Beyond the Last War

Balancing Ground Forces and Future Challenges Risk in USCENTCOM and USPACOM

A Report of the CSIS International Security Program

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We are further grateful to a number of professionals who were both involved decisively in working groups and took the time to review our findings in detail prior to publication. Of particular note in this regard, the CSIS team would like to thank Mr. Robert Haddick, a private consultant and former editor of Small Wars Journal; Mr. Frank Hoffman of the National Defense University; and Mr. D. Burgess Laird of the Institute for Defense Analyses. Internally, the report benefited from the insights of a number of CSIS experts. These included Dr. Jon Alterman, the CSIS Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy and director, Middle East Program; Dr. Michael Green, CSIS senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair; Mr. Ernest Bower, CSIS senior adviser and Sumitro Chair for Southeast Asian Studies; Dr. Maren Leed, CSIS senior adviser with the Harold Brown Chair in Defense Policy Studies; and, finally, Mr. Eric Ridge, CSIS fellow. They and their staffs were invaluable touchstones for the team and provided context for the final risk assessment.

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In the end, a great deal of the report’s content relied on interviews, engagements, working groups, and informal roundtable discussions with a range of subject matter experts and senior professionals. Thus, the report’s authors would like to take this opportunity to thank them for taking the time to provide us with their insights in spite of their busy schedules. Finally, this report would not have been possible without the material contributions of the CSIS staff and the capable team of military fellows. Their tireless efforts in bringing this report to fruition are a testament to their commitment to impartial analysis.

The judgments advanced in this report are those of the CSIS team alone. Participation by the aforementioned does not necessarily indicate endorsement of the report’s findings. Those and any mistakes or errors are the responsibility of the authors alone.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

You indicate your capacity and conviction to carry out your political ambitions when you have a standing army. . . . The political exercise of power is really about control of territory.¹

In September 2012, CSIS was commissioned by the United States Army to assess the future use of U.S. ground forces and future challenges risk in the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) and United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) areas of responsibility (AOR). This report is a culmination of that effort.

USPACOM and USCENTCOM are the geographic focus of U.S. defense strategy. This study’s risk judgments are based on ground force implications flowing from trends in and around these theaters. Both regions exemplify the intersection of core interests and fundamental strategic-level hazards. Both also feature pacing threats and challenges against which strategists and force planners might develop future capabilities.

The study recognizes that no region exists in isolation. The problems of one are often the problems of others. On a practical level, then—though focused on USCENTCOM and USPACOM—this study’s findings and recommendations presumably apply across combatant commands (COCOMs). Thus, the concepts and capabilities addressed by this report may translate to contingency demands worldwide.

A Classically Realist Outlook

The renewed focus of the United States Department of Defense (DoD) on USCENTCOM and USPACOM appears to center on rising traditional military challenges from Iran in the Middle East and China in the Asia-Pacific region. Beyond an inevitable post-9/11 emphasis on counterterrorism and homeland defense, the January 2012 defense strategic guidance reflects a traditional threat-based approach to force development. Efforts to rebalance U.S. forces toward emerging regional powers in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East, for example, indicate a classically realist outlook on international security affairs centering on balance-of-power calculations.²

In response, DoD intends to deter and, if necessary, defeat Iranian and Chinese conventional forces principally by leveraging advanced air, sea, space, and cyberspace capabilities. This view, combined with a belief that lethal drone and special operations strikes can address the lingering terrorist challenge, leads many policymakers to embrace leaner, stand-off/precision approaches to address future conflicts. According to one senior military official, “Targeting [now] equals tactics, operations, and strategy.”³ This perspective has the potential to overlook conditions where large-scale ground force responses are either appropriate or essential to a favorable outcome.

U.S. strategists appear to have concluded that “unfavorable order”—meaning the threat of regional military rivals irresponsibly exercising power or exerting control—presents the most profound future challenges. In so doing, they may have underestimated the possibility that “disorder”—or the failure of responsible authority to control territory, populations, resources, and capabilities—may be as or

³ Interview with a senior military officer, February 21, 2013.
more problematic.\(^4\) With the exception of a continued commitment to combat extremists, the 2012 guidance appears to downplay intervention in civil conflicts and sustained stabilization.\(^5\)

Few analysts discount the latent danger resident in unfavorable order (e.g., an aggressive China). However, recent events like civil wars in Libya and Syria indicate that threats emerging from disorder are less predictable and controllable and can also present fundamental security challenges. Thus, this report assumes that both unfavorable order and disorder present viable future defense challenges, and concludes that both are worthy of extensive contingency planning and risk assessment.

Important lessons of the last decade—including recognition of the significance of the human aspects of conflict, the democratization of the means of lethal resistance, the disruptive potential of expanding electronic interconnectivity and new technologies, the power of identity and revolutionary politics, and the impact of irregular and proxy resistance—were central to this conclusion and suggest alternative future contingency demands. Dynamic political and social forces can result in inherently human-based defense challenges. These challenges are less amenable to high-tech, stand-off military solutions, and ground forces are often centerpieces in U.S. contingency responses to them. Given the strategic priorities articulated in the new defense guidance, there is the potential that the ground capabilities that would be essential to these responses are in jeopardy.

**Shaping the Future Force**

The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance argues that DoD will shape the force and build capabilities for ten primary missions and mandates that four of these missions (counterterrorism and irregular warfare, deter and defeat aggression, nuclear deterrence, and homeland defense) will determine the force’s future capacity or size.\(^6\) Among them, “deter and defeat aggression” (deter/defeat) is often considered the principal driver of ground force capability and capacity. Future characterizations of that mission (e.g., deter/defeat who, where, and under what circumstances) will have a profound impact on the shape and size of the future ground force.

The conventional conception of deter/defeat is highly conditional, context specific, and narrowly applicable to a discrete set of future challenges centering on violent extremists, on the one hand, and organized adversaries’ armed forces, on the other.\(^7\) This outlook relies heavily on 21st-century military science without sufficient attention to the social sciences’ views of the likeliest future crises and conflicts. In short, the contemporary defense dialogue and attendant shifts in strategy appear to undervalue the political, human, nonlinear, and uncertain dynamics of the contemporary environment.\(^8\)

The deter/defeat mission will always be an important touchstone for future readiness. However, it is an incomplete readiness yardstick for ground force capabilities. Its allure is powerful both at senior levels of defense decisionmaking and among some in the general purpose ground force community. However, study participants universally rejected the idea that traditional interstate conflict should dominate U.S. defense strategy.\(^9\)

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\(^4\) For the purposes of this study, “unfavorable order” is principally manifested by a rising military power in the Asia-Pacific region (China) and an irresponsible, nuclearizing state (Iran) in the Middle East. “Disorder” is the consequential, violent failure of effective and responsible authority (often not military) which could happen in numerous places around the globe.


\(^6\) Ibid., 4–6.

\(^7\) Ibid., 4.

\(^8\) Interview with a senior military officer, February 21, 2013.

\(^9\) Throughout the course of the study—including dozens meetings, interviews, roundtable discussions, and working groups—no participant suggested that we were overlooking large conventional conflicts in addition to those considered in this report.
Instead, ground forces will more commonly face a much wider variety of contingency missions. While these may include conventional military operations, they are likelier to emerge from a state’s weakness than they are from a hostile state’s inherent strength. Reductions in ground force capability without a thorough understanding of the operational implications associated with this conclusion could undermine the effectiveness of future U.S. responses. This is especially relevant to USCENTCOM and USPACOM.

**Future Capability for Land Control**

At its core, strategy development is about identifying and allocating risk. Policymakers, senior leaders, and strategists must identify objectives; determine courses of action to achieve those objectives; and develop the capabilities and resources to support preferred courses of action. This study proceeded from the belief that risk is an imbalance among these three critical components.

