



# Force Planning Scenarios, 1945–2016

Their Origins and Use in  
Defense Strategic Planning

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## Preface

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This report documents research and analysis conducted as part of a project titled Defense Planning for a New Era, sponsored by the Quadrennial Defense Review Office, Deputy Chief of Staff (G-8), Headquarters, United States Army. The project aims to identify options for developing and improving the employment of scenarios in defense planning. The report describes the forces that shaped conventional ground force planning during the 1945–2016 period, with an emphasis on the strategic concepts and contingency scenarios used. It identifies broader lessons, especially those related to the strategic concepts that help connect basic national security policies with the planning and development of conventional ground forces. It also provides the context for the consideration of different combinations of alternative force planning scenarios. Finally, the report identifies potential opportunities for the U.S. Army to influence the future selection of defense planning scenarios. The findings should be of interest to Army force planners and others engaged in strategic planning in the U.S. Department of Defense.

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## Summary

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Historically, U.S. global interests and commitments have been sufficiently expansive that it would be impossible to design a fiscally acceptable force that could defend all U.S. interests simultaneously: Efforts to estimate the forces required to simultaneously defend all U.S. interests have typically led to force structure estimates twice as large as more-realistic (i.e., fiscally constrained) planning approaches. In combination with assessments of the strategic environment, statements of national policy and strategy have provided a basis for identifying which contingencies are sufficiently important to justify defense preparations and for specifying defense and military strategies. Strategic concepts have also helped to guide and narrow the range of scenarios that need to be considered in conventional force planning efforts.

This report presents a historical review of defense strategic planning, with an emphasis on the factors that have shaped defense planning scenarios and their use in strategic analysis in the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD); this report is part of a larger study for the U.S. Army that is examining ways to improve the use of scenarios in defense planning. This document is organized by presidential administration; and, for presidential administrations in the post–Cold War era, it is organized around the various defense reviews that were undertaken.

## Development and Use of Scenarios During the Cold War

### The Truman and Eisenhower Administrations

During the Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower administrations, the dominant strategic planning scenarios flowed from concern about the conventional threat and growing nuclear threat from the Soviet Union, and the possibility of a multifront war with the Soviets. Soviet and allied forces threatened not only the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) central region but also NATO's northern and southern flanks, and even the Middle East and Far East. Although the potential outcome of any war would depend on a wide range of factors, the conventional force balance in Europe throughout much of this period favored the Soviets. The planning scenarios during this period envisioned a combination of peacetime nuclear deterrence and, in the unlikely event of war, coalition forward defense, massive retaliation using nuclear forces, con-

ventional reinforcement, and general mobilization in response to a Soviet attack. War aims were for a decisive defeat of the Soviet Union, with reliance on nuclear weapons reaching its apogee during the New Look period of the Eisenhower administration. The July 1952 Memorandum of Policy No. 84 established a Joint Program for Planning, the forbear of the current Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS). The Joint Program for Planning included a family of three plans (applicable to either peace or war), which were designed to translate national policy into short-, medium-, and long-range strategic objectives extending ten years into the future: the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan, and the Long-Range Strategic Estimate. Short-range (or short-term) planning was based on the scenarios embedded in war plans; medium-range (or midterm) planning while also grounded in war planning scenarios, focused on force development and modernization over the coming four to five years; and long-range (or long-term) planning was preoccupied with concept development and research and development to more dramatically improve future capabilities for war-fighting scenarios beyond five years.

### **The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations**

To increase deterrent capabilities in limited wars and raise the threshold for nuclear employment, the John F. Kennedy administration introduced a concept of Flexible Response, which envisioned a greater emphasis on conventional and special operations forces and a more graduated continuum of conventional and nuclear military responses to threats. The administration developed a “2-1/2 war” strategic concept that specified a requirement for U.S. military forces to be able to conduct two simultaneous major wars (in Europe and Asia) and a “brushfire” or “1/2 war” elsewhere (usually interpreted to be located in the Western Hemisphere). The 2-1/2 war strategic concept not only identified which scenarios would be used for force planning but also provided a yardstick for establishing the sufficiency of forces in terms of the number and types of scenarios that the force was to be able to address in simultaneous or overlapping time frames. Notably, the force was generally judged incapable of supporting the strategic concept. Short-, mid-, and long-term planning all continued to correspond, to varying degrees, with war plans.

### **The Nixon and Ford Administrations**

The Sino-Soviet war of 1969 exposed the fiction of monolithic communism and allowed policymakers to uncouple the Soviet and Chinese threats while also seeking détente with the Soviet Union and normalized relations with China. The Richard Nixon administration accordingly fashioned a less-ambitious strategic concept for sizing conventional forces, called the “1-1/2 war” strategic concept. The concept envisioned either a war with the Soviets in Europe or a war with China in Asia (but not both) while the war with China was conceived to be either in Northeast Asia or Southeast Asia (but not both). The strategic concept also envisioned a 1/2 war elsewhere. As

was the case with the previous administrations, the strategic concept was quite specific about which scenarios would be used for strategic planning while also specifying a yardstick for assessing force sufficiency.

### **The Carter Administration**

The Jimmy Carter administration initially embraced what was effectively the 1-1/2 war strategic concept of its predecessors for sizing forces. However, the administration initiated a buildup of military capabilities that would continue well into the Ronald Reagan administration as a result of the Soviets' continued buildup of conventional and nuclear capabilities, in addition to growing evidence that Soviet war planning envisioned a multifront global war that included action in Europe, Northeast Asia, and Southwest Asia. In its strategic planning, the Carter administration gave increasing attention to scenarios related to a Soviet threat in Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf, especially after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution of 1979, and these scenarios were used in the planning and development of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force. This would culminate in the January 1980 declaration of the Carter Doctrine, which stated, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by the use of any means necessary, including military force."<sup>1</sup> Public statements by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown near the end of the administration suggest that at least some thought was given to a more demanding strategic concept that would have been capable of meeting the requirements of a three-theater conflict (a NATO–Warsaw Pact confrontation, a war in Southwest Asia, and a North Korean attack on South Korea), characterized in this report as a "1-2/2 war" (one and two half wars) strategic concept. As with the earlier administrations, short-, mid-, and long-term planning all continued to be based primarily on the dominant strategic concept and scenarios embedded in war plans while the introduction of Illustrative Planning Scenarios during this period conferred a more-formal status on the scenarios used in the Office of the Secretary of Defense's strategic planning.

### **The Reagan Administration**

In response to concern about growing Soviet capabilities and war planning for a multi-front global war, the Reagan administration developed what could be considered a "2-2/2 war" (two and two half wars) strategic concept to meet the demands of "a worldwide war, including concurrent reinforcement of Europe, deployment to Southwest Asia and the Pacific, and support for other areas." Short-, mid-, and long-term strategic planning scenarios continued to be largely threat-based and focused on what planners believed were plausible, real-world contingencies involving the Soviet Union or its prox-

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<sup>1</sup> White House, "The State of the Union Address Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Congress," Washington, D.C., January 23, 1980.

ies, although analyses of force requirements based on longer-term projections of Soviet capabilities were also conducted. Thus, thinking during the period echoed that belief during the early Cold War period: Policymakers were preoccupied with Soviet and allied capabilities for a multifront global war against the United States and its allies.

## **Development and Use of Scenarios in the Post–Cold War Era**

### **The George H. W. Bush Administration**

The George H. W. Bush administration entered office shortly before the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. The administration was responsible for shifting force planning from meeting the stable and reasonably well-understood threats and challenges posed by the Soviet Union to planning against less well-understood regional threats, such as Iraq and North Korea. This shift—and these scenarios—dominated defense planning for more than a decade, and it appears to represent, at least in part, a move from threat-based to capabilities-based planning.

Initiated in 1989 by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) GEN Colin L. Powell, the Base Force study constituted the principal strategic planning effort for establishing force requirements in the post–Cold War era while also retaining a capability for reconstitution of U.S. forces if favorable trends in the Soviet Union were reversed. The JSPS and Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) processes continued to constitute the dual framework for strategic planning in the department, and Powell seized on the additional authorities granted by the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 to strengthen the Joint Staff's capabilities, to refashion the JSPS to better meet his needs and to better integrate the JSPS schedule and products with those of the PPBS process.

The Base Force's strategic concept envisioned forward-presence and strategic deterrence activities during peacetime, and crisis responses to regional threats, with a residual capacity to reconstitute the force for global war-fighting; the Base Force study was the first to embrace a capabilities-based approach to force planning, rather than the threat-based approach that had prevailed during the Cold War.

The Base Force prescribed four force packages for meeting the requirements of the post–Cold War world: Strategic Forces, Atlantic Forces, Pacific Forces, and U.S.-based Contingency Forces. These forces were assessed using a number of contingency scenarios, including an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and a North Korean invasion of South Korea, as well as a scenario in which both occur simultaneously; a Russian-Belarus attack on the Baltics and Poland; a coup in the Philippines; a threat to the Panama Canal; and a threat involving a newly emergent global enemy of the United States. The overall capability and capacity of the force was assessed in terms of the ability of the force to succeed in multiple combinations of simultaneous contingencies.

### **The Clinton Administration**

The Bill Clinton administration conducted two defense reviews during its time in office: the 1993 Bottom-Up Review (BUR) and the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). In both cases, the primary scenarios used to assess force requirements for major combat operations included a hypothetical North Korean attack on South Korea and a Southwest Asia scenario that, at least in the case of the BUR, focused on an Iraqi attack on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Continuing the shift from threat-based to capabilities-based (or hybrid) planning, the 1997 QDR reportedly considered a total of 45 scenarios, including an analysis of force requirements for major combat operations in a wild-card scenario involving aggression by an unidentified regional great power. The requirements of homeland defense also were considered for the first time in the 1997 QDR. The BUR's strategic concept for promoting the administration's emerging strategy envisaged maintaining a high level of peacetime military engagement in the world—including presence operations, peace operations, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations—while retaining a capability to meet two overlapping or nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies.

The legislatively mandated 1997 QDR reflected only modest adjustments to the thinking in its predecessor. It also sought to address several challenges that had emerged since the BUR, notably (1) the high operational tempos associated with peacetime engagement and (2) the migration of funding from modernization accounts to operation and maintenance accounts. A number of wild-card scenarios that could seriously challenge U.S. interests both at home and abroad also were explored, including an analysis of the military requirements associated with responding to aggression by an unidentified regional great power. The planned force was assessed against these scenarios individually and against various combinations of scenarios, most notably including the most stressing case of two nearly simultaneous major theater wars (MTWs), in which greater emphasis was placed on the halt phase of the operation, and where greater consideration was given to peacetime engagement requirements than had been the case in the BUR.

### **The George W. Bush Administration**

The George W. Bush administration conducted two QDRs during its tenure, in 2001 and 2006. To size conventional (and other) forces, the administration relied on a mix of threat-based scenarios for plausible near-term threats and capabilities-based assessments to consider longer-term challenges that might help to focus the transformation of the force. However, DoD's longer-term focus would be disrupted by the September 11, 2001, al-Qa'ida attacks and by the requirements of the U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the 2001 QDR, the administration presented a strategic concept or force sizing construct, dubbed "1-4-2-1," that was capable of the following simultaneous military actions:

- (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.<sup>2</sup>

For its assessment, the review considered both threat-based scenarios to analyze the force requirements associated with MTWs while simultaneously calling for capabilities-based planning that focused on the potential future capabilities of future adversaries, and how they might fight, to better guide transformation efforts. The latter were considered important as a remedy to the potential overoptimization of forces to threat-based scenarios. The QDR described the scenario-based analyses that were used to test the current force in rather broad terms only. For example, the 2001 QDR did not specify the name of any countries associated with the scenarios used to test force capabilities in MTWs, although there is some evidence that the most prominent threat scenarios included North Korea, Iraq, the rise of China, terrorism, and the challenges of failing states and poor governance. Similarly, few details were provided on how the current force was assessed: The 2001 QDR stated simply that it had been “assessed across several combinations of scenarios.” Importantly, however, the QDR provided a powerful framework for managing risk, breaking risk into four components: (1) force management risk, (2) operational risk, (3) institutional risk, and (4) future challenges risk; this framework would continue to be used for a decade or longer.

The 2006 QDR presented a modest evolution of the strategic concept reported in the 2001 QDR, incorporating recent experience after the attacks of September 11, 2001. The force sizing construct was refined to consider steady-state and surge requirements associated with three different families of missions: homeland defense, the war on terror and irregular warfare, and conventional campaigns. As was the case with the 2001 QDR, the 2006 QDR had very little to say about the specific scenarios that were used to assess the force.

### **The Obama Administration**

The Barack Obama administration conducted two QDRs, the results of which were reported in 2010 and 2014.

The 2010 QDR was the first truly “wartime QDR.” It gave primacy to securing favorable outcomes in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as rebalancing the current force rather than preparing for longer-term threats. This was summarized well in the tenets

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<sup>2</sup> DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., September 2001b.



of the QDR's defense strategy—prevailing in today's wars, preventing and deterring conflict, preparing to defeat adversaries and succeeding in a wide range of contingencies, and preserving and enhancing the all-volunteer force—and by CJCS ADM Michael Mullen's top three priorities: “winning today's fight,” “balancing global strategic risk,” and “enhancing the health of the force.”

The conduct of the QDR benefited from significant efforts that were begun after the 2006 QDR to develop and socialize a common set of assumptions, scenarios, and models, an effort that came to be called the “Analytic Agenda.”

These efforts reportedly had identified an array of 11 scenarios that would be used to support the QDR analyses, including stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, regime collapse in North Korea, a major conflict with China over Taiwan, Russian coercion of the Baltic states, a nuclear-armed Iran, loss of control of nuclear weapons in Pakistan, and homeland defense and cyberattacks on the United States. At about the same time, a two-day war game reportedly was conducted that examined scenarios involving wars with China and Russia and what was at the time described as “high-end asymmetric threats.” Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, apparently still dissatisfied with the initial scenarios, shortly thereafter commissioned a “Red Team” to provide an alternative set of threat scenarios.

Scenarios were bundled into one or more of several Integrated Security Constructs (ISCs), each of which aimed to represent a different hypothesized state of the world in terms of a different combination of operations that might be conducted. Unlike the preceding post–Cold War defense reviews, the force planning construct did not emphasize two nearly simultaneous major combat operations, although this combination of scenarios reportedly was assessed. Gates rejected the development of a simple bumper-sticker force sizing construct, and he sought to consider a much-wider range of scenarios in the 2010 QDR than had been accomplished in previous QDRs. Moreover, for what appeared to have been the first time, the demands of contingency operations were assumed to be additive to ongoing peacetime operations; forces for homeland defense and support to civil authorities also were included in the scenario-based analyses.

The assessment revolved around use of the three ISCs to identify the force structure and capabilities needed in the midterm (five to seven years) to conduct six missions and achieve each of four defense objectives specified by the strategy. Among the ISC scenario combinations considered were the following three:

A major stabilization operation, deterring and defeating a highly capable regional aggressor, and extending support to civil authorities in response to a catastrophic event in the United States. This scenario combination particularly stressed the force's ability to defeat a sophisticated adversary and support domestic response.

Deterring and defeating two regional aggressors, while maintaining a heightened alert posture for U.S. forces in and around the United States. This scenario combination particularly stressed the force's combined arms capacity.

A major stabilization operation, a long-duration deterrence operation in a separate theater, a medium-sized counterinsurgency mission, and extended support to civil authorities in the United States. This scenario combination particularly stressed elements of the force most heavily tasked for counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations.<sup>3</sup>

The 2014 QDR examined the force requirements associated with the “three strategic pillars” of the strategy defined in the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance: (1) defending the homeland, (2) building security globally, and (3) remaining prepared to win decisively against any adversary. The principal basis for assessing the force reportedly was the ISC-designed “ISC–B,” which is said to have been made up of four mission types conducted in overlapping time frames:

DOD’s Integrated Security Construct–B comprises four mission types (in order of priority):

- (1) Defeat/Major Combat Operations: To defeat a regional adversary in a large-scale multiphased campaign;
- (2) Deter: To prevent acts of aggression in one or more theaters by presenting a potential adversary with a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction by U.S. forces, and/or belief that the cost of the potential adversary’s action outweighs the perceived benefits;
- (3) Defend/Homeland Defense: To defend U.S. territory from direct attack by state and nonstate actors and, in the event such defense fails or in the case of natural disasters, come to the assistance of domestic civil authorities in response to a very significant or even catastrophic event; and
- (4) Steady State/Foundational Activities: Activities the Joint Force conducts by rotating forces globally to build security globally, preserve regional stability, deter adversaries, and support allies and partners.<sup>4</sup>

As the Obama administration drew to an end, there were some indications in the February 2016 proposed defense budget for fiscal year 2017 that the administration had shifted to a strategic concept that envisioned military capacity and capability to deal with the following four scenarios: (1) defending the homeland; (2) dealing with four potential contingencies, including Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran; (3) conducting a sustained global campaign against violent extremism; and (4) responding to aggression from two different adversaries with overlapping time lines.

Post–Cold War use of planning scenarios appears to differ somewhat from the utilization during the Cold War, in large measure because of the greater availability of com-

<sup>3</sup> DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., February 2010.

<sup>4</sup> DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, Washington, D.C., March 2014a.



puter simulation and other analysis tools. The typical post–Cold War approach to using scenarios for force planning begins with a given force structure (e.g., current, planned, alternative), tests the ability of that force structure to succeed with low-to-moderate risk in achieving the operational and strategic objectives associated with a number of individual planning scenarios, and then assesses the ability of the force to meet the requirements of various combinations of simultaneous or overlapping scenarios. A force that can meet these requirements at low-to-moderate risk is judged to be robust.

Most recently, the innovation of ISCs has extended this further by providing a means for specifying alternative hypothesized states of the world (individual ISCs), each of which is made up of a different combination of simultaneous and overlapping scenarios. A force that can meet the requirements of multiple ISCs also may be said to be robust.

## Observations and Conclusions

The analysis in this report details the range of considerations that have shaped scenario selection during the Cold War and post–Cold War periods and will need to be considered in any effort to improve the use of scenarios in future defense planning.

Importantly, analysis shows that the scenarios in defense planning generally have been derived from each administration’s prior conclusions about the relative importance of national security interests and about threats and challenges to these interests; national security policies and strategies; and the strategic concepts that have provided a framework for relating military forces to strategic ends. Once these matters were settled, scenario choice appeared to become a fairly simple problem, both during the Cold War and in the more than two decades since its end.

As the range of military problems of concern to defense policymakers has expanded, so have the number and range of short-term, midterm, and long-term scenarios—and the number of combinations of these scenarios—that have been considered in strategic planning. The Army may have a number of points of leverage for influencing the steps that precede scenario selection and development, through its participation in the JSPS; the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System; the development of new joint operating concepts; the Support for Strategic Analysis; and the Analytic Baseline. The question of how best to develop and use scenarios in future defense planning is the focus of a larger study, of which this report is only a first step.



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## Abbreviations

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A2/AD	antiaccess/area denial
ACV	amphibious combat vehicle
ANZUS	Australia–New Zealand–United States
ARI	Aviation Restructure Initiative
ASW	antisubmarine warfare
AVF	all-volunteer force
BCT	brigade combat team
BNSP	basic national security policy
BUR	Bottom-Up Review
CAPE	Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CCJO	Capstone Concept for Joint Operations
CEM	Concepts Evaluation Model
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINC	commander in chief
CJA	Comprehensive Joint Assessment
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
COIN	counterinsurgency
CONOP	concept of operations
CONPLAN	concept plan

CONUS	continental United States
CORM	Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces
CPG	Contingency Planning Guidance
CRA	Chairman’s Risk Assessment
CT	counterterrorism
CVA	attack aircraft carrier
CVN	aircraft carrier (nuclear propulsion)
CVS	antisubmarine warfare carrier
DAWMS	Deep Attack Weapons Mix Study
DC	Dynamic Commitment
D-day	the unnamed day on which a particular operation commences or is to commence
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DPG	Defense Planning Guidance
DPM	Draft Presidential Memorandum
DSG	Defense Strategic Guidance
DSR	Defense Strategy Review
EMT	equivalent megaton
FASTALS	Force Analysis Simulation of Theater Administrative and Logistic Support Model
FOFA	Follow-On Forces Attack
FORCEM	Force Evaluation Model
FY	fiscal year
FYDP	Future Years Defense Program
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office (previously known as the U.S. General Accounting Office)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDF	Guidance for the Development of the Force

GEF	Guidance for the Employment of the Force
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HASC	House Armed Services Committee
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
IPS	Illustrative Planning Scenario
ISC	Integrated Security Construct
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JCEO	Joint Concept for Entry Operations
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDS	Joint Data Support
JLRSE	Joint Long-Range Strategic Estimate
JLRSS	Joint Long-Range Strategic Study
JMNA	Joint Military Net Assessment
JOAC	Joint Operational Access Concept
JOC	joint operational concept
JSCP	Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan
JSIE	Joint Strategic Intelligence Estimate
JSOP	Joint Strategic Objectives Plan
JSPD	Joint Strategic Planning Document
JSPS	Joint Strategic Planning System
JSR	Joint Strategic Review
MBFR	Mutually Balanced Force Reductions
MCS	Mobility Capabilities Study
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MOP	Memorandum of Policy
MPS	Maritime Prepositioning Ship
MRC	major regional conflict
MSFD	Multi-Service Force Date

MTOF	Mission Task Organized Force
MTW	major theater war
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NDP	National Defense Panel
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NMS	National Military Strategy
NPR	National Public Radio
NSAM	National Security Action Memorandum (Kennedy/Johnson)
NSC	National Security Council
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive (Reagan)
NSDM	National Security Decision Memorandum (Nixon/Ford)
NSR	National Security Review (George H. W. Bush)
NSS	National Security Strategy
NSSD	National Security Study Directive (Reagan)
NSSM	National Security Study Memorandum (Nixon/Ford)
OA	Operational Availability
OGSI	Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative
OPLAN	operations plan
OPTEMPO	operations tempo
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OUSD	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense
PA&E	program analysis and evaluation
PD	Presidential Decision (Carter)
PDD	Presidential Decision Directive (Carter)
PERSTEMPO	personnel tempo
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PPBES	Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System



PPBS	Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRM	Presidential Review Memorandum (Carter)
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
QRMRR	Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report
RCC	regional combatant command
RDJTF	Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RSAS	RAND Strategy Assessment System
SAGA	Studies, Analysis, and Gaming Agency
SASC	Senate Armed Services Committee
SCMR	Strategic Choices and Management Review
SLBM	submarine-launched ballistic missile
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
SNDV	strategic nuclear delivery vehicle
SSA	Support for Strategic Analysis
SSBN	ballistic missile submarine
SSC	smaller-scale contingency
SSN	attack submarine
TAA	Total Army Analysis
TOR	terms of reference
TW	throw weight
UCP	Unified Command Plan
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VIC	Vector-in-Command
WH	warhead
WMD	weapon of mass destruction
WMD-E	weapon of mass destruction elimination



## Introduction

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This report describes the elements of defense planning for conventional forces during the 1945–2014 period, with an emphasis on the strategic concepts and the contingency scenarios that were used to guide force structure planning.

By *defense planning*, we primarily mean “strategic analysis” or “strategic planning” involving the translation of national security policy and strategy into military ends, ways, and means. This is not to be confused with the more detailed “operational planning” related to operations plans (OPLANs) and concept plans (CONPLANs) developed by combatant commanders, or with “crisis response planning,” which is necessarily more ad hoc while also having an operational orientation.<sup>1</sup>

John M. Collins described five categories of U.S. defense plans that interlock and overlap while still remaining distinct:

- *Concept formulation* addresses how to satisfy aims and missions, and comprises plans in which U.S. national security interests, objectives, and policy guidelines are developed or are inferred from public and private pronouncement of the President and Congress.
- *Requirement plans* describe what resources must be allocated to do what needs to be done by setting forth strategic concepts and supporting force postures that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) deem essential to U.S. security, given guidance and assumptions concerning the nation’s interests, objectives, commitments, policies, and prevailing threat appraisals, balanced by allied contributions. Until the

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<sup>1</sup> We focus on the sorts of activities conducted within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)–led Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System (PPBES); the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)–led Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS); and the services, including analytic processes that undergird support to strategic analysis, which U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 8260.05 describes as analysis that “Support[s] deliberations by DoD senior leadership on strategy and planning, programming, budgeting, and execution system (PPBES) matters, including force sizing, shaping, and capability development” (see DoD, “Support for Strategic Analysis (SSA),” Washington, D.C., DoD Directive 8260.05, July 7, 2011).

DoD cites the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the Defense Planning Guidance (DPG), the Comprehensive Joint Assessment, Support to Strategic Analysis, and the Total Army Analysis as being among the studies and processes used to establish requirements for the military’s force structure overall and the Army in particular. See “DoD Opposes Proposed Independent Review of Army Structure, Size,” *Inside Defense*, December 18, 2012.

early 1980s, such assessments began with strictly military, “minimum risk” force requirements, until the focus was shifted to more fiscally responsible “prudent risk” force requirements.

- *Capability plans*, including OPLANs and CONPLANs, describe how to do what can be done with existing resources. They are predicated on U.S. peacetime posture and developed on the basis of available military and civilian capabilities. The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP), prepared by the JCS, provides guidance and promises forces for the regional combatant commands (RCCs), and the RCCs submit replies to the JCS for approval. As the RCCs may plan for many different contingencies, many such plans may prescribe essentially identical forces for different contingencies.
- *Mobilization plans* create a bridge between requirements and capabilities in war-time or other national emergency and the steps needed to assemble, organize, and otherwise bring needed assets to an acceptable state of readiness.
- *Crisis plans* help to sharpen perceptions of national interests and options and familiarize participants with the capabilities and limitations of other players in advance of actual crises or emergencies.<sup>2</sup>

The present effort focuses primarily on the role of scenarios in requirements plans, with somewhat more incidental treatment of the role of scenarios in the other types of plans.

In its January 1993 review of the George H. W. Bush administration’s Base Force study, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) reported that there are five critical policy issues that need to be addressed in making force structure decisions: (1) the nation’s interests; (2) potential threats to those interests; (3) the strategy for countering these threats, including the size, nature, and number of contingencies that the United States should be prepared to engage in at any one time; (4) the ways that military doctrine will be defined in the future; and (5) the level of risk the nation is prepared to take in not being able to protect its vital interests.<sup>3</sup> To this list of critical issues, we would suggest adding the level of resources that are to be made available for defense purposes, which has been at least as important historically as the other factors mentioned.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The foregoing is based on John M. Collins, *U.S. Defense Planning: A Critique*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982, pp. 155–159.

<sup>3</sup> GAO, *Force Structure: Issues Involving the Base Force*, Washington, D.C.: GAO/NSIAD-93-65, January 1993, p. 4. Please note that the office changed its name to the U.S. Government Accountability Office in 2004; we use the same abbreviation for both names.

<sup>4</sup> For more detailed analysis of post–Cold War defense planning that assesses DoD’s efforts to balance between ends, ways, and means, see Eric V. Larson, David T. Orletsky, and Kristin Leuschner, *Defense Planning in a Decade of Change: Lessons from the Base Force, Bottom-Up Review, and Quadrennial Defense Review*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1387-AF, 2001; and Eric V. Larson, Derek Eaton, Michael E. Linick, John E. Peters, Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Keith Walters, Stephanie Young, H. G. Massey, and Michelle Darrah Ziegler,

Accordingly, to address its subject matter, the study highlights and summarizes what the open literature has to say about defense planners' understanding of the following sorts of key strategic planning assumptions:

- the nation's national security interests
- basic national security policies (BNSPs)
- potential threats to national security interests
- the best strategy for countering these threats
- the ways that military doctrine would be defined in the future
- the strategic concepts, force sizing constructs, and scenarios and combinations used, including the size, nature, and number of conventional contingencies that the United States should be prepared to engage at any one time<sup>5</sup>
- the resources that would be made available for defense
- the level of risk that policymakers were prepared to accept in not being able to simultaneously protect all national security interests.<sup>6</sup>

The analysis purposely sacrifices detail in favor of historical sweep to highlight larger patterns in the use of defense planning scenarios in Cold War and post-Cold War defense planning that can illuminate the future use of scenarios in conventional force planning. The review also is somewhat selective in accenting the implications for Army ground forces at the expense of other elements of the force structure, including tactical, theater, and strategic nuclear weapons. It also is worth noting that, because of declassification policies, there is considerably more publicly available information on national security and defense decisionmaking for the earlier years than for the later ones. Nonetheless, one can generally gain a good sense of key details through a careful review of publicly available documentation, congressional testimony, scholarly analyses, media reporting, and other sources to understand the logic and outputs of conventional force planning.

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*Defense Planning in a Time of Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of the 2001–2014 Quadrennial Defense Reviews, and Implications for the Army*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1309-A, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> DoD Directive 8260.05 defines *scenario* as follows:

An account or synopsis of a projected course of action or events, with a focus on the strategic level of warfare. Scenarios include information such as threat and friendly politico-military contexts and backgrounds, assumptions, constraints, limitations, strategic objectives, and other planning considerations. A scenario is intended to represent a plausible challenge and may not reflect the most likely events. (DoD, 2011)

<sup>6</sup> GAO identified this framework as the basic framework that has been used to assess military requirements via DoD's PPBES and the CJCS's JSPS. See GAO, 1993.

## Approach

The analysis involved a comparative review and synthesis of official and other publicly available sources describing the sorts of considerations that went into national security and defense planning over the 1945–2014 period that set the context for establishing strategic concepts and selection of planning scenarios. Among the principal official sources used were the following:

- the OSD History Office’s series of official histories, titled *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, which to date has covered the 1945–1973 period
- the JCS History Office’s series of official histories, titled *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, which to date has covered the 1945–1980 period, as well as *Council of War: A History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, which covers from 1942 to 1991
- the Department of State’s Foreign Relations of the United States, which to date has covered developments through 1976<sup>7</sup>
- the JCS’s United States Military Posture and Joint Military Net Assessment (JMNA), from various years
- declassified national security planning, defense, and intelligence documents available through the various presidential libraries managed by the National Archives and Records Administration, and other sources
- DoD’s annual reports to Congress, covering the 1962–2005 period
- various releases of the National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and National Military Strategy (NMS)
- the various defense strategy reviews (DSRs) that have been undertaken since 1989, including the Base Force study (1989–1992), the Bottom-Up Review (BUR), and the QDRs of 1997, 2001, 2006, 2010, and 2014
- budget materials from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) website, especially the annual volume titled National Defense Budget Estimates
- congressional testimony on administration defense reviews, budgets, and related matters
- the U.S. Army Center for Military History’s annual histories of the Department of the Army.

The study has several limitations. First, by design, the study relied only on unclassified (including declassified) sources, although many details associated with the development of scenarios, scenario assumptions, and the analytic use of scenarios remain classified. Given this constraint, we believed that a comparative analysis framework using unclassified sources, such as declassified strategy documents, studies, memos, and

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<sup>7</sup> Office of the Historian, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1945–1988.

similar primary documents, and official histories that rely on these sources, offered the greatest chance of generating detailed insights into internal deliberations and debates regarding the development and use of defense planning scenarios.

Second, although there are occasional comments on these issues, the present effort does not aim to assess the effectiveness of defense planning, for example, in terms of the balance between ends, ways, and means, or the extent to which plans were able to anticipate or hedge against actual future developments. Readers who are interested in these sorts of issues may find two earlier RAND studies of defense planning in the post–Cold War era helpful in addressing these sorts of issues:

- Eric V. Larson, David T. Orletsky, and Kristin Leuschner, *Defense Planning in a Decade of Change: Lessons from the Base Force, Bottom-Up Review, and Quadrennial Defense Review*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1387-AF, 2001.
- Eric V. Larson, Derek Eaton, Michael E. Linick, John E. Peters, Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Keith Walters, Stephanie Young, H. G. Massey, and Michelle Darrah Ziegler, *Defense Planning in a Time of Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of the 2001–2014 Quadrennial Defense Reviews, and Implications for the Army*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1309-A, 2018.

Third, we note that, although they can sometimes delve into technical analytic issues, congressional testimony and public-release documents, such as annual budget documents and unclassified strategy documents, usually serve purposes that are very different from those associated with documents generated during internal deliberations. The purposes of these public expressions of defense planning and strategy can include signaling to various foreign and domestic audiences, or explaining, justifying, or defending administration strategy, policy, and budgetary decisions. Readers are accordingly advised to read each source in light of its context, intended audience, and larger purposes.

Although we do not believe these limitations have unduly hampered the analysis, we will leave it to the reader to make his or her own judgment.

## Organization of This Report

This report is organized as follows:

- Chapters Two through Seven trace the evolution of strategic and conventional force planning during the Cold War, from the Harry Truman administration through the Ronald Reagan administration, a period when planning scenarios focused primarily on Communist Soviet and Chinese threats and challenges.

- Chapter Eight describes defense planning scenarios during the George H. W. Bush administration’s Base Force study, when a shift to regional threat-based scenarios and capabilities-based planning first took place.
- Chapter Nine traces planning during the Bill Clinton administration, including the 1993 BUR and 1997 QDR.
- Chapter Ten traces planning during the George W. Bush administration, including the 2001 and 2006 QDRs.
- Chapter Eleven traces planning during the Barack Obama administration, including the 2010 and 2014 QDRs.
- Chapter Twelve integrates and synthesizes broader patterns and lessons over the entire period considered.

To provide a comparative framework for the analysis, in each chapter, we attempt to cover key planning assumptions about the prevailing conceptions of national interests, BNSPs, threats, strategy, doctrine, strategic concepts, force sizing constructs, planning scenarios, and other foundations for defense planning.



## The Truman Administration, 1945–1953

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During the first decade and a half of the Cold War, although the strategic concept for conventional force planning changed as understanding of the potential role of nuclear weapons increased over that time, conventional force planning was generally preoccupied with a single contingency—an all-out global conflict with communist forces, including Soviet and allied forces in Europe, and a major war with China in Northeast or Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup>

The Truman administration established both the intellectual foundations that would guide national security planning during the Cold War and a set of national security objectives and programs that would live on well beyond the administration. Nonetheless, defense planning during this period was conducted in an environment of significant uncertainty about Soviet intentions, capabilities, and force dispositions—but lacked guidance for prioritizing among various theaters in a global contest with the Soviet Union,<sup>2</sup> or on the conditions under which the employment of nuclear forces might be

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<sup>1</sup> For excellent reviews of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking during the Truman administration, see Seyom Brown, *The Faces of Power: Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Obama*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015, pp. 17–53, and John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy, Revised and Expanded Edition*, Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2005b, pp. 3–124. For a concise review of the assumptions that animated the Truman administration's foreign and defense policy, see Michael M. Boll, *National Security Planning: Roosevelt Through Reagan*, Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1988, pp. 40–94. The official JCS's histories for the period are James F. Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1945–1947*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996; Kenneth W. Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1947–1949*, Washington, D.C., Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996; James F. Schnabel and Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1950–1951: The Korean War; Part One*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Historical Office, 1986; and Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1950–1952*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998. The official OSD histories are Steven L. Rearden, *The Formative Years 1947–1950, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, Vol. 1, Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1984; and Doris M. Condit, *The Test of War, 1950–1953, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> According to Secretary of Defense James Forrestal's diary, "[Secretary of State George] Marshall stated that the objective of our policy from this point on would be the restoration of balance of power in both Europe and Asia and that all actions would be viewed in light of this objective." Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, New York: The Viking Press, 1951, p. 341.

authorized. Accordingly, defense policy was largely driven by estimates of the Soviet threat, related JCS war planning scenarios and putative service requirements, and the availability of resources. As would be the case throughout the period, in sizing U.S. force requirements, JCS war planners began with a contemporary understanding of Soviet and allied capabilities, trends, force dispositions, and plans; assessed the potential contributions of U.S. allies; and considered overall U.S., North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and Soviet force balances.<sup>3</sup> This was decidedly a threat-based approach.

The principal force planning process during this period was that of the JCS, which evolved somewhat over time. In late 1945, the JCS began developing its first concept of operations (CONOP) for a war with the Soviet Union,<sup>4</sup> and shortly thereafter began producing Emergency War Plans that assumed that a war with the Soviet Union could occur at any time, and which were used to guide short-term force planning efforts. On July 14, 1952, Memorandum of Policy (MOP) No. 84 established a Joint Program for Planning—the forebear of the current JSPS—that included a family of three plans (applicable to either peace or war), which were designed to translate national policy into short-, medium-, and long-range strategic objectives extending ten years into the future: the JSCP, the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (JSOP), and the Joint Long-Range Strategic Estimate (JLRSE). These will be described in greater detail later in this chapter.<sup>5</sup>

These military planning efforts, based largely on studies, war games, and military judgment, focused solely on military requirements that were resource-unconstrained and generally disconnected from fiscal guidance and executive branch budgeting activities, and occasionally disconnected from national policy and strategy. Moreover, the weakness of the CJCS relative to the service chiefs during this period ensured that the force requirements established in the midterm JSOP were little more than a stapling together of service wish lists, rather than an integrated statement of joint capability requirements, and that recurring presidential interventions would be required to resolve interservice disputes.

## Historical Review

During this period, there was a heavy reliance on “military judgment” regarding the risks and potential shape of a Soviet offensive: Although the JCS generally deemed

<sup>3</sup> An important consideration throughout the Cold War period was the shape of military and other assistance programs that might improve allies’ military and other capabilities to resist Soviet-Pact aggression, as such programs generally were deemed more cost-effective than deploying additional U.S. forces.

<sup>4</sup> Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1945–1950*, New York: Garland Publishing, 1988, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> For a history of the evolution of the Joint Program for Planning and the JSPS, see Walter S. Poole, *The Evolution of the Joint Strategic Planning System, 1947–1989*, Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Joint Secretariat, Joint Staff, September 1989.

the risks of such an offensive to be fairly low, the potential consequences were considered to be quite dire and likely to require a full mobilization on the part of the United States. Accordingly, defense planning relied extensively on numerous studies conducted by the Joint Staff that aimed to delineate the shape of the threat from the Soviet Union in terms of likely axes of attack and penetration,<sup>6</sup> to specify a strategic concept to meet this threat, and to flesh out more-detailed deployment and war plans to meet that threat, the execution of which would hinge on national mobilization. These activities also were aided by detailed studies and war games that were conducted during the period. Analysis during the period generally focused on a global war scenario, the assessment of forces in place and mobilization capabilities, and the potential Soviet advance based on local force balances and the mobilization and deployment of additional forces by each side. These analyses were conducted in the face of significant uncertainties about actual Soviet intentions, capabilities, force dispositions, and plans, necessitating consideration of a wide range of worst-case and other scenarios and assumptions.

Several major factors influenced force planning during the immediate postwar years: the massive demobilization of U.S. military forces following the conclusion of World War II; the growing understanding of the threat presented by the Soviet Union and the role the United States needed to assume in the world;<sup>7</sup> the U.S. monopoly of nuclear weapons; and debates regarding the relative importance of the extension of Soviet control over new areas of the world on the one hand and U.S. and Western industrial strength based on a sound economy on the other. And with the 1946 congressional elections, there were increasing pressures to reduce taxes and government expenditures and to economize on defense.

With the National Security Act of 1947, the principal U.S. national security and defense institutions were created, including the National Security Council (NSC), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and DoD, the latter of which absorbed and subordinated the War and Navy Departments while creating separate Departments of the Army and Air Force.<sup>8</sup> The National Security Act of 1947 also established, as the first duty of the JCS, the requirement “to prepare strategic plans and to provide for the strategic direction of the military forces.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For example, following development of basic war plan PINCHER, a number of more detailed studies were done to develop the plan at the regional level; this planning helped to clarify, for example, the importance of Turkey in defeating a Soviet attack toward the Mediterranean and Middle East. The most important of the war plans developed during this period are well described in Ross, 1988, pp. 25–52.

<sup>7</sup> Although there was a growing understanding that the Soviet Union posed a threat, there were innumerable uncertainties about the Soviets and their existing and planned military capabilities; consideration of the widest possible range eventualities in a global war may have helped to hedge against these uncertainties.

<sup>8</sup> The JCS organization, by comparison, had been created during World War II.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the development of the national security establishment during this period, see Boll, 1988, pp. 56–64.

Even after the unification of the services under DoD, however, rather than embracing an integrated approach to defining the force structure and defense programs required to address threats to the nation, strategic planning comprised independent service efforts that culminated in somewhat haphazard estimates of force requirements in which ends, ways, and means were never systematically reconciled. Efforts to reform and rationalize defense planning would continue for the next 70 years.

The larger strategic context was shaped by a succession of studies on the emerging Soviet threat, U.S. strategy toward Russia, and strategy and policy decisions. The studies included U.S. diplomat George Kennan's February 1946 "Long Telegram" to Marshall and his July 1947 "Mr. X" article, as well as Special Counsel to the President Clark M. Clifford's September 1946 study of relations with the Soviet Union and a number of NSC studies, notably including NSC 68.<sup>10</sup> The key policy and programmatic decisions included the Truman Doctrine, which declared in March 1947 that the United States would provide political, military, and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces, and extended assistance to Greece and Turkey to contain the Soviet threat. The decisions also included the June 1947 Marshall Plan, which proposed a massive economic assistance program to rebuild European market economies, the formation of NATO in 1949, and the U.S. pledge of a nuclear umbrella to NATO Europe (and later, Asian allies).<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the administration's failure to provide clear policy guidance on the circumstances under which employment of nuclear weapons might be authorized in a prospective conflict with the Soviets created significant ambiguities for defense planning.

Between 1945 and 1950, the U.S. Army shrank from nearly 6 million to 593,000 active-duty military personnel, at a rate largely determined by the capabilities of transportation systems to bring troops home and administrative processes to discharge them.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, the Soviets attempted to consolidate a sphere of influ-

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<sup>10</sup> George F. Kennan, telegram to Secretary of State George Marshall ("Long Telegram"), Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers, February 22, 1946; George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, 1946–1947; Clark M. Clifford, "American Relations with the Soviet Union" ["Clifford-Elsey Report"], September 24, 1946; and NSC, NSC 68, *A Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers, April 14, 1950. In addition, such significant events as the Chinese Communist victory and Soviet test of an atomic weapon in 1949 increased the sense of urgency for national security planners.

<sup>11</sup> Announced by Secretary of State George C. Marshall in June 1947.

<sup>12</sup> This does not include the Army Air Force personnel who would form the United States Air Force. Edward A. Kolodziej, *The Uncommon Defense and Congress, 1945–1963*, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1966, p. 35.

ence and fill power vacuums in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) that had emerged near the end of the war:<sup>13</sup>

A division of Europe into spheres of influence—as implied by the Churchill-Stalin agreement—would leave little room for the Europeans to determine their future: that is why Roosevelt worried about it. However much he might have justified the war to himself in balance of power terms, he had explained it to the American people as Wilson might have done—as a fight for self-determination. Churchill had gone along with this in 1941 by accepting the Atlantic Charter, F.D.R.’s restatement of Wilsonian principles. A major Anglo-American objective, therefore, was to reconcile these ideals with Stalin’s territorial demands, as well as his insistence on a sphere of influence that would ensure the presence of “friendly” nations along the Soviet Union’s postwar borders. Roosevelt and Churchill repeatedly pressed Stalin to allow free elections in the Baltic States, Poland, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. At the Yalta conference, he agreed to do so, but without the slightest intention of honoring his commitment.<sup>14</sup>

Accordingly, the Soviets occupied Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary; annexed Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Eastern Poland; and engaged in political warfare, including support for communist popular fronts, election-fixing, and coups, to influence developments elsewhere in Europe. The Soviets also challenged U.S. and Western interests in a succession of diplomatic disputes and crises, including in Iran (1946), Greece and Turkey (1947), Czechoslovakia and Berlin (1948), China (1949), and Korea (1950). Each in its own way was symptomatic of the rising tensions between the war-time allies in the early Cold War period.

During this period, there is little indication of a strong linkage between conceptions of national security interests, national policy, and strategy in the postwar world on the one hand and war planning and conventional force planning on the other.<sup>15</sup> As late as 1949, moreover, senior policymakers rejected the idea that the United States would need to make a more or less permanent contribution to European allies’ defense.<sup>16</sup>

During these early years following World War II, U.S. war planning focused primarily on scenarios involving the Soviet threat to central Europe, northern and

<sup>13</sup> In particular, resulting from the diminution of British and French political, military, and economic power. According to Friedman, the Americans were completely surprised by the Soviet Union’s postwar turn away from the West, but the British Foreign Office had fewer illusions and, in 1946, was predicting that “the Soviets could not forego the temptation to fill the likely power vacuum in Western Europe.” See Norman Friedman, *The Fifty-Year War: Conflict and Strategy in the Cold War*, Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2000, p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, New York: Penguin Books, 2005a, pp. 20–21.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Kolodziej, 1966, pp. 33–123.

<sup>16</sup> Hubert Zimmerman, “The Improbable Permanence of a Commitment: America’s Troop Presence in Europe During the Cold War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Winter 2009.

southern Europe, Turkey, the Middle East, and Iran.<sup>17</sup> In 1945, the JCS judged that the Soviets had the military capability to overrun Western Europe at any time between 1945 and 1948; and, by 1946, the Soviets were judged by the JCS to be capable of mounting simultaneous large-scale invasions of Italy and the Middle East, including major offensive operations against Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Nonetheless, the JCS did not believe at the time that there was any immediate danger of hostilities, in large measure because of the U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons.<sup>18</sup> By July 1948, the Short-Range Emergency War Plan assumed that war with the Soviets was a distinct possibility, and that “wide-ranging, concurrent and effective offensives in virtually every major region of the globe” would be required.<sup>19</sup>

NSC 20/4, approved in November 1948, provided Secretary of Defense Forrestal with the comprehensive statement of national policy to guide defense planning that he had requested. NSC 20/4 described the threat from the Soviet Union, in part, as follows:

2. The will and ability of the leaders of the [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] USSR to pursue policies which threaten the security of the United States constitute the greatest single danger to the U.S. within the foreseeable future.

9. Present estimates indicate that the current Soviet capabilities mentioned in 7-a above will progressively increase and that by no later than 1955 the USSR will probably be capable of serious air attacks against the United States with atomic, biological and chemical weapons, of more extensive submarine operations (including the launching of short-range guided missiles), and of airborne operations to seize advance bases. However, the USSR could not, even then, successfully undertake an invasion of the United States as long as effective U.S. military forces remained in being. Soviet capabilities for overrunning western Europe and the Near East and for occupying parts of the Far East will probably still exist by 1958.<sup>20</sup>

NSC 20/4 also established U.S. objectives in a war with the Soviet Union that would remain essentially unchanged into the Dwight Eisenhower administration (see Figure 2.1).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For a well-regarded discussion on U.S. efforts to establish a mobilization base for war with the Soviet Union, see Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> See Ross, 1988, pp. 5–8.

<sup>19</sup> Robert P. Haffa, Jr., *The Half War: Planning U.S. Rapid Deployment Forces to Meet a Limited Contingency, 1960–1983*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> NSC, NSC 20/4, *Report by the National Security Council on U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security*, November 23, 1948.

<sup>21</sup> These U.S. objectives were later endorsed by the Eisenhower administration in the annex to NSC 162/2 of October 30, 1953, which established the BNSP for that administration. NSC, NSC 162/2, *A Report to the*



Figure 2.1

U.S. Objectives in a War with the Soviet Union, November 1948-June 1953

ANNEX

U. S. OBJECTIVES VIS-A-VIS THE USSR IN THE EVENT OF WAR  
 (The following paragraphs are taken verbatim from NSC 20/4, approved in November, 1948. They also formed an annex to NSC 153/1, approved in June, 1953. This subject is currently under review by the NSC Planning Board.)

1. In the event of war with the USSR we should endeavor by successful military and other operations to create conditions which would permit satisfactory accomplishment of U. S. objectives without a predetermined requirement for unconditional surrender. War aims supplemental to our peace-time aims should include:

a. Eliminating Soviet Russian domination in areas outside the borders of any Russian state allowed to exist after the war.

b. Destroying the structure of relationships by which leaders of the All-Union Communist Party have been able to exert moral and disciplinary authority over individual citizens, or groups of citizens, in countries not under communist control.

c. Assuring that any regime or regimes which may exist on traditional Russian territory in the aftermath of a war:

(1) Do not have sufficient military power to wage aggressive war.

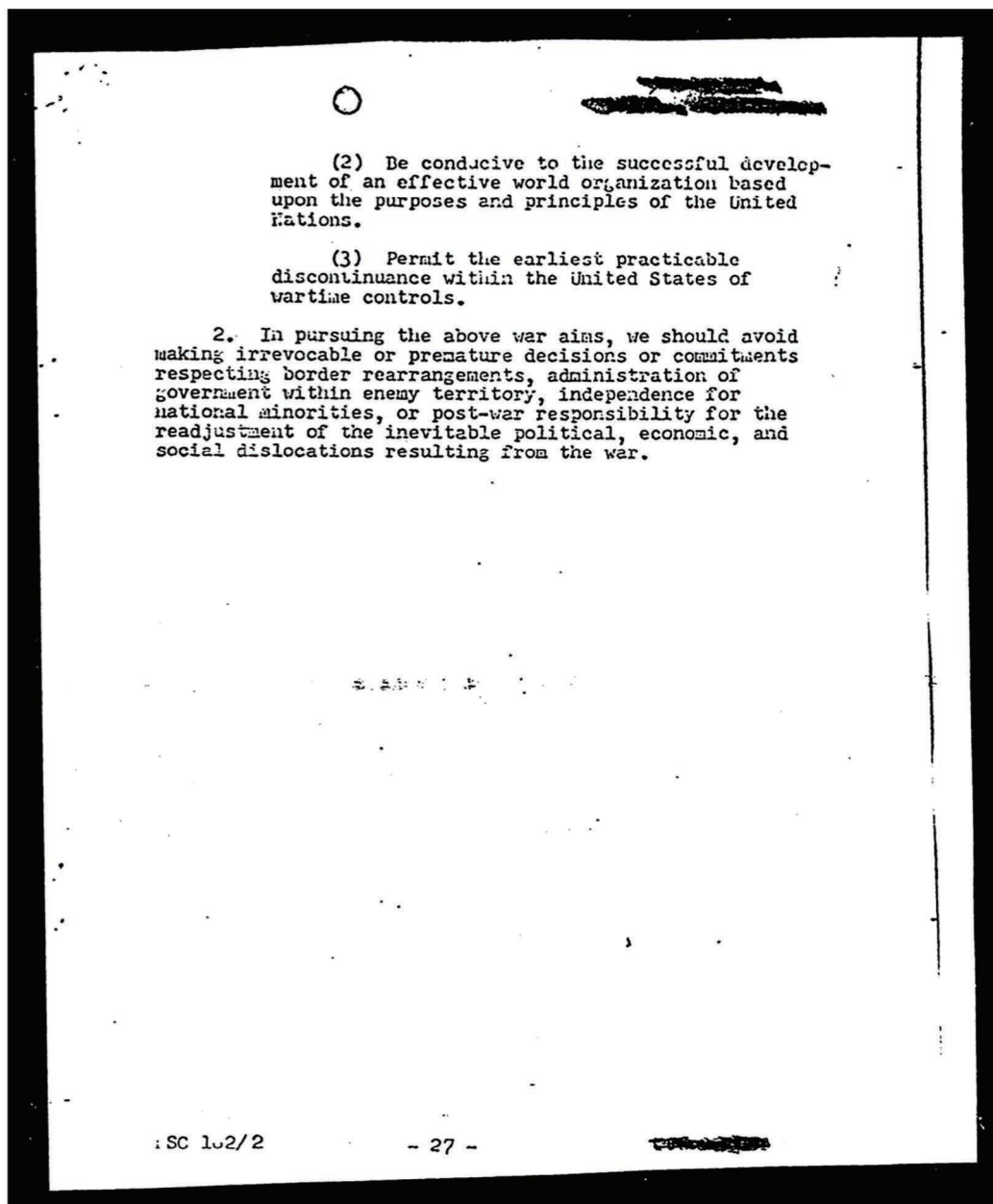
(2) Impose nothing resembling the present iron curtain over contacts with the outside world.

d. In addition, if any bolshevik regime is left in any part of the Soviet Union, insuring that it does not control enough of the military-industrial potential of the Soviet Union to enable it to wage war on comparable terms with any other regime or regimes which may exist on traditional Russian territory.

e. Seeking to create postwar conditions which will:

(1) Prevent the development of power relationships dangerous to the security of the United States and international peace.

Figure 2.1–Continued



SOURCE: NSC, NSC 162/2, 1953, pp. 26–27.

RAND RR21731/1-2.1



Moreover, for the fiscal year (FY) 1950 budget, the services recommended the following force structure: “Army, 12 Regular, 34 National Guard, and 25 Reserve divisions; Navy, 993 active ships and 1,657 Reserve ships (of which 434 and 508, respectively, would be of major combatant types); Marine Corps, 2 divisions and 2 air wings; Air Force, 70 groups.”<sup>22</sup> The associated cost of the recommended force was more than twice the budget allowed to the services under the established ceiling.<sup>23</sup> This chronic inability to develop integrated joint force requirements—and force requirements that conformed to budgetary ceilings—would continue to plague defense planning until the end of—and beyond—the Eisenhower administration.

By late 1949, the JCS finally had developed a preliminary strategic concept that provided a framework for establishing force requirements:

For guidance, the JCS approved a two-part strategic concept that restated the basic tasks of HALFMOON/FLEETWOOD, but on a reduced scale. Part “A” of the concept called for the protection of the Western Hemisphere, the maintenance of overseas lines of communication, a strategic air offensive conducted from bases in the United Kingdom and/or Iceland and Okinawa, and air and sea operations in the Mediterranean as far east as Tunisia and elsewhere to the extent permitted by budgetary limitations. Part “B” stated general requirements for the fulfillment of political commitments, the maintenance of bases in Okinawa and Alaska, mobilization planning, and the provision of administrative and support elements for strategic operations.<sup>24</sup>

In December 1949, the JCS approved a CONOP for a war with the Soviets that remained unchanged until 1952. As described in the official JCS history of the period:

According to OFFTACKLE, the United States would wage a strategic offensive in Western Eurasia and conduct a strategic defensive in the Far East. The armed forces’ missions (later repeated in NSC 68) were as follows:

- a. Provide a reasonable initial defense of the Western Hemisphere and essential allied areas, particularly in Europe.
- b. Protect a minimum mobilization base.
- c. Conduct an air-sea offensive to destroy vital elements of the Soviet war-making capacity and to impede enemy offensive operations.
- d. Defend necessary base areas and lines of communication.

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*National Security Council by the Executive Secretary on Basic National Security Policy*, October 30, 1953.

<sup>22</sup> Condit, 1996, p. 123.

<sup>23</sup> Condit, 1996, p. 123.

<sup>24</sup> Condit, 1988, p. iii.

e. Provide aid to allied nations.

In the war's opening phase (D-day to D+3 months), the USSR was expected to launch offensives in Western Europe and the Middle East, an aerial bombardment of the British Isles, campaigns with limited objectives in the Far East, air-sea offensives against allied lines of communications, and selective air attacks upon North America. Obviously, NATO's ground strength was too small for a successful defense of Western Europe. Necessarily, then, the allies would concede most of continental Europe and strive to secure the United Kingdom, protect the West Africa-Mediterranean littoral, and defend the Cairo-Suez area. Since Spain probably would elect to remain neutral at this stage, French Morocco should serve as the initial assembly area for U.S. forces.<sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless, as late as September 1952, there continued to be significant divergence in the positions of the service chiefs with respect to interpreting the strategic concept for war and the relative priority of military tasks;<sup>26</sup> these divisions would continue through the Eisenhower administration.

That said, the FY 1950 budget presented by President Truman and approved by Congress did not support the minimum forces recommended by the JCS to meet national security requirements. According to the JCS's official history,

President Truman overruled his military advisers and accepted the calculated risk inherent in smaller military forces. His decision was implicitly endorsed by Congress, which sought to alter the administration's approved balance of forces but not to increase the total resources devoted to military security.<sup>27</sup>

Late 1949 also saw two key developments that precipitated the early 1950 review of national security policy, known as NSC 68: The Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb in September, and the Chinese communists established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October.<sup>28</sup> These events greatly focused policymakers'

<sup>25</sup> Poole, 1998, p. 83. *D-day* refers to the unnamed day on which a particular operation commences or is to commence.

<sup>26</sup> See Joint Strategic Plans Committee, *Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Divergency in Views Regarding Priority of Tasks and Other Service Disagreements*, Washington, D.C., JCS 2143/24, September 4, 1952; and Joint Strategic Plans Committee, *Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee on Basic Issues Underlying Divergent Views on the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, 1 July 1953–1 July 1954*, Washington, D.C., JSPC 877/257, October 12, 1953.

<sup>27</sup> Condit, 1996, p. 137.

<sup>28</sup> On January 5, 1950, the NSC ordered the preparation of a report "assessing and appraising the objectives, commitments and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power," (Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1950–1952*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998, p. 3). Notably, the creation of NATO also occurred in 1949, with Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States serving as founding members.

attention on the balance of forces between the Soviet Union and world communism on the one hand and the United States and its allies on the other.<sup>29</sup> Also in late 1949, members of NATO agreed on their own strategic concept.

President Truman's proposed defense budget for FY 1951 originally had envisioned a 10-percent reduction in defense resources from the 1950 level to about \$13 billion: The budget aimed to maintain ten divisions, 12 separate regiments, and 48 anti-aircraft artillery battalions in the Army; 652 ships in the Navy, including 238 major combatant vessels and six Marine Corps battalion landing teams; and 48 wings and 13 separate Air Force squadrons.<sup>30</sup> The planning for FY 1951 would be thrown into disarray as a result of adverse national security trends and the NSC 68 strategy review—and even more so by the onset of the Korean War in June 1950.

Completed in April 1950, NSC 68 anticipated that, by 1954, the U.S. nuclear deterrent would be substantially offset by the Soviets' growing nuclear inventory,<sup>31</sup> and that the United States would need to rely on both nuclear forces and large conventional forces to contain the Soviet Union and to meet the requirements of lesser contingencies.<sup>32</sup> Truman's efforts to economize defense spending, on the other hand, put downward pressure on resources and forces; NSC 68 did not recommend any particular concept or size for U.S. conventional forces, but instead argued the case for an across-the-board buildup of capabilities to be completed by 1954, when U.S.-Soviet parity in nuclear weapons would be reached.<sup>33</sup>

An early 1950 JCS risk assessment conducted in response to a request in Johnson's FY 1952 budgetary guidelines suggested the inadequacy of the requested budgets: The JCS argued that military assessments be based on Soviet capabilities rather than intentions, and judged that the tentative FY 1952 budget ceiling "would be critically inadequate to meet the national security requirements of the United States."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See NSC, NSC 68, 1950.

<sup>30</sup> Watson, 1998, pp. 10–11. When Defense Secretary Louis Johnson announced the Army budget ceiling for FY 1951, Chief of Staff of the Army Joseph Collins told him, "This is the last cut in the Army that I will be able to accept" (see Watson, 1998, p. 12).

<sup>31</sup> The NSC estimated that the Soviets would have 200 atomic bombs by 1954. Indeed, this would, in January 1954, lead Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to announce a policy of defending U.S. allies through the "deterrent of massive retaliatory power"; although nuclear weapons were not explicitly mentioned by Dulles, the intent was clear (see John Foster Dulles, "The Evolution of Foreign Policy," address to the Council of Foreign Relations, New York: U.S. Department of State, Press Release No. 81, January 12, 1954).

<sup>32</sup> Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945–1952; NSC-68, 1950," Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, undated; William W. Kaufmann, *Planning Conventional Forces, 1950–80*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1982; Haffa, 1984; Robert P. Haffa, Jr., *Rational Methods, Prudent Choices: Planning U.S. Forces*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988.

<sup>33</sup> Kaufmann, 1982, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Watson, 1998, pp. 15.

The following provides a succinct summary of the Truman administration's strategic concept and posture, and the estimate of strategic risk associated with the concept, in the period preceding the onset of the Korean War:

Before the Korean War, the Truman administration maintained a relatively small number of forces-in-being and spent only a modest amount on procurement of new weapons systems. The primary consideration was a belief that the next war would be modeled after World War II. This meant that we could best deter the Soviet Union not by the prospect of an immediate and powerful response to attack (although we had an atomic monopoly at the time), but by the certainty of inflicting eventual defeat after total mobilization of our resources. This strategy ran high risks in the short run because of confidence in long-run factors.<sup>35</sup>

In June 1950, North Korea crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea, and the United States found itself in a hot war on the Korean peninsula. Truman would state the broad outlines of policy in July 1950: The United States would fight in Korea, build up overall U.S. strength, and create a worldwide collective security network.<sup>36</sup> The war and the new policy necessitated an increase in force structure well above those envisaged in the FY 1951 budget request, but well below the estimated requirements the JCS divined from NSC 68.<sup>37</sup>

Thereafter, administration defense planning would become preoccupied not just with the requirements of the Korean War but also with a wider range of other national security considerations:<sup>38</sup>

The beginning of war in June 1950 confronted the three-year-old Department of Defense with an immediate challenge to fight and to prepare for other anticipated contingencies. The United States undertook to revitalize and rearm NATO and to find a way to bring still-occupied West Germany into the service of Western European defense. In Asia, the Korean War intensified concern about the security of Indochina, establishment of a new peaceful relationship with Japan, and creation

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<sup>35</sup> Leslie H. Gelb and Arnold M. Kuzmack, "General Purpose Forces," in Henry Owen, ed., *The Next Phase in Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1973, p. 212.

<sup>36</sup> Condit, 1988, p. iii.

<sup>37</sup> As described by Kaufmann,

NSC-68 itself did not recommend any particular concept or size for U.S. conventional forces. Instead it argued the case for an across-the-board buildup of capabilities to be completed by 1954, when it was estimated that a nuclear stalemate between the United States and the Soviet Union would be reached. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were left with the responsibility to give form and substance to the buildup. They did so by dividing the world into regions and estimating U.S. military requirements by geographic area. When their estimates were added up, they proved too large for any conceivable budget. Accordingly, they were scaled down to about twenty-seven Army and Marine Corps divisions, 408 warships, and a tactical air force of about forty-one Air Force and Marine Corps fighter attack wings. (Kaufmann, 1982, p. 2)

<sup>38</sup> See Schnabel and Watson, 1986.

of a collective security network in the Pacific. Military assistance became a world-wide undertaking of the Department of Defense. Although no atomic weapons were used in Korea, the wartime period saw great growth in nuclear technology, both in the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>39</sup>

Among other changes, force structure plans in 1950 envisioned an increase from ten Army divisions in FY 1950 to 18 Army divisions in FY 1951.<sup>40</sup>

As noted earlier, several years after a 1949 proposal along these lines, in July 1952, the JCS approved MOP No. 84, Joint Program for Planning, which established the JCS's initial strategic planning system, including a family of three plans that were "applicable either to peace or to war, and designed to translate national policy into long-, medium-, and short-range strategic objectives over a span extending ten years into the future."<sup>41</sup> These plans included the following:

- The JSCP covered the upcoming FY and provided a conflict scenario and plan for the approaching FY, the first day of which was assumed to be D-day, which was to guide the disposition, employment, and support of existing forces: The JSCP was the plan that would be executed if war broke out.<sup>42</sup> JSCP 1953-54 was produced in late 1952.<sup>43</sup>
- The JSOP covered the midterm (two to five years) period, and provided a scenario and other guidance for the mid-range period based on the assumption of a war beginning on July 1 three years after the plan was approved. The JSOP was to provide strategic concepts for war and for the period preceding D-day, and was to guide the development of the forces required under these concepts. The first JSOP, JSOP 1956, was produced in the first half of 1953, but no JSOP was actually approved before Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, primarily because it was financially infeasible.<sup>44</sup>
- The JLRSE, which provided a scenario and other guidance for the mid-range period and was based on the assumption of a war beginning on July 1 three

<sup>39</sup> Condit, 1988, p. iii.

<sup>40</sup> For details on these changes, see Table C.1 in Appendix C. In addition, at the February 1952 Lisbon meeting, NATO would establish ambitious force goals for a planned increase in NATO's ground force from 25 to 96 divisions in two years. With the Eisenhower administration's New Look approach, ground force goals would be substantially reduced. See Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983, p. 288.

<sup>41</sup> Watson, 1998, p. 89.

<sup>42</sup> Watson, 1998, p. 90.

<sup>43</sup> For more on the JSPS during this period, see Robert J. Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1953–1954, History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, Vol. 5, Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, 1986, pp. 89–109.

<sup>44</sup> C. J. Hitch, "The Fourth Royal Society Nuffield Lecture: Decision-Making in Large Organizations," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, Series B, Biological Sciences*, Vol. 168, No. 1011, August 15, 1967, pp. 140–147.

years after the plan was approved, provided long-term guidance in the form of a forecast scenario of “the probable areas of conflict, the outline of the type of war expected and the basic undertakings required” during a five-year period beginning five years after the date of issuance of the JLRSE. The JLRSE was primarily intended to serve as a guide for military research and development.

The JCS continued to produce JSOPs for more than 25 years. The JSCP continues to be produced to the present day,<sup>45</sup> although the processes and products of the JSPS have been changed numerous times since 1952.

In any event, by January 1953, with the Korean War stalemated, the outgoing Truman administration would bequeath to its successor two NSC reports—NSC 141 and NSC 142—that identified deficiencies in the defense program, as well as a budget for FY 1954 that aimed to rectify these deficiencies by providing additional resources:

Some of these deficiencies were expected to be remedied under the budget for fiscal year 1954 that President Truman, in one of his last official acts, sent to Congress on 9 January 1953. It called for \$41.3 billion in new obligational authority for military programs, and estimated military expenditures at \$45.5 billion. The largest share of the new appropriations, \$16.8 billion, would go to the Air Force, to allow it to expand from 98 wings to 133 by July 1954. The Navy would increase its ships from 1,116 to 1,200; the Army would be maintained at its current strength of 20 [Regular] divisions. Military manpower, which totaled 3,512,453 on 31 December 1952, would rise to 3,647,612 by the end of FY 1954.<sup>46</sup>

In the end, the Truman administration would be the first to grapple with the evolving role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military policy and strategy as the strategic balance shifted toward parity while also growing conventional force structure. Cuts in Army force structure would not occur until the Eisenhower administration’s demobilization following the Korean Armistice in July 1953, with further force structure cuts dictated by the administration’s New Look efforts to economize through a strategic concept that (for a period, at least) relied extensively on nuclear weapons and would provide, as President Dwight Eisenhower put it, “a bigger bang for each buck.”

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<sup>45</sup> The processes and products of the JSPS have changed over time to make them more effective. There is currently no direct analog to the JSOP, although DoD describes the current JSCP as follows:

The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) provides guidance to the combatant commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to accomplish tasks and missions based on current military capabilities. It apportions limited forces and resources to combatant commanders, based on military capabilities resulting from completed program and budget actions and intelligence assessments. The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan provides a coherent framework for capabilities-based military advice provided to the President and Secretary of Defense. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

<sup>46</sup> Poole, 1998, pp. 2–3.



## Trends in Defense Analytics

Defense analysis during this period greatly benefited from the heavy investments in operations research during World War II. These included efforts by the services (e.g., the United States Strategic Bombing Survey and antisubmarine warfare), as well as by the National Defense Research Council, the Office of Scientific Research and Development, and its subordinate organization, the Office of Field Service,<sup>47</sup> although most of these organizations had been abolished by the end of 1947.<sup>48</sup> Shortly thereafter, in May 1948, the Army Air Force formed Project RAND to assist with analysis to connect military planning with research and development.

According to the Army's official history of operations research (OR) in the Army,

Although Army service and ground forces lagged behind the Navy and Army Air Forces in the integration of OR into the decision-making process during World War II, even the limited exposure of Army civilian leaders, commanders, and staff officers had an effect. In the postwar period, OR would become an integral part of the Army decision-making process, not only for the design and improvement of weapons and other military equipment but for the development of tactical doctrine and strategic planning as well. Having lagged behind the Navy and Army Air Forces in the adoption and use of OR in World War II, the ground Army quickly closed the gap in the postwar period.<sup>49</sup>

Integrated defense strategic analysis appears to have been hobbled somewhat in the early postwar years by organizational and bureaucratic issues that were, at least in part, addressed on July 26, 1947, with the passage of the National Security Act of 1947, which created a new organizational structure for national security and defense strategic planning, including the NSC, CIA, OSD, JCS, and Joint Staff organizations; Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force; and a National Security Resources Board.

Despite these developments, the early Cold War era was a turbulent period with many new emerging threats, challenges, and issues to be considered in the development of national security and military policy, and, as just described, new organizations that were just beginning to develop procedures and processes for fleshing out the practicalities associated with implementation of the National Security Act. Not surprisingly, analysis for national security and defense strategic planning remained somewhat rudimentary, and the defense planning system that Eisenhower would ultimately inherit appears to have lacked much in the way of solid analytic foundations:

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<sup>47</sup> For a good review of developments related to defense operations research during this period, see Charles R. Shrader, *History of Operations Research in the United States Army*, Vol. I: 1942–62, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for Operations Research, United States Army, 2006, pp. 55–132.

<sup>48</sup> Shrader, 2006, p. 56.

<sup>49</sup> Shrader, 2006, p. 43.

“A year ago,” one memorandum noted, “former Secretary of Defense Lovett testified that the Air Force initially estimated that the 143-wing program ‘required’ 1,900,000 military personnel, and that figure came down in stages, first to 1,700,000, then to 1,220,000, then to 1,061,000. It is obvious that something is wrong when so-called ‘requirements’ can be cut by 44% over a matter of months.”<sup>50</sup>

## Summary and Conclusions

The early Cold War period was one in which strategic planning was dominated by consideration of the force requirements for a NATO defense against an imminent Soviet attack on Europe, including (1) U.S. conventional and nuclear capabilities and (2) industrial mobilization planning for a longer-term, WWII-like mobilization for global war against the Soviets.

It also was, at least until NSC 68, a period in which conventional force planning appears to have been somewhat divorced from top-down national policy and strategy, and the consideration of likely resource constraints as well: Ends, ways, and means generally were not considered together. Moreover, service rivalries frequently prevented the emergence of consensus on strategic concepts, force sizing constructs, force structure, and other matters; and the relatively modest authorities granted to the Secretary of Defense and CJCS, even after the 1947 National Security Act, were inadequate to the task of resolving service disputes and forcing consensus. Finally, although operations research was beginning to gain traction in defense analysis circles, the limited analytic tools that were available, and the defense establishment’s lack of familiarity with them, meant that the analytics for establishing joint force requirements were essentially yet to be developed.

The result was that the planning scenarios were more or less synonymous with existing JCS war plans, and that unconstrained force structure “requirements” generally were established by each service (and the JCS) based on traditional military judgment, detailed studies, and war games. Accordingly, the cumulative result ultimately was little more than a stapling together of individual service wish lists that, taken together, were alleged to constitute a minimum risk force. However, these efforts did not generally reflect the systematic development of integrated and balanced defense programs, and the unconstrained requirements had to be pared down by others to meet the constraints imposed by budgetary guidance.

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<sup>50</sup> Donald J. Mrozek, “A New Look at ‘Balanced Forces’: Defense Continuities from Truman to Eisenhower,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 38, No. 4, December 1974.



## The Eisenhower Administration, 1953–1961

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During the 1952 presidential campaign, President Eisenhower had campaigned on two major issues: ending the Korean War and reducing the federal budget.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, once elected, Eisenhower rejected Truman's planned increases in defense resources and attempted to fashion a strategy and force structure that could be supported by more-austere defense budgets. The administration's approach, called the New Look, resulted in a reduction in military manpower, greater emphasis on strategic nuclear airpower, and less emphasis on U.S. conventional forces, as well as the reconfiguration of Army forces into "pentomic" divisions; defense budget authority fell from \$48.6 billion in FY 1953 to \$34.3 billion in 1954, and stood at \$35.9 billion in FY 1957.<sup>2</sup>

Strategic planning continued to be based on studies, war games, and military judgment, although operations research and systems analysis techniques began to be

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of academic histories (although somewhat dated) of Eisenhower administration defense policy and planning, see Glenn H. Snyder, "The New Look of 1953," in Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder, *Strategy, Politics and Defense Budgets*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1962; Douglas Kinnard, "President Eisenhower and the Defense Budget," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 3, August 1977; and Clark A. Murdock, *Defense Policy Formulation: A Comparative Analysis of the McNamara Era*, Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1974. A more recent scholarly assessment of the Eisenhower administration's strategy development and strategic planning is Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. For reviews of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking, and the assumptions that animated foreign and defense policy during the Truman administration, see Brown, 2015, pp. 57–113; Gaddis, 2005b, pp. 125–196; and Boll, 1988, pp. 95–110. The official JCS histories for the period are Watson, 1986; Kenneth W. Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1955–1956*, Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, 1998; and Byron R. Fairchild and Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. 7, 1957–1960*, Washington, D.C.: Office of Joint History, 2000. The official OSD histories are Richard M. Leighton, *Strategy, Money, and the New Look: History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, Vol. 3, Washington, D.C., 2001; and Robert J. Watson, *Into the Missile Age, 1956–1960, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, Vol. 4, Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1997. For details of joint strategic planning during this period, see Watson, 1986, pp. 89–109.

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2017*, Washington, D.C., March 2016b, p. 133. We note that 1953 was the last year of fighting in Korea, and much of the reduction in spending was associated with the end of major combat operations following the armistice.

introduced into defense planning.<sup>3</sup> The planning scenarios used during this period continued to be more or less synonymous with JCS war plans that captured the contemporary understanding of Soviet force capabilities and dispositions, and the balance between U.S. and NATO forces and Soviet forces. With the New Look, defense planning increasingly emphasized nuclear forces over conventional ones. In the last years of the Eisenhower administration, however, the erosion of U.S. strategic nuclear superiority and the proliferation of Soviet-supported limited wars that were virtually impossible to deter with nuclear weapons made it increasingly clear that the New Look would have a short shelf life. The range of scenarios considered also accordingly began to expand in the late Eisenhower administration to weigh limited war scenarios.

The JCS's Joint Program for Planning continued to be the principal process for strategic planning within DoD and continued to be characterized both by interservice disagreements and by frequent disconnects among national policy, strategy, plans, and resources.

## Historical Review

As noted in Chapter Two, upon entry into office, Eisenhower was confronted with a call from his predecessor for higher defense spending (NSC 141), and a warning that U.S. forces were stretched dangerously thin (NSC 142), as well as a proposed FY 1954 budget request from Truman that called for increasing military expenditures to \$45.5 billion.<sup>4</sup> Eisenhower instead sought a reduction in manpower, arms, and defense budgets, and a New Look for defense; Table 3.1 compares Truman's long-term force goals in January 1953, which were established before the June 1953 Korean armistice, with Eisenhower's force goals in November 1953.

As shown, Eisenhower envisioned a one-third reduction in Army divisions, largely accountable to the winding down of the Korean War following the armistice, and smaller reductions to Navy ships, Air Force wings, and overall defense manpower.

At the same time, Eisenhower was aware that defense spending constituted almost three-quarters of overall government spending, and he was mindful of his campaign pledge to use savings from defense spending to strengthen the economy without reducing defensive power; as he stated in his first State of the Union address:

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<sup>3</sup> Among the studies that were undertaken were Project Solarium, a broad review of Soviet capabilities and options for countering them that was ordered by President Eisenhower early in his administration. On Project Solarium, see Watson, 1998, pp. 11–14; and William B. Pickett, ed., *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower's New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, Monograph Series, No. 1, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> NSC, NSC 141, *Reexamination of United States Programs for National Security*, January 19, 1953; and NSC, NSC 142, *Status of U.S. National Security Programs on December 31, 1952*, January 19, 1953.

**Table 3.1**  
**Comparison of Truman and Eisenhower Long-Term Force Goals**

Service	Truman January 1953	Eisenhower November 1953
Army divisions	21	14
Navy ships	1,200	1,030
Marine divisions	3	3
Air Force wings	143	137
Manpower	3.6 million	2.8 million

SOURCE: Friedberg, 2000, p. 131.

Our problem is to achieve adequate military strength within the limits of endurable strain upon our economy. To amass military power without regard to our economic capacity would be to defend ourselves against one kind of disaster by inviting another.<sup>5</sup>

As noted, Eisenhower's strategic concept consisted of the following key elements: a reliance on deterrence, and a ruling-out of preventive war; a stress on the role of nuclear technology to reduce reliance on U.S. conventional forces, especially land forces; a heavier reliance on the self-defense capabilities of local allied land forces around the Soviet periphery; a stress on economic strength, achieved especially through reduced defense budgets; and preparations to continue the struggle with the Soviet Union over decades.<sup>6</sup> Eisenhower would later define the *New Look* as

first a reallocation of resources among the five categories of forces [i.e., (1) nuclear retaliatory; (2) land and air forces overseas; (3) naval and marine forces at sea; (4) continental air defense units; and (5) strategic reserve forces in the U.S.], and second, the placing of greater emphasis than formerly on the deterrent and destructive power of improved nuclear weapons, better means of delivery, and effective air-defense units.<sup>7</sup>

As described by administration critic Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell Taylor, the Eisenhower NSC system was a top-down one that was supposed to work according to the following process and schedule:

<sup>5</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," American Presidency Project, February 2, 1953.

<sup>6</sup> Kinnard, 1977, p. 598.

<sup>7</sup> Eisenhower, quoted in Kinnard, 1977, p. 600.

The NSC members hear the debate on the language of the “Basic National Security Policy,” which is in general language which only the experts really understand. That debate takes place usually about May. Then the budget guidelines are issued which should produce military forces compatible with the strategic concept of that basic document.<sup>8</sup>

As a practical matter, the actual system fell somewhat short of this idealized description. During the Eisenhower period, authority over BNSP and the defense budget, including both the total budget and its allocation among the services, in fact resided with the Executive Office of the President’s Bureau of the Budget, with the Secretary of State exercising considerable influence. Force structure requirements, however, continued to be “the result of bargains struck by three competing services more concerned with promoting their own parochial interests than producing a coherent military strategy and force structure.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is little surprise that Eisenhower reportedly maintained a healthy skepticism toward the military advice he received from the service chiefs, which, despite administration efforts in 1953 and 1958 to reform the system to end interservice disputes, seems to have grown deeper with the chiefs’ chronic failure to agree on joint positions on such key issues as joint force requirements and associated budgets.<sup>10</sup> At other times, Eisenhower only grudgingly accepted strategic recommendations, as in the case of accepting a strategy predicated on the assumption that a war with the Soviet Union would be short, an assumption with which he disagreed.<sup>11</sup>

It also is notable that the increased budget pressures Eisenhower faced came at a time of expanded security commitments following World War II that aimed to protect the Western Hemisphere and its approaches, and to underwrite containment of communist power on the Eurasian landmass. Among the more notable of these were the Rio Treaty (1947); the North Atlantic Treaty (1949); the Japan, Australia–New Zealand–United States (ANZUS), and Philippine treaties (1951); the Republic of Korea Treaty (1953); the Southeast Asia Treaty (1954); and the Baghdad Pact, creating the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO; 1955).<sup>12</sup> These agreements created additional mutual defense security obligations while also (in many cases) providing military bases and other access arrangements along the Eurasian periphery. Downward pressure on defense budgets also was maintained over a period that included the Soviet explosion of a thermonuclear weapon (1953), the invasion of Hungary and the Suez Crisis (1956),

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in William W. Kaufmann, *The McNamara Strategy*, New York: Harper and Row, 1964, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence E. Lynn, Jr., and Richard I. Smith, “Can the Secretary of Defense Make a Difference? *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Summer 1982.

<sup>10</sup> According to Kinnard, 1977, p. 835, Eisenhower “clearly recognized that his chief adversaries were the service chiefs.”

<sup>11</sup> Friedberg, 2000, pp. 13–133, 222–225.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Collective Defense Arrangements,” undated.

the launch of Sputnik (1957), the overthrow of Batista in Cuba (1959), the shoot-down of a U.S. U-2 spy plane over the Soviet Union (1960), and accelerated Soviet development of longer-range ballistic missiles.

Eisenhower's budget request for FY 1954 was for \$41.3 billion in new obligational authority, and his budget message to Congress promised that after FY 1954, military expenditures should decline to an eventual level of \$35 billion to \$40 billion annually, a level he judged to be enough to maintain the services in a sufficient state of readiness.

Whereas April 1953's NSC 149/2, titled *Reexamination of U.S. National Security Programs*, had set a target budget of \$40 billion for FY 1955, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson's preliminary defense budget proposal for FY 1955 was \$43 billion, which was rejected by the NSC as too high.<sup>13</sup> During the remainder of the administration, the general pattern would be that budgets were first decided, and force structure ultimately was trimmed to conform with these budgets. At this time as well, a new "long-haul" basis for military planning was introduced to replace the Truman administration's approach of planning toward a selected "crisis year" or "year of maximum peril."<sup>14</sup>

NSC 153/1, *Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on Restatement of Basic National Security Policy*, dated June 10, 1953, sought to provide a BNSP that would strike a balance between security and economy, accepting some risk in the former to achieve the latter.<sup>15</sup> As described by JCS's history of the period:

NSC 153/1 found two principal threats to the survival of fundamental values and institutions of the United States, as follows:

- a. The formidable power and aggressive policy of the communist world led by the USSR.
- b. The serious weakening of the economy of the United States that may result from the cost of opposing the Soviet threat over a sustained period.

The basic problem for the United States was to strike a balance between these dangers. Of the two, the first must continue to receive primary consideration. Nevertheless, sound fiscal policy might require the United States to assume increased risks in relation to the Soviet threat.

. . . The United States, said NSC 153/1, must "develop and maintain an offensive capability, particularly the capability to inflict massive damage on Soviet warmaking capacity, at a level that the Soviets must regard as an unacceptable risk in war."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Watson, 1986, pp. 60–61.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, 2015, p. 60.

<sup>15</sup> NSC, NSC 153/1, *Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on Restatement of Basic National Security Policy*, June 10, 1953.

<sup>16</sup> Watson, 1986, p. 10; NSC, NSC 153/1, 1953.

To better achieve security objectives with reduced defense budgets, the Eisenhower administration decided to emphasize nuclear forces over conventional forces, and, in October 1953, NSC 162/2, laid out a new strategy that would lead to the strategic concept for defense called the New Look.<sup>17</sup> NSC 162/2 embraced the containment policy and the balanced forces recommended during the Truman administration while placing somewhat greater reliance on strategic airpower for deterrence, and rejecting the less expensive defense policy promoted by Eisenhower's economic advisers, which would have required an overall reduction in general purpose forces, including ground forces.<sup>18</sup> In line with the New Look efforts, JCS proposed a 25-percent drop in military manpower and a reduction in defense expenditures to less than \$35 billion annually between the 1955 and 1957 budgets.<sup>19</sup> The administration's budget submission for FY 1954 reflected the New Look, which anticipated a reduction from 19 to 17 Regular Army divisions and an increase in Air Force combat wings, among other changes.<sup>20</sup>

As noted earlier, NSC 162/2's strategic concept was essentially a re-endorsement of the "U.S. Objectives vis-à-vis the USSR in the Event of War" that had been established in NSC 20/4 of November 1948. As described by the JCS's official history:

NSC 162/2 defined the basic problems of national security policy as follows:

- a. To meet the Soviet threat to U.S. security.
- b. In doing so, to avoid seriously weakening the U.S. economy or undermining our fundamental values and institutions.

Here the domestic danger was clearly subordinated to the foreign. Elsewhere, NSC 162/2 characterized Soviet hostility toward the West, together with the military power of the Soviets and their control of a formidable subversive apparatus, as the primary threat to the United States. This threat remained great, despite the more conciliatory attitude shown by the regime of Premier Georgi M. Malenkov. But there was room for hope that pressures inside the Soviet bloc, together with growing strength and unity of noncommunist countries, might ultimately induce the Soviets to agree to a settlement, that would be acceptable to the free world.

The requirements for defense against the Soviet threat were listed as:

<sup>17</sup> See NSC, NSC 162/2, 1953. By the end of 1953, consensus had formed on a proposal by CJCS Arthur W. Radford that military commanders could count on using tactical and strategic nuclear weapons when militarily required: Upon request from field commanders, the President would issue appropriate weapons release orders. The new approach was signaled in a speech by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in what came to be called the "Massive Retaliation" Address to the Council on Foreign Relations in January 1954. See Dulles, 1954; and the analysis in Brown, 2015, pp. 57–58.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, 2015, p. 61.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, 2015, p. 63. As noted at the beginning of the chapter, DoD budget authority fell from \$48.6 billion in 1953 to \$34.3 billion in 1954, and it stood at \$35.9 billion in FY 1957. See OUSD (Comptroller), 2016b, p. 133.

<sup>20</sup> See Table C.3 in Appendix C.

- a. Development and maintenance of:
  - (1) A strong military posture, with emphasis on the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power;
  - (2) U.S. and allied forces in readiness to move rapidly initially to counter aggression by Soviet bloc forces and to hold vital areas and lines of communication; and
  - (3) A mobilization base, and its protection against crippling damage, adequate to insure victory in the event of general war.
- b. Maintenance of a sound, strong and growing economy, capable of providing through the operation of free institutions, the strength described in a above over the long pull and of rapidly and effectively changing to full mobilization.
- c. Maintenance of morale and free institutions and the willingness of the U.S. people to support the measures necessary for national security.<sup>21</sup>

Following a review, CJCS Radford suggested to the NSC that a basis for force reductions could be found if the JCS was given a clear-cut authorization to base war plans on the assumption that nuclear weapons would be used immediately in case of war. In his guidance to the JCS to undertake the necessary planning to implement NSC 162/2, Secretary Wilson accordingly directed that overall end strength levels be reduced from 3.5 million to between 2.5 million and 3 million as part of the post-Korea drawdown, and that nuclear weapons assume a more important role in war planning. As stated by Wilson,

We have entered an era where the quantity of atomic weapons and their military application necessitates a review of their impact on our strategy. We shall assume that such weapons will be used in military operations by U.S. forces engaged whenever it is of military advantage to do so.<sup>22</sup>

Because the precise posture and force structure implications of NSC 162/2 were not entirely clear, Wilson asked the JCS to consider the questions of how detailed force composition and deployments could best meet NSC 162/2's broad statement of national strategy; to reflect the president's desire to emphasize retaliatory capabilities; and, ultimately, to define a military strategy that would justify smaller forces in being that could be supported by smaller budgets.

Then-director of the Joint Staff Lt Gen Frank F. Everest formed a committee consisting of two senior officers from each service to translate the concept into force structure and posture. The strategic concept that emerged argued for trimming the

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<sup>21</sup> Watson, 1986, p. 24.

<sup>22</sup> Watson, 1986, p. 27.



U.S. military presence abroad, rejected a heavy reliance on large conventional forces and defense budgets, and instead emphasized a reliance on the threat or use of nuclear weapons—what would be referred to as the Massive Retaliation doctrine—across the full range of contingencies:<sup>23</sup>

The committee's reply, submitted on 30 November 1953, constituted a plan for carrying out the new concept. It recommended that some US forces be withdrawn from overseas and regrouped to form a strategic reserve in the United States. This step would regain strategic flexibility and at the same time make it possible to reduce the size and cost of the military establishment. It should be accompanied by a reorientation of strategy toward greater reliance on new weapons, in order to exploit US technological superiority and to offset the communists' advantage in manpower.

The committee assumed that all major US forces would soon be withdrawn from Korea. It recommended that US troops be removed from Japan as Japanese forces came into existence. Air and naval forces should remain in the Far East, however, and should be armed with nuclear weapons. It was agreed that some troops must remain in Europe, for political and psychological as well as military reasons, but their number was a matter of dispute among the committee members. The representatives of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force wished to set a limit of three divisions by 1957—a 40 percent reduction from the five divisions then in Europe. The Army members declined to propose a target figure; they insisted that no troops should be withdrawn from Europe until the political climate was known to be favorable for such a step.<sup>24</sup>

In response, the JCS developed a set of requirements for a military strategy to support 162/2.<sup>25</sup> With JCS 2101/113 of December 10, 1953, the JCS formally recommended an FY 1957 force structure consisting of 14 Regular divisions and 1 million personnel for the Army (a reduction of about one-third in Army personnel); 1,030 ships and 650,000 personnel for the Navy; three divisions and 190,000 personnel for the Marine Corps; and 137 wings and 975,000 personnel for the Air Force. The estimated annual budgetary cost of this force was \$32.9 billion.<sup>26</sup>

Importantly, the Eisenhower administration, believing that a doctrine that relied more heavily on nuclear weapons would be less costly, had begun an effort to reshape force structure to emphasize airpower and nuclear weapons over ground combat capabilities. The Air Force was the main beneficiary of the dual thrusts

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<sup>23</sup> NSC 162/2, dated October 30, 1953, established the strategic concepts for Eisenhower's New Look; Secretary of State Dulles announced the doctrine of Massive Retaliation in 1954. For a discussion of the missioning of New Look forces to global war and lesser contingencies, see Haffa, 1984, pp. 20–21.

<sup>24</sup> Watson, 1986, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Watson, 1986, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Watson, 1986, p. 30.



to improve continental air defenses and offensive strategic capabilities, and saw an increase of 60,000 personnel, as well as an increase in the number of Air Force wings (from 98 to 137), with a reduction of 600,000 personnel coming from the other services.

