingly unaffordable capabilities.

When combined with a new force planning construct, new Service strategic concepts would better inform decisions as to how best to shape the U.S. military's capabilities, end strength, and basing posture. In combination, they could help DoD to better differentiate how the particular attributes of each Service's forces and capabilities could best be used across a range of illustrative planning scenarios and threat environments. This would be a significant break from the current planning paradigm, in which the Services seek to justify their programs and force structure by preparing to participate equally in every major contingency operation.

FIGURE 7. LEVERAGING THE SERVICES' UNIQUE CAPABILITY ATTRIBUTES



To illustrate this point, a force planning construct (see Figure 7) could require the Navy and Air Force to become the primary force providers for AirSea Battle operations in the Western Pacific to counter an enemy's A2/AD complex.¹¹³ Air and naval forces that are nearly self-deploying could also constitute a joint force postured to rapidly swing from one conflict to another theater to prevent a second aggressor from achieving its strategic objectives or provide support for Army and Marine Corps forces engaged in another operation. The Army could prepare for a major hybrid conflict against enemies that have asymmetric capabilities and employ irregular proxies, and operations to secure, render-safe, or destroy WMD in permissive and non-permissive conditions. The Marine Corps could focus primarily on new concepts and capabilities for scenarios that require joint theater entry operations to establish control over maritime chokepoints, ports, and airbases needed by deploying U.S. forces. At the low end of the conflict spectrum, the Marine Corps could prepare for expeditionary crisis response operations such as non-combatant evacuations and humanitarian relief missions.

In summary, creating a force planning construct that will help maintain the U.S. military's comparative advantages in the future at the expense of preparing for the last war will require difficult strategic choices. During the QDR, the Pentagon has the opportunity to take a different approach to force planning, one that will help create a new baseline that guides the development of its future force, rather than add another layer of planning priorities on top of existing guidance. Once it has defined priority scenarios and how the joint force will fight in the future, the Pentagon will be able to redefine appropriate roles and missions for the Services and areas where they have capability gaps or excessive overlap as a whole. Achieving these objectives will require leaders who ensure that strategic, rather than institutional, priorities take precedence when allocating increasingly scarce resources.

¹¹³ Initial operations to suppress the PLA's A2/AD complex will primarily require air, space, cyber, sea, and undersea capabilities that are provided by the two Services.

CHAPTER 5 > GLOSSARY

A2/AD	Anti-Access/Area-Denial
AEA	Airborne Electronic Attack
ARG	Amphibious Ready Group
ASBM	Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile
ASCM	Anti-Ship Cruise Missile
BUR	Bottom-Up Review
C4ISR	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
CSG	Carrier Strike Group
DE	Directed Energy
DoD	Department of Defense
FY	Fiscal Year
G-RAMM	Guided-Rockets, Artillery, Mortars, and Missiles
IADS	Integrated Air Defense System
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JOAC	Joint Operational Access Concept
MRAP	Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected
MRC	Major Regional Contingency
nmi	nautical mile
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PGM	Precision-Guided Munition
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PPBES	Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System

QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
QRMR	Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SCS	South China Sea
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft Systems
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UCLASS	Unmanned Carrier-Launched Airborne Surveillance and Strike
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction



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