While the defense community has recently focused on air, sea, space, and cyberspace, this study assessed conditions under which U.S. ground forces could be called upon to exercise land control. It focused on capability over capacity. Capability—or force shape—accounts for the assets, concepts, and competencies essential to mission success under a variety of conditions; capability requirements flow from an objective assessment of the adequacy of U.S. military capabilities in the face of the likeliest, most dangerous, and most disruptive challenges. Capacity—or force size—is an expression of the scale to which the force can satisfactorily perform important missions over time; capacity sets the material limits of operations and determines the force’s endurance for sustained military action.

Under ideal conditions, the right capability choices will posture the force for success under the most demanding circumstances. Standing capability allows for rapid response and serves as a platform for the force’s expansion. This study does not directly address capacity. It does, however, identify pacing archetypes that have unmistakable implications for force sizing.

**Key Findings**

- The U.S. faces future regional contingencies where policymakers will want to consider large-scale ground force options.
- Five pacing archetypes capture future large-scale ground force demands: humanitarian response, distributed security, enable and support actions, peace operations, and limited conventional campaigns. “Distributed security” is the most appropriate future warfighting focus.
- Regional shaping will dominate the peacetime ground force agenda.
- Current DoD and service priorities do not align well with the likeliest and most disruptive future large-scale ground force demands.

In order to arrive at its findings, CSIS employed an independent and comprehensive risk assessment process. The study team surveyed the contemporary policymaking context and core U.S. interests. It identified geostrategic and regional insights, trends, and operational vignettes. Finally, it arrived at qualitative risk judgments and a number of risk mitigation recommendations.

This process resulted in four major findings. The first and most important finding is that the United States faces future regional contingencies where policymakers will want to consider large-scale ground force options. In this work, “ground forces” include U.S. Army and Marine general purpose and special operations forces, and “large-scale” is defined as force commitments that exceed (in size only) the

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forces equivalent to an Army division, the ground combat element of a Marine Expeditionary Force, or some combination of general purpose forces and Special Operations Forces (SOF) that breaches this threshold (approximately 15,000–20,000).  

All five core interests identified in this report converge and are vulnerable in USCENTCOM and USPACOM. Large-scale ground force responses to contingency demands in both would not be unreasonable. Ground forces apply lethal and nonlethal effects with discrimination and precision. Their persistent presence is a material demonstration of U.S. commitment in peacetime, periods of tension, and crisis. Finally, the more crises or conflicts have an impact on or revolve around disputes between and among populations, the more ground forces provide qualitative advantages in U.S. military responses.

This report envisions expansive roles for all three ground components combined in the two regions of concern. Army forces are paramount to joint operations. They possess the bulk of the United States’ ground combat capabilities, and their vast theater-setting and enabling assets are the foundation of all large-scale military actions.

Likewise, the ability of the Marines to project forces ashore from the sea provides a unique theater entry and opening capability essential to the follow-on introduction of large numbers of additional Army and Marine forces. Further, as demonstrated in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marines can thicken sustained ground operations with their forces. For their part, SOF offer a mature, low-visibility presence that is foundational to shaping and advanced preparation of the AOR, discrete human engagement and intelligence gathering, and direct action. On large-scale operations, SOF also have a unique ability to effectively cover operational “dead space.”

The second major finding is future large-scale ground operations will likely fall into one of five pacing archetypes: humanitarian response, distributed security, enabling and support activities, peace operations, and limited conventional campaigns. “Humanitarian response” involves a combination of stability, enabling, and security operations in the event of natural or human disaster. “Distributed security” combines combat and security tasks and is concerned with gaining control over and securing geography, infrastructure, populations, or dangerous military capabilities threatened by foreign disorder. “Enable and support actions” underwrite joint, interagency, and foreign partner efforts, largely through the employment of Army combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities at the theater level. “Peace operations” focus on the maintenance of a stable peace between parties to an armed dispute. Finally, “limited conventional campaigns” involve large-scale combined arms combat action against an adversary state.

The study concludes that ground forces will more commonly be called on to respond to foreign disorder, catastrophes, or third-party conflicts than they will to overt cross-border military aggression. Ground force missions will often also focus on activities that enable and support future joint, combined, and civilian-led operations. Thus, “theater-setting” assets, largely residing in the U.S. Army, will play an essential role in future U.S. power projection.

Of the archetypes, the study found “distributed security” to be the likeliest, most disruptive, and, potentially, most dangerous future warfighting demand. Distributed security represented the largest cluster of warfighting vignettes in the study. Its prominence resulted in it being identified as the best target for future force optimization. The most demanding distributed security challenge confronting U.S. ground forces may lie in the response to the failure of a state possessing significant chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) capabilities.

Of the two theaters, USCENTCOM exhibits greater potential for failures of local authority and intrastate or transnational conflict; therefore, distributed security is considered its most significant
operational demand. Violent and disordered political transition in North Korea would require a similar combined U.S. / South Korean response. USPACOM also has other unique disorder challenges, largely emerging from natural or human disasters, which necessitate humanitarian response.

The study also found that limited conventional campaign is the least-prominent pacing archetype in both AORs. Further, extended opposed stabilization missions of the kind undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan were not expected to occur in either theater over the next 20 years. Therefore, both conventional warfights and opposed stabilization are considered “lesser included” cases for future ground force planning. That said, the preservation of capabilities essential to success in the five pacing archetypes—especially distributed security at its highest level of intensity—allows for timely adaptation to either case, assuming sufficient warning, depth in the active component, and a robust mobilization base. Ultimately, the prominence of distributed security and declining prospects for limited conventional campaigns stand long-held DoD convention on its head. It acknowledges military action in the event of consequential disorder as a higher ground force priority than preparation for major conventional campaigns.

Both combatant commands have one or more potential rival military powers to contend with in their AOR. However, the character of the competition between these rivals and the United States is qualitatively different in each theater. In USCENTCOM, the United States confronts a single state challenger that is allegedly developing a nuclear deterrent, presents a number of asymmetric access threats, and employs a network of irregular and proxy instruments regionwide. USPACOM features both a rising regional giant and an unstable nuclear-armed traditional military threat.

While conventional war involving the United States was considered a low-probability prospect in both regions, the study found it to be most plausible with respect to North Korea and Iran. A rising China and its potential to bring about unfavorable regional order presents USPACOM with unique ground force demands. A large-scale ground war between the United States and China was judged to be highly improbable. However, theater-wide ground force “enable and support actions” were considered substantially more likely.

A third major study finding is that regional shaping will dominate the peacetime ground force agenda. Contrary to current views, however, regional strategists urged CSIS to emphasize shaping activities that focus first on enhancing future contingency response capabilities. Thus, initiatives like the Army’s regionally aligned forces (RAF) should be undertaken with a view toward the potential employment of U.S. ground forces in “real world” contingencies and should involve partners that share common perspectives on future regional outcomes.

Finally, the study found that current defense priorities may not align well with important demands associated with the pacing archetypes. Therefore, future challenges risk was either increasing or static in all six of the major risk categories identified in the report. The principal challenge is that defense policy, regional strategy, and military convention are too focused on the clearest state-based traditional and hybrid challenges and are not focused enough on the most disruptive archetypal conditions emerging from disorder. This tendency is perhaps most relevant to USCENTCOM. Further, an emerging demand for large-scale enabling and support activities appears to run counter to service cultures that favor decisive ground combat action. This is especially true for the U.S. Army.

To mitigate the risk identified in this report, the study makes a number of policy-level risk mitigation recommendations. These are outlined at the end of the report and described in greater detail in Appendix E.

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I. INTRODUCTION

If the next century is to be another American century, . . . then this nation must possess a land force—Army, Marines, and Special Forces—of sufficient capacity to meet the numerous challenges, as well as opportunities, an uncertain future will present.

The Uncertain Promise of Prevention Alone

In January 2012, DoD issued strategic and budgetary guidance, which provides a foundation for the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and indicates major changes in future U.S. defense strategy. While the fiscal environment may evolve in light of budget cuts and sequestration, the basic contours of DoD’s guidance will endure. This includes an emerging preference among strategists to avoid any and all future large-scale ground force commitments.