In the new strategic concept, policymakers viewed lesser contingencies as being of lesser importance; as Secretary of Defense Wilson would put it in 1954, “We won’t have any small wars—we can’t afford them.”<sup>27</sup> The chiefs preliminarily assumed that a maximum of six Army divisions would be available for peacetime deployment overseas, but it was not clear yet how many would be assigned to Europe.<sup>28</sup> For his part, Chief of Staff of the Army GEN Matthew B. Ridgway “described the FY 1957 force levels under the New Look program as the result of a directed verdict, ‘following from fixed manpower and dollar ceilings . . . given the Joint Chiefs of Staff to start with.’”<sup>29</sup> Indeed, budget ceilings would continue shaping force levels for the remainder of the Eisenhower administration,<sup>30</sup> leaving the Army with 14 divisions and 873,000 personnel by the end of the administration.<sup>31</sup>

In January 1955, Eisenhower approved NSC 5501, a new statement of the nation’s BNSP, which superseded NSC 162/2, and stated, in part:

Section A: Estimate of the Situation: The Soviet-Communist challenge in this era of approaching nuclear plenty constitutes a grave peril to the United States.

Section B: Outline of U.S. National Strategy

21. The basic objective of U.S. national security policy is to preserve the security of the United States, and its fundamental values and institutions.

22. The basic threat to U.S. security is posed by the hostile policies and power, including growing nuclear power, of the Soviet-Communist bloc, with its international Communist apparatus.

23. The basic problem confronting the U.S. is how, without undermining fundamental U.S. values and institutions or seriously weakening the U.S. economy, to meet and ultimately to diminish this threat to U.S. security.

24. In meeting this threat, the U.S. must choose between two main lines of policy, aimed respectively at:

a. Destroying the power of the Soviet-Communist bloc; or

<sup>27</sup> Haffa, 1984, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of the JCS’s deliberations over force structure and posture to meet the requirements of NSC 162/2, see Watson, 1986, pp. 26–32.

<sup>29</sup> Watson, 1986, p. 33.

<sup>30</sup> See Fairchild and Poole, 2000, pp. 31–42.

<sup>31</sup> See Fairchild and Poole, 2000, p. 40.

b. Modifying the policies of the Soviet-Communist bloc along lines more compatible with U.S. security interests.

Either policy would include action to disrupt or neutralize the international Communist apparatus in the free world.<sup>32</sup>

In March 1956, the administration's BNSP underwent yet another revision with the approval of NSC 5602/1:

According to [NSC 5602/1], the United States and its allies must possess “for an indefinite period, military forces with sufficient strength, flexibility and mobility . . . to deal swiftly and severely with Communist overt aggression in its various forms and to cope successfully with general war should it develop.” Nuclear weapons were to continue being integrated into the nation's armory for use in general war and in military operations short of general war as authorized by the President. To deter general war, the United States would rely upon its nuclear retaliatory power, in conjunction with accelerated programs for continental defense. Deterring or defeating local aggression would require “ready forces . . . highly mobile and suitably deployed” and sufficiently versatile to employ either conventional or nuclear weapons. These forces needed a “flexible and selective nuclear capability,” since the United States did not intend to deny itself the use of nuclear weapons in a local situation. But reliance on tactical nuclear capabilities should not become so pronounced “that any decision to intervene against local aggression would probably be tantamount to a decision to use nuclear weapons.”<sup>33</sup>

NSC 5602/1 expanded the role of nuclear weapons across the range of military operations.<sup>34</sup> Contention within the JCS prevented the emergence of a clear strategic concept to underwrite NSC 5602/1 over the 1955–1956 period.<sup>35</sup>

During its second term, the Eisenhower administration would review its BNSP and reaffirm its reliance on nuclear weapons, even as the suitability of this approach for limited and general war planning came increasingly into doubt.

The first such review, NSC 5707/8, *Statement of Basic National Security Policy*, arguably represented the apogee of New Look efforts and was approved by Eisenhower on June 3, 1957; NSC 5707/8 brought national policy into alignment with existing strategy rather than serving as a guide for strategy development. Again, placing nuclear

<sup>32</sup> NSC, NSC 5501, *Basic National Security Policy*, January 7, 1955.

<sup>33</sup> Fairchild and Poole, 2000, pp. 11–12.

<sup>34</sup> The language used in NSC 5602/1 was as follows: “Nuclear weapons will be used in general war and in military operations short of general war as authorized by the President. Such authorization as may be given in advance will be determined by the President.” Condit, 1998, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> Condit, 1998, p. 39.

weapons at the core of U.S. strategy, NSC 5707/8 both sanctioned the elimination of distinctions between nuclear and other weapons and proposed that nuclear weapons generally be made available to tactical forces.<sup>36</sup> In this and subsequent revisions to BNSP, the failure of the services to agree on various related matters continued to necessitate presidential intervention.<sup>37</sup>

In any event, the strategic concept in NSC 5707/8 informed the development of the next JSOP and JSCP:

There was no formal link between BNSP and the Joint Strategic Planning System. . . . Obviously, though, the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan and the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan had to reflect the strategic concepts described by NSC 5707/8. In both JSOP-61 and JSCP-59, the concept for general war rested on a definition hammered out in 1956 and reargued during a NATO review early in 1957. A general war would consist of, first, “an initial phase of comparatively short duration . . . characterized by an intensive exchange of atomic blows and the initiation of operations and deployments . . . designed to achieve strategic advantage” and, second, “a subsequent phase of short duration.” As for the role of nuclear weapons in operations short of general war, the two plans simply repeated the BNSP’s wording: such weapons “will be used, when required, in order to achieve national objectives.”<sup>38</sup>

Despite growing doubts about the doctrine of Massive Retaliation, the next revision of BNSP, NSC 5810/1, *Statement of Basic National Security Policy*, dated May 5, 1958, also failed to resolve basic questions about the utility of nuclear weapons in limited war. Secretary Dulles warned at the time that the NATO alliance could be held together for only one to two additional years on the basis of NATO’s existing strategic concept of Massive Retaliation.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Watson, 1997, pp. 109–110.

<sup>37</sup> According to Fairchild and Poole (2000, p. 16):

President Eisenhower approved a new delineation of BNSP in NSC 5707/8 on 3 June 1957. It downplayed the possibility that US forces, responding to local aggression, might become extensively engaged in conventional warfare. Significantly, NSC 5707/8 did not retain its predecessor’s cautionary statement that US ready forces “must not become so dependent on tactical nuclear capabilities that any decision to intervene against local aggression would probably be tantamount to a decision to use nuclear weapons.” NSC 5707/8 moved closer to a policy of using nuclear weapons against local aggression but without affirming categorically that they would be used. It also redefined the mobilization base in terms of a concept developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then presented to the NSC by Secretary Wilson on 25 February.

<sup>38</sup> Fairchild and Poole, 2000, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Watson, 1997, p. 295.

The JCS continued to split on limited war issues, and Eisenhower again continued to reassert his earlier position opposing greater emphasis on limited war.<sup>40</sup>

The JCS's task was essentially to begin with budget constraints set by the President and come to agreement on the general outlines of a force structure and mobilization plans that could support either general or limited conflict, based on the strategic concept earlier approved by Secretary Wilson:

[Th]e president ruled that tentative planning for FY 1960 and FY 1961 should assume a continuation during those years of the personnel strength of 2,525,000 approved for the end of 1959, with a 5 percent margin either way. With this guidance from higher authority, the JCS reached agreement on the most nearly satisfactory mix of forces for 1 July 1961. They settled on 15 Army divisions, 397 combat vessels, and 101 Air Force wings as of the target date, assumed as M-day. These numbers came very close to those in the FY 1959 budget. Expansion goals, to be reached 6 months after mobilization, were 42 divisions, 633 vessels, and 140 wings. The plan would authorize the services to base their mobilization plans on these forces, projected to M+36 months to assure a mobilization base that would fully support them in combat.

The strategic concept adopted in the JSOP had presented no problem, since it had already been approved by Secretary Wilson in March 1957. Under this concept, forces would be deployed in “strategic forward areas” around the periphery of the Sino-Soviet bloc, ready to act promptly in event of aggression. General war, should it occur, was envisioned as consisting of two phases, the first (comparatively short) marked by an intensive nuclear exchange, the second, indeterminate in length, involving a continuation of nuclear operations probably at lower intensity. The duration of this second phase and the ultimate strategy to be adopted would depend largely on the relative advantage achieved in the initial phase. The plan set forth in general terms the wartime military tasks for accomplishment in each area of the globe.<sup>41</sup>

With the topic of limited war increasingly creeping into defense planning deliberations, a wider range of scenarios beyond the NATO European scenario appears to have been considered at this time. For example, a 1959 interagency study of five situa-

<sup>40</sup> According to Watson (1997, p. 297):

President Eisenhower, on the basis of convictions that he had often expressed, could be expected to come out against any increased emphasis on limited war. If anyone in the NSC could have changed his mind, it would have been Dulles. To the disappointment of the limited war advocates, however, Dulles's expression of his views was lukewarm and general. He warned that time was running out on massive retaliation and that the United States should prepare to fight defensive wars not involving the total defeat of the enemy. . . . The members then adopted NSC 5810 with minor revisions; the president subsequently approved it as NSC 5810/1. . . . The issue of limited war had thus been thrown back into the lap of Secretary McElroy, who in turn called on the JCS to reconsider it.

<sup>41</sup> Watson, 1997, p. 298.

tions deemed representative of the areas and types of situations that the United States might confront, including Berlin, Laos, Iraq, Quemoy and Matsu, and Korea, examined the conventional and nuclear requirements of limited wars:

The final report, appearing in September, rated US and allied strength adequate (if augmented by a partial mobilization) to conduct operations in any one of the five areas listed above. There were instances where escalation risked nuclear retaliation and broadening of the conflict. Meeting each of the five cases would require substantial conventional forces, even if no nuclear weapons were employed. On 5 January 1961, presumably based upon this report, the NSC concluded that there was no need for a “radical” reallocation of resources to strengthen nonnuclear forces. Nonetheless, particularly among President-elect Kennedy and his advisers, arguments against a nuclear strategy were gaining ground.<sup>42</sup>

And in late July 1959, as part of the review of BNSP that would lead to NSC 5906/1, the NSC defined “local aggression” as “conflicts occurring outside the NATO area” that excluded hostilities involving “sizable” U.S. and Soviet forces, and in fact adopted new language directing military planning for limited wars:

It is the policy of the United States to place main, but not sole, reliance on nuclear weapons; to integrate nuclear weapons with other weapons in the Armed Forces of the United States; and to use them when required to meet the nation’s war objectives. Planning should contemplate situations short of general war where the use of nuclear weapons would manifestly not be militarily necessary nor appropriate to the accomplishment of national objectives, particularly in those areas where main Communist power will not be brought to bear. All deployed organized units will be prepared to use nuclear weapons when required in defense of the command. Advance authorization for the use of nuclear weapons is as determined by the President.<sup>43</sup>

This additional language opened the door to planning for limited war without nuclear weapons. A strategic concept for limited war was provided by JSOP 63 of January 1960:

According to the concept, planning should be based upon “a flexible and selective capability, including nuclear capability for use in cases authorized by the President.” To deter limited war and either defeat an enemy or hold him until additional power could be applied, the US military establishment would have to include ready forces, highly mobile and suitably deployed. Whenever US forces were commit-

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<sup>42</sup> Fairchild and Poole, 2000, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> NSC, NSC 5906/1, *Basic National Security Policy*, August 5, 1959.

ted to a limited war, “force should be promptly and resolutely applied in a degree necessary to defeat the enemy.”<sup>44</sup>

Although defense budgets remained under severe pressure during this period, and the reliance on a strategy of Massive Retaliation raised the stakes of U.S.-Soviet miscalculation, planners’ and policymakers’ choices appear to have preserved a slim margin of U.S. superiority. As described in the JCS’s history of the period:

In December 1958, General Twining told the Cabinet that he felt US forces were sufficient to deter general war and meet limited aggression.’ Eleven months later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared the margin of US superiority to be “so thin” that any reductions unmatched by corresponding Soviet cutbacks would “place the United States in a vulnerable position”—carefully hedged words that bore the mark of interservice compromise. In September 1960, General Twining advised the Armed Forces Policy Council that while US capability to deliver nuclear weapons had increased, the growth of similar Soviet capabilities meant that “our relative posture may have weakened during the past year.” US forces could counter one limited aggression, he said, but would be hard pressed to carry out two operations simultaneously. The crucial point of these assessments lay in their tacit acknowledgment that US superiority, however thin or circumscribed it might be, did exist. Turning to Soviet and Chinese leaders, one can infer from their behavior (as distinct from their often belligerent rhetoric) that the men in Moscow and Peiping saw matters about the same way.<sup>45</sup>

The administration’s planned force for FY 1962 consisted of

- 14 Regular Army and three Marine divisions
- 14 attack and nine antisubmarine warfare (ASW) carriers
- nine ballistic missile submarines
- 780 B-47, 630 B-52, and 80 B-58 bombers
- 58 Titan and 95 Atlas intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).<sup>46</sup>

The JCS’s history describes the late Eisenhower administration’s strategic outlook and views on nuclear and conventional capabilities, and highlights the growing range of defense planning scenarios that were considered in strategic planning, as follows:

Although the Eisenhower administration placed main reliance on nuclear weapons, it was prepared to carry out limited, non-nuclear operations. During the summer of 1960, representatives from Defense, State, and Central Intelligence assessed US

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<sup>44</sup> Fairchild and Poole, 2000, p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> Fairchild and Poole, 2000, p. 228.

<sup>46</sup> Fairchild and Poole, 2000, p. 42.

and allied capabilities to defend South Korea, the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, Southeast Asia, Iran, and West Berlin. They concluded that US strength was sufficient, if buttressed by a partial mobilization, to wage a limited war in any one of these areas. Dealing with two or more crises concurrently, however, would degrade the general war posture “to an unacceptable degree.” The NSC, on 5 January 1961, rejected a “radical reallocation” of resources to strengthen conventional capabilities. President Eisenhower doubted whether it was possible to prevent large-scale conventional combat from escalating into general war. Therefore, maintaining the nuclear deterrent should still be the primary mission, with other forces relegated to supporting roles.

The forces relegated to supporting roles were substantial: 14 Army divisions and three Marine division/wing teams; 14 attack and nine [ASW] carriers, 14 cruisers, 225 destroyers, and 112 attack submarines; 55 [U.S. Air Force] tactical fighter [squadrons] and 30 transport squadrons.<sup>47</sup>

Prior to the Kennedy administration, the Secretary of Defense essentially imposed financial limits on defense without seriously involving himself in the matter of military needs while the military focused on military needs without consideration of resource constraints. As a result, consideration of force structure requirements was essentially decoupled from considerations of cost considerations.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, during the decade of the 1950s, the military force requirements process was itself broken, with members of the JCS chronically unable to develop a joint and integrated perspective on the interpretation of strategic concepts, force requirements, and budgets:

Through refinements to the Joint Program for Planning, the JCS had tried, with mixed success, to develop something similar [to McNamara’s Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS)] in the 1950s. The focus of the JCS effort had been the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (JSOP), a mid-range projection of military requirements. When the Joint Chiefs adopted the JSOP format in the early 1950s, they envisioned it serving as a statement of integrated requirements that would be updated annually to assist in smoothing out the ups and downs of the budget cycle. But because of disagreements over basic strategy—especially the relative balance between strategic and general-purpose capabilities—the Services were constantly at odds over force-level recommendations, known in JCS parlance as “force

<sup>47</sup> Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1961–1964*, Washington, D.C., 2011, p. 61.

<sup>48</sup> Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, *How Much Is Enough? Shaping the Defense Program, 1961–1969*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, CB-403, 2005, pp. 11, 14. The Rockefeller Commission on Department of Defense Organization produced two reports, one in 1953 and another in 1958, that aimed to improve defense management and budgeting and to make the department more responsive to emerging threats and defense requirements. Eisenhower’s efforts presented a number of direct challenges to congressional prerogatives related to defense. See Brian R. Duchin, “The Most Spectacular Legislative Battle of That Year: President Eisenhower and the 1958 Reorganization of the Department of Defense,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1994.



tabs.” By the end of the decade, the Joint Chiefs had given up trying to produce an integrated plan and had turned the JSOP into a compilation of unilateral Service estimates, organized in no particular order of priority, as their projection of future needs. Invariably, these estimates exceeded available funding.<sup>49</sup>

As described above, over the remainder of its term, the administration incrementally backed away from Massive Retaliation as the growing U.S. and Soviet stocks of nuclear weapons led to nuclear parity, and as doubts grew about the utility of nuclear weapons in small wars. This would lead to calls for rebalancing U.S. forces to achieve a more appropriate mix of conventional and nuclear capabilities, at least in part to raise the threshold for nuclear employment.<sup>50</sup> In 1958, Congress passed the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, granting the Secretary of Defense new authorities and powers that strengthened the hand of the position, but these were not fully exercised until the next administration.

## Trends in Defense Analytics

Strategic planning during this period consisted primarily of detailed JCS and OSD studies and scenario-based war games that were conducted throughout the Eisenhower administration to inform national security and defense planning.<sup>51</sup> In addition, new developments in the areas of operations research and operational analysis led, in the latter part of the decade, to the establishment of war gaming offices in the services and the development of computer simulation models that could be used for analyzing

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<sup>49</sup> Steven L. Rearden, *Council of War: A History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942–1991*, Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, 2012, p. 246.

<sup>50</sup> Henry A. Kissinger’s 1957 book, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, was an early critique of the New Look and Massive Retaliation doctrines (see Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957).

<sup>51</sup> For example, in July 1955, President Eisenhower requested that CJCS Radford conduct “ICBM and [intermediate-range ballistic missile] War Gaming” and prepare “a report on the war gaming of general war where long range ballistic missiles with atomic war heads were used” (see Dillon Anderson, “ICBM and IRBM War Gaming,” memorandum for Arthur W. Radford, January 16, 1956). In the summer of 1955, the JCS’s Joint War Game Group conducted a war game assessing two hypothetical Soviet war plans. For example, see Joint Strategic Plans Committee, *Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee (in Collaboration with the Joint Logistics Plans Committee and the Joint Intelligence Committee) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Joint War Game Report*, Washington, D.C., JCS 1948/34, May 29, 1956. The report criticizes the game for its weaknesses in the hypothetical war plans, time limitations, lack of jointly agreed assumptions and factors (such as the size of the Soviet stockpile, recovery rates from fallout, and criteria for estimating U.S. recovery from attack), inexperience of the players, large size of the staff, and the unavailability of models. Only one type of attack was played for each of the estimated Soviet war plans. In the play of the game, targets were overbombed, intelligence procedures interfered and were unrealistic, and Soviet logistic capabilities were unknown. War games also would be used to analyze continental defense and the Single Integrated Operational Plan for nuclear war-fighting. For a review of developments related to defense operations research during this period, see Shrader, 2006, pp. 133–156.



combat operations, inventory management, and other selected problems.<sup>52</sup> By 1960, for example, primitive Army combat simulation models existed at two levels: small unit tactical operations (CARMONETTE) and large operational-level units (the ATLAS theater-level model).<sup>53</sup> Thus, although some analytic progress was made during this period, the principal bases for decisionmaking remained traditional studies and war games on military requirements, generally ineffective efforts to encourage consensus within the JCS, and budget caps that ultimately reduced service-proposed force structure to a fiscally more realistic and manageable overall force structure.

## Summary and Conclusions

In the peacetime period that followed the armistice in Korea, the Eisenhower administration tightened its embrace of its predecessor's doctrine of reliance on nuclear weapons to offset conventional force imbalances in Europe (and, to a lesser extent, Asia), and undertook a wide range of New Look initiatives to transform the force to emphasize tactical, theater, and strategic nuclear capabilities in the hope that these would prove more cost-effective than conventional forces in meeting national security and defense needs. War plans for meeting the Soviet threat in Europe during this period continued to provide the principal scenarios for force planning, even though the heavy reliance on nuclear weapons was increasingly irrelevant to the limited wars, many Soviet sponsored, that emerged in the late 1950s.

Much greater effort appears to have been devoted by the Eisenhower administration than the Truman administration to providing BNSPs to guide the development of military capabilities, and efforts were made to provide additional clarity on other key issues, such as authority for the employment of nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, continued interservice rivalries, the limited exercise of authority by the Secretary of Defense and CJCS, and the absence of analytic approaches for doing joint force requirements analysis all continued to plague the development of the joint strategic plans and force

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<sup>52</sup> Francis J. McHugh, *The United States Naval War College Fundamentals of War Gaming*, 3rd ed., March 1966, pp. 2–40. Early models included CARMONETTE, a computer simulation of a tank battle, and the Air-Battle Model, a computer program for simulating a large-scale two-sided global war. See R. H. Adams and J. L. Jenkins, "Simulation of Air Operations with the Air-Battle Model," *Operations Research*, Vol. 8, No. 5, September–October 1960. During this period, the RAND Corporation made a number of important contributions to operations research, game theory, and computer applications in military analysis. See, for example, A. J. Wohlstetter, F. S. Hoffman, R. J. Lutz, and H. S. Rowen, *Selection and Use of Strategic Air Bases*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-266, April 1954; John D. Williams, *The Compleat Strategyst: Being a Primer on the Theory of Games of Strategy*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation and Dover Publications, CB-113-1, 1954; and David Novick and G. H. Fisher, *The Role of Management Tools in Making Military Decisions*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, P-694, June 16, 1955.

<sup>53</sup> Seth Bonder, "Army Operations Research: Historical Perspectives and Lessons Learned," *Operations Research*, Vol. 50, No. 1, January–February 2002, pp. 25–34.

requirements estimates that ostensibly aimed to underwrite these policies.<sup>54</sup> Although these pathologies would not entirely disappear by the end of the administration, new authorities and management and analysis tools available to the Secretary of Defense would help to foster more systematic and rational defense decisionmaking in the next administration.

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<sup>54</sup> An excellent review of defense budgeting and strategic planning from 1949 to 1960 observed,

The first eight Secretaries of Defense used a variety of approaches to attempt to get the JCS to scale down these requests and thus share responsibility with them for the final budget. These approaches ranged from direct commands to pep talks about being team players, but the results were always the same. The Chiefs were unwilling to perform this function for the Secretary. They were so concerned with safeguarding the interests of their own services that they could not agree on where to make the reductions. The task of reducing the requests thus fell to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Usually the Secretary of Defense or the comptroller made across-the-board cuts to bring the requests into line with the ceiling. (Lawrence J. Korb, "The Budget Process in the Department of Defense, 1947–77: The Strengths and Weaknesses of Three Systems," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 37, No. 4, July–August 1977, p. 335)

## The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, 1961–1969

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The incoming Kennedy administration rejected its predecessor's main reliance on nuclear weapons and the New Look efforts in defense, and considerably expanded and reshaped U.S. Army and other conventional forces to raise the nuclear threshold and to prepare for a wider range of limited conventional contingencies while also introducing a more flexible relationship between conventional and nuclear operations<sup>1</sup>—replacing the doctrine of Massive Retaliation with that of Flexible Response:<sup>2</sup>

Perceiving both the end of American nuclear superiority and a greater Soviet inclination to challenge American security, the Kennedy administration found the Eisenhower defense policy too risky. To buy a wide range of military capabilities, defense expenditures, which had begun rising in the late 1950s, continued to climb. Deterrence and defense, so it was believed, were two sides of the same coin, meaning that the only way to discourage threats was by having the capability to meet them at every level. The Kennedy administration, not wanting the Soviet Union and China to call our nuclear bluff and find us with no response at all, thus developed the strategy of flexible and controlled response, which placed special emphasis on conventional war and counterinsurgency preparedness. The Johnson administration continued this defense policy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For reviews of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking, and the assumptions that animated foreign and defense policy during the Kennedy-Johnson period, see Brown, 2015, pp. 117–206; Gaddis, 2005b, pp. 197–271; and Boll, 1988, pp. 111–154. The official JCS histories for the period are Poole, 2011; and Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1965–1968*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012. The official OSD histories are Lawrence S. Kaplan, Ronald D. Landa, and Edward J. Drea, *The McNamara Ascendancy, 1961–1965, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, Vol. 5, Washington, D.C., 2006; and Edward J. Drea, *McNamara, Clifford, and the Burdens of Vietnam, 1965–1969, Secretaries of Defense Historical Series*, Vol. 6, Washington, D.C., 2011.

<sup>2</sup> See Murdock, 1974, pp. 44–115.

<sup>3</sup> Gelb and Kazmuck, 1973, pp. 212–213.

Put simply, Kennedy hoped to “get the nuclear genie back in the bottle” by developing graduated conventional and nuclear responses that would raise the threshold for nuclear employment.<sup>4</sup>

Administration concerns about “brushfire” wars also would spur efforts to develop a strategic concept that could manage Soviet and Chinese threats and challenges while developing forces more suitable to limited war contingency scenarios. The result was a “2-1/2 war” strategic concept, but without the needed forces and resources, and a shift from Eisenhower’s New Look efforts and Army pentomic divisions to more infantry, airmobile, and special operations forces.

Finally, the new administration made substantial efforts to rationalize defense planning through Secretary McNamara’s exercise of new authorities granted by Congress in 1958, and the introduction of new organizations, processes, and analytic techniques. Studies, scenario-based war games, and military judgment continued to be used, but there was increasing emphasis, especially within OSD, on systems analysis and operations research techniques. McNamara’s introduction of the PPBS centralized and strengthened the ability of the Secretary of Defense to conduct resource planning while the introduction of systems analysis techniques strengthened the ability of OSD to challenge service and joint analyses of force requirements, weapon systems, and other matters. During this period, the JSPS and PPBS processes were not well integrated, the JSOP continued to be resource-unconstrained, and JCS-recommended “minimum risk” forces remained unaffordable.<sup>5</sup>

## Historical Review

In his inaugural address, President Kennedy would describe a much more activist foreign policy than that of his predecessor and one that would promote liberty and human rights:

Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world. Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall

<sup>4</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, “Kennedy in the Presidency: A Premature Appraisal,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 3, September 1964, p. 325. See also Brown, 2015, pp. 117–204.

<sup>5</sup> John M. Collins provided a definition of *minimum risk capabilities* as “assets which, if currently available or acquired, could accomplish essential aims and missions with a high chance of success.” See Collins, 1982, pp. 156–158, 308, and 311.

pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. This much we pledge—and more.<sup>6</sup>

By the time of his first State of the Union Address on January 30, 1961, Kennedy had heard from more than 25 specialized task forces that had identified gaps in the nation's "arsenal of power" that needed to be closed to ensure that the nation was making use of all available elements of national power to compete successfully with the growing Soviet threat.<sup>7</sup>

To underwrite its more ambitious foreign policy goals, and with growing concern about Soviet adventurism in the Third World and doubts about the utility of nuclear weapons in limited wars, the Kennedy administration introduced a strategy of Flexible Response that placed greater emphasis on conventional (and mobility) forces, and greater discrimination in nuclear targeting to be ready, in Kennedy's words, "to deter all wars, general or limited, nuclear or conventional, large or small."<sup>8</sup> In draft memoranda to the president, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara would propose Assured Destruction as the criterion for establishing nuclear force requirements, and a "two-war" capability for establishing conventional force requirements.<sup>9</sup>

A series of crises in Berlin, Laos, and Cuba (1961); Cuba (1962); and the Congo (1964) confirmed beliefs about growing Soviet adventurism and disrupted the normal defense planning, programming, and budgeting processes and timelines, and the growing entanglement in Vietnam would come to dominate conventional force planning and the employment of the force for the remainder of the decade. These crises,

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<sup>6</sup> White House, "Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy," Washington, D.C., January 20, 1961.

<sup>7</sup> Brown, 2015, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> Freedman (1983, p. 228) credits the Kennedy administration with introducing three particularly important concepts for strategic nuclear planning: *Assured Destruction*, *Damage Limitation*, and *Flexible Response*. The concept of Flexible Response would not be adopted by NATO until 1967, at which time it was defined as follows:

This concept . . . is based upon a flexible and balanced range of appropriate responses, conventional and nuclear, to all levels of aggression or threats of aggression. These responses, subject to appropriate political control, are designed, first to deter aggression and thus preserve peace; but should aggression unhappily occur, to maintain the security of the North Atlantic Treaty area within the concept of forward defense. (Freedman, 1983, p. 285)

<sup>9</sup> Secretary McNamara used Presidential Decision Memoranda (PDMs) as the vehicle for communicating these shifts. According to the official JCS history of the period, "These, in turn, were the foundations for OSD's statistically-based justifications of force levels." See Poole, 2011, p. 15. Until its abandonment in 1965, the idea of Damage Limitation, which involved shelters and other civil defense measures to minimize civilian deaths, also was a key tenet of McNamara's strategic thinking. As described by Freedman (1983, p. 251),

McNamara persisted with his advocacy of such a [shelter] programme, linking it to the general objective of damage limitation, which was explored in an internal study of 1962–3. For a brief period afterwards it was elevated to a central strategic concept. The advocacy became more lukewarm as it became apparent that most defensive measures could be neutralized by the adversary without a great deal of trouble. Calculations suggested that at each level of damage the defence had to spend three times as much as the offence. By 1965 the programme had been abandoned.

and the growing requirements of the Vietnam War, also would significantly affect force planning.<sup>10</sup>

According to testimony, Kennedy gave McNamara a simple instruction: “Develop the force structure necessary to our military requirements without regard to arbitrary or predetermined budget ceilings. And secondly, having determined that force structure, . . . procure it at the lowest possible cost.”<sup>11</sup>

Although NSC efforts to develop the sort of BNSP that had been a crucial element of strategic planning during the Eisenhower administration proved fruitless during the early Kennedy administration,<sup>12</sup> the JCS made efforts to adapt its JSPS to better support national policy and to harmonize it with the nascent PPBS. And as already noted, the introduction to the department of systems analysis aimed to provide greater rigor to analyses of force requirements and other choices.<sup>13</sup>

In early 1961, several studies were initiated that revealed that force planning was in disarray. These included an OSD committee study addressing “limited wars,” a study by the services that examined force structure requirements but ultimately lacked any sort of strategic concept and instead seemed to be another “wish list,” and a third panel study of limited war capabilities that revealed that a strategic concept was sorely needed to guide conventional force planning.<sup>14</sup>

In an NSC meeting in February 1961, Kennedy asked McNamara to examine ways to increase U.S. counter guerrilla capabilities, and with National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 55 of June 1961, Kennedy stated,

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have a responsibility for the defense of the nation in the Cold War similar to that which they have in conventional hostilities. They should know the military and paramilitary forces and resources available to the Department of Defense, verify their readiness, report on their adequacy, and make appropriate recommendations for their expansion and improvement. I look to the Chiefs to contribute dynamic and imaginative leadership in contributing to the success of the military and paramilitary aspects of Cold War programs.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For example, the 1962 Berlin crisis would lead to the mobilization of two Army Reserve divisions.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Kaufmann, 1964, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, U.S. Department of State, *Basic National Security Policy: Short Version*, Washington, D.C., August 2, 1962.

<sup>13</sup> The classic work on the application of systems analysis to a range of defense and military problems during the Kennedy and Johnson years is Enthoven and Smith, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Haffa, 1984, p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> NSC, NSAM 55, *Relations of Joint Chiefs of Staff to the President in Cold War Operations*, June 28, 1961.

By the end of 1962, Army Special Forces comprised 8,000 personnel, five times the number that had existed when Kennedy took office.<sup>16</sup>

In July 1961, at the beginning of a review of the final BNSP of the previous administration, the Military Representative to the President (and later, CJCS) GEN Maxwell Taylor posed six questions for consideration that aimed to drive to an NSS and military strategic concept for planning nuclear and conventional forces:

The list would be General Taylor's six questions, each of which addressed a critical issue:

1. What should be the target-hitting capability of strategic retaliatory forces?
2. How many contingencies should conventional or general purpose forces be able to handle, and what should be their speed of reaction?
3. What should be NATO's capability for enforcing a non-nuclear pause upon an aggressor?
4. What provision should be made for supporting a revolt in the Eastern European satellites?
5. What level of military activity could the United States conduct between Suez and Thailand? Was this adequate?
6. Should planners assume that the United States would not conduct large-scale ground operations on the Asian mainland?<sup>17</sup>

Many of these critical questions were never truly resolved due to the administration's failure to produce a revised BNSP that could be used to guide defense planning, but they would nonetheless influence the administration's early defense planning.

By November 1961, the JCS had approved statements of the strategic concept, objectives, and basic military tasks, all without clear resolution of whether and how the new administration might change BNSP.<sup>18</sup> During this period, as part of its Program for Planning, the JCS continued to generate a family of short-, mid-, and long-term planning documents:

- The JSCP continued to be a short-range "fight plan" that "translated national policies into military tasks consonant with actual capabilities and gave general—but not detailed operational—guidance to commanders of unified and specified commands for their conduct of cold, limited, and general war operations."

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<sup>16</sup> Poole, 2011, pp. 23–26.

<sup>17</sup> Poole, 2011, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> Poole, 2011, pp. 9–15.

- The JSOP continued to be the instrument for mid-range planning and included a broad strategic appraisal, a statement of basic U.S. objectives, a strategic concept, and force-level recommendations (“force tabs”), all of which adapted the JSOP to better correlate with the development of the Five-Year Defense Program.
- Finally, the Joint Long-Range Strategic Study (JLRSS) “provided planning guidance running eight to twelve years ahead, helping to shape DoD’s research and engineering program.”<sup>19</sup>

In December 1961, the JCS would advise McNamara that 16 Regular Army divisions were required “to conduct contingency operations in two areas simultaneously while maintaining an acceptable general war posture,” and Kennedy subsequently approved activation of two new Regular Army divisions.<sup>20</sup> McNamara’s geographic allocation of these 16 divisions was to be as follows:

[F]ive in Germany, two in Korea, one in the Western Hemisphere, four in [the continental United States (CONUS)] as the NATO-committed reserve, and four more to conduct an initial defense of either South Korea or Southeast Asia. Mobilizing two or three reserve divisions could meet “most of the other contingencies.” In any one of these eventualities, he maintained, several divisions in the theater of operations would not actually be fighting. Reserves could be sent to a quiet sector and complete training there, releasing regulars for combat. Here OSD was extending its reach into concepts of operational employment.<sup>21</sup>

In January 1962, McNamara testified that upon assuming office, the Kennedy administration “had available for use only eleven Army divisions, plus three Marine Corps and three Army divisions in training.” According to a history of force planning, the Kennedy administration sought with its first defense budget to increase ground forces for a wider range of contingency scenarios:

By January of 1962, in the first defense budget prepared wholly by the Kennedy administration, the conventional force build-up began to take on a recognizable form . . . . Key to this conventional force posture was a requirement of six Army divisions needed for the reinforcement of NATO, with an additional “reserve of ready divisions available to other parts of the world.” The Kennedy plan in 1962 was to increase the number of regular Army divisions from the eleven inherited to sixteen, with the following breakdown of ground forces and their deployments:

- 5 Divisions deployed to Europe,
- 2 Divisions deployed to Korea,

<sup>19</sup> The JLRSS replaced the earlier JLRSE in late 1961. Poole, 1989, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Poole, 2011, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Poole, 2011, pp. 76–77.



- 1 Division stationed in Hawaii and
- 8 Divisions stationed in the CONUS as a strategic reserve

... With six of the eight divisions committed to the reinforcement of a major contingency in Europe, two Army and two Marine divisions remained to reinforce U.S. troops already deployed to Asia or to form a mobile “fire brigade” capable of rapid deployment to a lesser contingency.<sup>22</sup>

This “fire brigade,” the details of which were yet to be worked out, constituted the nucleus of the “1/2 war” capability that would be included in the administration’s strategic concept.

In 1962, Secretary McNamara commissioned a General Purpose Forces Study, one of a large number of studies commissioned at the time. The study examined world-wide security interests and commitments, estimated the forces that might be required to meet threats to each of the identified interests and commitments, identified the number of simultaneous contingencies the force should be able to handle and their speed of reaction, and summed the total forces that would be required to support what might be thought of as a minimum risk force unconstrained by resources.<sup>23</sup> Table 4.1 presents an estimate of the force requirements generated from that study.

As shown in Table 4.1, the study identified four regions and ten additional theaters and, assuming that all of these theaters would be threatened at once, generated an estimated total force requirement of 55 U.S. divisions and 82 fighter wings to simultaneously defend all of the United States’ global security interests and commitments in all theaters. The result was deemed unrealistic and unaffordable.

The next step of the analysis was to go through these various commitments to prioritize U.S. interests, commitments, and threats; assess the likelihood of simultaneous crises arising; and identify the level of risk that could be accepted in assuming that the same forces might be used for more than one contingency. The result was the Flexible Response strategic concept, which yielded a force about half the size of the unconstrained force generated by the General Purpose Forces Study, including rapid deployment capabilities for limited wars (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3).

A strategic concept for assessing conventional force requirements based on specific contingency scenarios in four strategic regions was starting to crystalize by early 1963:

These premises for the planning of the general purpose forces—sizing ground troops and their support to meet specific contingencies, a reliance on the Reserves for major contingencies and the creation of a central strategic reserve of mobile, ready, active forces to meet a lesser contingency—continued to gain respect as well as advocates

<sup>22</sup> Cited in Haffa, 1984, pp. 29–31.

<sup>23</sup> The most detailed discussions of the 1962 General Purpose Forces Study appear to be Kaufmann, 1982, pp. 5–8; Haffa, 1988, pp. 41–44; and Poole, 2011, pp. 10–11, 22.

**Table 4.1**  
**Reconstruction of the 1962 General Purpose Forces Study**

Theater	Number of U.S. Divisions	Number of U.S. Fighter-Attack Wings
North Atlantic Treaty Organization region		
Norway	1	1
Germany	15	23
Greece, Turkey	1	1
Central Treaty Organization region		
Iran	4	6
Pakistan	0	0
Southeast Asia Treaty Organization region		
Thailand, Laos	9	14
South Vietnam	8	12
Australia–New Zealand–United States Treaty Organization region		
Australia	0	0
New Zealand	0	0
Other theaters		
Israel	3	4
India	0	0
Philippines	0	0
Republic of China	0	0
Republic of Korea	8	12
Japan	0	0
Cuba	3 1/3	4
Alaska	1/3	1
Panama	1/3	1
CONUS (strategic reserve)	2	3
Total	55	82

SOURCE: Kaufmann, 1982, p. 6.

**Table 4.2**  
**Forces Required by the Flexible Response Strategic Concept, 1962**

Theater of Possible Conflict	Number of U.S. Divisions	Number of U.S. Fighter-Attack Wings
Norway	1	1
Germany	15	23
Greece, Turkey	1	1
Korea, South Vietnam	8	12
Cuba	3 1/3	4
Total	28 1/3 <sup>a</sup>	41 <sup>b</sup>

SOURCE: Kaufmann, 1982, p. 7.

<sup>a</sup> The total consists of 16 and one-third active Army divisions, three active Marine Corps divisions, eight reserve Army divisions, and one reserve Marine Corps division.

<sup>b</sup> The total consists of 26 active Air Force wings, three active Marine Corps wings, 11 reserve Air Force wings, and one reserve Marine Corps wing.

**Table 4.3**  
**Rapid Deployment Capabilities Programmed for the Flexible Response Strategic Concept, 1962**

Deployment Status or Mode	Number of Divisions	Tonnage	Destination
Already deployed	5	n/a	Europe
Prepositioning and Civil Reserve Air Fleet	3	n/a	Europe
Airlift (C-5As and C-141s)	8	300,000	4,000 nautical miles
Sealift	9	300,000	Worldwide (or 11,000 nautical miles)

SOURCE: Kaufmann, 1982, p. 11.

NOTE: n/a = not applicable.

during the Kennedy years. By January 1963, these elements of general purpose force planning appeared to be narrowing to a well-defined strategic concept. In his “Posture Statement” for that year, Mr. McNamara referred to the “General Purpose Force Studies,” conducted under the direction of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that had examined “the general purpose force requirements to meet various kinds of attacks in four broad geographic regions—Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.” These studies, McNamara contended, “Constitute a very useful approach to the problem of determining the force requirements for a limited war.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Haffa, 1984, p. 32.

By summer 1964, JSOP 70 would define the “two-war” capability in the administration’s emerging 2-1/2 war strategic concept as revolving around potential Soviet and Chinese military action, as follows:

- 1. Defend Western Europe against a major assault long enough to force the Soviets to face the risks of escalation.
- 2. Conduct one major non-NATO operation while retaining the ability to accomplish (1) above. If hostilities erupted in Europe while this operation was underway, the non-NATO effort would be reduced as NATO requirements demanded. If US troops already were fighting in Europe, NATO’s needs would determine the conduct of the non-NATO contingency. Should Chinese or Soviet forces intervene massively in the non-NATO operation, escalation would be required.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, the so-called 2-1/2 war strategic concept focused on fighting a large-scale conventional war in Europe (one war) while facing the possibility of another major contingency in Asia (Vietnam or Korea, one war) and maintaining the capability to rapidly deploy forces from a central strategic reserve to a lesser contingency (1/2 war; see Tables 4.4 and 4.5).<sup>26</sup>

As described in the tables, during this period, force planning envisioned a total of perhaps 17 to 19 divisions for conflict in Europe, perhaps 7 to 12 divisions for conflict in Northeast or Southeast Asia, and 3–1/2 divisions in the strategic reserve for the 1/2 war in 1965, falling to 2/3 divisions by 1968. The tables clearly illustrate the dramatic change in force structure by contingency or scenario between 1965 and 1968, as the U.S. commitment to Vietnam increased, and the draft swelled the number of personnel and Regular divisions.

By early 1963, JSOP 68, covering 1968 to 1970, contained a detailed analysis of missions, objectives, and operational requirements.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, friction and differences between OSD and JCS conspired against agreement on the concepts of Assured Destruction for waging nuclear war and a two-war capability for conventional conflicts, which ultimately would be articulated by McNamara in his Defense Program Memoranda, which became the basis for OSD’s justification of force levels.<sup>28</sup>

According to JSOP 68:

[G]eneral purpose forces should be able to “frustrate, without using nuclear weapons, major non-nuclear assault by Sino-Soviet forces where vital US interests are involved . . . long enough to convince the communists of the risks involved . . . , thereby affording diplomacy a chance to end the conflict.” Specifically, they should be “sufficiently mobile to respond promptly and simultaneously in needed num-

<sup>25</sup> Poole, 2012, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Haffa, 1982, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> Poole, 2011, pp. 9–15.

<sup>28</sup> Poole, 2011, p. 15.

**Table 4.4**  
**Allocation and Deployment of Major General Purpose Forces Under the 2-1/2 War Strategic Concept, 1965**

CONTINGENCIES					
	1 War	+	2 War	+	1/2 War
	Warsaw Pact attack in Europe		Chinese attack in Asia		“Brushfire” in Western Hemisphere
	Allied support		Limited allied support		Some allied support
	Vital to United States		Vital to United States		Not vital to United States
FORCES (Army and Marine Divisions)					
CONUS	4		3		—
Deployed	5		4		—
Strategic reserve	—		—		3 1/3
Reserve	8		—		1
STRATEGIC CONCEPT					
	Duration of conventional war in Europe limited to three months		Did not allow for simultaneous attack in Korea and Vietnam		Rapid deployment to come from strategic reserves
	Forces in-place adequate to meet intermediate attack		Holding action required while reserves mobilized		Forces allocated based on simultaneous contingencies
	Reserve mobilization required		Reserve reinforcement required		Strategic reserves could also be used for major contingency reinforcement

SOURCE: Data from Enthoven and Smith, 2005, p. 215; Gelb and Kuzmack, 1973, p. 207; and Charles Schultze, ed., *Setting National Priorities: 1973 Budget*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1972, as cited in Haffa, 1984, p. 34.

bers to two substantial threats . . . , notably in Europe and Southeast Asia." JSOP-69, which appeared in September 1963, read that "general purpose forces should be sufficient . . . to meet the early reinforcement requirements of NATO and . . . the estimated requirements of any one of the most likely contingency plans of the commanders of the unified and specified commands." Thus, a two-war capability became the benchmark for planning conventional force levels.<sup>29</sup>

Although 1965 began with ends, ways, and means in apparent balance, this balance and the ability to support the strategic concept were in grave doubt by year's end:

<sup>29</sup> Poole, 2011, pp. 22–23.

**Table 4.5**  
**Allocation and Deployment of Major General Purpose Forces Under the 2-1/2 War Strategic Concept, 1968**

CONTINGENCIES					
	1 War	+	2 War	+	1/2 War
	Warsaw Pact attack in Europe		U.S. support of South in Vietnam		"Brushfire" in Western Hemisphere
	Allied support		Limited allied support		Some allied support
	Vital to United States		Declared vital to United States		Not vital to United States
FORCES (Army and Marine Divisions)					
CONUS	6		—		—
Deployed	5		12		—
Strategic reserve	—		—		2/3
Reserve	8		—		1
STRATEGIC CONCEPT					
	Duration of conventional war in Europe limited to three months		Forces equating to a major contingency deployed to Southeast Asia		Strategic reserves deployed to Southeast Asia
	Reserve mobilization required		Reserves would not be mobilized for this contingency		No limited contingency capability remains in CONUS active forces

SOURCE: Data from *DoD Annual Reports, FY 1966–1969*, as cited in Haffa, 1984, p. 37.

In January 1965, strategic requirements and capabilities appeared to be in balance. The deployable strategic reserve consisted of nine Army divisions, three Marine division/wing teams, and 48 tactical fighter squadrons. But by December 1965, with Vietnam commitments snowballing, the Joint Chiefs advised Secretary McNamara that they foresaw a loss, likely to last several years, in the United States' ability to meet contingencies and commitments elsewhere. In particular deployments to Southeast Asia were being met mainly by drawing upon the Continental United States (CONUS) strategic reserve.<sup>30</sup>

By 1965, the nominal 2-1/2 War strategic concept had proved unrealistic and unaffordable, in part, because of the growing commitment and costs of the Vietnam

<sup>30</sup> Poole, 2011, p. 11.

War,<sup>31</sup> and, by 1968, JSOP 70-77 would rate programmed strategic mobility forces inadequate to support the strategic concept. By the end of the Johnson administration, the 2-1/2 war strategic concept had been abandoned in all but name; it would be left to the Nixon administration to suggest a replacement that took account of the changing strategic outlook and budgetary realities.

In addition, the exercise by the Secretary of Defense of new leadership and management authorities, the introduction of the PPBS process and systems analysis approaches, and ongoing improvements to the JSPS arguably fostered greater discipline in defense planning than might have been observed absent these reforms.

Upon his success to the presidency following Kennedy's assassination, President Lyndon Johnson stated to Congress on November 27, 1963, that "This Nation will keep its commitments from South Vietnam to West Berlin." Indeed, the Johnson administration would keep its commitments, especially the expanded U.S. military commitment to Vietnam.

Notwithstanding continued refinements to the Joint Program for Planning—renamed JSPS in June 1968<sup>32</sup>—by the end of the Johnson administration, there were significant gaps between strategy and forces, and gaps still remained between the Secretary of Defense—recommended force and the JCS's more conservative JSOP force. According to the official JCS history of the period,

In December 1968, the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided President Johnson with a decidedly downbeat assessment of the budget and forces being proposed for FY 1970. The levels of strategic nuclear forces, compared with growing Soviet capabilities, "represent a declining trend in the US strategic position vis-à-vis the USSR. Additionally, we believe that the existing conventional capability of our general purpose forces provides only a limited choice of options at the present time outside Southeast Asia. It does not provide the capability to reinforce NATO adequately in a timely manner, nor of simultaneously providing a response to other than minor contingencies elsewhere." In other words, a two-war strategy was infeasible; the next administration would have to reassess the balance between requirements and capabilities.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> According to Kaufmann (1982, pp. 5–7),

To determine the need for U.S. forces, the planners first calculated what might be expected from relevant allies in the way of nonnuclear capabilities. They then assumed that the United States would contribute whatever additional forces would be required to check the hypothetical enemy attack. They concluded that American ground and tactical air forces would have to be provided in eleven of the theaters. In addition, Alaska and Panama would require their traditional garrisons. . . . For the first time since taking office, Secretary McNamara had some idea of how much conventional capability was thought to be enough. But enough proved to be far more than he could expect the president and Congress to provide . . . in short, three rather than eleven simultaneous contingencies seemed not only a more manageable but also a more plausible basis on which to plan the conventional forces.

<sup>32</sup> Poole, 1989, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Poole, 2012, p. 15.

**Table 4.6**  
**Comparison of OSD-Recommended and JSOP Post-Vietnam General Purpose Forces, January 1969**

Type of Forces	FY 1971		FY 1976	
	SEC DEF	JSOP	SEC DEF	JSOP
Active DFs	19 1/3	21 1/3	19 1/3	21 1/3
Reserve DFs	9	10	9	10
Tactical aircraft: Authorized Active Inventory	5,773	6,280	5,332	6,853
CVAs	15	17	15	17
CVSs	6	8	6	9
SSNs	55	60	72	80
Escort ships	276	282	239	280

SOURCE: DoD, 1969, p. 4.

NOTE: SEC DEF = Secretary of Defense; DF = division forces; CVA = attack aircraft carrier; CVS = antisubmarine warfare carrier; SSN = attack submarine.

Differences between JCS and OSD estimates of future forces continued, largely due to the resource-unconstrained nature of the former (see Table 4.6). According to a January 1969 Draft Presidential Memorandum (DPM) on general purpose forces, unlike the OSD-recommended force that reflected the nominal 2-1/2 war strategic concept, the JCS's JSOP reflected the belief that the United States should be prepared to meet two simultaneous Asia contingencies—essentially a “3-1/2 war” capability—that also assumed a full-scale Soviet surprise attack following a concealed mobilization, rather than an attack following warning of Soviet mobilization.<sup>34</sup> Although the differences in ground forces were relatively modest, there were more significant differences in other categories of major force elements. And the difference in the estimated costs of the two forces for FY 1971 was substantial: about \$19 billion in all, or slightly more than 26 percent (\$73.3 billion for the Secretary of Defense force versus \$92.4 billion for the JSOP force).

## Trends in Defense Analytics

Turning to the analytics of force planning, war gaming continued to be a favored tool for defense planning during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and the capa-

<sup>34</sup> DoD, “Draft Presidential Memorandum on General Purpose Forces,” Washington, D.C., January 15, 1969, p. 6.



bilities of DoD for war gaming expanded in the early years of the Kennedy administration with the creation of the Joint War Games Control Group in 1961 and its renamed and expanded version, the Joint War Games Agency, in 1963.<sup>35</sup> During the Kennedy-Johnson years, war games and politico-military games would be conducted on a wide range of topics, including Berlin, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Vietnam, France, NATO, and other topics.<sup>36</sup> By 1964, the JCS began employing the technique of “situational analyses” in the JSOP, which proved to be more useful in testing force levels for individual scenarios than deriving overall force objectives. According to the official JCS history of the period,

In 1964, according to General Taylor, the JCS made a major effort to improve their JSOP. Basically, they decided to buttress supporting rationales of the sort used in JSOP-68 with “situational analyses,” in which the Joint Staff and the services employed war gaming techniques to decide what forces would be needed during the early stages of hypothetical crises. The final product, in Taylor’s judgment, was better than its predecessors but not vastly so. The Joint Staff found that situational analyses were more useful “as a technique for testing force levels than as a method of deriving force objectives.” The Service Chiefs harbored “many reservations concerning the assumptions, factors, concepts of employment and conclusions of these analyses.” And JSOP-69, encumbered by these situational analyses, grew to a truly formidable length. Still, Taylor felt that this approach had proven to be of considerable value in rebutting some of OSD’s cost-effectiveness calculations.<sup>37</sup>

The JCS’s official history of the period describes the results from two applications of the situational analysis approach. The first dealt with a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union taking place in 1969; the second dealt with a conventional defense of Europe in 1968. The history describes the second case as follows:

The analysis for a 1968 war in Europe assumed—wrongly, in the eyes of Wheeler, Greene, and McDonald—that a surprise attack would occur thirty days after an invasion of Southeast Asia. Postulating a Soviet reinforcement capability of two divisions daily, 26 divisions would be needed to defend the Weser River line on D-day and 30 by D+11. In both cases, the US contribution would be five divisions. For a prolonged defense, 51 divisions would be required by D+30; only 42, eleven of them US, were projected as becoming available. Aircraft requirements for the

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed analysis of Army operations research activities during this period, see Shrader, 2006; and Charles R. Shrader, *History of Operations Research in the United States Army*, Vol. II, 1961–1973, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for Operations Research, 2008, pp. 37–120. The latter source recounts the Army’s response to McNamara’s introduction of systems analysis into planning.

<sup>36</sup> For reminiscences of his involvement in policy-level gaming during the Kennedy era, see Thomas C. Schelling, “Red vs. Blue,” paper presented at the Connections Wargaming Conference, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., August 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Poole, 2011, p. 14.

first thirty days totaled 6,661, creating a deficit of 969. Wheeler and Greene challenged many assumptions and comparisons, particularly the continued reliance on the Index of Combat Effectiveness. They made a similar complaint about the analysis for Southeast Asia.<sup>38</sup>

In the end, the method of situational analysis appears not to have proved a viable approach to overcoming interservice disagreements; according to the JCS history.

Persistent splits over force tabs and lowest-common-denominator language about strategic concepts more than offset any benefits from the preparation of alternative program packages or the war gaming of situational analyses. . . . The Joint Staff's situational analysis did nothing to nurture a consensus. It stimulated so much interservice disagreement that their influence on OSD was minimal.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps more significantly, with the McNamara-era growth in the use of systems analysis in defense planning, "military judgment" would continue to lose the privileged place in debates about defense strategy and force structure that it had been accorded in previous administrations.<sup>40</sup> Although war games, simulations, and expert judgment continued to play a role during this era, DoD strove to ground strategic nuclear, conventional, and strategic mobility requirements in systematic quantitative analysis.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Poole, 2011, p. 76.

<sup>39</sup> Poole, 2011, pp. 15, 76.

<sup>40</sup> An important contribution to defense operations research from RAND during the McNamara period was E. S. Quade and W. I. Boucher, *Systems Analysis and Policy Planning: Applications in Defense*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-439-PR, June 1968.

<sup>41</sup> Perhaps the best discussion of this is Enthoven and Smith, 2005. The authors, who were partisans in the effort to introduce systems analysis in DoD, state,

In the field of strategic mobility, it was possible to define a timetable for the rapid deployment of U.S. land and tactical air forces to reinforce allies in various theaters around the world. It was then possible to determine, under various assumptions, the best ways to provide that capability. In other areas only the first steps were taken toward defining the national interest served by major defense programs. In land forces, for example, only very crude indicators of capability were developed. No satisfactory criteria were evolved to help determine how many or what kinds of divisions were needed to support national objectives. Much the same can be said for tactical air forces. But, whether the measures were good or poor, the attempt to put defense program issues into a broader context and to search for explicit measures of national need and adequacy was a basic goal of PPBS.

Complex mathematical and computerized methods certainly have their place, especially when many quantifiable factors and numerous calculations are involved. They proved to be highly useful in analyzing U.S. strategic nuclear forces and strategic mobility forces. It would have been wrong not to use them on these problems. Nevertheless, it is impressive how much can be, and was, done with the simplest tools of analysis. In fact, most of the really important contributions made by the Systems Analysis office between 1961 and 1969 were based on simple analytical tools, often being worked out by hand with no more sophisticated equipment than pencil and paper. (Enthoven and Smith, 2005, pp. 35, 68)

Presentations on the defense systems analysis can be found in E.S. Quade, ed., *Analysis for Military Decisions*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-387-PR, November 1964; and Quade and Boucher, 1968.

As just suggested, a major analytic accomplishment during this period was associated with the NATO–Warsaw Pact military balance, which focused on developing a better understanding of the size and composition of Soviet divisions. These analyses revealed that, because Soviet divisions were equivalent to about half of a U.S. division, nominal division counts were a very poor basis for estimating force balances, and that presentations of nominal division counts greatly overstated Soviet capabilities.<sup>42</sup> Efforts to refine these initial estimates of U.S.-NATO and Soviet–Warsaw Pact land forces would continue for the remainder of the Cold War.<sup>43</sup> Additional analysis suggested that, with 30 days of warning, a successful conventional or limited nuclear defense of NATO might be mounted.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, cost-effectiveness and many other analyses of the U.S.-Soviet nuclear balance led to the rejection of a damage-limiting capability in favor of an Assured Destruction policy, which determined that the United States should have sufficient nuclear forces “to be sure that the United States can destroy one-fifth to one-fourth of the Soviet population and one-half of the Soviet industrial capacity, even after absorbing a full-scale surprise attack.”<sup>45</sup> Systems analyses of the level of destruction that would be expected from different numbers of warheads (WHs) delivered demonstrated that at about 400 one-megaton equivalent delivered WHs, 76 percent of Soviet industrial capacity would be destroyed, and greater numbers of WHs would not appreciably change this outcome. The analysis suggested that, by 1972, the United States’ strategic missile forces alone could destroy more than two-fifths of the Soviets’ total population (more than 100 million people), and more than three-quarters of their industrial capacity. Further spending on the delivery of nuclear WHs was simply not a cost-effective option.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Enthoven and Smith, 2005, pp. 117–164.

<sup>43</sup> A cottage industry in developing firepower scores emerged, and by the 1980s, for example, many analyses of the conventional military balance in Europe relied on Weapon Effectiveness Index/Weighted Unit Value scores.

<sup>44</sup> See Robert Shishko, *The European Conventional Balance: A Primer*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, P-6707, November 24, 1981.

<sup>45</sup> Enthoven and Smith, 2005, pp. 194–195. The full story is contained on pp. 165–196. According to the JCS’s official history of the period,

The alternative, a “damage-limiting” force large enough to destroy some Soviet delivery vehicles and disrupt coordination of the rest, would require twice as many Minuteman ICBMs but save relatively few American lives. Consequently, McNamara decided to use “assured destruction” as his yardstick for sizing strategic retaliatory forces. (Poole, 2011, p. 32)

McNamara publicly announced the Assured Destruction doctrine in 1964.

<sup>46</sup> By comparison, nuclear planning in 1956 gave the highest priority to Soviet bomber bases, including attacks on 1,100 Soviet airfields, and gave the second highest priority to Soviet industrial infrastructure. See Scott Shane, “1950s U.S. Nuclear Target List Offers Chilling Insight,” *New York Times*, December 22, 2015.

The doctrines of Flexible Response (to raise the nuclear threshold) and Assured Destruction (as a crude basis for estimating the requirements for deterrence of a Soviet attack) would survive in one form or another until the end of the Cold War.

## Summary and Conclusions

During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, force requirements continued to be developed primarily on the basis of beliefs about the potential shape of major wars in Europe and Asia, although the administration also gave increasing consideration to the requirements for scenarios involving brushfire or 1/2 wars. The resulting 2-1/2 war strategic concept proved unrealistic and unaffordable, however, and the resulting force probably was incapable of executing the concept.

McNamara reportedly was fond of pointing out that the size and character of general purpose forces were far more difficult to determine than those of strategic forces, because of the wide variety of possible contingencies they must be prepared to meet; the uncertainties regarding opposing forces; the uncertain allied contributions; the relatively important role of reserve forces; the interrelationship between the size of the force, its readiness, and the ability to deploy it rapidly to where it may be needed; and the sheer number and diversity of units involved.<sup>47</sup> Systems analysts dug into all of these sorts of issues during and after McNamara's tenure as Secretary of Defense. By virtue of the heavier reliance on systems analyses, defense analyses during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations arguably became somewhat more transparent and useful in engaging both service stakeholders and Congress.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, the accomplishments of the early systems analysts and the institutionalization of program analysis and evaluation (PA&E) within OSD would greatly strengthen future defense secretaries' ability to shape and judge service and joint analysis, and would provide a more systematic basis for estimating conventional force requirements. And although they were not without their own limitations, the development of theater campaign, mobility, and other models during this period would, over time, provide frameworks for increasing the transparency and improving the quality of conventional force requirements analyses. Theater campaign analyses using models such as these, moreover, would prove instrumental for estimating conventional force requirements over the next several decades.

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<sup>47</sup> Haffa, 1984, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> For example, whereas Gates' last annual report to Congress was 33 double-spaced pages in length, McNamara's first such report for FY 1962 was 122 single-spaced pages with an additional 44 pages of detailed tables; Secretary McNamara's January 1968 report for the FY 1969–1973 defense program was 220 pages (see Enthoven and Smith, 2005, pp. 40–41).

As McNamara observed in his FY 1969 annual report, DoD planning would increasingly be focused on contingencies on the basis of their associated probabilities, risks, and costs:

What we have done over the years is to study a wide variety of possible contingencies involving the potential need for U.S. forces. You may recall that when I appeared before this Committee five years ago I described our general approach to this problem, and how we had examined in considerable detail our land and tactical air force requirements for some 16 different contingencies. . . . Since completion of those early studies in 1962, we have greatly refined our techniques in computing General Purpose Force requirements. As I stated earlier, we do not plan to meet all theoretically possible emergencies simultaneously, since the risk of this is very low and the cost very high. Rather, our policy now is to set the size of the General Purpose Forces so that we can simultaneously meet the more probable contingencies.<sup>49</sup>

McNamara also provided an accurate and surprisingly modest description of what his systems analysts had accomplished in the years since he had assumed office:

I will be discussing at times the capabilities of our forces in terms of quantitative indices of effectiveness. These indices are still quite primitive, and they do not in all cases measure our capabilities in relation to those of possible enemies. The needed improvements in the indices have yet to be made, but even in their present state they provide useful indications of the changes in the combat power of our forces over the years.<sup>50</sup>

There were, moreover, a range of influences on the Kennedy administration's defense program beyond those of the systems analysts, as is described well in the following 1973 assessment:

Nevertheless, in the past ten years the impression has grown, at least outside the executive branch, that the connection between commitments and force posture is a logical one—or at any rate one that could be made persuasive. This impression was given special impetus by President Kennedy's statement to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara that in planning for American security he should not be bound by costs, but should buy "what is necessary." Thus began a process of general purpose force planning based on "what types of conflicts we anticipate, what countries we choose to assist, and to what degree these countries can defend themselves; in short, on what contingencies we prepare for." The following description of the

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<sup>49</sup> Robert S. McNamara, *Statement of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara Before the Senate Armed Service Committee on the Fiscal Year 1969–1973 Defense Program and 1969 Defense Budget*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 22, 1968, p. 79.

<sup>50</sup> McNamara, 1968, p. 83.

process by two important participants suggests, however, that other considerations also entered into the result:

“By 1969 the approved program for general-purpose forces was the result of an evolution to adapt an existing force structure to a stated strategy. Many elements of the force structure were as much a product of individually justified changes in an existing force as they were a result of any integrated, overall determination of strategic requirements.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Gelb and Kuzmack, 1973, pp. 205–206, quoting Enthoven and Smith, 2005. Enthoven and Smith were senior systems analysts in the McNamara DoD.

## The Nixon and Ford Administrations, 1969–1977

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The Nixon administration took advantage of the break between the Soviets and Chinese in 1969 to reshape the strategic concept and force sizing construct for conventional force planning, shifting the nation's peacetime defense posture from the nominal 2-1/2 war strategic concept of its predecessors that included NATO Europe, Northeast or Southeast Asia, and Caribbean scenarios, to a 1-1/2 war concept that involved either a major conflict scenario in NATO Europe or a conflict with China in Northeast or Southeast Asia, but not simultaneous conflicts with the Soviets and Chinese, as well as a 1/2 war elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Planning based on these scenarios generally continued to be threat-based, although longer-term, projections, especially if future Soviet capabilities also were considered for future force planning.

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird rejected McNamara's centralized approach to defense planning and management, and ceded some authorities back to the JCS and services.<sup>2</sup> Although the JSPS and PPBS continued to be the principal systems in use for future force planning, they remained essentially disconnected from one another, such

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<sup>1</sup> For reviews of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking, and the assumptions that animated foreign and defense policy during the Nixon-Ford years, see Brown, 2015, pp. 207–294; Gaddis, 2015b, pp. 272–341; and Boll, 1988, pp. 181–193. The official JCS histories for the period are Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1969–1972*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013; and Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1973–1976*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015. The official OSD histories are Richard A. Hunt, *Melvin Laird and the Foundations of the Post-Vietnam Military, 1969–1973, Secretaries of Defense Historical Series*, Vol. 7, Washington, D.C., 2015; and Richard A. Hunt, ed., *Melvin Laird and the Foundations of the Post-Vietnam Military, 1969–1973, Secretaries of Defense Historical Series*, Vol. 7, documentary supplement, Washington, D.C., 2016.

<sup>2</sup> In June 1973, the NSC established a national net assessment process, and the Secretary of Defense subsequently established an Office of Net Assessment. See Thomas H. Moorer, "Program for National Net Assessment: NSSM 178," memorandum to Henry A. Kissinger, May 31, 1973; A. W. Marshall, "Reply to NSSM 178," memorandum to Henry A. Kissinger, June 21, 1973; NSC, National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 224, "National Net Assessment Process, NSSM 178," June 28, 1973; NSC, National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 186, "National Net Assessment of the Comparative Costs and Capabilities of U.S. and Soviet Military Establishments," September 1, 1973; and NSC, NSDM 239, "National Net Assessment Process," November 27, 1973. For a recent historical review of the evolution of net assessment, see Philip A. Karber, *Net Assessment for Secretary of Defense: Future Implications from Early Formulations*, Washington, D.C.: The Potomac Foundation, February 2014.



that department-wide integrated planning and programming continued to be impossible. The challenges associated with resource-unconstrained force planning by the JCS and unresolved interservice disputes continued during this period. Scenario-based studies, war games, and military judgment continued to predominate on the military side while systems analysis techniques continued to be refined and were increasingly employed within OSD. There also was increasing use of combat simulation and other models in support of strategic analysis during the period.

## Historical Review

In January 1969, Nixon administration National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger launched “a reexamination of the assumptions of the ‘two and one-half war concept’” that had been developed during the previous administration.<sup>3</sup>

The Sino-Soviet border conflict in the summer of 1969 subsequently revealed a deep split in world communism, and signaled to the Nixon administration that the assumption of the sort of simultaneous coordinated Soviet and Chinese attack envisioned in the 2-1/2 war construct was no longer realistic, or desirable. In addition, in the administration’s thinking, a recent thaw in U.S.-Soviet relations had opened up a strategic opportunity to pursue crisis avoidance and management, détente, trade, and arms control with the Soviets; the acrimonious state of Soviet-Chinese relations presented another opportunity to normalize ties with China.<sup>4</sup> A desire to reduce defense spending also animated the administration’s thinking on defense.<sup>5</sup>

President Richard Nixon’s announcement, on July 25, 1969, of what came to be called “the Nixon Doctrine” further reduced a reliance on military power by signaling that the United States would continue to honor its treaty commitments in Asia, but would expect regional friends and allies, with U.S. assistance, to assume principal

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<sup>3</sup> NSC, NSSM 3, “U.S. Military Posture and Balance of Power,” January 21, 1969, cited in Haffa, 1982, p. 40. The memorandum read, in part,

The President has directed the preparation of a study reviewing our military posture and the balance of power. The study should consider in detail the security and foreign policy implications of a wide range of alternative budget levels and strategies for strategic and general purpose forces.

Haffa (1982, pp. 40–41) provides additional detail on the alternative strategic concepts that were presented to President Nixon.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, NSC, NSDM 8, “Crisis Anticipation and Management,” March 21, 1969; NSC, NSDM 15, “East West Trade,” May 28, 1969; NSC, NSDM 17, “Relaxation of Economic Controls Against China,” June 26, 1969; and NSC, NSDM 33, “Preliminary Strategic Arms Limitation Talks,” November 12, 1969.

<sup>5</sup> It is notable that Defense Secretary Clark Clifford’s January 1969 DPM on general purpose forces also mentioned budgetary pressures as one of the reasons for rejecting the JCS’s JSOP proposals on general purpose forces.



responsibility for their own internal security and stability needs.<sup>6</sup> And his February 1970 statement, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s: A New Strategy for Peace*, laid out his administration's larger foreign policy and national security outlook and program.<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, following the policy review, in October 1969,

As a result of the National Security Council meeting on September 10, 1969 the President has directed that Worldwide Strategy 2, as described in *National Security Study Memorandum 3, U.S. Military Posture and the Balance of Power, General Purpose Forces Section*, dated September 5, 1969, will constitute the approved United States strategy for general purpose forces.<sup>8</sup>

“Worldwide Strategy 2” formally shifted the U.S. strategic concept to a 1-1/2 war strategic concept that was capable of either a NATO initial defense or a defense against a full-scale Chinese attack in Korea or Southeast Asia (but not both simultaneously), as well as a lesser contingency (1/2 war).<sup>9</sup> As described by President Nixon at the time,

The stated basis of our conventional posture in the 1960's was the so-called “2-1/2 war” principle. According to it, U.S. forces would be maintained for a three-month conventional forward defense of NATO, a defense of Korea or Southeast Asia against a full-scale Chinese attack, and a minor contingency—all simultaneously. These force levels were never reached.

In the effort to harmonize doctrine and capability, we chose what is best described as the “1 1/2 war” strategy. Under it we will maintain in peacetime general purpose forces adequate for simultaneously meeting a major Communist attack in either

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<sup>6</sup> Nixon stated,

However, I believe that the time has come when the United States, in our relations with all of our Asian friends, be quite emphatic on two points: One, that we will keep our treaty commitments, our treaty commitments, for example, with Thailand under SEATO [the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization]; but, two, that as far as the problems of internal security are concerned, as far as the problems of military defense, except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons, that the United States is going to encourage and has a right to expect that this problem will be increasingly handled by, and the responsibility for it taken by, the Asian nations themselves. (Richard M. Nixon, “Informal Remarks in Guam with Newsmen,” American Presidency Project, July 25, 1969)

This shift to a heavier reliance on regional friends and allies would be echoed in the building partnership capacity initiatives of the first and second decade of the millennium.

<sup>7</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s: A New Strategy for Peace*, Message by the President to U.S. Congress, February 18, 1970.

<sup>8</sup> NSC, NSDM 27, “U.S. Military Posture,” October 11, 1969.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Haffa, 1984, p. 41. In fact, in his DPM on general purpose forces in January 1969, Defense Secretary Clifford suggested to the new administration the following cost-saving alternative to a “2-1/2 war” capability: “We could prepare to fight a major war in either Europe or Asia, but not both simultaneously, in effect combining strategies two and three.” This is essentially the sort of 1-1/2 war strategic concept the Nixon administration embraced. DoD, 1969, p. 12.

Europe or Asia, assisting Allies against non-Chinese threats in Asia, and contending with a contingency elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

In his FY 1971 annual report to Congress in February 1970, Secretary Laird would explain that the 2-1/2 war strategic concept had never been fully resourced and lacked the force structure that would be necessary for actual implementation:

We have and must maintain a considerable degree of flexibility in how we choose to be prepared to meet our military obligations under any particular set of circumstances. As you know, the previous Administration chose to design our General Purpose Forces, in the words of Secretary Clifford, “. . . to meet simultaneously two major contingencies (one in Europe and one in Asia) and one minor contingency, as well as a ‘War at Sea.’” This policy is popularly known as the “2-1/2 war strategy,” although such a description greatly oversimplifies the complexities of General Purpose Force planning.

It had long been clear to me when I served on the House Appropriations Committee, as well as to many other members of the Congress, that the forces and budgets proposed by the previous Administration were insufficient to support that policy. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff did develop their force recommendations on this basis, the budgets proposed by the Secretary of Defense and approved by the President fell considerably short of what would be required to support such forces. Thus, there remained a substantial gap between the stated policy objective and the means provided to fulfill it.<sup>11</sup>

In his FY 1973 annual report, citing President Nixon’s “Strategy for Peace” and Nixon Doctrine, and his own “Strategy of Realistic Deterrence,” Laird described his criteria for national security planning at the time:

From these elements, and after a thorough review of the situation as it existed at the time this Administration took office, we established the following basic criteria for national security planning for the decade of the 70s:

Preservation by the United States of an adequate strategic nuclear capability as the cornerstone of the Free World’s nuclear deterrent.

Development and/or continued maintenance of Free World forces that are effective, and minimize the likelihood of requiring the employment of strategic nuclear forces should deterrence fail.

An International Security Assistance Program that will enhance self-defense capabilities throughout the Free World, and, when coupled with diplomatic

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Melvin R. Laird, *Fiscal Year 1971 Defense Program and Budget: Defense Report*, Washington, D.C., February 20, 1970, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Laird, 1970, p. 53.

and other actions, will encourage regional cooperation and/or security agreements among our friends and allies.<sup>12</sup>

Laird described the defense strategy associated with this construct as flowing from the Nixon Doctrine, and consisting of three elements:

Our defense strategy is based on the three key elements of the Nixon Doctrine:

- First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.
- Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.
- Third, in cases involving other types of aggression we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested and as appropriate. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Laird provided the following summary of his thinking on criteria for assessing the adequacy of military capabilities and capacity, which reflected his apparent view of planning scenarios as hypothetical cases that the United States might or might not confront, but which were nonetheless useful for assessing the capabilities of the force:

Our goal is to deter war. The military means to this deterrence goal require maintenance of military forces—sufficient for deterrence and adequate in size and readiness, when combined with the forces of our allies—to defend our vital interests in the event of conflict.

In defense planning, the resources available to meet the requirements of Free World security include both active and reserve components of U.S. forces, the forces of our allies, and the additional military capabilities of our allies and friends that can be made available through provision of appropriate security assistance programs.

History has shown the disparity between plans for and use of military force. We cannot predict in specific detail how our military forces might be used in any given situation. We can, however, specify what we want them to be able to do, provide some inherent flexibility, and estimate what they can do in likely situations. We

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<sup>12</sup> Melvin R. Laird, *National Security Strategy of Realistic Deterrence: Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird's Annual Defense Department Report, FY 1973*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 17, 1972, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Laird, 1972, p. 22.

must be sure that our forces provide relevant power—power to reduce the probability of conflict; power to fight, if necessary, in defense of our interests.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, Laird laid out four guidelines that would provide additional specificity to the Nixon Doctrine:

Last year, I reported that these defense planning criteria, which reflect the imperatives of the Nixon Doctrine, would be implemented in harmony with the following four guidelines:

- In deterring strategic nuclear warfare primary reliance will continue to be placed on U.S. strategic deterrent forces.
- In deterring theater nuclear warfare the U.S. also has primary responsibility, but certain of our allies are able to share this responsibility by virtue of their own nuclear capabilities.
- In deterring theater conventional warfare for—example, a major war in Europe—U.S. and allied forces share responsibility.
- In deterring subtheater or localized warfare, the country or ally which is threatened bears the primary burden, particularly for providing manpower, but when U.S. interests or obligations are at stake we must be prepared to provide help as appropriate.<sup>15</sup>

Table 5.1 reconstructs the allocation and deployment of major general purpose forces under the Nixon administration's 1-1/2 war strategic concept.

As shown in the table, the administration envisioned that 4-1/3 Regular divisions would be forward-deployed in Europe, and that in the event of a Soviet–Warsaw Pact attack on Europe, these forces would be reinforced by another 4-2/3 Regular divisions from the CONUS, as well as eight reserve divisions, for a total of 17 divisions. The second (nonsimultaneous) war, involving a hypothesized Chinese conventional attack in Asia, would employ 1-2/3 forward-deployed Regular divisions, and be reinforced by 2-1/3 CONUS-based active divisions, for a total of four divisions.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the United States would earmark three Regular divisions from the strategic reserve and one reserve division for a 1/2 war, possibly in the Middle East.

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<sup>14</sup> Laird, 1972, pp. 61–62.

<sup>15</sup> Laird, 1972, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> By comparison, there were typically a total of six to seven U.S. Army divisions, plus additional Army combat and supporting elements during the Korean War and a U.S. Marine division. For example, in November 1950, eight Army forces included the 1st Cavalry Division and the 2nd, 24th, and 25th Infantry divisions; X Corps included the U.S. Army 3rd and 7th Infantry divisions and the 1st Marine Division (see U.S. Army Center of Military History, *Korea 1950*, Washington, D.C., 1997, pp. 227–228). It also is worth mentioning that the Nixon administration removed one of two Army divisions from Korea.

**Table 5.1**  
**Allocation and Deployment of Major General Purpose Forces Under the 1-1/2 War Strategic Concept, 1973**

CONTINGENCIES					
	1 War	+	1 War	+	1/2 War
	Warsaw Pact attack in Europe		Chinese conventional attack in Asia		Lesser contingency elsewhere, possibly the Middle East
	Allied support		Limited allied support		Allied support questionable
	Vital to United States		Vital to United States		Not vital to United States
FORCES (Army and Marine Divisions)					
CONUS	4 2/3		2 1/3		—
Deployed	4 1/3		1 2/3		—
Strategic reserve	—		—		3
Reserve	8		—		1
STRATEGIC CONCEPT					
	Nuclear capability of U.S. strategic/theater forces serves as a deterrent to full-scale Soviet attack in Asia			Non-Chinese threat in Asia, Middle East, or Latin America; force planning dependent on allied contribution	
	Prospects for a coordinated two-front attack on U.S. allies are low because of the risks of nuclear war and the improbability of Sino-Soviet cooperation				
	Reserves may not have to mobilize			In case of subversion, guerilla war, or wars of national liberation; United States will not be involved, will preempt through economic development, social reform	

SOURCE: Data from Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 220; and Gelb and Kuzmack, 1973, p. 208, as cited in Haffa, 1984, p. 51.

The FY 1972 defense budget, which was the first budget implementing the 1-1/2 war strategic concept and force sizing construct, set the basic terms for U.S. force structure in subsequent years:

A comparison of the forces provided for in the President's 1972 defense budget and those maintained before the Vietnam war shows a reduction of three Army divisions, two attack aircraft carriers, four Navy tactical air wings, and one Air Force tactical air wing. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird indicated that the administration planned to maintain essentially these force levels through the 1970s, with perhaps minor changes. The fiscal 1972 reduction to about thirteen Army and three

Marine divisions, thirty-five tactical air wings, and thirteen attack aircraft carriers is evidently the operational meaning of the one-and-a-half-war doctrine. This was borne out by the 1973 and 1974 defense budgets, which made only minor changes in these figures.<sup>17</sup>

Importantly, by the fall of 1971, NSDM 133 would specify that U.S. force planning for NATO should assume that NATO mobilization would begin at least a week behind a mobilization by the Pact, that priority should be given to “enhancing our assurance of a conventional defense in the initial period of a conflict, particularly the first 30 days,” and that “the size and structure of U.S. forces [should be] consistent with a strategy of initial conventional defense for a period of 90 days during which NATO’s war-fighting capabilities would stop a Pact attack and stabilize the military situation without major loss of NATO territory.”<sup>18</sup> The NSDM also instructed that all efforts be made to encourage European allies to carry out their current NATO force plans.

Turning to Asia, with NSDM 230, “U.S. Strategy and Forces for Asia,” dated August 9, 1973, the Nixon administration elaborated the strategic concept and force sizing construct for Asia that specified that “U.S. forces should be planned so that U.S. and allied forces would be capable of conducting a combined conventional defense against a joint PRC/Communist ally attack in either Northeast or Southeast Asia, as well as a non-PRC attack in the other Asian theater,” an objective that might be viewed as somewhat more demanding than its predecessor’s objective of providing a defense against a PRC attack either in Northeast or Southeast Asia: “Tactical nuclear forces should be planned in Asia as a hedge against the failure of a conventional defense. However, this does not preclude early use of tactical nuclear weapons in the event of a major PRC attack.”<sup>19</sup> The two major Army OPLANs at the time focused on conflict scenarios in Germany and Korea.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, NSDM 242, “Policy for Planning the Employment of Nuclear Weapons,” dated January 17, 1974, stated that “The U.S. will rely primarily on U.S. and allied conventional forces to deter conventional aggression by both nuclear and non-nuclear powers. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the U.S. use of nuclear weapons in

<sup>17</sup> Gelb and Kuzmack, 1973, p. 206.

<sup>18</sup> NSC, NSDM 133, “U.S. Strategy and Forces for NATO; Allied Force Improvements,” September 22, 1971. The period leading up to the signing of NSDM 133 appears to have involved a great deal of study of alternative strategies and mobilization and war-fighting assumptions. See Poole, 2013, pp. 113–128, as well as NSC, NSSM 84, “U.S. Strategies and Forces for NATO,” November 21, 1969; and NSC, NSDM 95, “U.S. Strategy and Forces for NATO,” November 25, 1970.

<sup>19</sup> The NSDM advised that “U.S. planning for the next five years should include Asian baseline deployments at essentially current levels in Korea, Japan/Okinawa, and the Philippines. . . . Deployments on Taiwan and in Thailand will be kept under continuous review.” NSC, NSDM 230, “U.S. Strategy and Forces for Asia,” August 9, 1973.

<sup>20</sup> Charles R. Shrader, *History of Operations Research in the United States Army*, Vol. III, 1973–1995, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for Operations Research, 2009, p. 253.

response to conventional aggression,” and that “In the event that escalation cannot be controlled, the objective for employment of nuclear forces is to obtain the best possible outcome for the United States and its allies.”<sup>21</sup>

At the beginning of Nixon’s second term in office in 1973, there remained some ambiguities regarding what the administration’s intentions were for Asia:

As of this writing, the Nixon administration has neither explicitly reaffirmed nor replaced this policy [of flexible and controlled response]. In response to pressures to reduce the defense budget it has, as suggested earlier, taken moves that affect overall conventional combat readiness. This may be largely a shift in priority: while this policy envisages a continuation of the flexible and controlled response doctrine for Europe, its implications for Asia are ambiguous. Further time and decisions are needed to clarify whether what is intended, over the longer term, is merely the stated shift from two-and-a-half- to one-and-a-half-war planning or a further reduction in U.S. Asian commitments or possibly some third course not yet defined.<sup>22</sup>

In the Middle East, a combination of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal of military forces “East of Suez,”<sup>23</sup> the October 1973 war between Israel and Egypt that raised the specter of U.S.-Soviet conflict, and the oil embargo by Arab oil producing nations thereafter that revealed the U.S. economy’s sensitivity to oil shocks raised the importance to the United States of the Persian Gulf region, and led to efforts to fill the security vacuum in the gulf. The Persian Gulf would only grow in importance as the focus of possible scenarios for U.S. military intervention.<sup>24</sup>

In August 1974, President Nixon resigned and was succeeded by Vice President Gerald R. Ford, and in October 1975, Donald Rumsfeld succeeded James R. Schlesinger as Secretary of Defense.<sup>25</sup> The Gerald Ford administration appears to have largely continued the directions set during the Nixon administration, and did not commission a new review of defense policy and the U.S. military posture for almost two more years.

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<sup>21</sup> NSC, NSDM 242, “Policy for Planning the Employment of Nuclear Weapons,” January 17, 1974.

<sup>22</sup> Gelb and Kuzmack, 1973, p. 213.

<sup>23</sup> In 1968, the United Kingdom announced that it would withdraw all military forces from the Persian Gulf and other areas “East of Suez” by the end of 1971.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, NSC, NSDM 186, “U.S. Military Supply Policy for the Lower Persian Gulf States and Oman,” August 18, 1972; Director of Central Intelligence, *Problems in the Persian Gulf*, National Intelligence Estimate 30-1-73, June 7, 1973; and Henry A. Kissinger, “The Persian Gulf,” memorandum to President Nixon, May 18, 1972.

<sup>25</sup> There appears to have been a fairly high level of turnover in the Secretary of Defense position during the Nixon-Ford years, including Melvin R. Laird (January 1969–January 1973), Elliot L. Richardson (January 1973–May 1973), William P. Clements (acting, May 1973–July 1973), James R. Schlesinger (July 1973–November 1975), and Donald Rumsfeld (November 1975–January 1977).



In NSSM 246, “National Defense Policy and Military Posture,” dated September 2, 1976, President Ford stated his desire for “a thorough review and analysis of our national defense policy and military posture. This review should consider in detail the security and foreign policy impact of a range of alternative strategies for our strategic and general purpose forces.”<sup>26</sup> An initial draft response to this tasking was provided in NSDM 348, “U.S. Defense Policy and Military Posture: Response to NSSM 246,” dated November 1, 1976, which subsequently underwent further discussion and revision until the administration codified its final decisions on U.S. defense policy and military posture in NSDM 348, “U.S. Defense Policy and Military Posture,” dated January 20, 1977.<sup>27</sup> The NSDM stated three overriding aims for policy and strategy: (1) a strategic balance with the Soviet Union that guarantees the United States would never be in an inferior position, (2) an adequate American contribution to the defense of the NATO area, and (3) a global capability designed to meet those challenges outside the NATO–Warsaw Pact area that threaten vital U.S. interests.<sup>28</sup> NSDM 348 ordered preparations for both short-warning attacks and for those with longer warnings and better-prepared Soviet–Warsaw Pact forces, and it also ordered that U.S. forces should have a sustaining capability for 90 days of combat. A strong theater nuclear capability also was endorsed. Finally, the memorandum also advocated continued conventional arms control negotiations under the Mutually Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) process.

An August 1976 briefing titled “Soviet Conventional Forces and the Military Balance in Europe” described a NATO “stout conventional defense which would deny the Soviets the possibility of a quick grab of a substantial piece of NATO territory.”<sup>29</sup> The briefing included a chart that showed projected buildup curves over the first 30 days of a NATO–Warsaw Pact conflict and that suggested a 1.38 to 1.0 Pact-to-NATO ratio of divisional manpower by mobilization day plus 30, well below a ratio that might inspire confidence that the Soviets could quickly succeed in an attack on NATO.<sup>30</sup>

In his January 1977 report on the FY 1978 defense budget, Secretary Rumsfeld gave a mixed assessment of the U.S.-Soviet military balance:

There is consensus that U.S. military capability and strength can be described as “sufficient”—today. That is, when compared to the Soviet Union, we have parity in some aspects of military power, marked superiority in some others, and a degree of inferiority in still others.

<sup>26</sup> NSC, NSSM 246, “National Defense Policy and Military Posture,” September 2, 1976.

<sup>27</sup> NSC, NSDM 348, “U.S. Defense Policy and Military Posture,” January 20, 1977.

<sup>28</sup> NSC, NSDM 348, 1977.

<sup>29</sup> This scenario reportedly was sometimes referred to as “the Hamburg Grab.”

<sup>30</sup> See Figure C.1 in Appendix C of this report.



However, the trends over a 10-15-year period had been decidedly adverse, quantitatively and qualitatively, as well as with respect to the key military balances, until arrested by real increases in the defense budget in FY 1976 and FY 1977.<sup>31</sup>

To illustrate, Rumsfeld's report included a chart titled "U.S./USSR Strategic Forces Advantage" that showed the U.S. advantages in equivalent megatons (EMT), throw weight (TW), strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVs), and WHs slipping since 1964 and projecting further erosion out to 1982.<sup>32</sup>

Rumsfeld also reported the Soviets' continued military buildup while highlighting the modest success to date of arms control negotiations. To arrest the unfavorable trends, Rumsfeld laid out a final long-term defense spending plan that envisioned real growth in defense accounts of about 19 percent in Total Obligational Authority and 23 percent growth in Outlays over FY 1977 levels over the FY 1978–1982 Five-Year Defense Program.<sup>33</sup>

## Trends in Defense Analytics

In his final annual report (FY 1978) to Congress in January 1977, Rumsfeld provided a relatively detailed description of his views on force planning during his tenure as Secretary of Defense. Rumsfeld enumerated his conception of the various types of planning as follows:

Types of Planning: Defense or force planning is not the same as the more detailed contingency and operational planning done by military staffs. Rather, its main purpose is to ensure that resources, in the form of force structure, personnel, weapons, materiel, supplies and other factors necessary to military effectiveness over a wide range of contingencies, are available to the President and his subordinates. As such, force planning does not, and should not, dictate where or how these capabilities should be used. In the face of many uncertainties, force planning strives—within the budgets provided—to furnish the President with sufficient power and flexibility to conduct national security policy in a manner consistent with the nation's interests.

Rumsfeld also opined on the importance of analysis, and the requirements of modern force planning, as follows:

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<sup>31</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *U.S. Defense Perspectives, Fiscal Year 1978*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 1977a, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> See Figure C.2 in Appendix C of this report.

<sup>33</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1978*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 17, 1977b, pp. 3–4.

The Importance of Analysis: Because so many real uncertainties are involved, and so many interests are at risk, conservatism in the design of the U.S. defense posture is in order. Superiority over, or insistence on numerical equivalence with potential adversaries, may be justified. But underlying such considerations must be a bed-rock of analysis based on the world as it actually exists. Modern force planning has the virtue of providing such a foundation. It demands specificity about a number of factors:

- the theaters in which contingencies could arise;
- the nature of the contingencies;
- potential enemies and allies;
- the roles U.S. forces could be expected to play; and the types of forces that could be used.

To identify these factors, modern force planning requires a context within which the detailed analysis of hypothetical campaigns, the clash of forces, and selection of preferred defense postures can proceed. Even manpower planning and research and development must and do take current and expected contexts into account.<sup>34</sup>

Turning to defense analysis during this period, the JCS's Studies, Analysis, and Gaming Agency (SAGA) undertook a number of games, studies, and analyses of various aspects of the NATO–Warsaw Pact conventional force balance, and other topics.<sup>35</sup> Use of theater combat models, such as the Concepts Evaluation Model (CEM) and the vector family of models, appears to have seen growth within DoD,<sup>36</sup> although the limitations arising from data quality, theories of combat, and results of such modeling activities appear frequently to have been judged suspiciously.<sup>37</sup>

In any event, examples of war gaming in support of conventional force assessments in Europe can be found in various 1973 SAGA assessments of ground weapons in NATO theater campaign outcomes,<sup>38</sup> the air battle in central Europe,<sup>39</sup> and “illustrative” options that might be proposed at the then-upcoming MBFR conventional

<sup>34</sup> Rumsfeld, 1977b, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> The official history of Army operations research during this period is Shrader, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> It is telling, however, that the official JCS histories only rarely mention computers, and never specifically mention computer models, in discussions of the war games, studies, and analyses that were conducted.