The long shadow of Iraq and Afghanistan and the concept of choice figure prominently in contemporary defense calculations. Almost a dozen years of ground combat in the Middle East and South Asia highlighted the absolute costs of U.S. involvement in regime change, postwar occupation, and nation-building. With operations in Afghanistan and Iraq overlapping for several years, the U.S. military tested the concept of simultaneity as well, exposing the challenges of fighting two large-scale conflicts at once.

Now, most observers believe Iraq was a war of choice from the beginning. Afghanistan, on the other hand, is seen as a war of necessity, where substantial choice about the course, conduct, and extent of operations might have been exercised. As a result, there may be a tendency to assume that the existence of choice in 2001 and 2003 indicates the absence of necessity in the future. That perspective can crowd out reasonable consideration of future ground contingencies, and, ultimately, result in miscalculation with respect to required ground force capabilities.

In response, many experts have turned their attention to crisis prevention, foreign military capacity building, and alternative lethal options (e.g., manned and remote precision strike) as low-cost alternatives that obviate the need for future large-scale ground operations. In theory, preventive efforts lower the overall profile of U.S. forces abroad and lessen potential U.S. contingency burdens worldwide. These are noble aspirations to be sure. They are also consistent with U.S. defense tradition.

Since World War II, U.S. military strategy has centered on prevention and deterrence. However, the perceived success of past efforts does not guarantee success in the future. Hedging is essential. Focused attention and investments may help the United States avoid armed conflict with state competitors. However, “all hazards” prevention is an uncertain proposition at best because of the increase in conflict within nations, and among peoples in the Middle East in particular; the demonstrated power of proxy conflict and hostile “free-riding;” natural disaster and climate change; the proliferation of lethal capabilities; and the growing use of cyber mobilization.

There is, for example, no quantifiable measure to prove its veracity. Prudent horizon-scanning suggests that prevention will fail on occasion. Indeed, many contemporary security challenges that call for large-scale ground force responses may simply be unpreventable. In addition, generalized uncertainty remains a persistent feature of the security environment. Former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates

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2 DoD, Sustaining U.S Global Leadership.
3 For the purposes of this discussion, “large-scale” is defined as employment of ground forces in excess of an Army/Marine division or their aggregate general purpose and special operations force equivalents. It also includes commitment of command, control, and support assets affiliated with the ground combat units.
acknowledged as much when he noted in his farewell address at West Point: “When it comes to predicting the nature and location of our next military engagements, since Vietnam, our record has been perfect. We have never once gotten it right, from the Mayaguez to Grenada, Panama, Somalia, the Balkans, Haiti, Kuwait, Iraq, and more—we had no idea a year before any of these missions that we would be so engaged.”

Thus, the limitations of prediction—coupled with the likelihood that prevention will on occasion break down—suggest that the maintenance of credible ground force options remains an important component of U.S. military readiness. Ground forces, after all, exert direct physical influence on adversary behavior. They underwrite core U.S. interests and foreign commitments. And, finally, they provide U.S. friends and opponents with tangible and unmistakable demonstrations of American resolve.

There are real pressures to objectively assess and reduce future ground force demands. DoD is entering an era of profound fiscal challenge. There is also a widely perceived decline in the number of plausible conventional warfighting scenarios worldwide. Maintenance of all standing military capabilities solely as a hedge against uncertainty is an expensive proposition. What is required, then, is an objective and comprehensive look at future challenges risk.

This study is one important first step in this regard. Its purpose is to help DoD (1) define future challenges risk as it relates to ground forces; (2) identify and classify specific qualitative risks that could undermine future operational success; and, finally, (3) make policy choices that mitigate risk over time. In the end, because U.S. officials will undoubtedly want to consider the widest possible range of options in the event of future crises, this study hopes to identify those ground force options that are most important. This is particularly relevant in light of the ground force reductions already mandated by the 2011 budget control act.

This report provides detailed findings in all three areas. Section II provides an overview of the study’s overall methodology and introduces the process used to assess ground-force-relevant future challenges risk. Section III outlines current DoD views on risk. Section IV describes the current policymaking context with respect to ground forces. Section V outlines a working view of core U.S. interests and generic threats to those interests. Section VI surveys a set of foundational geostrategic insights relevant to ground forces. Sections VII and VIII explore regional insights and trends and introduce operational ground force vignettes springing from them. Finally, Section IX provides ground force implications and an overall risk assessment based on those implications.

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II. STUDY METHODOLOGY AND RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

At the outset of this effort, CSIS scholars initiated a wide-ranging literature review of the primary and secondary sources most relevant to future challenges risk and ground force futures. The study team drew insights from several hundred U.S. government, academic, think tank, and commercial studies and reports; refereed scholarly journals; and military strategy, plans, doctrine, and concepts.

The primary focus of the literature review was to understand current thought on the nature and trajectory of the strategic and operational environments. The review offered insights into regional trends and threats, DoD’s strategic priorities, future military demands and required capabilities, and risk assessment. It proved essential to understanding the issues important for all ground force stakeholders.

With knowledge gleaned from the literature review, the study team interviewed and engaged with dozens of officials and subject matter experts. In addition to drawing extensively from CSIS’s deep bench of regional and functional scholars, the team met with current and former DoD decisionmakers and military officers in the combatant commands and joint and service staffs, as well as leading experts from the intelligence community, the Institute for Defense Analyses, the RAND Corporation, the National Defense University, the Center for a New American Security, and the Army War College.

The geographic combatant and service component commands also provided valuable insights during this engagement process. During the course of the project, the CSIS team traveled to Tampa to engage with USCENTCOM, the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and the Marine Forces Central Command (MARFORCENT). In support of its analysis of the USCENTCOM AOR, CSIS also engaged in extensive discussions with the U.S. Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) and the Near East and South Asian Center for Security Studies (NESA). The CSIS team also traveled to Honolulu for interviews and roundtable discussions with USPACOM, the U.S. Army Forces Pacific (USARPAC), and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS). Interactions with the two regional COCOMs in particular were instrumental in the development of both the operational vignettes and the pacing archetypes described later in the report. COCOM officials provided essential background information and helped to make “confidence judgments” on the validity of the CSIS-created vignettes and archetypes.

Finally, the team engaged with leaders and staff officers from U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). The interview process also benefited tremendously from long-standing relationships between members of the CSIS study team—including its military fellows—and a range of civilian and military thought leaders inside the U.S. Army, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the SOF communities, including veteran military commanders and staff officers with substantial operational experience. CSIS conducted all engagements on a strict nonattribution basis. Any specific citations from these engagements appear with the explicit permission of interviewees.

Three working group sessions also provided the study team with wide-ranging viewpoints relevant to U.S. ground force futures. Each session focused on study questions or issues and routinely included representatives from USPACOM, USCENTCOM, USARPAC, the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Center for a New American Security, the American Enterprise Institute, the RAND Corporation, the Institute for Defense Analyses, National Defense University, the U.S. Army War College, the Marine Corps’ Ellis Group, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Force Development and Net Assessment), the National Intelligence Council, the Joint Staff J-5 (Middle East, Asia, and the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell), the Joint Staff J-7 (Concept Development and Experimentation), Army Capabilities Integration Center, Army G3/5/7, and the Army Quadrennial Defense Review Office.

The first working group, in early December 2012, focused on defining core U.S. interests, regional trends and threats, risks, and future ground force vision. The second, in late January 2013, helped
to refine initial findings, including validation and refinement of operational vignettes and preliminary risk judgments. The final working group convened in late March 2013 with the purpose of reviewing the report’s findings and analysis. It was particularly valuable in finalizing judgments on the pacing archetypes, risk assessment, and risk mitigation. Finally, the report benefited from the insights of a senior review group. This group—which included former high-ranking officials from the White House, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the U.S. military—offered seasoned insights on risk and risk mitigation.

Participation by all interviewees, discussants, and senior reviewers was voluntary. While contributions by subject matter experts were instrumental, the report’s conclusions are the responsibility of the study team alone. Therefore, participation in the CSIS engagement process does not represent endorsement of the report’s findings.

**Five-Step Risk Assessment Process**

Assessing ground force future challenges risk required a process suitable to the task. Informed by the project’s literature review, interviews, and working groups, the study team followed a five-step process to arrive at its final risk judgments. Future challenges risk is defined here as the likelihood of failure or prohibitive cost associated with large-scale ground operations over the next two decades. It accounts for threats, challenges, and U.S. ground force responses that may have origins in the near-term planning horizon but extend beyond a 24-month operational risk assessment window.

The process has four important qualifications. First, the study looks only at risk in the context of large-scale ground operations. The CSIS team does not suggest that the process described here applies equally to smaller-scale military actions. Further, while acknowledging that future operations will be joint endeavors, the report focuses specifically on unique ground force demands alone.

Second, this is a qualitative assessment. Though future challenges risk has both qualitative and quantitative components, this work focuses on capabilities and not capacity. Specific recommendations on force size are beyond the given scope.

Third, demands in only two AORs are considered: USCENTCOM and USPACOM. A more comprehensive risk assessment should account directly for the intersection of interests, trends, threats, and potential U.S. responses in the other regional COCOMs as well. The judgments herein do not necessarily capture all ground force demands. However, they may provide snapshots of pacing demands for U.S. ground forces worldwide. This assumption is worthy of further analysis.

Finally, this report is an independent look at future challenges risk. It adds to the risk debate entering the forthcoming defense review. It does not replace it. Further, it is not intended to either supplant or pass judgment on existing DoD risk assessments. Instead, it provides an objective review of U.S. interests, ground-force-relevant trends in two key AORs, and an independent view of future challenges risk and risk mitigation.

The first step in the risk assessment process involved the development of a working set of core U.S. interests and threats. Identification of core interests provided strategic-level objectives and helped establish an independent context. In the process’ second step, the study team surveyed the strategic and operational environments and identified important geostrategic/regional insights and trends likeliest to have an impact on future ground operations. These insights and trends were instrumental in helping in the identification of those regional challenges most relevant to U.S. ground force capabilities planning. As in the case of core interests, the identification of these regional challenges was critical to establishing a baseline study context.

Through the assignment of one or more “operational types” to each regional challenge, the third step in the process allowed for the conversion of challenges into plausible and demanding ground force vignettes. Table 1 outlines the operational types employed for this purpose (see Appendix A for more detail on the operational types). The operational types describe the assumed character of U.S. responses.
The merger of challenge and response in this third step allowed the study team to visualize the vignettes holistically and assess their potential demands. Informed by the caution of one working group participant—who noted that “the canonical [defense planning] scenarios have a purpose, but that purpose is limited”—the vignettes provided CSIS with an independent perspective on the range of possible ground force contingencies in each AOR.\(^5\)

Ultimately, the vignettes became the principal lenses through which the team focused its analysis. Having identified, described, and vetted the vignettes with stakeholders and experts, the CSIS team distilled them into five “pacing” archetypes: humanitarian response, distributed security, peace operations, enable and support actions, and limited conventional campaigns.\(^6\) The grouping of vignettes—according to common purposes and demands—into pacing archetypes allowed the study team to draw conclusions from a more manageable number of cases.

The fourth step in the process involved identification of risk categories or those areas most important to evaluating the force’s overall capability to contend with the demands of the five archetypes. This step began with identification of 28 key tasks associated (in some combination) with operational success in the archetypes (See Appendix B for a detailed description of the tasks).\(^7\) The tasks naturally clustered into the six basic risk categories. Table 2 illustrates the relationship between the key tasks and risk categories. The categories were found to translate well into broad capability areas or competencies and, therefore, became the vehicle with which the team assessed and articulated its risk judgments. The risk categories are:

- **Understanding the strategic and operational environment and leveraging information**—This considers the ability of U.S. ground forces to gain and maintain situational awareness sufficient to conduct effective military operations and achieve operational objectives.
- **Shaping strategic and operational conditions**—This considers the ability of U.S. ground forces to set conditions that either prevent U.S. military intervention or materially contribute to operational success in a foundational way in the event large-scale commitments become necessary.
- **Projecting forces**—This considers the ability of U.S. ground forces to alert, deploy, enter theater with the right capabilities, and establish an operating presence consistent with contingency demands.
- **Employing forces and capabilities to achieve strategic and operational objectives**—This considers the ability of U.S. ground forces to employ combined arms capabilities, integrate coalition and interagency assets, and conduct military operations to achieve desired ends.
- **Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions**—This considers the ability of U.S. ground forces to operate, protect, and sustain forces in the face of diverse threats and challenges across the range of military operations (ROMO).
- **Terminating military operations consistent with strategic and operational objectives**—This considers the ability of U.S. ground forces to conclude military operations effectively, having met the expressed political and operational objectives of the mission or campaign.

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\(^{5}\) Observation made by a working group participant on December 4, 2012.

\(^{6}\) In the context of this study, a pacing archetype is a generic cluster of common operational conditions and demands that are used to visualize future operations and assess their requirements.

\(^{7}\) While the operational types and tasks originated in previous CSIS work, the team refined these concepts for purposes of this study. For the original descriptions, see Nathan Freier, *U.S. Ground Force Capabilities through 2020* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 2011).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Large-Scale Operational Types</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Shaping (ES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES involves the coordinated peacetime employment of military forces with the express purpose of either (1) preventing future intervention and military conflict with coordinated and visible demonstrations of U.S. military commitment, or (2) setting the conditions for future military operations by engaging in a series of strategically targeted military activities designed to bolster combined capability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Show of Force (SF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF involves dispatching, repositioning, or increasing the visibility of forward deployed forces to compel hostile actors to cease threatening behaviors in advance of open hostilities. Principal objective in a Show of Force is compelling an aggressor to cease their threatening or destabilizing behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Internal Defense (FID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FID entails military support and assistance to a foreign partner combating serious internal conflict and instability. FID missions are intended to build the capacity of a foreign partner toward security self-reliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian Assistance / Consequential Management (HA/CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA/CM are operations undertaken—typically in support of U.S. civilian agencies, state and local authorities, or a foreign governmentsin order to temporarily relieve human suffering, provide basic public goods, and help offset immediate threats to public safety and health in the wake of catastrophe or domestic disasters. These missions may be undertaken in response to accident, disaster, or purposeful attack.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enabling Operations (EO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO see ground forces providing supporting capabilities to defend an ally, underwrite partner-led combat, disaster relief, and law enforcement, or enable joint forces carrying the “main effort” of military operations. They typically only involve ground combat forces or the purpose of force protection, key point and area security, and niche defense demands (e.g., ballistic missile defense, long-range, precision fires).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secure and Evacuate (SE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE operations involve U.S. ground forces protecting U.S. government and commercial possessions abroad and securely evacuating U.S., host nation, and designated third-country nationals threatened by imminent harm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PKO are undertaken to separate warring states or factions, monitor their activities, dissuade resumption of hostilities, and support implementation of a negotiated end to conflict.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seize and Secure Operations (SSO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSOs are undertaken to prevent critical foreign infrastructure, terrain, and/or dangerous capabilities (i.e., WMD) from being actively threatened by conflict, instability, or illegitimate/hostile seizure and exploitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Security Operations (HSO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSOs are conducted to protect large numbers of innocent civilians from grave harm due to civil conflict or war.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opposed Stabilization (OS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSS are undertaken to restore basic civil functions and assist foreign authorities or third parties in restoring a secure environment in all or part of sovereign territory threatened by civil conflict and disorder. Opposed stabilization includes but is not limited to counterinsurgency operations and may involve combat action against elements of a failed state’s traditional military and security forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctuary Denial (SDO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD operations are undertaken to redress or forestall significant harm to core U.S. interests by temporarily controlling hostile territory, precluding terrorist, insurgent, or serious criminal activity posing persistent hazards, and disrupting or destroying adversary leadership, networks, and capabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counteraccess/Quarantine (CAQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAQ operations are speculative future actions by U.S. ground forces to counter a regional adversary’s A2/AD efforts at range. CAQ would involve the innovative employment of ground-based U.S. antiaccess capabilities such as air and missile defenses, long-range fires, and space/cyber capabilities, in close coordination with U.S. and coalition air and sea forces, in an attempt to deny an adversary freedom of maneuver beyond their immediate territory or area of operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Combat Campaign (MCC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCCs are large-scale military operations focused on the defeat of an enemy state’s conventional, irregular, and hybrid military capabilities and methods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISK CATEGORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding the strategic and operational environment and leveraging information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Map and understand the operational environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping strategic and operational conditions and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish and maintain collaborative partnerships with foreign security and paramilitary forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projecting forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project forces over strategic and operational distances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conduct forcible theater entry and opening.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employing forces and capabilities to achieve operational objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Integrate interagency and foreign government, military, and paramilitary capabilities in operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employ combined arms forces in security operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct stability operations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct operations entirely in contested or denied territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defend against air and missile attacks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sustain distributed operations for extended periods under austere conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminating military operations consistent with objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transfer responsibility to a foreign third party, coalition, or international force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct an opposed retrograde or withdraw and redeploy forces under uncertain conditions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The risk categories are loosely related to Army and Marine Corps “warfighting functions,” and are generally consistent with “phases” of joint campaigns.\(^8\) That said, it is important to note that there is significant functional and temporal overlap across all six categories. Therefore, the warfighting functions and phases by themselves are insufficient for the purposes of risk assessment.