<sup>37</sup> For an excellent review of the limitations of combat modeling for assessing conventional forces at this time, see J. A. Stockfish, *Models, Data, and War: A Critique of the Study of Conventional Forces*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-1526-PR, March 1975.

<sup>38</sup> Poole, 2015, p. 104.

<sup>39</sup> Poole, 2015, p. 112.

forces talks in Helsinki.<sup>40</sup> The official history of the JCS for the period described the first of these assessments—and its limits—as follows:

In June 1976, after what must have been an exhaustive study, the Studies Analysis and Gaming Agency reached rather pessimistic conclusions. In all cases studied, SAGA reported, Warsaw Pact forces would drive NATO units from their initial defensive positions. While NATO's tactical air forces could delay this dislodgement by as much as seven days, they could not prevent it from occurring. In September, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised Secretary Rumsfeld that SAGA's Air Battle Study could be useful, when used "in conjunction with other studies and supporting data." But they cited some factors that could lead to more optimistic conclusions. First, the introduction of F-15s and A-10s would increase conventional capabilities more than SAGA allowed. These and other advanced systems could "substantially" affect the military balance. Second, SAGA had not considered the new generation of tactical nuclear weapons. These, too, might have made SAGA's findings "substantially different." Third, the weather, which SAGA believed would affect both sides equally, might prove instead to be a decisive factor because of surface US avionics.<sup>41</sup>

SAGA's analyses appear to have garnered a mixed reception from policymakers. For example, according to the JCS's official history of the period:

A SAGA study done during 1975 estimated that in FY 1980, with 23 days of warning, 24 brigades could reach Europe by D-day when fighting began, 52 brigades by D+30. The Joint Chiefs of Staff commented that these conclusions "must be applied cautiously," since much would depend upon what actions US allies took and against what targets the Soviets used their submarines [sic].<sup>42</sup>

## Summary and Conclusions

As described in this chapter, the Nixon administration revised the 2-1/2 war strategic concept for sizing conventional forces to a 1-1/2 war concept that took advantage of the tectonic rift that had emerged between the Soviet Union and China, which made coordinated action against U.S. friends and allies far less likely. Although the administration also pursued a policy of *détente* to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union, and pursued arms control and other agreements that would reduce the risks and con-

<sup>40</sup> Poole, 2015, pp. 113–114. There reportedly were some concerns about how sensitive such analyses were to underlying assumptions—particularly to the premise that withdrawn Soviet units would be inactivated while redeployed U.S. forces would remain on active, dual-based status.

<sup>41</sup> Poole, 2015, p. 112.

<sup>42</sup> Poole, 2015, p. 268.

sequences of nuclear and conventional war, strategic and force planning during the period continued to be threat-based and Soviet-centric. The Ford administration generally continued the directions set by Nixon, and it did not update the Nixon administration policy statement of defense policy and military posture in NSDM 27 until the last days of the administration in January 1977.

Although the PPBS and JSPS continued to be the principal systems in use for future force planning, they remained disconnected, separate processes operating in parallel, making departmentwide integrated planning and programming impossible. The challenges associated with resource-unconstrained force planning by the JCS and unresolved interservice disputes continued during this period. Scenario-based studies, war games, and military judgment continued to predominate on the military side while systems analysis techniques continued to be refined and were increasingly employed within OSD. There also was increasing use of combat simulation and other models in support of strategic analysis during the period.

## The Carter Administration, 1977–1981

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Defense budget reform was the preeminent defense-related concern of the new Jimmy Carter administration, including both cuts in defense spending and the introduction of defense reform efforts that could better constrain and rationalize future defense spending.<sup>1</sup>

While devoting greater attention to Persian Gulf scenarios, the Carter administration initially pursued the 1-1/2 war strategic concept of its predecessors until the Iranian hostage crisis and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, which precipitated additional planning on Southwest Asia and development of the rapid deployment force and at least some thought regarding the need to return to a two-war strategic concept. The predominant planning scenarios continued to focus on major wars in NATO Europe and Northeast Asia, and later, planning scenarios involving a Soviet thrust into Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf. As the administration drew to a close, there was increasing concern about a global, multifront war scenario with the Soviet Union in Europe, Northeast Asia, and Southwest Asia.

Civilian policymakers continued to be frustrated by the seeming irrelevance of the JSOP to their resource-constrained PPBS-based planning efforts, and in 1978, the JCS replaced the JSOP with a Joint Strategic Planning Document (JSPD), which many viewed as little better than its predecessor. The rather weak authorities of the chairman relative to the service chiefs continued to militate against true joint force planning, and the lack of integration of the PPBS and JSPS militated against integrated department-wide force planning. By providing a set of approved scenarios, the introduction of Illustrative Planning Scenarios (IPs) proved to be an important and durable innovation from this period that improved the department's ability to consider potential military

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<sup>1</sup> For reviews of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking, and the assumptions that animated foreign and defense policy during the Carter administration, see Brown, 2015, pp. 297–362; and Boll, 1988, pp. 194–197, respectively. For a review of defense policy in the early years of the Carter administration, see Sam C. Sarkesian, *Defense Policy and the Presidency: Carter's First Years*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1980. The official JCS history of the period is Steven L. Rearden and Kenneth R. Foulks, Jr., *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1977–1980*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015. The official OSD history is Edward C. Keefer, *Harold Brown: Offsetting the Soviet Military Challenge, 1977–1981, Secretaries of Defense Historical Series*, Vol. 9, Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2017.

requirements for somewhat longer-term threats and challenges in a more systematic way while avoiding the challenges associated with understanding the assumptions and results of diverse analyses based on differing scenarios. These scenarios increasingly drove studies, war games, and simulation analyses.<sup>2</sup>

## Historical Review

President Jimmy Carter entered office with a commitment to preserving and extending détente with the Soviet Union, and remained optimistic that he could both reduce the role of military power in American foreign policy and shaved planned increases in U.S. defense expenditures:

Unlike his immediate predecessors in the Oval Office, President Carter did not necessarily regard US-Soviet relations as his uppermost foreign policy concern. He considered the country's growing dependence on foreign energy supplies, the protection of human rights, and the improvement of relations between the developed and developing worlds equally if not more important. Nor was he overly alarmed, as some in the Nixon-Ford administration had come to be, over the threat to détente posed by the Soviet Union's ominous buildup in strategic and theater nuclear weapons, accompanied by significant improvements in Warsaw Pact conventional forces on the Central Front in Europe. Instead of responding to these and other threats with increased military power, President Carter proposed to rely more on diplomacy and moral suasion to achieve American security objectives abroad. Although he did not dismiss the need for armed force in support of foreign policy, the new President thought it had been overused in the past. Henceforth, as he stated in his inaugural address, the United States would "maintain strength so sufficient that it need not be proven in combat—a quiet strength based not merely on the size of an arsenal but on the nobility of ideas."<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after taking office, Carter signed Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM) 10, instructing his national security staff to conduct a review of U.S. strategy and force posture:

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<sup>2</sup> During much of this period, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown relied significantly on the strategic planning of the Office of Net Assessment, including for scenario development and modeling. For an example of the Office of Net Assessment's work on national assessments during this period, see Office of the Director of Net Assessment, "Northeast Asia: Summary," April 28, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> Rearden and Foulks, 2015, p. 2. An earlier decision by members of the North Atlantic Council to increase defense spending by 3 percent annually in real terms reportedly had little support within the Carter administration. Rearden and Foulks, 2015, p. 175. By comparison, the Carter administration appears to have focused on meeting the previous administration's commitment to NATO for 3 percent real growth in defense expenditures. See Harold Brown, *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1980*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 25, 1979, p. 4.

Carter instructed his national security bureaucracy to undertake a study that included a comprehensive net assessment of the relative military, political, economic, and technological strengths of the United States and its allies versus the Soviet Union and other potential adversaries. Carter also required a more specific contingency assessment of how well U.S. forces might do in representative scenarios against opponents, as well as a military strategy and force posture review with multiple alternative military strategies and the costs for each alternative. The president assigned the net assessment and the contingency studies to [national security adviser Zbigniew] Brzezinski and the military strategy posture review to Brown.<sup>4</sup>

The review was to be conducted in two parts: The Policy Review Committee under the chairmanship of Brown was to “define a wide range of alternative military strategies and construct alternative military force postures and programs in support [of] each of these military strategies”; second, the Special Coordination Committee under the chairmanship of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Brzezinski was to review and compare “overall trends in the political, diplomatic, economic, technological, and military capabilities of the United States, its allies, and potential adversaries. It will evaluate the objectives and national strategies that may be pursued by our principal potential adversaries and examine the alternative national objectives and strategies appropriate to the United States.”

One of the PRM-10-commissioned studies under the Policy Review Committee, the Force Posture Study, was completed in June 1977, but it appears to have fallen somewhat short of expectations.<sup>5</sup> However, a separate effort on nuclear targeting did yield a well-regarded study that would prove quite influential to the countervailing nuclear war-fighting strategy and doctrine that would later be enshrined in Presidential Decision (PD) 59. Similarly helpful was a separate effort by Andrew W. Marshall’s Office of Net Assessment that recommended devising a strategy for nuclear capabilities that played on Soviet weaknesses and forced them to make difficult choices.<sup>6</sup> A similar idea animated the “offset strategy” devised by Brown and Deputy Director of Defense for Research and Engineering William Perry, which sought to develop and field stealth; cruise missile; command, control, and communications; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); and other capabilities that could, in combination, serve as a “force multiplier” for U.S. forces and would force the Soviet Union to compete in areas of technology where it was weak and where counters would be expensive.<sup>7</sup>

In any event, the policy review ultimately resulted in the administration’s first NSS, PD 18, “U.S. National Strategy,” dated August 26, 1977. PD 18 characterized

<sup>4</sup> The review was ordered via NSC, PRM 10, “Comprehensive Net Assessment and Military Force Posture Review,” February 18, 1977 (see Keefer, 2017, pp. 120, 127–135).

<sup>5</sup> See Keefer, 2017, pp. 120–127.

<sup>6</sup> See Keefer, 2017, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> For an excellent discussion of the “offset strategy,” see Keefer, 2017, pp. 575–600.

the U.S.-Soviet relationship as one involving both competition and cooperation, and directed that efforts be focused on counterbalancing the Soviets' improving military position primarily by building on traditional U.S. strengths and advantages, what would come to be called the "offset strategy":

It is clear that in the foreseeable future, U.S.-Soviet relations will continue to be characterized by both competition and cooperation, with the attendant risk of conflict as well as the opportunity for stabilizing U.S.-Soviet relations. . . . In this situation, I direct that U.S. national strategy will be to take advantage of our relative advantages in economic strength, technological superiority and popular political support to:

- Counterbalance, together with our allies and friends, by combination of military forces, political efforts, and economic programs, Soviet military power and adverse influence in key areas, particularly Europe, the Middle East and East Asia...<sup>8</sup>

PD 18 set the following yardstick for assessing the sufficiency of efforts to achieve the strategy's objectives vis-a-vis the Soviet Union:<sup>9</sup>

To fulfill this national strategy, the United States will maintain an overall balance of military power between the United States and its allies on the one hand and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other at least as favorable as that that now exists. In this connection, the United States will fulfill its commitment to its NATO allies to raise the level of defense spending by approximately three percent per year in real terms along with our allies.<sup>10</sup>

PD 18 also provided broad guidance for U.S. military strategy, programs, and policies for other global contingencies, as follows:

- In addition, the United States will maintain a deployment force of light divisions with strategic mobility independent of overseas bases and logistical support, which includes moderate naval and tactical air forces, and limited land combat forces. These forces will be designed for use against both local forces and forces projected by the USSR based on analyses of requirements in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, or Korea, taking into account the contribution of our friends and allies in these regions. US planning should provide that these requirements may be met by a combination of the light deployment forces, supplemented by forces in the United States, primarily oriented

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<sup>8</sup> NSC, PD 18, "U.S. National Security Strategy," August 26, 1977.

<sup>9</sup> NSC, PD 18, 1977.

<sup>10</sup> NSC, PD 18, 1977.



toward NATO defense. The 2nd Division will be oriented toward deployment in Asia but available for global contingencies as described above.<sup>11</sup>

The PD also directed a review of U.S. targeting policy and “recommendations on the appropriate level of U.S. capability to sustain worldwide conventional war against the Soviet Union and its allies.”<sup>12</sup> Brown’s first annual report stated that the principal basis for force sizing would be a range of scenarios related to a Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasion of Europe that varied in the level of Soviet attack:

The primary test of whether we currently satisfy these conditions of deterrence comes from a hypothetical Warsaw Pact attack in Central Europe. If we have reasonable confidence of halting such an attack, it would be logical to assume that we have the basic forces to deal with other contingencies of a less demanding nature.

Basically, there are several levels of attack by the Warsaw Pact against which we should measure the adequacy of our conventional posture. At the first level, the Pact could use a portion of its forward deployed forces; at the second level, all the deployed forces of the Pact could come into play; at the third level, the attack could consist of the entire deployed force plus reinforcements from the western military districts of the Soviet Union. Another possibility would be an attack beginning with the lowest level of forces, but accompanied by a mobilization and deployment that would continue until the full force was engaged.

The third level of attack is the most demanding in the sense that it tests the adequacy of the full U.S. force structure, including our reinforcement and resupply capabilities. Attacks by the forward deployed Pact forces are also important, however, not only because of the Soviet emphasis on surprise and Blitzkrieg, but also because of the tests to which they put other aspects of the NATO posture—forces in place and very early reinforcements.

Contingencies in the Central Region of NATO could be accompanied by attacks on one or both of NATO’s flanks. In the Northern Region, Iceland and Norway would require allied support in the event of a Soviet effort to break out of the Murmansk area. In the Southern Region, Greece and Turkey would need modern tactical air support to buttress their defenses against Pact attacks on Thrace and efforts to seize control of the Dardanelles.<sup>13</sup>

Brown’s discussion of Northeast Asia revealed the limits of the administration’s strategic concept at the time—“one major contingency at a time,” an apparent carry-

<sup>11</sup> NSC, PD 18, 1977.

<sup>12</sup> NSC, PD 18, 1977. With some additional analysis and planning, the review of U.S. nuclear targeting policy ultimately would find expression in NSC, PD 59, “Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy,” July 25, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> Harold Brown, *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1979*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2, 1978, pp. 87–88, 90.

over from the Nixon-Ford administration—as well as the regional allocation of combat forces implied by the strategic concept:

Our strategic concept calls for the capability to deal with only one major contingency at a time. What we provide in the form of ground and tactical air forces to help our allies halt a Warsaw Pact attack in Europe should be more than adequate to deal with any foreseeable contingency in Northeast Asia. To the extent that our rapid reinforcement system needs improvement (particularly in the form of expanded strategic airlift) to deal with Pact buildups in Europe, the improvement should suffice to manage any requirements we might have in the Far East. Even at the peak of the Korean war, our deployments never exceeded eight divisions and 12 land-based tactical air wings—well below what we are capable of providing at the present time.<sup>14</sup>

With the exception of withdrawals from Korea directed under PD/NSC-12, the United States will maintain the current level of combat forces deployed in the Western Pacific in order to preserve regional stability, to deter aggression in Korea and elsewhere, and to protect US interests and meet treaty commitments in the event of aggression. . . . The principal forces immediately available within the Western Pacific will be nine squadrons of land-based fighter/attack aircraft (of which three squadrons will be based in Korea), the two brigades of the Third Marine Amphibious Force, including its organic air, in Japan (Okinawa), and the 20-25 combatants of the Seventh Fleet, which will include two aircraft carriers. . . . We will also maintain the capability to reintroduce additional combat forces, including the 2nd Division and a larger complement of tactical fighters, should conditions so dictate.<sup>15</sup>

In November 1977, Brown commissioned a number of reviews of various aspects of defense organization, including a report on the JCS organization led by former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard C. Steadman. This review recommended that the Chairman be charged with supplying the Secretary with advice on program, budget, and force structure issues, allowing him augmented staff support in the studies, analysis, and gaming area, as appropriate.<sup>16</sup> In 1978, Brown began a new round of efforts to reform the PPBS and JSPS processes. In early 1978, he unveiled the Secretary's Consolidated Guidance, replacing the old Defense Guidance, and precipitating a far-reaching reform of the JSPS, reportedly the most significant since the 1950s. According to the JCS's official history of the period, "Short-range planning, contained in the biennial Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, assigning tasks and allocating forces to the unified and specified commands, remained the same. However, mid-range planning and other JCS inputs to the

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<sup>14</sup> Brown, 1978, pp. 90–91.

<sup>15</sup> NSC, PD 18, 1977.

<sup>16</sup> Rearden and Foulks, 2015, p. 14.

PPBS underwent extensive revision.”<sup>17</sup> The mid-range JSOP was replaced by a JSPD that provided a seven-year perspective that was circulated earlier and included a “risk reduction” package to address weaknesses in the force structure, but had no more influence outside the department than had the JSOP. A Joint Program Assessment Memorandum similarly superseded the Joint Force Memorandum as the JCS estimate of the optimum balance of forces attainable under fiscal limits.<sup>18</sup>

The Carter administration essentially continued with the 1-1/2 war strategic concept of the past two administrations, preparing for a major war in NATO Europe or Northeast Asia and a 1/2 war elsewhere. By the time of DoD’s FY 1981 budget submission in January 1980, however, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and instability in Iraq were causing the administration to question whether that strategic concept was any longer adequate. Brown’s January 1980 annual report for FY 1981 described the administration’s threat perspective in the region as follows:

Some of these other areas are now suffering increased turbulence from within as well as from the intervention of the Soviet Union. Nowhere is this more the case than in the Middle East. The region has become a breeding ground for internal upheaval—as has already occurred in Iran—for war, terrorism, and subversion. Temporary disruptions or a more permanent decline in the supply of oil from the Persian Gulf could easily occur as a consequence. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, its footholds in South Yemen and the Horn of Africa, and the Soviet naval presence in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, only make a volatile situation potentially even more explosive.<sup>19</sup>

In his report, Secretary Brown endorsed a 1-1/2 war strategic concept and force planning construct:

To help with these choices, we try in the first instance to understand the international situation, its dangers, and the demands that are likely to be made on the Armed Forces. This effort has led to the formulation of national objectives for the non-nuclear forces. These objectives, in effect, specify that we should:

- Be prepared for two simultaneous contingencies, one major and one minor;
- Have the readiness, the deployments, and the mobility to respond to emergencies rapidly enough to conduct forward defenses of the threatened areas; and
- Be able to sustain these forces in combat, without any resort to nuclear weapons, for at least as long as the enemy--subject to the caveat that it is not

<sup>17</sup> For details, see Rearden and Foulks, 2015, pp. 10, 246–249.

<sup>18</sup> Rearden and Foulks, 2015, pp. 246–249.

<sup>19</sup> Harold Brown, *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1981*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 29, 1980a, p. 5.

appropriate to fund U.S. sustainability much greater than that of our allies in theaters where only an alliance strategy is feasible.

Those, in short, are the basic demands we must be prepared to meet. They define in broad terms what constitute our need for forces, weapons, training, readiness, mobility and sustainability. They also shape the mobilization process and say something about how we should balance these capabilities. Right now, for example, it is our view that future events will create an increasing demand for high combat readiness and great speed in moving into particular theaters of operations. We also expect that while individual weapons will grow more sophisticated, numbers of weapons will still be substitutable to an important degree for quality.<sup>20</sup>

Brown also stated that the administration's goals for meeting the dominant NATO planning scenario were to increase available troop strength from 200,000 to 350,000 within two weeks, and triple the number of combat planes in theater.<sup>21</sup> More-ambitious objectives for mobility forces—"to be able, by FY 1982, to double the number of American divisions in-place within about 10 days and to deploy the remaining active divisions at a rapid rate thereafter"—also were stated.<sup>22</sup>

The objectives for non-NATO contingencies were described in less specific terms, and in language that is reminiscent of post-Cold War planning:

Although our Rapid Deployment Forces comprise far fewer forces than those which would be deployed to a NATO war, non-NATO contingencies may place more stringent demands on our mobility forces. First, we cannot predict where such contingencies will occur, and therefore, prepositioning supplies and equipment ashore is less effective and more risky. Second, we are likely to have fewer mobility assets available for a limited contingency. Finally, operational problems will be greater. In particular, we may be operating over longer distances with few or no intermediate bases, and reception facilities may be limited. Specific force deployment objectives, such as those we have for NATO, are not possible because the potential contingencies are too numerous and varied. Nonetheless, we seek to expand our capability to deploy modest, but effective combat forces very rapidly and support them in combat, and to reduce our need for intermediate foreign bases or overflight rights.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, Brown placed the current defense planning problem in historical context in the FY 1981 annual report in a section titled "Determining Strategy and Posture":

<sup>20</sup> Brown, 1980a, pp. 117–118.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, 1980a, p. 111.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, 1980a, p. 207.

<sup>23</sup> Brown, 1980a, p. 207.

During these same 20 years, we have seen a recurring effort to arrive at a U.S. non-nuclear posture that would be not only acceptable in budgetary terms, but also militarily sufficient in light of our international responsibilities, the forces of our allies, and opposing military capabilities. It has not been an easy task.

For most of the 1960s we defined such a posture as one capable, in conjunction with allies, of conducting a forward defense against three separate attacks: two of them of major dimensions; one of them relatively minor in scale.

A posture with this capability was also considered to be flexible enough to deal with a range of contingencies not specifically foreseen in the design of the forces, which was based largely on the supposition of having to fight in Europe, Asia, and possibly the Caribbean.

In 1969, with the formal acknowledgment of the Sino-Soviet split and the resumption of Chinese-American contacts, we changed the definition of non-nuclear adequacy. A capability to deal simultaneously with one major and one minor contingency in conjunction with allies was now said to suffice. Although the non-nuclear posture did not decline proportionately, reductions followed in ground, tactical air, and naval forces. Since then, the strategy has remained constant—with Europe as its primary focus for planning purposes—while increases have been made in active-duty ground force structure and Air Force tactical air wings.

The issue of whether we ever acquired the capabilities necessary to implement either of these strategies has been a matter of debate. There is, however, fairly widespread agreement about the main requirements that must be satisfied if the basic concept is to work and the non-nuclear deterrent is to be reasonably effective.<sup>24</sup>

Brown then suggested the possible need to return to a strategic concept and defense posture that could deal with “two or more simultaneous contingencies,” describing the associated requirements as follows:

For the United States to have the posture to deal with two or more simultaneous contingencies, and to keep such a posture within reasonable cost bounds:

- We must depend primarily (but not solely) on our allies to hold forward defense positions in peacetime.
- This, in turn, permits us to organize a central reinforcement capability of combat-ready ground and tactical air forces, located in the United States and able to move in support of a threatened theater.
- Such economy of force and the flexibility that goes with it, however, require the presence of a number of other capabilities:
  - naval forces for sea control and, where appropriate, power projection;

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<sup>24</sup> Brown, 1980a, pp. 98–99.

- early-arriving guard and reserve forces to support the initial efforts of the active-duty forces;
- war reserve stocks to keep forces supplied and equipped in combat for at least as long as enemies; and
- the ability to move with great power and speed on a worldwide basis through an appropriate mixture of strategic airlift, sealift (some of it with prepositioned stocks aboard), and what has come to be known as POMCUS (Prepositioned Overseas Materiel Configured to Unit Sets)—equipment and supplies stored in theaters of greatest danger, to which personnel can be flown rapidly without absorbing large quantities of expensive lift.

That, I should emphasize, is the theory. Our practices have not been entirely consistent with it.<sup>25</sup>

Importantly, during his State of the Union address on January 23, 1980, President Carter updated U.S. strategy in response to the Iranian revolution and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with what would come to be called the “Carter Doctrine,” which stated,

An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by the use of any means necessary, including military force.<sup>26</sup>

Among the key actions taken in the wake of developments during this period was the deployment of additional forces to the Persian Gulf, the creation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) as a new unified command, and broader consideration of needed force structure. National Security Council member William Odom explained,<sup>27</sup>

Another issue which you may or may not wish to address is the Newsom request for a “force structure” review, the one David recommended for your consideration. I am treating that in a separate memo, but the crux of the issue can be stated here. In principle, it is a sound idea. If we could get Defense to tell us the military strategy for the largest contingency (Soviets in Iran), the force size, and the basing and budgetary implications, we could plan in an orderly fashion, getting the money

<sup>25</sup> Brown, 1980a, pp. 98–99.

<sup>26</sup> White House, “The State of the Union Address Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Congress,” Washington, D.C., January 23, 1980.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Harold Brown, “Strategic Review of Our Unified Command Structure,” memorandum to President Jimmy Carter, March 6, 1980b; and DoD, “Regional Security Framework,” tables of actions to be taken vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf, June 16, 1980. For a good review of developments related to the RDJTF from the JCS’s perspective, see Rearden and Foulks, 2015, pp. 17–42.

(large sums) into the FY-82 budget and in FY-81 supplementals. Such a force sizing review was conducted under the PRM-10 effort in Defense in 1977, and a similar effort, NSSM-3, was conducted in 1969 which justified a large reduction in military commitments (from “2-1/2 to 1-1/2 wars”) in the parlance of the day.<sup>28</sup>

Although primarily influenced by Afghanistan and Iran, another major factor impelling a reconsideration of the administration’s defense strategic concept was that the administration was concerned by the long-term buildup in Soviet military capabilities that had taken place over the preceding decade and a half:

One development gains especially in importance against this background. It is the continuing evolution of the Soviet non-nuclear posture.

The details of that evolution have been reported before, but are worth repeating again. In the mid-1960s, Soviet land and tactical air forces consisted of about 1.4 million men. They have now expanded to over two million men, not including 450,000 border guards and internal security units with military capabilities. Much of this expansion has resulted from the Soviet military buildup in the Far East, which grew from 20 divisions and 210 fighter aircraft in 1965 to 46 divisions and 1,200 fighter aircraft in 1979. But even with this effort (and it should be kept in mind that Soviet forces can be redeployed either eastward or westward), approximately 154,000 men have been added during the past 11 years to the Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe, including the 70,000 men and five divisions deployed in Czechoslovakia since 1968.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, at the time, the administration also was wrestling with the possibility that Soviet war planning envisioned concerted action in three separate theaters, and that the U.S. defense establishment might need new plans and capabilities to meet such a coordinated effort:<sup>30</sup>

Currently we can only speculate as to whether the Soviets have actually adopted a three-contingency strategy just a decade after we abandoned it. But we can be reasonably confident that in Eastern Europe, the Soviets have improved their ability to launch heavy attacks with relatively little advance preparation and warning. I myself remain somewhat skeptical as to whether the Soviets—and particularly the other members of the Warsaw Pact—could successfully assemble a major assault force and move into action with the speed with which they are credited. And I

<sup>28</sup> William Odom, “SSC on the Security Framework for the Persian Gulf XIII,” memorandum to National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, July 12, 1980.

<sup>29</sup> Brown, 1980a, p. 100.

<sup>30</sup> The three separate theaters generally were conceived to be Europe, Northeast Asia, and Southwest Asia/Persian Gulf. Reagan administration policymakers would ascribe much higher credibility to this war-fighting concept than was evident in the Carter administration at this time.



doubt that we would have to contend with such an assault as a bolt out of the blue. But it is a possibility that grows increasingly troublesome as the Soviets continue their investments in general purpose forces. Even if we rule out the more extreme cases of Pact speed in preparing an attack, there can be no doubt about the seriousness and pertinacity with which the Soviets pursue their doctrinal objectives. If they are not there now, they will work hard to arrive in the future. We must not be caught by surprise, either tactically or strategically.<sup>31</sup>

By January 1981, the outgoing administration appears to have grown increasingly concerned about the possibilities for a three-theater conflict, what might require a “1-2/2 war” (“one and two-half wars”) strategic concept:

Because of the possibility of a three-theater conflict (a NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation, a war in Southwest Asia, and a North Korean attack on South Korea), we must emphasize flexibility in our strategic planning.<sup>32</sup>

In short, over its term, the Carter administration appears to have shifted its thinking about defense planning from the 1-1/2 war strategic concept of its predecessors to a 1-2/2 wars strategic concept, involving a major war in Europe, with one or more overlapping smaller contingencies in Southwest Asia, and in Northeast Asia or Southeast Asia.<sup>33</sup> The Southwest Asia and Northeast Asia scenarios would survive well past the end of the Cold War.

Not incidentally, the Carter administration’s first (FY 1979) budget proposed real growth of about 2.7 percent per year over the Five-Year Defense Program through FY 1983.<sup>34</sup> OSD’s FY 1981 annual report announced long-range spending plans that envisioned a five-year increase in defense spending, with real growth of more than 4.6 percent a year in Total Obligational Authority and about 4.1 percent in Outlays over the five-year period;<sup>35</sup> for its part, the FY 1982 budget presented by the outgoing administration in January 1981 stated that it represented “the sixth real increase in U.S. defense spending in six years, and our long-term program calls for increases in each of the following four years as well.” Thus, the Carter-Reagan defense buildup arguably began with the FY 1981 budget presented in January 1980.

<sup>31</sup> Brown, 1980a, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> Harold Brown, *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1982*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 19, 1981, p. 86. This report further stated that “[t]he most likely [Asian] regional contingencies would be an all-out North Korean attack on the Republic of Korea or a limited Vietnamese attack on Thailand.”

<sup>33</sup> The FY 1982 report further stated that “[t]he most likely [Asian] regional contingencies would be an all-out North Korean attack on the Republic of Korea or a limited Vietnamese attack on Thailand.” Brown, 1981, p. 86.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, 1978, pp. 366, C-7.

<sup>35</sup> Brown, 1980a, pp. 98–99.



Table 6.1 presents an overview of planned general purpose forces for FY 1981, and Table 6.2 presents the planned deployment of U.S. ground forces in FY 1981, as reported in the FY 1981 annual report to the President and Congress.

At this time, the administration also faced some pressure from the JCS for a more robust force, although the numbers and costs reportedly were so off-putting to senior policymakers in OSD and the NSC that the JCS's proposals appear not to have been taken terribly seriously.

As shown in Table 6.3, there was a significant amount of continuity in the deployment of U.S. ground forces between the Kennedy-Johnson years of 1964 and 1968 and at the end of the Carter administration.

Table 6.4 summarizes the missions, scenarios, service involvement, and ground forces apportioned to meeting the requirements of the 1/2 war during the 17 years from 1963 to 1980. As shown, estimated ground force requirements for the 1/2 war varied over this period between 4-1/2 and 6-1/3 divisions, and stood at five divisions near the end of the Carter administration in 1980. As will be described later, the roughly five-division ground force requirement of the 1/2 war during the Cold War period is similar to the four to five division ground force requirements for post-Cold War major regional conflict (MRC) or major theater war (MTW) scenarios beginning with the 1993 BUR.

## Trends in Defense Analytics

In his FY 1981 annual report, Brown shared his thinking on the sorts of scenario-based campaign analyses that were required to develop the defense posture in the contemporary strategic environment:

In order to make useful statements about our ability to reach our goals with the current posture, and about any adjustments needed in it, a different type of assessment is necessary. We have to consider a number of specific contingencies, engage in careful campaign analyses, and test the sensitivity of our performance to changes in the key assumptions we make. In most of these analyses, I should add, we do not pretend that we are either predicting actual conflicts and their outcomes or evaluating all the factors that determine these outcomes. Our work focuses primarily on materiel considerations and is intended to help tell us whether we are providing commanders with the weapons and other capabilities necessary to reach national objectives.

Our analyses do not and cannot finally decide our posture. The size, composition, and deployment of U.S. forces depend not only on which contingencies we use as the basis for our planning, but also on such factors as: how many contingencies we want to be able to deal with at any one time; how ready for them we should be; what contributions we expect from our allies; how long we should

**Table 6.1**  
**General Purpose Forces Highlights**

	FY 1964	FY 1968	FY 1979	FY 1980	FY 1981
Land forces					
Army divisions					
Active	16	19	16	16	16
Reserve	23	8	8	8	8
Marine Corps divisions					
Active	3	4	3	3	3
Reserve	1	1	1	1	1
Tactical Air Forces					
Air Force wings					
Active	21	25	26	26	26
Reserve	7	8	11	11	12
Marine Corps wings					
Active	3	3	3	3	3
Reserve	1	1	1	1	1
Navy Attack wings					
Active	15	15	12	12	12
Reserve	2	2	2	2	2
Naval forces					
Active fleet	803	875	388	395	418
Carriers	24	23	13	13	12
Other ships (active and NRF)	82	49	10	7	7
Reserve ships	62	54	53	53	42
Fleet auxiliary force ships	—	1	19	22	22

SOURCE: Brown, 1980a, p. A-10.

**Table 6.2**  
**Planned U.S. Army Ground Force Deployments for FY 1981**

Active Units		
CONUS	Europe	Other
1 infantry brigade	2 armored cavalry regiments	1 infantry brigade (Alaska)
1 armored brigade	3 forward-deployed brigades (one each from 3 CONUS-based divisions)	1 infantry brigade (Panama)
1 armored cavalry regiment	1 infantry brigade (Berlin)	
1 cavalry brigade (air combat)		
Reserve Units		
CONUS		
11 infantry brigades		
10 mechanized infantry brigades		
3 armored brigades		
4 armored cavalry regiments		

SOURCE: Brown, 1980a, p. 152.

**Table 6.3**  
**Ground Force Deployments Planned During the 1960s and Existing in 1964, 1968, and 1980**

Area of Deployment	Planned Number of Division Equivalents	Existing Number of Division Equivalents		
		1964	1968	1980
Germany	5	5	4 1/3	5
Republic of Korea	0	2	2	1
Japan (Okinawa)	1	1 1/3	0	1
Hawaii	1	1	0	1
Panama <sup>a</sup>	1/3	1/3	1/3	1/3
Alaska <sup>a</sup>	1/3	1/3	1/3	1/3
Continental United States, active duty	12 1/3	10	7	11
Continental United States, reserve	9	9	9	9
Subtotal	29	29	23	28 2/3
South Vietnam	0	0	10	0
Total	29	29	33	28 2/3

SOURCE: Author estimates and *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1981* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980, p. 151), as cited in Kaufmann, 1982, p. 15.

<sup>a</sup> Units stationed in Panama and Alaska are not included in the usual counts of Army units. Neither are other separate units, including the brigade in Berlin and armored cavalry regiments in Germany.

**Table 6.4**  
**Scenarios for the 1/2 War, 1963–1980**

Organization	Primary Mission	Scenario Specific	Service Specific	Active Ground Forces Available
Strike, 1963	To execute contingency missions and provide a strategic reserve of combat forces	Global	Army–Air Force	6-1/3 Divisions including 82nd Airborne and 101st
Strike, 1970	Movement coordination of all AF and Army units to SEA	Global with focus on MEAFSA	Army–Air Force	4-1/3 Divisions including 2/3 of 82nd Airborne
REDCOM, 1975	Joint training of assigned forces, reinforcement of overseas commands	None	Army–Air Force	5-2/3 Divisions including 82nd and 101st
RDJTF, 1980	To be prepared to deploy and employ designated forces in response to contingencies threatening U.S. vital interests	Focus on Southwest Asia	All 4 services	5 Divisions including 82nd and 101st + 1-1/3 Marine Division

SOURCE: Haffa, 1984, p. 130.

NOTE: AF = Air Force; MEAFSA = Middle East, Sub-Sahara Africa, and Southern Asia; REDCOM = United States Readiness Command; SEA = Southeast Asia.

be prepared to fight; and what probability of success in reaching objectives we should seek to achieve.

If times were relatively stable, we could be relatively relaxed on all these counts. That is, rather than adopt a rigid standard such as the British ten-year rule (first established in 1919, which instructed the military services each year to plan on the assumption that no major war would occur for the next ten years), we could base our planning on the less demanding contingencies, prepare for only a small number of them, and accept modest levels of modernization, readiness, and sustainability. When the threat is not very serious, the probability of success against it does not have to be very high.

But in my judgment our times are not relatively stable, and the future is even less likely to be so. With the steady increase in Soviet military capabilities and the spread of turbulence through so many regions of great interest to us, there are solid grounds for insisting on a much greater probability of success. Thus, in both the design and the assessment of our capabilities we must, as compared with the situation a few years ago:

- use more demanding contingencies and be prepared for more of them;

- set at a much higher level of the probability that we can mobilize and respond speedily to an attack, sustain our response, and achieve our objectives.<sup>36</sup>

Importantly, IPSs were adopted by OSD sometime between 1977 and 1980, during Brown's service as Defense Secretary, as a tool for considering force requirements.<sup>37</sup> These scenarios described plausible threats and challenges that might require the use of U.S. military forces, and were used to test the force to ensure its capabilities and capacity to succeed in each scenario or combination of scenarios.<sup>38</sup>

In fact, scenario-based analyses appear increasingly to have been conducted during this period. For example, the JCS's SAGA had, since early 1978, been conducting games to assess the U.S. capabilities to meet contingencies in the Middle East and Persian Gulf.<sup>39</sup> In addition, in September 1978, the Joint Staff and Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs launched a joint effort to examine various scenarios involving U.S. military responses in circumstances short of overt Soviet combat involvement.<sup>40</sup>

This early gaming revolved around analyses of scenarios related to a Soviet intervention into Iran:

As viewed by Iran, the most serious threats were those posed by the Soviet Union, especially in view of the growing Soviet influence in Afghanistan, and by Iraq. The Joint Chiefs concurred in this view and pointed out that, in the event of a Soviet invasion, the ability of the Imperial Iranian Air Force to deny the Soviets air superiority during the first critical days of the attack would have significant effect on the capacity of the United States to assist in the defense of Iran and ultimately on the credibility of a conventional defense of the region. According to an ongoing analysis by the JCS Studies, Analysis, and Gaming Agency (SAGA), a Soviet advance southward toward Tehran in the wake of simultaneous air and ground assaults could be stopped only if the United States could intervene on the first day with one aircraft carrier, nine USAF fighter squadrons within three days, and additional air and ground reinforcements by twenty-five days after the initial outbreak of hostilities. Iran would need to retain sufficient air power during the first critical

<sup>36</sup> Brown, 1980a, p. 64.

<sup>37</sup> Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Regional Programs Paul Wolfowitz reportedly was instrumental in OSD's adoption of the IPS. See Lorna S. Jaffe, *The Development of the Base Force 1989–1992*, Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 1993, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> The IPSs continue to be used in the department to this day.

<sup>39</sup> According to the official JCS history of the time, "As this study was being organized, Secretary of Defense Brown on 17 March requested an in-depth review of US strategy to counter Soviet inroads and to safeguard the availability of oil from the Middle East and Persian Gulf, with terms of reference (TOR) to be submitted by the end of May." Rearden and Foulks, 2015, p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> Rearden and Foulks, 2015, pp. 21–22.

days of the Soviet invasion to protect the air routes to its northern borders and its ocean approaches and port facilities.<sup>41</sup>

Force requirements analyses during the Carter period also increasingly relied upon computer-based combat models, including both campaign- or theater-level models and more-detailed models. Table 6.5 describes the range of applications of one prominent model (the CEM) developed by the U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency. Of particular importance from a strategic planning and programming perspective is CEM's use in developing the JSOP, and in supporting the Army's Total Army Analysis (TAA) process. As shown, in support of JSOP development, the model took as a given the projected threat level and national strategies in 1987, and generated outputs that informed force requirements and the development of an objective force. Under the "Impact" column, it is also described as providing a common framework for interservice discussions of joint, balanced forces. CEM's employment in the Total Army Study took threats, combat forces, consolidated guidance, and programs as a given in 1984, and was used to develop a program force. In addition, CEM apparently was being used for Army force design and development, supporting the purpose of "illuminat[ing] force design options" and generating an "alternative 1990 force structure." Thus, it appears that CEM was used to support a wide range of DoD and Army strategic planning, programming, and force structure design purposes.

## Summary and Conclusions

Defense planning against national security threats was not a high priority of the Carter administration during its first two years: It would not be until growing evidence of deteriorating nuclear and conventional force balances in Europe, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iranian revolution that conventional defense requirements became a high priority topic for the administration. That said, the Carter administration thereafter increased defense resources in an effort to reshape U.S. forces, the beginning of a defense buildup that would extend well into the Reagan administration.

The experience of the Carter administration demonstrates how rapid changes in the larger strategic and threat environment can necessitate changes in both (1) the specific scenarios and scenario variations that are used for planning conventional ground forces and (2) the challenges of adapting strategic and force sizing concepts and postures during such periods of turbulence and transition. In PD 62, "Modifications in U.S. National Strategy," released just days before the administration left office,

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<sup>41</sup> Rearden and Foulks, 2015, p. 50. For an unclassified analysis of the military problem of defending against such a Soviet thrust into the Persian Gulf region, see Thomas L. McNaugher, *Arms and Oil: U.S. Military Strategy and the Persian Gulf*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1985.

**Table 6.5**  
**Use of the CEM in Defense Decisionmaking, 1980**

Use	Purpose	Givens	Output	Impact
JSOP (Joint Strategic Objectives Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence national defense planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1987</li> <li>• Threat</li> <li>• National strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Force requirements</li> <li>• Objective force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows minimum goals acceptable to JCS</li> <li>• Shapes interservice balance</li> </ul>
TA (Total Army Study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports Program Objectives Memorandum (POM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1984</li> <li>• Other programs</li> <li>• Threat</li> <li>• Combat force</li> <li>• Consolidated guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sizes Army</li> </ul>
OM (Omnibus Study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1978</li> <li>• Other budgets</li> <li>• Threat</li> <li>• Real world force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current force deficiencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick fixes</li> <li>• Adjustments in early program years</li> </ul>
Ammo Rates (Ammunition Requirements Study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines ammo war reserves</li> <li>• Distributes ammo assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1984</li> <li>• Threat</li> <li>• Combat force</li> <li>• Weapon capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected expenditure of ammo (EEA), by type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sizes Army reserves</li> <li>• Scales production base</li> </ul>
WARF (Wartime Attrition Replacement Factors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines equipment war reserves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1984</li> <li>• Threat</li> <li>• Combat force</li> <li>• Weapon capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected equipment losses, by type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sizes port</li> <li>• Authorizes Acquisition Objective (AAO)</li> </ul>
WARRAMP (Wartime requirement for Ammunition, Materiel, and Personnel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both above, plus per-sonnel replacements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1984</li> <li>• Threat</li> <li>• Combat force</li> <li>• Weapon capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both above, plus person-nel losses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both above, plus personnel replacement policy</li> </ul>
IDOFOR (Improved Definition of Objective Force)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illuminates force design options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1990</li> <li>• Estimated resource constraints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative 1990 force structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inferences of current threat</li> </ul>

SOURCE: Data from U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency, as cited in GAO, *Models, Data and War: A Critique of the Foundation for Defense Analyses*, Washington, D.C., PADR80R21, March 12, 1980, p. 46.

Brzezinski highlighted both lines of continuity and change in the threats faced by the nation over the Carter administration:

I set forth U.S. National Strategy in 1977 in Presidential Directive/NSC-18. It remains our strategy, but in light of increased projection of Soviet power which threatens U.S. vital interests in the Persian Gulf region, it has become necessary through a series of individual directives to modify emphasis and priority in the strategy. This Directive will elaborate and codify our progress in building a security framework for the Persian Gulf.

... Presidential Directive/NSC-18 put the focus for our general purpose forces on Europe but also called for capabilities for contingencies in Korea and the Persian Gulf region. Soviet actions in the Horn of Africa and Afghanistan have, in the interim, increased substantially the threat to our vital interests in the Persian Gulf region. Moreover, the chaotic situation following the Iranian revolution, the Iraq-Iran war and the intensifying intra-Arab and Israeli-Arab tensions have increased the instability in the region.

... While NATO will retain first call on force deployments in peacetime for war-time operations, the Persian Gulf shall have highest priority for improvement of strategic lift and general-purpose forces in the Five Year Defense Program.

... Soviet projection of power in the Caribbean region with Cuba's assistance over the past two years has created another area of increased security concern. In support of the objectives of Presidential Directive/NSC-52, it is necessary to achieve quietly a stronger military presence in the region by gradual shifts in our military exercise activities and basing of U.S. forces in the Southeastern part of the United States and its territories in the region which will be perceived by Cuba and the Soviet Union as evidence of our determination to limit Soviet and Cuban regional influence.<sup>42</sup>

In establishing conventional force requirements, the administration also benefited from continued advances in systems analysis techniques, high-speed computers, and the development of theater campaign-level models (e.g., CEM) and other models that could support conventional force requirements analyses, and provide a common framework for interservice discussions about the size, shape, and mix of the joint force. A particularly noteworthy development during this period was the increasing attention in defense planning to the conventional force and mobility requirements of Southwest Asia scenarios, and the challenges associated with simultaneous or nearly simultaneous Soviet thrusts into Europe and the Persian Gulf region. In retrospect, the efforts of the administration appear prescient, especially in light of the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

<sup>42</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, PD 62, "Modifications in U.S. National Strategy," January 15, 1981. The White House released another PD, "Persian Gulf Security Framework," the same day (see NSC, PD 63, "Persian Gulf Security Framework," January 15, 1981).



## The Reagan Administration, 1981–1989

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The Reagan administration developed what might be considered a 2-2/2 war (two and two half wars) strategic concept that revolved around planning for a global war with the Soviet Union involving major wars in NATO Europe and Northeast Asia and a scenario for meeting a simultaneous Soviet thrust into Southwest Asia, as well as a 1/2 war elsewhere. Most strategic planning scenarios continued to be threat-based and focused on what planners believed were plausible, real-world contingencies involving the Soviet Union or its proxies, although analyses of force requirements based upon longer-term projections of Soviet capabilities also were conducted.<sup>1</sup>

Incremental refinements to PPBS, JSPS, and systems analysis techniques continued apace during this period. But it was not until the 1986 report of the Packard Commission and the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 (Pub. L. 99-433) that gave hope that the CJCS would have the authority to forge joint outcomes, rather than refereeing interservice disputes that achieved lowest-common denominator consensus, and that the JCS's JSPS process might be better integrated with the PPBS process. The new authorities granted to the CJCS under Goldwater-Nichols would not be exercised, however, until GEN Colin L. Powell assumed the chairmanship in 1989. With the growth of computing power and the advent of desktop computers, a number of advances were made in combat and other simulation models.

### Historical Review

The Reagan administration entered office alarmed at the growth in the Soviet threat in recent years, and the U.S.-Soviet nuclear and conventional balances that had been shifting against the United States, concluding that a buildup of U.S. defense capabilities was needed.

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<sup>1</sup> For reviews of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking, and the assumptions that animated foreign and defense policy during the Reagan administration, see Brown, 2015, pp. 365–469; Gaddis, 2005, pp. 342–379; and Boll, 1988, pp. 217–228.

The Reagan administration was encouraged in these beliefs shortly after entering office by a National Intelligence Estimate in July 1981 that suggested the Soviet Union might be more willing to take risks in confronting the United States than previously as a result of the Soviets' improved position in the strategic and conventional military balance:

A central question for the 1980s is whether the Soviets may be more inclined now than in earlier periods to confront the United States in a crisis. Moscow still views such a prospect as extremely hazardous. However, in light of the change in the strategic balance and continued expansion of general purpose forces, the Soviets are now more prepared and may be more willing to accept the risks of confrontation in a serious crisis, particularly in an area where they have military or geopolitical advantages.<sup>2</sup>

Members of the Reagan administration also had entered office claiming a “decade of neglect” in defense.<sup>3</sup> As Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger put it in his first (FY 1983) annual report:

It is my primary statutory responsibility to advise the President, the Congress, and the American people of the things we must do to improve our national defense and why we must do them. Serious deficiencies in our military forces have compelled us to break with past thinking and to develop new policies and programs. We must correct the major weaknesses in our defenses that have resulted from a decade of neglect. And we must at the same time look at the decade to come. With the cooperation of this Congress, we will construct a defense that can substantially reduce the dangers we now face, and, at the same time, give us the margin of safety necessary to preserve the peace.<sup>4</sup>

As shown in Table 7.1 although qualitative changes to forces also had certainly occurred, the force structure for conventional land and tactical airpower that the Reagan administration inherited was little different from the one that had been planned in the 1960s. Table 7.2 details the assignment of Army ground forces in January 1981,

<sup>2</sup> National Intelligence Council, *Soviet Goals and Expectations in the Global Power Arena*, NIE 11-4-78, Washington, D.C., July 1981, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Although President Ronald Reagan had criticized President Carter on the campaign trail and in the early years of his administration for insufficient effort on defense, in a radio address in April 1986, Reagan gave credit to his predecessor for his efforts to increase long-term defense spending (see Bernard Weinraub, “Reagan Acknowledges Carter’s Military Buildup,” *New York Times*, April 5, 1986). It is worth noting that much of the reduction in defense spending in the 1970s was associated with the wind-down of operations in Vietnam; for example, DoD active-duty military manpower peaked in 1968 at nearly 3.55 million and had fallen to 2.2 million by 1974. Similar reductions would take place at the end of the Cold War, and with the wind-down of U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

<sup>4</sup> Caspar W. Weinberger, *Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1983*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 8, 1982, p. 1–3. For a rejoinder, see Robert W. Komer, “What ‘Decade of Neglect’?” *International Security*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Fall 1985, pp. 70–83.

**Table 7.1**  
**Conventional Forces Planned During the 1960s and Existing in 1981**

Force Component	Planned	Existing
Divisions		
Active Army	16 1/3	16
Active Marine Corps	3	3
Reserve Army	8	8
Reserve Marine Corps	1	1
Fighter-attack wings		
Active Air Force	26	26
Active Marine Corps	3	3
Reserve Air Force	11	11
Reserve Marine Corps	1	1
General purpose naval forces		
Attack carriers	15	12
Surface warships	266	188
Nuclear-powered attack submarines	90	82
Underway replenishment ships	60	56
Amphibious assault ships	102	59
Mine countermeasure ships	18	3
Auxiliary ships	56	40
Rapid deployment capabilities		
Prepositioned sets of division equipment	3	4
C-5A aircraft	129	70
C-141 aircraft	280	234
Fast deployment logistic ships	31	7

SOURCE: Author's estimates and *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1982* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 132, 154, 174, 199, 204, 205, and A-3–A-4, as cited in Kaufmann, 1982, p. 14.

when the Reagan administration took office, and Table 7.3 provides an overview of then-planned general purpose forces for 1982 at the end of the Carter administration, including 16 Regular Army and eight Army Reserve divisions.

It is noteworthy that, notwithstanding the criticism of the preceding administration's efforts on defense, DoD's FY 1983 annual report listed improvements to ground forces would continue to be primarily qualitative rather than quantitative in nature:

The primary goal of our five-year program is to improve the combat capability of our existing ground forces. As a result, no significant expansion of our ground forces is planned. We seek to balance the force structure in order to improve responsiveness to both NATO and non-NATO contingencies; to improve the sustainability of our forces, not only in Europe but in other theaters worldwide; and to modernize our forces to enhance their effectiveness.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Weinberger, 1982.

**Table 7.2**  
**Actual U.S. Army Ground Force Deployments in January 1981**

Active Units		
CONUS	EUROPE	Other
1 infantry brigade	2 armored cavalry regiments	1 infantry brigade (Alaska)
1 armored brigade	1 infantry brigade (Berlin)	1 infantry brigade (Panama)
1 armored cavalry regiment		
1 cavalry brigade (air combat)		
Reserve Units		
CONUS		
	12 infantry brigades	
	9 mechanized infantry brigades	
	4 armored brigades	
	4 armored cavalry regiments	

SOURCE: Brown, 1981, p. 132.

**Table 7.3**  
**General Purpose Forces Highlights, January 1981**

	FY 1964	FY 1968	FY 1975	FY 1980	FY 1981	FY 1982
Land forces						
Army divisions						
Active	16	19	14	16	16	16
Reserve	23	8	8	8	8	8
Marine Corps divisions						
Active	3	4	3	3	3	3
Reserve	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tactical Air Forces						
Air Force wings						
Active (full strength equivalent)	21	25	26 (22)	26 (23)	26 (24)	26 (24)
Reserve	7	8	11	11	11	12
Marine Corps wings						
Active	3	3	3	3	3	3
Reserve	1	1	1	1	1	1
Navy attack wings						
Active	15	15	13	12	12	12
Reserve	2	2	2	2	2	2
Naval forces						
Active fleet	721	826	416	391	409	429
Carriers	24	23	15	13	12	13
Other ships (active and NRF)	82	49	10	6	7	6
Reserve ships	62	54	63	49	45	45
Fleet auxiliary force ships	—	1	16	30	34	33

SOURCE: Brown, 1981, p. A-3.

By FY 1985, however, the administration would initiate a program to raise the number of Army active and reserve component divisions.

In February 1982, President Reagan signed National Security Study Directive (NSSD) 1-82, “U.S. National Security Strategy,” commissioning a study of administration NSS, and directing that the review address the following topics:

Fundamental U.S. national security objectives.

Regional security objectives.

Impact of Soviet military power and international behavior on U.S. National Strategy.

Role of Allies in U.S. National Strategy.

Strategic Forces: objectives, policies, force application strategy, and force development strategy.

General Purpose Forces:

- Policies for the use of conventional military power to secure U.S. interests in peacetime and war (to include regional considerations and priorities as appropriate).
- Force development objectives and policies:

Security Assistance policies and objectives.

Interim goals: Where existing and programmed capabilities are insufficient to achieve desired objectives, interim objectives should be defined.<sup>6</sup>

In May 1982, National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 32, “U.S. National Security Strategy,” had been signed.<sup>7</sup> NSDD 32 established the following overarching objectives for U.S. NSS:

The national security policy of the United States shall be guided by the following global objectives:

- To deter military attack by the USSR and its allies against the U.S., its allies, and other countries across the spectrum of conflict; and to defeat such attack should deterrence fail.
- To strengthen the influence of the U.S. throughout the world by strengthening existing alliances, by improving relations with other nations, by forming and supporting coalitions of states friendly to U.S. interests, and by a full range of diplomatic, political, economic, and information efforts.

<sup>6</sup> NSC, NSSD 1-82, “U.S. National Security Strategy,” February 6, 1982, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> NSC, NSDD 32, “U.S. National Security Strategy,” May 20, 1982.

- To contain and reverse the expansion of Soviet control and military presence throughout the world, and to increase the costs of Soviet support and use of proxy, terrorist, and subversive forces.
- To neutralize the efforts of the USSR to increase its influence through its use of diplomacy, arms transfers, economic pressure, political action, propaganda, and disinformation.
- To foster, if possible in concert with our allies, restraint in Soviet military spending, discourage Soviet adventurism, and weaken the Soviet alliance system by forcing the USSR to bear the brunt of its economic shortcomings, and to encourage long-term liberalizing and nationalist tendencies within the Soviet Union and allied countries.
- To limit Soviet military capabilities by strengthening the U.S. military, by pursuing equitable and verifiable arms control agreements, and by preventing the flow of militarily significant technologies and resources to the Soviet Union.
- To ensure the U.S. access to foreign markets, and to ensure the U.S. and its allies and friends access to foreign energy and mineral resources.
- To ensure U.S. access to space and the oceans.
- To discourage further proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- To encourage and strongly support aid, trade, and investment programs that promote economic development and the growth of humane social and political orders in the Third World.
- To promote a well-functioning international economic system with minimal distortions to trade and investment and broadly agreed and respected rules for managing and resolving differences.<sup>8</sup>

NSDD 32 noted “the loss of U.S. strategic superiority and the overwhelming growth of Soviet conventional forces capabilities,” and identified the Soviet Union as the main threat to U.S. national security:

The key military threats to U.S. security during the 1980s will continue to be posed by the Soviet Union and its allies and clients. Despite increasing pressures on its economy and the growing vulnerabilities of its empire, the Soviet military will continue to expand and modernize.<sup>9</sup>

The expectation was that the Soviet Union had developed sufficient capabilities to threaten U.S. interests on multiple fronts, including not just Europe but also South-

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<sup>8</sup> NSC, NSDD 32, 1982, pp. 1–2.

<sup>9</sup> NSC, NSDD 32, 1982, p. 2.

west Asia and Northeast Asia; U.S. war planning, accordingly, needed to consider how to address such a multifront threat.<sup>10</sup> NSDD 32 described the administration's strategic concept as follows:

The U.S. shall maintain a global posture and shall strive to increase its influence worldwide through the maintenance and improvement of forward deployed forces and rapidly deployable U.S.-based forces, together with periodic exercises, security assistance, and special operations.

In a conflict not involving the Soviet Union, the United States will seek to limit the scope of the conflict, avoid involvement of the Soviet Union, and ensure that U.S. objectives are met as quickly as possible.

In a conflict involving the Soviet Union, the U.S. must plan, in conjunction with allies, for a successful defense in a global war. Given our current force insufficiencies, however, we must plan to focus our military efforts in the areas of most vital concern first, undertaking lesser operations elsewhere. This sequential concept shall be a basic feature of our force applications policy. It is in the interest of the United States to limit the scope of any U.S.-Soviet conflict, but if global war with the Soviet Union ensues, counteroffensives are to be directed at places where the U.S. can affect the outcome of the war. Counteroffensives are not a substitute for the robust military capabilities necessary to protect vital interests at the point at which they are threatened in the first place.<sup>11</sup>

In early 1982, Weinberger stated the administration's strategic concept and force sizing construct as having the capabilities and capacity

to meet the demands of a worldwide war, including concurrent reinforcement of Europe, deployment to Southwest Asia and the Pacific, and support for other areas. . . . Given the Soviets' capability to launch simultaneous attacks in [southwest Asia], NATO, and the Pacific, our long-range goal is to be capable of defending all theaters simultaneously.<sup>12</sup>

The NSDD emphasized NATO as the principal mechanism of defense for Europe, and regional allies and friends elsewhere while advocating continued efforts to ensure greater burden sharing:

In peacetime, our regional military objectives seek to deter military attack against the United States, our Allies and friends, and to contain and reverse the expansion of Soviet influence worldwide. The security of Europe remains vital to the defense

<sup>10</sup> As a result of the Iran-Iraq war and subsequent developments, including the Iraqi attack on the USS *Stark* in 1987, concern about the threat from Iraq also grew.

<sup>11</sup> NSC, NSDD 32, 1982, pp. 5–6.

<sup>12</sup> Weinberger, 1982, p. III-91.

of the United States. This means that we must achieve significant improvements in NATO's conventional defense capabilities while also improving nuclear and chemical forces. For our part, the United States will maintain its commitments for forward deployment and early reinforcement. The security of Southwest Asia is inextricably linked to the security of Europe and Japan and thus is vital to the defense of the United States. A key peacetime military objective in Southwest Asia is to enhance deterrence by sufficiently improving our global capability to deploy and sustain military forces so as to ensure that, if the Soviet Union attacks, it would be confronted with the prospect of a major conflict with the U.S. in-theater and the threat of escalation.<sup>13</sup>

The NSDD also directed that the possibility of a multitheater war with the Soviet Union be addressed, and prioritized the various theaters as follows:

Wartime planning must consider the likelihood that any U.S.-Soviet conflict would expand beyond one theater. Within this context, and recognizing that the political and military situations at the time of war will bear heavily on strategic decisions, the following priorities apply for wartime planning: highest priority is North America, followed by NATO, and the supporting lines of communication. The next priority is ensuring access to the oil in Southwest Asia, followed by the defense of U.S. Pacific allies and the lines of communication for the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and then the defense of other friendly nations in Latin America and Africa.<sup>14</sup>

In a section on regional military objectives, the NSDD stated,

In peacetime, our regional military objectives seek to deter military attack against the United States, our Allies and friends, and to contain and reverse the expansion of Soviet influence worldwide. The security of Europe remains vital to the defense of the United States. This means that we must achieve significant improvements in NATO's conventional defense capabilities while also improving nuclear and chemical forces. For our part, the United States will maintain its commitments for forward deployment and early reinforcement. The security of Southwest Asia is inextricably linked to the security of Europe and Japan and thus is vital to the defense of the United States. A key peacetime military objective in Southwest Asia is to enhance deterrence by sufficiently improving our global capability to deploy and sustain military forces so as to ensure that, if the Soviet Union attacks, it would be confronted with the prospect of a major conflict with the U.S. in-theater and the threat of escalation.

Wartime planning must consider the likelihood that any U.S.-Soviet conflict would expand beyond one theater. Within this context, and recognizing that the political

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<sup>13</sup> NSC, NSDD 32, 1982, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> NSC, NSDD 32, 1982, p. 4.



and military situations at the time of war will bear heavily on strategic decisions, the following priorities apply for wartime planning: highest priority is North America, followed by NATO, and the supporting lines of communication. The next priority is ensuring access to the oil in Southwest Asia, followed by the defense of U.S. Pacific allies and the lines of communication for the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and then the defense of other friendly nations in Latin America and Africa.<sup>15</sup>

Objectives for nuclear forces were stated as follows:

The modernization of our strategic nuclear forces and the achievement of parity with the Soviet Union shall receive first priority in our efforts to rebuild the military capabilities of the United States. Deterrence can best be achieved if our defense posture makes Soviet assessment of war outcomes, under any contingency, so dangerous and uncertain as to remove any incentive for initiating attack. The United States will enhance its strategic nuclear deterrent by developing a capability to sustain protracted nuclear conflict.<sup>16</sup>

Also in 1982, the JCS completed a study of the requirements for a “minimum risk” force reflecting the “requirements” of a “worldwide” war involving conflict in multiple theaters—or, essentially, what might be thought of as a 3-1/2 war strategic concept to meet the Soviet Union’s presumed plan to be capable of war-fighting on multiple simultaneous fronts (Table 7.4).

At this point, it is again worth mentioning that until the early 1980s, force requirements assessments began with strictly military, “minimum risk” force requirements, until the focus was shifted to more fiscally responsible “prudent risk” force requirements sometime around 1982. The “prudent risk” force requirements continued to be so high, however, that then–Deputy Secretary Frank Carlucci stated that the JCS’s midterm planning document at the time was “not a very valuable document as far as the budget process is concerned . . . ; it’s a benchmark only.”<sup>17</sup>

Whereas the Army had a total of 24 divisions (16 Regular and eight Reserve divisions) in 1981, the JCS minimum risk force would have seen the number of divisions grow by more than one-third to a total of 33 divisions (25 Regular and eight Reserve). Similarly, the Air Force had 26 active and 11 Reserve tactical fighter wings, or a total of 37, but the JCS minimum risk force envisioned a total of 57 wings, including 38 active

<sup>15</sup> NSC, NSDD 32, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> NSC, NSDD 13, “Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy,” October 19, 1981.

<sup>17</sup> A book by John M. Collins published in 1982 indicated that this change had recently taken place. Collins contrasted “minimum risk capabilities,” which he defined as “assets which, if currently available or acquired, could accomplish essential aims and missions with a high chance of success,” with “prudent risk capabilities,” defined as “less than optimum assets that decisionmakers deem politically, economically, and militarily acceptable because intelligence estimates and/or intuitive reasoning convince them that no crisis requiring greater power will occur before deficiencies can be rectified.” See Collins, 1982, pp. 156–158, 308, and 311.

**Table 7.4**  
**Joint Chiefs of Staff Estimate of Minimum Risk Forces, 1982**

Forces	Active-Duty	Reserve
Army divisions	25	8
Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) <sup>b</sup>	4	1
Air Force fight-attack wings	38	19
Aircraft carrier battle groups	22	—
Intercontinental airlift aircraft	632	—
Intratheater airlift aircraft	458	302
Strategic bombers	483	—
ICBMs	1,254	—
Fleet ballistic missile submarines	44	—

SOURCE: William W. Kaufmann, *The 1986 Defense Budget*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1985, p. 3, as cited in William W. Kaufmann, *Assessing the Base Force: How Much Is Too Much?* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1992, p. 30.

NOTE: As estimated in 1982. Projected date of deployment was 1991.

<sup>b</sup> An MEF is usually defined as a division and an air wing.

and 19 Reserve, an increase of more than one-half. The JCS's minimum risk force, essentially a stapling together of service wish lists, was not terribly different from the JSPD FYs 1982–1989 force proffered by the JCS in the late Carter administration, which had earlier been rejected as implausible; increasing congressional pressure in 1983 to trim growth in defense budgets made it at least as implausible at this time.<sup>18</sup>

Tables 7.5 and 7.6 are alternative authors' estimates of how U.S. forces would be allocated to these multiple contingencies. As shown, the Reagan-era force allocations involved perhaps 11 to 12 Regular divisions for a European contingency, four to seven divisions for a Persian Gulf contingency, and two to three divisions for a Northeast Asia contingency, plus, in the first estimate, forces for a Caribbean basin contingency.<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the JCS's minimum risk force, the tables suggest a 1-3/2 (one and three half) war (Table 7.5) or 1-2/2 (one and two half) war (Table 7.6) strategic concept for the Reagan administration.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> In part, this was due to reduced congressional willingness to support the growth in defense spending beginning in mid-1983. See George C. Wilson, "Weinberger Declines to Recommend Defense Cuts for Congress," *Washington Post*, June 17, 1983a, p. A6; "Budget Cuts Underscore Needed Defense Reforms," *Washington Post*, June 26, 1983, p. G1; and George C. Wilson, "Pentagon Regroups for the Leaner Years," *Washington Post*, August 14, 1983b, p. A12.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Kugler, *Policy Analysis in National Security Affairs: New Methods for a New Era*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 2006, pp. 260–262. Kugler indicates that the Army reinforcement program involved five divisions while the Air Force reinforcement program involved five division equivalents.

<sup>20</sup> The principal difference between the two tables appears to be the consideration of a 1/2 war in the Caribbean in the first table and the absence of such a scenario in the second.

**Table 7.5**  
**Strategic Concept Envisioning Multiple Contingencies, 1981**

	1 War	+ 1/2 War (Gulf)	+ 1/2 War (NEA) +	+ 1/2 War (Caribbean Basin)
	Warsaw Pact attack in Europe	Soviet /proxy attack in Southwest Asia	Non-Chinese attack in Northeast Asia	Insurgency/revolution in Caribbean
	Allied support	Limited allied support	Limited support	No support
	Vital to United States	Vital to United States	Vital to United States	Not vital
<b>Forces (Army and Marine Divisions)</b>				
CONUS	5	4	1	—
Deployed	6	—	2	—
Strategic reserves	—	—	—	1
Reserves	4 + 4	—	—	1
<b>Strategic Concept</b>				
Assumes that multiple, simultaneous contingencies are likely and could be linked with a major contingency in Europe. Forces must be allocated and strengthened in order of priority, depending on the threat and the contingencies that can best be estimated. Four reserve divisions are fully equipped and prepared for rapid mobilization and deployment in support of the NATO contingency.				

SOURCES: William W. Kaufmann, "The Defense Budget," p. 175; Walter S. Mossberg, "U.S. in Defense Strategy Switch Plans Power to Fight 2 Big Wars Simultaneously," *Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 1983, p. 12; George C. Wilson, "U.S. May Hit Soviet Outposts in Event of Oil Cutoffs," *Washington Post*, July 17, 1981, p. 1; and Drew Middleton, "U.S. and Distant Conflicts: Europe Fears Military Shift," *New York Times*, June 11, 1981, as cited in Haffa, 1984, p. 221.

**Table 7.6**  
**Illustrative U.S. Force Allocations for Global War, 1980s**

Region	Active Divisions	Fighter Wings	Carrier Battlegroups
Europe	12	20	5
Persian Gulf	7	11	4
Northeast Asia	2	3	3
Total	21	34	12

SOURCE: Kugler, 2006, p. 262.

NOTE: Sixteen Army Reserve Component divisions, most of which were either committed to Europe as later-arriving reinforcements or withheld as strategic reserves, are not shown. Also not displayed are a Marine Reserve Component division and two to three Navy carriers that would have been unavailable for early wartime duties because they were in shipyards being repaired or overhauled.

Recently declassified materials suggest that the ABLE ARCHER exercise and “war scare” of late 1983 may have represented an apex in U.S.-Soviet suspicion and misunderstanding: The record suggests that both sides were convinced that the other side had achieved military superiority, and might be tempted to engage in a nuclear first-strike.<sup>21</sup> This was said to be a turning point in Reagan’s understanding of Soviet paranoia, as the President wrote in his memoir:

During my first years in Washington, . . . I think many of us in the administration took it for granted that the Russians, like ourselves, considered it unthinkable that the United States would launch a first strike against them. But the more experience I had with the Soviet leaders and other heads of state who knew them, the more I began to realize that many Soviet officials feared us not only as adversaries but as potential aggressors who might hurl nuclear weapons at them in a first strike; because of this, and perhaps because of a sense of insecurity and paranoia with roots reaching back to the invasions of Russia by Napoleon and Hitler, they had aimed a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons at us.<sup>22</sup>

In any event, shortly after Reagan’s 1984 reelection, the administration began preparing for a heightened level of diplomatic engagement with the Soviet Union on security issues that would ultimately culminate in a meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 1986.<sup>23</sup>

In February 1984, DoD reported recent adverse trends in the military balance vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, described as follows:

Since World War II, the Soviets have held an overall quantitative advantage in most conventional forces, and, as was noted in last year’s annual report, in recent years they have widened this advantage in almost all categories by producing major weapons at rates exceeding those of the United States and its NATO allies combined.

Perhaps even more important, the quality of Soviet weaponry and equipment has improved significantly—often through the purchase or theft of Western technology. The newest Soviet ground systems, for example, are comparable to many

<sup>21</sup> On the U.S. side, see Secretary of Defense and Director of Central Intelligence, *U.S. and Soviet Strategic Forces: Joint Net Assessment, Executive Version*, November 14, 1983; and for an assessment of the Soviet side, see President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, *The Soviet “War Scare,”* February 15, 1990. For a good overview of the “war scare,” see David E. Hoffman, “In 1983 ‘War Scare,’ Soviet Leadership Feared Nuclear Surprise Attack by U.S.,” *Washington Post*, October 24, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Hoffman, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, NSC, NSDD 160, “Preparing for Negotiations with the Soviet Union,” January 24, 1985. President Reagan held summits with General Secretary Gorbachev in Geneva in November 1985; in Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 1986; in Washington in December 1987; in Moscow in May 1988; and on Governor’s Island, New York, in December 1988 (see “Reagan–Gorbachev Summits,” The Reagan Files, undated).

Western systems. Moreover, the Soviets have already fielded large numbers of their most advanced ground force systems while equivalent U.S. systems are still being developed or just entering production. Measures of total combat potential, which take into account both numbers and quality of weapons, show that Warsaw Pact forces in the Central Region of Europe have improved by more than 90% from 1965 to the present while NATO forces advanced by less than 40%. Simultaneously, the Soviets have engaged in a massive buildup—in both numbers and combat potential—of their ground forces opposite China; yet this buildup in Asia has in no way slowed the pace of their modernization in Europe.<sup>24</sup>

Accordingly, among other actions, the administration signaled its plans to increase the nation's ability to mobilize Army land forces for a NATO contingency:

In peacetime, the United States stations ground and air forces in Europe, and deploys naval forces in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. In time of crisis, we are prepared to reinforce these forward-deployed forces rapidly and heavily. Specifically, we have pledged to bring U.S. forces in Europe up to a total of ten divisions within ten days of a reinforcement decision, with corresponding increases in tactical aviation. Additional reinforcements would follow. The European NATO nations are prepared to round out their units with rapidly mobilized reserve personnel and to provide additional combat and support units. This would nearly double the strength of NATO's in-place forces.<sup>25</sup>

Importantly, the administration also reported a decision to increase the overall number of Army divisions:

In FY 1985, our planned land force structure will consist of 30 divisions. Twenty of those divisions (17 Army and three Marine) will come from the active force; the remaining ten divisions (nine Army and one Marine) will be supplied by the Reserve Components. These divisions, supplemented by separate nondivisional brigades and regiments, form the cutting edge of our land forces. They are supported by a wide variety of active and reserve units and are backed by an extensive training and support base.

In order to take advantage of the economies represented by the Reserve Components, the Army's active combat divisions rely on reserve forces to achieve their full combat potential. Of the 17 active Army divisions, four will be "rounded out" by at least one reserve combat brigade while four others will use one or more reserve battalions to reach their full complement. In this way, a total of 19 Reserve Component maneuver battalions will be used to round out the active divisions. In addi-

<sup>24</sup> Caspar W. Weinberger, *Annual Report to the Congress Fiscal Year 1985*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 1, 1984, pp. 23–24.

<sup>25</sup> Weinberger, 1984, p. 39.

tion, the Reserve Components provide a large number of service support units for the active force. Many of these reserve units are scheduled to deploy within 10 days of mobilization.<sup>26</sup>

The Army began activation of two new divisions, which would continue in FY 1986, when the number of active component Army divisions stood at 18 and the number of reserve component divisions stood at 10.<sup>27</sup>

By September 1986, a revised version of the administration's NSS, NSDD 238, "Basic National Security Strategy," had been signed. NSDD 238 noted significant progress in strengthening the United States' position in the world over the preceding six years, and restated the broad purposes of U.S. national security policy as follows:

The primary objective of U.S. foreign and security policy is to protect the integrity of our democratic institutions and promote a peaceful global environment in which they can thrive. The national security policy of the United States shall serve the following broad purposes:

- To preserve the political identity, framework and institutions of the United States as embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
- To protect the United States—its national territory, citizenry, military forces, and assets abroad—from military, paramilitary, or terrorist attack.
- To foster the economic well-being of the United States, in particular, by maintaining and strengthening the nation's industrial, agricultural and technological base and by ensuring access to foreign markets and resources.
- To foster an international order supportive of the vital interests of the United States by maintaining and strengthening constructive, cooperative relationships and alliances, and by encouraging and reinforcing wherever possible and practicable, freedom, the rule of law, economic development and national independence throughout the world.<sup>28</sup>

Using a classic realist formulation, echoes of which could be heard in the George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush administrations, the NSDD described the United States' grand strategy, again identifying the Soviet Union as the principal threat facing the nation:

<sup>26</sup> Weinberger, 1984, p. 114.

<sup>27</sup> Frank C. Carlucci, *Fiscal Year 1989 Annual Report to the Congress*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 18, 1988, p. 314, and Center for Army History, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1985*, Washington, D.C., 1995, p. 59. Some of these divisions—for example, the 10th Mountain Division, which was stood up in FY 1986—had roundout brigades.

<sup>28</sup> NSC, NSDD 238, "Basic National Security Strategy," September 2, 1986.

The grand strategy of the United States is to avoid nuclear war while preventing a single hostile power or coalition of powers from dominating the Eurasian land-mass or other strategic regions from which threats to U.S. interests might arise. The success of this strategy is dependent on the maintenance of a strong nuclear deterrent, dynamic alliances, and a Western-oriented world economy. It is also dependent on the U.S. ability to wage successfully a competition for influence among less developed countries, the ability to influence events beyond our direct control, and ultimately, the ability to project military power abroad in defense of U.S. interests. . . . U.S. grand strategy is fundamentally a coalition strategy.

The primary threats to U.S. national security in the years ahead will continue to be posed by the armed forces of the Soviet Union and Soviet exploitation of regional instabilities. The Gorbachev leadership is more vigorous and dynamic than its predecessors since the late Brezhnev period. The potential now exists for more creative and energized Soviet foreign policies inimical to U.S. interests.<sup>29</sup>

NSDD 238 also described an overall requirement for balanced military forces as follows:

The full range of U.S. military capabilities must be appropriately balanced among combat and support elements, and mixed within active duty and reserve components. The U.S. must have specialized forces for nuclear deterrence and anti-terrorism; and must also have general purpose forces both capable of sustaining high intensity conflict, and trained and equipped for lesser contingencies and special operations. . . . While the possible use of nuclear weapons must remain an element in our overall military strategy, nuclear forces will not be viewed as a lower-cost alternative to conventional forces.<sup>30</sup>

The NSDD described the general strategic concept for general purpose forces as follows:

General-purpose forces support U.S. national security policy in peacetime by deterring aggression, by demonstrating U.S. interests, concern, and commitment, by assisting the forces of other friendly nations, and by providing a basis to move rapidly from peace to war. In wartime, these forces would be employed to achieve our political objectives and to secure early war termination on terms favorable to the U.S. and allies, preferably without the use of nuclear weapons. U.S. general purpose forces must, however, be prepared for both prolonged conflict and the use of nuclear weapons if required.

The U.S. shall maintain a global posture and shall strive to increase its influence worldwide through the maintenance and improvement of forward deployed forces

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<sup>29</sup> NSC, NSDD 238, 1986, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> NSC, NSDD 238, 1986, p. 7.



and rapidly deployable U.S.-based forces, together with periodic exercises, security assistance, and special operations. U.S. general purpose forces must provide the flexibility to deal quickly, decisively and discriminately with low-level conflict contingencies requiring U.S. military involvement. The U.S. will further enhance its capabilities for global mobility, including appropriate protection and support for points of embarkation and debarkation. The United States will continue to improve its conventional warfare capabilities and to improve its ability to deter chemical attack through the production of binary chemical munitions.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, it described the administration's regional priorities:

- The defense of *North America* was identified as the primary security concern.
- The security of *Europe* was described as vital to the defense of the United States, and a strong and unified NATO indispensable to protecting Western interests. The NSDD stated that the United States would maintain its commitment to forward deployment and early reinforcement.
- In the *Far East and the Pacific basin*, the foremost U.S. peacetime objective, in conjunction with Japan and other allies and friends in the region, was to prevent the Soviet Union and its allies from expanding their influence in the region.
- In the *Near East/Southwest Asia*, the primary U.S. objective was, in concert with regional states, to prevent the Soviet Union or its client states from extending their influence in the region in a manner that would threaten the security of U.S. allies and U.S. interests in Europe and Asia.
- Finally, U.S. peacetime objectives in *Africa*, in concert with allies, were to preempt and defeat foreign aggression, subversion, and terrorism sponsored by Libya or other forces hostile to U.S. interests; to secure the withdrawal of Soviet and proxy forces from the continent; to ensure U.S. and allied access to oil and mineral resources; to prevent the Soviets from attaining strategic advantage; to support accelerated reform in African economic policies so as to promote stability, pluralism, and the role of market forces and reduce possibilities for hostile destabilization; and to promote peaceful reform in South Africa while maintaining U.S. influence.<sup>32</sup>

During the last years of the Reagan administration, the Soviet Union continued to represent the principal national security threat of concern to policymakers, who remained uncertain of Gorbachev's true intentions regarding the reform program

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<sup>31</sup> NSC, NSDD 238, 1986, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> NSC, NSDD 238, 1986, p. 12–14.



known as *perestroika*, and his ability to effect change, as well as the potential that he was trying to buy time or dupe Western publics.<sup>33</sup>

In the February 1988 annual report for FY 1989, DoD restated U.S. national security interests, as follows:

America's preeminent national security interest is the survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values and institutions intact, and its people secure. We also seek to promote the growth of freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout the world, linked by fair and open international trade. More specifically, we support the security, stability and well-being of our allies and other nations friendly to our interests. We oppose the expansion of influence, control, or territory by nations hostile to freedom and to other fundamental values shared by America and its allies.<sup>34</sup>

The annual report also described national security objectives that derived from an analysis of the requirements of countering threats to the nation's national security interests:

Our major national security objectives are:

- To safeguard the United States, its allies, and interests by deterring aggression and coercion; and should deterrence fail, by defeating the armed aggression and ending the conflict on terms favorable to the United States, its allies, and interests at the lowest possible level of hostilities.
- To encourage and assist our allies and friends in defending themselves against aggression, coercion, subversion, insurgencies, and terrorism.
- To ensure U.S. access to critical resources, markets, the oceans, and space.
- To reduce, where possible, Soviet military presence throughout the world; to increase the costs of Moscow's use of subversive force; and to encourage changes within the Soviet bloc that will lead to a more peaceful world order.
- To prevent the transfer of militarily critical technology and knowledge to the Soviet bloc, and to other potential adversaries.
- To pursue equitable and verifiable arms reduction agreements, with special emphasis on compliance.
- To defend and advance the cause of democracy, freedom, and human rights throughout the world.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Directorate of Intelligence, *Gorbachev's Economic Agenda: Promises, Potentials, and Pitfalls: An Intelligence Assessment*, Washington, D.C., September 1985.

<sup>34</sup> Carlucci, 1988, p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> Carlucci, 1988, p. 45.

Secretary of Defense Carlucci argued that the United States' NSS should continue to focus on deterring and preventing Soviet aggression:

While our forces are now stronger, we continue to face a host of threats. Foremost among them is Soviet military power, the single most significant factor we consider in determining the forces required to guarantee our national security. Neither *glasnost* nor the stirrings of economic reform within the Soviet Union have resulted in any redirection of resources away from the Soviet military machine. Deterring Soviet or Soviet-inspired aggression will remain the prime aim of our national security strategy, and the benchmark against which we must measure our strength.<sup>36</sup>

The annual report summarized U.S. defense strategy more broadly as follows:

Our basic defense strategy is to safeguard the United States and its allies and interests by deterring aggression. Deterrence works by convincing potential adversaries that the probable costs to them of their aggression will exceed their probable gains. We seek not only to deter actual aggression, but also to prevent coercion of the United States, its allies, and friends through the threat of aggression. Successful coercion could give a hostile power the fruits of war without actual conflict. Against Western Europe and Japan, for example, the Soviet threat comprises both overt attack, as well as propaganda and other tactics designed to intimidate and to seduce. Moscow seeks to persuade our allies and friends to distance themselves from the United States, neglect their military capabilities, adopt passive policies such as unilateral disarmament, and ultimately end the 16-nation North Atlantic Alliance and our mutual defense treaty with Japan, which reflect our collective resolve to resist Soviet attempts at domination.<sup>37</sup>

Despite these various threats and challenges, the annual report said that current plans and programs were leading to an increasingly favorable military balance with the Soviet Union overall:

Our assessment is that today's overall strategic balance is essentially stable. Soviet planners, armed with a preponderant advantage in heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), must nonetheless weigh the enhanced capability of our strategic Triad of ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and strategic bombers, as each leg proceeds through a critical modernization program. In Western Europe, NATO general-purpose forces are being modernized in order to meet the increased threat from a numerically superior Warsaw Pact possessing weapons systems whose quality approaches that of the best fielded by NATO. In the Middle East/Southwest Asia, the military balance favors the Soviets, but the combination of our efforts and those of countries in the region create significant risks and

<sup>36</sup> Carlucci, 1988, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Carlucci, 1988, p. 46.

uncertainties for Soviet planners. In East Asia, the balance again favors the Soviets, but our modernization programs, and the economic vigor of our allies and friends, indicate a more favorable long-term trend.

The maritime balance favors us, but we have a greater dependence on the sea than do the Soviets. The power-projection balance also favors us, but increasing Soviet capabilities and their use of surrogates make this balance unstable at best.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, the annual report concluded that the continuation of recent favorable trends in the strategic balance would require continued improvements to strategic nuclear capabilities:

An overall assessment of the strategic balance indicates that the United States has, and will retain for the foreseeable future, the capability to deter a direct nuclear attack. This judgment assumes that President Reagan's strategic modernization program is fully implemented in a timely manner. Absent these U.S. improvements, the tempo and direction of Soviet programs will erode some remaining areas of U.S. advantage and extend Soviet advantages, particularly in the area of strategic defense.<sup>39</sup>

The number of active component Army divisions increased from 16 in FY 1980 to 18 in FY 1986, where it remained for the rest of the administration while the number of reserve component divisions increased from eight to ten in the same period and also remained at that level. Meanwhile, active component tactical Air Force fighter attack squadrons rose from 74 to 79 in that period while reserve component squadrons rose from 36 to 43. Nonstrategic naval forces grew more significantly during that time frame. The planned deployment of Army and Marine divisions for FY 1989 is described in Figure 7.1.

Nonetheless, as had previously been the case, the JCS's estimate of a minimum risk force appeared to have maintained 25 Regular Army divisions, seven more than the 18 that would be budgeted for FY 1989 (see Table 7.7).

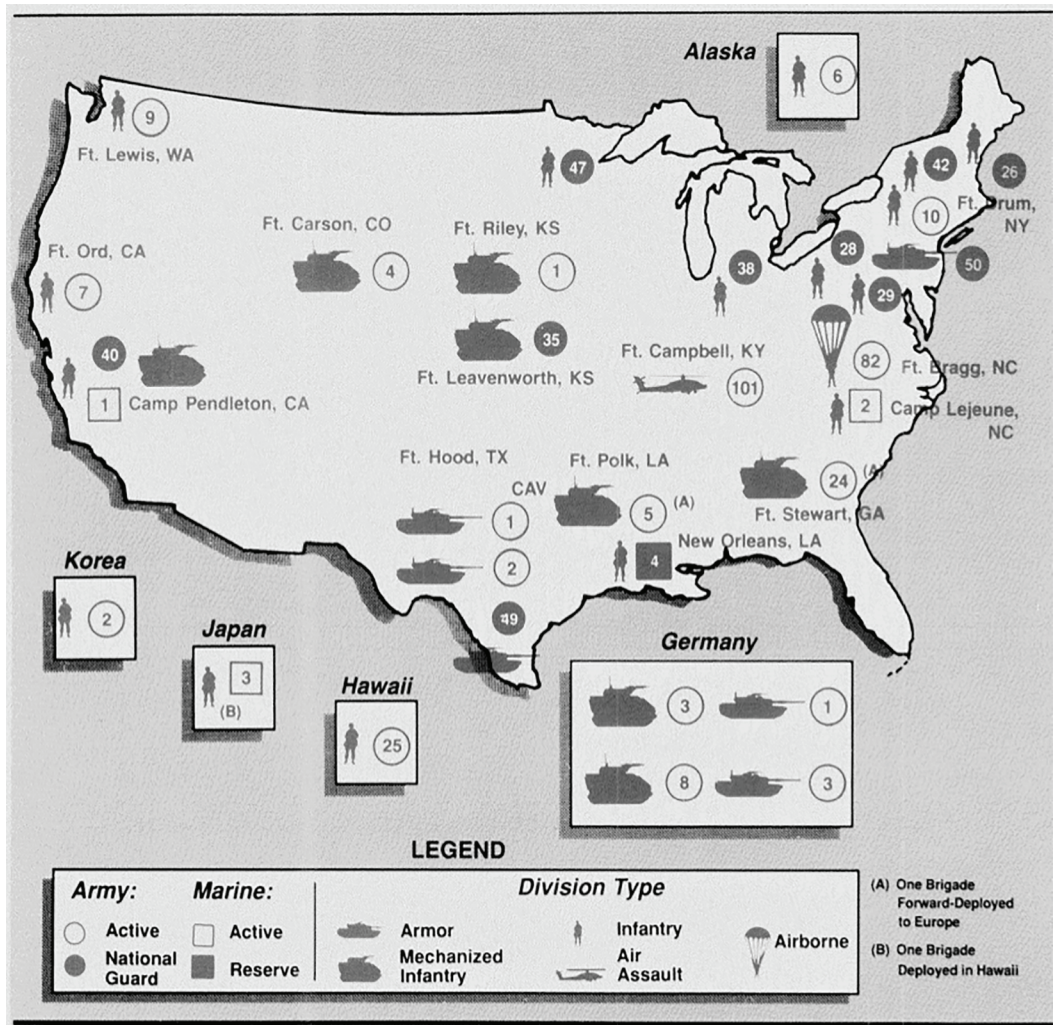
As the Reagan administration came to an end, in a November 1988 Special National Intelligence Estimate, the Intelligence Community judged that the Soviets and their allies had a number of interrelated military, political, and economic reasons to engage the West in conventional arms control, and that among the military reasons was "to improve the correlation of forces and to reduce what they perceive as NATO's capability to launch a surprise attack."<sup>40</sup> The short-term forecast at the time was, in part,

<sup>38</sup> Carlucci, 1988, pp. 24–25.

<sup>39</sup> Carlucci, 1988, p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> Director of Central Intelligence, *Soviet Policy During the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe*, Special National Intelligence Estimate 11-16-88 CX, November 1988, key judgments only.

Figure 7.1  
Planned Deployment of U.S. Divisions, FY 1989



SOURCE: Carlucci, 1988, p. 184.

RAND RR21731/1-7.1

In the short term (up to two years) we believe the Pact will pursue a strategy aimed at reducing the West’s perception of the Soviet threat in the expectation that this course will make it difficult for NATO governments to maintain or increase defense spending. The Pact will engage NATO in the Conventional Stability Talks and probably will introduce sweeping proposals for asymmetric reductions.

... The Warsaw Pact states will not accept the current NATO proposal, which in effect calls on the Pact to take gigantic cuts in tanks and artillery for minor cuts on the NATO side so that there is parity between the Pact and NATO. For example,

**Table 7.7**  
**JCS Objectives for Minimum Risk Nuclear and Conventional Force Levels, by Type, FY 1991**

Type	Number Required			Number Deployed, End of FY 1988
	Active-Duty	Reserve	Total	
Nuclear				
ICBMs	1,254	—	1,254	1,000
Ballistic missile submarines	44	—	44	31
Strategic bombers	483	—	483	372
Conventional				
Army divisions	25	8	33	28
Marine amphibious forces (divisions and air wings)	3	1	4	4
Air Force tactical fighter wings	38	19	57	37
Aircraft carrier battlegroups	22	—	22	14
Intercontinental airlift aircraft	632	—	632	389
Intratheater airlift aircraft	458	302	760	521

SOURCE: William W. Kaufmann, *A Reasonable Defense*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1986, p. 101; and *Department of Defense Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1989*, pp. 313–315, as cited in William W. Kaufmann and Lawrence J. Korb, *The 1990 Defense Budget*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1989, p. 33.

this would mean the Pact would have to withdraw or destroy about 25,000 tanks while NATO would withdraw or destroy about 900 tanks.<sup>41</sup>

**Trends in Defense Analytics**

Although incremental improvements to the PPBS and JSPS processes continued during this period, and computer models and other analytic techniques also were refined, the real turning point during this period arguably was the 1986 report of the Packard Commission and the Goldwater-Nichols Act that followed; although their full impact would not be felt for several years, these efforts laid the groundwork

<sup>41</sup> Director of Central Intelligence, 1988, key judgments only.



for achieving true joint strategic planning, and better integration of the JSPS with DoD's PPBS processes.

Also during this period, more-sophisticated theater campaign simulation and other models were developed to support strategic analysis. Prominent examples of combat models developed during this period include the CEM, Version 7 (CEM VII in 1983), Vector-in-Commander (VIC, 1986), the Force Evaluation Model (FORCEM in 1987), the RAND Strategy Assessment System (RSAS in 1987), BDM's BASIS model, and TASC's TASCFORM model.<sup>42</sup>

## Summary and Conclusions

At the end of the Reagan administration, defense policymakers continued to evidence concern about the continued threat posed by the Soviet Union, and they remained skeptical that the changes then under way in the Soviet Union would result in revolutionary changes in Soviet capabilities, intentions, and posture, or the overall strategic situation. It is somewhat ironic that the Soviets' position in Europe would deteriorate within one year of the administration's departure from office.

Incremental refinements to PPBS, JSPS, and systems analysis techniques continued apace during this period. But it was not until the 1986 Packard Commission report and the Goldwater-Nichols Act that the CJCS would be granted the authority to forge joint outcomes. The new authorities granted the CJCS under Goldwater-Nichols would not be exercised, however, until GEN Colin L. Powell assumed the chairmanship in 1989. With the growth of computing power and the advent of desktop computers, a number of advances were made in combat and other simulation models that supported strategic analysis.

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<sup>42</sup> For a review of models developed or used by the Army in this period, see Shrader, 2009, pp. 252–258. For a brief overview of the RAND Strategy Assessment System, see Paul K. Davis, James A. Winnefeld, Steven C. Bankes, and James P. Kahan, *Analytic War Gaming with the RAND Strategy Assessment System (RSAS)*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RB-7801, 1987. The BASIS model is described in Hans W. Hofmann, Reiner K. Huber, and Karl Steiger, "On Reactive Defense Options: A Comparative Systems Analysis of Alternatives for the Initial Defense Against the First Strategic Echelon of the Warsaw Pact in Central Europe," in Reiner K. Huber, ed., *Modeling and Analysis of Conventional Defense in Europe: Assessment of Improvement Options*, New York: Plenum Press, 1986, pp. 97–140. The TASCFORM model is described in Jonathan M. Regan, *The TASCFORM Methodology: A Technique for Assessing Comparative Force Modernization*, Analytic Sciences Corporation, 1993. The TASCFORM model was used by OSD and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) for force structure studies. See CBO, *Structuring U.S. Forces After the Cold War: Costs and Effects of Increased Reliance on the Reserves*, Washington, D.C., September 1992.

## Cold War Strategic Concepts, Scenarios, and Forces: A Brief Summary

In a 1994 article, Former Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski provided a good summation of the United States' strategic outlook during the Cold War:

For nearly 45 difficult years the United States pursued a remarkably consistent policy toward the Soviet Union. On the level of grand strategy, that policy was defined as containment of both Soviet geopolitical and ideological ambitions. The practical implementation of the policy of containment involved American geo-strategic concentration on the defense of both the western and eastern peripheries of Eurasia, manifested by permanent troop deployments and defined by binding treaty commitments. The doctrine of deterrence, designed to neutralize any Soviet nuclear blackmail, reinforced this defensive posture.<sup>43</sup>

During the Cold War, defense and conventional force planning was overwhelmingly dominated by concern about the conventional, and later strategic nuclear, threat from the Soviet Union. Soviet conventional forces threatened not only the NATO central region, but also NATO's northern and southern flanks—although the shape of that threat changed along with the Soviet conventional and nuclear posture, capabilities, force dispositions, and the Western understanding of Soviet intentions and war plans. Planning during this period generally envisioned a combination of nuclear deterrence, forward presence, and mobilization to meet the Soviet threat.

Although the potential outcome of any war would depend on a wide range of factors,<sup>44</sup> the conventional force balance in Europe throughout much of this period favored the Soviets. Force planning generally envisioned four to five divisions forward-deployed in Europe, with a capability to mobilize and deploy existing CONUS-based active and reserve component forces and, if needed, full mobilization of the nation for a protracted general war. Throughout the period, the threat of potential escalation to tactical, theater, and strategic nuclear operations served as a deterrent to buttress NATO's inferior conventional posture.

During most of the Cold War period, the Northeast Asian theater (primarily the Korean peninsula) and Southeast Asian theater (which focused, at one time or another, on the Chinese threat to Vietnam or Thailand) were theaters of secondary concern compared with the NATO region, and had somewhat smaller numbers of assigned

<sup>43</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2, Fall 1994, p. 67.

<sup>44</sup> Prominent among these factors were adversary capabilities and force dispositions, theater military balances or correlation of forces, and the availability of mobility assets. Gelb and Kuzmack (1973, pp. 213–217) identified the following additional factors as being among the most important of the defense planning assumptions that influenced the size and shape of general purpose forces: tactical nuclear weapons, simultaneity of requirements, length of the war, mobilization lead time, forward defense, tactical air levels, confidence levels, reliance on allies, and enemy intentions.

forces. Forces for so-called brushfire or 1/2 wars were initially envisioned primarily for operations in the Western Hemisphere but were later viewed as suitable for employment in other regions.

The Sino-Soviet war of 1969 had exposed the fiction of monolithic communism and allowed policymakers to uncouple the Soviet and Chinese threats while seeking détente with the Soviet Union and normalized relations with China. By the late 1970s, the perceived Soviet threat to Southwest Asia and Northeast Asia had grown, however, as a result of growing Soviet conventional and nuclear capabilities, and growing belief that the Soviets' war plans envisioned war on multiple simultaneous fronts. Meanwhile, defense planners also continued to plan for a potential Korean contingency in Northeast Asia or a China contingency in Southeast Asia, as well as smaller contingencies, primarily in the Caribbean basin.

As described in preceding chapters, throughout the Cold War period, conventional force planning was guided by assumptions about national security interests, threats to those interests, national security policy and strategy, the contributions of allies, and the strategic concepts or force sizing constructs that would best meet security requirements given available resources, and at an acceptable level of risk.

Cold War force planning was dominated by consideration of plausible threat scenarios and contingencies related to key U.S. allies and friends, primarily those posed by the Soviet Union, its allies, and its clients. With a few exceptions—the Korean War being a notable one—these threats and scenarios tended to change only gradually. Planning of conventional ground forces also was reactive to changes in the U.S.-Soviet conventional and strategic balances, emergent crises, and increased budgetary pressures to economize in defense.

During most of this period, each administration's strategic concept was translated into a force sizing construct that was quite specific about which scenarios were sufficiently grave and plausible to warrant operational and strategic planning; these scenarios were then used to guide force planning, and were made manifest in short-term, midterm, and long-term plans to meet current and anticipated Soviet threats and capabilities and, to a lesser extent, Chinese and other threats as well. Indeed, there appears to have been a high degree of correspondence between planners' understanding of Soviet capabilities, capability trends, intentions, doctrine, and war plans on the one hand and the military problems that planners needed to address in their force planning on the other. Put simply, even when clear national security policy or strategic concepts were lacking, the scenarios used for force planning during the Cold War appear to have been greatly influenced by more-detailed operational and contingency plans. Aligning national policy and strategic plans proved to be an ongoing challenge to planners and policymakers alike, especially in times of high threat and reduced resources. On the one hand, this was due, in part, to the weak links between civilian national security and defense policy and, on the other hand, military policy and strategy. In addition, it was partly due to chronic problems associated with a weak CJCS that lacked the authorities to forge joint solutions, and partly due to disconnects between the parallel



JSPS and PPBS systems that provided the framework for strategic planning.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, with the advent of modern computers, the tools and techniques for analysis of these scenarios evolved from human war games and military judgment to also include the results of computer simulation modeling and other advanced techniques that helped make the process more rigorous and systematic.

Importantly, the strategic concepts that were developed during the Cold War period not only specified which threats and challenges would be translated into scenarios and war plans but also served as force sizing constructs or yardsticks that specified how many major wars and smaller combat operations the force needed to be capable of conducting simultaneously, or nearly so:

- In the 1950s, the doctrine of Massive Retaliation linked the employment of nuclear weapons to a potential multitheater war with the Soviet Union that would either decide the conflict or serve as the opening act for a longer war involving World War II–style mobilization and prolonged conventional (and nuclear) warfare.
- In the 1960s, the 2-1/2 war strategic concept and doctrine of Flexible Response emphasized capabilities that were capable of two simultaneous wars in Europe and Asia—or limited wars elsewhere—while retaining forces for a smaller, 1/2 war contingency.
- The 1-1/2 war strategic concept developed in the late 1960s assumed only one major war in Europe or Asia simultaneously, which generally proved adequate for planning until the Soviets were understood to have engaged in a comprehensive military buildup, and to have developed plans for a global, multitheater war against the United States and its allies.
- The late Carter administration's 1-2/2 war strategic concept and the 1-3/2 war strategic concept of the Reagan administration ultimately would be underwritten by an addition of only two Regular Army divisions, raising the total from 16 to 18.<sup>46</sup>

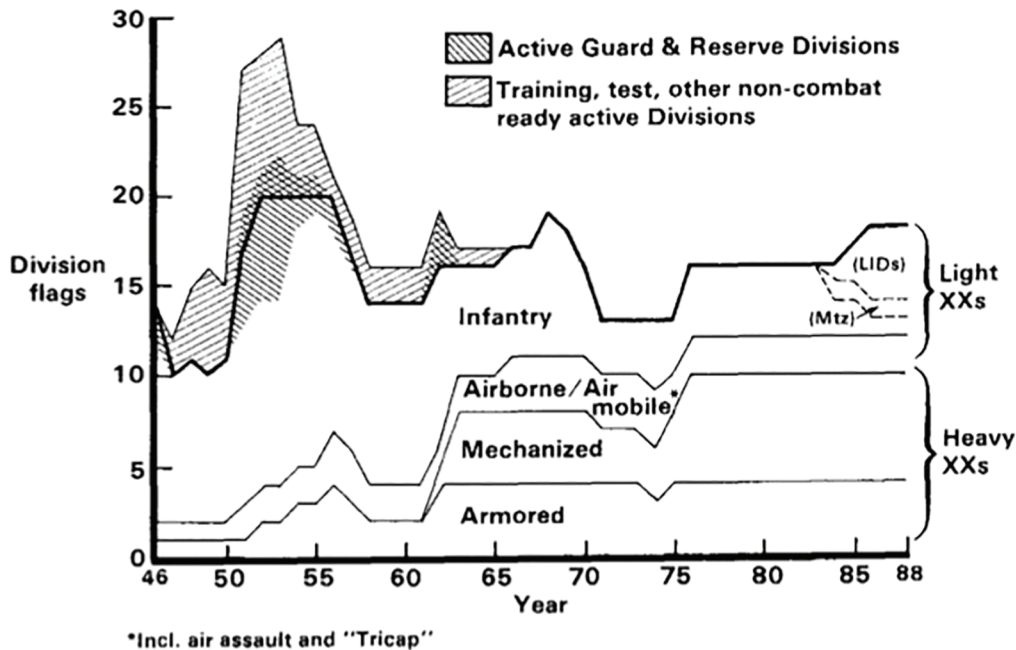
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<sup>45</sup> Perhaps the most comprehensive treatments of the evolution of the JSPS and the role of the CJCS are Richard M. Meinhart, *Chairmen Joint Chiefs of Staff's Leadership Using the Joint Strategic Planning System in the 1990s: Recommendations for Strategic Leaders*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, June 2003; Richard M. Meinhart, *Strategic Planning by the Chairmen, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1990 to 2005*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, April 2006; and Richard M. Meinhart, *Joint Strategic Planning Insights: Chairmen Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1990–2012*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2013.

<sup>46</sup> That a more ambitious strategic concept could be supported with the addition of only two Army divisions may seem odd, but may be accountable to capability increases of the force resulting from the Carter administration's second offset strategy, the development of AirLand Battle, and similar developments. As Daniel Goure put it,

The second offset was required when the Soviet Union attained nuclear parity with the United States, essentially undermining the deterrent value of a U.S. nuclear response to Russian conventional aggression. Since the Red Army still maintained a massive quantitative advantage in Europe and the Far East in comparison to the United States and its allies, a new way had to be found to prevent Moscow from initiating hostilities. The second offset strategy relied on several key technologies—stealth, precision guidance for aircraft and weapons and information networks—and a new strategy of deep attack to counter the threat from massed Soviet mechanized forces.

**Figure 7.2**  
**U.S. Army Active Division Structure, by Type, 1946–1988**



SOURCE: Lewis, 1989, p. 27.

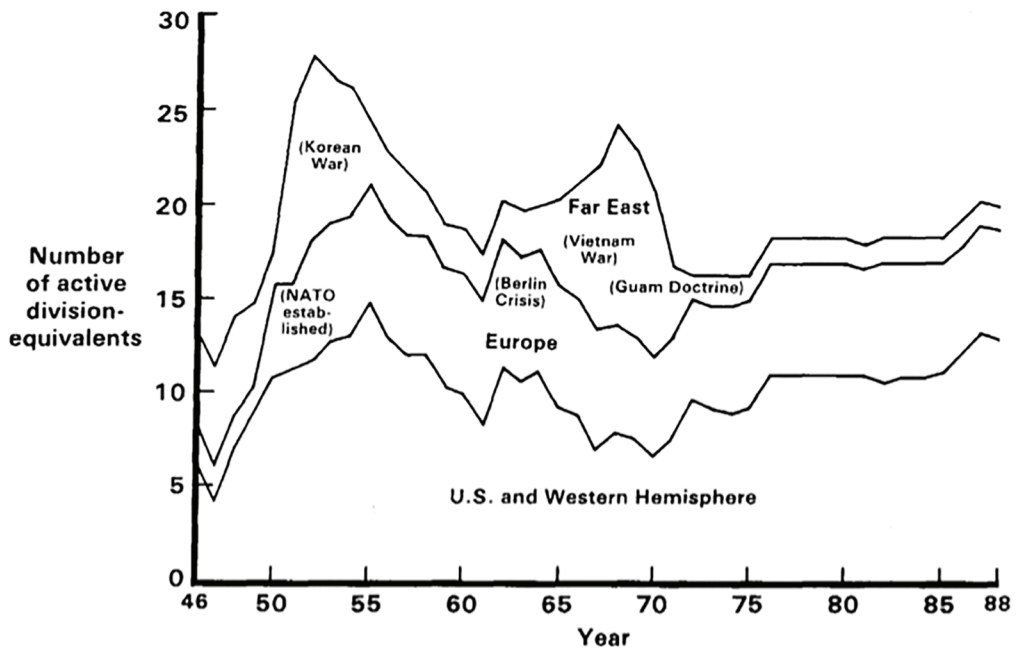
RAND RR2173/1-7.2

Previous chapters also describe how changing threats and strategic concepts (including embedded threat scenarios) influenced the size, composition, and deployment of U.S. conventional (and nuclear) forces. To illustrate, it is difficult to find a more cogent summary of Army force structure changes during the Cold War than Figures 7.2 and 7.3, and the following accompanying description:

Thus, we see the Army grow from a post-World War II nadir of 10-11 divisions (many languishing in conditions of significant unreadiness), to a posture of 20 divisions during and immediately following the Korean War, after which a decline to 14 active divisions occurs. We see an expansion in posture during the Berlin Crisis [of 1961], when two new active heavy divisions were constituted, and two National Guard divisions (one infantry and one armored) were called to active duty, and then the Vietnam related buildup. Following the Vietnam War, the number of Army divisions plunged to 13 during the early 1970s. A rebuilding program expanded this posture to 16 divisions (although several of these relied on “round-out” brigades and other units from the Guard and Reserve). This

(Daniel Goure, “The Pentagon’s Third Offset: Just a Smoke Screen for a Shrinking US Military?” *The National Interest*, June 14, 2016)

**Figure 7.3**  
**U.S. Army Active Strength, by Region, 1946–1988**



SOURCE: Lewis, 1989, p. 31.

RAND RR2173/1-7.3

16-division force was consolidated to a substantial degree later in the 1970s. Most recently, the posture has expanded to 18 active divisions, although these were created without the addition of commensurate new personnel.<sup>47</sup>

The reader will note that Figures 7.2 and 7.3 differ: Figure 7.2 presents Army Regular division structure in terms of the number of division flags during the 1946–1988 period, whereas Figure 7.3 presents the number of division equivalents over time, including divisions, brigades, and regiments.<sup>48</sup> Peaks in both can be seen during the wars in Korea and Vietnam, and the buildup to a new peak during the Reagan era.

As described in Figure 7.2:

- Following the postwar demobilization after 1945, the Truman administration reduced the number of Regular Army divisions to ten or 11. However, in 1950, the

<sup>47</sup> Kevin N. Lewis, *Historical Force Structure Trends: A Primer*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, P-7582, July 1989, p. 26.

<sup>48</sup> Brigades and regiments are scored as one-third of a division equivalent.

administration increased that number to 20 in light of the growing threat from the Soviet Union that culminated in NSC 68, and the onset of the Korean War.

- To minimize the defense burden on the economy, the Eisenhower administration introduced the doctrines of Massive Retaliation and a New Look in force structure that emphasized nuclear over conventional weapons, and the number of Regular Army divisions fell from 20 to 14 between 1955 and 1961.
- With the Kennedy administration's 2-1/2 war strategic concept and doctrine of Flexible Response, as well as the 1961 Berlin Crisis and 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the number of Army divisions increased from 14 to 16.
- Under the Johnson administration, the number of Regular Army divisions increased to 19 divisions in response to the growing requirements of the Vietnam War.
- Under the Nixon administration, the number of Regular Army divisions fell briefly to 13 in response to the winding down of the Vietnam War, and the administration's 1-1/2 war strategic concept.
- The number of Regular divisions increased to 16 in 1976 under the Ford administration, where it remained through the Carter and early Reagan administrations.
- In response to the Reagan administration's continued beliefs about the growing threat from the Soviet Union, and its 1-3/2 war strategic doctrine, the number of Regular divisions increased from 16 to 18 in 1985 and 1986, where it remained until 1988.

For its part, Figure 7.3 presents the following allocation of Army strength by region, in terms of division equivalents:<sup>49</sup>

- There were generally between five and seven division equivalents forward-deployed in Europe after the 1949 creation of NATO.
- There were nine to ten division equivalents deployed to the Korea and Vietnam wars, and typically two to three divisions deployed to the Far East in nonwar years.
- There were ten or more Army division equivalents in the continental United States and Western Hemisphere between 1950 and 1960, following the 1962 Berlin crisis, and in all years from 1976 to 1988.

Importantly, in addition to considering the conventional ground force requirements associated with potential contingencies, Cold War defense planning was preoccupied with a wide array of other considerations, including basing and presence requirements; the proper balance between burden-sharing and security assistance in improving allies' capabilities to provide for their own defense; mobility and mobilization requirements; protection of sea lanes of communication; and, perhaps above all, the planning and development of strategic nuclear forces.

<sup>49</sup> Brigades and regiments are scored as one-third of a division equivalent.

In any event, with the reform and ultimate dissolution of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, defense planning would shift from consideration of one or more simultaneous major wars to consideration of one or more regional wars, operations that were of a scale and scope envisioned to involve perhaps four to five divisions and ten tactical fighter wings in each of two nearly simultaneous contingencies. Put another way, the estimated requirements of the major regional contingencies that preoccupied planners in much of the post–Cold War era can be thought of as roughly equivalent to the 1/2 wars of the Cold War period.



## **The George H. W. Bush Administration, 1989–1993**

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The George H. W. Bush administration entered office shortly before the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union, and it was responsible for shifting force planning from meeting the stable and reasonably well-understood threats and challenges posed by the Soviet Union to planning against less well-understood regional threats, such as Iraq and North Korea. This shift and these scenarios would continue to dominate defense planning for more than a decade and appear to represent, at least in part, a shift from threat-based to capabilities-based planning.<sup>1</sup>

The JSPS and PPBS processes continued to constitute the dual framework for strategic planning in DoD, and CJCS Powell seized on the additional authorities granted by the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 to strengthen the Joint Staff's capabilities and to refashion the JSPS to better meet his needs and to better integrate the JSPS schedule and products with those of the PPBS process.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking during the George H. W. Bush administration, see Brown, 2015, pp. 473–545.

<sup>2</sup> For details, see Jaffe, 1993; and Meinhart, 2013.

## The 1989 Base Force Study

Until the 1989 Base Force study,<sup>3</sup> Bush administration strategic planning continued to be preoccupied with the threat from the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> In May 1989, President Bush stated:

While we hope to move beyond containment, we are only at the beginning of our new path. Many dangers and uncertainties are ahead. We must not forget that the Soviet Union has acquired awesome military capabilities. That was a fact of life for my predecessors, and that's always been a fact of life for our allies. And that is a fact of life for me today as President of the United States.<sup>5</sup>

The Base Force study of the Bush administration was the first effort to define the nation's interests and objectives, strategy and force structure for the post–Cold War world: The Base Force aimed to provide a force structure suitable for the transition from the Cold War strategy of containment of the Soviet Union to a regional defense strategy designed to address post–Cold War threats; provide a floor to force reductions that would avoid “breaking the force”; and retain a capability for reconstitution of military capabilities if then-favorable trends were reversed. Therefore, we begin with a description of the Base Force study in terms of its key assumptions, processes, and portrayal of national interests and threats, as well as its strategy, CONOPs, and force

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Base Force, see Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001, pp. 5–40. Descriptions of the Base Force at various levels of detail can be found in Colin L. Powell, “Building the Base Force: National Security for the 1990s and Beyond,” annotated briefing, September 1990; Colin L. Powell, “The Base Force: A Total Force,” presentation to the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense, September 25, 1991b; Colin L. Powell, testimony before U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993, February 21, 1991a; Richard Cheney, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, January 31, 1992; JCS, *1991 Joint Military Net Assessment*, Washington, D.C., 1991; JCS, *Joint Military Net Assessment*, Washington, D.C., 1992a; and JCS, *1992 National Military Strategy*, Washington, D.C., January 1992b. Detailed histories of the Base Force can be found in Don M. Snider, *Strategy, Forces and Budgets: Dominant Influences in Executive Decision Making, Post-Cold War, 1989–91*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, Professional Readings in Military Strategy No. 8, February 1993; Jaffe, 1993; and Leslie Lewis, C. Robert Roll, and John D. Mayer, *Assessing the Structure and Mix of Future Active and Reserve Forces: Assessment of Policies and Practices for Implementing the Total Force Policy*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-133-OSD, 1992. An assessment of the Base Force can be found in GAO, 1993. The issue of the Base Force's treatment of Total Force policy is addressed in Bernard Rostker, Charles Robert Roll, Jr., Marney Peet, Marygail Brauner, Harry J. Thie, Roger Allen Brown, Glenn A. Gotz, Steve Drezner, Bruce W. Don, Ken Watman, Michael G. Shanley, Fred L. Frostic, Colin O. Halvorson, Norman T. O'Meara, Jeanne M. Jarvaise, Robert Howe, David A. Shlapak, William Schwabe, Adele Palmer, James H. Bigelow, Joseph G. Bolten, Deena Dizengoff, Jennifer H. Kawata, Hugh G. Massey, Robert Petruschell, Craig Moore, Thomas F. Lippiatt, Ronald E. Sortor, J. Michael Polich, David W. Grissmer, Sheila Nataraj Kirby, and Richard Buddin, *Assessing the Structure and Mix of Future Active and Reserve Forces: Final Report to the Secretary of Defense*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-140-1-OSD, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, JCS, *1990 Joint Military Net Assessment*, Washington, D.C., February 1990.

<sup>5</sup> DoD, *Soviet Military Power: Prospects for Change 1989*, Washington, D.C., September 1989, preface.



structure requirements, and the results of assessments of the force's capabilities and capacity.

As will be described, many of the scenarios used to assess force requirements for major combat operations in the Base Force study were essentially leftovers from the Cold War, minus the guiding role of the Soviet Union. The Base Force prominently included consideration of scenarios involving an Iraqi attack on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (as opposed to a Soviet thrust into the Persian Gulf), and a North Korean attack on South Korea. The scenario set also included a European crisis involving heavy forces.<sup>6</sup> Planning continued to include threat-based approaches during the period, but the Base Force also was the first planning effort to use a capabilities-based approach to plan against threats that were less tangible than the Soviet Union had been during the Cold War.

Upon taking office as CJCS in October 1989, and building on the recently concluded National Security Review (NSR) 12,<sup>7</sup> Powell began what came to be called the Base Force study; the study was conducted during the tumultuous final act of the Cold War, from the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 to the defeat of a communist coup and dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991.<sup>8</sup> For his part, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney conducted a review of past drawdowns in late 1989 and early 1990 to better avoid the sort of rushed and haphazard reduction in forces that had characterized earlier drawdowns.

In May 1990, Powell presented his proposed Base Force to the Defense Planning Resource Board, and in June 1990, Cheney proposed possible reductions in U.S. military forces that reflected Powell's Base Force.<sup>9</sup> In an address on August 2, 1990, the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, Bush announced the administration's new defense strategy, which would replace the Cold War strategy of deterrence of Soviet aggression and coercion across the conflict spectrum with a new strategy based on managing regional threats.<sup>10</sup> The president also detailed the implications of this change for U.S. military forces: a 25-percent reduction in active forces, and a need to reshape those forces for the post-Cold War era as they were being reduced. In November 1990, reductions to defense spending were signed into law with the Budget Enforcement Act. In early 1991, the administration publicly

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<sup>6</sup> Later in this chapter, we list a number of scenarios that are said to have been used in assessing the Base Force, and independent estimates of the force requirements associated with these scenarios.

<sup>7</sup> NSC, NSR 12, "Review of National Defense Strategy," March 3, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> Powell was the first CJCS to exercise the new authorities provided by the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and made important changes to the JSPS.

<sup>9</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> The ideas expressed in Bush's August 2, 1990, speech at the Aspen Institute were given fuller exposition in the August 1991 and January 1993 releases of the NSS. The ramifications for military strategy also found expression in various other sources, such as the NMS, the JMNA, the Secretary of Defense's annual reports to Congress, and congressional testimony.

described the Base Force and budget levels for FY 1992;<sup>11</sup> in February 1991, a U.S.-led coalition conducted military operations to eject Iraq from Kuwait.

### Key Assumptions

Upon entering office in January 1989, the Bush administration conducted its NSR 12. Assuming that a 25-percent reduction in force structure and a 10- to 25-percent reduction in defense resources was possible due to the recent favorable security trends with respect to the Soviet Union, and growing concern about deficits, the administration rejected a JCS proposal for 2-percent annual real growth in defense resources. In early 1989, the Bush administration instead announced plans for a flat defense budget for one year while the international situation clarified, with modest real defense growth planned thereafter.

In addition, during congressional testimony in late February and in early March 1992, senior DoD officials stated that the Base Force was predicated on four key assumptions about the future: (1) the United States would see continued arms reductions and democratic progress in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; (2) security ties among democratic states would continue; (3) regional tensions, heightened by weapons proliferation, would continue in areas of great concern to the United States; and (4) the United States would not have to undertake any significant commitment of forward-deployed forces.<sup>12</sup> Cheney stated that two of these four assumptions were placed in doubt in 1990 and 1991: The communist coup in the former Soviet Union in December 1991 raised doubts about the first assumption, which held up when the coup was suppressed while the 1991 Gulf War showed the fourth assumption to have been in error.<sup>13</sup>

### National Interests

In January 1990, the administration released its first NSS with an updated statement of national security interests that identified four main national security interests:

- The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure.
- A healthy and growing U.S. economy to ensure opportunity for individual prosperity and resources for national endeavors at home and abroad.
- Healthy, cooperative, and politically vigorous relations with allies and friendly nations.

<sup>11</sup> Although the Base Force was presented in detail in congressional hearings throughout 1991, it was not until the 1992 NMS that the numerous and complex linkages between the NSS, the NMS, and the Base Force's force structure were described in full detail.

<sup>12</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Changes in Army force structure plans from 1988 to 1992 are described in GAO, *Army Force Structure: Future Reserve Roles Shaped by New Strategy, Base Force Mandates, and Gulf War*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-93-80, 1992, Table 1.1, p. 14.

- A stable and secure world, where political and economic freedom, human rights, and democratic institutions flourish.<sup>14</sup>

The administration's 1991 NSS report and DoD's 1992 NMS elaborated on the implications of these interests; the strategy

defined U.S. national interests as the survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, a healthy U.S. economy, a secure world, and cooperative relations with allies and friendly nations. These documents express continued U.S. commitment to the security of allied and/or friendly nations in Europe, the Pacific, the Middle East (including Southwest Asia), and Latin America. They define U.S. national objectives to include, among others, defeating aggression against the United States and its allies, ensuring U.S. access to markets, and promoting regional balances of power.<sup>15</sup>

### Threats

DoD believed that the threats to U.S. interests were regional in nature, and that a regional defense strategy with a range of types of forces would be needed. Although threats to U.S. national interests were judged to be low as a result of the end of the Cold War and the defeat of Iraq, DoD believed that the United States still faced a dangerous but unpredictable future, and that it needed to retain a robust, though smaller, military. In DoD's view, only a strong military could deter and defend against potential adversaries, as well as promote stability to ensure that future threats to U.S. interests were prevented from emerging in the first place.

### Strategy

By early 1991, Powell had identified five national military objectives to guide the development of the Base Force: deter or defeat aggression in concert with allies, ensure global access and influence, promote regional stability and cooperation, stanch the flow of illegal drugs, and combat terrorism.<sup>16</sup> Regional objectives also had been established for Europe, the Middle East and Persian Gulf, the Far East, and the remainder of the world. Finally, by this time, nine central military strategy concepts, four supporting concepts, and a force construct also had been established.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, Washington, D.C., January 1990, pp. 2–3.

<sup>15</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> JCS, 1991, p. 2-2.

<sup>17</sup> The strategic concepts included nuclear and conventional deterrence, crisis response through power projection, forward presence, reconstitution, collective security, maritime and aerospace superiority, security assistance, arms control, and technological superiority. The essential supporting concepts included peacetime engagement, timely response, measured response options, and warning time and political authority. JCS, 1991, pp. 2-2–2-7.

The final defense strategy released by the administration, titled *Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy*,<sup>18</sup> identified U.S. national security interests, and translated them into four mutually supportive strategic goals that were to guide overall defense efforts as follows:

Our most fundamental goal is to deter or defeat attack from whatever source, against the United States, its citizens and forces, and to honor our historic and treaty commitments.

The second goal is to strengthen and extend the system of defense arrangements that binds democratic and like-minded nations together in common defense against aggression, builds habits of cooperation, avoids the renationalization of security policies, and provides security at lower costs and with lower risks for all. Our preference for a collective response to preclude threats or, if necessary, to deal with them is a key feature of our Regional Defense Strategy.

The third goal is to preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our interests, and also thereby to strengthen the barriers against the reemergence of a global threat to the interests of the United States and our allies. These regions include Europe, East Asia, the Middle East/Persian Gulf, and Latin America. Consolidated, nondemocratic control of the resources of such a critical region could generate a significant threat to our security.

The fourth goal is to help preclude conflict by reducing sources of regional instability and to limit violence should conflict occur. Within the broader national security policy of encouraging the spread and consolidation of democratic government and open economic systems, the Defense Department furthers these ends through efforts to counter terrorism, drug trafficking, and other threats to internal democratic order; assistance to peacekeeping efforts; the provision of humanitarian and security assistance; limits on the spread of militarily significant technology, particularly the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction along with the means to deliver them; and the use of defense-to-defense contacts to assist in strengthening civil-military institutions and encourage reductions in the economic burden of military spending.<sup>19</sup>

As described by Powell, the aim of the Base Force was to provide a new military strategy and force structure for the post–Cold War era while setting a floor for force reductions. The floor was necessary, Powell argued, to avoid creating the level of churn-

<sup>18</sup> DoD, *Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy*, Washington, D.C., January 1993b.

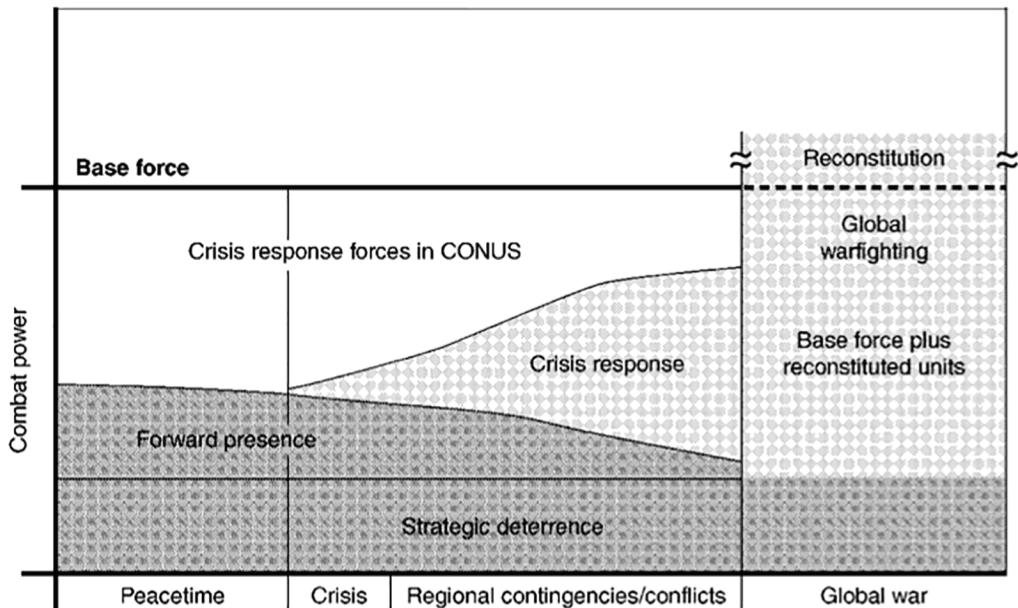
<sup>19</sup> DoD, 1993b, p. 3. It is notable that in early 1992, press reported that a draft of the DPG was promoting a strategy of blocking the emergence of new superpowers that might challenge the United States. In response to the adverse public reaction, the DPG was reportedly revised to remove this goal. Nonetheless, the third strategic goal retained some of this flavor. See William Matthews, "Soviet Demise Leaves Pentagon Wondering Who Is the Foe," *Defense News*, February 24, 1992; and Patrick E. Tyler, "Pentagon Drops Goal of Blocking New Superpowers," *New York Times*, May 24, 1992b, p. 1.

ing that might “break” the force, and to hedge against the risks of a resurgent Soviet/Russian threat. The Base Force—conceived as the minimum force necessary to defend and promote U.S. interests in the post–Cold War world—fleshed out the new regional defense strategy in terms of four main elements: strategic deterrence and defense, forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution of military forces in the event of a reversal of favorable trends in the former Soviet Union.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 8.1 describes the basic strategic concept behind the Base Force. As shown, the Base Force’s strategic concept envisioned that strategic deterrence would be maintained across the spectrum of conflict, although the relative balance among forward presence, crisis response, and war-fighting activities would shift as regional (or global) contingencies emerged and where capabilities for global war were either retained or reconstituted.

It is important to note that the nearly simultaneous MTW construct that was to dominate defense planning for the remainder of the decade was not believed to be an intrinsic capability of the Base Force, but was instead an afterthought. As late as February 1992, Powell testified that the 1997 force would be able to accommodate one MRC

**Figure 8.1**  
**Base Force Strategic Concept Across the Spectrum of Conflict**



SOURCE: JCS, 1992a, p. 3-1.

RAND RR2173/1-8.1

<sup>20</sup> No doubt in recognition of the sweeping changes in the strategic environment since the Base Force study was begun and approved, by the time of the 1992 JMNA, the Base Force was being described as dynamic and potentially “reshapeable” in response to further changes in the strategic environment.

“with great difficulty,” but that two concurrent Desert Storm and Korean campaigns would put the force “at the breaking point.”<sup>21</sup> For his part, in May 1992, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Paul Wolfowitz testified that the Base Force should be capable of conducting one offensive deployment in a major regional contingency, and a defensive action in a second contingency.<sup>22</sup>

Importantly, the NMS signed in August 1989 by Powell’s predecessor Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr. had introduced the concept of forward presence, an important change from the standard Cold War formulation of forward defense.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, it was decided at about this time that the single Soviet-centric global war-fighting scenario that had guided defense planning during the Cold War would be replaced by multiple generic scenarios for regional and global war.<sup>24</sup> These multiple generic scenarios would be included in the DPG for 1994 to 1999, and become a staple of defense planning thereafter.<sup>25</sup>

### Concepts of Operation

The Base Force introduced the concept of forward presence to replace the Cold War-era concept of forward defense. Under the concept of forward presence, fewer forces would be permanently deployed forward, and U.S. presence would be maintained by deploying forces on a rotational basis. Although the Base Force was developed prior to many of DoD’s efforts to develop joint operational concepts (JOCs), perhaps the most prominent military CONOP during the development of the Base Force was AirLand Battle, a Cold War-era Army–Air Force concept that integrated tactical aviation and ground forces for combat against enemy mechanized forces.<sup>26</sup> This CONOP appeared to have been validated with its successful employment during the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq.

### Force Structure Requirements

DoD derived its force structure requirements by assessing the military capabilities of known adversaries and countries not currently hostile but located in regions critical to U.S. national interests, and assessing the presence, crisis response, and other military

<sup>21</sup> Powell’s judgment was almost certainly influenced by his belief in a doctrine of Overwhelming Force, which necessitated larger forces to better ensure successful outcomes, short campaigns, and low casualties.

<sup>22</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> “The concept of forward presence in key areas was inherited from the 1989 NMS but was given additional emphasis in the Base Force. This concept, which in effect replaced the earlier Cold War concept of forward defense, called for smaller permanent forces, together with periodic deployments, to demonstrate U.S. commitment to protecting its interests overseas” (see Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001, p. 11).

<sup>24</sup> Jaffe, 1993.

<sup>25</sup> Among the scenarios was a scenario for an MRC in Europe, as well as a Southwest Asian scenario envisioning an Iraqi thrust into the Arabian Peninsula. See Dale A. Vesser, “Abbreviated Scenarios for Inclusion in DPG—Issues?” memorandum to Lewis “Scooter” Libby, April 1992; and Jaffe, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Another relevant concept was NATO’s Follow-On Forces Attack (FOFA).



requirements needed to deter and defeat challenges. With the Base Force, DoD chose to stop evaluating force requirements solely in terms of immediate threats, and instead used a capabilities-based approach to force planning when formulating the Base Force:

According to the 1992 National Military Strategy, DoD derived force structure by making broad comparisons of US. capabilities with those of other countries—no matter what their current intentions were—and by ensuring that our own force can undertake military tasks ranging from the full spectrum of combat missions to those not specifically related to countering an actual conflict (such as maintaining forward presence and conducting counter-narcotics, counterterrorism, or humanitarian assistance operations). The Base Force, in DOD’S view, is the force now necessary to shape the international security environment so that threats do not emerge and if they do, to deter potential aggressors and respond decisively in the event of major conflict.<sup>27</sup>

As will be described, a number of contingency scenarios were developed and used to assess the capacity and capabilities of the force. As described by GAO,

DoD derived force structure requirements by assessing the military capabilities of known adversaries, as well as those of countries not currently hostile but located in regions critical to U.S. national interests. DOD further noted in its *1992 Joint Military Net Assessment* that in planning future military forces the United States must look to regions where potential aggressors have the motive and capability to employ military coercion or actual force against their neighbors. That assessment noted that, while determining motive remains an elusive goal, some measures, including whether nations are heavily militarized, give indications of capabilities. In this regard, data on the capability of other countries indicates that the military power of the former Soviet Union is breaking apart and shrinking, while the substantial military superiority the United States possesses relative to regional powers in the Third World should not appreciably change, even with the planned drawdown to the Base Force (unless these countries undertake massive military buildups).<sup>28</sup>

Deriving from the strategic concept or force construct were four conceptual force packages: Strategic Forces, Atlantic Forces, Pacific Forces, and Contingency Forces. These were supported by four supporting capabilities: transportation, space, reconstitution, and research and development.<sup>29</sup> In general, the force was sized with the assump-

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<sup>27</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> These military force packages and supporting capabilities were described publicly as early as the JCS’s March 1991 JMNA.

tion that the United States should seek decisive outcomes and minimal casualties in regional conflicts.<sup>30</sup>

The evidence suggests evolution in the shape of Base Force plans for FY 1995 (see Table 8.1). As shown, the total number of divisions planned for FY 1995 fell from 23 in October 1989 to 20 in February 1992 while active end strength fell from 627,000 to 536,000, and reserve end strength fell from 623,000 to 567,000, during the same period.

Table 8.2 describes the allocation of major conventional force elements of the Base Force to each force package.

The most detailed information on the contingency scenarios and analyses conducted to assess the Base Force are described in the 1991 and 1992 JMNAs. Although

**Table 8.1**  
**Planned Army Force Structure for FY 1995, October 1989–February 1992**

Date of Plan	Corps	Divisions				End Strength	
		Total	Active	Reserve	Cadre <sup>a</sup>	Active	Reserve
Force as of 1988	5	28	18	10	0	781,000	782,000
Oct. 1989	4	23	15	8	0	627,000	623,000
Fall of the Berlin Wall, November 1989							
Jan. 1990	4	21	— <sup>b</sup>	— <sup>b</sup>	0.5	80,000	645,000
April 1990	4	22	14	8	0	580,000	645,000
Announcement of new security strategy, August 1990							
Sept. 1990	4	22	14	6	2	580,000	515,000
Jan. 1991	4	20	12	6	2	536,000	550,000
Failed Soviet coup, August 1991							
Commonwealth of Independent States formed, December 1991							
Feb. 1992	4	20	12	6	2	536,000	567,000

SOURCE: GAO, *Army Force Structure: Future Reserve Roles Shaped by New Strategy, Base Force Mandates, and Gulf War*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-93-80, December 1992, p. 14.

NOTE: Planned Army force structure for FY 1995 as reflected in successive plans and key intervening events in the security environment.

<sup>a</sup> Cadre divisions were created in late 1990 to implement the reconstitution element of the new NSS. They were originally envisioned to have a skeletal staff in peacetime and be reconstituted with additional soldiers if a major conflict required additional divisions.

<sup>b</sup> Plan contained various options for the mix of active and reserve divisions.

<sup>30</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 6.



**Table 8.2**  
**Base Force Strategic Concept, Force Packages, and Force Structure, 1992**

Package	Army Divisions <sup>a</sup>	Air Force Wings <sup>b</sup>	MEF <sup>c</sup>	Carriers <sup>d</sup>
Atlantic				
Europe	2	3.42	0	2
United States				
Active	3	1.33	1	4
Reserve	6	11.25	1	0
Cadre	2	0	0	0
Subtotal	13	16.00	2	6
Pacific				
Japan	0	1.25	1	1
South Korea	1	1.25	0	0
United States <sup>e</sup>	1	1.00	0	5
Subtotal	2	3.50	1	6
Contingency				
United States	5	7.00	1	0
Total	20	26.50	4	12

SOURCE: GAO, 1993, p. 17.

NOTE: All forces are active unless otherwise indicated. Additionally, only major reserve combat units from the Army National Guard, the Air Force National Guard and Reserve, and the Marine Corps Reserve are listed, whereas the ships in the Navy Reserves are not. This is consistent with DoD's presentation of the Base Force.

<sup>a</sup> By 1995, the Army also plans to have one reserve and two active armored cavalry regiments, one light cavalry regiment, and three active and five reserve brigades. One of the armored cavalry regiments will be located in Europe while one of the brigades will be in Alaska.

<sup>b</sup> These are approximations based on information from the Air Force staff and Joint Staff.

<sup>c</sup> The MEF is made up of a Marine division and an air wing. The reserve MEF is listed here in the Atlantic package only for illustrative purposes, since DoD has not specified in which force package it belongs.

<sup>d</sup> The total number of Navy battle force ships will decline from 547 in 1990 to 435 by 1997, including approximately 24 strategic submarines, 79 attack submarines, and 143 surface combatants. Also, in addition to forward-deployed carrier battle groups, the Atlantic and Pacific packages will each contain one amphibious ready group with an afloat Marine Expeditionary Unit.

<sup>e</sup> This package includes forces in Hawaii, Alaska, and CONUS.

each is discussed, it also bears mentioning that, because President George H. W. Bush was not reelected in 1992, assessment of the Base Force generally must be restricted to the short period it was implemented.

### **1991 Joint Military Net Assessment**

The JMNA considered the international and domestic environments, and conducted forces and capabilities analyses, as well as an overall assessment of the defense program. The 1991 JMNA described its methodology as follows:

The JMNA was developed using previous analyses, estimates, expert advice, models, politico-military gaming and seminars, static comparisons, and the military judgment of senior leaders. With the strategic environment as a backdrop, force capabilities are assessed in multiple scenarios against the capabilities and perceived intentions of potential U.S. adversaries.<sup>31</sup>

A range of conventional conflict scenario analyses were conducted in the JMNA to assess the defense program. The JMNA explained its use of scenarios as follows:

Although these scenarios represent the types of situations we believe we must be prepared to face in the future, they were not the basis for the programs that produced our current capabilities; their details remain under study, and their implications are only now being incorporated into the FYDP [Future Years Defense Program]. Thus, this assessment represents a first report of the transition from planning and programming principally for a global war with the Soviet Union to planning and programming for the regional situations we expect to face in the 1990s.

As the threats to U.S. interests have changed, the scenarios selected for conventional force structure and capability assessments have changed. The preponderance of emphasis now rests with potential conflicts lower on the spectrum of conflict scale where the probability of occurrence is greater. This contrasts with earlier assessments, whose scenario stressed a global conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. It must be stressed, however, that these scenarios are not predictive. They are intended specifically to evaluate forces and programs and should not be construed as strategy.<sup>32</sup>

The 1991 JMNA described a range of assumptions associated with five scenarios that were used to test the force (see Table 8.3). As shown in Table 8.3, the JMNA's contingency scenarios covered a range of military operations across the spectrum of

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<sup>31</sup> JCS, 1991, p. iv.

<sup>32</sup> JCS, 1991, pp. 1-5–1-6.

**Table 8.3**  
**JMNA Conventional Conflict Scenarios, 1992**

	Counterinsurgency/ Counter narcotics	Lesser Regional Contingency	Major Regional Contingency: Korea	Major Regional Contingency: Southwest Asia	War Escalating from a European Crisis
Infrastructure	None	Very limited	Good	Fair	Good
Threat	Light	Light	Heavy	Heavy	Heavy
Distance	2,000–6,000 nm	2,000– 6,000 nm	6,000 nm	7,000 nm (air) 8,000 nm (sea)	4,500 nm
Warning	Days	Days	Days	Days	Days
Mobilization	None	None	200,000	200,000	Full
Airlift	Active fleet	Active fleet	Active fleet ARF fleet CRAF II/ROK	Active fleet ARF fleet CRAF II	Active fleet ARF fleet CRAF II NAPCAP
Sealift	FSS/MSC	FSS/Limited RRF/MSC	FSS/RRF/SRP MSC/ROK	FSS/RRF SRP/MSC	FSS/RRF MSC/US EUSC/NDRF NATO
Prepositioning	MPS	Limited Afloat MPS	Limited Afloat MPS	Afloat/MPS Limited Ashore	NALMEB POMCUS PPP/MPS Limited Afloat
Days of combat (Intensity)	450 days	90 days (low to mid)	120 days (mid to high)	120 days (mid to high)	>50 days (mid to high)

SOURCE: JCS, 1991, Table 9-1, p. 9-2.

NOTE: ARF = Air Reserve Forces; CRAF = Civil Reserve Air Fleet; EUSC = effective U.S. controlled; FSS = fast sealift ships; MPS = Maritime Prepositioning Ship; MSC = Military Sealift Command; NALMEB = Norway Air-Landed Marine Expeditionary Brigade; NAPCAP = NATO Allied Precommitted Civil Aircraft Program; NDRF = National Defense Reserve Fleet; nm = nautical miles; POMCUS = Prepositioning of Materiel Configured in Unit Sets; PPP = priority placement program; ROK = Republic of Korea; RRF = Ready Reserve Fleet; SRP = Sealift Readiness Program.

conflict, including two major regional contingencies (in Korea and Southwest Asia) and a European conflict scenario requiring full mobilization.<sup>33</sup>

The 1991 JMNA reported the results of the scenario analyses as follows:

Postulated available forces are adequate to defeat potential threats in all scenarios with the exception of the MRC-E [East] scenario or two regional contingencies occurring sequentially or concurrently because of deployment and sustainment deficiencies. Further, forces are potentially inadequate for a crisis in Europe leading to a war between NATO and the Soviet Union because of sustainment shortfalls. They are potentially inadequate in the long-warning global war scenario because of

<sup>33</sup> A large number of recently declassified memoranda and other documents related to the DPG for the FYs 1994 to 1999 program provide some additional insights into the use of contingency scenarios during this period. See “Prevent the Reemergence of a New Rival: The Making of the Cheney Regional Defense Strategy, 1991–1992,” George Washington University National Security Archive, undated; and National Archives and Records Administration, “ISCAP Released Files Decisions FY 2012 (October 1, 2011–September 30, 2012),” undated.

mobilization shortfalls in personnel, training, and the industrial base. . . . A short-warning war in SWA [Southwest Asia] or two regional contingencies occurring sequentially or concurrently would produce the greatest shortcomings.<sup>34</sup>

The conclusion of the net assessment was that of “moderately high, but acceptable risk,” but that the general trend increasingly was toward unacceptable risk:

Given the transitional nature of the strategic environment, the forecast trends, and the assessed risks, the Defense Program provides minimum capability to accomplish national security objectives. Vulnerabilities in the current force structure, declining investment patterns, and the forecast of dramatically reduced funding and force structure result in an overall assessment of moderately high, but acceptable, risk. However:

- We are rapidly approaching the point where, if capability is reduced further, the United States will have to fundamentally alter its position in the world order and redefine its objectives and policies.
- The continued erosion of defense capability, left unchecked, will undermine the foundations of the U.S. Force structure and preclude the fostering of U.S. interests.

We are moving rapidly toward unacceptable risk. How quickly we arrive will depend on how much of the Defense Program goes underfunded.<sup>35</sup>

### **1992 Joint Military Net Assessment**

The 1992 JMNA also used scenario-based analyses to assess the capabilities of the force:

The methodology uses scenario-based analysis. The scenarios are not predictive and the sequence of U.S. force employment described below is not strategy—scenarios are tools to help evaluate forces and programs. The scenarios include critical assumptions about threats, warning time, and strategy and military objectives. They also provide explicit criteria concerning existing logistic infrastructure, distance to the operational area, forces available on D-day, and strategic lift and sustainment.<sup>36</sup>

For its assessment, the JMNA selected a crisis in Korea in 1993 and a crisis in Southwest Asia in 1999, scenarios that were said to have been chosen for three reasons: (1) they were plausible within the anticipated international security environment

<sup>34</sup> JCS, 1991, pp. 9-7, 9-9. The 1991 JMNA describes in more detail the results of the analyses of MRC-East (an Iraq scenario) and MRC-West (a Korea scenario).

<sup>35</sup> JCS, 1991, p. 12-7.

<sup>36</sup> JCS, 1992a, p. 9-2.

for the time frame selected; (2) they were demanding—postulating stressful circumstances that challenged the capabilities of U.S. forces; and (3) they were representative of current and future U.S. alliance commitments and vital interests.<sup>37</sup>

Concurrent Persian Gulf and Korean contingencies also were reportedly included as IPSs in the FYs 1994–1999 DPG.<sup>38</sup> Thus, although the origins of the two-MTW standard were somewhat inauspicious, they would, with the 1993 BUR and 1997 QDR, come to constitute high canon for defense planning.

The JMNA's conclusion from the war-fighting analyses that were conducted using these scenarios was as follows:

Overall, the 1993 crisis-response capability of the U.S. Armed Forces is adequate to respond to a single major regional crisis, maintain forward presence in other regions, and reaction to a second crisis. For a single major regional crisis, there is decisive force available under all foreseeable circumstances. In 1999, the force structure will be reduced, but specific improvements will have been concluded to relief many of the deficiencies noted in the near term. With these changes, the 1999 crisis-response capability is also assessed as adequate.

On balance, the force of 1999, if funded and carried out in accordance with the Defense program, will be better capable than today's of dealing with an uncertain world.

Given continuing changes in the world, the FY 1993 President's Budget request and the Defense Program provide the U.S. Armed Forces with the minimum capability to accomplish national security objectives with low-to-moderate risk. However, this capability is already at risk because of the shortcomings identified in this report. We may be in even greater jeopardy as a result of the patterns of declining investments in the industrial base, technology, and R&D [research and development]—as well as by the prospects of even further cuts in force structure and capabilities.<sup>39</sup>

Two sources—the JCS's official history of the Base Force, and declassified versions of an appendix to the FYs 1994–1999 DPG describing IPSs—provide some additional detail on the use of scenarios during this period. Each is briefly discussed.

### ***The JCS's Official History of the Base Force***

The official JCS history of the Base Force describes the use of planning scenarios during the very late Cold War, and provides some details on the features of these scenarios, as well as detailing the development of “multiple generic scenarios” for analyzing regional

<sup>37</sup> JCS, 1992a, p. 9-2.

<sup>38</sup> Press reports suggest the development of seven IPSs in the 1991–1992 period, including Persian Gulf, Korea, Persian Gulf + Korea, Russia-Baltics, the Philippines, Panama, and a new global enemy. See Patrick E. Tyler, “7 Hypothetical Conflicts Foreseen by the Pentagon,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1992a.

<sup>39</sup> JCS, JMNA, 1992, pp. 9-13, 12-3, and 12-7.

conflicts in the post–Cold War era, especially including those related to Iraq and North Korea, that would preoccupy U.S. defense planners for the next two decades:

The NMS contained another significant change. In the late 1970s the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) had adopted the Illustrative Planning Scenario (IPS), a force sizing scenario that postulated a Soviet invasion of Iran as the triggering event for global war. And from the early 1980s mid-range strategic planning had included Southwest Asia as a theater in which a regional crisis could lead to Soviet intervention, thereby precipitating global war. With the incorporation in JSCP FY 1989-90 of the intelligence assessment that warning of a planned Soviet attack in Central Europe would be about two weeks when that of a Soviet incursion into Iran would be a month, Joint Staff strategic planners had reexamined some of the assumptions used in mid-range as well as short-range planning. Their analysis had made it apparent that, on the brink of a major confrontation with the Warsaw Pact, the United States would be unlikely to send forces to Southwest Asia when it would soon have to divert them to Europe. This confirmed a long-standing belief among many military strategists that to plan, in anticipation of global war, first to send forces to Southwest Asia was unrealistic. This conclusion led eventually to an adjustment in recommended strategy.

Believing that planning for Southwest Asia should focus on a regional war precipitated by an Iraqi attack into the Arabian Peninsula rather than on a cascading crisis leading to war with the Soviet Union, Joint Staff planners omitted Southwest Asia from the initial theaters for which NMS FY 1992-97 presented strategies for a global war with the Soviet Union. This omission precipitated a debate between the Joint Staff and Mr. Wolfowitz, who in May had become Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Regional Programs from 1977 through 1980, Mr. Wolfowitz had been instrumental in OSD's adoption of the IPS. He believed that strategy for Southwest Asia should retain its emphasis on the Soviet threat there. This disagreement over the focus of planning for Southwest Asia remained unresolved for months.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Developing Illustrative Planning Scenarios for the FYs 1994–1999 Defense Program***

A declassified version of the May 1992 draft appendix to the DPG describes the development of IPSs for the FYs 1994–1999 defense program, and provides an additional useful perspective on how the Bush administration used planning scenarios. As described in this document, the scenarios were not to be used to size or structure the Base Force—the overall force was already sized to support the elements of the new strategy that had been developed during the Base Force study—but the use of multiple scenarios was described

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<sup>40</sup> Jaffe, 1993, pp. 4–5. Additional discussion of the use of multiple generic scenarios for regional war planning at this time can be found in Jaffe, 1993, pp. 7, 24, 38, 62–63.

as representing an evolution in the use of such scenarios for defense planning during the Cold War, and also hinting at a shift to capabilities-based planning:<sup>41</sup>

These scenarios reflect the dramatically changing security environment, and our new defense strategy. The move to use of multiple scenarios is a major innovation in defense planning for a new strategic era. It supports the more flexible approach we must take to the more uncertain environment we face, and it tangibly embodies our change in focus from the former Soviet global war scenario to an array of possible regional contingencies. For years we have generally assumed that regional contingencies required only “lesser-included capabilities”—subsets of the requirements of the one massive scenario that was our focus. Now, absent the margin of safety that was provided by those larger forces, we need more nuanced examination of the broad range of possible regional requirements. These scenarios provide one basis for such examination.

These scenarios are illustrations to be used for technical analytical purposes only. The scenarios:

- are not predictions of future events;
- by no means exhaust the range of possible threats to US interests in the planning period and beyond;
- do not constitute a commitment or policy decision to respond in any particular way should events such as they depict actually occur;
- do not imply any strategic or programming priority among regions; and
- are not the basis for sizing the overall Base Force structure.

While not exhaustive, the scenario set does illustrate a substantial range of the kinds of capabilities as forces might have to employ in various regions of the world. Although changing world events make some individual scenarios distinctly less probable than others, all are useful for planning under the new strategy.<sup>42</sup>

A February 1992 *New York Times* article reported that a DoD working group had developed a set of IPSs for assessing the Base Force, including the following: an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and a North Korean invasion of South Korea, as well as a scenario in which both occur simultaneously; a Russian-Belarus attack on the Baltics and Poland; a coup in the Philippines; a threat to the Panama Canal; and a threat involving a newly emergent (but unspecified) global enemy of the United

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<sup>41</sup> Capabilities-based planning was introduced during the George W. Bush administration, which focused on potential opposing capabilities rather than specific adversaries.

<sup>42</sup> DoD, “Annex A: Illustrative Planning Scenarios,” May 4, 1992, p. 1.

States.<sup>43</sup> Table 8.4 presents one defense analyst’s estimate of the force requirements associated with each of these scenarios.

Other Assessments  
*General Accounting Office*

Although GAO’s report on the Base Force was generally descriptive in nature, GAO offered several criticisms, including that (1) the strategic and fiscal environments had changed between the development of the Base Force and its implementation, yet the force did not change;<sup>44</sup> (2) the Base Force’s strategic and operational concepts assumed that adversaries would use heavy ground forces, and that the United States would rely

Table 8.4  
Estimate of U.S. Forces Required by Base Force Planning Contingency

Contingency	Army Divisions	MEFs <sup>a</sup>	Air Force Fighter Squadrons/Wings	Heavy Bomber Squadrons	Carrier Battle Groups
Lithuania-Poland					
Adequate force	7 1/3	1	45/15	4	6 <sup>b</sup>
Overwhelming force	11 2/3	2	63/21	4	8 <sup>b</sup>
Base force	12	3	78/26	4	12 <sup>c</sup>
Persian Gulf	4 2/3	1	15/5	4	3 <sup>b</sup>
Korea	5 1/3	2	16/5 1/3	4	5 <sup>b</sup>
Persian Gulf and Korea <sup>d</sup>	10	3	31/10 1/3	4	8 <sup>b</sup>
Base force	12	3	78/26	4	12 <sup>c</sup>
Panama	2/3	1/3	1 1/3	—	1 <sup>b</sup>
Philippines	2/3	1/3	—	—	2 <sup>b</sup>

SOURCE: Patrick E. Tyler, “7 Hypothetical Conflicts Foreseen by the Pentagon,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1992, p. A8; Barton Gellman, “Pentagon War Scenario Spotlights Russia,” *Washington Post*, February 20, 1992, pp. A1, A21; and *Department of Defense Annual Report Fiscal Year 1993*, pp. 1, 75, as cited in Kaufmann, 1992, p. 52.

<sup>a</sup> Each MEF consists of a division and an air wing.  
<sup>b</sup> These are the number of carriers deployed. Between eight and nine could be deployed out of a total of 12.  
<sup>c</sup> This is the total number of carriers available.  
<sup>d</sup> This is the simultaneous two-war contingency.

<sup>43</sup> Tyler, 1992a.  
<sup>44</sup> With the receding of the Soviet Union into the dustbin of history, for example, the reconstitution component of the Base Force strategy became less important.



on extant doctrine; (3) the Base Force was unclear about the nature of the two regional contingencies for which it wished to prepare; and (4) DoD changed its description of the Base Force from a minimum force structure on the one hand and as a force sizing concept that is adaptable to circumstances on the other.

GAO's assessment of the Base Force also pointed to ambiguities regarding precisely which combinations of two scenarios the force actually was capable of handling:

According to the 1992 National Military Strategy, the Base Force is sized such that if the U.S. military employs decisive force in a major regional contingency in one part of the world, it will have sufficient forces so as not to be left vulnerable to a second regional contingency elsewhere. However, DOD is unclear as to the nature of the two regional contingencies for which it wishes to prepare. In assessing the capabilities of U.S. Armed Forces in specific crisis scenarios, the *1992 Joint Military Net Assessment* examined the forces' capability to respond to other crises that might occur before redeployment from the first crisis has been completed. The assessment stated that these other crises are not specified in location or detail but stated that they might range in scope from a second major regional crisis through lesser contingencies. The scope of the second regional crisis would affect whether the military would be able to respond with an offensive or defensive operation.<sup>45</sup>

### **Brookings Institution**

It also is worth noting William W. Kaufmann's 1992 analysis and appraisal of the allocation of forces to the collection of contingencies considered in the Base Force (see Table 8.3).<sup>46</sup> Analyzing the data reported in Table 8.3, Kaufman stated:

This collection of contingencies and the U.S. forces tested by them send several messages. Most important, whether the policymaker chooses the overwhelming U.S. force against Russia and Belarus, the pairing of the adequate force for that contingency and the package for Iraq, or the combination of the forces required in the Iraqi and Korean contingencies, with the Panama and Philippine coups thrown in to fill any gaps, the total U.S. input will always add up to the base force (table 6-1). In other words, the base force was right on the mark in 1990 and remained right on the mark in 1992. The force planners obviously deserve a commendation.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> GAO, 1993, p. 6. The assessment was prepared for the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), Sen. Sam Nunn, and the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), Rep. Ronald V. Dellums, in the belief that "it would be useful to the Congress and the new administration in assessing future defense requirements." The development of a post-Cold War strategy and force structure was a topic of ongoing interest and concern during this period and the subject of numerous GAO reports, including those on the Base Force, the BUR, the various QDRs, and other relevant topics.

<sup>46</sup> Kaufmann, 1992, p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> Kaufmann, 1992, p. 52.

## Summary and Conclusions

The George H. W. Bush administration's Base Force study was conducted during a transitional period and a time of great uncertainty about the outcome of then-favorable trends in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The principal result of this uncertainty was a certain amount of hedging in terms of the size and composition of the proposed future force, as well as explicit consideration of reconstitution of U.S. military forces as a fundamental pillar of the proposed Base Force strategy.

As described in this chapter, from the perspective of conventional ground force planning, the Base Force study was a principal vehicle for shifting DoD's thinking from theater and global conflicts with the former Soviet Union to conflicts with smaller regional adversaries like Iraq and North Korea. As late as February 1992, evidently assuming that the Overwhelming Force doctrine would apply, Powell testified that the 1997 force would be able to accommodate one MRC "with great difficulty," but that two concurrent Desert Storm and Korean campaigns would put the force "at the breaking point." For his part, in May 1992, Wolfowitz testified that the Base Force should be capable of conducting one offensive deployment in a major regional contingency, and a defensive action in a second contingency. It can, however, be fairly said that the Base Force was analytically assessed using plausible near-term, real-world scenarios like Iraq and North Korea, a major European crisis requiring heavy forces, and counterinsurgency (COIN)/counternarcotics and lesser regional contingencies requiring lighter forces, as well as certain combinations of these scenarios. Nonetheless, there is some ambiguity regarding the simultaneity assumptions in the strategic concept and force sizing construct associated with the Base Force beyond the two-MRC case.

The Base Force plans were executed over two FYs, 1992 and 1993. Although few problems were encountered in realizing the planned 25 percent force structure and 20 percent active manpower reductions, DoD struggled to reduce reserve component manpower. In addition, DoD leaders anticipated a number of important program execution risks in the out-years of the FYDP. A December 1991 CBO study concluded that, although the size of the Base Force could be maintained through 1997 with planned funding, after 1997, substantial increases in spending on the order of \$20 billion to \$65 billion a year would be required to modernize the force. By December 1992, GAO reported a "significant mismatch" between the defense spending plan and budget realities, necessitating additional program reductions of more than \$150 billion. Powell suggested that a new Base Force, engendering additional cuts to force structure, might be necessary by 1995 while Cheney suggested that increases in real defense spending might be needed in the out-years to cover modernization needs, including an anticipated procurement "bow wave."

In fact, the Clinton administration that took office in January 1993 would make even deeper cuts in forces, personnel, and budgets while arguably establishing a strategic concept and force sizing construct that placed even greater operational demands on the smaller force.

## The Clinton Administration, 1993–2001

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The Clinton administration conducted two major defense strategy and force structure reviews: the 1993 BUR and the 1997 QDR. In both cases, the primary scenarios used to assess force requirements for major combat operations included a hypothetical North Korean attack on South Korea and a Southwest Asia scenario, which, at least in this case, is known to have focused on an Iraqi attack on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Continuing the shift from threat-based to capabilities-based (or hybrid) planning, the 1997 QDR reportedly considered a total of 45 scenarios, including an analysis of force requirements for major combat operations in a “wild-card” scenario involving aggression by an unidentified regional great power. The requirements of homeland defense also were considered for the first time in the 1997 QDR.

Efforts to better integrate the PPBS and JSPS processes continued to be made during this period, and computer models and other elements of DoD’s analytic architecture continued to improve.<sup>1</sup>

### The 1993 Bottom-Up Review

The 1993 BUR was the second major force structure review of the post–Cold War decade of the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> The stated aim of the BUR was to provide “a comprehensive

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking during the Clinton administration, see Brown, 2015, pp. 549–605.

<sup>2</sup> See Les Aspin, “National Security in the 1990s,” paper presented to the Atlantic Council of the United States, 1992; and DoD, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review*, Washington, D.C., October 1993a. The BUR was, in part, a continuation of work that Secretary of Defense Lee Aspin had conducted while serving as HASC chairman and, in part, reflected an evolution in Powell’s thinking since the development of the Base Force.

For a detailed analysis of the BUR, see Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001, pp. 41–82. The BUR is documented in Aspin and Powell’s briefing slides in Les Aspin and Colin L. Powell, “Bottom-Up Review,” briefing slides, Washington, D.C., September 1, 1993; in the DoD’s transcript of that briefing in DoD, “Bottom-Up Review Briefing by SECDEF and CJCS,” Secretary of Defense Message P020023Z SEP 93, September 2, 1993c; in the preliminary release of the BUR’s results on the same date in Les Aspin, “The Bottom-Up Review: Forces for a New Era,” briefing slides, Washington, D.C., 1993a; and Les Aspin, “Force Structure Excerpts: Bottom-Up Review,” briefing slides, Washington, D.C., September 1993c; and in the final report, contained in Les Aspin,

review of the nation's defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, foundations, and budgetary requirements." The report was described as "bottom-up" in the sense that the authors intended to design a force from the ground up, based upon the security requirements of the post–Cold War world, rather than designing a force by subtraction, and essentially ending up with a smaller version of the Cold War force.

In a 1992 paper, Aspin noted the conjoined nature of significant interests and the significance and plausibility of threats as criteria for choosing scenarios: "It is critical to identify threats to U.S. interests that are sufficiently important that Americans would consider the use of force to secure them."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, there were two main scenarios that were used as the basis for establishing force requirements: an invasion of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia by Iraq, and an invasion of South Korea by North Korea; in each case, a four-phase CONOP was employed, and military tasks and force requirements were assessed for each phase of the operation. Excursions involving "nearly simultaneous" or "overlapping" operations also were assessed.

In the case of the BUR, a strategy was overlaid on a force structure that was justified primarily in war-fighting terms,<sup>4</sup> but would soon become preoccupied instead with operations in support of the administration's still-crystallizing strategy of "engagement, prevention, and partnership."<sup>5</sup> The BUR redefined the meaning of engagement in an important way, giving increased rhetorical and policy importance to U.S. participation in multilateral peace and humanitarian operations while setting the stage for an

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*Report on the Bottom-Up Review*, Washington, D.C., October 1993c. A detailed discussion of the BUR's assessment process can be found in Edward L. Warner, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995—S. 2182 (H.R. 4301) and Oversight of Previously Authorized Programs*, Washington, D.C., testimony to U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, February 2, 1994; and U.S. House of Representatives, *An Assessment of the Bottom-Up Review*, Washington, D.C., testimony to U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, March 1, 1994, specifically the testimony of Rear Admiral Francis W. Lacroix. (Warner was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Requirements, and Resources; Lacroix was Deputy Director for Force Structure and Resources Division [J-8], Joint Staff.) For an analysis and critique of the key assumptions used in the BUR and in the Nimble Dancer exercises that tested the BUR, see GAO, *Bottom-Up Review: Analysis of Key DoD Assumptions*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-95-56, January 1995b; and GAO, *Bottom-Up Review: Analysis of DoD War Game to Test Key Assumptions*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-96-170, June 1996. An excellent history of the BUR can be found in Mark Gunzinger, "Beyond the Bottom-Up Review," in *Essays on Strategy XIV*, Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Security Studies, National Defense University, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Aspin, 1992, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Secretary Aspin's approach to force planning was in part oriented around force packages that would be capable of prosecuting another 1991 Iraq war, which he referred to as "Iraq equivalents." The BUR also was heavily influenced by a 1993 RAND study called "The New Calculus." See Christopher J. Bowie, Fred L. Frostic, Kevin N. Lewis, John Lund, David Ochmanek, and Philip Propper, *The New Calculus: Analyzing Airpower's Changing Role in Joint Theater Campaigns*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-149-AF, 1993. In addition, the BUR was shaped by an argument made by then–Vice Admiral William Owens, that Navy forward presence requirements were more demanding than supporting two nearly simultaneous MRCs. For further details on the BUR, see Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001, pp. 41–82.

<sup>5</sup> With the January 1994 release of the NSS, the administration would describe its strategy as one of "engagement and enlargement," i.e., engagement with the world, and enlargement of the community of peaceful democracies.

increased operations tempo (OPTEMPO) and rate of deployment, even as force reductions continued. Indeed, the BUR's planned force structure reductions accelerated and surpassed those planned in the Base Force, leading to a total reduction in forces from FY 1990 of about one-third—well beyond the Base Force's planned 25-percent reduction, most of which had already been achieved by the end of FY 1993. Budgets would also fall beyond planned Base Force levels as a result of the BUR.

This chapter describes the key assumptions, processes, conception of national interests and threats, strategy, CONOPs, and force structure requirements, and the results of assessments of the BUR force's capabilities and capacity.

### Key Assumptions

As had been the case with the Bush administration, the Clinton administration conducted its first defense review without the benefit of a new administration NSS.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the BUR would be the first formal statement of strategy from the administration.

With the successful end of the Cold War, and the dismantling of the Iraqi military in the Gulf War, together with continued progress on nuclear arms control with the states of the former Soviet Union, Clinton administration policymakers appear to have viewed the post-Cold War world with some optimism. They viewed these favorable changes in the threat environment as making possible—and necessary, given the nation's poor economic circumstances—a cut of approximately \$60 billion in defense spending, along with continued reductions in force structure and military personnel. Upon their arrival in office, however, these policymakers found an unsettled environment filled with new dangers—in the former Soviet Union, Southwest Asia, Somalia, Bosnia, and elsewhere—that would occupy them for the remainder of the decade.

In addition, DoD made a number of other key assumptions in developing the BUR strategy and force structure:

- Forces would be redeployed from other operations, such as peacekeeping, to regional conflicts, and forces would be redeployed between regional conflicts.
- Certain specialized units or unique assets would be shifted from one conflict to another.
- Sufficient strategic lift assets, prepositioned equipment, and support forces would be available.
- Army National Guard enhanced combat brigades could be deployed within 90 days of being called to active duty to supplement Regular Army combat units.

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<sup>6</sup> The administration released its first NSS in January 1994, and diligently released annual updates up to January 2000.

- A series of enhancements, such as improvements to strategic mobility and U.S. firepower, are critical to implementing the two-conflict strategy and would be available by about 2000.<sup>7</sup>

### National Interests

The BUR argued that despite the revolutionary changes in the security environment, the most basic goals of the United States had not changed and continued to include

- protecting the lives and personal safety of Americans, both at home and abroad
- maintaining the political freedom and independence of the United States with its values, institutions, and territory intact
- providing for the well-being and prosperity of the nation and its people.<sup>8</sup>

The BUR also argued that the United States had core values that should inform the defense strategy:

In addition to these fundamental goals, we have core values that we have an interest in promoting. These include democracy and human rights, the peaceful resolution of conflict, and the maintenance of open markets in the international economic system. The advancement of these core values contributes significantly to the achievement of our fundamental national goals: our nation will be more secure in a world of democratic and pluralistic institutions, and our economic well-being will be enhanced by the maintenance of an open international economic system.<sup>9</sup>

These interests and values would be elaborated in the administration's first NSS report, titled *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, in July 1994.<sup>10</sup>

### Threats

The BUR identified a range of dangers and opportunities that needed to be addressed in the new strategy, including the following:

- Regional dangers and opportunities, including dangers posed primarily by the threat of large-scale aggression by major regional powers with interests antithetical to the United States, but also by the potential for smaller, often internal, conflicts based on ethnic or religious animosities, state-sponsored terrorism, or subversion of friendly governments. According to the BUR, the threat of large-scale aggression by major regional powers was chief among the key dangers faced by the United States.

<sup>7</sup> GAO found all of these assumptions to be questionable. See GAO, 1995b, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> DoD, 1993a, pp. 2–3.

<sup>9</sup> DoD, 1993a, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, Washington, D.C., July 1994.

- Nuclear dangers and opportunities, including dangers associated with the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, as well as those associated with the large stocks of these weapons that remain in the former Soviet Union.
- New dangers to democracy and opportunities for democratic reform, including dangers in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere.
- New economic dangers and opportunities, including dangers to national security that could result if efforts to build a strong, competitive, and growing economy failed.

### Strategy

The BUR described its nascent “strategy of engagement, prevention, and partnership” as follows:

[The strategy] advocates preventing threats to our interests by promoting democracy, economic growth and free markets, human dignity, and the peaceful resolution of conflict, giving first priority to regions critical to our interests. Our new strategy will also pursue an international partnership for freedom, prosperity, and peace. To succeed, this partnership will require the contributions of our allies and will depend on our ability to establish fair and equitable political, economic, and military relationships with them. Our primary task, then, as a nation is to strengthen our society and economy for the demanding competitive environment of the 21st century, while at the same time avoiding the risks of precipitous reductions in defense capabilities and the overseas commitments they support. Such reductions could defeat attempts to improve both our overall security situation and our prosperity.<sup>11</sup>

The BUR’s strategic concept for promoting this strategy accordingly envisaged a high level of peacetime military engagement in the world, including presence operations, peace operations, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations while retaining a capability to meet two overlapping or nearly simultaneous MRCs (see Figure 9.1).

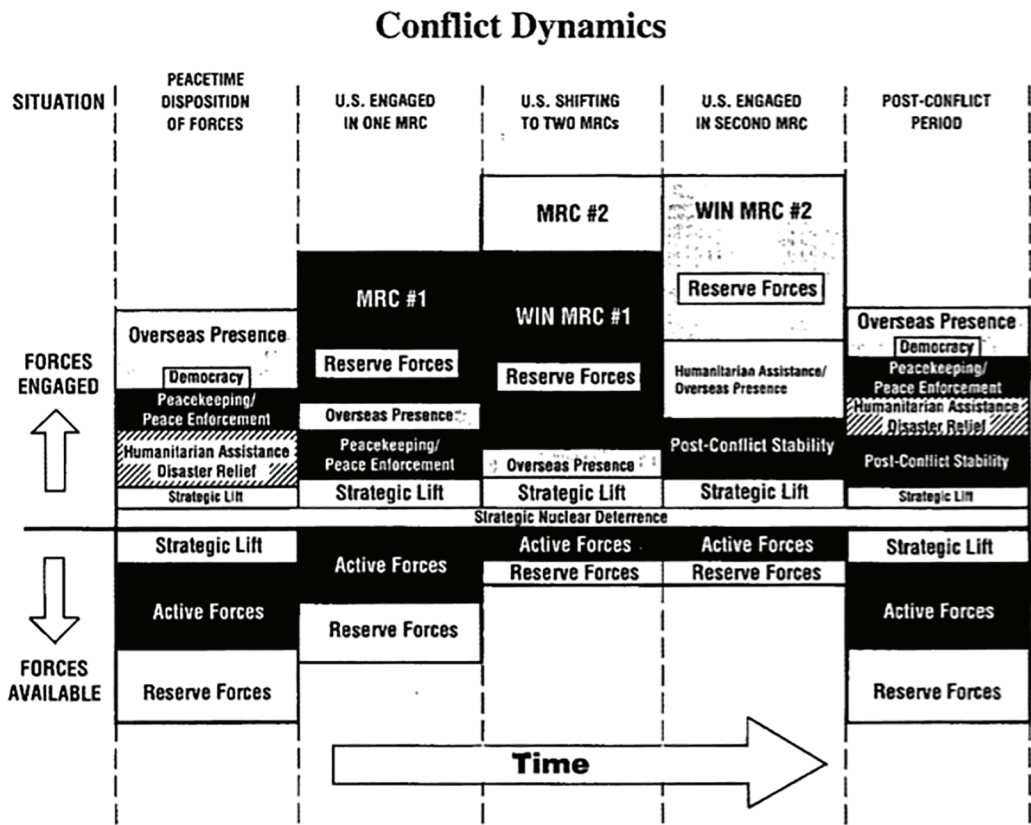
Figure 9.2 provides some additional detail on the BUR’s thinking about the sequencing of military activities to win two nearly simultaneous MRCs.

As shown in the figure, the concept for executing two nearly simultaneous MRCs involving an Iraq-like enemy invasion of a U.S. ally or friend envisions halting the invading force with airpower in the first contingency; building up forces and conducting an air campaign in the first contingency while halting the invading force in the second; mounting a decisive counteroffensive in the first conflict while building up forces and conducting an air campaign in the second; and providing for postwar stability in the first conflict while mounting a decisive counteroffensive in the second.

<sup>11</sup> DoD, 1993a, p. 3.



Figure 9.1  
BUR Strategic Concept of Conflict Dynamics



SOURCE: DoD, 1993a, p. 27.

RAND RR2173/1-9.1

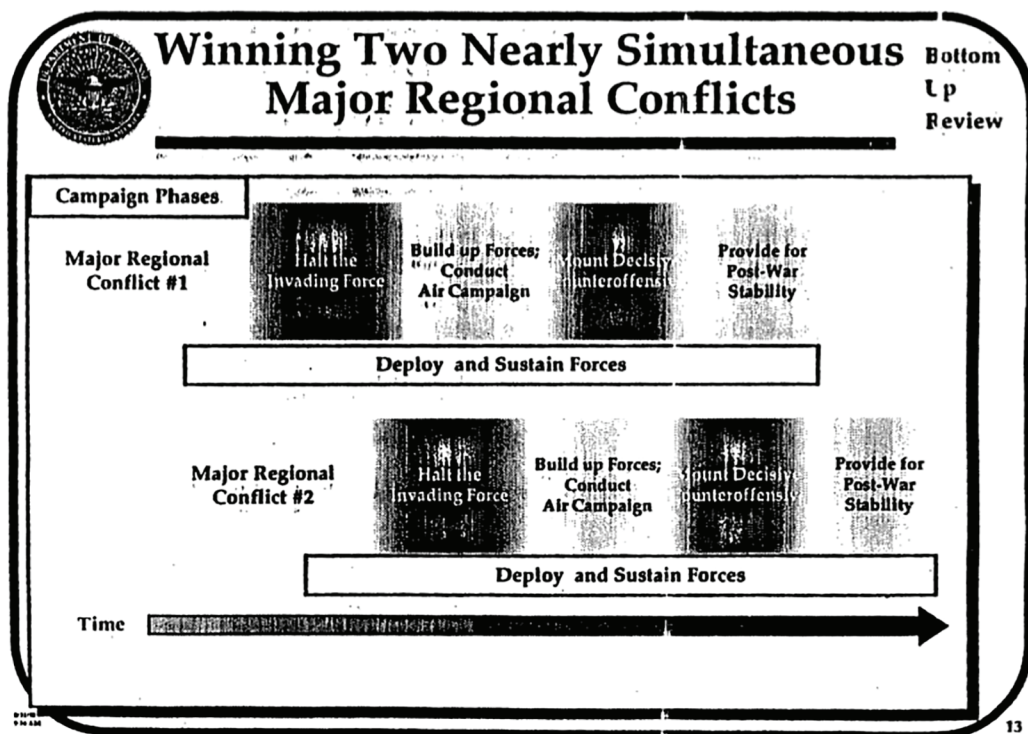
In subsequent years, there would be additional consideration of defense strategy in the CJCS’s 1995 NMS and the 1995 report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces (CORM).

The CORM report’s main conclusion was as follows:

DoD must do more to ensure its ability to conduct effective, unified military operations—the overarching goal of America’s National Security Strategy. This means that the Military Services and all other elements of the Department of Defense must focus their energies on supporting the unified Commanders in Chief who plan for and conduct our military operations, as directed by the President and by the Secretary of Defense. The traditional approach to roles and missions—attempting to allocate them among the Services in the context of the Key West Agreement of 1948—is no longer appropriate. That approach leads to institutional quarrels (as reported in the press during our deliberations) and unsatisfactory com-



Figure 9.2  
Winning Two Nearly Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts



SOURCE: DoD, 1993c, slide 13.

RAND RR21731-9.2

promises (as discussed in our report). More importantly, it does not lead to achieving the Department's goals.<sup>12</sup>

For its part, the 1995 NMS derived from *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* and the defense framework presented in the BUR:

This new national military strategy, derived from the national security strategy and the defense framework outlined in the Bottom-Up Review, describes the critical role which the Armed Forces will play in helping to achieve our Nation's objectives. This is a strategy of flexible and selective engagement required to support our Nation's interests. Reflecting the ambiguous nature of our security challenges, the strategy emphasizes full spectrum capabilities for our Armed Forces.

The fundamental purpose of the Armed Forces must remain to fight and win our Nation's wars whenever and wherever called upon. With worldwide interests and

<sup>12</sup> CORM, *Directions for Defense: Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces*, Washington, D.C., 1995.

challenges, the United States must maintain its capability to deal with more than one major crisis at a time. For this reason, our Armed Forces must maintain the capability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous regional contingencies, even as we continue to restructure and reduce the size of the force.

The challenge of the new strategic era is to selectively use the vast and unique capabilities of the Armed Forces to advance national interests in peacetime while maintaining readiness to fight and win when called upon. This new national military strategy describes the objectives, concepts, tasks, and capabilities necessary in the near term to adapt the Armed Forces' proven capabilities to meet this challenge.<sup>13</sup>

The NMS identified as key threats regional instability, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), transnational dangers, and dangers to democracy and reform. It also identified two military objectives—promoting stability and thwarting aggression—and two strategic concepts—overseas presence and power projection. The NMS described “a strategy of flexible and selective engagement,” the main components of which were peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention, and fighting and winning.

### Concepts of Operation

The principal CONOP that animated development of the BUR appears to have been AirLand Battle, updated to reflect the recent lessons from the Gulf War, and providing a heavier accent on airpower in the initial phases of combat operations to halt and attrite enemy ground forces and set the conditions for the decisive employment of land power. In addition, the Navy's concept for forward presence was more important in shaping naval and maritime forces than planning for two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies. Finally, Powell's doctrine of Overwhelming Force also may have influenced the direction of the BUR.

The BUR described a CONOP for major combat operations that involved four discrete phases: (1) halt the invasion; (2) build up U.S. combat power in the theater while reducing the enemy's power; (3) decisively defeat the enemy; and (4) provide for postwar stability.<sup>14</sup> The military tasks and required forces for each phase reportedly were analyzed.

### Force Structure Requirements

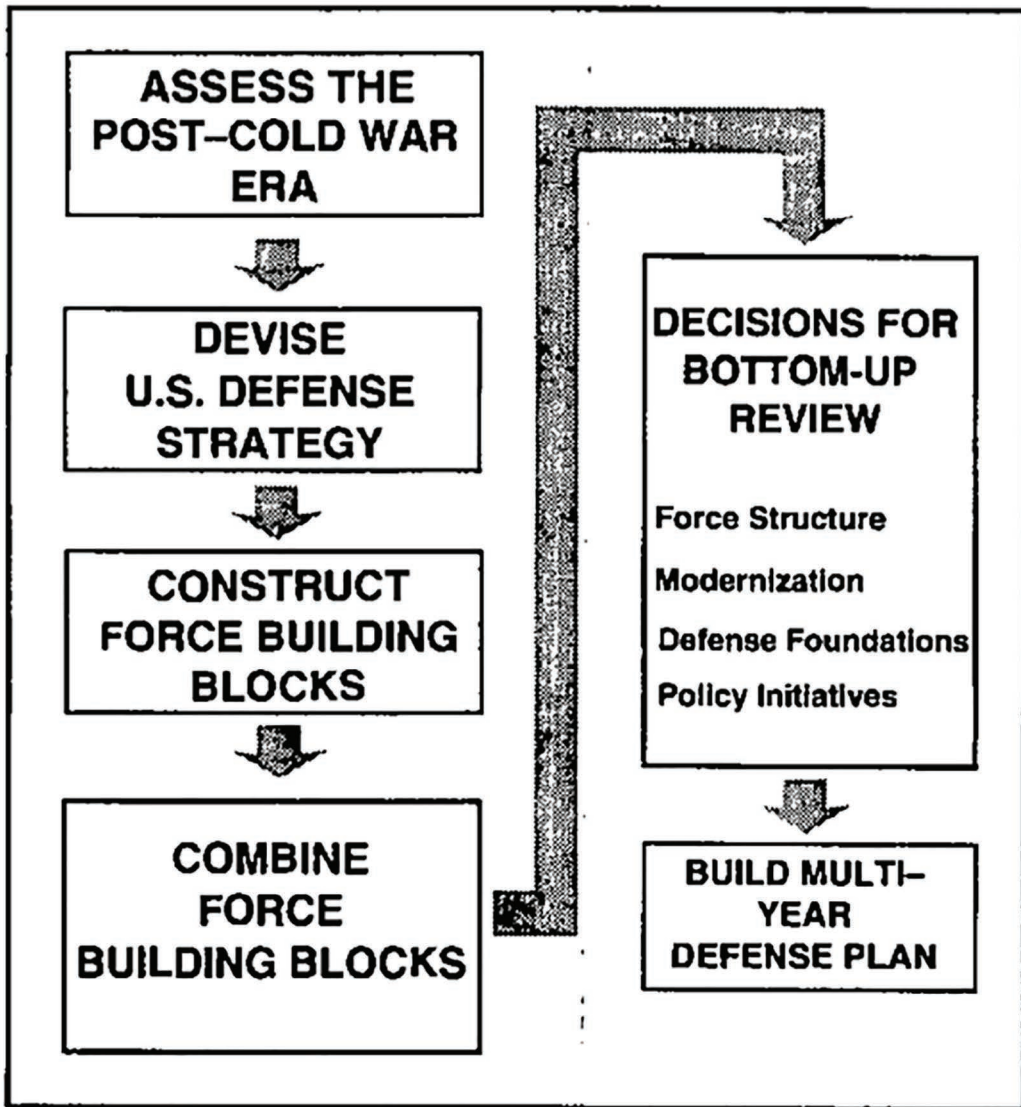
Figure 9.3 presents the BUR's portrayal of the methodology that was used by the architects of the BUR.<sup>15</sup> As shown in Figure 9.3, the process began with a review and assessment of the post–Cold War security environment that was informed by an intelligence

<sup>13</sup> JCS, *National Military Strategy of the United States*, Washington, D.C., 1995.

<sup>14</sup> DoD, 1993a, pp. 15–16.

<sup>15</sup> More-detailed discussions of the analytics in the BUR can be found in Warner, 1994; and the testimony of Lacroix and Russell E. Travers in U.S. House of Representatives, 1994.

**Figure 9.3**  
**Methodology of the Bottom-Up Review**



SOURCE: DoD, 1993a, p. 4.