In a fifth and final step in the process, the team used the risk categories to compare the archetypes against current and planned DoD, joint, and service plans, concepts, and capabilities. This allowed the team to identify potential qualitative gaps between future operational demands and current capabilities and priorities.

Later, in Section IX, after a thorough review of the environment and its demands, risk is identified as increasing, static, or decreasing by major risk category. Areas of increasing risk indicate that general trends are inconsistent with the report’s findings on future contingency demands, creating challenges for ground forces to achieve operational success. For areas where risk is static, ground forces demonstrate foundational potential for operational success. However, either maintaining or improving capabilities to keep up with emerging demands requires significant risk mitigation. Finally, areas of decreasing risk indicate capabilities and functions where DoD, the military services, or the regional commands are actively addressing needs. As a result of conscious risk mitigation, ground forces will become steadily better prepared for future success.

III. RISK ASSESSMENT AND DEFENSE STRATEGY

This study starts and ends with the concept of risk. Risk is routinely identified as some combination of the likelihood and consequences of specific adverse conditions. In general terms, DoD defines risk as the “probability and severity of loss linked to hazards.”9 Risk judgments should reflect deliberation (e.g., risk assessment) and should be framed “in reference to the [evaluating] organization’s strategy and goals.”10 In this regard, there is no risk assessment without strategic context.

Risk assessment should explore the relationships between strategic intentions and the environment, and it should involve the “identification and assessment of hazards” within a strategic design.11 Risk judgments should address the current and prospective threats to core interests, unique conditions, and physical environments under which they manifest, and the evolution of adversary methods and capabilities over time.12 Too often, risk assessments fail to proceed beyond identification of hazards without relating how their emergence affects plans or policy goals. While chronicling bad outcomes might be interesting, it is only relevant within some context.

In DoD, all risk assessments should consider existing strategy and plans in light of strategic and operational challenges over time. The most effective risk judgments account for “ranges of outcomes that capture distributions of possibilities rather than simply point estimates.”13 In practice, risk assessment must consider the likeliest, most dangerous, and most disruptive challenges. The prevailing tendency, however, is to focus on the first two and wish away the third. This latter category—most disruptive—encompasses challenges whose emergence “would most strain an unsuspecting organization.”14 Considering the full range of possible outcomes helps decisionmakers account for the kinds of “shocks” experienced over the last 12 years.15

Risk-informed strategy development is ultimately about making choices. Risk judgments underwriting strategy should identify important areas where the demands associated with effective conflict prevention or contingency response are significantly out of balance with current and planned military strategy, concepts, capabilities, and competencies. Clear gaps and shortfalls between ends, ways, and means constitute risk.16 To facilitate the best decisionmaking, strategists should present senior leaders with clearly articulated choices about where these risks will have the most impact and what steps might effectively reduce their hazard. Thus, senior defense leaders can make an informed decision about accepting risk in some areas and mitigating it in others.

Future Challenges Risk and DoD’s Risk Framework

This study endeavors to help DoD make risk-based choices regarding ground forces, focusing specifically on identifying and mitigating future challenges risk in USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs. Future challenges risk is a major component in DoD’s risk management framework; DoD seeks to identify and effectively accept, balance, or buy down risk in three additional areas—operational, force management,
and institutional risk.\textsuperscript{17} Operational risk concerns DoD’s ability to meet near-term contingency requirements “within acceptable human, material, financial, and strategic costs.”\textsuperscript{18} It is fundamentally about meeting current military demands with the forces and capabilities on hand.

Force management risk covers DoD’s ability to effectively man, maintain, and capitalize the force at appropriate levels of “readiness and morale” over the near, mid, and long terms.\textsuperscript{19} Finally, institutional risk reflects DoD’s ability to establish and employ the appropriate internal governance and management structures for effective, efficient conduct of DoD business.\textsuperscript{20} Ultimately, force management and institutional risk judgments provide a decisionmaking foundation for critical choices in the mission-focused operational and future challenges bins.\textsuperscript{21} More or less hazard in the former two will have a profound impact on DoD’s ability to contend with current and future challenges in the field.

When the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR 01) introduced future challenges risk, it involved judgments about DoD’s “ability to invest in new capabilities and develop new operational concepts [that would be] needed to dissuade or defeat mid- to long-term military challenges.”\textsuperscript{22} Current DoD leadership identifies future challenges risk as judgments about DoD’s ability to “execute future missions successfully and hedge against shocks.”\textsuperscript{23} According to the 2010 QDR (QDR 10), future challenges risk focuses on assessing DoD’s “ability to field superior capabilities and sufficient capacity to deter/defeat emerging threats in the midterm and long term.”\textsuperscript{24} Thus, future challenges risk has both qualitative (capabilities) and quantitative (capacity) elements.

There is an important distinction between the 2001 and 2010 QDRs. DoD released QDR 01 only days after the 9/11 attacks, and its principal focus, beyond the need to address the exigent terrorist threat, was on maintaining qualitative military advantages over competitors that may benefit from the perceived revolution in military affairs (RMA).\textsuperscript{25} QDR 01 assumed that the United States had a small window of opportunity during a period of “strategic pause,” which would allow it to “leap ahead” of prospective military competitors and forestall future military adventurism that threatened U.S. interests.\textsuperscript{26} Conversely, QDR 10 made future challenges risk an extension of operational risk. While qualitatively edging out military competitors remained an important component of risk calculation, future challenges risk focused more on assessing the adequacy of U.S. forces for a range of future contingency demands and contending with dislocating strategic surprise.