RAND RR2173/1-9.3

analysis. Testimony revealed that the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had provided “data on worldwide military capabilities, analyses of future threats to U.S. interests, and specific assessments of threats to various U.S. weapons systems under consideration, as well as an “analysis of the contingencies, [and] scenario threats” to OSD and the Joint Staff for the BUR. For example, after describing the scale of Iraqi combat losses from Operation Desert Storm, and factors constraining the Iraqi regime’s ability

to rebuild its military, DIA testimony concluded, “For bottom-line purposes, therefore, we judge that the Iraqi military in 1999 will be no larger than approximately half the size of the force that existed at the time of Desert Storm.” Following a similar analysis for the Korean contingency scenario, the testimony concluded, “As a result, for planning purposes, we assess that the current conventional force structure is a reasonable proxy for the size of the North Korean military in 1999.”<sup>16</sup>

The next step was development of alternative “defense strategies,” which were really alternative strategic concepts or force sizing constructs that stated what the overall force would be capable of accomplishing in support the larger strategy of “engagement, prevention, and partnership.”

During the briefing presenting the results of the BUR, Powell indicated that force structure requirements were primarily justified in terms of the ability to fight and win the nation’s wars, but that the force also would be able to support other, secondary missions:

Let me begin by giving a little bit of a tutorial about what an armed forces is all about. Notwithstanding all of the changes that have taken place in the world, notwithstanding the new emphasis of peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace engagement, preventive diplomacy, we have a value system and a culture system within the armed forces of the United States. We have this mission—to fight and win the nation’s wars. That’s what we do. Why do we do it? For this purpose—to provide for the common defense. Who do we do it for? We do it for the American people. We never want to lose sight of this ethic. We never want to lose sight of this basic, underlying principle of the armed forces of the United States. We are warriors, and because we are warriors, because we have demonstrated time and time again that we can do this for that purpose for the American people, that’s why you have armed forces within the United States structure.

At the same time, because we are able to fight and win the nation’s wars, because we are warriors, we are also uniquely able to do some of these other new missions that are coming along—peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, disaster relief, you name it, we can do it. And we can modify our doctrine, we can modify our strategy, we can modify our structure, our equipment, our training, our leadership techniques, everything else to do these other missions. But we never want to do it in such a way that we lose sight of the focus of why you have armed forces—to fight and to win the nation’s wars.<sup>17</sup>

The BUR reported four alternative strategies (i.e., strategic concepts or force sizing constructs) that were developed focused primarily on the force requirements associated with MRCs: (1) “win one MRC”; (2) “win one MRC with hold in second”; (3) “win two

<sup>16</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> DoD, 1993c.

nearly simultaneous MRCs”; and (4) “win two nearly simultaneous MRCs plus conduct smaller operations.” The architects of the BUR then developed a set of “force building blocks” that could be used to address the various types of threats and situations of greatest concern employing the BUR’s new CONOP for MRCs. According to the BUR,

In planning our future force structure and allocating resources, we established force levels and support objectives that should enable us to win one MRC across a range of likely conflicts. Our detailed analyses of possible future MRCs, coupled with military judgment as to the outcomes, suggest that the following forces will be adequate to execute the strategy outlined above for a single MRC:

- 4–5 Army divisions
- 4–5 Marine Expeditionary Brigades
- 10 Air Force fighter wings
- 100 Air Force heavy bombers
- 4–5 Navy aircraft carrier battle groups
- Special operations forces

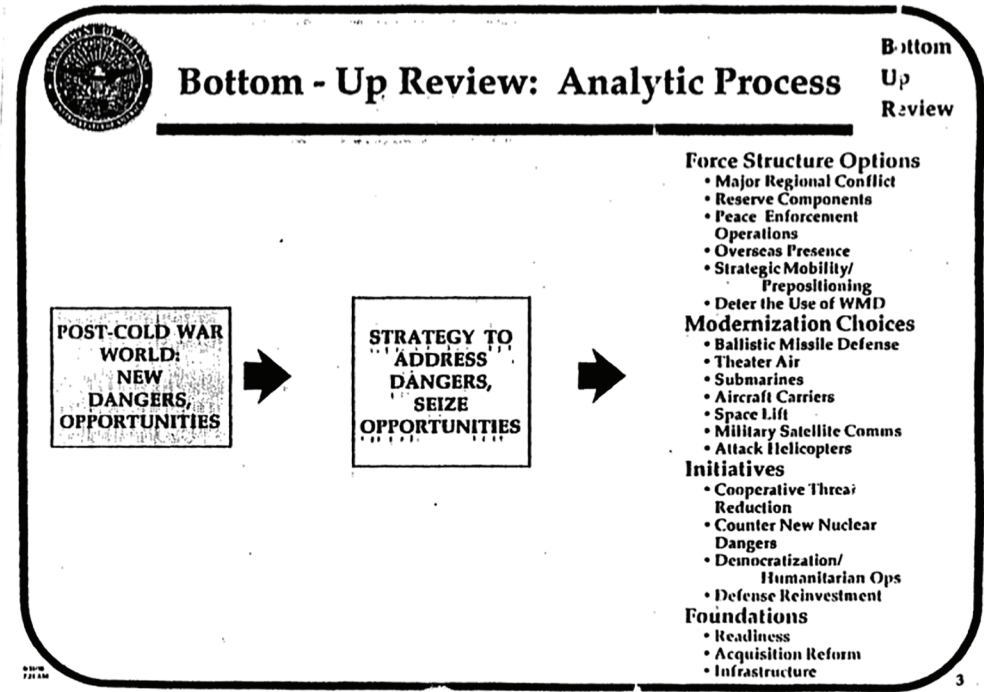
These forces constitute a prudent building block for force planning purposes. In the event of a conflict, our response would depend on the nature and scale of the aggression and on circumstances elsewhere in the world. If the initial defense failed to halt the invasion quickly, or if circumstances in other parts of the world permitted, U.S. decisionmakers might choose to commit more forces than those listed (for example, two additional Army divisions). These added forces would help either to achieve the needed advantage over the enemy, to mount a decisive counteroffensive, or to accomplish more ambitious war objectives, such as the complete destruction of the enemy’s war-making potential. But our analysis also led us to the conclusion that enhancements to our military forces, focused on ensuring our ability to conduct a successful initial defense, would both reduce our overall ground force requirements and increase the responsiveness and effectiveness of our power projection forces.<sup>18</sup>

These force building blocks were then assessed against various planning scenarios to define force structure and modernization requirements, necessary “defense foundations” (research and development, infrastructure, industrial base, and so on), and necessary policy initiatives. The final stages were the programming and budgeting phases of PPBS that would result in a multiyear defense plan.

Figure 9.4 unpacks the methodology and adds detail on the range of missions and mission scenarios that were considered in developing force structure options—MRCs, peace enforcement operations, overseas presence, strategic mobility, and operations to deter the use of WMDs—as well as the key modernization choices that were considered,

<sup>18</sup> DoD, 1993a, pp. 18–19.

Figure 9.4  
Bottom-Up Review Analytic Process



SOURCE: DoD, 1993c, slide 3.  
RAND RR2173/1-9.4

and the sorts of policy initiatives and defense foundations that were considered. The BUR report was similarly organized along these lines to address national security threats and opportunities, defense strategy, forces to implement the strategy, force structure, modernization, initiatives and foundations, and resources to implement the strategy.

In determining force requirements, DoD consequently evaluated various strategy and force options for countering regional aggression while considering the requirements for conducting overseas presence, deterring attacks with WMDs, and conducting peacekeeping and other military operations.<sup>19</sup> Figure 9.5 shows the use of alternative scenarios for assessing the capabilities of the force.

As suggested in the figure, the principal scenarios used in the BUR to assess force requirements for major combat operations were related to aggression by Iraq and North Korea, and posited to take place in 1999, at the end of the 1994–1999 FYDP:

For planning and assessment purposes, we have selected two illustrative scenarios that are both plausible and posit demands characteristic of those that

<sup>19</sup> Among the smaller operation types identified were disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, embassy evacuations, and lesser regional conflicts.





In each scenario, we examined the performance of projected U.S. forces in relation to critical parameters, including warning time, the threat, terrain, weather, duration of hostilities, and combat intensity. Overall, these scenarios were representative of likely ranges of these parameters.

Both scenarios were developed for analyses conducted by the Joint Staff. Each assumed a similar enemy operation: an armor-heavy, combined-arms offensive against the outnumbered forces of a neighboring state. U.S. forces, most of which were not presumed to be present in the region when hostilities commenced, had to deploy to the region quickly, supplement indigenous forces, halt the invasion, and defeat the aggressor.

Such a “short notice” scenario, in which only a modest number of U.S. forces are in a region at the outset of hostilities, is both highly stressing and plausible. History shows that we frequently fail to anticipate the location and timing of aggression, even large-scale attacks against our interests. In such cases, it may also not be possible, prior to an attack, to reach a political consensus on the proper U.S. response or to convince our allies to grant U.S. forces access to facilities in their countries.

We also expect that the United States will often be fighting as the leader of a coalition, with allies providing some support and combat forces. As was the case in Desert Storm, the need to defend common interests should prompt our allies in many cases to contribute capable forces to a war effort. However, our forces must be sized and structured to preserve the flexibility and the capability to act unilaterally, should we choose to do so.<sup>20</sup>

As described in the BUR, the four discrete strategies (or strategic concepts), each of which assumed a different combination of simultaneous or nearly simultaneous operations, had associated force options that were considered (see Table 9.1).

The BUR stated that defense leaders had decided early in the BUR that the United States must be capable of fielding forces sufficient to fight and win two MRCs that occur nearly simultaneously.<sup>21</sup> However, the media suggested that after choosing—and then rejecting—the second strategy and force structure (called “win-hold-win”), the BUR chose the force associated with a newly developed third strategy: the capability to win two nearly simultaneous MRCs.<sup>22</sup> This force differed only slightly from the win-

<sup>20</sup> DoD, 1993a, p. 14. For additional detail on the use of scenarios in the BUR, see the testimony in U.S. House of Representatives, 1994.

In Secretary Aspin and Chairman Powell’s briefing on the BUR, General Powell described unidentified “Country X” as follows: “The point I want to make with respect to this little cartoon, Country X, is that history teaches us we never really fight where we thought we were going to fight.” Aspin and Powell, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> DoD, 1993a, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> In May 1993, it was reported that defense policymakers were leaning toward a win-hold-win strategy in which the military would no longer plan to fight two major wars at once, but instead would have the capabilities to win



**Table 9.1**  
**BUR Strategies and Force Options for Major Regional Conflicts**

	1	2	3	4
Strategy	Win One MRC	Win One MRC with Hold in Second	Win Two Nearly Simultaneous MRCs	Win Two Nearly Simultaneous MRCs Plus Conduct Smaller Operation
Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 active divisions</li><li>• 6 reserve division equivalents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 active divisions</li><li>• 6 reserve division equivalents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 active divisions</li><li>• 15 reserve enhanced readiness brigades</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 active divisions</li><li>• 8 reserve enhanced equivalents</li></ul>
Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 carrier battle groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 carrier battle groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 11 carrier battle groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 carrier battle groups</li></ul>
Marine Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 active brigades</li><li>• 1 reserve division</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 active brigades</li><li>• 1 reserve division</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 active brigades</li><li>• 1 reserve division</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 active brigades</li><li>• 1 reserve division</li></ul>
Air Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 active fighter wings</li><li>• 6 reserve fighter wings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13 active fighter wings</li><li>• 7 reserve fighter wings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13 active fighter wings</li><li>• 7 reserve fighter wings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 14 active fighter wings</li><li>• 10 reserve fighter wings</li></ul>
			Force Enhancements	

SOURCE: DoD, 1993a, p. 28.

hold-win force but provided some additional capabilities for carrier-based naval presence operations, enhanced readiness Army reserve component forces, and a number of additional force enhancements (e.g., precision attack, strategic mobility) that aimed to improve the force’s ability to underwrite two conflicts with a smaller force structure than the Base Force. This force was also smaller than that associated with a fourth strategy, which provided a capability for winning two nearly simultaneous MRCs plus conducting smaller operations. The precise differences between “win-hold-win” and “nearly simultaneously” are not entirely clear.<sup>23</sup>

Additional detail on the development and employment of scenarios and the analytics behind the BUR is provided in testimony from hearings of the HASC’s Military Forces and Personnel Subcommittee in March 1994. The hearing appears to have been

one war while airpower and a limited number of ground forces would be used to hold the line in another until the first war was concluded. See Michael R. Gordon, “Cuts Force Review of War Strategies,” *New York Times*, May 29, 1993. Win-hold-win sounded very much like the capability that Powell ascribed to the Base Force.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, the BUR’s “Conflict Dynamics” chart, reproduced in Figure 9.1.

called as a result of some congressional skepticism regarding the analyses and findings of the BUR. For example, as stated by Rep. Jon Kyl of Arizona:

In October, Mr. Ted Warner, DoD's principal witness, while defending the results of the review made the following assertions about the BUR:

Compared to the 1991 Desert Storm force, the Army would need five divisions, not eight, and 180,000 people, not 250,000, to win a Desert Storm in 1999. The battle would be fought against an Iraq force of 1999 that was smaller, but smarter and more modern than the Iraqi force of 1990.

The BUR concluded just four to five Army divisions and 120,000 personnel would be needed to decisively defeat a North Korean surprise attack in 1999.

The success of smaller U.S. forces in 1999 was dependent upon many other things: on both modernization and research and development to provide increased lethality.

In response to my assertion, then, that the BUR actually downsized both the threats and U.S. forces required in 1999 in order to accommodate the reduced defense budget that the President had proposed well before the BUR, Mr. Warner directed us to examine the Joint Staff, which, he asserted conducted the BUR war gaming in essentially apolitical, fiscally unconstrained manner. So today we will hear from the Joint Staff.<sup>24</sup>

Testimony by RADM Francis W. Lacroix, Deputy Director for Force Structure, Resources, Joint Staff stated that the Joint Staff's force sizing and risk assessments in the BUR were based primarily on the ability of forces to provide the United States with a conventional deterrent capability, and to fight and win hypothesized MRCs in Iraq and Korea in 1999, should that prove necessary. Lacroix stated that while the requirements of peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations were assessed, they were not used to size the force. The BUR's analysis proceeded from the tasks in the strategy (e.g., "Deter, Defeat Aggression") to the force requirements associated with the conduct of major missions (e.g., MRCs) to specific scenarios (e.g., Iraq and Korea) that were used to assess the capabilities of alternative force options. It was assumed that a force that was capable of nearly simultaneous combat operations against these actors should be capable of defeating other actors ("lesser-included cases") that might emerge. In addition to scenarios, modeling, simulation, and military judgment informed the BUR.<sup>25</sup>

To determine the adequacy of given forces, alternative force structures were assessed against the two conflict scenarios using modeling and simulation and other techniques to develop insights and judgments about the adequacy of the force to

<sup>24</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, pp. 2–3.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 13.

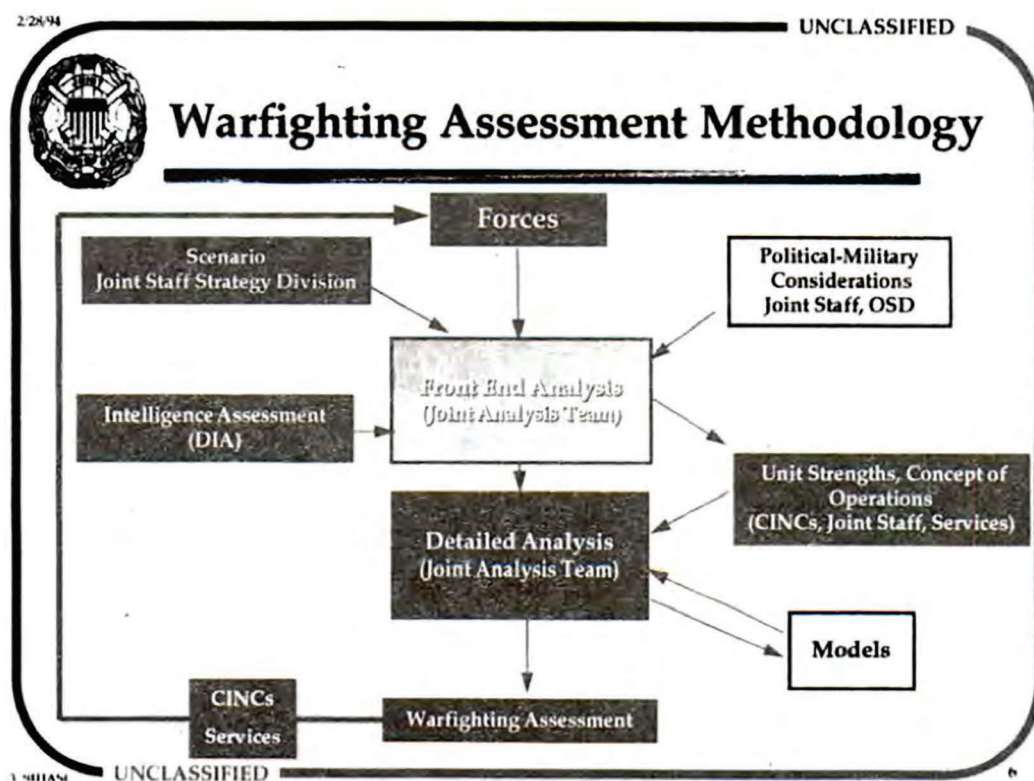
accomplish the conflict objectives at acceptable risk. As described by Lacroix, the process was iterative:

It was an iterative process by which proposed force structures were analyzed using a variety of techniques including computer simulation. As scenarios were run and rerun, insights into the qualities and quantities of the required forces were gained. Results were provided to the chairman to assist him in his final assessment and with his recommendations to the Secretary.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 9.6 unpacks the Joint Staff's war-fighting assessment methodology a bit further.

As shown in the figure, a "front end analysis" of alternative forces was informed by DIA intelligence assessments, scenarios from the Joint Staff Strategy Division, and "political-military considerations" from the Joint Staff and OSD. The front end analy-

**Figure 9.6**  
Force Sizing for Major Regional Conflicts in the Bottom-Up Review



SOURCE: U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 14.

RAND RR2173/1-9.6

<sup>26</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 13.

sis “identifie[d] assumptions, variables, measures of effectiveness, operational concepts, and the overall scope of the analysis, as well as other perspectives and alternative doctrine approaches of the [commander in chief (CINC)] and services.”<sup>27</sup>

This “front end analysis” was then combined with information on unit strengths and CONOPs from the regional combatant commanders, the Joint Staff, and the services, and subjected to more detailed analysis by the Joint Analysis Team, which then gamed these refined options using theater campaign, naval, mobility, and other models; conducted excursions and sensitivity analyses; and so on. These results were interpreted using “a very heavy dose of reasoned, military judgment and joint war-fighting doctrine to all inputs, interim results, as well as the outputs,” with each war-fighting assessment fed back to the regional combatant commanders and services for further refinement of the force alternatives and, if indicated, another iteration of the same analytic process.<sup>28</sup>

Lacroix described in some detail the CONOP for winning two nearly simultaneous MRCs in the BUR (see earlier Figure 9.4). As described earlier, the basic concept followed the Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm model: (1) an initial effort to halt the invading force in the first MRC; (2) a buildup of forces and conduct of an air campaign in the first MRC while simultaneously halting the invading force in the second MRC; (3) a decisive counteroffensive in the first MRC while building up forces and conducting an air campaign in the second; and (4) shifting to providing postwar stability in the first MRC while conducting a decisive counteroffensive in the second. Lacroix provided significant additional detail on the Southwest Asia and Korean scenario-based analyses.

The Southwest Asia scenario envisioned an Iraqi attack on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia; as already noted, the Iraqi forces that were available for this operation were assumed to be about half the size of the forces that were involved in the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait (see Figure 9.7).

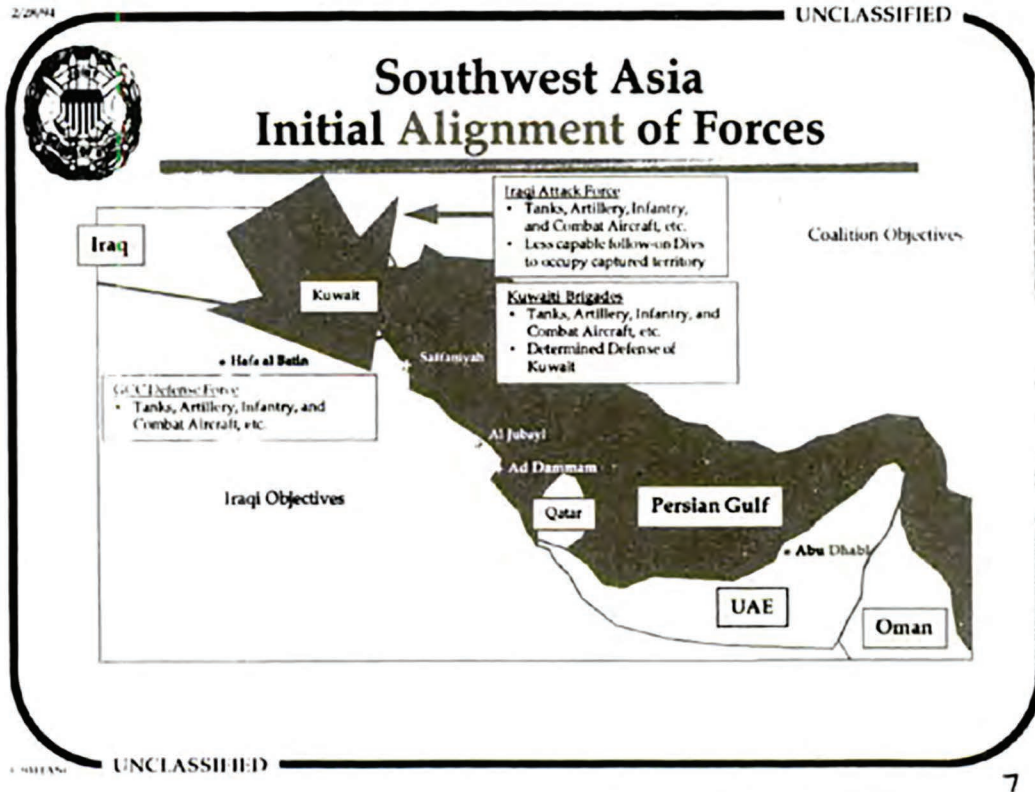
The Joint Staff used mobility models to estimate the potential buildup of forces for each scenario, including airlift and sealift capabilities; Figure 9.8 portrays a representative buildup over time in the Persian Gulf theater of Army and Marine brigades and tactical fighter squadrons for the scenario. As shown in the figure, airlift makes the most substantial contribution to the force buildup in the early stages of the scenario, until two sailings of sealift can deliver more substantial U.S. ground and other forces.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Lacroix testified that the study team’s analysis examined a wide range of alternative flows of forces, and implications for the war fight, to establish the required capabilities needed to meet opposing forces. U.S. House of Representatives, 1994.

**Figure 9.7**  
**Initial Alignment of Forces in Bottom-Up Review Southwest Asia Scenario**



SOURCE: U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 15.

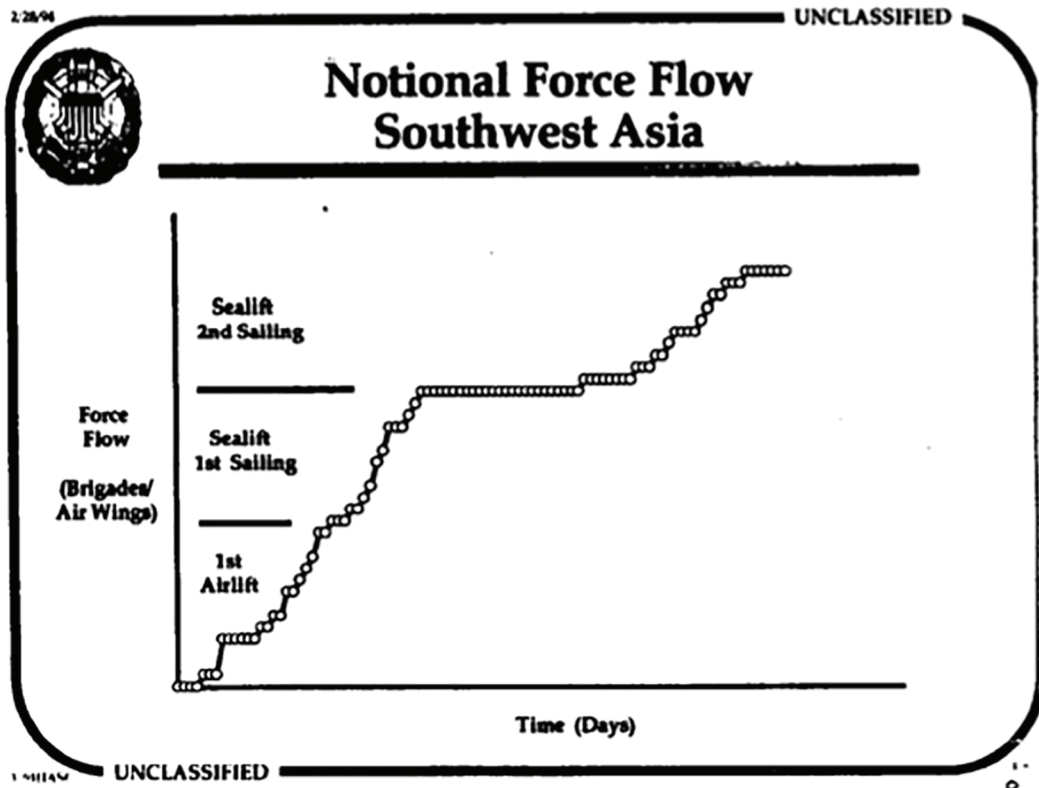
RAND RR21731-9.7

Figure 9.9 portrays the initial defense in the BUR's Southwest Asia scenario. As shown in the figure, the scenario envisioned that the Iraqi advance would be stopped by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and early arriving air and ground U.S. forces, which would then be followed by a counteroffensive to eject and decisively defeat Iraqi forces. Also noted in Figure 9.9, the shape and effectiveness of the initial defense would be affected by such factors as warning time and force effectiveness, each of which would influence the time required to halt and minimize the penetration of Iraqi forces.

The architects of the BUR saw airpower as key to initial efforts to halt invading armies in Southwest Asia and Korea, and to support the counteroffensive (see Figure 9.10). Accordingly, the buildup and employment of airpower was a key consideration in the CONOP for conducting a major combat operation.

As shown in the figure, a high initial sortie rate (primarily by long-range bombers and arriving ground attack aircraft) would provide for the initial defense in the halt phase, and then support high intensity ground combat until U.S. coalition

Figure 9.8  
Notional Force Flow in Bottom-Up Review Southwest Asia Scenario



SOURCE: U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 16.

RAND RR2173/1-9.8

forces had been built up, and Iraqi forces had been attrited sufficiently, to enable a counteroffensive. Figure 9.11 presents the slide that was used to portray the counteroffensive phase.

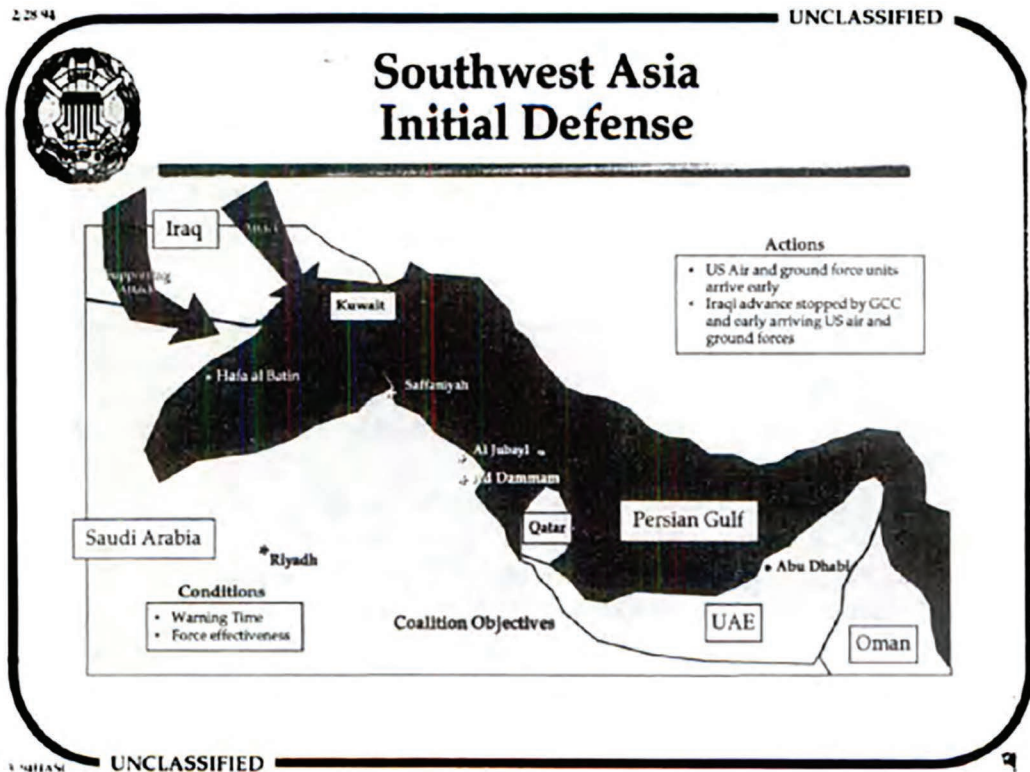
According to Lacroix, analysis of the Southwest Asia case involved “many excursions with varying warning times, alternate forces, force flows, in order to examine the projected risk to key oil, water, and port facilities.”<sup>30</sup> A similar set of analyses were conducted regarding the Korea scenario, and then combined analyses were conducted to assess the impact of timing between the scenarios for force and mobility requirements.

Returning now to the larger concept for conducting two nearly simultaneous MRCs, the concept was found to place significant demands on mobility forces to

<sup>30</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 19. RADM Lacroix stated: “The warfighting in Korea and Southwest Asia provided the illustrative scenarios for two separate, nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies. They also provided the basic scenarios for assessing our ability to conduct two nearly simultaneous MRC’s [major regional contingencies].”



**Figure 9.9**  
Initial Defense in Bottom-Up Review Southwest Asia Scenario



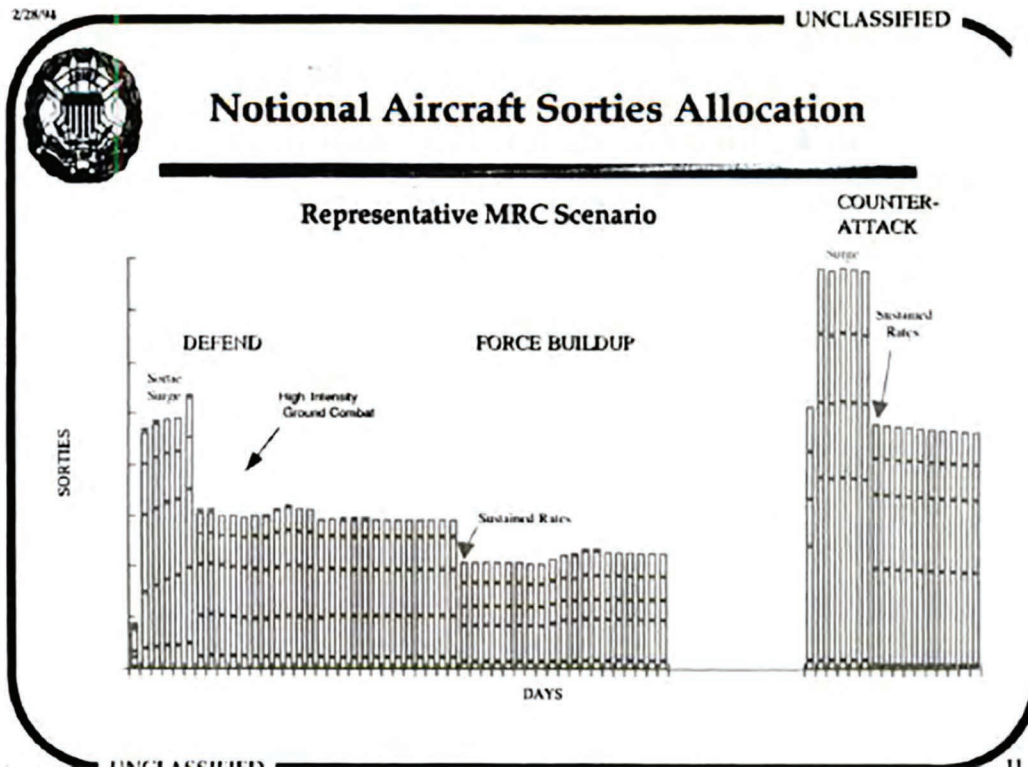
SOURCE: U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 17.

RAND RR2173/1-9.9

deliver early arriving forces (especially airpower) to two theaters, and to “swing” from the first theater to the second. Figure 9.12 portrays two buildup curves for scenarios in Southwest Asia and Korea of the kind that might be expected if North Korea opportunistically sought to take advantage of a situation in which the U.S. had already committed forces to Southwest Asia.

In this case, we see the shifting allocation of airlift and sealift between the two theaters to facilitate an early halt and stabilize the military situation in the first theater, and then the second theater, until conditions have been established in each for counteroffensives. As was suggested by the earlier figure portraying the buildup in Southwest Asia, the emergence of a second contingency would slow the rates of buildup, the speed with which an offensive could be halted, and the amount of penetration by attacking forces. Given the crucial issue of the nation’s capabilities to meet nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies, a number of actions were taken after the completion of the BUR. As a result of concerns about the adequacy of mobility capabilities to support the sorts of swings of forces between theaters envisioned

**Figure 9.10**  
**Notional Aircraft Sorties Allocation in Bottom-Up Review Southwest Asia Scenario**



SOURCE: U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 19.

RAND RR2173/1-9.10

in the BUR, the preliminary findings of the BUR related to mobility requirements were subsequently reanalyzed using other techniques, such as the Nimble Dancer war game, and the Mobility Requirements Study Bottom-Up Review Update.<sup>31</sup>

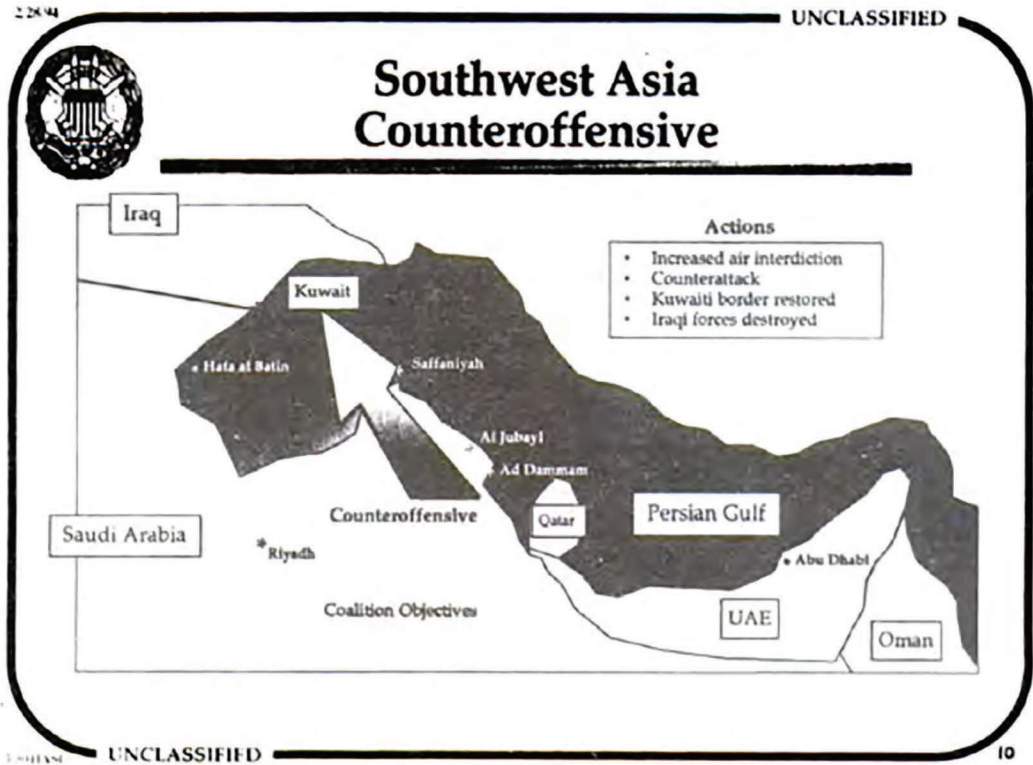
As just described, although the requirements for other missions (e.g., naval and other presence missions, peace operations) also were assessed in the BUR, conventional force requirements were largely derived from a strategy and force construct that was said to be capable of fighting two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies in Southwest Asia and Korea, and constituted the “minimum Active Force necessary to accomplish the strategy calling for success in two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See GAO, 1996; and GAO, *Military Airlift: Options Exist for Meeting Requirements While Acquiring Fewer C-17s*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-97-38, February 1997b.

<sup>32</sup> Lacroix testimony in U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 26.



**Figure 9.11**  
**Counteroffensive in Bottom-Up Review Southwest Asia Scenario**



SOURCE: U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 18.

RAND RR21731/1-9.11

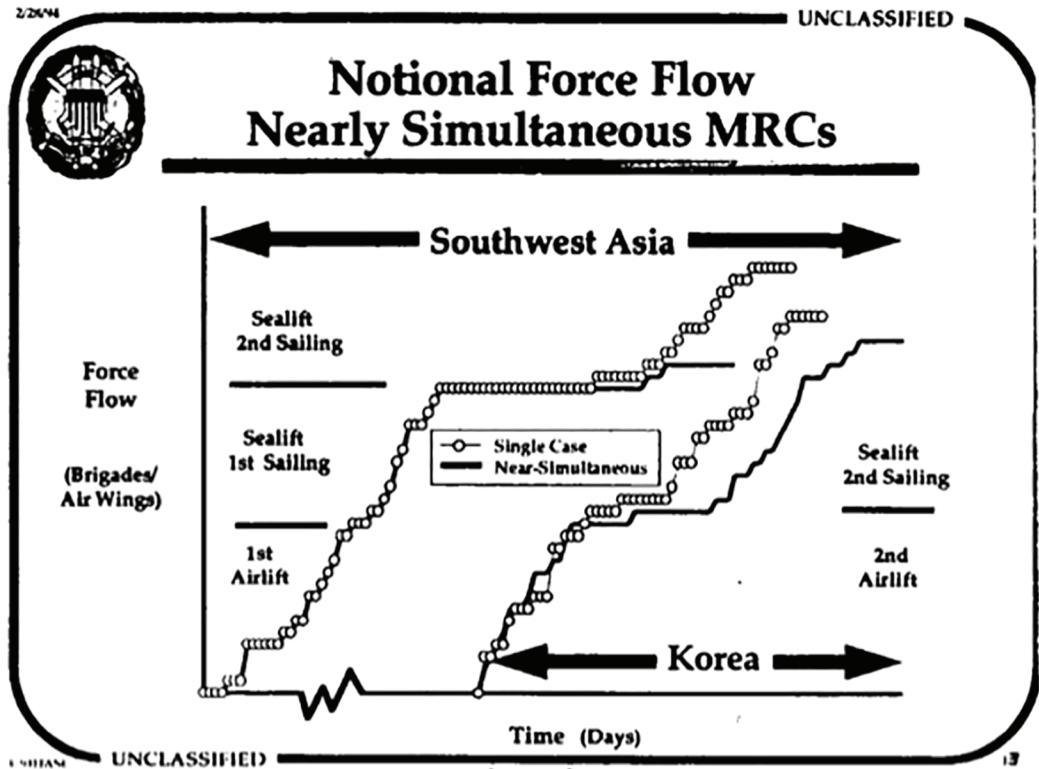
In any event, the BUR proposed the force structure described in Table 9.2 for FY 1999, which included ten Regular Army divisions and 15 Army National Guard enhanced readiness (combat) brigades,<sup>33</sup> a 25-percent reduction in conventional ground forces from the earlier total of 20 Army divisions prescribed in the Base Force (12 Regular Army divisions, six Guard divisions, and two reserve cadre divisions).

Figure 9.13 describes the OPLANs, CONPLANs, and functional plans that were directed by the FY 1996 JSCP, the short-term guidance developed in the JSPS that guides war planning. As shown in Figure 9.13, the FY 1996 JSCP directed combatant and functional commanders to produce or update a total of three OPLANs, 42 CONPLANs, and 16 functional plans.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Importantly, according to Lacroix, “The restructuring of Army divisions into 10 full three-brigade divisions versus the prior structure of two brigades in about half of the 12 Base Force divisions will improve both the capability and responsiveness of these divisions.” U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 26.

<sup>34</sup> As suggested by the figure, combatant commanders can be tasked to develop different categories of plans to varying degrees of detail: Higher-priority CONPLANs, for example, require the development of Time-Phased

Figure 9.12  
Notional Force Flow in Two Nearly Simultaneous Major Regional Conflicts in Bottom-Up Review



SOURCE: U.S. House of Representatives, 1994, p. 22.

RAND RR2173/1-9.12

In addition, the BUR reported that a number of critical force enhancements would be required to improve the capabilities of this smaller force to meet operational requirements, including requirements for mobility forces.<sup>35</sup>

Among these enhancements were additional Army prepositioned equipment; additional airlift and sealift; improved antiarmor and precision-guided munitions; more early arriving naval aviation; improving Army National Guard combat brigade readiness; improving Army Guard and Reserve support force readiness; and improving command, control, communications, and intelligence assets. The BUR also stressed the importance of retaining Marine Corps end strength. The BUR also assessed modernization requirements related to ballistic missile defense, theater air, attack submarines, aircraft carriers, space launch, military satellite communications, and attack and

Force Deployment Data, capturing the envisioned flow of forces into the theater.

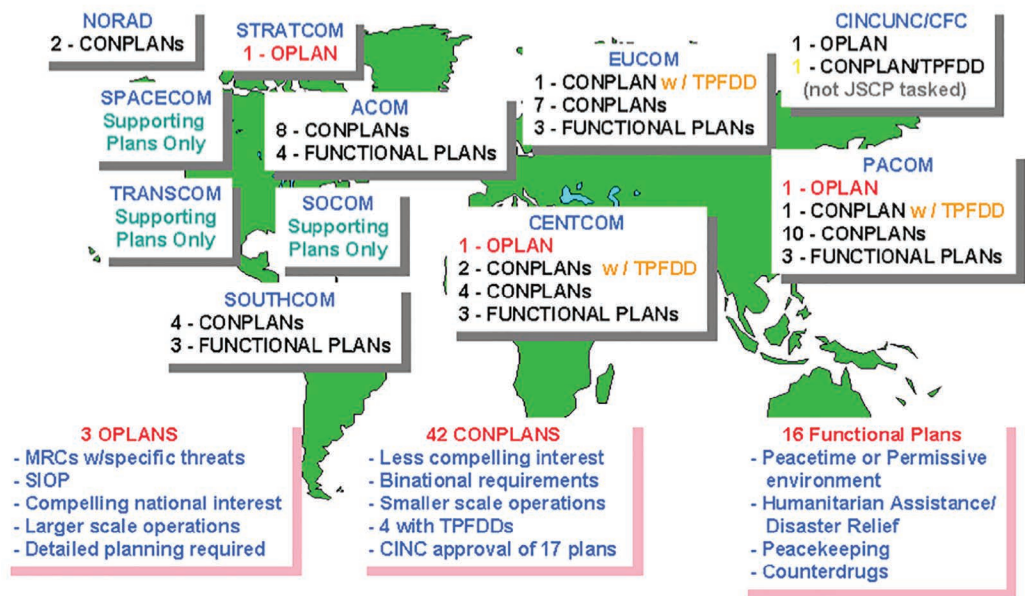
<sup>35</sup> Warner, 1994, p. 31.

**Table 9.2**  
**BUR Force Structure, 1999**

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 MEFs 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)

SOURCE: DoD, 1993a, p. 30.

**Figure 9.13**  
**Deliberate Planning Tasks in the FY 1996 JSCP**



SOURCE: Bob Barthelmess, instructor, "Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP)," Contingency Wartime Planning Course, IP-4000, undated.

reconnaissance helicopters. It also examined infrastructure requirements and further reform of the defense acquisition process.

### **Assessment of Risk**

Powell described the risk assessments in broad terms as follows:

So, two major regional conflicts, be able to deal with them near simultaneously. Also, to have sufficient capacity if something else comes along. That's nice strategy, but then you have to convert that into form and substance and structure. The way we do that is through a series of models and war games and military analyses and discussions with our political leaders as to what is an acceptable risk or an unacceptable risk.<sup>36</sup>

### **Other Assessments**

GAO's reviews of the BUR indicate that the review itself, and additional analyses that were conducted in connection with the Nimble Dancer war games, were based on generally favorable assumptions, and that there were not enough sensitivity analyses of key variables to assess the robustness of the force:

Nimble Dancer, conducted from November 1994 to July 1995, consisted of baseline computer modeling, separate analyses on selected two-MRC topics, and seminars to discuss modeling and other analytical results. The computer modeling simulated force deployment and combat in various two-MRC scenarios involving a North Korean invasion of South Korea and an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. According to DOD, this modeling assessed the scenarios in the years 1997, 2001, and 2005. Seminar participants were mid- and senior-level military officers and DOD civilians, including the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the commanders of selected combatant commands. Since conducting Nimble Dancer, DOD has continued to analyze issues related to the two-MRC requirement.

Based on Nimble Dancer, DOD concluded that the United States can fight and win two nearly simultaneous MRCs in the 1997 and 2001-2005 time frames, provided that the force enhancements anticipated in the Bottom-Up Review are completed as programmed and that national command authorities make timely decisions at the onset of the first MRC.<sup>1</sup> In reaching this conclusion, DOD identified several issues that it deemed critical to ensuring the success of U.S. forces. In press statements and congressional hearings, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said that Nimble Dancer tested and validated basic Bottom-Up Review assumptions, and they characterized the war game as extensive, intensive, rigorous, and robust.

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<sup>36</sup> DoD, 1993c.

DOD statements that Nimble Dancer tested basic Bottom-Up Review assumptions through intensive and extensive war-gaming suggest a more rigorous level of analysis than occurred during the exercise. Nimble Dancer was a useful forum for promoting interaction among DOD organizations and in identifying critical issues in fulfilling the two-MRC requirement. However, Nimble Dancer used many of the same favorable assumptions contained in DOD guidance implementing the Bottom-Up Review..<sup>37</sup>

In its initial analysis of the assumptions behind the BUR, GAO concluded,

In making these decisions [regarding the necessity of having a capability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts, and deciding the specific size and composition of the force capable of meeting this strategy, DoD made critical assumptions about factors that are key to the successful execution of the two-conflict strategy without performing sufficient analyses to test the validity of its assumptions. In fact, DoD and the warfighting commands are now exploring basic questions about DoD's assumptions, such as whether forces involved in smaller-scale operations can actually be available when needed to deploy to a regional conflict, whether the same combat forces would be needed at the same time in both regional conflicts and whether the Army has sufficient support for nearly simultaneous combat operations in two conflicts.<sup>38</sup>

Congressional concern about the capabilities of the BUR force to meet the requirements of two nearly simultaneous MRCs led to the inclusion of a requirement in the FY 1995 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that DoD reexamine the BUR's assumptions and conclusions regarding force and budgetary requirements,<sup>39</sup> and report on the review to the president and Congress by May 1995. The NDAA directed DoD to describe the force structure required to execute its two-conflict strategy in light of other ongoing or potential operations, and gave DoD permission to make possible adjustments to the two-conflict strategy.<sup>40</sup>

In its analysis of the assumptions behind the November 1994–July 1995 Nimble Dancer war games that tested the BUR force, GAO argued that the war games had embraced many of the same favorable assumptions that had been used in the BUR, and that there was insufficient sensitivity analysis of key assumptions to assess the robustness of the BUR force to execute the strategy. Among the assumptions GAO cited as requiring additional sensitivity analyses were reserve mobilization, activation of

<sup>37</sup> GAO, 1995b, p. 2–3.

<sup>38</sup> GAO, 1995b, pp. 37–38.

<sup>39</sup> See the expressions of congressional skepticism, for example, in reactions to Warner, 1994, and Lacroix in U.S. House of Representatives, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> GAO, 1995b, pp. 4–5, 20.

the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, the amount of separation time between MRCs, the amount of warning time before the attack, and differences in the scenarios used by DoD in the BUR and Nimble Dancer exercises and those used by U.S. Forces Korea and U.S. Central Command analyses.<sup>41</sup>

In a 2001 report, GAO summarized the findings from its assessments of the BUR as follows:

DOD assumed that forces would be redeployed from other operations, such as peacekeeping, to regional conflicts or between regional conflicts. However, our work showed that critical combat and support forces needed in the early stages of a conflict may not be able to quickly redeploy from peace operations because (1) certain Army support forces would need to remain to facilitate the redeployment of other forces and (2) logistics and maintenance support for specialized Air Force aircraft would have to wait for available airlift. DOD also assumed sufficient strategic lift assets, prepositioned equipment, and support forces would be available. However, at the time of our review in 1994 and 1995, our work showed that the Army lacked sufficient numbers of certain support units to meet requirements for a single conflict and that DOD had encountered problems or funding uncertainties in acquiring additional airlift and sealift and prepositioned equipment.<sup>42</sup>

In the years between the 1993 BUR and the 1997 QDR, a number of challenges emerged, including

- failure to achieve anticipated budget savings
- higher-than-expected level of engagement in smaller-scale contingencies (SSCs)
- migration of funding from modernization accounts to operations and support accounts to support U.S. forces in SSCs
- growing “bow wave” in out-year procurement costs, including those for theater aviation
- increasing concerns about the readiness of U.S. forces to conduct assigned missions.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> GAO, 1996, pp. 5–8.

<sup>42</sup> GAO, *Defense Planning: Opportunities to Improve Strategic Reviews*, Washington, D.C., GAO-01-514R, March 20, 2001.

<sup>43</sup> According to a 1994 GAO report, “During the past several years, service chiefs and commanders in chief (CINC) have expressed concerns about the effect on current and future readiness of (1) the level of current military operations, (2) contingency operations, (3) the shifting of funds to support these operations, and (4) personnel turbulence.” GAO also found that DoD and JCS officials believed that the readiness indicators they were using were no longer relevant to the national security environment. See GAO, *Military Readiness: DoD Needs to Develop a More Comprehensive Measurement System*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-95-29, 1994, p. 1. By March 1995, GAO reported that improved assessment measures were evolving, but by March 1997, GAO indicated that improvements were still needed. See GAO, *Military Readiness: Improved Assessment Measures Are Evolv-*



In retrospect, it appears that the force chosen by the BUR was less suitable to the high levels of peacetime engagement in contingency operations that were observed in subsequent years than the force deemed capable of winning two nearly simultaneous MRCs plus conducting smaller operations. Furthermore, the failure to achieve anticipated savings reported suggests that the BUR force in fact required a Base Force–sized budget. In the end, the mismatch between a more ambitious strategy of engagement and forces and resources that were declining at different rates made it impossible for the services to support the dual priorities of readiness and modernization in the years following the BUR.<sup>44</sup>

## The 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review

The Base Force study and BUR had provided two somewhat different answers to the question of post–Cold War defense requirements; the NDAA for FY 1997 aimed to make the regular conduct of defense reviews a recurring feature of defense planning, and formally established the requirement for a QDR in 1997:<sup>45</sup>

The Secretary of Defense shall every four years, . . . conduct a comprehensive examination (to be known as a “quadrennial defense review”) of the national defense strategy, force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program and policies of the United States with a view toward determining and expressing the defense strategy of the United States and establishing a defense program for the next 20 years. Each such [QDR] shall be conducted in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>46</sup>

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*ing*, Washington, D.C., GAO/T-NSIAD-95-117, 1995a; and GAO, *Military Readiness: Improvements Still Needed in Assessing Military Readiness*, Washington, D.C., GAO/T-NSIAD-97-107, 1997a.

<sup>44</sup> For the details on these developments, see Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001, pp. 41–79.

<sup>45</sup> An assessment of the 1997 QDR can be found in Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001, pp. 83–120. Good sources describing the QDR include DoD, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington, D.C., May 1997; Armed Forces Information Service, *Defense 97: Commitment to Readiness*, Washington, D.C., 1997; and Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), “Quadrennial Defense Review,” DoD news briefing, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1997. For analyses of the 1997 QDR, see John Schrader, Leslie Lewis, and Roger Allen Brown, *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Analysis: A Retrospective Look at Joint Staff Participation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, DB-236-JS, 1999; James S. Thomason, Paul H. Richanbach, Sharon M. Fiore, and Deborah P. Christie, *Quadrennial Review Process: Lessons Learned from the 1997 Review and Options for the Future*, Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, IDA Paper P-3402, August 1998; GAO, *Quadrennial Defense Review: Opportunities to Improve the Next Review*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-98-155, 1998a; and Booz Allen Hamilton, *An Assessment of the National Review Process*, McLean, Va., December 1999.

<sup>46</sup> 10 U.S.C., Section 118, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, Subtitle A, “Review Required,” amended as of January 2012. The statutory language was subsequently amended to require publication of the QDR at the same time as the next year’s budget request. Legislation also established a National Defense Panel (NDP) to review and critique the first QDR; this basic framework of a defense review conducted by DoD and an independent blue-ribbon panel to review DoD’s effort would become a staple of the period.

The May 1997 QDR accordingly considered the potential threats, strategy, force structure, readiness posture, military modernization programs, defense infrastructure, and other elements of the defense program needed for the 1997–2015 time frame and beyond. With some exceptions, the result reflected preservation of the status quo established in the BUR. As described in the QDR report, the development of the QDR was broken into a number of phases: a start-up and guidance phase (December 1996), a strategy and fiscal context phase (January 1997), an analysis phase (February 1997), an integration phase (March 1997), and a decision phase (April 1997). The report itself considered the global security environment, defense strategy, alternative defense postures, forces and manpower, force readiness, transformation of U.S. forces for the future, infrastructure, and defense resources, and concluded with comments from the CJCS on the QDR's findings.

The principal scenarios that were employed to assess force requirements for major combat operations in the 1997 QDR were a North Korean invasion of South Korea and a Southwest Asian contingency again involving an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia. A number of wild-card scenarios that could seriously challenge U.S. interests both at home and abroad also were explored, including an analysis of the military requirements associated with responding to aggression by an unidentified regional great power.

### **Key Assumptions**

The QDR assumed that the United States would remain politically and militarily engaged in the world over the next 15 to 20 years, and that it would maintain military superiority over current and potential rivals over the 1997–2015 period. The QDR generally accepted the normative and other underpinnings of the BUR's strategy, reaffirmed the BUR's emphasis on two nearly simultaneous MTWs as the principal basis for force sizing, and posited that the United States might have to fight one or two MTWs during the 1997–2015 period. It also anticipated continued involvement over the same period in the kinds of SSC operations that had been described in the BUR, including peace and humanitarian operations. In an early nod to antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) threats, U.S. forces' long-term access to forward bases, including air bases, ports, and logistics facilities, could no longer be assumed.

The QDR was intended to provide a blueprint for a strategy-based, balanced, and affordable defense program. Lingering concerns about the deficit and the austere budgetary environment that resulted, however, placed continued constraints on defense resources, leading to the assumption of flat, \$250 billion-a-year defense budgets. Equally important, the QDR aimed—within a flat budget and with only modest adjustments to force structure—to rebalance the defense program and budget to address some of the key problems that had developed during the BUR years, including the adverse effects of SSCs on the “migration” of funds from modernization (particularly procurement) accounts to operations accounts.



Based on an assessment of recent patterns and the assumptions embedded in the current six-year plan, the QDR concluded that there was a potential for annual migration to unplanned expenses of as much as \$10 billion to \$12 billion per year in the later years of the plan. Migration in that range would undermine much of the planned increase in procurement. Finally, the QDR assumed that to build the forces envisioned in *Joint Vision 2010*, additional programs would need to be developed in the years beyond the FYDP, but to afford those programs would require both the vision and the will to shrink DoD's supporting infrastructure and make it dramatically more efficient.

### National Interests

The Clinton administration released a new NSS, titled *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, simultaneously with the May 1997 release of the QDR. The new strategy replaced the *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* that the administration had updated every year between 1994 and 1996, and emphasized the following enduring national interests, values, and objectives:

As stated, the goal of the national security strategy is to ensure the protection of our nation's fundamental and enduring needs: protect the lives and safety of Americans; maintain the sovereignty of the United States, with its values, institutions and territory intact; and provide for the prosperity of the nation and its people.

We seek to create conditions in the world where our interests are rarely threatened, and when they are, we have effective means of addressing those threats. In general, we seek a world in which no critical region is dominated by a power hostile to the United States and regions of greatest importance to the U.S. are stable and at peace. We seek a climate where the global economy and open trade are growing, where democratic norms and respect for human rights are increasingly accepted and where terrorism, drug trafficking and international crime do not undermine stability and peaceful relations. And we seek a world where the spread of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially destabilizing technologies is minimized, and the international community is willing and able to prevent or respond to calamitous events. This vision of the world is also one in which the United States has close cooperative relations with the world's most influential countries and has the ability to influence the policies and actions of those who can affect our national well-being.<sup>47</sup>

The QDR restated the “fundamental and enduring goals” of the nation in similar, but not identical, terms to those used in the NSS:

Since the founding of the Republic, the United States has embraced several fundamental and enduring goals as a nation: to maintain the sovereignty, political freedom, and independence of the United States, with its values, institutions, and

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<sup>47</sup> White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, Washington, D.C., May 1997.

territory intact; to protect the lives and personal safety of Americans, both at home and abroad; and to provide for the well-being and prosperity of the nation and its people.<sup>48</sup>

The QDR described the defense strategy as follows:

In order to support this national security strategy, the U.S. military and the Department of Defense must be able to help shape the international security environment in ways favorable to U.S. interests, respond to the full spectrum of crises when directed, and prepare now to meet the challenges of an uncertain future. These three elements—shaping, responding, and preparing—define the essence of U.S. defense strategy between now and 2015.<sup>49</sup>

For his part, in September 1997 the CJCS GEN John M. Shalikashvili released a new NMS, subtitled *Shape, Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy for a New Era*, that supported the NSS and was consistent with the defense strategy. The NMS established the following national military objectives to support the national security and defense strategies:

To defend and protect US national interests. Our national military objectives are to Promote Peace and Stability and, when necessary, to Defeat Adversaries. US Armed Forces advance national security by applying military power as directed to help Shape the international environment and Respond to the full spectrum of crises, while we also Prepare Now for an uncertain future.<sup>50</sup>

### Threats

The QDR described the current world situation as one of “strategic opportunity” for the United States: The threat of global war had receded, and U.S. core values of representative democracy and market economics had been embraced in many parts of the world. This situation was seen as having created new opportunities to promote peace, prosperity, and enhanced cooperation among nations. The QDR assumed that the generally favorable conditions prevalent in the security environment at the time would continue until at least 2015. Within this time frame, no regional power or coalition was expected to amass sufficient conventional military strength to be able to defeat U.S. armed forces once the full military potential of the United States was mobilized and deployed. At the same time, the QDR emphasized the emergence of “new threats and

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<sup>48</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 7.

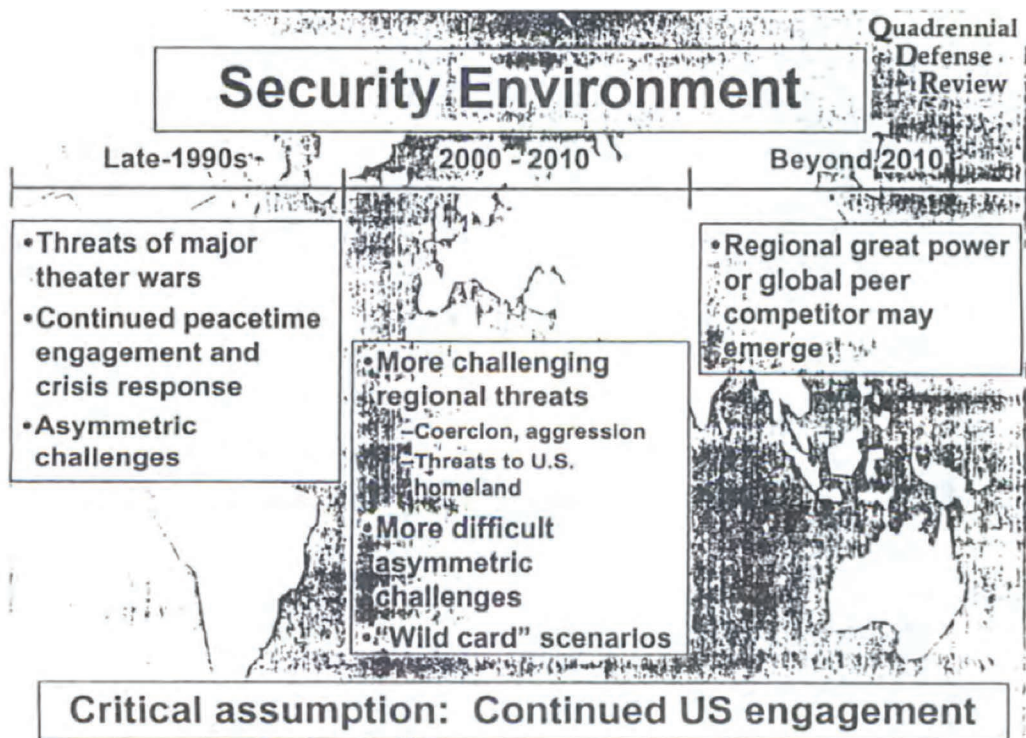
<sup>49</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 9.

<sup>50</sup> John M. Shalikashvili, *National Military Strategy: Shape, Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy for a New Era*, Washington, D.C.: Defense Technical Information Center, 1997b.

dangers—harder to define and more difficult to track.” Figure 9.14 summarizes the threats that the QDR identified in the security environment.

Among these threats were regional dangers, including the threat of coercion and cross-border aggression in Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and East Asia; the proliferation of advanced technologies, including WMDs; transnational dangers, such as the spread of illegal drugs, organized crime, terrorism, and uncontrolled refugee migration; and threats to the U.S. homeland through terrorism, cyberattacks on computer networks, ICBMs, and WMDs. Terrorist incidents during the period—both at home and abroad—heightened security concerns about forward-deployed forces and homeland defense. One major reason for such concerns was that the unsurpassed military capabilities of the United States in conventional war-fighting were expected to lead adversaries to develop strategies and capabilities for “asymmetric” attacks, both in theater and potentially against the U.S. homeland. Capabilities that rested on information technologies were seen as particularly vulner-

**Figure 9.14**  
**Threats in the Security Environment, 1997 QDR**



SOURCE: U.S. Senate, *Quadrennial Defense Review: Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services*, 105th Congress, 1st Session, May 20–21, 1997, p. 7.

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able, including space-based; command, control, communications, and computers; and ISR assets.

### Strategy

The QDR rejected two straw man strategies—a U.S. strategy of isolationism and one in which the United States would serve as “world policeman”—in favor of a strategy of engagement.

The result of the assessment was promoted as a more balanced strategy, dubbed “shape, respond, and prepare now”—i.e., shaping the international environment, responding to the full spectrum of crises, and preparing now for an uncertain future—that embraced both active engagement and crisis response options while advocating increased resources for force modernization.

The QDR also rejected a 10-percent cut in force structure because it would result in unacceptable risk, presumably both to war-fighting capability and to the force’s ability to engage in SSC operations. With force structure cuts essentially off the table, savings of \$4 billion to \$6 billion per year were to be achieved through manpower cuts.

Although it accepted many of the strategic assumptions of its predecessor the BUR, the QDR made several important adjustments to the BUR strategy, two of which had substantive importance. First, the QDR placed increased emphasis on the halt phase in MTWs. Second, it gave increased rhetorical recognition to the demands of SSCs and recognized the potential need to respond to multiple concurrent SSCs. Although it aimed to provide “strategic agility”—i.e., the capability to transition from global peacetime engagement to war-fighting—the QDR did not advocate significant adjustments in force structure or resourcing to accommodate these demands. Finally, the QDR articulated a somewhat more cautious and nuanced employment doctrine than had the BUR, distinguishing among situations involving vital, important but not vital, and humanitarian interests and identifying the sorts of responses appropriate to each.

Although the QDR gave increased rhetorical attention to the demands of SSCs, no fundamental change was made to the BUR’s basic strategic concept, which stressed the necessity of managing “conflict dynamics”—preparations to allow for a quick transition from a posture of peacetime engagement to war-fighting—and relied on management review to minimize SSC-related deployment tempo and personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO), readiness, and other risks to war-fighting capabilities. The QDR argued that U.S. forces would need to ensure the capability to transition from global peacetime engagement or multiple concurrent SSCs to fighting MTWs—a particularly important capability in light of the QDR’s recognition of the growing potential for multiple concurrent SSCs and regional engagement missions. The QDR also gave emphasis to new missions, including counterproliferation, force protection, counterterrorism (CT), and information operations.

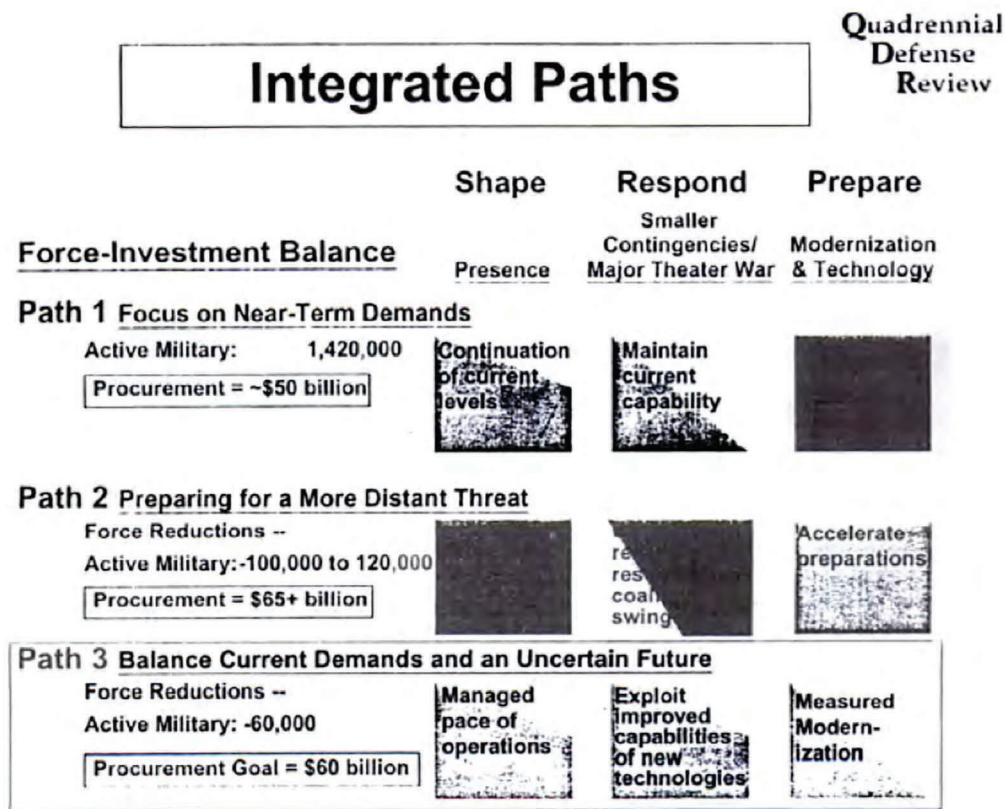
In defining the parameters of future U.S. uses of force, the QDR articulated a somewhat more cautious and nuanced employment doctrine than had the BUR, dis-

tinguishing among situations involving vital, important but not vital, and humanitarian interests and identifying the sorts of responses appropriate to each. Like both the BUR and the Base Force, the QDR reported that it favored a coalition strategy that while preserving the United States’ ability to act unilaterally, emphasized cooperative, multinational approaches—including coalition operations that would enhance political legitimacy and distribute the burden of responsibility among like-minded states, particularly among the world’s most influential countries.

In its assessment of alternative postures, the QDR considered what it described as three integrated paths for planning future capabilities (see Figure 9.15).

The QDR rejected two straw man alternatives regarding defense posture—“Path 1: Focus on Near-Term Demands” and “Path 2: Preparing for a More Distant Threat”—in favor of a third posture—“Path 3: Balance Current Demands and an Uncertain Future.” In this way, the QDR aimed to meet current needs and support modernization and transformation of the force.

Figure 9.15  
Three Integrated Paths/Postures Considered in the 1997 QDR



SOURCE: U.S. Senate, 1997, p. 9.

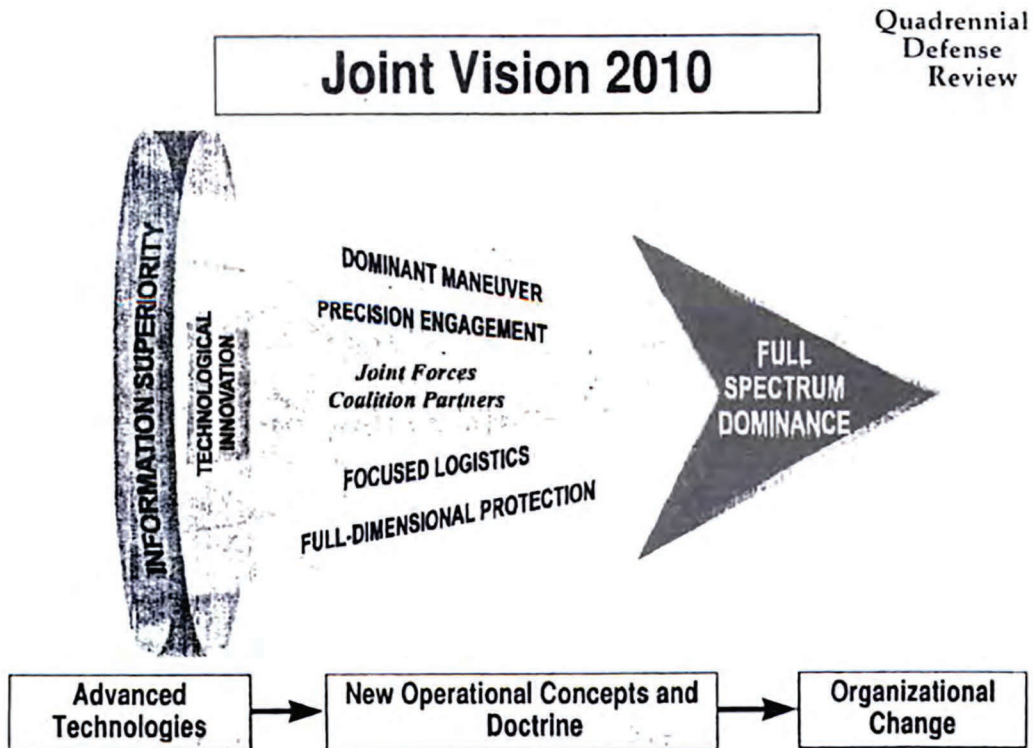
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### Concepts of Operation

As described above, the QDR promoted the continued evolution of the Cold War Air-Land Battle CONOP involving an increased emphasis on airpower in the halt phase of major regional contingencies.<sup>51</sup> That said, the 1997 QDR—especially its discussions of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and transformation of the future force—appears to have been informed by the JCS’s July 1996 *Joint Vision 2010*, which presented a vision for the development of future U.S. forces,<sup>52</sup> and possibly the JCS’s May 1997 *Concept for Future Joint Operations: Expanding Joint Vision 2010* (see Figure 9.16):<sup>53</sup>

**Figure 9.16**  
Three Integrated Paths/Postures Considered in the 1997 QDR



SOURCE: U.S. Senate, 1997, p. 9.

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<sup>51</sup> For an analysis exploring this concept, see Bowie et al., 1993.

<sup>52</sup> JCS, *Joint Vision 2010*, Washington, D.C., July 1996.

<sup>53</sup> In May 1997, the JCS released a joint concept for Joint Vision 2010. See JCS, *Concept for Future Joint Operations: Expanding Joint Vision 2010*, Washington, D.C., May 1997.

- Joint Vision 2010 sketched out a conceptual framework for U.S. armed forces to think about the future that was premised upon the assumption that modern and emerging technologies—particularly information-specific advances—could make possible a new level of joint operations capability, including “information superiority.”<sup>54</sup>
- The JCS’s Concept for Future Joint Operations posited the objective of “full spectrum dominance” and presented four new operational concepts to underwrite Joint Vision 2010: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full-dimensional protection, and focused logistics.<sup>55</sup>

### Force Structure Requirements

The QDR promoted the development of a “full-spectrum force” that was capable of conducting the full spectrum of military operations that might be required to defend and promote U.S. interests and values. The QDR’s strategic concept viewed the capability to fight and win two MTWs as the high end of the crisis continuum, the most stressing requirement for the U.S. military, and the hedge against even more-difficult contingencies; the QDR announced that its force needed to be capable of executing two nearly simultaneous MTWs with moderate risk. As in the BUR, the two-war capability was dictated primarily by the potentially adverse consequences of having only a one-war capability; as stated in the QDR, “If the United States were to forgo 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.” In comparison with the BUR, the QDR placed even greater emphasis on the quick-halt phase in MTWs, arguing that the United States needed to be able to rapidly defeat initial enemy advances short of their objectives in two theaters in close succession, one followed almost immediately by another.

The QDR described the scenarios used for the force structure requirements analyses as follows:

Since the Bottom-Up Review, much of the warfighting analysis conducted within the Department has focused on the threat posed by regional aggressors on the scale of Iraq and North Korea. The analysis conducted during the QDR built on and expanded that detailed work. Specifically, the analysis examined the sufficiency of U.S. forces to fight and win, in concert with regional allies, two overlapping major theater wars on the Korean peninsula and in Southwest Asia in 2006 while varying four key conditions across the analysis: enemy use of chemical and biological

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<sup>54</sup> JCS, 1996.

<sup>55</sup> JCS, 1997.



weapons, warning time, U.S. force size, and the degree to which U.S. forces were engaged in peacetime operations at the outbreak of the first major theater war.<sup>56</sup>

There is evidence that the primary scenarios used for the analysis of major combat operations related to Northeast Asia, specifically North Korea, and Southwest Asia.

U.S. forces could also be expected to participate in a great many SSCs involving a broad array of operations: show-of-force operations, interventions, limited strikes, non-combatant evacuation operations, no-fly-zone enforcement, peace enforcement, maritime sanctions enforcement, CT, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. Indeed, the demand for SSCs was expected to remain high over the next 15 to 20 years and to pose the most frequent challenge through 2015.

Nonetheless, DoD policymakers sought to ensure that there would be no major changes to defense strategy, forces, or budgets as a result of the QDR: They essentially hoped to preserve the status quo. Accordingly, the QDR projected stable annual defense budgets of roughly \$250 billion, thereby greatly limiting the range of force structure, modernization, transformation, and other alternatives that could be explored. In fact, the QDR force was only slightly different from that developed during the BUR four years earlier. The QDR force structure is described in Table 9.3, and the regional assignment of these forces is described in Table 9.4.

As shown in the tables, the QDR classified the major elements of the force structure both functionally (forward or contingency) and regionally (Atlantic, Pacific, Persian Gulf, and U.S.-based).

Based on the JCS's July 1996 *Joint Vision 2010*, the May 1997 *Concept for Future Joint Operations*, and further consideration of the opportunities presented by the RMA, the QDR also devoted an entire chapter to the subject of transforming U.S. forces for the future.<sup>57</sup>

### Assessment of Risk

According to the QDR,

In order to assess the three alternative defense postures [i.e., near-term, future, and balanced] against the strategy, we tested these postures and a number of other force structures against a full spectrum of operational challenges under diverse

<sup>56</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 8. The QDR also mentioned a scenario involving aggression by a regional great power, i.e., "an aggressor with capabilities significantly greater than those anticipated for Iraq, Iran, or North Korea." The Institute for Defense Analyses report analyzed "the two Major Theater Wars (MTWs) for which the Department of Defense (DoD) plans as part of the National Military Strategy," identifying Korea by name and identifying Southwest Asia without identifying a specific adversary. See John C. F. Tillson, *The Role of External Support in Total Force Planning*, Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, IDA Paper, P-3344, November 1997, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> JCS, 1996; JCS, 1997.

**Table 9.3**  
**Major Elements of Force Structure in the QDR, May 1997**

	Programmed Force		QDR
	FY 1997	FY 2003	
Army			
Active divisions	10	10	10
Reserve personnel (000s)	582	575	530
Navy			
Aircraft carriers (active/reserve)	11/1	11/1	11/1
Air wings (active/reserve)	10/1	10/1	10/1
Amphibious ready groups	12	12	12
Attack submarines	73	52	50
Surface combatants	128	131	116
Air Force			
Active fighter wings	13	13	12+
Reserve fighter wings	7	7	8
Reserve air defense squadrons	10	6	4
Bombers (total)	202	187	187
Marine Corps			
MEFs	3	3	3

SOURCE: DoD, 1997.

conditions, including providing overseas presence, smaller-scale contingency operations, major theater wars, and conflict with a future regional great power.<sup>58</sup>

Shalikashvili's testimony on the QDR revealed that the Joint Staff's analysis had examined 45 plausible scenarios describing future security challenges, and had used a range of approaches, including seminars, war games, and computer modeling:

The strength of our force assessment methodology was that it used a broad array of analytical tools from seminars, wargames and computer modeling to intensive sessions with senior civilian and military leaders over 5 months. In addition to traditional warfare modeling, we needed to develop tools that captured the load placed on our force by the lower end of the spectrum of conflict. We examined a series of 45 plausible scenarios describing future security challenges. We brought in CINC war planners and Service war planners and other experts—more than 200 profes-

<sup>58</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 22.

**Table 9.4**  
**Regional Assignment of Forces in the QDR, May 1997**

Force Package	Army Divisions	Tactical Fighter Wings	Marine Corps MEFs	Navy Carriers <sup>a</sup>
<b>Forward</b>				
Atlantic				
Europe	2.0	2.3		0.7
Pacific				
Japan	0.11 <sup>b</sup>	1.4	1.0	1.0
South Korea	0.66 <sup>c</sup>	1.0	(0.66) <sup>d</sup>	
Persian Gulf	— <sup>e</sup>	— <sup>e</sup>	(0.33) <sup>f</sup>	0.7–1.0 <sup>g</sup>
Total	2.66	4.7	1.0	2.4–2.7
<b>Contingency</b>				
U.S.				
Active	7.33	8.1	2.0	7.3–7.6
Reserve	8.0	8.0	1.0	1.0 <sup>h</sup>
Total	15.33	16.1	3.0	8.3–8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>
Active	10.0	12.8	3.0	11.0
Reserve	8.0	8.0	1.0 <sup>i</sup>	1.0 <sup>h</sup>

SOURCES: DoD, 1997; authors' estimates.

<sup>a</sup> Eleven active plus one reserve carrier capable of sustaining full-time presence in one region and presence in two other regions 70 percent of the time. The Navy never implemented the reserve carrier concept.

<sup>b</sup> Army Special Forces battalion in Okinawa, not scored against division count.

<sup>c</sup> The BUR plan called for ultimate reduction to one brigade.

<sup>d</sup> Two brigade-size MEFs (two MPS squadrons) available for the MTW in Northeast Asia.

<sup>e</sup> Land-based Army and Air Force forces to be rotational only.

<sup>f</sup> One MPS squadron for brigade-size MEF available for the MTW in Southwest Asia.

<sup>g</sup> "Tether" carrier, supplemented by other Navy ship and a rotational amphibious ready group.

<sup>h</sup> Operational reserve/Navy carrier. This carrier was subsequently returned to the active force.

<sup>i</sup> Reserve Marine division/wing/service support group.

sionals in all—to wargame the forces necessary to meet our future requirements. Then we met face to face with the Deputy CINCs to validate our findings. We now understand very clearly what demands are placed on our force. The force is working hard, as you well know and as you have reported. It is working hard to protect America's interests and to prevent regional crises from escalating. Through our robust assessment process, we learned which parts of the force must be protected. We also learned where we can thin out the force. We drew upon the analysis conducted by the CINC staffs in preparing their own major theater war plans over

the last 4 years. Based on this strategy and this most rigorous and comprehensive examination, the Joint Chiefs, the combatant commanders and I agree that the QDR force is the force that America will need as we enter the 21st Century. This is not to imply that this was a perfect review. The QDR is part of the ongoing process of building the defense program.<sup>59</sup>

The report also stated that the QDR examined “mobility requirements across a continuum of planning scenarios, from SSC operations to major theater wars and single-theater conflicts against notional regional great power adversaries.”<sup>60</sup>

The QDR reported that the force assessments conducted during the development of the QDR considered a wide range of missions, including overseas presence analyses, SSC operations analyses, MTW analyses, and regional great power analyses and that these DoD and joint analyses were supplemented by individual service assessments:<sup>61</sup>

- The overseas presence analyses examined overseas presence objectives and posture in all regions, including the mix of permanently stationed forces, rotational forces, temporary forces, and prepositioned equipment and stocks. Additional analysis was done examining the impact of possible naval force structure options.
- The SSC operations analyses involved various studies, games, and workshops to gain insights into the challenges of conducting these operations, which revealed high operational tempos and stresses across the force.
- The QDR described its MTW analyses as focused on scenarios involving nearly simultaneous MRCs in Korea and Southwest Asia as follows:

Since the Bottom-Up Review, much of the war-fighting analysis conducted within the Department has focused on the threat posed by regional aggressors on the scale of Iraq and North Korea. The analysis conducted during the QDR built on and expanded that detailed work. Specifically, the analysis examined the sufficiency of U.S. forces to fight and win, in concert with regional allies, two overlapping major theater wars on the Korean peninsula and in Southwest Asia in 2006 while varying four key conditions across the analysis: enemy use of chemical and biological weapons, warning time, U.S. force size, and the degree to which U.S. forces were engaged in peacetime operations at the outbreak of the first major theater war.

The results of this analysis demonstrated that a force of the size and structure close to the current force was necessary to meet the requirement set out in the strategy of being able to win two, nearly simultaneous, major theater wars in concert with regional allies. While slightly smaller forces were capable of prevailing without a significant increase in risk in the base case of the analysis, a larger force

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Senate, 1997, p. 62.

<sup>60</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> DoD, 1997, pp. 22–25.

was judged necessary to conduct these operations with acceptable risk when either enemy chemical weapons were used or shorter warning times were played. Even with the current force, enemy use of chemical and biological weapons presents U.S. and coalition forces with considerable challenges. The results of the analysis also underlined the importance of several planned modernization programs, as well as increased investment in capabilities to prevent and defend against the use of chemical and biological weapons.<sup>62</sup>

- Analysis of a wild-card scenario involving a regional great power considered the potential requirements that would be posed by an aggressor with capabilities significantly greater than those anticipated for Iraq, Iran, or North Korea, and was used to inform modernization and other decisions. The QDR described this scenario and the related analyses as follows:

This analysis employed combat simulation models to examine the capabilities of U.S. forces in a major theater war against a postulated regional great power in 2014. The generic scenarios used a threat force that was roughly based on the projected capabilities of major nations not currently allied with the United States operating in a generic political environment and physical terrain. This analysis differed from our major theater war assessments in that it involved a significantly larger and more capable threat, relied on more capable allies, and employed a larger proportion of U.S. forces than the single major theater war scenarios involving North Korea or Iraq. The scenarios assumed that U.S. forces would be deployed to defend, in concert with allies, the territory of a fictitious threatened nation. The purpose of this analysis was to explore a range of outcomes by varying key conditions, projected modernization, warning times, aggressor and allied capabilities, and weapon systems effectiveness. The analysis enabled us to test our projected capabilities against a range of more challenging threats. In addition, the modernization excursions demonstrated that planned modernization programs have high payoffs in these more demanding scenarios.<sup>63</sup>

As noted earlier, the strategic assessment of the alternative paths for posture—a focus on near-term, future, or a balanced set of military capabilities—led to the seemingly foregone conclusion that a balanced force (“Path 3”) was needed to shape, respond, and prepare for an uncertain future:

Based on these insights and assessments, the QDR concluded that the overall defense posture associated with Path 3 would best allow the Department to address the fundamental challenge presented by our strategy: to meet our requirements to shape and respond in the near term, while at the same time transforming U.S. combat capabilities and support structures to shape and respond in the face of

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<sup>62</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 24.

<sup>63</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 24.

future challenges. The posture described in Path 3 is not without risks, both near- and longer-term, but we believe we can mitigate these risks by more effectively managing the force and enhancing its capabilities. The Department proceeded to determine the specific implications of Path 3 for force structure, operating posture, and modernization planning.<sup>64</sup>

Shalikashvili's comments to Secretary of Defense William Cohen on the QDR were favorable, yet somewhat conditional on the availability of adequate resources:

From the beginning, as well, it was agreed that the QDR had to be based on the strategy and that all recommended changes to the force structure and defense programs had to be tested against the proposed strategy.

The recommended changes outlined in your QDR report will strengthen our armed forces and provide our nation over the long term with the strong defense programs needed to protect America's interests well into the next century. However, for the QDR to have the desired effect, we must ensure that the savings it identifies be redirected to preserve our procurement accounts, to fix recently emerging readiness problems, and to do all that is necessary to maintain faith with our people, both military and civilian.

... The Quadrennial Defense Review proposes the correct strategy to protect our interests today and into the future. It makes proper end strength reductions, program adjustments, and reengineering of our infrastructure to prudently balance near-, mid-, and long-term risks.<sup>65</sup>

Nonetheless, Shalikashvili expressed specific concern, in particular, about the high operating tempo and the need to reduce the pressure on the force. He also pointed to the need to improve the analytic basis for conducting force requirements analyses:

This QDR assessment process has highlighted the need for better analytical models that will allow us to accurately and rapidly conduct future force requirements analysis. These analytical tools need to capture the interaction of key variables in force-on-force assessments across the spectrum of military operations, from smaller-scale contingencies through major theater war. While professional judgment will always be required to use and interpret the models, we need better tools to conduct the analytical assessments of warfighting risk.<sup>66</sup>

In testimony, Shalikashvili responded to a question about risks that might be accepted in accepting the recommendations of the QDR as follows:

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<sup>64</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> DoD, 1997, pp. 64, 68.

<sup>66</sup> DoD, 1997, p. 66.

Our plan is not without some risk in responding to crises and contingencies in the near-term and in transforming the force for the longer-term. As the report states, we need to continue to be selective in responding to smaller-scale contingencies. It will take a longer period of time to exploit new capabilities and operational concepts to achieve battlefield dominance with smaller overall forces. Our program also introduces new systems and technologies at a slower, but reasonable, rate with modest room for new program starts. We believe we can mitigate these risks by effectively managing the force while enhancing its capabilities.

We also assumed a moderate risk with regard to the all-volunteer Force (AVF). We have the best force today because of the outstanding women and men who comprise it. Sustaining both the quantity and quality of the all-volunteer force is imperative. We have unresolved OPSTEMPO, PERSTEMPO and quality of life concerns that could place the AVF at risk.<sup>67</sup>

The congressionally mandated NDP's assessment of the QDR was mixed. On the one hand, the NDP praised the general path for defense laid out in the QDR:

The National Defense Panel (NDP) believes that the strategy and actions outlined in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) will better position our Armed Forces for success in the security environment of the 21st Century. The QDR is an important step down the evolutionary path that must be taken to reshape our military capabilities to meet the needs of the nation in the next century.

On the other hand, the NDP offered a number of criticisms of the QDR, including those on the following points:

- Insufficient connectivity between strategy on the one hand and force structure, operational concepts, and procurement decisions on the other.
- Although the QDR strategy opened the door to RMA, which requires new war-fighting concepts and new force structures that capitalize on rapidly improving technologies, the QDR's view of major theater warfare as a traditional force-on-force challenge limited possibilities for transforming the force.
- The NDP agreed that the force structure and military personnel reductions could be taken without creating significant risk, but thought that efforts to augment the most highly stressed elements of the force structure also should be considered.
- The NDP considered modernization plans to have a higher budget risk than was acknowledged by the QDR, because of their reliance on expected future savings from additional Base Realignment and Closure rounds and other sources.
- The NDP stated the belief that new tools were required for making ongoing force structure decisions (and for the next QDR in 2001) and that the department

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<sup>67</sup> John M. Shalikashvili, *Quadrennial Defense Review: Hearings Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services*, 105th Congress, 1st Session, May 20–21, 1997a, p. 93.



should broaden the range of models and analytic tools it has available, and accelerate their availability:<sup>68</sup>

Models and gaming were used extensively in much of the analysis done during the QDR, especially in force structure studies and the Deep Attack Weapons Mix Study (DAWMS) analysis (munitions and platforms). Most of the cases studied were the Korea and Persian Gulf scenarios, with emphasis on conventional force-on-force assaults. But the models used, such as TACWAR, were developed originally for analysis of the NATO–Warsaw Pact Central Front scenario. Ten years ago, they were believed to have significant shortcomings, even for that use, because of their reliance on deterministic force attrition concepts and inadequate attention to such important elements of warfare as air power. Moreover, the continued introduction of sophisticated military systems such as airborne surveillance platforms, nonlethals, stealthy platforms, standoff weapons and modern-day information systems, into our force structure is changing our conduct of warfare in ways that make those analytic models even less relevant today. This is particularly true for analysis of the 2-MTW and multiple-SSC scenarios reflected in the QDR.<sup>69</sup>

The NDP also noted the desirability of better analytic tools for assessing the impact of SSCs on force availability and readiness:

The Joint Staff’s Dynamic Commitment (DC) series of seminars brought needed attention to the impact of SSCs on our forces. The applicability of the DC series, however, lies only within the realm of force availability. It is not a traditional war game, and does not actually “fight” the forces employed in its scenarios. Further, it reflects only today’s forces against historically-based vignettes as opposed to preparing for likely future challenges (e.g., urban warfare, weapons of mass destruction, and non-state entities such as organized crime).<sup>70</sup>

For its part, GAO’s overall assessment of the 1997 QDR was that the review was broad in scope but also had some “limitations that precluded a full analysis of defense needs”:

One limitation was that it did not examine some alternatives that would have provided greater assurance that the review identified the force structure and the modernization program that were best suited to implement the defense strategy. For example, the QDR’s force assessments only modeled alternatives to cut the services’ forces proportionately by 10, 20, and 30 percent. It did not examine alternatives that would reduce or increase only ground forces or air power or naval forces.

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<sup>68</sup> NDP, *The National Defense Panel: Assessment of the May 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington, D.C., May 15, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> NDP, 1997, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> NDP, 1997, p. 6.

Furthermore, none of the assessments fully examined the potential effects of new technologies and warfighting concepts on DOD's planned force structure.

[As of 2001], DOD faces the same challenge as it did during the Bottom-Up Review and 1997 QDR—developing an affordable defense program that provides the necessary current and future military capabilities to support the U.S. strategy.<sup>71</sup>

In fact, GAO had a large number of criticisms of the analytics behind the 1997 QDR, including the following:

- DoD did not finalize the defense strategy until the force structure and modernization panels had completed much of their work.
- DoD's force structure assessments modeled only major theater warfare and did not examine alternatives other than proportional reductions to the services' combat capabilities.
- In a QDR war game, DC, DoD analyzed the effect of SSCs but did not identify or analyze changes to force structure.
- DoD's modernization assessment reviewed proportional changes to existing plans but did not examine alternative mixes of air, ground, and maritime modernization.
- Modernization and force structure panels completed their analyses separately and did not model trade-offs between force structure and modernization alternatives.
- DoD did not examine the potential effects of new or advanced technologies or enemy use of asymmetric concepts of warfare used by U.S. and enemy forces on operational concepts or force structure because of limitations in available models.
- DoD employed overly optimistic planning assumptions in its budget formulation, which leads to far too many programs for the available dollars.
- DoD had difficulty meeting its planned growth in procurement funds and as a result, increases in procurement funds were shifted to the future. This pattern was caused by the need to use procurement funds for operation and maintenance activities, which have continued to represent a large proportion of DoD's budget.<sup>72</sup>

Four key factors appear to have militated against a successful outcome in the 1997 QDR. First, there was a major clash between the Army on one side and the Air Force and Army National Guard on the other over the matter of "decisive halt," and its emphasis on airpower, and a lengthy mobilization before large ground forces were

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<sup>71</sup> GAO, 2001, pp. 3–4.

<sup>72</sup> GAO, 2001, pp. 7–8. It is worth mentioning that in its response, DoD did not concur with many of GAO's criticisms.

transported into theater.<sup>73</sup> Second, budgets were effectively frozen at levels that not only seemed incapable of resolving the emerging gaps between ends, ways, and means but also hindered the development of more-creative strategies for resolving DoD's dilemma. Third, Shalikashvili effectively ruled out any major changes to the status quo regarding force structure, roles and missions, and service budget shares. Finally, Cohen's status as the newest member of (and sole Republican in) the Clinton cabinet gave him little of the compensating leverage that would have been needed to overturn the status quo that Shalikashvili had set. Taken together, it seems to have been almost a foregone conclusion that the QDR would generate a status quo outcome that would fail to achieve the balance that DoD policymakers ostensibly sought.

In the end, the 1997 QDR yielded relatively modest reductions to force structure and end strength in its attempts to stabilize the level of defense resources and better achieve modernization goals, and even more-modest savings.<sup>74</sup> The selective and minimal force structure reductions resulted in a force structure that looked like the one that had resulted from the BUR. Meanwhile, by 2003, active manpower would fall by 6.2 percent, reserve manpower by 7.2 percent, and civilian manpower by 20 percent below their 1997 levels. Budgets would remain roughly at the 1997 level of \$250 billion while procurement spending would not reach \$60 billion until FY 2001.

Concerns regarding military readiness, deferred modernization, transformation of the force, and other issues continued to grow in the years following the QDR, and would become prominent topics for consideration in the George W. Bush administration's defense planning efforts.<sup>75</sup>

## Summary and Conclusions

The Clinton administration completed the process of downsizing forces to meet post–Cold War defense requirements that had begun with the previous administration's

<sup>73</sup> Air Force analyses reportedly demonstrated the virtues of “decisive halt,” whereas Army analyses did not. The author is indebted to Andrew F. Krepinevich for this point.

<sup>74</sup> On the challenges in achieving planned savings from personnel reductions, see GAO, *Quadrennial Defense Review: Some Personnel Cuts and Associated Savings May Not Be Achieved*, Washington, D.C., NSIAD-98-100, April 30, 1998d.

<sup>75</sup> In 1996, Congress enacted a statutory requirement (currently 10 U.S.C. 482) for Quarterly Readiness Reports from the CJCS. Also on military readiness, see GAO, *Military Readiness: Congress Needs Better Tools for Effective Oversight*, Washington, D.C., GAO/T-NSIAD-98-124, March 18, 1998c; GAO, *Military Readiness: Reports to Congress Provide Few Details on Deficiencies and Solutions*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-98-68, March 1998b; and GAO, *Military Readiness: Readiness Reports Do Not Provide a Clear Assessment of Army Equipment*, Washington, D.C., GAO/NSIAD-99-119, June 1999. On risks to modernization, see GAO, *DoD Budget: Substantial Risks in Weapons Modernization Plans*, Washington, D.C., GAO/T-NSIAD-99-20, October 8, 1998e; and U.S. House of Representatives, *Department of Defense Modernization Plans: Hearings Before the Military Procurement Subcommittee of the Committee on National Security*, 105th Congress, 1st Session, November 6, 1997.

Base Force study. As was the case with the Base Force, the two main scenarios that were used to assess conventional force requirements were MRCs in Southwest Asia and Iraq, although the 1997 QDR also included a rising regional threat among the reportedly 45 scenarios that were considered during that review. The result was a reduction of Regular Army divisions from 14 in FY 1993 to ten in FY 1996—two divisions fewer than was envisioned in the Base Force—and a reduction in Regular Army manpower from 572,000 to 495,000 over the same period.

The administration's strategic concept and force sizing construct evolved slightly over the course of the administration to meet the unexpectedly high demands on the force from peace operations that responded to the turbulence arising from the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, but that also were, at least in part, the direct result of the administration's activist foreign policy stance. Despite the high priority given by the administration to the readiness of the force, funding for operations accounts proved inadequate, and the migration of funds from modernization accounts to operations accounts also clouded the longer-term health of the force. As a result, concerns about readiness increased over time, leading to additional congressionally imposed readiness reporting requirements, and concerns about a looming "bow wave" in deferred procurement also increased. In addition, despite the rhetorical emphasis given to transformation in the 1997 QDR, meeting the growing calls for transformation of the force would prove unaffordable during the administration. The range of challenges that developed during the administration would become major topics in the 2000 presidential campaign and the early George W. Bush administration.

## The George W. Bush Administration, 2001–2009

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In this chapter, we examine the use of scenarios in defense planning during the George W. Bush administration, with an emphasis on the two QDRs that were conducted in 2001 and 2005 to identify lessons from that administration's experience.<sup>1</sup>

To size conventional (and other) forces, the administration relied on a mix of threat-based scenarios for plausible near-term threats and capabilities-based assessments to consider longer-term challenges that might help to focus the transformation of the force.<sup>2</sup> DoD's longer-term focus would be disrupted by the al-Qa'ida terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11) and by the requirements of the U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

### The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report

The 2001 QDR<sup>3</sup> aimed to address the various challenges that had emerged in previous years, and to give greater prominence to the security of the homeland, and fuller

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking during the George W. Bush administration, see Brown, 2015, pp. 609–656. For a rather dour assessment of U.S. strategic planning at the end of the Bush administration, see Aaron L. Friedberg, "Strengthening U.S. Strategic Planning," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 2007–2008.

<sup>2</sup> For his part, Chief of Staff of the Army GEN Eric K. Shinseki began efforts to make the Army more agile in 1999, when he ordered the establishment of the first of what would become dozens of brigade-sized combat formations. See, for example, Steven Lee Myers, "Army Is Restructuring with Brigades for Rapid Response," *New York Times*, October 13, 1999; and Peter J. Boyer, "A Different War," *New Yorker*, July 1, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Descriptions of the 2001 QDR can be found in DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., September 2001b; Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Guidance and Terms of Reference for the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington, D.C., June 22, 2001d; DoD, "Executive Summary of the QDR Terms of Reference," Washington, D.C., August 8, 2001a; U.S. Senate, *Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR): Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services*, 107th Congress, 1st Session, October 4, 2001; John Y. Schrader, Leslie Lewis, and Roger Allen Brown, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2001: Lessons on Managing Change in the Department of Defense*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, DB-379-JS, 2001; and GAO, *Quadrennial Defense Review: Future Reviews Can Benefit from Better Analysis and Changes in Timing and Scope*, GAO-03-13, November 2002.

consideration of the risks associated with uncertain future threats. As stated in the Foreword:

Even before the attack of September 11, 2001, the senior leaders of the Defense Department set out to establish a new strategy for America's defense that would embrace uncertainty and contend with surprise, a strategy premised on the idea that to be effective abroad, America must be safe at home. It sought to set the conditions to extend America's influence and preserve America's security.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the work on the QDR was conducted prior to the 9/11 attacks, and the QDR retained its focus on repairing the health of the current force while preparing for future threats and challenges through the transformation of the force.<sup>5</sup> The QDR also introduced an innovative risk assessment framework that focused defense planners on future challenges risk, in addition to operational, institutional, and force management risk, thereby further underwriting its long-term perspective.

Defense planners in the years following the 9/11 attacks thus faced significant challenges in developing strategy, programs, and budgets that could reconcile short-term operational requirements for what came to be called the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and the war in Iraq, with longer-term defense needs to address future threats and challenges.

### Key Assumptions

The June 22, 2001, Terms of Reference (TOR) for the QDR provided a summary of key assumptions behind the review:

This review is based on the *premise* that, in combination with other instruments of national power, *the foundation of a peaceful world* for ourselves and for our posterity rests on the ability of the U.S. Armed forces to maintain a *substantial margin of national military advantage relative to others*. The U.S. uses this advantage not to dominate others, but through cooperation with its friends and allies around the world to dissuade new functional or geographic military competitions from emerging and to manage them if they do. *The U.S. is committing to expanding its network of friendships and alliances* with the aim that eventually all of the world's great powers will willingly cooperate with it to safeguard freedom and preserve peace. The aim is to extend the conditions favorable to peace and the U.S. geo-strategic position far into the future.

. . . U.S. forces overall remain unrivalled, but are largely a downsized legacy of Cold War investment and therefore may not be optimized for the future. DoD

<sup>4</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. iii.

<sup>5</sup> The idea behind "transformation" was to focus changes on small parts of the force in a way that would yield U.S. capabilities that would be far in advance of those possessed by any potential adversaries.

must improve morale, reverse the decline in readiness, *replace or retire worn out equipment*, purchase necessary spare parts, and *manage the frequency of deployments*. Looking toward the future, the U.S. requires forces that are more capable of information operations and effective in all critical areas of the world (Europe, Northeast Asia, the Asian littoral, Middle East/Southwest Asia). These forces must be capable of deploying into and sustaining forces in anti-access environments, and operating under the threat of covert or overt attack from nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons and their means of delivery, including ballistic and cruise missile of all ranges. The U.S. must maintain the capability to deal with threats to Europe and its territory, which while largely at peace today remains one of the world's greatest economic-military-technological-industrial centers and therefore a critical economic and security interest.

Given this context, the QDR will focus on the task of transforming the U.S. defense posture to stay ahead of and hedge against the uncertain eventualities of the future while continuing to meet current U.S. security responsibilities. The current period of U.S. military preeminence is the best time to transform for the challenges of the future. An overriding objective of these transformation efforts is to maximize the operational effectiveness of the most valuable but most scarce resource: the men and women in uniform. New combinations of technologies, combined with innovative concepts of operations and organizational arrangements will serve as the multipliers of future U.S. forces, both active and Reserve. DoD must leverage information technology to create a network centric operational force. U.S. forces must transform, in a manner that outpaces competitors by pursuing new technologies, concepts and organizational arrangements.<sup>6</sup>

### National Interests

In its description of U.S. national interests and objectives, the QDR TOR gave a preview of the strategy's emphasis on defense capabilities that could deter and decisively defeat adversaries (i.e., conduct regime change), along with a succinct, more traditional statement of interests, as follows:

The purpose of the U.S. Armed Forces is to protect and advance U.S. national interests, and if deterrence fails to decisively defeat threats to those interests. Thus, U.S. national security interests and objectives guide the new approach to defense.

The U.S. is a global power with interests, responsibilities, and commitments that span the world. As an open society, the U.S. can be affected by trends, events, and influences that occur or emanate from beyond its borders.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Rumsfeld, 2001d, pp. 1–2. Emphasis in original.

<sup>7</sup> Rumsfeld, 2001d, p. 6.



The QDR elaborated on the TOR's traditional statement of U.S. national interests and objectives, as follows:

America's goals are to promote peace, sustain freedom, and encourage prosperity. U.S. leadership is premised on sustaining an international system that is respectful of the rule of law. America's political, diplomatic, and economic leadership contributes directly to global peace, freedom, and prosperity. U.S. military strength is essential to achieving these goals, as it assures friends and allies of an unwavering U.S. commitment to common interests.<sup>8</sup>

The QDR then elaborated U.S. interests as follows:

- Ensuring U.S. security and freedom of action, including:
  - U.S. sovereignty, territorial integrity, and freedom
  - Safety of U.S. citizens at home and abroad
  - Protection of critical U.S. infrastructure
- Honoring international commitments, including:
  - Security and well-being of allies and friends
  - Precluding hostile domination of critical areas, particularly Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian littoral, and the Middle East and Southwest Asia
  - Peace and stability in the Western Hemisphere
- Contributing to economic well-being, including:
  - Vitality and productivity of the global economy
  - Security of international sea, air, and space, and information lines of communication
  - Access to key markets and strategic resources.<sup>9</sup>

In order to secure these interests, the 2001 QDR report was organized around four defense policy goals intended to protect the United States and preserve a global order beneficial to the United States:

- First, the United States required a military capable of assuring allies and friends by demonstrating its resolve and capability to be a reliable partner and of using force in both its own interests and to advance common goals.

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<sup>8</sup> Rumsfeld, 2001d, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 2.

- Second, the United States required a military that could dissuade future military competition by demonstrating the futility of attempting to challenge it in key areas of military capability.
- Third, the U.S. military needed to be capable of deterring threats and coercion against U.S. interests through forces and capabilities that discouraged all forms of aggression and coercion, which were forward-deployed to critical global areas, and which could defeat aggression with only minimal modest reinforcements.
- Finally, should deterrence fail, the U.S. military needed to be capable of imposing its will on any adversary through regime change or military occupation until U.S. strategic objectives were met.<sup>10</sup>

### Threats

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and the 2001 QDR made much of the vast uncertainties associated with identifying threats and adversaries for defense planning.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the QDR advocated a shift from threat-based defense planning to capabilities-based defense planning:

A central objective of the review was to shift the basis of defense planning from a “threat-based” model that has dominated thinking in the past to a “capabilities-based” model for the future. This capabilities-based model focuses more on how an adversary might fight rather than specifically whom the adversary might be or where a war might occur. It recognizes that it is not enough to plan for large conventional wars in distant theaters. Instead, the United States must identify the capabilities required to deter and defeat adversaries who will rely on surprise, deception, and asymmetric warfare to achieve their objectives.

A guiding principle behind the 2001 QDR was the idea that, although the United States could not confidently predict which adversaries would threaten it, the types of future military capabilities that could be used to challenge U.S. interests and U.S. forces could be identified and understood. This perspective came to be called “capabilities-based planning.”

Adopting this capabilities-based approach to planning requires that the nation maintain its military advantages in key areas while it develops new areas of military advantage and denies asymmetric advantages to adversaries. It entails adapting existing military capabilities to new circumstances, while experimenting with

<sup>10</sup> DoD, 2001b, pp. 11–13. These four goals are consistent with those stated in a memorandum from Secretary Rumsfeld to the President four days before the 9/11 attacks. See Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Defense Planning Guidance,” memorandum to President George W. Bush, The Rumsfeld Papers, September 7, 2001e.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the QDR stated, “An assessment of the global security environment involves a great deal of uncertainty about the potential sources of military threats, the conduct of war in the future, and the form that threats and attacks against the Nation will take.” DoD, 2001b, p. 3.

the development of new military capabilities. In short, it requires the transformation of U.S. forces, capabilities, and institutions to extend America's asymmetric advantages well into the future.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, the QDR presented a construct that would harmonize short-term, "threat-based planning" against contemporary threats with longer-term, capabilities-based planning to meet more uncertain future challenges. As stated in the QDR: "The new construct serves as a bridge from today's force, developed around the threat-based, two-MTW construct, to a future, transformed force."<sup>13</sup>

Thus, consideration in the QDR of longer-term adversary capabilities that might be encountered primarily revolved around assessments of geopolitical and technological trends that would shape the specific threats encountered while, in combination, increasing uncertainty and the possibility for surprise. Relevant geopolitical trends cited in the QDR included the diminishing geographic isolation and growing vulnerability of the United States itself; regional security dynamics that could lead regional actors to develop military capabilities that threatened regional stability in areas of critical interest to the United States; the territories of weak or failed states, which could serve as safe havens for terrorism, or whose instability could threaten neighbors; and nonstate actors with increasing access to military capabilities that could threaten the United States. A number of threat-related technology trends also were identified in the QDR that would increase the possibility that the United States could be surprised by the speed at which opponents exploited RMA, acquired WMDs and ballistic missiles, and challenged the nation in space and cyberspace. These trends included the rapid advancement in military technologies that had the potential to change the conduct of military operations; globalization resulting in the rapid and pervasive proliferation of WMDs, ballistic missiles, and conventional weapons; and technical advances leading to increased competition in space and cyberspace. In addition, the QDR emphasized threats to the homeland; antiaccess challenges; and the general employment of surprise, deception, and asymmetric warfare by adversaries.

The authors of the 2001 QDR report appear to have believed that the previous threat-based focus of defense planning on potential conflict scenarios in Northeast Asia and Southwest Asia, as well as the concentration of U.S. overseas force posture in Europe and Northeast Asia, were inadequate to assessing the requirements of the emerging strategic environment. Of course, these two contingencies had dominated defense planning in the preceding decade.<sup>14</sup> The QDR explained its use of scenarios as follows:

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<sup>12</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. iv.

<sup>13</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> See Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001.

[T]he approach shifts the focus of U.S. force planning from optimizing for conflicts in two particular regions—Northeast and Southwest Asia—to building a portfolio of capabilities that is robust across the spectrum of possible force requirements, both functional and geographical. This approach to planning responds to the capabilities-based strategy outlined above. It focuses more on how an adversary might fight than on who the adversary might be and where a war might occur. The shift is intended to refocus planners on the growing range of capabilities that adversaries might possess or could develop. It will require planners to define the military objectives associated with defeating aggression or coercion in a variety of potential scenarios in addition to conventional cross-border invasions. It calls for identifying, developing, and fielding capabilities that, for a given level of forces, would accomplish each mission at an acceptable level of risk as established by the National Command Authorities.<sup>15</sup>

The QDR called for maintaining critical bases in Western Europe and Northeast Asia, which also might serve the additional role of hubs for power projection in future contingencies in other areas of the world. In a section on regional security developments, the QDR described “a broad arc of instability that stretches from the Middle East to Northeast Asia,” mentioning Iraq only in the context of the United States’ success in building a coalition to meet the 1990 invasion of Iraq while failing to explicitly mention North Korea at all. In connection with Asia, the QDR signaled the potential long-term challenge posed by China, in a thinly veiled fashion: “Maintaining a stable balance in Asia will be a complex task. The possibility exists that a military competitor with a formidable resource base will emerge in the region”.<sup>16</sup>

A major contribution of the 2001 QDR was to provide a more comprehensive framework for assessing risk, which focused on four dimensions of risk:

- *force management risk*, defined as “the ability to recruit, retain, train, and equip sufficient numbers of quality personnel and sustain the readiness of the force while accomplishing its many operational tasks”
- *operational risk*, defined as “the ability to achieve military objectives in a near-term conflict or other contingency”
- *future challenges risk*, defined as “the ability to invest in new capabilities and develop new operational concepts needed to dissuade or defeat mid- to long-term military challenges”
- *institutional risk*, defined as “the ability to develop management practices and controls that use resources efficiently and promote the effective operation of the Defense establishment.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> DoD, 2001b, pp. 17–18.

<sup>16</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> DoD, 2001b, pp. 57–58. The evolution of DoD’s conceptions of risk is described in Larson, Orletsky, and Leuschner, 2001; and Larson et al., 2018.

Although it was never fully fleshed out with the necessary underlying analytics, this framework would continue to be cited as the basis for assessing risk in executing the QDR strategy at least until the 2014 QDR.

The capabilities-based approach to planning aimed to guide transformation, strong support for which remained even after the 9/11 attacks.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, as a practical matter, it appears that a threat-based approach necessarily continued to be embraced for assessing nearer-term operational risks associated with identifiable potential near-term contingencies while the capabilities-based approach was deemed more appropriate for addressing the risks of being unprepared for longer-term surprises in new adversary capabilities and concepts, and addressing what the QDR termed future challenges risk.

### Strategy

Importantly, the Bush administration appears to have largely ignored the outgoing Clinton administration's December 2000 NSS report,<sup>19</sup> and the statutory requirement for also producing a new NSS report within 150 days of taking office.<sup>20</sup> In fact, it would not be until September 2002 that the administration would publish its first NSS.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the 2001 QDR report was the first strategy document published by the new Bush administration, and was presented as being a significant break from the strategy pursued by the previous Clinton administration. As described in a June 19, 2001, strategy memorandum authored by Rumsfeld, the priorities at the time were as follows:

The U.S. will balance the serious current risks to the men and women in the Armed Forces, the risks to meeting current operational requirements, and the risks of failing to invest for the future by using this period of distinct U.S. advantage to:

<sup>18</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 61. A September 29, 2001, memorandum from Rumsfeld to Pete Aldridge and an October 10, 2001, memorandum from Rumsfeld to Stephen Cambone recorded both Rumsfeld's and President Bush's continued belief in the need to use the current period to pursue DoD's transformation efforts, even as the nation moved to war (see Donald H. Rumsfeld, "To Pete Aldridge et al re Transformation," memorandum to Pete Aldridge, The Rumsfeld Papers, September 29, 2001f; and Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Transformation," memorandum to Stephen Cambone, The Rumsfeld Papers, October 10, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> White House, *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age*, Washington, D.C., December 2000.

<sup>20</sup> See John Y. Schrader, Leslie Lewis, and Roger Allen Brown, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2001: Lessons on Managing Change in the Department of Defense*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, DB-379-JS, 2003. Federal law (U.S.C. 50, § 3043, Annual National Security Strategy Report) requires that an incoming presidential administration produce its first national security strategy report within 150 days of taking office, with subsequent annual reports submitted simultaneously with each new president's budget. See Catherine Dale, *National Security Strategy: Mandates, Execution to Date, and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R43174, August 6, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., September 2002.

- Get well from the investment shortfalls in people, morale, infrastructure, equipment, OPTEMPO, etc., so we are able to attract and retain the talents needed for a modern force;
- Invest in the future capabilities that will be critical if the U.S. is to be able to reassure allies and friends, and to deter and defeat potential adversaries armed with advanced technologies, vastly more lethal weapons, and a range of methods of threatening their use.<sup>22</sup>

The QDR identified four defense policy goals and five strategic tenets. The four defense policy goals provided a strategic concept for defense planning from peacetime to wartime, and included the following goals: (1) assuring allies and friends; (2) dissuading future military competition; (3) deterring any coercion against U.S. interests; and (4) if deterrence fails, decisively defeating any adversary.<sup>23</sup>

The QDR's five strategic tenets were: (1) managing risks in a more holistic fashion, (2) shifting defense planning to a capabilities-based approach, (3) defending the United States and projecting power, (4) strengthening alliances and partnerships, and (5) transforming the force.

### Concepts of Operations

As evidenced by the highly innovative and effective integration of special operations forces and airpower in operations to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan in late 2001, and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, Rumsfeld was eager to develop new CONOPs for joint operations that could guide transformation of the force and provide new capabilities, and could demonstrate that military missions could be accomplished without the necessity of the large forces and long deployment timelines associated with the Overwhelming Force doctrine.

The QDR called for the creation of standing joint task force headquarters that could serve as the engines for developing new operational concepts to provide for more-effective joint operations:

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<sup>22</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, "A Strategy (and/or a Force Sizing Construct?)—for Consideration," memorandum, The Rumsfeld Papers, June 19, 2001c. In a version of the memorandum dated June 18, Rumsfeld commented that "[t]he strategy reduces flexibility in the near term, in favor of providing the necessary margin of safety for the future" (see Donald H. Rumsfeld, "A Strategy—for Consideration—," memorandum, The Rumsfeld Papers, June 18, 2001b).

According to structured conversations that were held as research for Larson et al., 2018 Rumsfeld was concerned about the decay of defense infrastructure, and, as part of the assessment of institutional risk, refocused attention on the whole defense institution and the infrastructure required to support it.

In an earlier memorandum to Director of Net Assessment Andrew W. Marshall on his draft DSR, Rumsfeld refers to an "advantage strategy," and the desirability of describing this in a way that would make the idea less subject to criticism (see Donald H. Rumsfeld, "To Andy Marshall re Some Thoughts on the -03-08-01 Draft," memorandum, The Rumsfeld Papers, March 12, 2001a).

<sup>23</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 11.

In addition, the Department will examine options for establishing Standing Joint Task Forces (SJTFFs). SJTFF organizations will focus in particular on the critical operational goals described previously. They will seek to develop new concepts to exploit U.S. asymmetric military advantages and joint force synergies. These concepts will be designed to take into account the potential to achieve significantly greater military capability at lower total personnel levels.<sup>24</sup>

As part of the effort to develop and test new operational concepts, the QDR also called for the expansion of experimentation under Joint Forces Command.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, the QDR called explicitly for new concepts for deterrence,<sup>26</sup> and called on the Secretary of the Navy to develop new concepts of maritime prepositioning, high-speed sealift, and new amphibious capabilities for the Marine Corps.<sup>27</sup>

### Force Structure Requirements

Force structure requirements were established in two phases: The QDR process (including the various study panels) established overall force structure requirements in the first phase, and then, following the conclusion of the QDR, the services conducted further analyses to determine the best number and mix of forces within the force caps established in the QDR.

The first phase appears to have been characterized at least in part by an effort to find the most desirable trade-off between force structure and freeing up resources for transformation of the force.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, in the summer of 2001, a requirement for forces capable of “swiftly defeating an enemy’s effort with minimum reinforcement” reportedly was dropped due to the additional forces and coats that would be needed to meet that criterion.<sup>29</sup> As of August 9, 2001, Rumsfeld reportedly had been presented with two basic options: a “steady state” option that would maintain current force levels, and a PA&E-developed option representing deep force structure cuts on the order of 10 percent, “with the Army losing about two of its 10 active-duty divisions, the Air Force eliminating as many as 16 of 61 fighter squadrons, and the Navy eventually

<sup>24</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. v.

<sup>27</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> For example, according to retired Marine LtGen Paul Van Riper, “Where we were cutting [force structure], where we were putting our money, was wrong. We went from 16 Army divisions down to 10. And, of course, Mr. Rumsfeld, when he came in, wanted to take it down to eight. That was our concern, those of us in that school, that the money wasn’t being spent in the right places. And yes, those forces were stretched” (see *Frontline*, “Pushing ‘Transformation,’” Paul Van Riper interview, Public Broadcasting System, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> As will be described, this appears to have been reformulated to swiftly defeating two adversaries in overlapping time frames, but dropping the “minimum reinforcement” requirement.



giving up one or two of its 12 carrier battle groups.”<sup>30</sup> Although it is not entirely clear when the deep force cuts option was taken off the table, it appears likely that the 9/11 attacks a month later laid the issue to rest once and for all.

The strategic concept of dissuasion, deterrence, and the defeat of adversaries would be translated into a force sizing construct that would support homeland security and defense, deterrence in key regions, and major regional wars in two theaters, with a capability to “decisively defeat” the adversary in one theater. This is referred to as the “1-4-2-1” force sizing construct, which consisted of the following four elements:

- (1) defend the United States
- (4) deter aggression and coercion forward in 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
- (1) conduct a limited number of SSC operations.<sup>31</sup>

The scenarios considered in the QDR appear to have included both threat-based and capabilities-based scenarios:

Second, the approach shifts the focus of U.S. force planning from optimizing for conflicts in two particular regions—Northeast and Southwest Asia—to building a portfolio of capabilities that is robust across the spectrum of possible force requirements, both functional and geographical. This approach to planning responds to the capabilities-based strategy outlined above. It focuses more on how an adversary might fight than on who the adversary might be and where a war might occur. The shift is intended to refocus planners on the growing range of capabilities that adversaries might possess or could develop. It will require planners to define the military objectives associated with defeating aggression or coercion in a variety of potential scenarios in addition to conventional cross-border invasions. It calls for identifying, developing, and fielding capabilities that, for a given level of forces, would accomplish each mission at an acceptable level of risk as established by the National Command Authorities.

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<sup>30</sup> Thom Shanker, “Rumsfeld Is Facing a Deadline in Effort to Reshape the Military,” *New York Times*, August 9, 2001; and Thomas E. Ricks, “Rumsfeld Mulls Two Options: Status Quo or 10% Military Cut; Secretary Wants to Match Armed Forces, New Strategy,” *Washington Post*, August 9, 2001. At that time, Rumsfeld was described as taking a “noncommittal” position on the two options, and reportedly requested answers to six basic questions, including the benefits of increasing deployments in Asia, the risk of reducing warfighting capabilities in Europe, and the measurement for how large a military was required to protect the country’s interests around the globe while fighting one major war. The other three questions reportedly were classified.

<sup>31</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 17. This formulation is nearly identical to a September 7, 2001, memorandum on the DPG from Rumsfeld to President Bush (see Rumsfeld, 2001e).

Third, the new construct serves as a bridge from today's force, developed around the threat-based, two-MTW construct, to a future, transformed force. The United States will continue to meet its commitments around the world, including in Southwest and Northeast Asia, by maintaining the ability to defeat aggression in two critical areas in overlapping timeframes. The United States is not abandoning planning for two conflicts to plan for fewer than two. On the contrary, DoD is changing the concept altogether by planning for victory across the spectrum of possible conflict.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, whereas the QDR planning framework was represented as “a paradigm shift in defense planning,” that only can fairly be said about the capabilities-based, transformational elements of the strategy: In fact, the continued consideration of scenarios involving “aggression in two overlapping major conflicts” was not terribly different from the “two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts” that had served as the principal basis for force planning in the preceding decade, and the analyses of potential near-term contingencies appear essentially or in part to have been threat-based.<sup>33</sup> In any event, the QDR described the scenario-based analyses that were used to test the force in rather broad terms only—the current force “was assessed across several combinations of scenarios.”<sup>34</sup>

For his part, CJCS GEN Hugh Shelton's risk assessment described some of the tools that were used to assess the force, and identified, again in broad terms, the most stressing scenarios that were considered in this assessment:

Analytical tools such as Dynamic Commitment and Positive Match wargames indicate that the QDR reduces the strategy-to-structure imbalance and results in moderate near-term risk for the current force executing the revised strategy. This assessment includes the most demanding scenario where U.S. forces respond to two overlapping major crises in different regions, decisively defeating one adversary while defeating the efforts of the other.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> DoD, 2001b, pp. 17–18.

<sup>33</sup> There is some evidence that among the most prominent threat scenarios considered during the QDR were North Korea, Iraq, the rise of China, terrorism, and the challenges of failing states and poor governance.

<sup>34</sup> According to the QDR,

Today's force structure—both Active and Reserve components—is the baseline from which the Department will develop a transformed force for the future. The current force structure . . . was assessed across several combinations of scenarios on the basis of the new defense strategy and force sizing construct, and the capabilities of this force were judged as presenting moderate operational risk, although certain combinations of warfighting and smaller-scale contingency scenarios present high risk. (DoD, 2001b, p. 22)

The QDR later noted that “considerably more warfighting analysis on a range of scenarios must be done, however, to confirm this initial assessment” (DoD, 2001b, p. 68).

<sup>35</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 70.

**Table 10.1**  
**Current Force Structure During the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review**

Army	
Divisions(active/National Guard)	10/8
Active armored cavalry/light cavalry regiments	1/1
Enhanced separate brigades (National Guard)	15
Navy	
Aircraft carriers	12
Air wings (active/reserve)	10/1
Amphibious ready groups	12
Attack submarines	55
Surface combatants (active/reserve)	108/8
Air Force	
Active fighter squadrons	46
Reserve fighter squadrons	38
Reserve air defense squadrons	4
Bombers (combat-coded)	112
Marine Corps (3 MEFs)	
Divisions (active/reserve)	3/1
Air wings (active/reserve)	3/1
Force service support groups (active/reserve)	3/1

SOURCE: DoD, 2001b, p. 22.

The QDR characterized the current U.S. force structure (see Table 10.1) as the baseline for transformation of the force, suggesting that no major force structure changes were envisioned in the short term to ensure that the force was capable of executing the NDS at an overall moderate level of risk.

Following the conclusion of the QDR, the Army undertook a TAA to establish the numbers and mix of units that would be required at the end of FY 2009 to support the QDR strategy while maintaining the current force size.<sup>36</sup> An assessment of TAA 2009 by the Institute for Defense Analyses provides some additional detail on the scenarios and analytics used by the Army to assess post-2001 QDR Army force number and mix requirements, and provides additional insights into the use of scenarios in conventional force planning.<sup>37</sup>

The TAA process begins with higher-level guidance and aims to assess the best number and mix of units to conduct the missions specified in the strategic concept

<sup>36</sup> Put another way, force size was capped and analysis was conducted to determine the number and mix of forces within these caps to conduct the missions in the QDR's force sizing construct.

<sup>37</sup> John C. F. Tillson, John R. Brinkerhoff, and Robert Magruder, *Total Army Analysis 2009 (TAA09)—A Critical Review*, Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, IDA Document D-2809, May 2003.

and/or force sizing construct. Table 10.2 describes the strategic concept and force sizing construct guidance that was used in TAA 2003 (following the BUR) through TAA 2009 (following the 2001 QDR).

The TAA process involved the following five analytic steps:

1. *Force Level Determination* establishes the number and types of major combat formations (divisions, brigades, and regiments) and other combat units upon which force structure determination is based. [Note: The TAA analysis used the 2001 QDR as the basis for establishing missions and force levels.]
2. *Estimation of Combat Parameters* is accomplished by “fighting” theater combat scenarios in a theater-level simulation to obtain values for battlefield locations, operating tempos, loss rates for people and equipment, and consumption rates for supplies. In this portion of the TAA, the Center for Army Analysis conducts theater-level simulations of the anticipated scenarios to establish the timing of the arrival of units in the theaters, locations of units in the theater, operational tempo, losses of personnel and equipment, and time-phased consumption of supplies. These parameter values are used in the next phase of the process, which establishes the requirement for support units to optimize the output of the combat units. This part of the process was not examined in detail in the [Institute for Defense Analyses] study.
3. *Support Unit Determination* establishes the numbers and types of combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) units required to sustain the combat units (and themselves) during combat operations or other military operations. . . . This is accomplished by a model that uses allocation rules to relate workload to unit design capability by time. The allocation rules are expressed in mathematical terms so that the model can calculate the numbers of each type of support unit needed in the theater each day of a simulated campaign. The model calculates both direct support of combat units and support for the support units themselves. The Army used 1,782 allocation rules that apply to its 28 functional categories of combat and support units.

**Table 10.2**  
**Requirements for Major Combat Operations in TAA 2003 Through TAA 2009**

Year	Spaces	Guidance
TAA 2003	688,000	Two near simultaneous major regional wars
TAA 2005	753,000	Two near simultaneous major regional wars
TAA 2007	737,000	Fight and win two MTWs
TAA 2009	643,000	Two overlapping conflicts; win one fast; stalemate other

SOURCE: Tillson, Brinkerhoff, and Magruder, 2003, p. 18.

4. *Application of Anticipated Constraints* reduces the required troop lists produced by the first three steps into a force structure that fits into the manpower, procurement, and funding constraints established by the Secretary of Defense and Congress. [Note: That is, the force structure and manpower constraints established by the 2001 QDR.]

5. *Conversion to Program Language* translates the funded troop list into program elements and budget categories for use in preparation of the DoD budget request.<sup>38</sup>

As described in the Institute for Defense Analyses report, during the TAA process, planners developed a “simultaneity stack” of missions derived directly from the force sizing construct developed in the QDR, and then estimated the force numbers and mix that were required to support each of these missions, in order of mission priority, subject to the force and manpower constraints decided in the QDR. Thus, the TAA process was highly constrained and did not estimate the forces required to achieve, say, a low-to-moderate level of risk, but sought rather to identify the number and mix of units to maximize mission capabilities within the QDR’s force structure and manpower caps.

Table 10.3 describes the missions that were included in the TAA 2009 simultaneity stack, and the associated estimates of force requirements to conduct the missions. As shown in the table, the TAA included consideration of Army force requirements for each of the elements of the force sizing construct (homeland security, deterrence forward, and major combat operations), transformation of the force, the conduct of critical SSCs, and the maintenance of a strategic reserve and the generating force.

Table 10.4 summarizes the models and other analytic methods that were used to establish force numbers and mix within the QDR-imposed force caps. As shown, for example, major combat operations were assessed using two models, the CEM and the Force Analysis Simulation of Theater Administration and Logistic Support (FASTALS) model.<sup>39</sup> Homeland security requirements were estimated using Mission Task Organized Forces (MTOFs) for assumed scenarios.

<sup>38</sup> Tillson, Brinkerhoff, and Magruder, 2003, pp. S-1–S-8.

<sup>39</sup> As described earlier, “The Concepts Evaluation Model (CEM) is a theater combat simulation model which resolves combat at the Blue brigade and Red division level theater combat” (John E. Shepherd, *Concepts Evaluation Model (CEM) Design Specifications for: (1) Attrition and Calibration (2) Fixed Fortified Defense*, Bethesda, Md.: General Research Corporation, December 1979, p. 1). For the other model,

The purpose of the Force Analysis Simulation of Theater Administrative and Logistic Support (FASTALS) Model is to compute the combat service support requirements that are associated with a hypothesized military operation. Ultimately, the output from the model is a balanced and time-phased troop list of units which have been geographically distributed in a theater of operations. This troop list identifies all the combat, nondivisional combat, and support to combat units employed in a single theater of operations to accomplish a projected mission (Henry J. Fink, *Force Analysis Simulation of Theater Administrative and Logistic Support (FASTALS)*, Bethesda, Md.: U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency, 1973, p. 405).

**Table 10.3**  
**Summary of the TAA 2009 Simultaneity Stack**

Mission	BCTs and ACR <sup>a</sup>	Military Personnel <sup>b</sup>	Force-Level Guidance	Rationale
Homeland security	5	92	None	Army estimates
Deter aggression	5	89	None	Overseas support
Critical SSCs	3	25	None	Current operations
Major combat operations	46	643		
Terrorism	4	32	None	Army estimate
Decisive victory	26	364	None	TAA 2007 IPS (+6)
Defeat the efforts	16	248	None	TAA 2007 IPS (-6)
Strategic reserve	7	43	None	Two NG <sup>c</sup> divisions
Transformation	2	10	None	SBCT <sup>d</sup> schedule
Generating force	4	309	None	Workloading
Total	72	1,211		

SOURCE: Tillson, Brinkerhoff, and Magruder, 2003, p. S-3.

<sup>a</sup> BCT = brigade combat team; ACR – armored cavalry regiments.

<sup>b</sup> Thousands of military manpower authorizations.

<sup>c</sup> NG = National Guard.

<sup>d</sup> SBCT = Stryker BCT.

**Table 10.4**  
**TAA 2009 Simultaneity Stack Methodology, by Force Package**

	Combat Units	Support Units
Homeland security	Homeland security MTOFs	MTOFs and current programs
Deter aggression	Current operations/treaties	Current operations
Major combat operations	TAA 2007	CEM + FASTALS
Strategic reserve	Contingencies beyond planning	Contingencies beyond planning
Transformation	Transformation program	Transformation program
Generating force	n/a	Workload estimates

SOURCE: Tillson, Brinkerhoff, and Magruder, 2003, p. 13.

NOTE: n/a = not available.

The Institute for Defense Analyses report provides useful additional detail on the mission-related scenarios that were considered in TAA 2009. For example, the TAA 2009 analyses of force requirements for major combat operations included consideration of three types of operations: to achieve decisive victory over one regional adversary; to defeat the efforts of another adversary, as described in the force sizing construct; and to “defeat terrorism” (see Table 10.5). Supporting force requirements for these major combat operations were then estimated on the basis of these force building blocks.<sup>40</sup>

The Institute for Defense Analyses report describes the scenarios that were used to analyze force requirements for major combat operations as follows:

The force package for fighting terrorism consists of an airborne division and the ranger regiment. This force appears to be based on fighting a war similar to the 2001 Afghan Campaign. It would be rapidly deployable and capable of fighting

**Table 10.5**  
**TAA 2009 Major Combat Formations**

Stack Element	Corps Headquarters	Division Headquarters	BCTs	Cavalry Regiments	Special Forces Groups
Homeland security*			5		
Unified command support	1	1	5		3
Critical SSCs		2	3		
MCO—defeat terrorism		1	4		1
MCO—decisive victory	2	7	25	1	2
MCO—defeat the efforts	1	3	15	1	2
Strategic reserve		2	7		
Transformation		1	2		
Generating force			4		
Total Army	4	17	70	2	8

SOURCE: Tillson, Brinkerhoff, and Magruder, 2003, p. 24.

\* Also 20 Light Infantry Battalions.

MCO = major combat operations.

<sup>40</sup> In the interests of brevity, these analytics will not be further described. Interested readers should examine the Institute for Defense Analyses report on TAA 2009.



light forces such as those encountered in Afghanistan. This force package is not mentioned specifically in the QDR or DPG guidance.

The force package for a theater in which a decisive victory is to be achieved is based on a war in Korea. For TAA09, the Army used the same forces as were used for that scenario in TAA07, which amounted to 2 corps with 5-1/3 divisions and 8 enhanced separate brigades. The Army added two divisions to these forces that are labeled as for “post-hostilities.” Presumably, after the decisive victory has been achieved these divisions would replace two or more other divisions that would be redeployed to the other theater to achieve a victory there.

The force package for a theater in which the initial goal is to defeat the efforts of the enemy to win is based on a Southwest Asia Scenario. The forces deemed to be sufficient to achieve a stalemate in this scenario consist of one corps with 3-1/3 divisions and 5 enhanced separate brigades.<sup>41</sup>

Importantly, the Institute for Defense Analyses analysis determined that “The net effect of the TAA process is to preclude capabilities-based planning,” due in large measure to its heavy reliance on concrete scenarios and unit formations.<sup>42</sup>

Returning now to the QDR, using the existing force structure as a baseline, the QDR also called for a number of modernization and transformation efforts to improve the effectiveness of the force. The QDR’s modernization approach had three main parts:

- exploiting research and development to ensure that U.S. forces maintain a decisive lead in technologies critical to transformation
- advancing key transformation initiatives
- selectively recapitalizing legacy forces to meet near-term challenges and to provide near-term readiness.

Meanwhile, the QDR identified four pillars for the transformation of the force:

- strengthening joint operations through standing joint task force headquarters, improved joint command and control, joint training, and an expanded joint forces presence policy
- experimenting with new approaches to warfare, operational concepts and capabilities, and organizational constructs, such as standing joint forces through wargaming, simulations, and field exercises focused on emerging challenges and opportunities

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<sup>41</sup> Tillson, Brinkerhoff, and Magruder, 2003, p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> Tillson, Brinkerhoff, and Magruder, 2003, p. 56.

- exploiting U.S. intelligence advantages through multiple intelligence collection assets, global surveillance and reconnaissance, and enhanced exploitation and dissemination
- developing transformational capabilities through increased and wide-ranging science and technology, selective increases in procurement, and innovations in DoD processes.<sup>43</sup>

In the case of the Army, the focus of transformation would continue to be on the conversion of the force from division-based to BCT-based formations, and on improvements to ISR and networking of the force to improve the situational awareness and operational effectiveness of these formations.<sup>44</sup>

### Assessment of Risk

In its discussion of operational risk, the QDR argued that a broader range of analyses would be needed to properly assess this type of risk:

DoD's new force planning approach recognizes the need to size U.S. military forces not only for the most demanding near-term warfighting tasks, but also for a plausible set of other near-term contingencies, including small-scale contingencies. Consequently, all measurements of operational risk will reflect the full range of capabilities U.S. forces must possess and missions that U.S. forces must perform.

In the past, major elements of the forces were designed and evaluated against a narrow set of military missions and associated tasks. With a wider set of missions and tasks, the measurement of operational risk will consider both the missions that forces were designed to accomplish, and those that they are currently assigned to conduct.<sup>45</sup>

The QDR reported OSD's assessment of risk as follows:

Today's force structure—both Active and Reserve components—is the baseline from which the Department will develop a transformed force for the future. The current force structure, shown in the table below, was assessed across several com-

<sup>43</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> As described, TAA 2009 considered the forces associated with these transformation efforts. The Army effort to modularize the force into BCTs was given additional impetus by the war in Iraq, and by December 2003, Army Stryker brigades had been deployed to Iraq. In June 2009, however, a DoD acquisition decision memorandum canceled the Future Combat System program, which had, since 2003, been the centerpiece for Army's transformation since Shinseki laid out his vision for Army transformation in 1999. The decision also authorized the spin out of a number of capabilities that had been developed in connection with the Future Combat System program (see Lisa Troshinsky, "GAO: Stryker Brigade Showed 'Strengths and Weaknesses,'" *Aerospace Daily*, December 15, 2003; and "U.S. Army's Future Combat System Programme Terminated," *Army Technology*, June 25, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 60.

binations of scenarios on the basis of the new defense strategy and force sizing construct, and the capabilities of this force were judged as presenting moderate operational risk, although certain combinations of warfighting and smaller-scale contingency scenarios present high risk.<sup>46</sup>

In testimony before the SASC, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz provided a bit more detail on the analytics behind OSD's risk assessment:

So we are trying to get the resources that we need to do transformation at the same time that we stay as close as possible to an end strength that will make the force management risk acceptable and a force structure that will make the operational warfighting risk acceptable.

In terms of force structure levels, the QDR used today's current Active and Reserve Forces as the baseline from which the Department will develop a transformed force for the future. The current force structure was assessed across several combinations of scenarios on the basis of the new defense strategy and force sizing construct, and the capabilities of this force were judged as presenting moderate operational risk, although certain combinations of warfighting and smaller-scale contingency scenarios present high risk. As our transformation efforts mature, producing significantly higher output of military value from each element of the force, DOD will explore additional opportunities to restructure and reorganize the Armed Forces.<sup>47</sup>

As the Joint Staff was unable to assess the resources required to support the QDR 2001 strategy at a low-to-moderate risk level, CJCS Hugh Shelton's assessment was limited to noting that he agreed with the emerging strategy, that more resources were required, and that additional analysis was required to address the issues raised by the 2001 QDR report.<sup>48</sup> For his part, Shelton assessed the level of risk associated with the QDR as moderate, conditioned upon the assumption that the necessary resources were in fact provided:

The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) faced two challenging tasks. First, it had to address significant concerns regarding the near-term ability of the force to protect and advance U.S. interests worldwide in a dangerous and evolving security environment. Second, it had to implement the President's goal of transforming the Armed Forces to meet future security challenges. In my view, the defense strategy and program recommendations contained in the QDR report are a major step

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<sup>46</sup> DoD, 2001b, p. 22.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Senate, 2001, pp. 96, 110.

<sup>48</sup> Examples of cross-cutting issues are potential strategy-force structure mismatches, strategic mobility forces structure, and readiness. They are issues involving more than a single DoD component or functional element. Schrader, Lewis, and Brown, 2003, pp. 21–25, 43.

toward accomplishing these two tasks, while balancing the associated near-, mid-, and long-term risks.

. . . In my view, the defense strategy outlined in the QDR 2001—if matched with resources over time—will adequately address the current and emerging challenges of the strategic environment.

. . . Analytical tools such as Dynamic Commitment and Positive Match wargames indicate that the QDR reduces the strategy-to-structure imbalance and results in moderate near-term risk for the current force executing the revised strategy. This assessment includes the most demanding scenario where U.S. forces respond to two overlapping major crises in different regions, decisively defeating one adversary while defeating the efforts of the other.

The broad range of military requirements identified in the QDR lays the foundation for determining the size and structure of the force. *The recommendations of the review are the starting point for determining how best to organize, man, train and equip the Total Force. An initial look at the force structure indicates the current force is capable of executing the new defense strategy with moderate risk. Considerably more warfighting analysis on a range of scenarios must be done, however, to confirm this initial assessment.*<sup>49</sup>

Nor did the QDR analyze or provide details on the future force structure required to execute the strategy, or assess end strength requirements in detail.<sup>50</sup> Because of these and other limitations in the 2001 QDR's analysis, the GAO recommended in 2002 that new administrations be given additional time to complete future QDRs so that complex issues could be more thoroughly examined.<sup>51</sup>

## Other Assessments

Although praising the QDR's risk construct, members of Congress criticized the QDR for failing to address the full set of issues called for in the QDR legislation, and the deferral of many decisions.<sup>52</sup> For its part, the GAO also was critical of some of the analytics behind the QDR:

[T]he thoroughness of the department's analysis and reporting on issues mandated by legislation varied considerably, and some significant issues, such as the role of the reserves, were deferred to follow-on studies. Finally, the department's assessment of

<sup>49</sup> DoD, 2001b, pp. 67–78. Emphasis added. The Chairman was, however, concerned about the ability to find the resources needed to attain sufficient end strength to support sustainable OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO rates, and he noted that “I believe that sustaining an end strength and force structure capable of executing the new defense strategy at moderate risk will be a significant challenge.”

<sup>50</sup> GAO, 2002, pp. 16, 18.

<sup>51</sup> GAO, 2002, pp. 19–20.

<sup>52</sup> See the opening remarks in U.S. Senate, 2001.

force structure requirements had some significant limitations—such as its lack of focus on longer-term threats and requirements for critical support capabilities—and the department’s report provided little information on some required issues, such as the specific assumptions used in the analysis. As a result of these shortcomings, Congress did not receive comprehensive information on all of the legislatively mandated issues, the department lacks assurance that it has optimized its force structure to balance short- and long-term risks, and the review resulted in few specific decisions on how existing military forces and weapons modernization programs may need to be changed in response to emerging threats.<sup>53</sup>

Our review identified that many of the specific threats and scenarios DOD examined had a near-term focus and that DOD, in estimating the numbers and types of forces required for major combat operations, relied to a significant extent on existing war plans that have been at the center of U.S. military planning for a number of years. As a result, we believe that more extensive use of analytical tools such as modeling and simulation, along with analysis of a broad range of longer-term scenarios and threats, would have enhanced the QDR’s usefulness in fundamentally reassessing force structure requirements.<sup>54</sup>

## The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report

The 2006 QDR<sup>55</sup> was widely viewed as an evolutionary document that continued the directions set by its predecessor while addressing lessons learned from “the long war” since 9/11, rather than a revolutionary document pushing defense planning in substantially new directions.<sup>56</sup>

The foundation of the 2006 QDR was the 2005 NDS, which outlined four major categories of threats that the United States faced: familiar traditional threats; irregu-

<sup>53</sup> GAO, 2002, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> GAO, 2002, p. 31. DoD took exception to GAO’s finding that the QDR force structure assessment had “significant limitations” and the suggestion that the focus of DoD’s force analysis was misplaced, arguing that a combination of analytic tools (including computer simulations) and professional judgments were used in their analyses. As noted in the second paragraph in the quotation, however, GAO did not agree on this point.

<sup>55</sup> Descriptions of the 2006 QDR can be found in DoD, “Quadrennial Defense Review Results,” Washington, D.C., briefing, February 3, 2006a, slide 2; DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., February 6, 2006c; testimony in U.S. Senate, *The Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services*, 109th Congress, 2nd Session, March 8, 2006; U.S. House of Representatives, *Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services*, 109th Congress, 2nd Session, March 14, 2006; and Ryan Henry, “Defense Transformation and the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review,” *Parameters*, Winter 2005–2006.

<sup>56</sup> The roll-out briefing for the QDR described it as “A wartime QDR: conducted during the 4th year of a ‘long war.’” The Preface to the QDR report began with the statement, “The United States is a nation engaged in what will be a long war,” and devoted six pages to a discussion of “refining the department’s force planning construct for wartime.” See DoD, 2006a, slide 2; and DoD, 2006c, pp. 35–40.

lar threats, including terrorism, insurgency, or guerrilla warfare; catastrophic threats, including WMDs; and disruptive threats designed to disrupt or negate traditional U.S. military advantages.<sup>57</sup> Although the QDR's authors believed that the United States still faced traditional threats, the preponderance of future challenges likely to them appeared to fall into the other three areas, which required DoD to continue to reorient and broaden its focus.<sup>58</sup>

### Key Assumptions

A key assumption of the QDR was that the United States was in a “long war,” characterized by:

- prolonged irregular conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq
- wider irregular operations in the Philippines, Horn of Africa, Georgia, Pan-Sahel, and elsewhere
- humanitarian actions, such as the responses to the Southeast Asian tsunami and the Pakistani earthquake, as well as anticipatory actions, such those in Haiti and Liberia
- operations in support of civil authorities at home, such as the 9/11 response and that to Hurricane Katrina.<sup>59</sup>

The QDR enumerated a number of lessons from these recent operations that indicated the importance of building partnership capacity, i.e., indirect approaches and enabling partners; early anticipatory measures; unity of effort; and uncertainty and unpredictability.<sup>60</sup> According to Rumsfeld, the QDR “continue[d] the shift in emphasis by identifying key strategic priorities,”<sup>61</sup> which aimed to “provide more options for the President, [and more] capabilities for the [Combatant Commanders].”<sup>62</sup> The QDR aimed to do this by shifting effort from traditional threats and challenges to nontraditional ones, including “irregular,” “catastrophic,” and “disruptive” challenges. Figure 10.1 presents a chart from the QDR report that aimed to clarify the nature of this shift.<sup>63</sup>

As suggested by the figure, this shift was programmatically manifested in additional efforts in four key capability focus areas: defeating terrorist networks; defending the homeland in depth; preventing acquisition or use of WMDs; and shaping the

<sup>57</sup> DoD, *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., March 2005.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Senate, 2006, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> DoD, 2006a, slide 3.

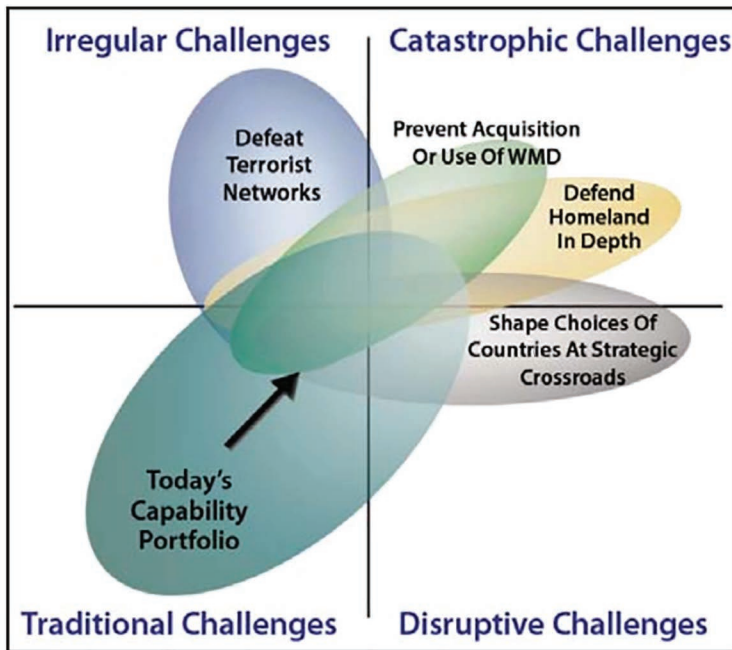
<sup>60</sup> DoD, 2006a, slide 3.

<sup>61</sup> DoD, “DoD News Briefing on Fiscal Year 2007 Budget,” Washington, D.C., February 6, 2006b.

<sup>62</sup> DoD, 2006b.

<sup>63</sup> The corresponding slide in the February 3, 2006, briefing included text with the arrow in the bottom-right panel reading “shifting our weight” (see DoD, 2006a, slide 5).

**Figure 10.1**  
**Range of Challenges Identified in the 2006 QDR Report**



SOURCE: DoD, 2006c, p. 19.

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choices of countries at strategic crossroads through efforts to “assure” allies and friends, and “dissuade, deter, and defeat” adversaries.<sup>64</sup>

### National Interests

The QDR did not devote much ink to enumerating U.S. national interests, values, or objectives:

On any given day, nearly 350,000 men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces are deployed or stationed in approximately 130 countries. They are battle-hardened from operations over the past four years, fighting the enemies of freedom as part of this long war. They maintain the Nation’s treaty obligations and international commitments. They protect and advance U.S. interests and values. They are often asked to be protectors of the peace and providers of relief. They are a force for good.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> DoD, 2006a, slide 4; and DoD, 2006c, pp. 14, 26.

<sup>65</sup> DoD, 2006c, p. 85.



The QDR report did, nonetheless, portray itself as promoting the aims of the NSS, although it was not entirely clear which NSS the QDR was referring to—the last NSS was 3 1/2 years old at that point, and a new NSS would not be released for another month—or precisely what the linkages were between the principal aims expressed in the NSS and the defense strategy explicated in the QDR.<sup>66</sup> That said, both NSSs took a somewhat revolutionary stance in promoting democracy as the principal aim of U.S. NSS and policy:

2002 NSS: The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity.<sup>67</sup>

2006 NSS: It is the policy of the United States to seek and support democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. In the world today, the fundamental character of regimes matters as much as the distribution of power among them. The goal of our statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. This is the best way to provide enduring security for the American people.<sup>68</sup>

Although one can infer from the QDR's recitation of trends favoring the development of democracy in various places, statements about "helping to foster fledgling democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan," and concerns about the course of democracy in Russia, references to democracy in the QDR were somewhat spotty and do not appear to have represented a principal motive or national security objective that would be supported by military power. The connection between the QDR's defense strategy and the NSS thus appears to be indirect, or possibly somewhat tenuous.

In addition, although the 2006 QDR did not explicitly state this either, the QDR most likely accepted as a given the strategic objectives and other elements of the March 2005 NDS:

Secure the United States from direct attack. We will give top priority to dissuading, deterring, and defeating those who seek to harm the United States directly, especially extremist enemies with weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

<sup>66</sup> DoD, 2006c, pp. 83, 85. The most recent NSS at the time was released in September 2002; a new NSS would be released in March 2006, one month after the release of the QDR. One assumes that the authors of the QDR were referring to the yet-to-be-released version of the NSS.

<sup>67</sup> White House, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., March 2006.

Secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action. We will promote the security, prosperity, and freedom of action of the United States and its partners by securing access to key regions, lines of communication, and the global commons.

Strengthen alliances and partnerships. We will expand the community of nations that share principles and interests with us. We will help partners increase their capacity to defend themselves and collectively meet challenges to our common interests.

Establish favorable security conditions. Working with others in the U.S. Government, we will create conditions for a favorable international system by honoring our security commitments and working with other nations to bring about a common appreciation of threats; a broad, secure, and lasting peace; and the steps required to protect against these threats.<sup>69</sup>

The QDR also explicitly accepted the NDS's four-part approach to securing these objectives: (1) assuring allies and friends, (2) dissuading potential adversaries, (3) deterring aggression and countering coercion, and (4) defeating adversaries. The QDR also seems to have embraced the four elements of the 2005 NDS's implementation guidelines: (1) active, layered defense; (2) continuous transformation; (3) capabilities-based approach; and (4) managing risks.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting the May 2004 release by the CJCS of an NMS, the first since the last NMS was released in 1997, and the first since the attacks of 9/11.<sup>71</sup> To establish its connection with these documents, the NMS summarized the September 2002 NSS and the NDS that would not be released until March 2005,<sup>72</sup> and embraced the latter's four defense objectives: (1) secure the United States from direct attack, (2) secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action, (3) establish security conditions conducive to a favorable international order, and (4) strengthen alliances and partnerships to contend with common challenges.

## Threats

As described earlier, the QDR appropriated a framework for characterizing post-9/11 security threats and challenges that was developed in the 2005 NDS, including

<sup>69</sup> DoD, 2005, p. iv.

<sup>70</sup> DoD, 2005, p. iv.

<sup>71</sup> JCS, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America: A Strategy for Today; A Vision for Tomorrow*, Washington, D.C., May 2004, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> DoD, 2005. The NDS and NMS were actually prepared at the same time with the apparent intention of simultaneous release, but the former apparently took an additional 10 months for interagency coordination (see Donald H. Rumsfeld, "National Defense and Military Strategies," memorandum to Vice President Richard Cheney, The Rumsfeld Papers, November 8, 2004; and Paul Wolfowitz, "National Defense Strategy," memorandum to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, The Rumsfeld Papers, Washington, D.C., February 7, 2005).

- traditional security challenges: states employing military forces in well-known forms of military competition and conflict
- irregular security challenges: nonstate and state actors employing “unconventional” methods to counter stronger state opponents, and including terrorism, insurgency, etc.
- catastrophic security challenges: terrorist or rogue state employment of WMD-like effects against U.S. interests
- disruptive security challenges: competitors employing technology or methods that might counter or cancel the United States’ current military advantages.<sup>73</sup>

## Strategy

As described earlier, although it did not explicitly state this, the 2006 QDR accepted and refined somewhat the NDS articulated in the March 2005 NDS.

## Concepts of Operations

DoD’s efforts to develop new JOCs were well under way by the time of the 2006 QDR. By August 2005, for example, the JCS had released version 2.0 of a Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO), which aimed to incorporate the lessons gleaned from the Afghan and Iraq conflicts “while looking to the future to examine the capabilities we will need to fight tomorrow’s wars.”<sup>74</sup> According to the CCJO,

The CCJO is the overarching concept of the family of joint concepts that guides the development of future joint capabilities. Its purpose is to lead force development and employment primarily by providing a broad description of how the future joint force will operate. Service concepts and subordinate joint operating, functional, and integrating concepts will expand on the CCJO solution. Interagency and multinational partners may use it to assess potential integration requirements and opportunities.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, the CCJO was informed by a number of sources of strategic guidance, including the NDS, NMS, Transformation Planning Guidance, NSS, QDR, and Strategic Planning Guidance.<sup>76</sup> After laying out some basic assumptions, the CCJO provided the following statement of the military problem that it aimed to address:

In the varied and highly uncertain future security environment that we expect, potential adversaries will increasingly benefit from technology diffusion and access

<sup>73</sup> DoD, 2006a, slide 4.

<sup>74</sup> JCS, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations Version 2.0*, Washington, D.C., August 2005, p. v.

<sup>75</sup> JCS, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> For example, the CCJO used the March 2005 NDS’s scheme for categorizing threats, i.e., catastrophic, irregular, disruptive, and traditional (see JCS, 2005, pp. 6–7).

to advanced weapon systems. Complex and adaptive adversaries will likely employ traditional, irregular, disruptive, and catastrophic methods singularly or in combinations which are intended to keep the future joint force from being successful across the range of military operations.<sup>77</sup>

The CCJO then defined a proposed solution to this military problem; discussed its concept of risk and risk mitigation; and detailed its implications for joint doctrine, leadership and education, identification and development of joint capabilities, transformation of the force toward unified action, and the use of a comprehensive framework for planning military campaigns.

In addition, in September 2004, DoD released a stability operations JOC that laid out ten principles to guide the planning and conduct of stability operations:

Stability operations associated with major combat are among the most complicated missions assigned to the United States military and require a focused approach to ensure that they are successful in obtaining strategic aims. To help provide this required focus, the stability operations concept proposes 10 principles that should guide a joint force commander's thoughts on the conduct of operations pre-, during, and post-conflict. These principles are:

1. Organize military and civilian agencies to achieve unity of purpose and coherency of action;
2. Incorporate information operations into every action, tactical and operational;
3. Impose security by adopting an assertive posture;
4. Defeat those violently opposed to stability;
5. Neutralize, co-opt, or induce others who threaten stability;
6. Act with precision quickly: Balance restraint and overmatching power;
7. Act from a position of legitimacy;
8. Pursue interim conditions for "next state" in the transition process;
9. Operate within the law; and
10. Develop reliable local intelligence.<sup>78</sup>

Notably, six additional JOCs and three supporting concepts would be released before the Obama administration's first QDR report in February 2010.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>77</sup> JCS, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> DoD, *Joint Concept for Stability Operations*, Washington, D.C., September 2004, p. iv.

<sup>79</sup> These will be identified in the discussion of the 2010 QDR in the next chapter.

it is not clear that these operational concepts led to major changes in service programs or force structure.<sup>80</sup>

### Force Structure Requirements

With some recognition that additional fine-tuning of the construct was indicated, the 2006 QDR essentially embraced the existing force planning construct from the 2001 QDR, which had been endorsed again in the March 2005 NDS, released a little less than a year before the 2006 QDR:

The shape, size, and global posture of U.S. military forces are configured to:

- Defend the U.S. homeland;
- Operate in and from four forward regions to assure allies and friends, dissuade competitors, and deter and counter aggression and coercion;
- Swiftly defeat adversaries in overlapping military campaigns, while preserving for the President the option to call for a more decisive and enduring result in a single operation; and
- Conduct a limited number of lesser contingencies.<sup>81</sup>

To operationalize the QDR's defense strategy, DoD's senior civilian and military leaders identified four priority areas for examination during the QDR: (1) defeating terrorist networks, (2) defending the homeland in depth, (3) preventing hostile states and nonstate actors from acquiring or using WMDs, and (4) shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads.<sup>82</sup>

The four focus areas informed the Department's review of the guidance for sizing and shaping the U.S. Armed Forces. This guidance is commonly referred to as the Department's Force Planning Construct. Such guidance informs the analysis that provides a guide to determine both the appropriate size of the force (capacity), as well as the types of capabilities (forces and equipment) needed across a range of scenarios.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> According to the Commander of Joint Forces Command at the time, GEN Raymond Odierno, "We no longer require a separate four-star command to oversee joint warfighting . . . We have progressed far enough and inculcated jointness deeply enough to realize an efficiency while simultaneously refining our efforts" (see Dave Dilegge, "U.S. Joint Forces Command Formally Disestablished," *Small Wars Journal*, blog post, August 4, 2011). The failure to advance concepts that influenced service decisions may have been an additional reason behind Joint Forces Command's formal disestablishment in February 2011.

<sup>81</sup> DoD, 2005.

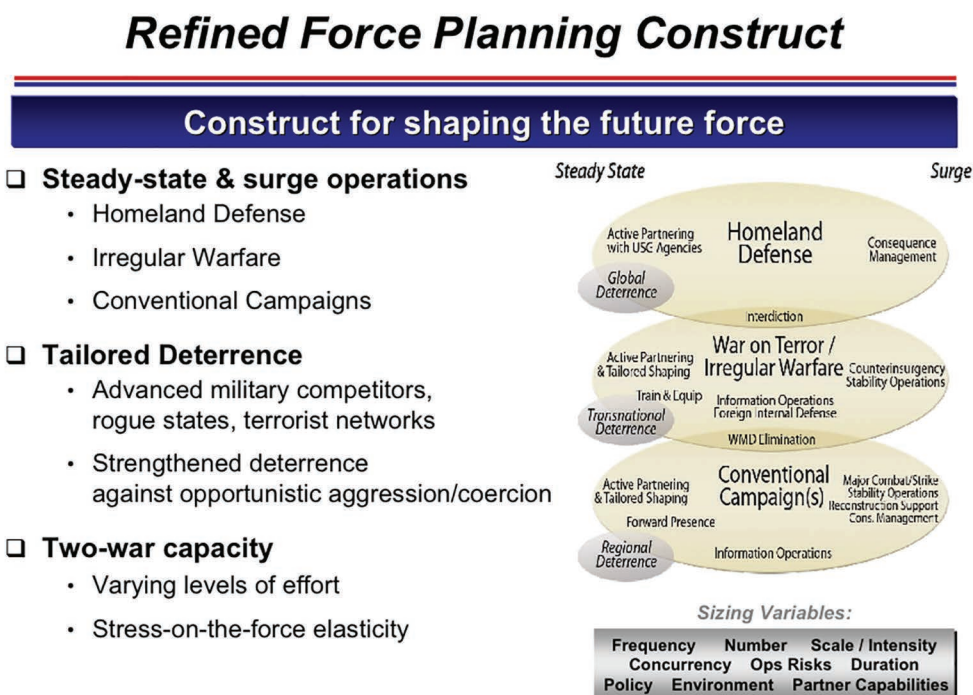
<sup>82</sup> DoD, 2006c, p. 19.

<sup>83</sup> DoD, 2006c, p. 35.

The QDR reported that DoD had refined its force planning construct to consider steady-state and surge requirements in three objective areas: homeland defense, the war on terror and irregular (asymmetric) warfare, and conventional campaigns. Figure 10.2 presents what came to be called the “Michelin Man,” the graphical representation of the force planning construct that was used in the QDR to portray the three objective areas, and the types of missions and activities conducted during steady-state through surge phases that were to be used to size and shape the force. The idea was that the level of effort associated with each objective area could expand from “steady state” (on the left of each ellipse) to “surge” (on the right).

As described in the figure, the homeland defense objective at the top of the chart captured the increasing importance given to this mission in the QDR, as well as the increasing recognition of the potential defense role in a catastrophic attack on the homeland. Meanwhile, policymakers expected the war on terror/irregular warfare objective in the center to shrink as the United States concluded its operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The bottom objective, conventional campaigns, provided for a continued capability to manage multiple, nearly simultaneous major conventional campaigns.

**Figure 10.2**  
2006 QDR Force Planning Construct Chart (“Michelin Man”)



SOURCE: DoD, 2006a, slide 16.

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As described in the QDR,

The 2001 QDR led the Department to direct the military to organize, train and equip sufficient forces to defend the U.S. homeland; operate in and from four forward regions; “swiftly defeat” adversaries in two overlapping military campaigns while preserving for the President the option to “win decisively” one of those campaigns; and conduct a limited number of lesser military and humanitarian contingencies.

During this QDR, senior leaders confirmed the importance of the main elements of that Force Planning Construct: maintaining the ability to defend the U.S. homeland; continuing to operate in and from forward areas; and above all, the importance of maintaining capabilities and forces to wage multiple campaigns in an overlapping time frame – for which there may be little or no warning of attack. This latter capability in particular remains a strong deterrent against opportunistic aggression or attempted coercion. At the same time, lessons learned from recent operations suggest the need for some refinement of the construct to take better account of wartime demands.<sup>84</sup>

As portrayed in the figure, this refined force planning construct aimed to support “steady-state and surge operations,” “tailored deterrence,” and a “two-war capacity,” the idea being that the ellipses representing “homeland defense,” “war on terror/irregular warfare,” and “conventional campaign(s)” could horizontally expand or contract over time in response to real-world developments and associated military requirements.

The QDR described its refined force planning construct as follows:

Based on their evaluation of the four QDR focus areas, the Department’s senior leaders decided to refine the capstone force planning construct that translates the Department’s strategy into guidance to shape and size military forces. This wartime construct, described in detail later in this Report, makes adjustments to better capture the realities of a long war by:

- Better defining the Department’s responsibilities for homeland defense within a broader national framework.
- Giving greater emphasis to the war on terror and irregular warfare activities, including long-duration unconventional warfare, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and military support for stabilization and reconstruction efforts.
- Accounting for, and drawing a distinction between, steady-state force demands and surge activities over multi-year periods.

At the same time, this wartime construct requires the capability to conduct multiple, overlapping wars. In addition, it calls for the forces and capabilities needed for deterrence, reflecting a shift from “one size fits all” deterrence toward more

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<sup>84</sup> DoD, 2006c, p. 36.



tailable capabilities to deter advanced military powers, regional WMD states, or non-state terrorists.<sup>85</sup>

DoD also conducted a Mobility Capabilities Study (MCS) and an Operational Availability (OA) study to assess the ability of the force to meet the requirements of two overlapping wars. The MCS found that “programmed mobility forces were capable of deploying and sustaining combat forces called for in the scenarios.”<sup>86</sup>

In testimony before the SASC, ADM Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., U.S. Navy, Vice Chairman, JCS, and Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, responded to a question from Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island and elaborated on some of the scenarios that were used to assess the capabilities of the force for conducting overlapping wars:

Senator REED. One reason for this line of questioning is when I am looking at the force planning construct for the QDR, it talks about, forces to defend the Homeland, operating in forward areas, swiftly defeating adversaries in two overlapping military commands, campaigns, and conducting limited numbers of military and humanitarian contingencies. I do not see nation-building or conducting a 3-year counterinsurgency in this force planning project. One of the stresses on the force that we are seeing today is not a result of being unable with our present brigade forms to swiftly defeat an enemy. It is trying to rebuild a country and essentially conduct a—

Admiral GIAMBASTIANI. Sir, part of the refined force planning construct would assume in what that 1–4–2–1 construct we have is, where we can do two major things at a time, if you will. One of them is considered to be this long-term, long duration, or what we are doing right now. That is an assumption that we have.

Mr. Henry, do you want to elaborate on that a little bit?

Mr. HENRY. Yes, sir. With operational availability, which is a study effort that has been going on with the Joint Staff for the last 4 years to get a handle on what it takes to have sufficiency of the force, we put a lot of effort this year into understanding how we support the force planning construct.

As the Vice Chairman was saying, one of the ones that we looked at was a prolonged irregular conflict in the future, to be able to support something the size of Iraq and Afghanistan combined, and yet still be able to do a conventional operation. We ran that through, and here is where we would probably take exception to you. The big lesson that we took out of the QDR is it is not about end strength numbers; it is about the capability of the force and what the force can do.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> DoD, 2006c, pp. 3–4.

<sup>86</sup> DoD, 2006c, pp. 54–55.

<sup>87</sup> U.S. Senate, 2006, pp. 30–31.

Although the QDR did not present any force structure tables for the out-years, like the 2001 QDR report, the 2006 QDR report generally endorsed existing force structure and end strength and endorsing the continuation of modernization and transformation efforts,<sup>88</sup> with some modest additional adjustments at the margins, to better meet the requirements of the four capability focus areas.

### Assessment of Risk

The 2006 QDR report indicated the continued relevance of the risk assessment framework articulated in the 2001 QDR and stated that it was incorporating the lessons learned from implementation of that framework into the development of a more robust framework that could assist in decisionmaking.<sup>89</sup> The 2006 QDR report, however, did not discuss these risks or explore the potential trade-offs required to execute the revised QDR strategy. It did, however, note that the portfolio of capabilities currently held by the U.S. military was still largely focused on addressing traditional challenges, and that it needed to be reoriented to also address irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive challenges.<sup>90</sup>

CJCS Peter Pace's assessment of the 2006 QDR largely echoed the assessment of the QDR itself. He stated that it articulated "a vision for the transformed force fully consistent with the demands of the anticipated security environment in 2025" and that it promised to "more effectively and efficiently align strategy and resources."<sup>91</sup> Pace further noted that

we cannot accurately characterize the security environment of 2025; therefore, we must hedge against this uncertainty by identifying and developing a broad range of capabilities. Further, we must organize and arrange our forces to create the agility and flexibility to deal with unknowns and surprises in the coming decades. This review has carefully balanced those areas where risk might best be taken in order to provide the needed resources for areas requiring new or additional investment.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> For example, the QDR reported the decision to stabilize the Army's end strength at 482,400 active and 533,000 reserve component personnel by FY 2011. It endorsed continued efforts to rebalance Army capabilities by creating modular brigades in all three Army components: 117 in the Regular Army (42 BCTs and 75 support brigades); 106 in the Army National Guard (28 BCTs and 78 support brigades); and 58 support brigades in the U.S. Army Reserve.

<sup>89</sup> DoD, 2006c, p. 70. The March 2005 NDS had similarly embraced the 2001 QDR's risk framework, stating, "The 2001 QDR is the Department's vehicle for risk assessment. It identifies the key dimensions of risk and enables the Secretary to evaluate the size, shape, posture, commitment, and management of our armed forces relative to the objectives of the National Defense Strategy. It allows the Secretary of Defense to assess the tradeoffs among objectives and resource constraints. The risk framework comprises: operational risk, future challenges risk, force management risk, and institutional risk." See DoD, 2005, p. 11.

<sup>90</sup> DoD, 2006c, pp. 3, 19.

<sup>91</sup> DoD, 2006c, p. A-4.

<sup>92</sup> DoD, 2006c, p. A-6.

The CJCS did not identify any risks to the execution of the strategy laid out in the 2006 QDR report, and concluded that the U.S. military was currently fully capable of executing all of the objectives articulated in the NDS, and that the recommendations in the 2006 QDR report “provide future capability, capacity, and flexibility to execute these assigned missions while hedging against the unknown threats of 2025.”<sup>93</sup>

### Other Assessments

The congressional response to the 2006 QDR report was, however, somewhat mixed, with the principal criticism being that, in HASC Chairman Rep. Duncan Hunter’s words, the QDR was a “budget-driven exercise”: “We need to better understand the current and future threats to our national security and then design and fund our military accordingly,” he stated.<sup>94</sup> Ranking member Rep. Ike Skelton also criticized the QDR as follows:

Although it is too early to say for sure, it appears that this QDR places obligations on the military services that may not be supported by our current projected budgets. In particular, I question whether the full range of potential missions detailed in this QDR is possible with an Army that includes only 70 Brigade Combat Teams. . . . Today’s Army is severely stretched by deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is not clear to me that an Army of 70 BCTs can sustain the “Long War” envisioned by this QDR while simultaneously executing the missions that are necessary to support major conflicts in the future. The Army’s land force partner, the Marine Corps, will likewise be severely challenged by the framework laid out in this report.<sup>95</sup>

The March 2006 HASC hearings on the QDR identified a number of specific congressional concerns about the QDR, including worries that the QDR was unduly resource-constrained, rather than being a true strategy analysis; contradictory conclusions in the QDR about force structure, including proposed cuts to ground forces while increasing the demands on the force; proposed cuts to the operational bomber force, despite statements about the increased demands and value of long-range strike; and the intellectually confusing oxymoron of a “surge” for “long-duration [irregular warfare] campaigns.”<sup>96</sup>

Rather than establishing an independent, bipartisan NDP to review the 2006 QDR, the HASC took the unusual step of conducting its own Committee Defense

<sup>93</sup> DoD, 2006c, pp. A-6–A-7.

<sup>94</sup> HASC, “Hunter Statement on the Department of Defense’s Quadrennial Defense Review,” press release, February 2, 2006a.

<sup>95</sup> Pamela Hess, “QDR Leaves Repubs, Dems Skeptical,” UPI, February 3, 2006.

<sup>96</sup> See the remarks of Hunter and Skelton in U.S. House of Representatives, 2006.

Review of strategy.<sup>97</sup> As described by the HASC, the purpose of the review was to “create an alternative framework to consider the defense budget request for fiscal year 2007 and the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP),” and to “complement—not to compete with or contradict—the DoD’s QDR.”<sup>98</sup> The report made nearly a dozen recommendations, including increases in force structure and budgets.<sup>99</sup>

The Senate side also expressed doubts about the resourcing of the QDR’s strategy. For example, SASC Chairman Carl Levin called for “honest budgeting” of wars that would finance wartime expenses through additional taxes rather than deficit spending, the burden of which would be passed on to future generations. Levin also asked that a number of subjects be addressed in more detail, including the contradictions between increasing demands on forces and the lowering of force levels, uncertainties about the sufficiency of strategic lift, and inadequate attention given to the counterproliferation of WMDs.<sup>100</sup> Sen. John McCain asked why the QDR was focused on “budget disciplines,” when the statutory language called for the QDR to provide a strategy and estimate the budgets needed, and the intent of Congress was that “a successful review . . . should be driven first by the demands of strategy, not by any presupposition about the size of the defense budget.”

Congress commissioned GAO to review the 2006 QDR, and that review provides some additional insights into the analytics behind the QDR. GAO noted, for example,

- Rather than assessing different levels of forces and their capabilities, and evaluating trade-offs among capabilities, DoD’s primary assessment approach was to assess currently planned forces in potential scenarios to determine whether and to what extent the planned force structure would experience shortages.
- Rather than conducting a comprehensive assessment of personnel requirements, DoD’s approach to active and reserve military personnel levels was to limit growth and initiate efforts to use current personnel levels more efficiently, taking current personnel levels as a given.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> See HASC, “Chairman Hunter, Members of the House Armed Services Committee Release Comprehensive Committee Defense Review,” press release, December 6, 2006c. Interestingly, Hunter signaled his plans to conduct such as review in June 2005, more than six months before the 2006 QDR was released. See “House Committee Readying Plans to Conduct Its Own ‘Threat-Based QDR,’” *Inside Defense*, June 16, 2005; and “House Panel to Launch Defense Review, Produce QDR Alternative,” *Inside Defense*, September 15, 2005.

<sup>98</sup> HASC, *Committee Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., December 2006b, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>99</sup> HASC, 2006a, pp. 3–5.

<sup>100</sup> See in particular the opening remarks of Levin in U.S. Senate, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> GAO, *Quadrennial Defense Review: Future Reviews Could Benefit from Improved Department of Defense Analyses and Changes to Legislative Requirements*, Washington, D.C., GAO-07-709, September 2007, p. 23. GAO submitted as evidence of DoD’s failure to conduct a thorough review of personnel in the QDR the fact that in the FY 2008 budget proposal of January 2007, the Secretary of Defense announced plans to permanently increase the size of the active component Army by 65,000 to 547,000, and the Marine Corps by 27,000 to 202,000, a total of 92,000 troops

- Although the 2001 QDR and 2006 QDR study guidance had emphasized that DoD planned to use capabilities-based planning to perform its analyses, DoD did not actually conduct a comprehensive, integrated assessment of alternative force structures and capabilities that would enable such an analysis.<sup>102</sup>
- By January 2007, DoD had reported to Congress that it had completed implementation of about 90 of the 130 initiatives (or 70 percent) that flowed from the QDR.<sup>103</sup>

GAO also provided a lengthy description and assessment of the analytic work conducted in the Joint Staff–led study called OA 06:

DoD’s primary basis for assessing the overall force structure best suited to implement the national defense strategy, according to several DoD officials, was a Joint Staff-led study known as Operational Availability 06. The study compared the number and types of units in DoD’s planned force structure to the operational requirements for potential scenarios to determine whether and to what extent the planned force structure would experience shortages. However, the Joint Staff’s Operational Availability 06 Study did not assess alternatives to planned force structures and evaluate trade-offs among capabilities.

In conducting the Operational Availability 06 Study, the Joint Staff completed two different analyses. The first analysis, referred to as the base case, relied on a set of operational scenarios that created requirements for air, ground, maritime, and special operations forces. During this study, the Joint Staff examined requirements for a broad range of military operations over a 7-year time frame. Two overlapping conventional campaigns served as the primary demand for forces with additional operational demands created by 23 lesser contingency operations, some of which represented the types of operations that military forces would encounter while defending the homeland and executing the war on terrorism. The Joint Staff then compared the number of military units in DOD’s planned air, ground, maritime, and special operations forces to the operational demands of the scenarios. The Joint Staff made two key assumptions during the analysis. First, the Joint Staff assumed that reserve component units could not deploy more than once in 6 years. Second, the Joint Staff assumed that while forces within each service could be reassigned or retrained to meet shortfalls within the force structure, forces could not be substituted across the services. Results of the Joint Staff’s first analysis showed that maritime forces were capable of meeting operational demands and air, ground, and special operations forces experienced some shortages.

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over the next five years. The Army National Guard also would be increased by 8,200 to 358,200, and the Army Reserve was to be increased by 6,000 to 206,000.

<sup>102</sup> GAO, 2007, pp. ii, 5–6, 16–24.

<sup>103</sup> GAO, 2007, p. 15.

In response to a tasking from top-level officials the Joint Staff performed a second analysis that developed a different set of operational demands reflecting the high pace of operations in Iraq. In this analysis, the Joint Staff used the same 2012 planned force structure that was examined in the first analysis. When it compared the operational demands that were similar to those experienced in Iraq with DOD's planned force structure, the Joint Staff found that the air, ground, maritime, and special operations forces experienced shortages and they could only meet operational demands for a security environment similar to Iraq, one conventional campaign, and 11 of the 23 lesser contingency scenarios.<sup>104</sup>

For its part, and as it had with respect to the 2001 QDR, GAO praised the sustained involvement of DoD senior leaders in the QDR, as well as the extensive collaboration with interagency partners and allied countries, and development of a database to track QDR initiatives. On the other hand, GAO criticized DoD's failure to conduct a comprehensive, integrated assessment of different options for organizing and sizing forces to provide needed capabilities; DoD's failure to provide a clear analytical basis for the conclusion that it had the appropriate number of active and reserve component personnel to meet current and projected demands; and OSD and CJCS risk assessments that did not fully apply DoD's risk management framework, because assessment tools for measuring risk had not been developed. GAO also raised questions about changes to the timing and required topical coverage for future QDRs to make them more effective vehicles for regular strategy reviews.<sup>105</sup>

## Summary and Conclusions

As had been the case with the BUR in the first Clinton administration, the 2001 QDR lacked a basic statement of national security policy from the new administration to guide the development of a new strategic concept, strategy, and force structure.

Among the principal contributions of the 2001 QDR were an emphasis on homeland security that predated the 2001 attacks, its elaborations of transformation and capabilities-based planning, and its risk assessment framework, which focused on (1) force management risk, (2) operational risk, (3) future challenges risk, and (4) institutional risk. That said, the highly compressed timeline for conducting the review left many issues and details to be addressed in follow-on work. In addition, the scenarios that appear to have been considered in connection with the capability to meet "aggression in two overlapping major conflicts" in the 2001 QDR bore only slight resemblance

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<sup>104</sup> See GAO, 2007, pp. 17–18. The work of the QDR Red Team reportedly was instrumental in identifying the shortfalls in special operations forces and promoting the decision to boost U.S. special operations forces capabilities.

<sup>105</sup> GAO, 2007, pp. 2–3, 31.

to the post-combat stabilization operations that were required as a direct consequence of a “decisive defeat” of the Taliban and Saddam regimes; the potential requirement for forces to conduct long-duration stability operations following a decisive defeat arguably should have been considered more seriously. The QDR’s failure, in particular, to consider in detail the end strength requirements of one or more such operations led to extensive reliance on reserve forces and force management challenges that derived from the high OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO requirements of the two conflicts. The transformation agenda also would end up taking a back seat to the conduct of the wars. Thus, it can fairly be said that the dictum that “no plan survives its first encounter with the enemy” appears no less true in the case of the 2001 QDR.

The 2006 QDR appeared to have expanded the range of scenarios that were considered in the analysis, and continued to include two overlapping conventional campaigns, which served as the primary demand for forces, although among the nearly simultaneous scenarios reportedly assessed were a conventional campaign and an irregular conflict on the order of an Afghanistan or Iraq operation, with additional operational demands created by various combinations of 23 lesser contingency operation scenarios.

Although the 2006 QDR’s Michelin Man force planning construct and the construct for thinking about threats made useful contributions to extending the thinking presented in the 2001 QDR, they similarly failed to address the operational challenges that had emerged since the last QDR, especially the end strength requirements of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; in less than a year, the 2006 QDR’s conclusion that Regular Army end strength levels were capable of meeting OPTEMPO and other requirements was overturned, and increases in Army end strength followed.



## The Obama Administration, 2009–2017

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The Obama administration came to power with the aim of ending the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq on satisfactory terms, even as it reshaped the force for the post-war period. In reshaping the force, required force enhancements were identified by examining ongoing conflicts, as well as the performance of the current and planned force through combinations of scenarios spanning a broader range of plausible future challenges than had been addressed in previous QDRs. Meanwhile, although most U.S. troops had been withdrawn, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq were far from settled.<sup>1</sup>

As the administration drew to an end, it shifted to a strategic concept that envisioned military capacity and capability to (1) defend the homeland; (2) deal with four potential contingencies, including Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran; (3) conduct a sustained global campaign against violent extremism; and (4) respond to aggression from two different adversaries with overlapping timelines, similar to the “1-4-2-1” construct presented in the 2001 QDR of the previous administration.<sup>2</sup>

### The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report

As will be described, whereas previous post-9/11 QDRs had sought to advance defense transformation and management reform, the 2010 QDR<sup>3</sup> focused primarily on win-

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of presidential national security and foreign policy decisionmaking during the Obama administration, see Brown, 2015, pp. 659–755.