Consistent with QDR 10, it is useful to look at operational and future challenges as a single continuum. Both are basic judgments about DoD’s ability to successfully execute contingency missions.\textsuperscript{27} Operational risk, however, involves near-term (0–5 years) judgments about the ability of U.S. forces to meet current plans, whereas future challenges risk involves forecasting the planned force’s ability to meet extant and emergent challenges extending over the mid- (6–10 years) to long-term (11 plus years) planning horizons.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} DoD, \textit{QDR 01}, 57.
\textsuperscript{23} DoD, \textit{QDR 10}, 94.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Then-secretary of defense Donald H. Rumsfeld observes in his cover letter, “As we contend with the difficult challenges of the war on terrorism, we must also proceed on the path of transforming America’s defenses.” See DoD, \textit{Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR 01)} (Washington, D.C.: DoD, 2001), VI.
\textsuperscript{27} Insight largely derived from Hoffman, presentation, December 4, 2012.
Operational risk remains the dominant consideration in current strategy and planning. Toward that end, DoD’s most authoritative risk assessment occurs quarterly, based primarily on existing operational plans (OPLANS). Operational risk is simply more tangible, and the hazards associated with getting it wrong overshadow the potential benefits associated with a more fulsome “near-to-far” examination.

According to one study participant, DoD’s quarterly risk assessment occurs within a “24-month predictive window [and is] based on ever-changing assumptions.” This near-term snapshot relies on 21 independent organizations, including nine COCOMs (geographic and functional), five services, and seven DoD agencies. One CSIS expert observed that DoD spends too much time trying to “control the future” with efforts like concept development instead of preparing to survive the near-term planning horizon where it has a reasonable chance at accurate prediction. This report suggests that an optimal approach examines risk through the near term and into the foreseeable future based on an objective assessment of known trends.

**Risk Biases and Behaviors**

Biases toward traditional military challenges commonly drive DoD’s risk assessment toward those contingencies considered most likely or lethal, or that benefit from extensive prior planning (e.g., OPLANS). These biases translate into strategy, planning, and risk assessment that favor strictly military hazards above all others regardless of likelihood or disruptive potential. DoD’s preferred challenges involve clearly defined opponents, traditional military organizations, an internal logic (e.g., unified adversary purpose), and an identifiable beginning and end. Therefore, a potential adversary’s military lethality and ability to mount organized, traditional military opposition to the United States remains the gold standard for readiness and risk assessment.

In this traditional view of risk, threats posed by “unfavorable order”—that is, military competition with a rising peer or regional power—are emphasized over those of “disorder”—a loss of control or failure of responsible authority in a key state or region. This appears to be true principally because the latter does not comport well with traditional conceptions of warfighting. Consideration of disorder requires institutional acceptance of irregular opponents and challenges. Fundamentally, operations in the “human dimension of conflict” are less easily modeled and war-gamed. Finally, response to disorder calls for some recognition that the United States may need to remain in the business of messy, indeterminate population-centric conflicts for the foreseeable future.

Because of traditional biases, policymakers may engage in “risky behavior” that translates highly undesirable or unfamiliar outcomes into unlikely ones. DoD planning, then, tends to project future military demands based on current conditions, capabilities, and concepts, applying them to future contexts. This can end in mirror imaging, where an adversary’s desired methods and U.S. military

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28 Interview with a senior military officer, Washington, D.C., January 17, 2013.
29 Ibid.
30 Conversation with a CSIS expert, March 2013.
31 “Military” here implies having to do with the organized armed forces of a foreign power.
priorities are perfectly aligned, providing fertile ground for surprise, shock, and miscalculation. Figure 1 demonstrates CSIS’s view of the relationship between risk categories and its weighting in favor of operational risk.

**Figure 1. Relationship between OSD Risk Categories**

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IV. POLICYMAKING CONTEXT FOR GROUND FORCE FUTURES

An Era of New and Inevitable Constraints

Prior to examining the external drivers of ground force demand, it is essential to survey the policymaking environment, which may pose unique challenges to thoughtful consideration of ground force futures. According to one March working group participant, DoD faces “strategy formulated in an era of constraints.”37 Another working group member acknowledged the same, adding, however, that constraints were normal, implying that unconstrained resources and planning were aberrations of the past decade.38 Principally, the study team found that new constraints with respect to ground force futures were emerging from two important sources—the long shadow of Iraq and Afghanistan, and fiscal challenges.

Of the two, the latter is having profound and well-recognized impacts across DoD. The influence of Iraq and Afghanistan, on the other hand, is having the most profound effect on future ground force planning and capabilities development. Recurrent insights on how the Iraq and Afghan wars may shape future decisionmaking had a significant impact on the study effort. The CSIS team assumed that future ground operations will face new postwar conservatism about intervention in general. U.S. policymakers, when faced with crises conducive to ground force solutions, will be inclined to act only when they perceive fundamental threats to core interests. Future operations may then occur only under a mandate that authorizes limited objectives.

Thus, future U.S. decisionmakers may charter operations with explicit guidance on time, resources, costs, and risks for mission completion. Collectively, these constraints indicate that “decisiveness”—a quality long associated with U.S. ground forces—may be far less important to U.S. decisionmakers in the future than “good enough for now.” In this regard, the study found that most often future operations will open with the intent only to manage future crises and not decisively terminate them.

A Changing Context for Future Challenges Risk Assessment

In general, the emerging postwar policymaking context is having a significant impact on senior-level decisions with respect to ground forces and risk. As DoD looks forward, it weighs decisions on focus areas for strategy, plans, force structure, and investment within this context. Between 2001 and 2011, DoD officials appeared willing to accept greater future challenges risk to buy down potential operational risk that might be associated with the Iraq and Afghan wars. Now, as DoD looks beyond the wars, the reverse is true.

Risk judgments inevitably emerge from policymaking contexts. Dissuading, deterring, and defeating future adversaries, for example, holds a specific meaning in light of perceptions about the strategic environment. In 2001, strategy and risk centered on future adversaries that could take advantage of the RMA; more specifically, they focused on the potential for increased military competition with a rising China and “rogue” states. As a consequence of the 9/11 attacks and 12 years of war, a new policymaking context emerged. The universe of potential adversaries expanded, changing U.S. concepts of dissuasion, deterrence, and defeat. By 2010, dissuading, deterring, and defeating consequential threats implied a great deal more in practice than traditional military competition with adversary states. Thus, the context for risk judgments evolved with the changing strategic landscape.

That landscape is changing again. The war in Iraq is over. The war in Afghanistan is ending. Osama bin Laden is dead. China is increasingly assertive in pursuit of its interests in its near abroad. Iran is presumed to be pursuing nuclear weapons and agitates against the current Middle Eastern status quo. North Korea purposefully undermines the security of Northeast Asia, while its long-term viability as a state is in doubt. Nuclear-armed Pakistan is vulnerable to internal instability. Finally, the Middle East

37 Working group participant, CSIS working group meeting, March 21, 2013.
38 Ibid.
appears to be at the front end of a turbulent, uncertain, and revolutionary period of transformational change.

All of this is occurring against the backdrop of an information and technology revolution, the democratization and atomization of the means of violent resistance, and increased fiscal pressure on U.S. defense and national security institutions. These factors call for a postwar reorientation of U.S. defense policy that is already taking shape and that should be more clearly articulated in the forthcoming QDR. As a consequence, a new thoroughgoing risk assessment of the decisions that emerge from the upcoming QDR will help ensure that the postwar reorientation effectively addresses current and future threats to core U.S. interests.

To date, DoD risk judgments appear to favor more traditional threats posed by regional great powers. In this regard, contending with “unfavorable order” is currently winning the capabilities debate inside the Pentagon. As it proceeds, this work presents alternative choices. While recognizing legitimate senior-level concerns about sophisticated threats to access, for example, it also recognizes that there may well be more common demands for response to challenges of “disorder.” Thus, it endeavors to present a balanced assessment of the widest range of possible ground-force-relevant threats and challenges.