<sup>2</sup> OUSD (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, *Operation and Maintenance Overview: Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Estimates*, Washington, D.C., February 2016, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Documentation related to the 2010 QDR includes DoD, “2010 QDR Terms of Reference Fact Sheet,” Washington, D.C., April 27, 2009e; DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., February 2010a; DoD, *2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Fact Sheet*, Washington, D.C., 2009a; U.S. House of Representatives, *The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review*, 111th Congress, 2nd Session, February 4, 2010; and U.S. Senate, *Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services on Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2011; The Future Years Defense Program; the 2011 [sic] Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR); the 2011 [sic] Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR); the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Policy*, 111th Congress, 2nd Session, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Gov-

ning the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and, according to DoD, constituted the first truly “wartime QDR.” It gave primacy to securing favorable outcomes in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as rebalancing the current force, rather than preparing for longer-term threats. This was summarized well in the tenets of the QDR’s defense strategy—prevailing in today’s wars, preventing and deterring conflict, preparing to defeat adversaries and succeeding in a wide range of contingencies, and preserving and enhancing the AVF—and by CJCS Mullen’s top three priorities: “winning today’s fight,” balancing global strategic risk,” and “enhancing the health of the force.”<sup>4</sup>

Preparatory efforts for the QDR appear to have begun well before the Obama administration took office in developing what came to be called the “Analytic Agenda,” the result of frustration with the unwieldy organization and process that underpinned the 2006 QDR, as well as inconsistent usage by the services of different OPLANs, scenarios, and data, which had made it difficult for senior leaders to understand the key assumptions behind the analyses. These preparations for the 2010 QDR included the development and socialization of a common set of assumptions, scenarios, and models. As will be described, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates sought to consider a wider range of scenarios in the 2010 QDR than its predecessors. The 2010 QDR also introduced the innovation of Integrated Security Constructs (ISCs), each of which contained different combinations of overlapping contingency scenarios and other demands on the force, and was used to test the capabilities of the force. Another innovative aspect of the analysis was that the demands of the contingency scenarios were assumed to be additive to ongoing peacetime operations, rather than serving as demands for forces that would necessitate termination of such peacetime operations.

### Key Assumptions

As with the earlier QDRs, the 2010 QDR report emphasized the complexity of the international environment and the accelerating pace of change.<sup>5</sup> For the foreseeable

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ernment Printing Office, February 2, 2010a. See also Stephen J. Hadley and William J. Perry, Co-Chairmen, *The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America’s National Security Needs in the 21st Century; The Final Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2010; U.S. Senate, *The Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services*, 111th Congress, 2nd Session, Washington, D.C., August 3, 2010b; GAO, *Quadrennial Defense Review: 2010 Report Addressed Many but Not All Required Items*, Washington, D.C., GAO-10-575R, April 30, 2010; Stephen Daggett, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2010: Overview and Implications for National Security Planning*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R41250, May 17, 2010; and Kathleen H. Hicks and Samuel J. Brannen, “Force Planning in the 2010 QDR,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No. 59, 4th Quarter 2010, pp. 136–142.

<sup>4</sup> P. Stephen Stanley, *The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review: Testimony Before U.S. House of Representatives*, 111th Congress, 2nd Session, February 4, 2010, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 15–16.

future, prevailing in the war against al-Qa’ida and its allies, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan, would be DoD’s top priority.<sup>6</sup>

The QDR reported three key global trends and three operational trends that would significantly shape the future security environment. The three global trends were:

1. The distribution of global power (political, economic, and military) was becoming more diffuse.
2. Non-state actors were expected to become an increasingly important feature of the global system, as well as have the influence and access to capabilities that were previously monopolized by states.
3. The proliferation of WMDs would continue to undermine global stability.<sup>7</sup>

Overlying these three trends and complicating U.S. efforts at maintaining stability were the global rising demand for resources, rapid urbanization of the littoral regions, the effects of climate change, the emergence of new diseases, and deep cultural and ethnic division in parts of the globe. All of these factors had the potential to spark or exacerbate a future conflict.<sup>8</sup>

The three operational trends were:

1. U.S. opponents would increasingly turn to unconventional or “hybrid” approaches to mitigate against the continued dominance of the United States in traditional forms of military conflict.
2. Rising alternative centers of power and strong nonstate actors would increase the importance of U.S. access to the global commons.
3. Changes to the global environment would increasingly undermine chronically fragile states, making them a potential source of conflict.<sup>9</sup>

### National Interests

The 2010 QDR report addressed U.S. national interest in very broad strokes. It noted that U.S. national interests were closely tied to strengthening and maintaining the current international system, as that system promoted security, prosperity, a broad respect for universal values, and cooperative action.<sup>10</sup> In regard to global stability, because the U.S. military was the most powerful in the world, the United States was seen as having

<sup>6</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 5–6.

<sup>7</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 6–7.

<sup>8</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 8–9.

<sup>10</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 9.

an obligation to sustain that system. This obligation, in turn, required that the United States maintain a military with unmatched capabilities that could be used “in defense of our national interests and the common good.”<sup>11</sup>

As with the 2001 and 2006 QDRs, the 2010 QDR report identified regions critical to U.S. interests throughout most of the world. First and foremost, however, was the successful prosecution of the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Beyond these two theaters of war, Europe and NATO, the Asia-Pacific region, the broader Middle East, Africa, and Central and South Asia were also identified as priority regions for the development of U.S. global force posture.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, U.S. objectives in Africa, as well as Central and South America, were to be pursued with only a limited U.S. military presence.

Given the above, the 2010 QDR report sought to achieve two primary objectives: first, to rebalance the military capabilities of the United States to prevail in the then-current wars; and, second, to reform DoD’s institutions to better support the war-fighter, to buy affordable and needed weapons, and to ensure that taxpayer money was spent wisely.<sup>13</sup>

### Threats

It was reported that an integration group with a QDR analysis and integration cell was created, with at least four issue teams that were to examine irregular warfare, defeating high-end asymmetric threats, civil support at home and abroad, and DoD’s global posture.<sup>14</sup>

### Strategy

Key national security documents published under the previous administration prior to the 2010 QDR included the March 2006 NSS, the June 2008 NDS, and the 2009 Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report (QRMRR), which served as the starting points for the QDR, at least prior to the kickoff of the QDR.<sup>15</sup> In the same way that the 2001 QDR was the first strategy report of the George W. Bush administration, the 2010 QDR was for the Obama administration. Nonetheless, the report built

<sup>11</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. iii.

<sup>14</sup> “Gates Plans Frequent Meetings with COCOMs to Shape 2010 QDR,” *Inside Defense*, April 8, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> DoD, *National Defense Strategy*, Washington, D.C., 2008; and DoD, *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report*, Washington, D.C., 2009b. The NDS had described an operating environment shaped by globalization, violent extremist movements, rogue and unstable states, and proliferation of WMDs. GAO, 2010. Gates served as Secretary of Defense from December 2006 to July 2011, and provided a measure of continuity in defense planning between the late Bush administration and the early Obama administration.

on drafts of the administration's NSS, Gates' 2009 article in *Foreign Affairs*, and the FY 2010–2015 Program Objective Memorandum (POM) submission.<sup>16</sup>

As had been the case with the Bush administration at the beginning of its term, the Obama administration sought to set a different strategic direction from its predecessor,<sup>17</sup> and similarly failed to release an NSS within 150 days of entry into office: The first NSS report of the Obama administration was released in May 2010, three months after the release of the 2010 QDR report.<sup>18</sup> That said, interviews suggest that the QDR and NSS drafting teams made efforts to harmonize and ensure the complementarity of the two efforts.

Nonetheless, although the 2010 QDR report was the first QDR of the new Obama administration, it did not represent an entirely clean break with the previous administration's strategic thinking in at least one important respect:<sup>19</sup> The continued service of Gates as Secretary of Defense served as an intellectual bridge between the two periods.<sup>20</sup> Gates' 2009 article "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age" in *Foreign Affairs* magazine signaled areas of both continuity and change.<sup>21</sup>

The 2010 QDR report was clearly, to an even greater extent than its predecessor, a wartime QDR, and it placed winning the current wars at the top of DoD's budgeting, policy, and program priorities. It noted that, "first and foremost, the United States is a nation at war" and sought to ensure that the current war-fighter was adequately supported.<sup>22</sup> The QDR also continued to emphasize America's unique role in the world, and the importance of integrating all elements of national power to meet present and future security challenges.<sup>23</sup>

In order to advance the United States' national interests, the strategy posited that DoD needed to balance resources and risks among four priority strategic objectives: (1) prevailing in the current wars, (2) preventing and deterring conflict, (3) preparing to defeat adversaries and prevailing in a wide range of contingencies, and (4) preserving and enhancing the AVF.

<sup>16</sup> The Obama administration issued its first NSS in May 2010. According to structured conversations held for Larson et al., 2018, the teams drafting the NSS and QDR worked to harmonize their efforts.

<sup>17</sup> The White House's first NSS would describe this new strategic direction as "a strategy of national renewal and global leadership." White House, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, D.C., May 2010.

<sup>18</sup> White House, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Daggett notes that the 2010 QDR reflects "a considerable degree of continuity with the 2005 National Defense Strategy, the 2006 QDR, and the 2008 National Defense Strategy" (see Daggett, 2010, p. 21).

<sup>20</sup> Secretary of Defense Gates issued policy guidance for the 2010 QDR in April 2009 during the Bush administration. Daggett, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2009.

<sup>22</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. i.

<sup>23</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 1.

The objective of prevailing in today's wars focused primarily on ensuring the success of U.S. operations against "al-Qa'ida and the Taliban in Afghanistan and the border regions of Pakistan."<sup>24</sup> The QDR advocated preventing and deterring conflict so as to prevent the rise of threats to U.S. interests. This was to be accomplished through whole-of-government approaches and by close cooperation with U.S. allies and partners. It also focused on defending the United States from direct attack, deterring potential adversaries, fostering regional security, and assuring U.S. access to the global commons.<sup>25</sup> Preparing to defeat adversaries and succeeding in a wide range of contingencies focused efforts on being able to address a wide range of plausible future challenges to U.S. interests. These challenges included defeating al-Qa'ida and its allies, supporting domestic authorities in response to domestic attacks or disasters, conducting counter-WMD operations, conducting overseas stability operations, protecting U.S. citizens abroad, conducting operations in cyberspace, and preventing human suffering due to mass atrocities or large-scale disasters.<sup>26</sup> Finally, preserving and enhancing the AVF focused policy attention on ensuring the long-term viability of the AVF by sustaining the rotation base, providing care for DoD personnel in both peace and war, and adapting the force to meet the changing security environment.<sup>27</sup>

### Concepts of Operations

At the behest of the U.S. Congress, DoD undertook an effort to clarify military roles and missions based on the recently developed strategic guidance. The formal product of that review, the QRMRR, was published in January 2009.<sup>28</sup> The QRMRR codified the concept that DoD's mission was broader than its traditional focus on defeating a state adversary's conventional forces. It identified six core missions for which DoD was the lead U.S. government agency and/or for which it provided the preponderance of capabilities. These six core mission areas were (1) homeland defense and civil support; (2) deterrence operations; (3) major combat operations; (4) irregular warfare; (5) military support to stabilization, security, transition, and reconstruction operations; and (6) military contributions to cooperative security.<sup>29</sup>

Each of these core missions was to have a corresponding JOC intended to guide capability development and to provide a common lexicon for use across DoD.<sup>30</sup> The

<sup>24</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 11–12. According to structured conversations held for Larson et al., 2018, there was some disagreement regarding a statement about the speed of the drawdown in Iraq, with some pushing for faster withdrawal.

<sup>25</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 13–14.

<sup>26</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 14–15.

<sup>27</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. iii, 5.

<sup>28</sup> DoD, 2009b.

<sup>29</sup> DoD, 2009b, pp. 5–6.

<sup>30</sup> DoD, 2009b, pp. 3, 5–6, 7. Supporting the core missions were nine core competencies, or Joint Capability Areas, that linked the core mission areas to DoD's capability development process. These core competencies were

QRMRR also emphasized the importance of “soft power” and whole-of-government approaches in addressing the nation’s complex security challenges.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the QRMRR focused on DoD roles and mission issues in four new and rapidly evolving capability areas. Three of these areas, (irregular warfare, unmanned aircraft systems, and intratheater airlift) were closely related to the COIN operations that the United States had been conducting since 2004. The fourth, cyberspace operations, was the result of the rapidly evolving importance of cyberspace.<sup>32</sup>

By the time the QDR was published in February 2010, a rather impressive number of JOCs and supporting concepts had been released. JOCs at the time of the QDR’s release included the following:

- stability operations (September 2004)
- deterrence operations (December 2006)
- military support to stabilization, security, transition, and reconstruction operations (December 2006)
- major combat operations (December 2006)
- homeland defense and civil support (October 2007)
- irregular warfare, version 1.0 (September 2007)
- cooperative security (September 2008).

In addition, the following supporting concepts had been released by this time:

- joint integrating concept for combating WMDs (December 2007)
- joint urban operations joint integrating concept (July 2007)
- strategic communication joint integrating concept (October 2009).<sup>33</sup>

### Force Structure Requirements

The QDR report presented no named force sizing construct,<sup>34</sup> although one might be inferred from four stated priorities: (1) to prevail in the ongoing U.S. military operations; (2) to ensure “a defense in depth of the United States, preventing the emergence or reemergence of transnational terrorist threats, . . . and [deter] other potential major

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force application, command and control, battlespace awareness, net centric, building partnerships, protection, logistics, force support, and corporate management and support. DoD, 2009b, pp. 6–7.

<sup>31</sup> DoD, 2009b, pp. v, 31–37.

<sup>32</sup> DoD, 2009b, pp. v, 9–29.

<sup>33</sup> See DoD, “Joint Concepts,” Joint Electronic Library website, undated.

<sup>34</sup> In light of the complexity of the demands on U.S. forces, Gates reportedly was averse to development of an oversimplified, “bumper sticker”-type force planning construct. See “QDR Overhauls Two-War Planning Construct, Embraces New Operational Requirements Mix (Updated),” *Inside Defense*, January 26, 2010; and “Quadrennial Defense Review Overhauls Two-War Planning Construct,” *Inside Defense*, January 29, 2010.



adversaries;” (3) to “prepare for significant new challenges;” and (4) to “preserve and enhance . . . the all-volunteer force.”<sup>35</sup> These priorities served as the springboard to the 2010 QDR report’s statement of required military capabilities and force structure. Unlike the preceding post–Cold War defense reviews, the force-planning construct did not emphasize two nearly simultaneous major combat operations, although this combination of scenarios reportedly was assessed.<sup>36</sup> As a practical matter, development of the force planning construct was said to have flowed to the three ISCs, each of which consisted of a combination of war-fighting and other scenarios that aimed to capture different potential states of the world.

Following the release of the 2006 QDR report, OSD and the Joint Staff sought to develop the Analytic Agenda, the aim of which was to establish the foundations for more-transparent collaboration between OSD, the Joint Staff, and the services going forward. The development of the Analytic Agenda began with OSD (Policy), J-8, director of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation (CAPE), and the four services, and, ultimately, engendered a highly interactive DoD-wide approach that took input from broad, inclusive working groups up to the three-star level, with senior-level input pushed down to the working groups.<sup>37</sup> By 2009, this reportedly constituted a mature analytic infrastructure that included agreed-upon and rigorously modeled scenarios and scenario combinations (or ISCs), and provided a firmer analytic foundation for the 2010 QDR than had existed during the conduct of the 2006 QDR. The 2010 QDR reportedly used a total of three ISCs, each representing a different possible state of the world and containing a different combination of contingency and peacetime operation scenarios.

In late April 2009, DoD released the TOR for the QDR.<sup>38</sup> By this time, DoD reportedly had identified an array of 11 scenarios that would be used to support the QDR analyses, including stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, regime collapse in North Korea, a major conflict with China over Taiwan, Russian coercion of the Baltic states, a nuclear-armed Iran, loss of control of nuclear weapons in Pakistan, and homeland defense and cyberattacks on the United States.<sup>39</sup> At about the same time, a two-day war game reportedly was conducted that examined scenarios involving wars with China and Russia, and what was at the time described as “high-end asymmetric

<sup>35</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 43–46.

<sup>36</sup> According to structured conversations held for Larson et al., 2018, only one of the two major combat operations scenarios included an important role for Army ground forces while the other stressed air and naval forces.

<sup>37</sup> See DoD, “Support for Strategic Analysis,” DoD Instruction 8260.01, January 11, 2007.

<sup>38</sup> See DoD, “DoD Statement on Commencement of QDR, NPR,” Release No. 269-09, April 23, 2009d; and DoD, “DoD Background Briefing on the QDR, NPR,” April 23, 2009c. DoD also released an unclassified fact sheet on the QDR Terms of Reference (see DoD, 2009e).

<sup>39</sup> “Defense Department Selects QDR Scenarios, Leaders for Issue Teams,” *Inside Defense*, April 20, 2009; and “Upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review to Assess 11 Scenarios,” *Inside Defense*, April 22, 2009.

threats.”<sup>40</sup> Gates apparently was dissatisfied with the initial scenarios; shortly thereafter, he commissioned a Red Team to provide an alternative set of threat scenarios:

“I’ve got them red-teaming both the scenarios and the QDR itself so that we’re not prisoners of bureaucratic group-think of people who have done this work forever,” Gates said.

[Red Team leaders Director of Net Assessment Andrew Marshall and Joint Forces Command’s Gen. James Mattis] have already completed a key assignment from Gates: On May 1, they delivered a classified set of alternative defense planning scenarios for the QDR to consider alongside the established inventory of defense planning scenarios developed with input from the services, which can be portrayed in DoD-validated computer models, according to military sources. . . . The services prefer relying on scenarios that are part of the Pentagon’s “Analytic Agenda” process, which each has participated in designing to ensure their force structure and capabilities are accurately represented. In addition, these scenarios show case what they own and plan to buy.<sup>41</sup>

Gates, advised by other senior civilian and military leaders within DoD, reviewed, modified, and ultimately endorsed the scenarios that would be used to evaluate current and potential future forces.<sup>42</sup>

According to GAO, the QDR used the three ISCs to identify the force structure and capabilities needed in the midterm (five to seven years) to conduct the six missions and achieve each of the four defense objectives specified by the strategy. The QDR’s scenario analyses assumed that “U.S. forces will almost always be engaged in smaller-scale missions, such as deterrence operations or humanitarian relief missions—now called foundational activities. The analyses also assumed that over time, forces could be redirected to meet more pressing operational needs.”<sup>43</sup> Forces for homeland defense and support to civil authorities also were included in the QDR’s scenario analyses.<sup>44</sup>

The QDR tested the force against the portfolio of scenarios in each of the ISCs, with each ISC representing a different state of the world represented as a distinct com-

<sup>40</sup> “QDR War Game to Examine Wars with China, Russia, High-End Asymmetric Threats,” *Inside Defense*, April 17, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> “Defense Secretary Taps ‘Red Team’ to Critique QDR Process, Scenarios,” *Inside Defense*, May 18, 2009. The scenarios reportedly included scenarios described in Andrew F. Krepinevich, *7 Deadly Scenarios: A Military Futurist Explores War in the 21st Century*, New York: Bantam Dell, 2009. According to Krepinevich, the Red Team scenarios led to very different results from those that emerged from the Pentagon’s efforts. Private communication, March 30, 2017. Krepinevich’s outfit, the Center for Strategy and Budgetary Assessments, has conducted a significant amount of research for OSD’s Office of Net Assessment.

<sup>42</sup> DoD, 2009b, pp. 2, 17.

<sup>43</sup> GAO, 2010, p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> GAO, 2010, p. 27.

bination of contingency and peacetime operation scenarios.<sup>45</sup> The QDR reported that the combinations of scenarios assessed in the QDR included the following:

A major stabilization operation, deterring and defeating a highly capable regional aggressor, and extending support to civil authorities in response to a catastrophic event in the United States. This scenario combination particularly stressed the force's ability to defeat a sophisticated adversary and support domestic response.

Deterring and defeating two regional aggressors while maintaining a heightened alert posture for U.S. forces in and around the United States. This scenario combination particularly stressed the force's combined arms capacity.

A major stabilization operation, a long-duration deterrence operation in a separate theater, a medium-sized counterinsurgency mission, and extended support to civil authorities in the United States. This scenario combination particularly stressed elements of the force most heavily tasked for counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations.

QDR force analysis also tested the force's ability to sustain robust levels of engagement overseas through forward stationing and routine rotational deployments. Successfully achieving any of the core missions of the U.S. Armed Forces requires strong security relationships with a host of allies and partners—relationships best enabled and maintained through both a long-term presence abroad and sustained, focused interactions between U.S. and partner forces.

In all of the scenario sets it tested, the Department assumed ongoing U.S. military engagement in presence and deterrence missions.<sup>46</sup>

And as described in testimony:

[W]e certainly looked at and tested the force against the classic two major theater wars because we think that is still an important standard, but we didn't think it was sufficient.

... [W]hile I don't want to get into classified details in this setting, what I can say to you is that in many of those cases we found that a lot of the U.S. contribution would be heavy air and naval intensive, and there was certainly adequate flex in our forces to provide that assistance to allies on the ground who were engaged.

<sup>45</sup> Although we found no definitive information on the number of force structure alternatives that were tested in the QDR, testimony and the modest changes to then-current force structure called for by the 2010 QDR suggest that the then-planned force structure was tested using the various cases or scenario combinations to identify gaps and shortfalls, and a notional enhanced future force was tested to ensure that it addressed the most important gaps and shortfalls.

<sup>46</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 42–43.

. . . In terms of the longer-term perspective, our scenarios did look out into the future. 2016 was one snapshot. 2028 was another. And we pulled those insights forward to really focus on refining the plans for the FYDP.<sup>47</sup>

The scenario cases that we picked—and again there are three scenario cases that we tested the force against; so instead of just building for a capability level, we tested the force against three different visions of the future. That emphasizes the flexibility of the force that we require. The size of the ground forces was part of that, and the size of the force tested satisfactorily against those three different scenario cases.

. . . Again, we did three cases. Each case had different combinations of scenarios in it. So, it is not three scenarios. It is three separate scenario cases that include multiple scenarios. Was Korea a part of it? Yes. OK, do we put boots on the ground in Korea? Yes.<sup>48</sup>

Nonetheless, it appeared to some Army observers that rather than being required to prepare for ground operations in two major wars, the Army was being asked to prepare for one war, and to support another that was dominated by air and sea operations. There also appears to have been substantial confusion regarding whether the ISCs should be considered “illustrative” or “real plans.”<sup>49</sup>

Other reporting suggested that one of the ISCs included the following missions conducted in overlapping time frames:

- conducting a large-scale stability operation, such as Operation Iraqi Freedom
- defeating a highly capable state adversary in a distant theater
- extending support to civil authorities in response to a catastrophic event in the United States
- continuing to execute a global campaign against al-Qa’ida and its allies.<sup>50</sup>

For its part, GAO reported that the scenarios that were used to test the force in the midterm time frame (five to seven years) included homeland defense, defense support to civil authorities responding to a catastrophic event in the United States, a major

<sup>47</sup> Michelle A. Flournoy, *The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review: Testimony Before the U.S. House of Representatives*, 111th Congress, 2nd Session, February 4, 2010, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Stanley, 2010, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> Structured conversations from Larson et al., 2018. In addition, there was a feeling at the O-6 level in the Army that “the goal posts had been moved” in the sense that the Army was to provide forces for one war rather than two, with a requirement to provide some support in the second war; there reportedly were no ground scenarios in the Middle East–Europe region at this time. Finally, there reportedly was a disconnect between the military and civilian leadership regarding the likelihood of the scenarios; civilians reportedly assumed “we’ll never execute that second campaign” while the military assumed “that is the strategy we’ve been told to prepare to execute.”

<sup>50</sup> Hicks and Brannen, 2010, pp. 136–142.

stabilization operation, deterring and defeating regional aggressors, and a medium-sized COIN mission.<sup>51</sup>

The analysis focused on identifying capability gaps and capacity shortfalls when the U.S. military executed missions in the near-, mid-, and far-term.<sup>52</sup> This analysis also led to two fundamental conclusions: (1) Additional and better enabling capabilities were required for the U.S. military to successfully execute its missions; and (2) U.S. forces needed to be flexible and adaptable so that they could successfully engage the full range of challenges that can emerge from a complex and dynamic security environment.<sup>53</sup>

To meet the QDR's four primary objectives, the 2010 report identified six key mission areas where significant enhancements were required to rebalance the U.S. military:

- First, to be able to defend the United States and support civil authorities at home. These capabilities focused on protecting the United States from direct attack and supporting civil authorities in the case of a man-made or natural catastrophic event.
- Second, to be able to succeed in COIN, stability, and CT operations. These capabilities focused on enhancing the whole-of-government capability to conduct large-scale COIN, stability, and CT operations.
- Third, to be able to build the security capacity of partner states. These capabilities focused on an improved ability to conduct security cooperation activities and, in particular, security force assistance operations.
- Fourth, to be able to deter and defeat aggression in antiaccess environments. These capabilities focused on countering an adversary's antiaccess capabilities and on ensuring the U.S. ability to project power.
- Fifth, to be able to prevent proliferation of and to counter WMDs. These capabilities focused on successfully conducting counter-WMD operations.
- Sixth, to be able to operate effectively in cyberspace. These capabilities focused on improving the security of U.S. information systems.<sup>54</sup>

According to the 2010 QDR report, these capability areas were identified by evaluating alternative future forces across a range of scenarios and from lessons learned from the ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> GAO, 2010, p. 2. GAO did not evaluate DoD's process and methodology or validate the results of the QDR analyses, but provided some interesting insights into these issues.

<sup>52</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. vii, 17.

<sup>53</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 17–49.

<sup>55</sup> According to the 2010 QDR, the QDR “developed insights regarding the ways in which the capabilities of U.S. forces should evolve by evaluating alternative future forces in a diverse set of scenarios, which depicted a wide range of plausible challenges that might call for a response by U.S. military forces. The Department also assessed lessons learned from ongoing operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Collectively, these assessments helped inform decisions affecting capabilities in six key mission areas.” DoD, 2010a, p. 17.

In a March 2009 interview, Gates signaled that the force planning construct might undergo further refinement:

ADAM SIEGEL (National Public Radio [NPR]): There have been debates in Washington for forever over whether we are capable of waging two wars at one time, whether we have a military large enough for that, having inherited this situation when we were at war both in Iraq and Afghanistan. What's the lesson, is two wars at once perhaps biting off more than we can effectively chew even if we're willing to spend a trillion dollars on it?

SECRETARY GATES: Our military planning for a number of years has—and I would say going back at least 20 years—has been to have the ability to fight two major combat operations simultaneously. One where it would be an aggressive effort and another where you might have to hold for a while and then finish the job. I think one of the central questions that this department will face in the Quadrennial Defense Review, which will begin shortly, is whether that model makes any sense in the 21st century and whether what may have fit in a cold War environment or an immediately post–Cold War environment really has application to today's world.

ADAM SIEGEL (NPR): And the experience of the past few years suggests some rethinking is needed there in terms of what our doctrines are?

SECRETARY GATES: I think so.<sup>56</sup>

The 2010 QDR report reported that its force sizing and force-shaping construct was defined to meet the priority objectives of the strategy—prevail, prevent and deter, prepare, and preserve and enhance—while meeting the needs of the current operational environment (e.g., Iraq and Afghanistan) and including sizing criteria for the midterm (five to seven years) and long term (seven to 20 years):

The QDR establishes force planning guidance to ensure U.S. forces are sized to conduct the following types of operations in overlapping time frames:

- Prevail in ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and in the war against Al Qaeda and its allies
- Conduct “foundational activities” to prevent and deter: attacks on the United States, emergence of new trans-national terrorist threats, and aggression by state adversaries
- Be prepared to prevail in other challenges, including conducting multiple, simultaneous operations ranging from: defeating adversaries with advanced anti-access capabilities to supporting large scale support to civil authorities at home

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<sup>56</sup> Gates interview by Adam Siegel of NPR, reported in “Two at Once,” *Inside Defense*, March 18, 2009.

- Preserve and enhance the force by ensuring sufficient aggregate capacity to accomplish these objectives at sustainable rotation rates.<sup>57</sup>

The QDR provided detailed instructions to the services on the forces they were to provide over the FYs 2011–2015 FYDP (see Table 11.1).

### Assessment of Risk

As had been the case with previous QDRs, the overall analysis aimed to assess the level of risk associated with executing the strategy using the planned force, and to identify solution paths for ensuring an overall moderate level of risk. Moreover, the 2010 QDR used a variety of approaches to assess the risk in executing the strategy.

According to the QDR,

In assessing risk for this QDR, the Department used a multidisciplinary approach. The assessment reflects updated thinking on best practices, which increasingly not only draws on quantitative analysis, but also relies on informed judgments, expert opinions, and the use of scenarios. The Department ensured that its risk assessment was strategy driven. Our efforts were informed by recent risk identification efforts conducted by various components of the Department, including the DoD Inspector General and by the Government Accountability Office.<sup>58</sup>

The Joint Staff reportedly believed that the OSD risk assessments covered the risk in executing commanders' operational plans, but did not adequately address "strategic risk," i.e., what might happen, and whether the force was prepared to deal with it. Moreover, the OSD risk assessment process reportedly was not very systematic or data driven, and relied on subjective input from senior leaders.

Accordingly, the risk framework developed in the 2001 QDR was slightly updated with the addition of another category of risk—strategic, military, and political risk. As described in the QDR,

As a framework to organize its assessment, the 2010 QDR used risk categories, described below, that have been employed since 2001:

- Operational risk: the ability of the current force to execute strategy successfully within acceptable human, materiel, financial, and strategic costs. Consideration of operational risk requires assessing the Department's ability to execute current, planned, and contingency operations in the near term.

<sup>57</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 41–45. The QDR report stated,

The QDR force-sizing and force-shaping construct differentiates between current commitments and plausible future requirements, and forms the basis for determining the appropriate type and range of the main elements of U.S. force structure necessary to meet the needs of the defense strategy (DoD, 2010a, p. 3).

<sup>58</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 89.



**Table 11.1****Main Elements of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Special Operations Force Structures, FYs 2011–2015****Department of the Army**

- 4 Corps headquarters
- 18 Division headquarters
- 73 total BCTs (45 active components and 28 reserve components), consisting of:
  - 40 infantry BCTs (IBCTs)
  - 8 Stryker BCTs (SBCTs)
  - 25 heavy BCTs (HBCTs)
- 21 combat aviation brigades (CABs) (13 active components and 8 reserve components)
- 15 Patriot battalions; 7 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) batteries

**Department of the Navy**

- 10–11 aircraft carriers and 10 carrier air wings
- 84–88 large surface combatants, including 21–32 ballistic missile defense–capable combatants and Aegis Ashore
- 14–28 small surface combatants (+14 mine countermeasure ships)
- 29–31 amphibious warfare ships
- 53–55 attack submarines and 4 guided missile submarines
- 126–171 land-based ISR and EW aircraft (manned and unmanned)
- 3 maritime prepositioning squadrons
- 30–33 combat logistics force ships (+1 Mobile Landing Platform [MLP])
- 17–25 command and support vessels (including Joint High Speed Vessels, 3 T-AKE Class dry cargo/ammunition ships, 1 mobile landing platform)
- 51 roll-on/roll-off strategic sealift vessels
- 3 MEFs
- 4 Marine divisions (3 active components and 1 reserve component)
- 11 infantry regiments
- 4 artillery regiments
- 4 Marine aircraft wings (6 fixed-wing groups, 7 rotary-wing groups, 4 control groups, 4 support groups)
- 4 Marine logistics groups (9 combat logistics regiments)
- 7 Marine expeditionary unit command elements

**Department of the Air Force**

- 8 ISR wing-equivalents (with up to 380 primary mission aircraft)
- 30–32 airlift and aerial refueling wing-equivalents (with 33 primary mission aircraft per wing-equivalent)
- 10–11 theater strike wing-equivalents (with 72 primary mission aircraft per wing-equivalent)
- 5 long-range strike (bomber) wings (with up to 96 primary mission aircraft)
- 6 air superiority wing-equivalents (with 72 primary mission aircraft per wing-equivalent)
- 3 command and control wings and 5 fully operational air and space operations centers (with a total of 27 primary mission aircraft)
- 10 space and cyberspace wings

**Special Operations Forces**

- Approximately 660 special operations teams (includes Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha [ODA] teams; Navy Sea, Air, and Land [SEAL] platoons; Marine special operations teams; Air Force special tactics teams; and operational aviation detachments [OADs])

Table 11.1—Continued

Special Operations Forces (continued)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 Ranger battalions</li><li>• 165 tilt-rotor/fixed-wing mobility and fire support primary mission aircraft</li></ul>

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SOURCE: DoD, 2010a, pp. 69–70.

- Force management risk: our ability to recruit, retain, train, educate, and equip the all-volunteer force, and to sustain its readiness and morale. This requires the Department to examine its ability to provide trained and ready personnel in the near term, midterm, and long term.
- Institutional risk: the capacity of management and business practices to plan for, enable, and support the execution of DoD missions. It encompasses the ability to develop effective and efficient organizations and processes over the near term, midterm, and long term.
- Future challenges risk: the Department’s capacity to execute future missions successfully, and to hedge against shocks. Here most consideration is given to the Department’s ability to field superior capabilities and sufficient capacity to deter/defeat emerging threats in the midterm and long term.

. . . In the 2010 QDR risk assessment, strategic risk constitutes the Department’s ability to execute the defense priority objectives in the near term, midterm, and long term in support of national security. Military risk encompasses the ability of U.S. forces to adequately resource, execute, and sustain military operations in the near- to midterm, and the mid- to longer term. In the international context, political risk derives from the perceived legitimacy of our actions and the resulting impact on the ability and will of allies and partners to support shared goals. In the domestic context, political risk relates to public support of national strategic priorities and the associated resource requirements in the near term, midterm, and long term.<sup>59</sup>

As part of this assessment, the QDR highlighted three specific areas of operational risk (“enabling capabilities,” “the building of partnership capacity,” and “securing DoD systems in cyberspace”), as well as addressing the institutional, force management, and future challenges risks.<sup>60</sup>

Testimony suggests that risk also was assessed using another framework. The QDR sought to balance resources and risk across four major objectives: (1) prevail-

<sup>59</sup> DoD, 2010a, pp. 90–95.

<sup>60</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 13.

ing in current operations, (2) preventing or deterring conflict, (3) preparing for a wide range of contingencies, and (4) preserving and enhancing the AVF.<sup>61</sup>

According to the QDR,

In assessing risk for this QDR, the Department used a multidisciplinary approach. The assessment reflects updated thinking on best practices, which increasingly not only draws on quantitative analysis, but also relies on informed judgments, expert opinions, and the use of scenarios. The Department ensured that its risk assessment was strategy driven.<sup>62</sup>

That said, the CJCS's assessment of the 2010 QDR did not include a clear statement that the QDR's strategy could be executed at low-to-moderate risk. Rather, the CJCS's assessment of the QDR concludes that, although "U.S. Armed Forces can perform the missions called for in the QDR," additional risk assessment work was needed, and implied that the risk level would depend on the adequacy of defense resources:

Managing risk under the new QDR force planning construct requires further analysis, including new scenarios to test joint concepts of operation and force mixes and the development of associated operational and strategic assumptions. Our planning and assessment efforts will vary the size, duration, and simultaneity of operations and account for associated policies and goals for force rotation, disengagement, and access to the Reserve Component.

Overall, the QDR provides an accurate depiction of our future national security requirements. Our challenge as a nation will be to properly resource these priorities.<sup>63</sup>

## Other Assessments

Perhaps the most notable concerns from members of Congress and the independent panel that was commissioned to review the QDR regarded the QDR's failure to take a longer-term perspective, lack of clarity surrounding the force planning construct that was used in the QDR, and the apparent shift away from a strategy and force structure that were capable of meeting the requirements of two nearly simultaneous major combat operations.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Christine Fox, *The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review: Testimony Before U.S. House of Representatives*, 111th Congress, 2nd Session, February 4, 2010, pp. 8–9. Beyond the descriptions of the scenario combinations the force was tested against to assess operational risk, few details were provided in testimony on how these risk assessments were actually done.

<sup>62</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 89.

<sup>63</sup> DoD, 2010a, p. 105.

<sup>64</sup> Hadley and Perry, 2010; U.S. Senate, 2010b; and GAO, 2010.

Returning to the matter of the 2010 QDR's use of scenarios, GAO's assessment of the QDR gave a generally favorable report as follows:

The QDR report outlined current and near-term threats confronting the United States and explained the scenarios DOD used in the QDR analyses. The report emphasized that the U.S. is currently at war and discussed the need for DOD to remain cognizant of global issues such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Unlike past reviews that called for U.S. forces to be able to fight and win two major regional conflicts, the 2010 QDR report asserted that U.S. forces must be capable of conducting a wide range of operations, including homeland defense and deterrence as well as defeating regional aggressors. The scenarios analyzed included a combination of types of operations reflecting a wide range of operations in multiple theaters in overlapping timeframes.<sup>65</sup>

## The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review Report

The 2014 QDR Report<sup>66</sup> served as a transitional QDR that aimed to guide DoD from a period dominated by wartime operations to one that would be better able to address emerging threats;<sup>67</sup> the QDR focused on the period following the end of major U.S. involvement in overseas COIN operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the resetting of the force.

<sup>65</sup> GAO, 2010, p. 5. GAO also reported DoD's argument that it had great difficulties succinctly reporting the results of its scenario analyses. GAO, 2010, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> See DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, Washington, D.C., March 2014a; DoD, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014 Fact Sheet*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2014b; DoD, "Statement by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel on the Release of the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget and 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review," Washington, D.C., Release No. NR-112-14, March 4, 2014c; HASC, *2014 Quadrennial Defense Review*, hearing, 113th Congress, 2nd Session, Washington, D.C., April 3, 2014b; William J. Perry and John P. Abizaid, *QDR National Defense Panel, Ensuring a Strong U.S. Defense for the Future: The National Defense Panel Review of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington, D.C., July 2014; and Catherine Dale, *The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and Defense Strategy: Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R43403, February 24, 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Secretary Hagel described the QDR as follows:

This QDR defines the historic transition unfolding throughout our defense enterprise. As we move off the longest continuous war footing in our nation's history, this QDR explains how we will adapt, reshape, and rebalance our military for the challenges and opportunities of the future" (see DoD, 2014d). As described by VADM James A. Winnefeld, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: "We think that a lot of the glue has come undone in the last few years. You know, this is a transition QDR. The last QDR was our war fight. And you know, we were in the middle of two tough war fights in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a transition QDR. The geopolitical environment has changed significantly. The ways wars are fought is changing every day, and it's accelerating and the fiscal environment is changing. So, everything is different in the ends, ways and means equation for us" (see HASC, 2014b).

In his cover letter to the QDR, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel noted that the QDR built on the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) and gave priority to “three strategic pillars:” (1) defending the homeland, (2) building security globally, and (3) remaining prepared to win decisively against any adversary. The Secretary also noted the imperative to “rebalance the military over the next decade and put it on a sustainable path to protect and advance U.S. interests and sustain U.S. global leadership.”<sup>68</sup> The steps Secretary Hagel proposed to reach a sustainable path included “making much-needed reforms across the defense enterprise. We will prioritize combat power by reducing unnecessary overhead and streamlining activities. (We will) reform military compensation.”<sup>69</sup>

The 2014 QDR also was an evolutionary document that built on the 2010 QDR and several documents that immediately preceded the 2014 report, including the May 2010 NSS, the January 2012 DSG, the July 2012 QRMRR, and the July 2013 Strategic Choices and Management Review (SCMR). The DSG established the defense strategy, identified which missions would be used to size military capabilities and capacity, and determined that U.S. forces would no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations such as the ones that had been conducted in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>70</sup> For its part, the SCMR identified options for reshaping the force and DoD institutions under three budget cut scenarios, and identified the resources that would be needed to support the defense strategy and its force requirements.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, although the 2014 QDR was conducted in the shadow of the Budget Control Act and the sequestration-driven cuts that resulted from that legislation, the QDR was described by its authors as being “strategy-driven, but resource-informed.”<sup>72</sup> The review was also informed by the knowledge that the United States had concluded combat operations in Iraq, and that operations in Afghanistan might also conclude in the near-term, especially given the difficulties the United States faced in arriving at the

<sup>68</sup> DoD, 2014c. In addition, in 2011, Gates reportedly launched a DoD “comprehensive review” that was continued by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta (see Dale, 2014, p. ii).

<sup>69</sup> DoD, 2014c.

<sup>70</sup> See DoD, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, Washington, D.C., January 2012. This document is typically referred to as the DSG.

<sup>71</sup> DoD described the three levels that were examined in the SCMR as full sequestration (\$500 billion in reductions), implementation of the president’s proposed 2014 budget (\$150 billion in reductions), and a middle option (\$250 billion in reductions). See DoD, “Statement on Strategic Choices and Management Review,” July 31, 2013c; DoD, “Defense Department Background Briefing on the Strategic Choices and Management Review in the Pentagon Briefing Room,” July 31, 2013a; DoD, “Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Hagel and Adm. Winnefeld from the Pentagon,” July 31, 2013b; and U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, *Initial Conclusions Formed by the Defense Strategic Choices and Management Review*, hearing, 113th Congress, 1st Session, HASC No. 113-53, August 1, 2013. DoD also released a QRMRR in 2012. For a critique, see GAO, *Defense Management: DoD Needs to Improve Future Assessments of Roles and Missions*, Washington, D.C., GAO-14-668, 2014.

<sup>72</sup> HASC, 2014b.

Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the Karzai government that was required to make continued operations possible.

Unlike past QDRs, the 2014 QDR itself had very little to say about the scenarios and analyses that were employed; this is possibly due to the fact that the QDR essentially completed the cycle of work that had begun with the January 2012 DSG and the July 2013 SCMR, in which the most important decisions on strategy, resources, and force structure had already essentially been taken.<sup>73</sup>

### Key Assumptions

Among the key assumptions of the 2014 QDR were the following:

- There had been “major changes” in the nation’s security environment, including the end of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- DoD was in a period of stringent fiscal constraints, and possibly even sequestration.
- U.S. military capabilities needed rebalancing, including sustaining U.S. presence and posture abroad to protect U.S. national security interests more effectively; shifting the focus toward greater emphasis on the full spectrum of possible combat operations; and adjusting the balance of capability, capacity, and readiness within the Joint Force.

In addition, the authors of the QDR appeared willing to accept some additional risk in the execution of the strategy at their proposed budget levels, but they warned of more-severe consequences for defense if DoD was faced with sequestration spending levels that would require further cuts in modernization, readiness, and other accounts.

### National Interests

According to the May 2010 NSS,

American interests are enduring. They are:

- The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners;
- A strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity;
- Respect for universal values at home and around the world; and
- An international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> The word *scenarios* was used only three times, none of which was particularly substantive.

<sup>74</sup> White House, 2010, p. 7.

The 2014 QDR summarized national security interests in similar terms:

The United States exercises global leadership in support of our interests: U.S. security and that of our allies and partners; a strong economy in an open economic system; respect for universal values; and an international order that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through cooperation. Protecting and advancing these interests, consistent with the National Security Strategy, the 2014 QDR embodies the 21st century defense priorities outlined in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance.<sup>75</sup>

For his part, in his risk assessment of the QDR, CJCS Martin Dempsey stated that there were six national security interests that derived from the NSS for which the armed forces were directly responsible: (1) the survival of the nation; (2) the prevention of catastrophic attack against U.S. territory; (3) the security of the global economic system; (4) the security, confidence, and reliability of U.S. allies; (5) the protection of American citizens abroad; and (6) the preservation and extension of universal values.<sup>76</sup> The CJCS proposed a framework for assessing prospective uses of force in the form of a 6-by-4 matrix of the six national security interests and the four enduring interests of the NSS:

Based on these six interests, the Joint Chiefs and I use the following prioritization of missions (or “ways”) to advise the Secretary of Defense and the President and to determine how to distribute the force among our Combatant Commanders:

1. Maintain a secure and effective nuclear deterrent;
2. Provide for military defense of the homeland;
3. Defeat an adversary;
4. Provide a global, stabilizing presence;
5. Combat terrorism;
6. Counter weapons of mass destruction;
7. Deny an adversary’s objectives;
8. Respond to crisis and conduct limited contingency operations;
9. Conduct military engagement and security cooperation;
10. Conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations;
11. Provide support to civil authorities; and
12. Conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster response.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> DoD, 2014c.

<sup>76</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 60.

<sup>77</sup> DoD, 2014c, pp. 60–61.



## Threats

The 2014 QDR report envisioned a future international security environment that was uncertain and complicated, and that presented a broad array of threats to U.S. interests. It was an environment characterized by shifting centers of gravity that empower smaller countries and nonstate actors, in which capabilities formerly limited to major powers were available to all. In addition, rapidly changing information technology was limiting the ability of some governments to maintain order, changing the ways wars were fought, and empowering non-state actors. In addition, domestic fiscal austerity required a more adaptive and innovative U.S. military if the U.S. was to sustain its position as the global leader.<sup>78</sup>

Potentially harmful regional trends included China's military modernization, North Korea's pursuit of long-range missiles and WMDs, the Sunni-Shi'a divide, Iranian activities in the Middle East, domestic upheaval that could be exploited by terrorist groups, and fragile states.<sup>79</sup> Dangerous global trends included the proliferation of A2/AD, cyber control, and space control concepts and technologies, particularly to China, that might be used to counter U.S. strengths and limit its global freedom of action. New technologies were also making new and more dangerous forms of WMDs more easily, rapidly, and widely available. Terrorist networks would also continue to evolve and directly threaten U.S. global and domestic security. Finally, the pressures of climate change might exacerbate existing societal tensions, overload weak institutions, and increase the competition for scarce resources.<sup>80</sup>

The 2014 QDR report also recognized that domestically generated pressures for fiscal austerity would constrain DoD budgets in the near-term to midterm. The immediate effect of these fiscal constraints was a reduction in force structure, and the introduction into the defense planning process of a great deal of uncertainty as to the availability of future resources. In addition, the constrained fiscal environment meant that the DoD could no longer continue to sustain the rate of growth in military pay and benefits of the past ten years.

## Strategy

As noted earlier, from a strategy perspective, the 2014 QDR built on the January 2012 DSG and the July 2013 SCMR.<sup>81</sup> The principal strategy foundation for the QDR,

<sup>78</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> DoD, 2014c, pp. 4–6. According to interviews held for Larson et al., 2018, the main threats considered in the QDR were proliferation, Iran, North Korea, and China, and more attention was paid to the requirements of homeland security missions as well.

<sup>80</sup> DoD, 2014c, pp. 6–8. The QDR's discussion of Russia generally was oriented toward opportunities for greater security cooperation.

<sup>81</sup> White House, 2010; JCS, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., February 2011a; and DoD, 2012. The administration released an updated version of its NSS in January 2015, 11 months after the release of the QDR; and the JCS released an updated version of the NMS in June 2015.

however, was the 2012 DSG, which provided priorities and advanced an updated strategic framework emphasizing three pillars:

- Protecting the homeland, which focused on protecting the security of U.S. citizens from both conventional and unconventional threats. This protection was to be provided by an active layered approach that included missile defense, nuclear deterrence, protection against cyberattacks, consequence management, and counterproliferation.
- Building security globally, which focused on the forward deployment of rotational forces to support regional stability. A key part of this pillar was engagement activities that enhanced the capabilities of U.S. partners and allies.
- Projecting power and winning decisively, focused on maintaining a full-spectrum force capable of being globally deployed in support of U.S. national interests.<sup>82</sup>

As will be described, the DSG also essentially established the force sizing construct used in the 2014 QDR as well.

### Concepts of Operations

DoD stated that it was pursuing innovative ways to achieve its goals, including “new presence paradigms” and closer strategic cooperation with allies and partners; “Whenever possible,” the DSG had stated two years earlier, “we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities.”<sup>83</sup> The QDR reported that “We are identifying new presence paradigms, including potentially positioning additional forward-deployed naval forces in critical areas, and deploying new combinations of ships, aviation assets, regionally aligned or rotational ground forces, and crisis response forces, all with the intention of maximizing effects while minimizing costs,” and offered the following examples:

- Positioning additional forward-deployed naval forces in critical areas, such as the Asia-Pacific region, to achieve faster response times and additional presence at a lower recurring cost;
- Deploying new combinations of ships, aviation assets, and crisis response forces that allow for more flexible and tailored support to regional combatant command steady-state and contingency requirements;
- Employing regionally focused forces to provide additional tailored packages that achieve critical global and regional objectives, including in such critical areas as the Asia-Pacific region;

<sup>82</sup> DoD, 2012, pp. 13–22.

<sup>83</sup> DoD, 2012, p. 3.

- Optimizing the use of multilateral, joint training facilities overseas to increase readiness and interoperability with our allies and partners;
- Developing concepts, posture and presence options, and supporting infrastructure to exploit DoD's investment in advanced capabilities rapidly, such as the Joint Strike Fighter;
- Extending the life of ships in innovative ways to get longer use out of our investments; and
- Pursuing access agreements that provide additional strategic and operational flexibility in case of crisis.<sup>84</sup>

In addition, a number of joint operational and supporting concepts were developed since the 2010 QDR, including the following:

- Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC), January 2012
- Joint Concept for Logistics, August 2010
- Operational Contract Support Joint Concept, October 2013
- Joint Concept for Entry Operations (JCEO), April 2014.

Of particular significance were the JOAC and the JCEO, which aimed to provide a construct for addressing A2/AD threats and challenges.<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, none of these concepts called for significant changes, and they appear to have had only a modest impact on the defense program, force structure, and budget shares.<sup>86</sup>

### Force Structure Requirements

As noted above, the January 2012 DSG essentially established the defense strategy that was endorsed in the 2014 QDR. Importantly, the DSG had identified ten primary missions for the U.S. armed forces:

1. CT and irregular warfare
2. deter and defeat aggression
3. project power despite A2/AD challenges
4. counter WMDs
5. operate effectively in cyberspace and space
6. maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent

<sup>84</sup> DoD, 2014b, pp. 23–24.

<sup>85</sup> In addition, an AirSea Battle concept was developed by the Navy and Air Force, but in January 2015, it was announced that the somewhat controversial concept would be folded into a Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons that reportedly will include a role for land forces. See Sam LaGrone, "Pentagon Drops Air Sea Battle Name, Concept Lives On," U.S. Naval Institute, January 20, 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Private communication from Andrew F. Krepinevich, March 30, 2017.

7. defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities
8. provide a stabilizing presence
9. conduct stability and COIN operations
10. conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations.<sup>87</sup>

Equally importantly, the DSG privileged four of these primary missions as a basis for determining capacity, i.e., force structure:

The aforementioned missions will largely determine the shape of the future Joint Force. The overall capacity of U.S. forces, however, will be based on requirements that the following subset of missions demand: counter terrorism and irregular warfare; deter and defeat aggression; maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent; and defend the homeland and support civil authorities.<sup>88</sup>

Perhaps most notably for the Army, conducting stability and COIN operations of the kind that had recently been conducted in Afghanistan and Iraq, and countering WMDs, including WMD elimination (WMD-E) operations in North Korea, were essentially “below the line,” i.e., not to be used as a basis for determining or justifying force structure.

To support the three pillars of the DSG’s strategic framework, the QDR accordingly reported a force planning construct that aimed to ensure that U.S. forces were sized to conduct the four primary missions that the DSG stated should be used for force sizing. At a high level, the U.S. military was to be able to simultaneously

- defend the homeland
- conduct sustained, distributed counterterrorist operations
- deter aggression and assure allies in multiple regions through forward presence and engagement. And if deterrence fails:
  - U.S. forces would remain capable of defeating a regional adversary in a large-scale, multi-phased campaign; and
  - denying the objectives of—or imposing unacceptable costs on—a second aggressor in another region.<sup>89</sup>

As noted earlier, there appears to be very little information on the scenarios and ISCs in the 2014 QDR or associated congressional testimony. Nonetheless, according to GAO, the principal ISC that was used in the QDR was ISC-B, which was said to have comprised four mission types conducted in an overlapping time frame:

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<sup>87</sup> DoD, 2012, pp. 4–6.

<sup>88</sup> DoD, 2012, p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> DoD, 2014c, pp. vi, 1–2.

DOD's Integrated Security Construct–B comprises four mission types (in order of priority):

- (1) Defeat / Major Combat Operations: To defeat a regional adversary in a large-scale multiphased campaign;
- (2) Deter: To prevent acts of aggression in one or more theaters by presenting a potential adversary with a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction by U.S. forces, and/or belief that the cost of the potential adversary's action outweighs the perceived benefits;
- (3) Defend / Homeland Defense: To defend U.S. territory from direct attack by state and nonstate actors and, in the event such defense fails or in the case of natural disasters, come to the assistance of domestic civil authorities in response to a very significant or even catastrophic event; and
- (4) Steady State / Foundational Activities: Activities the Joint Force conducts by rotating forces globally to build security globally, preserve regional stability, deter adversaries, and support allies and partners.<sup>90</sup>

Thus, the principal ISC of multiple scenarios that was used in the 2014 QDR (ISC-B), appears to have lacked the last requirement for simultaneously denying the objectives of a second aggressor: As shown in this list, there is no explicit provision in ISC-B for a capability to conduct a simultaneous “denial” operation in a second theater during the first “defeat” operation. Although the available evidence is not entirely dispositive of the matter, it does appear that the principal ISC used to size the force included the capability to conduct only a single major combat operation.<sup>91</sup>

Table 11.2 details the planned force structure for FY 2019. The QDR stated that as the Joint Force became smaller and was rebalanced to remain modern, capable, and ready, DoD would seek to protect key capability areas in support of the strategy, including cyber, missile defense, nuclear deterrence, space, air and sea, precision strike, ISR, and CT and special operations. In addition, the QDR stated that part of the rebalancing involved adjusting the balance between active and reserve components, and it directed the services to prioritize selected modernization programs.

Significantly, the QDR directed that postwar Army end strength targets be reduced from 490,000 to 440,000–450,000 active-duty personnel, 195,000 U.S. Army Reserve, and 335,000 Army National Guard, levels that reflected an acceptance of additional risk in execution of the strategy to meet the constraints imposed by the

<sup>90</sup> GAO, *Force Structure: Army's Analyses of Aviation Alternatives*, Washington, D.C., GAO-15-430R, April 27, 2015, p. 4. The base planning scenario for shaping Army force structure reportedly was Scenario 3 of ISC-B, one of three planning scenarios in DoD's 2014 classified planning guidance. GAO, 2015, p. 23. The planning scenarios are unclassified unless a specific location is referenced when depicting a scenario.

<sup>91</sup> It may be, for example, that other scenario combinations were used to test this capability.

**Table 11.2**  
**Main Elements of Planned U.S. Force Structure and End Strength, FY 2019**

**Department of the Army\***

- 18 divisions (10 Regular Army; 8 Army National Guard)
- 22 aviation brigades (10 Regular Army, 2 U.S. Army Reserve, and 10 Army National Guard)
- 15 Patriot air and missile defense battalions, 7 Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense batteries (all Regular Army)
- Military Personnel: 440,000–450,000 Regular Army; 195,000 U.S. Army Reserve; 335,000 Army National Guard

\* Specific numbers and composition of Army forces are not yet finalized as the Army balances forces, modernization, and readiness, and considers innovative force designs.

**Department of the Navy**

- 11 aircraft carriers (CVNs) and 10 carrier air wings (CVWs)
- 92 large surface combatants (68 DDG-51s, 3 DDG-1000s, and 21 CG-47s with 10-11 cruisers in temporary lay-up for modernization)
- 43 small surface combatants (25 LCS, 8 MCMs, and 10 PCs)
- 33 amphibious warfare ships (10 LHAs/LHDs, 11 LPDs, and 12 LSDs, with 1 LSD in temporary lay-up for modernization)
- 51 SSNs and 4 guided missile submarines (SSGNs)
- Personnel end strength: 323,200 active components; 58,800 Naval Reserve
- 2 MEFs organized in 3 active components and 1 reserve component Division/Wing/Logistics Group teams
- 3 Marine Expeditionary Brigade Command Elements
- 7 Marine Expeditionary Unit Command Elements
- Personnel end strength: 182,000 active components; 39,000 reserve components

**Department of the Air Force\***

- 48 fighter squadrons (26 active components; 22 reserve components) (971 aircraft)
- 9 heavy bomber squadrons (96 aircraft: 44 B-52, 36 B-1B, 16 B-2)
- 443 aerial refueling aircraft (335 KC-135, 54 KC-46, 54 KC-10)
- 211 strategic airlift aircraft (39 C-5, 172 C-17)
- 300 tactical airlift aircraft (C-130)
- 280 ISR aircraft (231 MQ-9, 17 RC-135, 32 RQ-4)
- 27 Command and Control Aircraft (18 E-3, 3 E-4, 6 E-8)
- 6 operational satellite constellations (missile warning, navigation and timing, wideband & protected SATCOM, environmental monitoring, multi-mission)
- Personnel end strength: 308,800 active components; 66,500 Air Force Reserve; 103,600 Air National Guard

\* Numbers shown for U.S. Air Force aircraft reflect “combat coded” inventory; that is, aircraft assigned to units for performance of their wartime missions.

**Special Operations Forces**

Table 11.2—Continued

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approximately 660 special operations teams (Includes Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha [ODA] teams and their equivalents; Navy Sea, Air, Land [SEAL] platoons; Marine special operations teams; Air Force special tactics teams; and operational aviation detachments [OADs]. Does not include civil affairs [CA] teams or military information support operations [MISO] detachments.)</li><li>• 3 Ranger battalions</li><li>• 259 mobility and fire support aircraft</li><li>• Approximately 83 ISR aircraft (40 remotely piloted and 43 manned)</li><li>• Personnel end strength: 69,700</li></ul>
Strategic Nuclear Forces*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No more than 1,550 accountable deployed warheads for the following strategic nuclear delivery vehicles:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Up to 420 Minuteman III intercontinental-range ballistic missiles</li><li>240 submarine-launched ballistic missiles deployed on 12 of 14 SSBNs</li><li>Up to 60 nuclear-capable heavy bombers, with each deployed heavy bomber counting as one deployed warhead</li></ul></li></ul>
<p>* This U.S. strategic nuclear force complies with the central limits set forth in the U.S.-Russia New START Treaty. These limits must not be exceeded from 5 February 2018 onward; that is, seven years after the treaty entered into force. These numbers pertain to deployed warheads and deployed strategic nuclear delivery vehicles as defined in the New START Treaty.</p>
Cyber Mission Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13 National Mission Teams (NMTs) with 8 National Support Teams (NSTs)</li><li>• 27 Combat Mission Teams (CMTs) with 17 Combat Support Teams (CSTs)</li><li>• 18 National Cyber Protection Teams (CPTs)</li><li>• 24 Service CPTs</li><li>• 26 Combatant Command and DOD Information Network CPTs</li></ul>

SOURCE: DoD, 2014a, pp. 39–41.

NOTES: CVN = aircraft carrier (nuclear propulsion); LCS = littoral combat ships; LHA = landing helicopter assault; LHD = landing helicopter dock; LPD = landing platform dock; LSD = landing ship dock; MCM = mine countermeasures; PC = patrol coastal ships; SSBN = ballistic missile submarine; START = Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

new, more stringent budgets.<sup>92</sup> For the Army, then, end strength reductions were to serve as bill payers to restore readiness levels and to invest in improvements to war-fighting capabilities, including selective upgrades of combat and support vehicles and aircraft, and investments in new technologies required for 21st century warfare.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> In 2013, in response to the fiscal constraints imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011 and sequestration, the Army established an Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI) that envisaged a restructuring of the Army’s aviation force; the ARI was approved by the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army in October 2013 and, following endorsement by OSD(CAPE), the ARI was included in the President’s budget for FY 2015. See Headquarters, Department of the Army, *National Commission on the Future of the Army: Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI)*, briefing book, May 18, 2015.

<sup>93</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 29.



In the case of the Air Force, the QDR identified the following modernization efforts as most critical:

- The multirole, fifth-generation F-35 fighter that will provide improved survivability and an integrated suite of sensors to recapitalize the bulk of its fighter fleet.
- A new, stealthy, long-range strike aircraft to maintain the ability to operate from long ranges, carry substantial payloads, and operate in and around contested airspace.
- The KC-46A next-generation tanker/cargo aircraft to replace the legacy tanker fleet, to enable efficient and rapid long-range deployments.<sup>94</sup>

For its part, the Navy was directed to prioritize the following:

- maintaining a credible, modern, and safe sea-based strategic deterrent, including required investments to start SSBN(X) submarine construction in FY 2021
- sustaining or affordably enhancing asymmetric advantages to remain ahead of or keep pace with adversary threats, including offensive strike capabilities, such as the offensive anti-surface warfare weapons, next-generation land attack weapon, Virginia payload module, and F-35 programs.<sup>95</sup>

Like the Army, the Marine Corps was directed to reduce end strength, and to prioritize a phased acquisition approach to the amphibious combat vehicle (ACV). In order to invest in the modernization of this amphibious capability, the Marine Corps was directed to plan for an end strength of 182,000 active-duty Marines, with additional cuts to 175,000 if sequestration-level cuts were imposed in FY 2016 and beyond.<sup>96</sup>

### **Assessment of Risk**

The authors of the 2014 QDR report were primarily concerned about the level of funding that would be needed and made available to execute their proposed defense strategy, a topic that was the focus of the SCMR that preceded the kickoff of the QDR. Although they argued that the proposed FY 2015 funding level—including an additional \$26.4 billion from a proposed Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative (OGSI)—posed acceptable risk to the strategy, they expressed concern that these risks would increase significantly if sequester-level cuts were reinstated, or if there was continued uncertainty over DoD’s budget.<sup>97</sup> Overall, they concluded that the proposed force planning construct was adequately resourced, with caveats:

<sup>94</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 28.

<sup>95</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 30.

<sup>96</sup> DoD, 2014c, pp. 30–31.

<sup>97</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 13.

The President's FY2015 Budget provides the resources to build and sustain the capabilities to conduct these operations, although at increased levels of risk for some missions. With the President's Budget, our military will be able to defeat or deny any aggressor. Budget reductions inevitably reduce the military's margin of error in dealing with risks, and a smaller force strains our ability to simultaneously respond to more than one major contingency at a time. The Department can manage these risks under the President's FY2015 budget plan, but the risks would grow significantly if sequester-level cuts return in FY2016, if proposed reforms are not accepted, or if uncertainty over budget levels continues.<sup>98</sup>

Overall, the QDR puts forth an updated national defense strategy that we believe is right for the country. At the President's budget level, which does ask for more resources than if sequestration were to continue, we believe we can execute the strategy, although with increased risk in certain areas.<sup>99</sup>

The CJCS identified three main areas of higher risk. The first was the capacity of the QDR force to defend the homeland while conducting simultaneous high- to mid-intensity defeat and deny campaigns:

The most stressing interpretation of the strategy calls for defending the homeland while conducting simultaneous defeat and deny campaigns. When measured against high- to mid-intensity operational plans, executing this combination of contingencies simultaneously would be higher risk with the QDR force.<sup>100</sup>

The second area of high risk was associated with the low probability that reductions in U.S. capacity could be completely offset by an increased reliance on U.S. partners. Finally, the CJCS believed that the rapidly changing international environment would diminish U.S. military capabilities relative to potential adversaries and "complicate our ability to meet ambitious strategic objectives." Thus, he felt that it was important that U.S. military objectives be more closely aligned with the programmed capabilities and capacities of the U.S. military.<sup>101</sup>

The CJCS also noted that the 2014 QDR assumed risk in the capacity of each service, in particular with the ground forces. As a result, they would need to be "even better organized, trained, and equipped for the full spectrum of 21st Century challenges." In addition, he said that this assumption of risk required a comprehensive review of the reserve component's ability to mobilize and of the nation's preparedness for a potential

<sup>98</sup> DoD, 2014c, pp. 22, 38–39.

<sup>99</sup> Wormuth, 2014, p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 62.

<sup>101</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 63.

national mobilization.<sup>102</sup> He also identified the risk that the United States could procure expensive systems that could be cheaply neutralized by our adversaries.<sup>103</sup>

The CJCS saw sequestration as an even greater risk to the 2014 QDR's military strategy, and he described its effects in stark terms:

The return of sequestration-level cuts in FY2016 would significantly reduce the Department's ability to fully implement our strategy. Relative to funding levels in the President's FY2015 Budget, risks associated with conducting military operations would rise substantially. Our military would be unbalanced and eventually too small and insufficiently modern to meet the needs of our strategy, leading to greater risk of longer wars with higher casualties for the United States and our allies and partners. Ultimately, continued sequestration-level cuts would likely embolden our adversaries and undermine the confidence of our allies and partners, which in turn could lead to an even more challenging security environment than we already face.<sup>104</sup>

The CJCS supported the program laid out in the 2014 QDR report but was worried about the willingness of the nation to pay for the military forces that both the QDR's authors and he believed to be necessary to achieve U.S. security goals. He stated that

I support the strategic direction articulated in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). As we rebuild our readiness following more than a decade of conflict, the U.S. military will be capable of executing the 2014 QDR strategy but with higher risk in some areas. In fact, our military risk will grow quickly over time if we don't make the types and scope of changes identified in the report.<sup>105</sup>

He was particularly worried about longer-term risks associated with the rise of China:

[I]n the next 10 years, I expect the risk of interstate conflict in East Asia to rise, the vulnerability of our platforms and basing to increase, our technology edge to erode, instability to persist in the Middle East, and threats posed by violent extremist organizations to endure. Nearly any future conflict will occur on a much faster pace and on a more technically challenging battlefield. And, in the case of U.S. involvement in conflicts overseas, the homeland will no longer be a sanctuary either for our forces or for our citizens.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> DoD, 2014c, pp. 61–62.

<sup>103</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 62.

<sup>104</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 53.

<sup>105</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 59.

<sup>106</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 61.

Given the available resources, the CJCS concurred with the QDR's force structure and investment recommendations. He stated that:

I consider the QDR's force structure recommendations appropriate to the resources available. The QDR prioritizes investments that support our interests and missions, with particular attention to space, cyber, situational awareness and intelligence capabilities, stand-off strike platforms and weapons, technology to counter cruise and ballistic missiles, and preservation of our superiority undersea.<sup>107</sup>

Overarching many of the CJCS's concerns were previous and planned budget cuts that resulted from the broader national debate over fiscal responsibility and the appropriate size of the federal government. He summarized his view of the QDR risks as follows:

The smaller and less capable military outlined in the QDR makes meeting these obligations more difficult. Most of our platforms and equipment will be older, and our advantages in some domains will have eroded. Our loss of depth across the force could reduce our ability to intimidate opponents from escalating conflict. Nations and non-state actors who have become accustomed to our presence could begin to act differently, often in harmful ways. Moreover, many of our most capable allies will lose key capabilities. The situation will be exacerbated given our current readiness concerns, which will worsen over the next 3 to 4 years.

The essentials of the 2014 QDR are correct. Given the increasing uncertainty of our future, and the inherent uncertainty in judging risk, I support its short-term conclusions and direction. As suggested by the QDR, we will be challenged as an institution to make even relatively simple and well-understood reforms. We will be preoccupied in the near term with restoring readiness given the devastating impacts of previous budget cuts. Nevertheless, if our elected leaders reverse the Budget Control Act caps soon—and if we can execute the promises of the QDR—then I believe we can deliver security to the Nation at moderate risk.

My greatest concern is that we will not innovate quickly enough or deeply enough to be prepared for the future, for the world we will face 2 decades from now. I urge Congress—again—to move quickly to implement difficult decisions and to remove limitations on our ability to make hard choices within the Department of Defense. The changes required for institutional reform are unpleasant and unpopular, but we need our elected leaders to work with us to reduce excess infrastructure, slow the growth in military pay and compensation, and retire equipment that we do not need. Savings from these and other reforms will help us modernize, will add to research and development investments, and will provide needed funds to

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<sup>107</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 61.

recover readiness. The lack of will to do what is necessary may drain us of the will to pursue the more far-reaching ideas promised in the QDR.

The true risk is that we will fail to achieve the far-reaching changes to our force, our plans, our posture, our objectives, and our concepts of warfare. I believe that dramatic changes will be needed in all of these by 2025. Some of these changes are well-known and outlined in the QDR. Some of these changes are only dimly perceived today and need encouragement and direction. Innovation is the military imperative and the leadership opportunity of this generation. It's a fleeting opportunity.<sup>108</sup>

### Other Assessments

HASC Chairman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon immediately rejected the 2014 QDR report, saying that the strategy document was

heavily constrained by low budget levels. . . . The law requires the QDR to identify resources not included in the Pentagon's [five] year spending plan. The whole point of the review is to identify the budget needed to address the evolving threat.<sup>109</sup>

In fact, McKeon called for the QDR to be rewritten:

I appreciate the work that has gone into this QDR. A rigorous analysis and debate that takes place every four years as the review is put together should be immensely valuable to planners and senior commanders. Unfortunately, the product the process produced this time has more to do with politics than policy and is of little value to decision makers. For that reason, I will require the Department to re-write and re-submit a compliant report. In defiance of the law, this QDR provides no insight into what a moderate-to-low risk strategy would be, is clearly budget driven, and is shortsighted. It allows the President to duck the consequences of the deep defense cuts he has advocated and leaves us all wondering what the true future costs of those cuts will be.

What's wrong with the QDR for 2014:

- **Budget Driven:** The FY14 QDR is heavily constrained by low budget levels. The law requires the QDR to identify resources not included in the Pentagon's 5-year spending plan. The whole point of the review is to identify the budget needed to address the evolving threat
- **Shortsighted:** The FY14 QDR only looks out 5 years, instead of the 20 years required by law.

<sup>108</sup> DoD, 2014c, p. 64.

<sup>109</sup> Marcus Weisberger, “DoD Official Fires Back at McKeon's Rejection of QDR,” *Defense News*, March 18, 2014.

- **Assumes Too Much Risk:** The law requires the QDR to offer a low-to-moderate-risk plan for our forces and mission. By Secretary Hagel’s own admission, this QDR accepts additional risks.

In the coming days, I will introduce legislation intended to reverse this trend. The legislation will require DoD to re-write and re-submit a compliant QDR for FY14, and could be considered on its own or incorporated into the National Defense Authorization Act. In the coming days, I will consider what measures could be added to such legislation to ensure a prompt and compliant re-write.<sup>110</sup>

In December 2014, it was reported that:

Chairman McKeon remains dissatisfied with the inadequate Quadrennial Defense Review delivered to Congress earlier this year. Contrary to statutory requirements, [the] 2014 QDR focused largely on the near-term, and it contained a strategy that assumes increased risk to the force, without specifying the resources required to execute the strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk. Armed Services Members believe that the time has come to reform the QDR process to make it a more useful oversight tool. The NDAA includes a provision introduced by Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith (D-WA) designed to overhaul the QDR. A new Defense Strategy Review will require tradeoff analyses between missions, risks, and resources to better inform decisions on the longer-term direction of America’s national security infrastructure. The NDAA also reshapes the role of the independent National Defense Panel.<sup>111</sup>

The Levin and McKeon NDAA for FY 2015 was passed by both houses and was signed into law by President Barack Obama on December 19, 2014, including a new set of provisions to reform the QDR process.<sup>112</sup> The legislation replaced the existing statutory language and established the standing requirement for a quadrennial DSR and NDP to assess each such review while eliminating the requirement for a QRMRR. Most recently, the FY 2017 NDAA repealed the requirement for a DSR. Thus, the 2014 QDR report would be the last QDR produced by DoD.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> HASC Chairman McKeon also threatened to restrict 25 percent of OSD funding until a revised QDR was submitted. HASC, “Chairman McKeon Rejects QDR,” press release, March 4, 2014a; and HASC, “Fact Sheet: Highlights of the NDAA,” May 5, 2014c.

<sup>111</sup> House Republicans, “H.R. 3979—Senate Amendment: National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2015,” legislative digest, December 4, 2014e.

<sup>112</sup> DoD, “President Signs National Defense Authorization Act,” press release, December 19, 2014e. See Appendix B for the full text of Section 1072 of the NDAA, Reform of Quadrennial Defense Review.

<sup>113</sup> 10 U.S.C. 113 currently contains a number of statutory requirements for DoD to produce reports, including a quadrennial defense strategy report, an annual report from the Secretary of Defense to the President and Congress, an annual report containing “a comprehensive net assessment of the defense capabilities and programs of the armed forces of the United States and its allies as compared with those of their potential adversaries,” an annual report on the cost of stationing U.S. forces outside the United States, and an annual report from

**Table 11.3**  
**Force Structures 2015, QDR 2019 Targets, and Sequestration 2019**

	2015	QDR 2019 Targets	Sequestration 2019
Navy total ships	284	301	292
Air Force active + reserve components aircraft authorized	4,299	2,328	2,259
ICBM inventory	450	420	Not stated
Army brigade combat teams and equivalents, active + reserve components	60	56	37
MEFs	3	2	2

SOURCE: Perry and Abizaid, 2014.

As it had for the 1997 and 2010 QDRs, Congress commissioned an independent blue-ribbon panel to review and assess the 2014 QDR.<sup>114</sup> The NDP report was released in July 2014, and observed that the United States' international leadership has historically rested on a strategic foundation of military capability and commitment, but that the capabilities called for by the 2014 QDR report clearly exceeded the budget resources made available to DoD.

The report included a comparison of force structures that would have resulted from the president's FY 2015 budget, the 2019 (i.e., end of FYDP) force proposed in the QDR, and the funding provided under sequestration in 2019. Table 11.3 summarizes the results.

The panel reported that the "defense budget cuts mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011, coupled with the additional cuts and constraints on defense management under the law's sequestration provision, constitute a serious strategic misstep on the part of the United States."<sup>115</sup> In addition to their direct effects on military force structure, these funding levels also created "bow waves" for the services: deferred or delayed procurement and depot maintenance to years outside the FYDP that will create a backlog greater than the funding typically appropriated for those accounts. The Air Force bow wave resulted largely from procurement plans for the F-35 fighter, a new

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the Reserve Forces Policy Board. In addition, the FY 2017 NDAA established a Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States, and a biennial requirement for a new or updated NMS from the CJCS.

<sup>114</sup> Perry and Abizaid, 2014.

A DoD report titled *Estimated Impacts of Sequestration-Level Funding* used different counting rules and focused exclusively on general purpose forces, and produced more pessimistic estimates, e.g., for FY2019, 186 Navy ships, 48 Air Force tactical air squadrons (active + reserve components), 46 Army BCTs (active + reserve components), and a Marine Corps of 29 Infantry Battalions (active + reserve components). See DoD, *Estimated Impacts of Sequestration-Level Funding*, Washington, D.C., April 2014d.

<sup>115</sup> Perry and Abizaid, 2014, p. 2.



bomber, and the KC-46 tanker. The Navy bow wave reflected the service's 30-year ship building program, and the CBO's conclusion that the service had underestimated the cost of the program by 13 percent.<sup>116</sup> The Army's bow wave was the product of equipment reset, in particular, the depot maintenance carry-over (backlog) of \$10.8 billion during FYs 2013 to 2015.<sup>117</sup>

In place of this force structure, the panel recommended a force structure derived from a more expansive force planning construct:

We find the logic of the two-war construct to be as powerful as ever, and note that the force sizing construct in the 2014 QDR strives to stay within the two-war tradition while using different language. But given the worsening threat environment, we believe a more expansive force sizing construct—one that is different from the two-war construct, but no less strong—is appropriate: “The United States armed forces should be sized and shaped to deter and defeat large-scale aggression in one theater, preferably in concert with regional allies and partners, while simultaneously and decisively deterring or thwarting opportunistic aggression in multiple other theaters by denying adversaries’ objectives or punishing them with unacceptable costs, all the while defending the U.S. homeland and maintaining missions such as active global counterterrorism operations.”<sup>118</sup>

The panel argued that the 2014 QDR report was “not the long-term planning document envisioned by Congress because it was dominated by the shifting constraints of various possible budget levels,” and that “the United States must prepare for what will almost certainly be a much more challenging future.”<sup>119</sup>

The panel argued for a larger Navy and Air Force, expressed the belief that the QDR's contemplated reductions in Army end strength went too far, and argued that the Army and Marine Corps should return to their pre-9/11 end strengths. On force structure and mix issues, the panel observed:

Regarding force size and mix, we note the Panel had neither the time nor the analytic capacity to determine the force structure necessary to meet the requirements of a force sizing construct or to carry out the national military strategy within an acceptable margin of risk. We believe, however, the force structure contemplated in the 2014 QDR—much less the projected force structure if the current budget baseline does not change—is inadequate given the future strategic and operational environment. This judgment is bolstered by comparing projected end strengths

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<sup>116</sup> CBO, *An Analysis of the Navy's Fiscal Year 2015 Shipbuilding Plan*, Washington, D.C., December 2014, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, “Army Working Capital Fund Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Estimates,” March 2014, p. 58.

<sup>118</sup> Perry and Abizaid, 2014, pp. 2–3.

<sup>119</sup> Perry and Abizaid, 2014, p. 3.

with the much larger force recommended in the Department’s Bottom-Up Review (BUR) of twenty years ago.

Although our conventional capabilities have significantly improved since that time, so have the capabilities of our potential adversaries, and the security environment facing the Department twenty years ago was far less challenging than today and what is projected for tomorrow. That a substantially larger force was deemed necessary then is powerful evidence that the smaller force envisioned by the Department is insufficient now.<sup>120</sup>

The panel argued that the nation would “have a high-risk force in the near future unless the Department receives substantial additional funding,”<sup>121</sup> and viewed Gates’ FY 2012 proposal as the minimum baseline for appropriate defense spending in the future. The report concluded,

Finally, although risk is difficult to quantify because the world is unpredictable and capabilities are hard to measure on the margin, we conclude that American military forces will be at high risk to accomplish the Nation’s defense strategy in the near future unless recommendations of the kind we make in this report are speedily adopted.<sup>122</sup>

Before turning to our conclusions regarding the Obama administration, we briefly note that the Obama administration’s final defense budget for FY 2017 identified the following capacity and capability requirements of the force, including specifying four contingency scenarios, any two of which might be encountered in overlapping time frames:

- defend the homeland
- deal with four potential “contingencies”
  - Russia
  - China
  - North Korea
  - Iran
- conduct a sustained global campaign against violent extremism (enduring “condition”)
- respond to aggression from two different adversaries with overlapping timelines.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Perry and Abizaid, 2014, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> Perry and Abizaid, 2014, p. 4.

<sup>122</sup> Perry and Abizaid, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>123</sup> OUSD (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, 2016, p. 3.

## Summary and Conclusions

Defense planning during the Obama administration generally concentrated on the requirements for successfully ending the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and for managing a highly uncertain postwar security environment in the face of growing fiscal constraints.

To consider a more diverse set of threats and challenges, the administration appears to have made use of a much wider range of scenarios in its analyses—the 2010 QDR reportedly considered more than 11 scenarios across the range of military operations, packaged in several ISCs. In the case of the 2014 QDR, the principal ISC reportedly used was ISC-B, which is said to have included a major combat operation involving Army ground forces that was used to shape Army force structure, but available evidence does not suggest that the ISC also included a simultaneous denial scenario alongside the defeat scenario.

DoD's development of the Analytic Agenda and use of multiple scenarios in ISCs to facilitate strategic analysis was a novel and fruitful approach for ensuring more transparent analyses, even if the ISCs were not fully utilized to explore a fuller set of combinations of major combat scenarios. Nonetheless, the period also presents evidence that just as the relevance of the force planning construct based on two nearly simultaneous major combat operations declined, so too did the credibility of theater campaign combat models as a tool for assessing conventional forces. Although DoD efforts related to Support for Strategic Analysis (SSA) appear promising, the absence of suitable tools to assess emerging defense challenges seems likely to pose great challenges for planners involved in the next DSR.

## Observations and Conclusions

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Organized chronologically by presidential administration, the analysis reported here has detailed the range of considerations that have shaped scenario selection in the post-war period and need to be considered in any effort to improve the use of scenarios in future defense planning. Our analysis shows that the scenarios used in defense planning have generally been derived from each administration's prior conclusions about the relative importance of national security interests, along with threats and challenges to these interests; national security policies and strategies; and the strategic concepts that have provided a framework for relating military forces to strategic ends and for solving strategic military problems. Once these matters were settled, scenario choice appears to have become a fairly simple problem, both during the Cold War and in the more than 25 years after.

Historically speaking, U.S. global interests and commitments have been sufficiently expansive that it would be impossible to design a fiscally acceptable force that could defend all U.S. interests simultaneously. Efforts to estimate the forces required to simultaneously defend all U.S. interests led in the 1960s, for example, to JCS force requirements estimates twice as large as more-realistic (i.e., fiscally constrained) planning approaches. In combination with assessments of the strategic environment, statements of national policy and strategy have provided a basis for identifying which contingencies are sufficiently important to justify defense preparations, and for specifying defense and military strategies, and strategic concepts have helped to guide and narrow the range of scenarios that need to be considered in conventional force planning efforts. In addition, defense planners historically have taken a regional approach to conventional force planning, which has proved fruitful and has lent rigor to the process. Planners have identified plausible potential threats and contingency scenarios related to key interests in discrete regions (Europe, Northeast Asia, Southwest Asia, and so on), potential campaign objectives, yardsticks for campaign outcomes, and force requirements associated with each contingency while making assumptions about simultaneity, considering available resources, and endeavoring to manage risks.

Our research also suggests that the role of scenarios in conventional force structure planning has evolved over time. Although, because of their plausible and near-to-midterm nature, scenarios were almost always associated with threat-based plan-

ning during the Cold War against the Communist bloc, including the Soviet Union, China, and their regional allies. During most of the Cold War, the strategic concept allowed for the possibility of nearly simultaneous major wars initiated by the Soviet Union and/or China, although scenarios envisioning a Soviet threat to NATO Europe tended to dominate strategic planning. The analysis of these scenarios focused attention on gaining an understanding of Soviet–Warsaw Pact plans and intentions vis-à-vis NATO Europe, as well as capabilities, force dispositions, warning time, relative mobilization rates, prepositioning and mobility requirements and, ultimately, force balances over time. During this period, deterrence was the key object, and planners sought to ensure that the force balances were sufficiently high that the Soviets would remain doubtful about their ability to quickly overrun NATO forces. Consideration of nuclear forces—tactical, theater, and strategic—also played an important role in these analyses, but from a conventional force planning perspective, the point was to ensure sufficient conventional capabilities to maintain a threshold for nuclear employment that would make deterrence more credible. All of the relevant analyses—including conventional, nuclear, and mobility requirements—became increasingly sophisticated over time, although the dominance of military judgment and human war gaming was increasingly supplemented by the results of combat simulation, mobility, and other models, as these tools became available.

Of course, Cold War planners also analyzed in detail potential conflict scenarios in Asia, including Korea scenarios involving the Chinese and/or North Koreans in Northeast Asia, and scenarios dealing with Chinese aggression in Southeast Asia (Vietnam in the early Cold War years and, later, Thailand). Following Vietnam, the Southeast Asian scenarios would languish while Southwest Asia scenarios would be added to round out the understanding of the forces that were required to support the strategy and strategic concept for a force sizing construct that increasingly envisioned Soviet action in multiple theaters.

Although there was some variation in the strategic concepts that were embraced during the first two decades after the end of the Cold War, the dominant scenarios were a nearly simultaneous pair of what would have been considered 1/2 wars during the Cold War. Again, Northeast Asia and Southwest Asia scenarios were the hardy perennials of defense planning during this period. Nonetheless, homeland security and antiaccess threat scenarios appear to have entered with the 2001 QDR, and new threats, such as cyberattacks, were being injected into standard scenarios by the time of the 2010 and 2014 QDRs. Embryonic efforts to use capabilities-based planning to consider longer-term challenges that might guide defense transformation appear never to have been fully developed after the 2001 QDR, apparently because of the preoccupation with the wars in Afghanistan in Iraq, but also the conceptual, institutional, and other difficulties associated with the approach; some uncertainties accordingly remain about the potential use of scenarios in capabilities-based planning.

In the present environment, it is typically argued that the nation faces a more uncertain and diverse set of threats and challenges than the conventional threats of the past; in such periods, examination of greater numbers and combinations of more-diverse scenarios—and scenarios that combine multiple vectors of adversary capabilities—is usually warranted. As these hybrid threats are not yet well understood, however, computer modeling may be less suitable for these analyses because they are not yet well-formed enough to represent in simulations: Military judgment also may face great challenges in considering these sorts of considerations.

This assessment of factors shaping conventional force planning suggests significant continuity in conceptions of the nation's basic national interests, values, and commitments, and significant periods of stability or gradual change in the threats facing the nation<sup>1</sup> that have, at times, been punctuated by developments—including emerging threats and political, economic, and technological developments—that have placed defense planning on a new path. For example,

- The North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950, the gradually increased commitment to Vietnam, and the al-Qa'ida attacks on 9/11 all increased defense requirements, and defense resources, and shifted planning away from longer-term conventional force development.
- The end of these wars—and the end of the Cold War and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—created challenges for the services as they transitioned from periods of relative plenty back to periods of smaller forces and budgets.
- Major changes in strategic outlook and concept have historically affected planning scenarios and force structure. Examples include Eisenhower's shift to a New Look that relied more heavily on nuclear over conventional forces; Kennedy's shift to a 2-1/2 war strategy that relied on lighter conventional and special operations forces to meet brushfire wars; the Nixon administration's shift from a 2-1/2 war strategic concept to a 1-1/2 war strategic concept; the Carter administration's development of rapid deployment forces for Southwest Asian contingencies; the Reagan administration's shift to a strategic concept for a three-front war with the Soviet Union; the post-Cold War shift from consideration of a global Soviet threat to concern about regional threats; and post-9/11 efforts to maintain capabilities for nearly simultaneous major combat operations while emphasizing special operations forces and drones against terrorist networks.
- Recurring periods of budgetary difficulty—such as during the Eisenhower administration and following the imposition of budget caps and pay-as-you-go rules in the late 1980s and the early 2010s—have led to defense strategies and

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<sup>1</sup> For example, during the Cold War, a frequently stated interest was protecting the nation's sea lines of communication; in recent years, the interest has been described as protecting the global commons.

forces that have been even more driven by budgets than by top-down assessments of interests, threats, strategy, and risk.

- Assessments of risk are likely to be a continuing challenge in defense planning, although it is difficult to identify a more comprehensive framework for assessing risk than that of the 2001 QDR, as subsequently amended: (1) operational risk, (2) force management risk, (3) institutional risk, (4) strategic and political risk, and (5) future challenges risk. Reviving this framework and buttressing it with the necessary underlying analytics present a daunting challenge, but the result could be quite rewarding for the Army in better delineating the trade-offs associated with various decisions.

Our research suggests that perhaps the most important factors driving conventional force planning are the strategic objectives and priority missions, the strategic concept and related force sizing construct, which scenarios and scenario combinations are used to assess the capabilities of the force, and the associated assumptions about the simultaneity or temporal overlap of operations that derive from the strategic concept and force sizing construct.<sup>2</sup> Anticipated resource levels also have been a key—and even dominant—driver of force structure decisions.<sup>3</sup>

Returning to the design and use of defense planning scenarios, it seems clear that the portfolio of scenarios considered should include scenarios that are pegged to different time horizons:

- *Short-term planning (one to two years)*. There are considerable differences between conventional force planning and detailed war planning, but, in the short term, threat-based planning arguably should be used when there is at least some correspondence between the OPLANs and CONPLANs of combatant commanders and the scenarios that are assessed in DoD-wide conventional force planning exercises. The likelihood and potential consequences of the scenarios envisioned in combatant commanders' plans should guide actual selection. Scenarios in this time frame may help to reveal gaps and measures that can mitigate threats at the margin to improve operational performance, but are unlikely to substantially affect force structure.
- *Midterm planning (five to seven years)*. An end-of-FYDP set of scenarios is also likely to be fairly heavily weighted toward already existing and growing threats, although they will necessarily be more speculative regarding the capabilities that might be employed against U.S. forces. Scenarios dealing with this time frame

<sup>2</sup> Appendix B describes in greater detail the development and use of scenarios in the JSPS, the principal strategic planning process in DoD.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed analysis of how defense plans in the post–Cold War period have sought to balance ends, ways, and means, see Larson, Orlitsky, and Leuschner, 2001; and Larson et al., 2018.



may help to identify new JOCs, for example, and force structure changes that might affect up to 10 percent to 20 percent of the force over the period.

- *Long-term planning (seven to 20 years).* Longer-term planning, such as that required by statute in QDRs (or, in future, DSRs), is likely to be the most speculative and, therefore, the least threat-based and most capabilities-based of all. Scenarios for this time period are far more likely to be useful in identifying desirable new capabilities that can guide research and development, and underwrite more-futuristic operational concepts and formations than in designing future force structure, although over the long term, they can be the most consequential of all in reshaping the force.

It also is apparent that a portfolio of scenarios that includes a wider range of plausible but stressing scenarios is more likely to yield more useful information about risks, gaps, and mitigation measures than a smaller and less-stressing set, and that testing the forces against more combinations of scenarios and scenario variations is better than testing it against only a few:

- In this regard, although understandable on account of the two wars at the time (in Afghanistan and Iraq), it was nonetheless somewhat worrisome that the 2010 QDR appears to have dropped the requirement for two nearly simultaneous major combat operations, and that the principal ISC used in the 2014 QDR seemed to imply a capability for only one major combat operation, rather than one “defeat” operation and one “deny” operation, as specified in the force sizing construct.
- It also is worrisome that the Analytic Agenda that had been developed after the 2006 QDR had frayed by the time of the 2014 QDR, and that available analytic models and other tools increasingly appeared incapable of supporting defense analyses. Nonetheless, recent DoD efforts to boost SSA are encouraging, especially given the greater diversity of threats and other considerations in contemporary defense planning.