The forthcoming QDR will no doubt wrestle with fundamental choices over where and how to buy down future challenges risk. Nonetheless, the policy impact of recent extended indeterminate wars, the widely recognized expense of manpower-intensive ground forces, the allure of DoD’s traditional biases, and the easy association of those biases with two significant rival powers in Asia and the Middle East have the potential to combine in ways that allow the comfortable to crowd out a more complex and unpleasant reality.
V. CORE U.S. INTERESTS

National interests are the foundation of foreign policy.39

Permanent Friends and Permanent Interests

Prior to 9/11, senior U.S. decisionmakers generally saw core interests and defense-relevant hazards to them in traditional terms; however, the terrorist attacks of 2001 fundamentally altered how the U.S. government views both. Officials suffered from a “failure of imagination” to understand the changing nature of national security threats, to include terrorism.40 This traditional thinking failed to account for threats emerging from the post-Cold War period, despite warnings that the end of the U.S./Soviet stand-off meant the dawn of a more complicated era. The U.S. Commission on National Security / 21st Century proved prescient in 1999 in this regard, stating that “many of the threats emerging in our future will differ significantly from those of the past, not only in their physical but also in their psychological effects.”41

The sudden focus on terrorism resulting from 9/11 emphasized the need to shift attention and resources to counterterrorism and homeland defense and security to safeguard the survival and well-being of the United States and its people against a new urgent threat. This shift, however, did not necessarily lessen the importance of traditional threats, and post-9/11 national security policy continued to acknowledge core interests beyond those related solely to threats from terrorism or CBRN. As Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted:

As in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States was swept into a fundamentally different world. We were called to lead with a new urgency and with a new perspective on what constituted threats and what might emerge as opportunities. And as with previous strategic shocks, one can cite elements of both continuity and change in our foreign policy since the attacks of September 11.42

Understanding the evolution of both the threat environment and U.S. policy is a critical step in considering future archetypal conditions that may again call for the employment of U.S. ground forces in substantial numbers in the post-Iraq/Afghanistan era. Core national interests are the logical and foundational starting point toward achieving this understanding. Several questions emerged in the review of core interests:

• How should the United States define its core national interests?
• What particular interests should be considered “core”?
• What are the likeliest generic threats to those interests over the next two decades?
• How can a definition of core interests and the generic threats to them help DoD identify military capabilities that are most important over time?
• And, finally, how can a definition of core interests help guide both future defense investments and future ground force planning during a time of increased austerity and newfound policy-level conservatism about intervention?

In the end, the study team found that Lord Palmerston’s adage—“We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual”—is as relevant today as when it was first uttered in 1848. While U.S. policymakers may perceive themselves as less utilitarian than this view suggests, it is useful to help define a set of enduring interests that senior leaders can employ to assess the adequacy of military capabilities.

With respect to Palmerston, the United States at least does have “eternal allies.” Critical bilateral and multilateral friendships continue to underwrite American influence worldwide. However, the United States also has a set of functional interests that transcend its close foreign partnerships. These generally define the frontiers of U.S. security and prosperity. In most cases, these interests are an integral element of the United States’ commitments to its allies and partners and are the product of a shared understanding of global threats and challenges.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), for example, grew out of a common perception of the Soviet threat and shared values between the United States and its closest European partners. Today, the alliance is based on a continuing commonality of interest in defending against terrorism, CBRN, and access threats, as well as threats to strategic resources; the May 2012 NATO Summit Declaration was the most recent public reflection of this common perspective. Likewise, U.S. partnerships in Asia have similar roots in the Cold War and earlier, but endure in part because of a common threat perception; in this case, partners continue to express concern about the great power challenge of an ascendant China and the future trajectory of North Korea. Finally, many U.S. relationships in the Middle East were born of persistent U.S. concerns about the security of that region’s energy resources. While energy security remains a strong rationale for continued U.S. engagement, the emergence and persistent threat from violent extremism has added new complexity to continued U.S. regional engagement.

A Working Definition of “Core” National Interests

To begin setting the context for future challenges risk assessment, CSIS developed a working definition of core U.S. interests. This working definition was necessary to determine which trends in the regions of concern were most significant and which vignettes represented reasonable approximations of future large-scale ground force demands. A working, carefully crafted articulation of the United States’ core interests and the regional implications associated with them (following in Sections VII and VIII), provides a solid basis from which to identify these trends.

In this study, a core national interest is an enduring condition upon which the United States depends that, if compromised, could imperil U.S. survival, well-being, prosperity, or international standing. Core interests underwrite the United States’ common defense. They include but are not limited to the integrity of U.S. territories and institutions; the general welfare of the American people; individual freedom, human rights, and economic prosperity; and the United States’ unique ability to exercise decisive international leadership.

An important outcome of the first expert working group was a caution to avoid overspecifying what is and is not a core interest. That, according to one participant, was “a recipe for mischief.” Instead, the working group universally agreed that core U.S. interests should be viewed as a “globally networked” whole; linking specific functional and regional concerns, consequential threats, and U.S. responses. Ultimately, neither interests nor threats conform well to the boundaries established by the

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46 Participant, CSIS working group meeting, December 4, 2012.
47 Ibid.
Unified Command Plan (UCP), which outlines specific responsibilities for each COCOM.\textsuperscript{48} Thus, an internal challenge to an important regional ally abroad, for example, could at once imperil the physical security of the United States, access to strategic resources or regions, and the responsible control of dangerous weapons and capabilities. On the last point, a working group participant observed that the U.S. desire to “lead” changes the threshold of whether or not it acts under certain conditions.\textsuperscript{49}

With these cautions in mind, this working definition of core interests reflects common areas of concern across AORs. In this regard, interests are relevant to the unique circumstances of different regions. However, aside from direct homeland defense issues that are of primary concern to U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), the study team agreed that the proximate sources of most urgent threats to core interests do in fact reside in, emanate from, or significantly impact USCENTCOM and USPACOM. To proceed with risk assessment and accepting the caution on excessive precision, the CSIS team identified five core interests as a start point for its analysis:

- Physical and virtual security of the United States, its citizens, its allies, and its partners;
- An international order conducive to continued U.S. security and prosperity, the rule of law, and universal human dignity;
- Stable functioning of strategic states;
- Secure, unrestricted access to strategic regions, resources, and the global commons and prevention of their hostile domination;
- Prevention of the continued development, proliferation, use of, or loss of control over CBRN capabilities.

Collectively, core interests are the basis of future challenges risk assessment. One caution from a working group participant is noteworthy before proceeding; he observed, “realists are perpetually disappointed” with the translation of core interests into military action, as the United States has been known to act “consistent with human justice” against threats that do not, at face value, appear to breach the threat-to-interest threshold articulated here.\textsuperscript{50} As a consequence, while this description of core interests and its affiliation with specific military actions may be useful in the abstract, his contention was that American military operations in practice are not necessarily motivated or prosecuted on as fine an “interest point” as might be suggested by the five interests outlined above.

Indeed, another working group member also observed that threats to core interests are not automatic triggers. He observed, “Just because it is a core interest doesn’t mean there is a redline.”\textsuperscript{51} In all cases, a “cost-benefit” analysis comes into play.


This core interest is fundamental to the survival, well-being, and prosperity of the United States. The physical aspect of this interest is perhaps the most basic issue of concern to U.S. policymakers, especially as it relates to ground forces. The U.S. government has long recognized the importance of territorial integrity of the American homeland, as well as the physical security of American citizens at home and abroad. This has been the case whether the threat was deliberate or accidental, human-driven or naturally occurring. One only has to remember the U.S. reaction to the 2001 anthrax incidents in Washington, D.C., and Florida, or any of evacuations of U.S. noncombatants from conflict areas around the world to understand that officials clearly recognize the importance of protecting U.S. citizens. In many cases, the

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Participant, CSIS working group meeting, March 21, 2013.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Participant, CSIS working group meeting, March 21, 2013.
U.S. has extended the same level of importance to the territorial integrity of allies and partners, as well as to the safety and human security of partner nations’ citizens.

All of this combined implies that the physical defense of the United States does not start and end at U.S. borders but rather extends to extraterritorial threats as well, as articulated in the U.S. National Defense Strategy in early 2005. This strategy succinctly outlined the need for an active, layered defense of the United States over considerable distances.  