In closing, based on a synthesis of the historical record on the development and use of scenarios, the following might be considered the current approach and state of the art for scenario development, selection, and use:

- Scenarios are preceded by a strategic concept and force sizing construct that provides general guidance on the types and numbers of contingencies that the U.S. military should be prepared to address simultaneously or nearly simultaneously alongside homeland defense, steady-state deterrence, and other ongoing operations.
- They represent plausible short-term to midterm (e.g., six-year period) real-world contingencies and potential adversary capabilities that might be used that involve

vital interests, commitments, and potentially significant (or grave) consequences in identifiable locations.

- They are collectively inclusive, representative, or illustrative of the most important types of military operations that might plausibly be conducted over the period of interest.
- They reflect current or planned U.S. concepts of operations, forces, and capabilities, for each individual contingency.
- By considering multiple scenarios that are stressing cases in each category, they collectively provide a robust basis for assessing the force's ability to support the strategy, and the associated risks.

The following is a notional list of illustrative scenarios that would appear to be good candidates for defense planners circa 2017; each scenario in its own way represents a plausible real-world contingency of potentially significant consequence, the list collectively covers a range of threats and challenges the United States is currently facing, and each may present stressing cases for current or planned U.S. CONOPs, forces and capabilities:<sup>4</sup>

- a North Korean collapse scenario involving the requirement for WMD-E operations in the context of a larger humanitarian and stability operation<sup>5</sup>
- a Russia contingency involving hybrid warfare in the Baltics or Black Sea region
- an Iran or China contingency involving employment of A2/AD capabilities<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Although it was beyond the scope of the present effort to evaluate these scenarios in detail, a potentially useful framework for evaluating scenarios is provided in Martin Neill, Wade P. Hinkle, and Gary Morgan, *Scenarios—International Best Practice: An Analysis of Their Use by the United States, United Kingdom, and Republic of Korea*, Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, D-5665, February 2016. A discussion of scenario characteristics can be found in “The Use of Scenarios in Long Term Defence Planning,” Plausible Futures Newsletter, April 10, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> The January 2012 DSG appears to have placed such scenarios “below the line” for purposes of sizing U.S. conventional forces. For analysis of the rather substantial ground force requirements associated with WMD-E operations, see Timothy M. Bonds, Eric V. Larson, Derek Eaton, and Richard E. Darilek, *Strategy-Policy Mismatch: How the U.S. Army Can Help Close Gaps in Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-541-RC, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> The NDP review of the 2014 QDR argued:

While the United States continues to pursue conflict prevention and cooperation measures, given the increasing strategic weight of the Asia-Pacific region and the growth and modernization of China's military, one of DOD's force planning scenarios should involve the most challenging, high-end threat the United States and its allies face in the Western Pacific for planning purposes. Since detailed force planning is beyond the scope and capabilities of this Panel, we recommend that Congress ask DOD to spell out the specific forces and capabilities it would need to meet the requirements of this new and more comprehensive force sizing and shaping construct. (Perry and Abizaid, 2014, p. 26)

- support to ongoing operations in a Syria/Iraq irregular warfare contingency involving efforts to defeat the Islamic State, as well as CT operations against global Islamic State and al-Qa'ida affiliates
- a Chinese or Russian cyberattack on key defense or civilian communications or other infrastructure, perhaps in connection with another contingency
- assistance in large-scale refugee relief operations.

The obvious challenge for planners will be to consider scenarios that help to hedge against threats and capabilities that the nation is likely to face and also those that can be combined with longer-term assessments that can help to spur the development of transformative operational concepts and capabilities that will provide the United States with continued military advantage.

Before concluding, we note that although the principal conclusion of our research is that scenarios may be less important in determining planning outcomes than prior decisions about strategy, strategic concepts, force sizing constructs, and other matters, “the devil is in the details” of the assumptions that go into the scenarios. Accordingly, it is highly desirable for the Army to help shape the decisions that lead to specific scenario selections. In fact, there appear to be several points of leverage for the Army to do this:

- JSPS processes for conducting threat assessments that can influence conceptions of the Joint Operating Environment and identify emerging threat scenarios that might be used in the DPG<sup>7</sup>
- the planning phase of the PPBES, which presents additional opportunities to influence OSD thinking about emerging threat scenarios
- the processes for identifying new JOCs, which will need to be tested against new scenarios
- the recently reinvigorated SSA process, notably the processes for specifying the Analytic Baseline, including scenarios and scenario combinations contained in ISCs.

The question of how best to develop and use scenarios in future defense planning is the focus of the larger study, of which this report is only a first step.

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<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the development and employment of scenarios in the JSPS that may be useful in identifying opportunities to shape the development of defense planning scenarios, see Appendix B.



## Strategic Analysis Key Terms, Authorities, and Directives

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### National Policy

A broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives. (DoD, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, D.C., JP 1-02, amended as of January 15, 2015).

### Strategic Direction

The processes and products by which the President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provide strategic guidance to the Joint Staff, combatant commands, Services, and combat support agencies (DoD, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, D.C., JP 1-02, amended as of January 15, 2015).

DoD, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components*, Washington, D.C., DoD Directive 5100.01, December 21, 2010b, “establishes the functions of the Department of Defense and its major Components, supporting the core mission areas of the Armed Forces, which are broad DoD military operations and activities required to achieve the strategic objectives of the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and National Military Strategy.”

## National Security Strategy

To date, 16 NSS reports have been released in January 1987, January 1988, March 1990, August 1991, January 1993, July 1994, February 1995, February 1996, May 1997, October 1998, December 1999, December 2000, September 2002, March 2006, May 2010, and February 2015.

- (1) The President shall transmit to Congress each year a comprehensive report on the national security strategy of the United States (hereinafter in this section referred to as a “national security strategy report”).
- (2) The national security strategy report for any year shall be transmitted on the date on which the President submits to Congress the budget for the next fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31.
- (3) Not later than 150 days after the date on which a new President takes office, the President shall transmit to Congress a national security strategy report under this section. That report shall be in addition to the report for that year transmitted at the time specified in paragraph (2) (50 U.S.C. 3043, Annual National Security Strategy Report, amended as of January 2015).

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The NSS is a comprehensive report required annually by Title 50. It is prepared by the executive branch of the government for Congress and outlines major national security concerns of the United States and how the administration plans to address these concerns using all instruments of national power. The document is purposely general in content, and its implementation relies on elaborating guidance provided in supporting documents by different Departments and Agencies (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c).

## Defense Strategy Review, Previously Quadrennial Defense Review

To date, there have been five QDR reports, released in May 1997, September 2001, February 2006, February 2010, and March 2014. Prior to legislation requiring a QDR, DSRs were conducted in the development of the Base Force study of 1989 to 1992, and the BUR of 1993. With the NDAA of FY 2017, the formal requirement for a DSR was dropped.

## National Defense Strategy

Three NDS documents have been issued to date, in January 1993, March 2005, and June 2008. In January 2012, a presidential DSG was issued.

According to the June 2008 NDS,

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) serves as the Department's capstone document in this long-term effort [to implement the NSS]. It flows from the NSS and informs the National Military Strategy. It also provides a framework for other DoD strategic guidance, specifically on campaign and contingency planning, force development, and intelligence. . . . The NDS describes our overarching goals and strategy. It outlines how DoD will support the objectives outlined in the NSS, including the need to strengthen alliances and build new partnerships to defeat global terrorism and prevent attacks against us, our allies, and our friends; prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends with WMDs; work with others to defuse regional conflicts, including conflict intervention; and transform national security institutions to face the challenges of the 21st century. The NDS acts on these objectives, evaluates the strategic environment, challenges, and risks we must consider in achieving them, and maps the way forward. (DoD, *National Defense Strategy*, Washington, D.C., June 2008, pp. 1–2)

As of April 28, 2017, and incorporating the revisions in Section 941 of the NDAA for FY 2017, the statutory guidance on the NDS reads as follows:

(g)(1)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (E), in January every four years, and intermittently otherwise as may be appropriate, the Secretary of Defense shall provide to the Secretaries of the military departments, the Chiefs of Staff of the armed forces, the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands, and the heads of all Defense Agencies and Field Activities of the Department of Defense and other elements of the Department specified in paragraphs (1) through (10) of section 111(b) of this title, and to the congressional defense committees, a defense strategy. Each strategy shall be known as the “national defense strategy,” and shall support the most recent national security strategy report of the President under section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3043).

(B) Each national defense strategy shall including the following:

- (i) The priority missions of the Department of Defense, and the assumed force planning scenarios and constructs.
- (ii) The assumed strategic environment, including the most critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies posed by state or non-state actors, and the strategies that the Department will employ to counter such threats and provide for the national defense.



(iii) A strategic framework prescribed by the Secretary that guides how the Department will prioritize among the threats described in clause (ii) and the missions specified pursuant to clause (i), how the Department will allocate and mitigate the resulting risks, and how the Department will make resource investments.

(iv) The roles and missions of the armed forces to carry out the missions described in clause (i), and the assumed roles and capabilities provided by other United States Government agencies and by allies and international partners.

(v) The force size and shape, force posture, defense capabilities, force readiness, infrastructure, organization, personnel, technological innovation, and other elements of the defense program necessary to support such strategy.

(vi) The major investments in defense capabilities, force structure, force readiness, force posture, and technological innovation that the Department will make over the following five-year period in accordance with the strategic framework described in clause (iii).

(C) The Secretary shall seek the military advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in preparing each national defense strategy required by this subsection.

(D) Each national defense strategy under this subsection shall be presented to the congressional defense committees in classified form with an unclassified summary.

(E) In a year following an election for President, which election results in the appointment by the President of a new Secretary of Defense, the Secretary shall present the national defense strategy required by this subsection as soon as possible after appointment by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(F) In February of each year in which the Secretary does not submit a new defense strategy as required by paragraph (A), the Secretary shall submit to the congressional defense committees an assessment of the current national defense strategy, including an assessment of the implementation of the strategy by the Department and an assessment whether the strategy requires revision as a result of changes in assumptions, policy, or other factors.

(2) In implementing a national defense strategy under paragraph (1), the Secretary, with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall provide annually to the Secretaries of the military departments, the Chiefs of Staff of the armed forces, the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands, and the heads of all Defense Agencies and Field Activities of the Department and other elements of the Department specified in paragraphs (1) through (10) of section 111(b) of this title, written policy guidance for the preparation and

review of the program recommendations and budget proposals of their respective components to guide the development of forces. Such guidance shall include—

- (A) the national security interests and objectives;
- (B) the priority military missions of the Department, including the assumed force planning scenarios and constructs;
- (C) the force size and shape, force posture, defense capabilities, force readiness, infrastructure, organization, personnel, technological innovation, and other elements of the defense program necessary to support the strategy;
- (D) the resource levels projected to be available for the period of time for which such recommendations and proposals are to be effective; and
- (E) a discussion of any changes in the defense strategy and assumptions underpinning the strategy, as required by paragraph (1). (Public Law 114-328, National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2017, December 26, 2016)

## **Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States**

Section 942 of the NDAA for FY 2017 also established a Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States, described in the NDAA as follows:

### **SEC. 942. COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY FOR THE UNITED STATES.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is hereby established a commission to be known as the “Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States” (in this section referred to as the “Commission”). The purpose of the Commission is to examine and make recommendations with respect to the national defense strategy for the United States.

(b) **COMPOSITION.**—

(1) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Commission shall be composed of 12 members appointed as follows:

(A) Three members appointed by the chair of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives. (B) Three members appointed by the ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(C) Three members appointed by the chair of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

(D) Three members appointed by the ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

## (2) CHAIR; VICE CHAIR.—

(A) CHAIR.—The chair of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representative and the chair of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate shall jointly designate one member of the Commission to serve as chair of the Commission.

(B) VICE CHAIR.—The ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representative and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate shall jointly designate one member of the Commission to serve as vice chair of the Commission.

(3) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—Members shall be appointed for the life of the Commission. Any vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

## (c) DUTIES.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Commission shall review the current national defense strategy of the United States, including the assumptions, missions, force posture and structure, and strategic and military risks associated with the strategy.

(2) ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Commission shall conduct a comprehensive assessment of the strategic environment, the threats to the United States, the size and shape of the force, the readiness of the force, the posture and capabilities of the force, the allocation of resources, and strategic and military risks in order to provide recommendations on the national defense strategy for the United States.

## (d) COOPERATION FROM GOVERNMENT.—

(1) COOPERATION.—In carrying out its duties, the Commission shall receive the full and timely cooperation of the Secretary of Defense in providing the Commission with analysis, briefings, and other information necessary for the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

(2) LIAISON.—The Secretary shall designate at least one officer or employee of the Department of Defense to serve as a liaison officer between the Department and the Commission.

## (e) REPORT.—

(1) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than December 1, 2017, the Commission shall submit to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate a report on the Commission's findings, conclu-

sions, and recommendations. The report shall address, but not be limited to, each of the following:

(A) The strategic environment, including threats to the United States and the potential for conflicts arising from such threats, security challenges, and the national security interests of the United States.

(B) The military missions for which the Department of Defense should prepare and the force planning construct. (C) The roles and missions of the Armed Forces to carry out those missions and the roles and capabilities provided by other United States Government agencies and by allies and international partners.

(D) The force planning construct, size and shape, posture and capabilities, readiness, infrastructure, organization, personnel, and other elements of the defense program necessary to support the strategy.

(E) The resources necessary to support the strategy, including budget recommendations.

(F) The risks associated with the strategy, including the relationships and tradeoffs between missions, risks, and resources.

(2) INTERIM BRIEFING.—Not later than June 1, 2017, the Commission shall provide to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate a briefing on the status of its review and assessment, and include a discussion of any interim recommendations.

(3) FORM.—The report submitted to Congress under paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(f) FUNDING.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated by to this Act for the Department of Defense, \$5,000,000 is available to fund the activities of the Commission.

(g) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate 6 months after the date on which it submits the report required by subsection (e). (Public Law 114-328, National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2017, December 26, 2016)

## Strategic Planning Guidance

An input to the Guidance for the Development of the Force (GDF), now the DPG. (Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Description of the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS)*, briefing, July 2009)

## Defense Planning Guidance

The DPG provides annual classified direction on force development priorities. The DPG, coupled with Fiscal Guidance (FG) enable Services to build their Program Objective Memorandum (POMs) and budgets. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

## Contingency Planning Guidance

Secretary of Defense written guidance, approved by the President, for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which focuses the guidance given in the national security strategy and Defense Planning Guidance, and is the principal source document for the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. Also called CPG [contingency planning guidance]. (DoD, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, D.C., JP 1-02, amended as of January 15, 2015)

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The Secretary of Defense, with the approval of the President and after consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall provide to the Chairman written policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency plans, including plans for providing support to civil authorities in an incident of national significance or a catastrophic incident, for homeland defense, and for military support to civil authorities. Such guidance shall be provided every two years or more frequently as needed and shall include guidance on the specific force levels and specific supporting resource levels projected to be available for the period of time for which such plans are to be effective. (10 U.S.C. 113, Secretary of Defense, amended as of January 2012)

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The Under Secretary [for Policy] shall assist the Secretary of Defense—(A) in preparing written policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency plans; and (b) in reviewing such plans. (10 U.S.C. 134, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, amended as of January 2011)

The CJCS is responsible for

(3) Contingency Planning; Preparedness. (A) Providing for the preparation and review of contingency plans which conform to policy guidance from the President and the Secretary of Defense. (10 U.S.C. 153, Chairman: Functions, amended as of January 2011)

## Guidance for the Employment of the Force

The [Guidance for the Employment of the Force] GEF provides presidential and politico-military guidance. The President approves the contingency planning guidance contained in the GEF and approves the Secretary's issuance of the GEF. The GEF is informed by the UCP [Unified Command Plan] and informs strategic policy guidance, campaign plans, and the JSCP. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c, p. GL-4)

## National Military Strategy

To date, NMS reports have been issued in 1992, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2011, and 2015. Prior to January 1992, NMS was issued as a classified document called the National Military Strategy Document.

A document developed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for distributing and applying military power to attain national security strategy and defense strategy objectives. The NMS is informed by the NSS, QDR, NDS, and CRA [Chairman's Risk Assessment] and informs JSCP and provides CRA framework (10 U.S.C. 153(a)(1)). (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCSI 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

Section 943 of the NDAA for FY 2017 called for reform of the NMS, and modified the language of the statute to read as follows:

(b) NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY.—

(1) NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY.—

(A) The Chairman shall determine each even-numbered year whether to prepare a new National Military Strategy in accordance with this paragraph or to update a strategy previously prepared in accordance with this paragraph. The Chairman shall provide such National Military Strategy or update to the Secretary of Defense in time for transmittal to Congress pursuant to paragraph (3), including in time for inclusion in the report of the Secretary of Defense, if any, under paragraph (4).

(B) Each National Military Strategy (or update) under this paragraph shall be based on a comprehensive review conducted by the Chairman in conjunction with the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands. Each update shall address only those parts of the most recent National Military Strategy for which the Chairman determines, on the basis of the review, that a modification is needed.

(C) Each National Military Strategy (or update) submitted under this paragraph shall describe how the military will support the objectives of the United States as articulated in—

- (i) the most recent National Security Strategy prescribed by the President pursuant to section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3043);
- (ii) the most recent annual report of the Secretary of Defense submitted to the President and Congress pursuant to section 113 of this title;
- (iii) the most recent national defense strategy presented by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to section 113 of this title;
- (iv) the most recent policy guidance provided by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to section 113(g) of this title; and
- (v) any other national security or defense strategic guidance issued by the President or the Secretary of Defense. (Public Law 114-328, National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2017, December 26, 2016)

## Theater Strategy

[Combatant commands] develop a theater strategy focused on achieving specified objectives and stating the commander's long-term vision. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCSI 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

## Joint Strategic Planning System

Joint Strategic Planning System—One of the primary means by which the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in consultation with the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the combatant commanders, carries out the statutory responsibilities to assist the President and Secretary of Defense in providing strategic direction to the Armed Forces. Also called JSPS. (DoD, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, D.C., JP 1-02, amended as of January 15, 2015)

## Strategic Analysis/Support for Strategic Analysis

DoD defines *strategic analysis* as:

An analysis of force sufficiency and effectiveness conducted by the DoD Components to support the development and evaluation of the defense strategy. Such



analyses address both forces and enablers (e.g., inter-theater and intra-theater lift capability, required language skill, and regional expertise capabilities. (DoD, “Support for Strategic Analysis,” DoD Instruction 8260.01, January 11, 2007)

Throughout this report, we use the term *force planning* as synonymous with *strategic analysis* and *strategic planning*. DoD distinguishes between two main kinds of strategic analysis—strategic analysis of current forces and strategic analysis of future forces:

*Strategic Analysis of Current Forces.* An analysis of the sufficiency and effectiveness of current forces, including enablers. Such analyses examine the current force’s ability to execute the defense strategy. These analyses inform longer-term strategic analyses. . . .

*Strategic Analysis of Future Forces.* An analysis of the sufficiency and effectiveness of out-year forces, including enablers. Such analyses examine force structure and program alternatives and help evaluate strategic risk in the midterm and beyond. (DoD, “Support for Strategic Analysis,” DoD Instruction 8260.01, January 11, 2007)

For purposes of strategic analysis, DoD defines a *scenario* as follows:

*Scenario.* An account or synopsis of a projected course of action or events. For the purpose of this Instruction, the focus of scenarios is on strategic and operational levels of warfare. Scenarios include information such as threat and friendly politico-military contexts and/or backgrounds, assumptions, operational objectives, and other planning considerations. (DoD, “Support for Strategic Analysis,” DoD Instruction 8260.01, January 11, 2007)

DoD’s SSA effort concentrates not just on the development of scenarios but also on the development of “analytic baselines” that can be used for strategic analyses and help to round out the scenarios with crucial additional detail. DoD defines an *analytical baseline* as follows:

*Analytical Baseline.* Referred to as “baseline” in the text of this Instruction. A package comprising a scenario, concept of operations, and integrated data used by the DoD Components as a foundation for strategic analyses. Analytical baselines shall be produced and reviewed in an open, collaborative, and transparent environment. (DoD, “Support for Strategic Analysis,” DoD Instruction 8260.01, January 11, 2007)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Analytical baselines reportedly include future forces, units, equipment; targets; environment; and characteristics and performance data, all of which are approved by OUSD (PA&E)/CAPE (see James G. Stevens and R. Eric Johnson, *Joint Data Support to The DoD Analytic Agenda*, briefing at U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., June 22, 2005).

Joint Data Support (JDS) is the name of the OSD CAPE program that provides the analytic architecture and foundation containing databases, models and tools, scenarios, CONOPs, baselines, OA, mobility capability, and other studies, as well as other elements that are to be used in strategic and Analytic Agenda analyses.

## Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan

A plan that provides guidance to the combatant commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to accomplish tasks and missions based on current military capabilities. Also called JSCP. (DoD, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, D.C., JP 1-02, amended as of January 15, 2015)

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The JSCP provides detailed planning guidance to implement the GEF's strategic policy guidance and tasks CCDRs to develop campaign, contingency and posture plans. Fulfills title 10 requirement for the Chairman to produce strategic plans and provides assistance to President and the Secretary of Defense in military direction to the Armed Forces. The JSCP is informed by the GEF and NMS and directs campaign, campaign support, contingency, and posture planning (10 U.S.C. 153(a)(2)). (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

## Comprehensive Joint Assessment

The CJA [Comprehensive Joint Assessment] is a formal, holistic strategic assessment process that provides a common informational baseline and strategic picture; it begins the JSPS deliberate assessment process. The CJA is based on a strategic survey instrument completed by all [combatant commands] and Services, providing a unified mechanism to render a strategic report that informs the full range of JSPS outputs over the next year. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

## Joint Strategic Review

The JSR [Joint Strategic Review] process is the synthesis of CJA information, along with Joint Staff functional estimates and processes that inform development of the Chairman's advice and directive activities and culminate in a JSR report to the joint community. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

## Strategic Risk

The potential impact upon the United States—to include our population, territory, and interests—of current and contingency events given their estimated consequences and probabilities. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

## Military Risk Assessment

The ability of U.S. Armed Forces to adequately resource, execute and sustain military operations in support of the strategic objectives of the National Military Strategy. (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

## Chairman's Risk Assessment

### Risk Assessment of National Military Strategy

(2) Risk assessment. (A) The Chairman shall prepare each year an assessment of the risks associated with the most current National Military Strategy (or update) under paragraph (1). The risk assessment shall be known as the “Risk Assessment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff” (CRA). The Chairman shall complete preparation of the Risk Assessment in time for transmittal to Congress pursuant to paragraph (3), including in time for inclusion of the report of the Secretary of Defense, if any, under paragraph (4). (10 U.S.C. 153, Chairman: Functions, amended as of January 2011)

In accordance with Title 10, the Chairman must conduct a comprehensive review of the NMS including an assessment of the strategic and military risk associated with executing the NMS. The CRA is informed by the current NMS, 4-star level input, and the strategic environment, and it informs the GEF, NMS, and JSCP and helps to frame independent military advice (10 U.S.C. 153(b)). (JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, November 20, 2015c)

### Risk Assessment of National Defense Strategy in Quadrennial Defense Review/Defense Strategy Review

The QDR or DSR is to

address the security environment, threats, trends, opportunities, and challenges, and define the nature and magnitude of the strategic and military risks associated with executing the national defense strategy by using the most recent net assessment submitted by the Secretary of Defense under section 113 of this title, the

risk assessment submitted by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under section 153 of this title, and, as determined necessary or useful by the Secretary, any other Department of Defense, Government, or non-government strategic or intelligence estimate, assessment, study, or review. (10 U.S.C. 118, Defense Strategy Review)

## The Development and Use of Scenarios in the Joint Strategic Planning System

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This appendix provides additional detailed information on how scenarios are developed and used within the JSPS, DoD's principal strategic planning process.

### Purposes and Characteristics of the JSPS

The JSPS is one of the primary means by which the CJCS, in consultation with the other members of the JCS and the combatant commanders, carries out the statutory responsibilities to assist the President and Secretary of Defense in providing military strategy and planning direction to the armed forces. The CJCS uses the JSPS for conducting strategic analysis and planning based on national strategy and policy. Most broadly, the JSPS assists the CJCS in meeting the responsibilities related to his four main statutory roles: assess, advise, direct, and execute (see Figure B.1).

The JSPS also provides the framework for the CJCS to interact with national, congressional, and DoD processes,<sup>1</sup> including the PPBES, QDRs, and the development of NDS. The JSPS is deeply intertwined with PPBE, and historically has required adjustment and resynchronization whenever there are significant changes to PPBE processes and timelines.

In addition, the JSPS is a major contributor to and user of SSA and JDS, which makes it difficult to separate JSPS activities and products from those of these related efforts.<sup>2</sup>

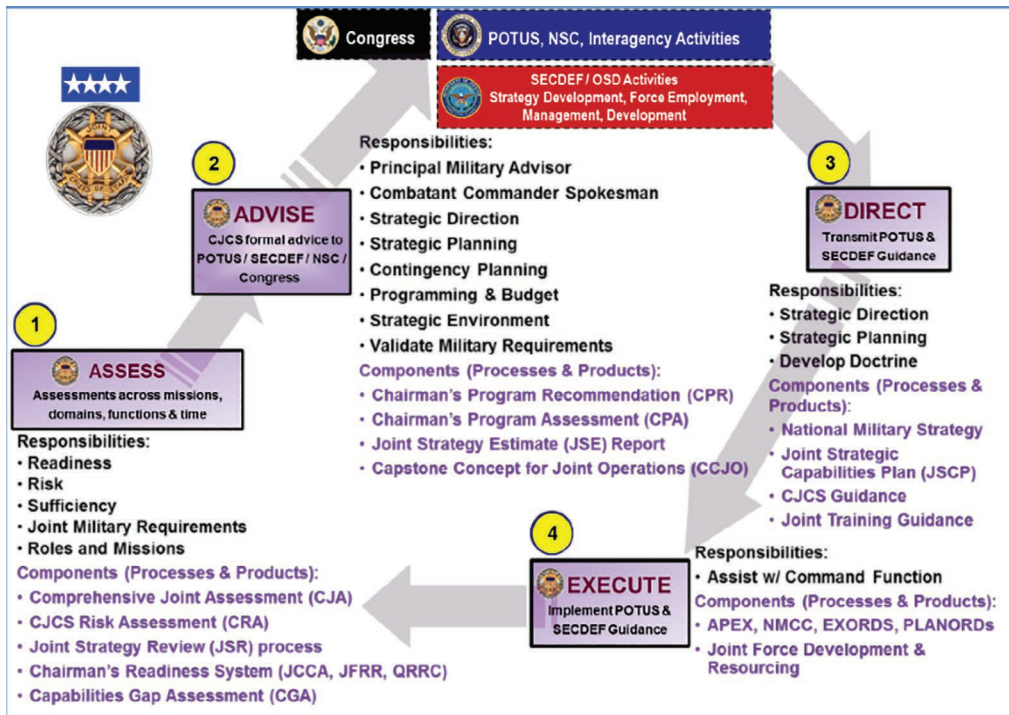
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<sup>1</sup> For example, the CJCS provides military advice and assessments to Congress, including the CRA, Biennial National Military Strategy Review, QDR Risk Assessments, and testimony to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

<sup>2</sup> SSA and the JDS were formerly called the "Analytic Agenda." Much of CAPE's analytic architecture for strategic analysis was dismantled after the 2010 QDR due to a lack of faith in the analyses that were being generated, but Deputy Secretary Robert Work recently pledged to reinvigorate SSA, especially DoD war-gaming. See Jason Sherman, "Work Grabs Reins of Analysis Effort Pivotal to Strategy, Budget Decisions," *Inside Defense*, November 26, 2014.

Figure B.1

## CJCS Statutory Roles, Responsibilities, and Associated JSPS Components



SOURCE: JCS, 2015c, p. A-1.

NOTE: APEX = Adaptive Planning and Execution; EXORD = execute order; JCCA = Joint Combat Capabilities Assessment; JFRR = Joint Force Readiness Review; NMCC = National Military Command Center; PLANORD = planning order; POTUS = President of the United States; QRRR = Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress.

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According to CJCS Instruction 3100.01C, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, the JSPS assists the CJCS in performing his assessment, advisory, direction, and execution roles and responsibilities as follows:

- *Assessment Role.* The CJCS's assessments consist of "acquiring and analyzing relevant data to determine the nature of the strategic environment, the U.S.' and its allies' ability to operate within and influence that environment, potential adversary abilities to do the same, and the risk to national strategies examined temporally over the near- (0-2 years), mid- (3-7 years), and far-terms (8-20 years)."<sup>3</sup>
- *Advisory Role.* The CJCS's advice "assists National Security, National Defense, and Interagency leadership and their staffs in the development of National Security and Defense strategies; DoD planning, programming, [and] budgeting doc-

<sup>3</sup> JCS, 2015c, p. B-1. Appendix A provides a more detailed listing of the CJCS's responsibilities and JSPS processes and products related to the assessment, advisory, direction, and execution roles.

uments and activities; as well as informs Service Strategic Plans and Program Objective Memoranda (POM). The Chairman also has routine political-military interaction with the President and SecDef outside formal JSPS processes.”<sup>4</sup>

- *Direction Role.* The CJCS’s direction consists of “authoritative directive functions or responsibilities, with which he is specifically charged by law, in order to enhance operational effectiveness and organizational efficiency of the Joint Force. These directive responsibilities include: planning, joint doctrine, education, and training.”<sup>5</sup>
- *Execution Role.* “The JSPS enables the chairman to assist the President and the SecDef in executing their respective command functions.”<sup>6</sup>

The JSPS has proved a flexible and adaptable system, and past CJCSs have modified the JSPS to streamline the process, rationalize and reduce the number of products it generates, and otherwise better tailor the system to their—and broader DoD—requirements whenever this appeared to be indicated.<sup>7</sup>

## The Role of the JSPS Process in Force Planning

The JSPS is the principal Joint Staff process for supporting the CJCS’s strategic planning efforts, including force planning, from threat assessments and strategy development, to establishment of short- and long-term force requirements, assessments of capability gaps, force readiness and risk, concept and capability development, and other related activities.

As shown in Figure B.2, the JSPS simultaneously operates within the NSC process, which develops national policy and strategy, and OSD’s PPBES: In the figure, the entries in blue represent national-level processes and products, those in red reflect DoD processes and products, those in green are related to the combatant commanders and services, and the entries in purple reflect JSPS processes and products.

<sup>4</sup> JCS, 2015c, p. C-1.

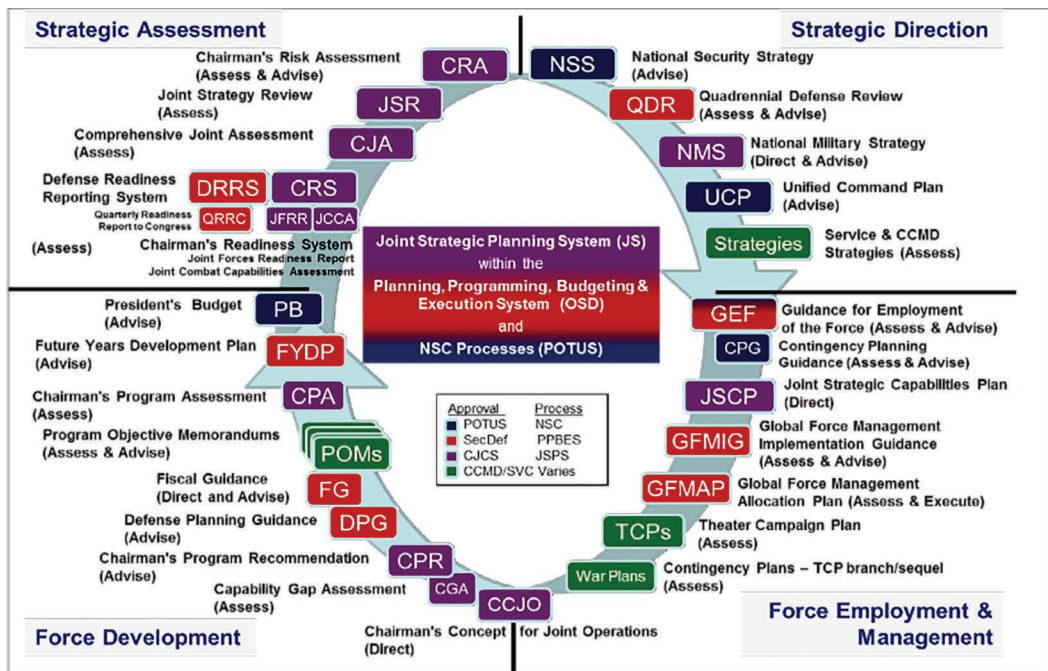
<sup>5</sup> JCS, 2015c, p. D-1. For example, the JSCP communicates to the combatant and functional commanders planning guidance from OSD.

<sup>6</sup> JCS, 2015c, p. E-1.

<sup>7</sup> The most recent revision to CJCS JSPS guidance was in November 2015, when CJCSI 3100.01B, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, was revised and promulgated as CJCSI 3100.01C. Poole (1989) reports that the principal internal document that guides JCS strategic planning, JCS MOP No. 84, dated July 14, 1952, had undergone a total of 17 revisions by February 1989. Meinhart (2006) reports that there were five changes to the JSPS during the 1990–2005 period. See Poole, 1989, and Meinhart, 2006. Strategic planning under previous chairmen is described in greater detail in Rearden, 2012, and volumes in the Joint History Office’s series, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*.



**Figure B.2**  
**JSPS in Relation to Other Key National Security and Defense Processes**



SOURCE: JCS, November 2015c, p. A-5.

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As shown in the figure, the JSPS includes a wide range of processes and products related to strategic assessment, force development, strategic direction, and force employment and management:

- *Strategic Assessment.* This phase includes a CJA, a JSR, a CRA, and reports from the CRS:
  - The CJA process is a formal, holistic, strategic assessment process that provides a common baseline and strategic picture. The CJA generates a wide range of intelligence, strategy, and other outputs, including a Joint Strategic Intelligence Estimate (JSIE), a Joint Intelligence Posture Assessment, a Joint Strategic Estimate (JSE), a Joint Logistics Estimate, a Capability Gap Assessment, OA studies, a CCJO and Joint Concept Assessments, and a Joint Force Development Analysis, Actions, and Recommendations Report.
  - The JSR is designed to provide a comprehensive and cogent analytical framework that enables exploration of areas of strategic interest and supports preparation of CJCS products, such as strategic documents, directives, instructions, or memoranda.

- The CRA is an assessment that provides Congress with the CJCS’s assessment of the nature and magnitude of strategic and military risk in executing the objectives called for in the NMS.
- The CRS generates Joint Forces Readiness Reports and a Joint Combat Capabilities Assessment.
- *Force Development.* This phase includes the CCJO, the Capability Gap Assessment, the Chairman’s Program Recommendation, and Chairman’s Program Assessment, as well as a range of other Joint Force Development activities.
- *Strategic Direction.* This phase includes both the CJCS’s risk assessment of the QDR and development of the NMS.
- *Force Employment and Management.* Finally, the principal JSPS output in this phase is the JSCP, which contains direction for combatant command and service planning activities and informs DoD planning guidance for the next two years.<sup>8</sup>

A principal product of the JSPS is the JSCP, which, in conjunction with the UCP and OSD’s GEF, tasks combatant commanders to conduct comprehensive theater campaign, contingency, and other planning to achieve the objectives directed by the President and Secretary of Defense over the next two years.<sup>9</sup>

Figure B.3 illustrates the taskings contained in the FY 1996 JSCP planning guidance. As shown in the figure, the FY 1996 JSCP directed combatant and functional commanders to produce or update a total of three OPLANs, 42 CONPLANs, and 16 functional plans.<sup>10</sup> Current guidance on the JSCP aims to give the JSCP a more strategic orientation by directing combatant commanders to develop a theater campaign plan to execute their peacetime theater strategy, and treating OPLANs, CONPLANs, and functional plans as subordinate branches and sequels to the main theater campaign plan that may need to be executed: The idea is that the theater campaign plan is the main plan and, when contingencies arise, that in essence represents a failure of the peacetime plan to deter or prevent crisis or conflict.

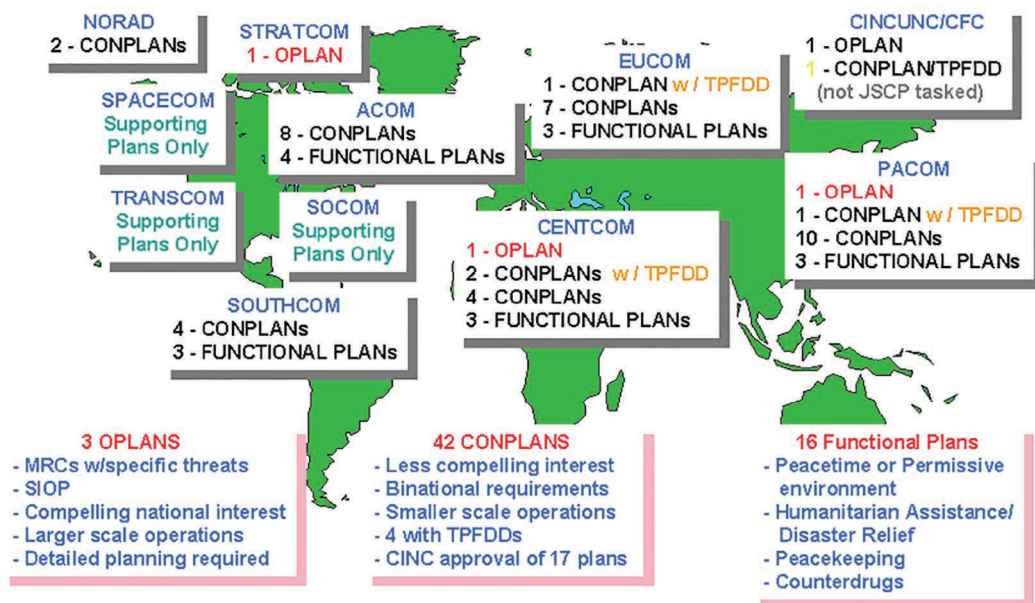
In summary, the JSPS is a highly complex process whose products are designed to assist the CJCS in strategic analysis and force planning; fulfill his other assessment,

<sup>8</sup> Notably, the JSCP is the vehicle for directing the development of RCC war plans.

<sup>9</sup> In essence, the GEF provides policy guidance for planning that includes the CPG signed by the President while the JSCP provides plan guidance by formally tasking campaign, contingency, and posture planning requirements to combatant commanders. The 2015 JSCP was issued in September 2015. See JCS, *2015 Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP)*, Washington, D.C., CJCSI 3110.01J, September 25, 2015a, not available to the general public; and JCS, *Contingency Planning Supplement to the 2015 Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP)*, Washington, D.C., CJCSI 3110.01J-1, September 25, 2015b, not available to the general public.

<sup>10</sup> As suggested by the figure, combatant commanders can be tasked to develop different categories of plans to varying degrees of detail: Higher-priority CONPLANs, for example, require the development of Time-Phased Force Deployment Data, capturing the envisioned flow of forces into the theater.

**Figure B.3**  
**Deliberate Planning Tasks in the FY 1996 JSCP**



SOURCE: Barthelmeß, undated.

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advisory, direction, and execution responsibilities; and support his interactions with the Secretary of Defense, the NSC, and Congress.

## Basic Work and Analytical Flow of the JSPS Process

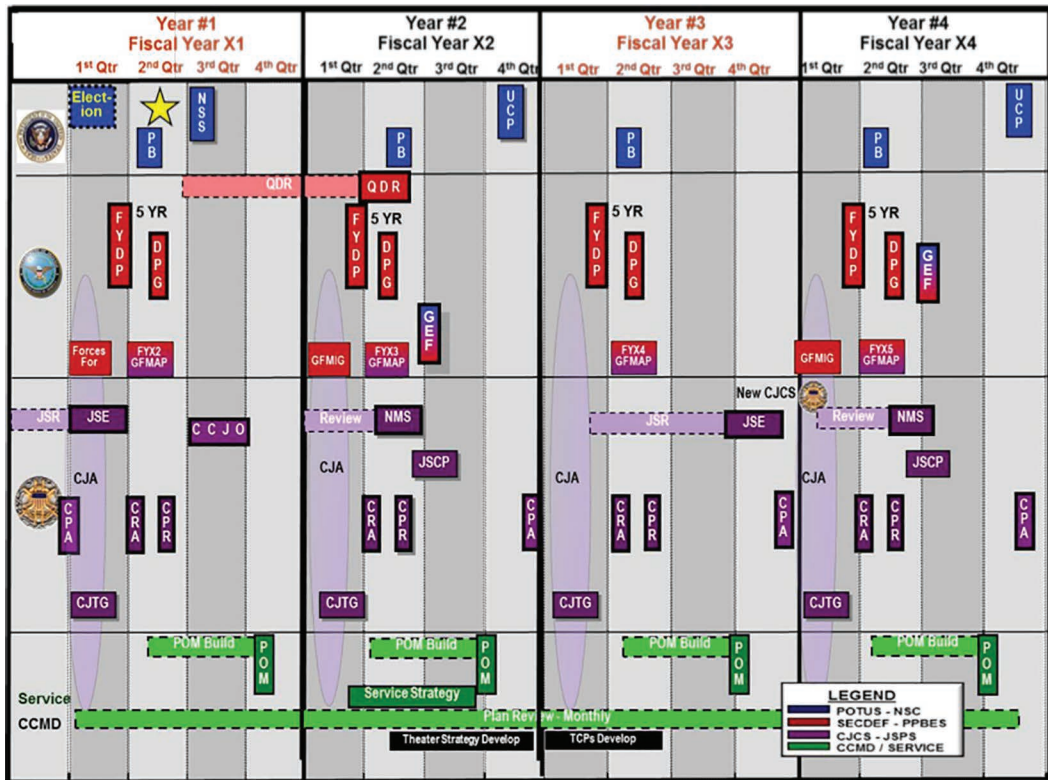
Figure B.4 describes the JSPS and strategic planning cycle, alongside related national, DoD, service, and combatant command processes. As shown in the figure, the four-year cycle begins with the inauguration of the President and, following the production of a new NSS,<sup>11</sup> efforts focus on the development and publication of the major OSD and JSPS strategy documents, including the QDR,<sup>12</sup> the NMS, the UCP, the GEF, and the JSCP, in year two. These documents are reevaluated and, if necessary, updated in year four, constituting a two-year cycle within the large four-year presidential cycle.

As shown, the basic JSPS cycle begins with a review of the strategic environment and national security, defense, and military strategy (as well as service and combatant

<sup>11</sup> By law, the President is required to release a new NSS within 150 days of assuming office. As a practical matter, no President to date has released a publicly available NSS within 150 days.

<sup>12</sup> Most recently, after rewriting the statutory language and renaming the QDR to the DSR, the requirement for a quadrennial review by the DoD was abolished altogether.

**Figure B.4**  
**JSPS and Strategic Planning Cycle: Four-Year Cycle**



SOURCE: JCS, November 2015c, p. A-6.

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commander strategies, and war plans). The process considers short-, mid-, and long-term threats and challenges, force requirements, capability gaps, and risks in the strategy, and provides advice on ways to remedy gaps and reduce risk. Finally, it informs service and OSD planning, programming, and budgeting, and provides planning guidance to the combatant commands and services.

## Origin of JSPS Scenarios

Historically, the JSPS has distinguished between the development and refinement of scenarios for meeting current demands (i.e., the current and next FY), and those for meeting future demands, either over the FYDP or beyond.

For short-term planning, the JSPS includes processes both for tasking combatant commanders to develop theater campaign plans, OPLANs, CONPLANs, and supporting plans, and for reviewing, assessing, and suggesting changes to these plans, including the

scenarios that are embedded in the plans.<sup>13</sup> Based on the JSIE, the Joint Strategic Assessment, and JSR, among others, the Joint Staff provides assessments and advice for OSD's development of the GEF and the CPG contained in the GEF that is to be approved by the President. These documents guide the development of combatant commanders' theater campaign plans, OPLANs, CONPLANs, and supporting plans, which necessarily include embedded scenarios. And as described above, the JSCP communicates the GEF's short-term guidance to combatant commanders for the development of their plans. The Joint Staff also reviews and assesses current theater OPLANs and CONPLANs previously tasked by the JSCP. These JSPS processes provide mechanisms for influencing the scenarios for which combatant commanders will prepare in the short term.<sup>14</sup> Finally, based on guidance from OUSD (Policy), the Joint Staff develops abstracted or summary versions of these plans for use as DPSs that are included in OSD's DPG.

Formally, OUSD (Policy), in coordination with the heads of the DoD components, develops and establishes priorities among scenarios for use in short-, mid- and long-term strategic analyses; approves authorized scenarios; and issues scenario planning factors (e.g., warning time, concurrency, assumed postures of engagement) for use in strategic analyses.<sup>15</sup> JSPS contributions, including to SSA, shape the choice and content of scenarios while the midterm and long-term force planning scenarios are used to support development of the FYDP, NDS, and QDR. Where the Joint Staff has the lead on near-term scenarios, OUSD (Policy) has the lead on mid- and long-term scenarios.

Outputs and products from the JSPS process also contribute to SSA activities, which provide the analytic foundations for OSD's longer-term PPBES activities, including force sizing, shaping, and capability development:

Support for Strategic Analysis (SSA) [is a] collaborative and iterative process co-led, on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, by the Offices of Director, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (D, CAPE); the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy [USD(P)]; and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. SSA products support deliberations by DoD senior leadership on strategy and Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) System matters, including force sizing, shaping, and capability development. SSA products include current baselines that reflect selected Combatant Commander (CCDR) plans and approved force management decisions and near-to-long term scenarios. Concepts of Operation (CONOPS), forces and baselines based upon plausible challenges requiring DoD resources and capabilities.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See JCS, *Management and Review of Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP)-Tasked Plans*, Washington, D.C., CJCSI 3141.01E, September 15, 2011b; and CJCS, *Campaign Planning Procedures and Responsibilities*, Washington, D.C., CJCSM 3130.01A, November 25, 2014. Plans will be reviewed annually under current guidance.

<sup>14</sup> OSD's GEF provides formal policy direction to the CJCS and others.

<sup>15</sup> DoD, "Data Collection, Development, and Management in Support of Strategic Analysis," DoD Directive 8260.1, Washington, D.C., December 6, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> DoD, 2011.



SSA products shall include: (1) Current baselines that reflect selected Combatant Commander (CCDR) plans and approved force management decisions. These baselines shall NOT be used to evaluate CCDR plans or force management decisions. (2) Near- to long-term scenarios, concepts of operation (CONOPS), forces, and baselines based upon plausible challenges requiring DoD resources and capabilities.<sup>17</sup>

Among other responsibilities with respect to SSA, the CJCS is charged with developing current analytical baselines in coordination with combatant commanders, and managing the development of and approving SSA scenario CONOPS and forces.

Structured interviews regarding the 2010 QDR described the Analytic Agenda (subsequently dubbed “Support for Strategic Analysis”) as follows:<sup>18</sup>

There was also seamless coordination between us, the Joint Staff, and CAPE for collaboration of force sizing analysis. We had a process called the “analytic agenda” where OSD Policy/Strategy was responsible for Defense Planning Scenario development, the Joint Staff J-8 was responsible for developing the [concepts of operations] and detailed force lists for those scenarios, and CAPE—through a division called the Studies and Analysis Group—did the analysis to determine baseline costs, applied likely force demand levels, and fed analysis into the QDR and POM processes. Because of the Analytic Agenda, we had collaborative and transparent adaptation and analysis to apply to the 2010 QDR construct.<sup>19</sup>

Figure B.5 portrays the flow to the current-year and future-year analytical baselines. As shown, the current-year baseline, which is the CJCS’s responsibility, flows from national strategy and policy and combatant commanders’ war plans, whereas the Future-Year Analytic Baseline, which is CAPE’s responsibility, flows from national strategy and policy through OUSD (Policy) defense planning scenarios, Joint Staff CONOPS and the Multi-Service Force Data (MSFD), and collaborative studies.

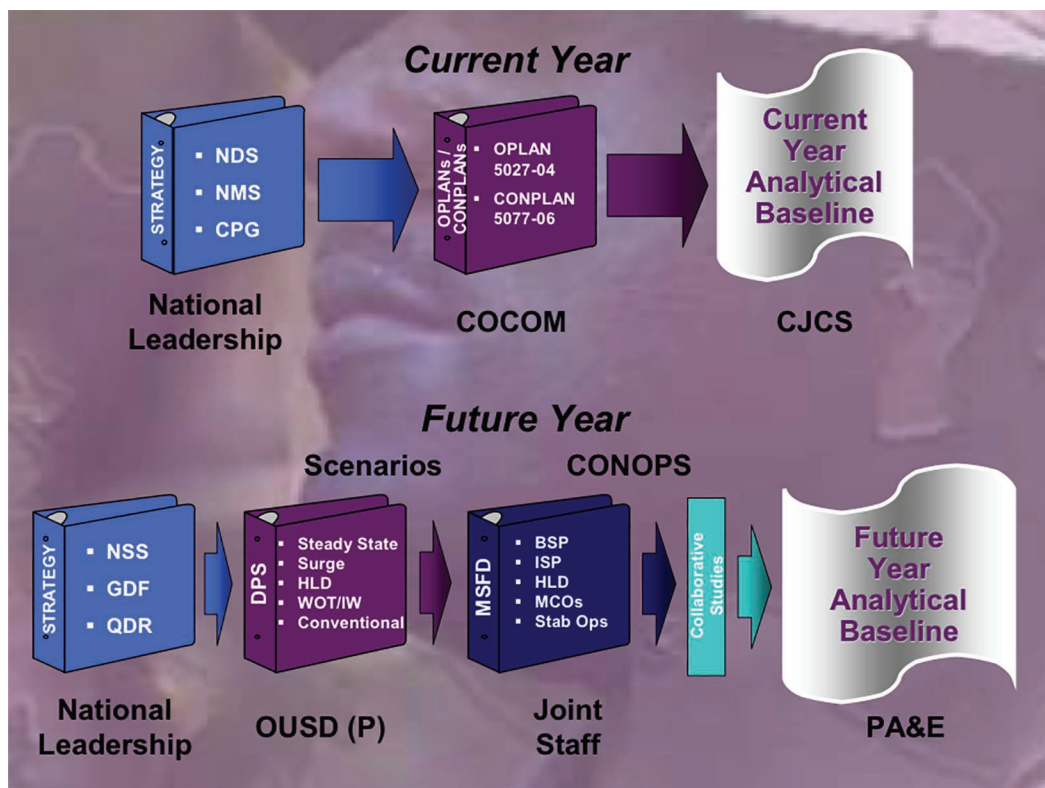
## Intelligence Assessment Inputs to JSPS Scenarios

The scenarios used for strategic planning are directly informed by JSPS, DIA, and other intelligence assessments of threats and emerging challenges in the operational environment, but also by OSD-led and DoD-wide policy and strategy deliberations regarding strategic objectives and defense strategy, strategic concepts and force sizing constructs, likely resources, and other factors. Put another way, scenario development

<sup>17</sup> DoD, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Structured conversations held for Larson et al., 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Larson et al., 2018, p. 154. In 2014, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work sought to reinvigorate the analytic agenda. See Sherman, 2014.

**Figure B.5****Flow to Current-Year and Future-Year Analytical Baselines**SOURCE: OUUSD (PA&E), *Joint Data Support (JDS)*, Washington, D.C., June 2009.

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is a collaborative activity that engages senior civilian and military, as well as intelligence, operational, and planning personnel, in which intelligence assessments are only one of several vectors of influence.

## The Purpose of Scenarios in the JSPS Process

Scenarios primarily support strategic analysis and planning, including force requirements analyses and force assessments while connecting operational planning to strategic planning.

Scenarios for strategic analyses of current forces are developed in cases where the importance of the national interests, and the gravity and plausibility of threats are considered to be sufficiently high to justify scenario development. These scenarios provide a context for assessing current forces' capability and capacity to conduct specific types of operations that generally reflect combatant commanders' war plans for managing



regional threats and challenges. By comparison, scenarios for strategic analysis of future forces are used to assess potential force requirements associated with longer-term threats, challenges, and adversary capabilities, the shape of which may be much less clear.

When scenarios are combined into a set to portray a notional state of the world, as in the ISCs,<sup>20</sup> the individual scenarios are meant to be representative of the range of operations that might be conducted simultaneously or nearly simultaneously: The ISCs reflect illustrative alternative states of the world in terms of different possible combinations of demands on the force. The consideration of the collective demands associated with different potential states of the world aims to provide a basis for determining or assessing the capabilities and capacity of the overall force's ability to support the defense strategy. And by assessing multiple ISCs or states of the world, analysts can further test the robustness of current or planned forces across a wider range of world-state conditions.<sup>21</sup>

### **Use of Scenarios to Assess Current/Future/Planned Force Structure, Concepts, Doctrine, or Training**

As just described, the JSPS uses current scenarios related to combatant commanders' OPLANs in strategic assessments that test the adequacy of the current force to meet the requirements of short-term contingencies and combinations of contingencies. Future scenarios are used to establish midterm and long-term force requirements and test alternative future force options, as well as develop JOCs, doctrine, and programs, and inform future resource requirements.

### **Number and Depth of Scenarios Used**

Available unclassified information does not provide definitive answers to these questions, as the scenarios and countries involved are considered to be classified. Nonetheless, as shown in Figure B.5, it appears that there is typically a small number of OPLAN-related scenarios, and a somewhat larger number of CONPLAN-related scenarios, that are typically considered. Other available evidence points in the same direction.

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<sup>20</sup> Hicks and Brannen (2010) describe the ISCs used in the 2010 QDR as "integrated, overlapping, detailed sets of planning scenarios and associated assessment tools," and their rationale as follows: "Ensuring our ability to meet defense objectives over the long term required us to move beyond a single, small set of scenarios against which to assess our future forces. For this reason, the QDR used multiple Integrated Security Constructs—scenario combinations designed to test the force's capacity to manage plausible but highly stressing combinations of overlapping missions." Hicks and Brannen, 2010, pp. 136–142. Each ISC covers operations over a six-to-seven-year time period, including rotation of forces for peacetime steady-state operations.

<sup>21</sup> As a practical matter, apparently due to the significant demands associated with developing ISCs and limitations on the ability of DoD analytic agencies to analyze a wider range of detailed scenarios and variations, the original intent of constructing three full-developed ISCs reportedly has never been realized.

### Numbers of Scenarios Considered

The ISCs that recently have been used in strategic planning describe different potential states of the world, represented as portfolios of overlapping scenarios that reflect potential demands on the force, and are used to test the capacity and capabilities of the force to execute the national defense and military strategies, and accomplish peacetime steady-state and deterrence options, crisis response, warfighting, and other missions. Individual scenarios serve as exemplars of the sorts of discrete contingencies and other missions that the force may be asked to undertake while the combinations are meant to reflect the overall intent of the defense strategy, strategic concept, and force sizing construct. Although there is a parallel between the combatant commanders' OPLANs and the current scenarios used in strategic planning, the latter are at a much higher level of abstraction than the far more detailed scenarios used in combatant commanders' OPLANs. Importantly, it appears that the ISCs typically envision a homeland defense mission, one or two overlapping or nearly simultaneous scenarios involving combat operations, a humanitarian assistance/disaster relief or similar mission, and a much larger number of much smaller steady-state operations.<sup>22</sup>

According to GAO, the 2010 QDR used the ISCs to identify the force structure and capabilities needed in the midterm (five to seven years) to conduct the six missions and achieve each of the four defense objectives specified by the defense strategy. The QDR's scenario analyses assumed that "U.S. forces will almost always be engaged in smaller-scale missions, such as deterrence operations or humanitarian relief missions—now called foundational activities. The analyses also assumed that over time, forces could be redirected to meet more pressing operational needs."<sup>23</sup> Forces for homeland defense and support to civil authorities also reportedly were included in the QDR's scenario analyses.<sup>24</sup>

There appears to be less information on the scenarios and ISCs in the 2014 QDR or associated congressional testimony. Nonetheless, according to GAO, the principal ISC that was used in the QDR reportedly was ISC-B, which was said to have comprised four mission types conducted in an overlapping time frame:

DOD's Integrated Security Construct–B comprises four mission types (in order of priority):

(1) Defeat/Major Combat Operations: To defeat a regional adversary in a large-scale multiphased campaign;

<sup>22</sup> A total of 78 "vignettes" of discrete steady-state operations reportedly were developed at a modest level of detail to account for the demands of potential steady-state operations. Of course, not all of these vignettes were envisioned to take place simultaneously.

<sup>23</sup> GAO, 2010, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> GAO, 2010, p. 27.

(2) Deter: To prevent acts of aggression in one or more theaters by presenting a potential adversary with a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction by U.S. forces, and/or belief that the cost of the potential adversary's action outweighs the perceived benefits;

(3) Defend/Homeland Defense: To defend U.S. territory from direct attack by state and nonstate actors and, in the event such defense fails or in the case of natural disasters, come to the assistance of domestic civil authorities in response to a very significant or even catastrophic event; and

(4) Steady State/Foundational Activities: Activities the Joint Force conducts by rotating forces globally to build security globally, preserve regional stability, deter adversaries, and support allies and partners.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the principal ISC of multiple scenarios used in the 2014 QDR (ISC-B) also appears to have included ongoing steady-state operations, but appears to have lacked the last requirement for simultaneously denying the objectives of a second aggressor: As shown in this list above, there is no explicit provision in ISC-B for a capability to conduct a simultaneous “denial” operation in a second theater during the first “defeat” operation.<sup>26</sup>

### Depth of Scenarios Considered

Although no comprehensive listing or outline of the standard elements of OUSD (Policy) DPS and SSA scenarios is available, and the details of these scenarios are classified, Army Training and Doctrine Command Regulation 71-4 states that the DPS set boundaries for scenario variables and include the following elements:

- country or region
- time frame
- “road to war” narrative
- threat strategic and operational objectives
- U.S. and/or coalition strategic and operational objectives
- operational theme under the spectrum of conflict
- strategic-level CONOPS
- joint concept of the operation.

<sup>25</sup> GAO, 2015, p. 4. The base planning scenario for shaping Army force structure reportedly was Scenario 3 of ISC-B, one of three planning scenarios in DoD's 2014 classified planning guidance. GAO, 2015, p. 23. The planning scenarios are unclassified unless a specific location is referenced when depicting a scenario. Of course, although the specific missions conducted in future steady-state operations are unknowable, the overall level of demand reportedly is reasonably well understood. As a practical matter, a total of 78 vignettes of discrete steady-state operations reportedly were developed at a modest level of detail to account for the demands of potential steady-state operations.

<sup>26</sup> It may be, for example, that other scenario combinations were used to test this capability, or that a capability to “deter” was considered sufficient to “deny” a second adversary.

In addition, the following sorts of elements have either been explicitly identified in, or can be inferred from, official documents and briefings that discuss the characteristics of force-planning scenarios and the analytical baselines:

- assumptions
- strategic context
- assumptions about warning and mobilization time
- assumptions about separation time between major warfighting contingencies
- Current-Year Analytic Baseline data on Red and Blue forces<sup>27</sup>
- assessment metrics.<sup>28</sup>

## Staff Organizations Providing Substance for Scenarios

As noted above, the Joint Staff is primarily responsible for the development of current scenarios based on regional combatant commanders' war plans, as well as SSA scenario CONOPs and forces. For its part, OUSD (Policy) has primary responsibility for the development of future scenarios, and CAPE is the office with primary responsibility for building and maintaining the databases and other core elements of SSA and planning found in JDS, including the ISCs and component scenarios.

Several offices within the Joint Staff play particularly important roles in scenario development within the JSPS:

- The Director, J-2 provides DPS Red CONOPs for use with Analytic Agenda studies; develops and provides a Joint Strategic Intelligence Estimate, including a description of the global strategic environment, threat capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action of foreign nations and actors; and provides assessments of threat capabilities, via the JSIE, to the JSR process, among other activities.
- The Director, J-5, builds the CJA baseline using combatant command and service inputs, and conducts the JSR process that produces the Joint Strategic Estimate report.
- The Director, J-8, leads the development of defense scenario documents and SSA; oversees the development of the Current-Year Analytic Baselines and Assessment Metrics used for all Analytic Agenda studies; in conjunction with OSD (Policy)

<sup>27</sup> For example, MSFD data are developed for "U.S. and non-U.S. forces, capabilities, and CONOPS, plus D-day/H-hour laydown data for Defense Planning Scenarios," and analytical baselines, including CONOPS and data for analyses, also are developed to support scenario-based analyses (see OUSD (PA&E), 2009).

<sup>28</sup> OUSD (PA&E), 2009; James G. Stevens, *Perspectives on the Analysis M&S Community*, presentation, March 11, 2008; James G. Stevens and R. Eric Johnson, *Joint Data Support to the DoD Analytic Agenda*, briefing at U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., June 22, 2005; and OUSD (Comptroller), *Fiscal Year 2017 President's Budget: The Joint Staff*, Washington, D.C., February 2016a. Stevens was Director, Joint Data Support, OSD PA&E at the time of his briefings.

and CAPE, acts as the Joint Staff lead for management and oversight of SSA; and oversees studies and archiving of study results across DoD components.<sup>29</sup>

## Approval of Scenarios Used for Force Planning

Although there are many opportunities for others to shape the choice and content of scenarios used for force planning—especially scenarios for strategic analyses of future forces—OUSD (Policy) is the office of primary responsibility for approving scenarios, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Defense. Notably, prior choices regarding strategy, strategic concept, and force sizing construct also can prefigure chosen scenarios.

## Use of JSPS Scenarios in Other Processes

The scenarios that are developed for strategic analysis are shared, and support not just JSPS processes and products but also QDRs, the development of NDS, and the planning phase of the PPBES cycle.

## Assessment of How Scenarios Are Used in the JSPS Process

Although there are no obvious inherent problems in the way scenarios are chosen and developed, there arguably are problems in the way they are used.

There appears to be no strong basis for criticizing the two principal vectors for scenarios: the scenarios embedded in combatant commanders' current war plans, and OUSD (Policy)—directed midterm and long-term scenarios. The short-term scenarios aim to capture the “fight tomorrow” demands that may be placed on military commanders while the midterm and long-term scenarios from OUSD (Policy) reflect senior civilian officials' views of longer-term threats and challenges that need to be addressed in defense planning. Although one might not like the choices they make, that is not an inherent failing of the system, *per se*.

On the other hand, there appear to be some limitations in the way that scenarios are used analytically, relating to the limited exploration of the “challenge space” (essentially, scenario variations) in sufficient detail.<sup>30</sup> At the scenario-analysis level, for example, scenario-based analyses can yield little more than point solutions in which

<sup>29</sup> JCS, November 20, 2015c, pp. F-5–F-10; and JCS, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, Washington, D.C., CJCSI 3100.01C, September 5, 2013, pp. F-6–F-14.

<sup>30</sup> For example, RAND colleague Paul Davis has been a strong advocate of efforts to expand the range of cases and variations that are considered in defense strategic analysis.

political objectives, CONOPs, force lists, or other factors are fixed: they do not assess alternative CONOPs in warfighting scenarios, nor potential trades between forces. There may be alternative concepts, or different force lists that could yield comparable or better outcomes, but these are never fully explored. Some essentially argue that by failing to conduct enough excursions and sensitivity analyses, scenario-based analyses do not provide much confidence in the robustness of analytic results.

There also are criticisms at the level of the ISCs that are portfolios of multiple scenarios, and aim to capture potential force demands under alternative future states of the world. Critics charge that the failure to fully build out all three ISCs (A, B, and C) has further limited the robustness of analyses of force requirements by failing to explore the consequences of possible different states of the world.

The reasons for these limitations on recent scenario-based analyses in support of strategic analysis are understandable. First of all, the burdens of developing, coordinating, and building out individual scenarios and related data—much less constructing multiple ISCs—is considerable, and appears to have exceeded available resources and bandwidth (manpower, time, etc.). Some also argue, however, that these analyses have become so routinized and bureaucratized that not only do the analyses fail basic tests of robustness, but, by failing to truly explore the “challenge space,” they are far less useful than they might be for thinking about future concepts, capabilities, and force requirements that are different from the current ones.<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion

To summarize and conclude, the JSPS is the key CJCS process for strategic analysis and planning. The JSPS is inextricably linked to PPBES, SSA, JDS, and various other processes and programs related to strategic analysis. Moreover, the short-, mid-, and long-term force planning scenarios that are developed and used are inextricably linked to analytic baselines and other data, as well as models and tools, that enable force requirements analyses and force assessments. As discussed, although observers may not like the scenarios that are chosen, there appear to be more reasons to criticize the analytic use of force planning scenarios than the JSPS processes for choosing or developing them, which can be seen to be logical and systematic.

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<sup>31</sup> Around 2011, senior civilian policymakers reportedly decided that SSA they were getting from CAPE was inadequate, which helps to explain the elimination around 2011 of the analytic capability within CAPE that was responsible for supporting strategic analysis.

## Supplementary Tables and Figures

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This appendix contains supplementary force structure tables and figures that characterize planned and actual U.S. military force structure at various times.



**Table C.1**  
**Development of FY 1951 Strength and Force Levels**

	Actual 30 Jun 50	Basic Budget	JCS Rec 18 Jul 50	JCS Rec 1 Sept 50	JCS Rec 22 Sept 50	JCS Rec 13 Nov 50	JCS Rec 19 Nov 50	Approved 24 Nov 50	Approved 14 Dec 50	Fourth Supplement	Actual 30 Jun 51
<b>Army</b>											
Divisions	10	10	11	17	17	16	16	17	18	— <sup>a</sup>	18
Regts/RCTs	12	12	12	14	15	15	15	15	18	—	18
AAA bns	49	48	72	78	78	78	78	78	100	—	103
Other bns	—	39	90	138	—	—	—	138	150	—	—
End strength	591,487	630,000 <sup>b</sup>	834,000 <sup>c</sup>	1,261,000	1,263,000	1,263,000	1,263,000	1,261,000	1,353,000	1,552,000	1,529,902
<b>Navy</b>											
Carriers, all classes	15	15	19 (1R) <sup>d</sup>	20 (1R)	20 (1R)	20 (1R)	20 (1R)	20 (1R)	27	—	27 (1R)
Battleships	1	1	1 (R)	2 (1R)	2 (1R)	2 (1R)	2 (1R)	2 (1R)	3 (R)	—	3 (2R)
Cruisers	13	13	15	15	15	15	15	15	19	—	15
Destroyers	136	140	172	200	200	200	200	200	248	—	209
Submarines	72	70	75	85	85	85	85	85	100	—	88
Other active ships	381	414	629	704	706	706	706	704	764	—	695
Total ships	618	653	911	1,026	1,028	1,028	1,028	1,026	1,161	—	1,037
<b>Air units:</b>											
Carrier groups	9	9	12	12	12	12	12	12	14	—	14
Other squadrons	27	27	37	37	37	37	37	37	49	—	47
ZP airships/ squadrons <sup>e</sup>	2 sqdns	—	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	—	4 sqdns
MC squadrons	16	12	16	20	20	20	20	20	27	—	21
MC divisions	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2 + 1 RCT	—	2 + 1 RCT
MC end strength	74,279	—	138,013	166,155	166,155	166,155	166,155	166,155	162,000	204,029	192,620
Navy end strength	376,501	—	579,805	675,918	689,394	689,394	683,872	675,918	725,000	735,000	732,152
Total end strength	450,780	460,605	717,818	842,073	855,549	855,549	850,027	842,073+	887,000	939,029	924,772

Table C.1.—Continued

	Actual 30 Jun 50	Basic Budget	JCS Rec 18 Jul 50	JCS Rec 1 Sept 50	JCS Rec 22 Sept 50	JCS Rec 13 Nov 50	JCS Rec 19 Nov 50	Approved 24 Nov 50	Approved 14 Dec 50	Fourth Supplement	Actual 30 Jun 51
Air Force											
Combat wings	42	42	52	61	61	59	59	61	80	—	72
Troop carrier wings	6	6	6	9	9	9	9	9 (3R)	15	87	15
Separate squadrons	—	13	14	23	23	24	24	23	28	—	—
MATS squadrons	—	—	20	20	20	24	24	20	30	—	—
End strength	411,277	416,000 <sup>b</sup>	569,000	—	688,186	651,095	651,095	651,000+	971,000	850,000	788,381
Total strength											
Armed forces	1,453,544	1,506,605	2,120,818	—	2,806,735	2,769,644	2,764,122	2,754,073	3,211,000	3,341,029	3,243,055

SOURCE: Condit, 1988, p. 238.

NOTE: The table is based on data from OSD, JCS, NSC, and congressional sources available in the OSD Historical Office. The basic budget for FY 1951 proposed a slightly higher manpower end strength than was the actual case on June 30, 1950, and adjusted some force levels. After the start of the Korean War, the JCS recommendations of July 18 were covered by the first supplemental FY 1951 appropriation. Considerations relative to a long-term buildup and disagreement over final FY 1951 goals resulted in separate JCS recommendations of September 1, September 22, November 13, and November 19, 1950. On November 24, the NSC, reacting to the Chinese Communist intervention, adopted increases in FY 1951 goals based on various JCS recommendations; the second supplemental budget request seems to have funded the November force level recommendations. On December 14, the NSC accepted that FY 1952 levels should be reached as soon as practicable, thus accounting for the fact that some actual force levels on June 30, 1951 (e.g., 18 Army divisions) were higher than the FY 1951 goals approved on November 24, 1950. Meanwhile, the fourth FY 1951 budget supplement provided for further changes in strength and force levels.

Regts = regiments; RCT = regimental combat team; AAA bn= antiaircraft assault battalion; ZP = zeppelin (lighter than air); MC = Marine Corps; MATS = Military Air Transport Service.

<sup>a</sup> — = not available.

<sup>b</sup> Man-year strengths.

<sup>c</sup> Raised to 1,081,000 on 10 Aug 50.

<sup>d</sup> "R" indicates reduced manning level for all or given number.

<sup>e</sup> Lighter-than-air ships or squadron.

**Table C.2**  
**Actual and Authorized U.S. Force Levels, December 31, 1952**

Service and Force	Actual 31 Dec 1952	Authorized for 30 Jun 1953	Goal for 30 Jun 1954	Ultimate Objective
<b>Army</b>				
Divisions <sup>a</sup>	20	20	20	21
Regiments and regimental combat teams	18	18	18	18
Antiaircraft battalions	113	113	— <sup>b</sup>	117
<b>Navy</b>				
Warships <sup>c</sup>	401	410	408	408
Other combatant ships <sup>d</sup>	432	433	496	496
Total combatant ships	833	843	904	904
Other ships <sup>e</sup>	283	287	296	296
Total active ships	1,116	1,130	1,200	1,200
<b>Marine Corps</b>				
Divisions	3	3	3	3
Air Wings	3	3	3	3
<b>Air Force</b>				
Strategic wings	39	41	— <sup>b</sup>	57
Air-defense wings	21	26	— <sup>b</sup>	29
Tactical wings	23	23	— <sup>b</sup>	40
Total combat wings	83	90	— <sup>b</sup>	126
Troop-carrier wings <sup>f</sup>	15	16	— <sup>b</sup>	17
Total wings	98	106	133	143

SOURCES: NSC 142, 10 Feb 53, sec 1, pp. 41–42; Budget of U.S. Government, FY 1954, p. 563, as cited in Watson, 1986, p. 60.

<sup>a</sup> Does not include training divisions.

<sup>b</sup> Not available.

<sup>c</sup> Includes carriers (CVA/CVS/CVE [escort aircraft carriers]/CVL [small carriers]), battleships (BB), cruisers (CA/CL [light cruisers]/CLAA [light cruiser with anti-aircraft capability]/CAG [guided missile cruiser]), destroyers (DD/DDE [escort destroyer], DDR [radar picket destroyer]/DL [destroyer leader]), and submarines (SS/SSG [guided missile submarine, nuclear powered]/SSK [antisubmarine submarine]/SSR [radar picket submarine]/SSN[nuclear-powered]).

<sup>d</sup> Includes mine-warfare, patrol, and amphibious-warfare ships.

<sup>e</sup> Various auxiliaries.

<sup>f</sup> Air Force troop-carrier groups, so referred to in NSC 142, were redesignated “wings” in 1953. For simplicity, the term “wings” has been used.

**Table C.3**  
**Summary of Major Military Forces and Military Personnel, June 30, 1954 and 1955**

	30 Jun 1954	30 Jun 1955
Major Military Forces		
Army		
Divisions	19	17
Regiments and RCTs	18	18
Antiaircraft battalions	117	122
Navy		
Warships	409	404
Other ships	717	676
Total Navy, active	1,126	1,080
Carrier air groups	16	16
Carrier ASW squadrons	15	15
Marine divisions	3	3
Marine air wings	3	3
Active aircraft inventory	13,285 <sup>†</sup>	13,191
Operating aircraft	9,941	9,941
Logistic support	3,341	3,250
Air Force		
Total wings	115	120
Combat wings	99	107
Troop carriers	16	13
Active aircraft	21,010	22,927
Military personnel and strength (including cadets and officer candidates)		
Army	1,407,000	1,172,700
Navy	741,000	689,000
Marine Corps	225,000	215,000
Air Force	955,000	970,000
Total	3,328,000	3,046,700

SOURCE: HASC, *Hearings Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 1955*, 83/2, 1954, p. 116, as cited in Kolodziej, 1966, p. 190.

NOTE: RCT = regimental combat team.

<sup>†</sup> The discrepancy in total for aircraft inventory with the figures immediately below is to be found in the original HASC table.

**Table C.4**  
**Actual Force Levels of U.S. Armed Forces, 1954–1957**

Service	30 Jun 1954 <sup>a</sup>	30 Jun 1955 <sup>b</sup>	30 Jun 1956 <sup>c</sup>	30 Jun 1957 <sup>d</sup>
<b>Army</b>				
Divisions	19	20	18	18 (3 reduced strength)
(Mobile)	(19)	(15)	(15)	
(Static)		(2)		
(Training)		(3)	(3)	
Regts/RCTs	17	12	10	9
AA Bns	114	122	133	
<b>Navy</b>				
Ships	1,113	1,030	973	967
(Major Combat)	(405)	(402)	(404)	(409)
[CVA]	[14]	[15]	[15]	[14]
[Other]	[391]	[387]	[389]	[395]
(Support and Minor Combat)	(708)	(628)	(569)	(558)
<b>Marine Corps</b>				
Divisions	3	3	3	3
Wings	3	3	3	3
<b>Air Force</b>				
Wings	115 1/3	121	131	137
(Strategic)	(44)	(46)	(51)	(50)
(Air Defense)	(28)	(29)	(32)	(32)
(Tactical)	(27 1/3)	(33)	(35)	(55)
(Troop Carrier)	(16)	(13)	(13)	**

SOURCE: Watson, 1986, p. 84.

NOTE: Regt = regiment; RCT = regimental combat team; AA Bns = amphibious assault battalion.

\*\* Included in "Tactical" figure.

<sup>a</sup> From JCS 1800/234, 11 Jan 55; JCS 1800/235, 22 Jan 55.

<sup>b</sup> From JSPC 851/162, 9 Sep 55.

<sup>c</sup> From OSD, "Department of Defense Military Functions Fiscal Year 1958 Budget Highlights," p. 29, 50, 75.

<sup>d</sup> From JCS 1800/261, 31 Oct 57.

**Table C.5**  
**Actual Force Levels of U.S. Armed Forces, 1965–1968**

	30 Jun 1965	30 Jun 1966	30 Jun 1967	30 Jun 1968
Army				
Airborne Divisions	2	2	2	1
Airmobile Divisions	—	1	1	2
Armored Divisions	4	4	4	4
Mechanized Divisions	4	4	4	4
Infantry Divisions	6	6	6	8
Marine Corps				
Division/Wing Teams	3/3	4/3	4/3	4/3
Navy				
Attack Carriers	16	15	15	15
ASW Carriers	9	8	8	8
Diesel Submarines	83	82	77	72
Nuclear Submarines	21	22	28	33
Guided Missile Destroyers	23	23	24	28
Destroyers	178	176	175	175
Escorts/Frigates	49	52	61	64
Amphibious Ships	129	148	150	145
Air Force				
F-105 Aircraft	579	484	322	247
F-4 Aircraft	338	516	929	1,124
Tactical Fighter Wings	22	24	25	29
C-130 Aircraft	416	439	454	437
C-141 Aircraft	26	110	206	242

SOURCE: OASD (Compt.), "The Five-Year Defense Program," May 12, 1982. Information about Army divisions came from John Wilson, U.S. Army Center of Military History, as cited in Poole, 2012, p. 66. Until 1968, the 1st Armored Division was organized and equipped as a mechanized division. In February 1968, McNamara approved converting the 101st Airborne Division into an airmobile division. Information about Air Force tactical fighter wings came from Dr. Walton Moody, Office of Air Force History.

**Table C.6**  
**Programmed and Alternative Forces, FYs 1985–1989, JSPD 82–89, December 1979**

	Programmed FYDP FY85	Risk Reduction by End FY86	JSPD FY89
<b>Strategic Forces</b>			
B-52 bombers	316	344	342
FB-111B/C	60	53	155
Titans	54	54	54
MM II	450	450	450
MM III	550	550	312
MX (missile)	—	10	200
Poseidon/Poseidon	19/304	19/304	13/208
Poseidon/Trident I	12/192	12/192	12/192
Tri/Trident I	7/168	9/216	11/264
Tri/Trident II	—	—	1/24
<b>General Purpose Forces</b>			
Active Army Divisions	16	16	23
Marine AFs	3	3	4
USAF Tactical Fighter Wings (Full Strength Equiv.)	24.7	24.7	36
CV/CVN	12	11 (13)	16
SS/SSN	97	92 (98)	131
Surface Combatants	224	225 (231)	306
Marine AF Lift Capability	1.15	1.14	2.33

SOURCE: FYDP 1981 Budget Summary and Program Element Detail, January 7, 1980, S; JSPD FY 82–89, TS, JCS 2143/942, Appendix B, as cited in Rearden and Foulks, 2015, p. 275.

NOTES: Numbers in parentheses are for ships funded but not yet operational owing to long construction lead time required for naval vessels. Additional ships would augment Marine AF lift capability as they became available. MM = Minuteman; AF = amphibious force.



**Table C.7**  
**Selected Forces in Being, FYs 1977–1980**

	End FY77	End FY78	End FY79	End FY80
<b>Personnel</b>				
Military	2.07m	2.06m	2.02m	2.05m
Civilians	1.02m	1.02m	.991m	.990m
<b>Strategic Forces</b>				
B-52 Squadrons/ UE	21/316	21/316	21/316	21/316
FB-111A Squadrons/UE	4/66	4/60	4/60	4/60
Titan ICBMs	54	54	54	54
Minuteman II	450	450	450	450
Minuteman III	550	550	550	550
<b>SSBNs</b>				
Polaris	10	10	10	5
Poseidon	31	31	31	31
<b>General Purpose Forces</b>				
<b>Army</b>				
Divisions (A/R)	16/8	16/8	16/8	16/8
Heavy <sup>a</sup>	9	9	10	10
Light <sup>b</sup>	7	7	6	6
<b>Marine Corps</b>				
Divisions (A/R)	3/1	3/1	3/1	3/1
Air Wings	3	3	3	3
<b>Air Force</b>				
Tactical Fighter Wings	26	26	26	26
A-7	2	2	1	1
A-10	2	2	2	3
F-4	17	15	15	13
F-15	—	2	4	5
F-16	—	—	—	1
F-111	5	5	4	3

**Table C.7—Continued**

	End FY77	End FY78	End FY79	End FY80
Strategic Airlift UE				
C-5A	70	70	70	77
C-141	234	234	234	275
Navy				
Active Fleet	477	412	398	415
Attack Carriers	12	12	12	12
Air Wings	12	12	12	12
Attack Submarines	76	74	77	76
Surface Combatants <sup>c</sup>	187	162	165	178
Cruisers	27	28	28	26
Destroyers	96	69	72	80
Frigates	64	65	65	72

SOURCE: Annual Reports of the Secretary of Defense, FYs 1978–1982; Strategic Air Command Annual Reports, CYs 1977–1980; Air Staff History Branch, as cited in Rearden and Foulks, 2015, p. 293.

NOTE: A/R = active/reserve; UE = unit-equipped.

<sup>a</sup> Armored and mechanized divisions.

<sup>b</sup> Infantry, airborne, and air mobile divisions.

<sup>c</sup> Includes active cruisers, destroyers, and frigates.

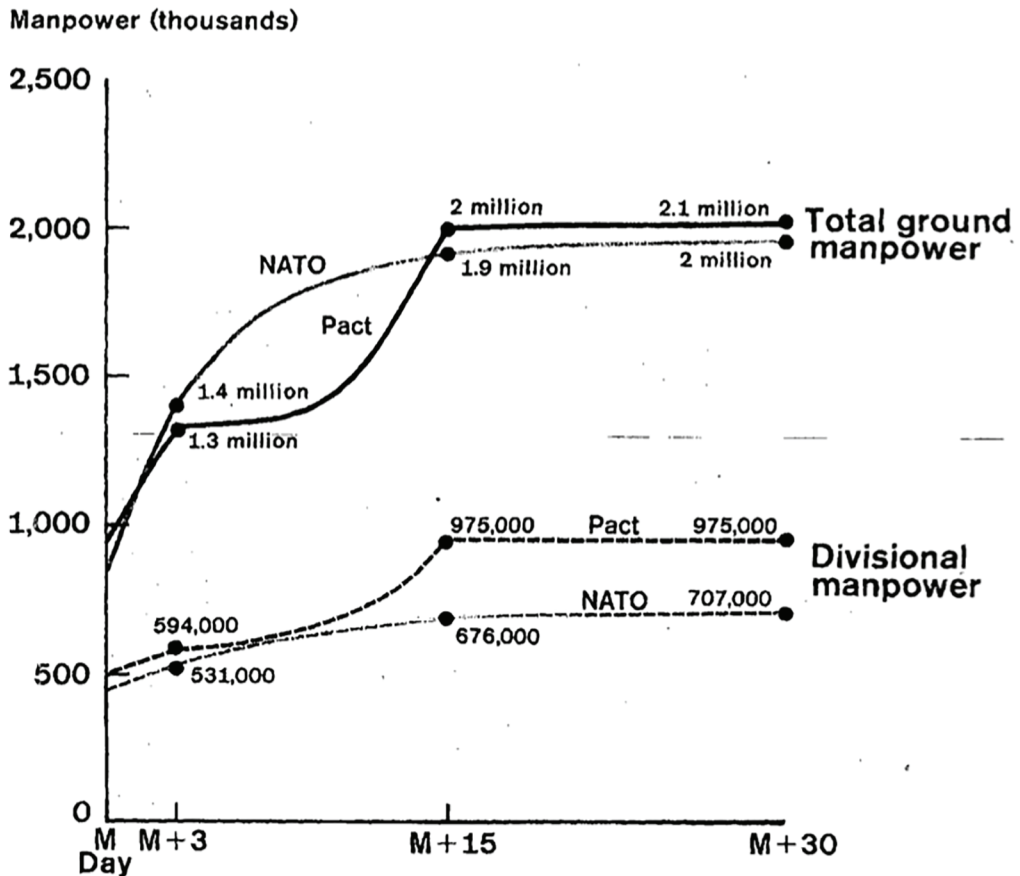
**Table C.8**  
**General Purpose Forces Highlights, FY 1989 Annual Report**

	FY 1980	FY 1984	FY 1986	FY 1987	FY 1988	FY 1989
Land forces						
Army divisions						
Active	16	16	18	18	18	18
Reserve	8	8	10	10	10	10
Marine Corps divisions						
Active	3	3	3	3	3	3
Reserve	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tactical Air Forces						
(PAA squadrons) <sup>a</sup>						
Air Force attack/fighter						
Active	1,608/74	1,734/77	1,764/78	1,812/81	1,762/79	1,746/79
Reserve	758/36	852/43	876/43	900/44	894/43	876/43
Navy attack/fighter						
Active	696/60	616/63	758/65	752/67	758/67	792/70
Reserve	120/10	75/9	107/10	101/10	120/10	118/10
Marine Corps attack/fighter						
Active	329/25	256/24	333/25	331/25	334/25	341/25
Reserve	84/7	90/8	94/8	96/8	94/8	96/8
Naval forces						
Strategic forces ships	48	41	45	43	42	42
Battle forces ships	384	425	437	445	439	443
Support forces ships	41	46	55	58	61	65
Reserve forces ships	6	12	18	22	28	30
Total deployable battle forces	479	524	555	568	570	580
Other reserve forces ships	44	24	21	21	20	18
Other auxiliaries	8	9	7	5	5	5
Total other forces	52	33	28	26	25	23

SOURCE: Carlucci, 1988, p. 314.

<sup>a</sup> PAA = Primary Aircraft Authorized.

Figure C.1  
NATO–Warsaw Pact Ground Forces; Manpower in Central Region, August 1976

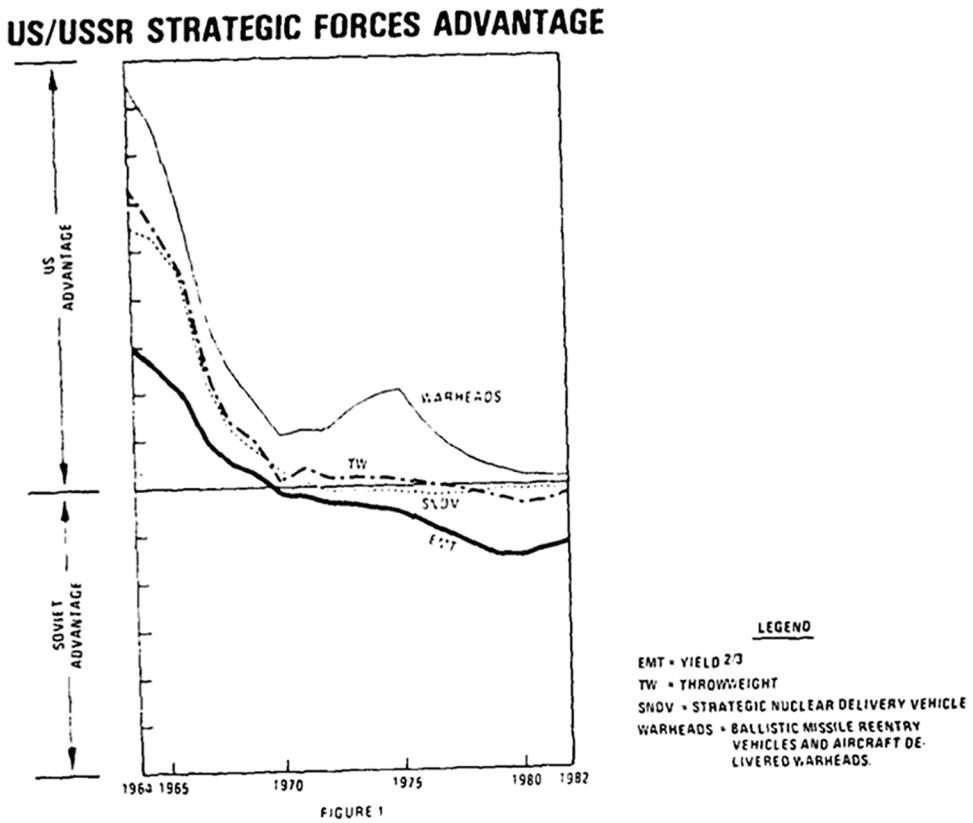


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SOURCE: CIA, "Soviet Conventional Forces and the Military Balance in Europe," briefing, August 6, 1976.

RAND RR21731/C.1

Figure C.2  
U.S./USSR Strategic Forces Advantage, January 1977



SOURCE: DoD, 1977b, p. 1.

RAND RR217311-C.2



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This report describes the forces that shaped conventional ground force planning during the 1945–2016 period, with an emphasis on the strategic concepts and contingency scenarios used. It identifies broader lessons that are likely to be of interest to contemporary force planners, especially those related to the strategic concepts to help connect basic national security policies with the planning and development of conventional ground forces, and provides the context for consideration of different combinations of force planning scenarios. Finally, the report identifies potential opportunities for the U.S. Army to influence the future selection of defense planning scenarios.

Historically, U.S. global interests and commitments have been sufficiently expansive that it was impossible to design a fiscally acceptable force that could defend all U.S. interests simultaneously: Efforts to estimate the forces required to simultaneously defend all U.S. interests have typically led to force structure estimates twice as large as more-realistic, budget-informed planning approaches.

The report demonstrates that Cold War–era strategic concepts and scenarios for planning conventional forces focused on the capabilities, intentions, posture, and plans of the USSR and China. In the post–Cold War era, Northeast and Southwest Asian and terrorist threat scenarios have predominated.

The analysis shows that the scenarios that have been used in defense planning have been derived from each administration’s prior conclusions about the relative importance of national security interests, and threats and challenges to these interests; national security policies and strategies; and the strategic concepts that have provided a framework for relating military forces to strategic ends.



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