Presumably, this view persists. While there is some controversy about the specific application of this interest in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, it is widely accepted that it is better to confront direct security challenges at arm’s length than it is to deal with them after they have fully materialized inside or against the United States.

The virtual aspect of this particular interest is a somewhat recent development. It is also illustrative of the “arm’s length” conception of threat and response. As demonstrated by recent cyberattacks that have compromised a range of systems from the Pentagon to the Bank of America, U.S. well-being and continued prosperity are heavily linked to virtual security as well. Over the last decade, virtual elements of the threat-to-interest calculation have been recognized as critical to the functioning of a robust economy and global marketplace, not to mention the assumed guarantees implicit in U.S. technical military advantages.

As this report focuses on the large-scale employment of U.S. ground forces, threats of unique concern are those that might emanate from the following generic sources:

- Consequential military, terrorist, or criminal attack against the U.S., its citizens, its treaty allies, or strategic partners;
- Catastrophic deliberate or accidental disruption of U.S. and/or partner institutions, critical infrastructure, or distribution of essential public goods and services;
- Widespread natural or human-driven disaster or public health emergency;
- Contagious civil conflict in the United States, a treaty ally, or strategic partner;
- And, finally, violent instability of neighboring states and uncontrolled cross-border migration.

An International Order Conducive to Continued U.S. Security and Prosperity, the Rule of Law, and Universal Human Dignity

In 2000, the Commission on America’s National Interests identified “the viability and stability of major global systems” as vital. The Commission concluded this is essential to the security and well-being of the United States. The study team agreed. The United States relies on a stable international order, particularly in key regions of concern. An American-enabled order of this kind is universally recognized by U.S. decisionmakers and political authorities as providing a solid foundation upon which the United States and its key international partners flourish and secure important national objectives.

In addition to a secure global economic system and free and open political arrangements, the rule of law and universal human dignity are attributes of an international system that provide a range of tangible and intangible benefits for the United States. Consistent with the caution outlined above on the American propensity to act on behalf of “human justice,” these qualities are congruent with official statements of U.S. interests, policy, and values over the last quarter century. Further, a commitment to human rights is considered the price of entry for those seeking to both form partnerships with United

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54 Commission on America’s National Interests, America’s National Interests, 6.
States on issues of common interest and be recognized as having a rightful place among the community of responsible nations.

When combined, prosperity, the rule of law, and human dignity were found to be consistent with a more stable international system. Recent history has indicated that these not only mitigate immediate risks to U.S. political and economic well-being but also temper the kinds of extreme reactions against social dislocation and political disaffection that can breed violent threats to the physical security of the United States, its people, and its partners.

The generic ground-force-relevant threats to this particular interest include but are not limited to:

- Persistent unprovoked military or proxy aggression in a key region;
- Physical threats against important U.S. economic interests abroad;
- Criminal or hostile control and exploitation of an important state or strategic resource;
- Contagious civil violence in an important state/region;
- Mass, state-sponsored violence or the purposeful denial of basic human needs;
- And, finally, a nation’s tolerance of un-, under-, or ill-governed terrorist or criminal sanctuary.

The Stable Functioning of Strategic States

For the purposes of this study, “strategic states” are countries whose stable functioning is uniquely important to the United States, its partners, and the favorable international order described above. Strategic states can be friendly, hostile, indifferent, or neutral and are designated as “strategic” largely by virtue of some crosscutting relationship with other core interests. For example, while North Korea is hostile to the United States, its proximity and behavior with respect to treaty allies, coupled with its possession of employable CBRN, make it “strategic” by implication. The prospect of sudden destabilization, failure, or collapse of a strategic state has the potential to pose grave harm to a range of at-risk interests.

There is perhaps no more concrete an example in the abstract of the potential disorder challenge than a consequential failure of authority in a strategic state. The origin of that failure might be purposeful—indicating hostile intent by a purpose-driven actor bent on establishing a new and unfavorable political outcome—or it may be contextual, meaning that events with no specific purpose result in fundamental challenges to effective and responsible governance. As is becoming clear with events in the Middle East, this kind of instability might threaten all or significant parts of an important state or region. Such a loss of authority or control would pose a significant threat if that state:

- Possesses significant employable CBRN capabilities where a loss of responsible control over those assets clearly puts the physical security of the United States and important partners at substantial hazard or could unfavorably tip the balance of power in a key region;
- Controls substantial strategic resources, economic capacity, dominant geography, or critical infrastructure upon which the world relies for political and economic stability;
- Lies in close proximity to the United States, an ally, a key partner, or another “strategic state” and has a large, dependent population;
- Could—with unanticipated destabilization—trigger contagious instability in a region that is important to the United States or could, as a result of failed authority, be a platform for wider regional instability;
- And, finally, is a treaty ally or strategic partner.
The Secure, Unrestricted Access to Strategic Regions, Resources, and the Global Commons and Prevention of Their Hostile Domination

The United States’ and its partners’ well-being—including the stable functioning of global markets—requires access to key regions of the world, such as the Persian Gulf, the western Pacific, and the Southeast Asian littoral. However, this broad conception of access includes more than simple transit to, from, and within critical regions of the world. In addition to the oft-discussed “global commons” (e.g., the security of air, sea, space, and cyber domains), control of the land domain under crisis conditions is pivotal. Broad access, for example, relies on a number of critical land- and population-based variables, including responsible control of the territory that allows for secure passage through strategic chokepoints; the security of critical infrastructure; and stability and security of strategic resources at their point of origin.

In the broad conception of core interests, these are as vital as generalized security of the commons, although the latter receives the bulk of attention. The ability to control land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace, while consistently securing access to the strategic resources and critical infrastructure upon which the global economy relies, is essential to U.S. and partner security and prosperity.

Generic threats for ground forces to consider in this regard include:

- Deliberate action by a hostile power, entente, or group to either deny U.S. access to, or exercise political, economic, and security control over, a strategic region;
- Deliberate action by a hostile power, entente, or group to deny routine access to and use of the global commons or strategic territory, including closure, or persistent threats to safe passage through and use, of strategic chokepoints;
- Deliberate attempts by a hostile power, entente, or group to deny U.S. / partner access to strategic resources through embargo, deliberate direct attack, or proxy action;
- Indirect threats to broad access—strategic regions or resources and the commons—emerging from a third-party war, civil conflict, criminal action, instability, or catastrophes.

The Prevention of the Continued Development, Proliferation, Use of, or Loss of Responsible Control over CBRN Capabilities and Weapons

Prevention of the emergence of imminent CBRN hazards has been an explicit interest of the United States and its political authorities for some time, as illustrated by its prominence in the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance. This is vital to the survival of the United States and its institutions, its economy, and its society. The prospect of additional states joining the nuclear club, in particular, raises the specter of a hyperproliferated environment; the emergence of which could increase the likelihood of a nuclear exchange between rival states. The Commission on America’s National Interests in 2000—even before the 9/11 terrorist attacks—made a similar finding, noting that it was a vital interest to “prevent, deter, and reduce the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons attacks on the United States or its military forces abroad.” In the post-9/11 world, this interest has naturally grown in importance.

There are innumerable complex components to the CBRN challenge. First, several terrorist organizations have expressed interest in acquiring and possibly using CBRN. The potential for “loose nukes” has heightened concern in international circles as the nexus between terrorism and proliferation offers frightening consequences. Second, recent violent instability in chemically armed Syria, persistent

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56 Commission on America’s National Interests, America’s National Interests, 17.
concerns about the surety of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal, and lingering doubts about North Korea’s long-
term stability and questionable rationality make the prospect of sudden and widespread loss of effective
and responsible control over CBRN an urgent priority for both policymakers and contingency planners. This not only increases the probability for transfer to irresponsible third parties but also the potential for rogue use of CBRN by surviving elements of a failed state’s military.

Finally, a persistent threat of a nuclear-capable Iran in the heart of the Persian Gulf, North Korea’s continued pursuit of both better weapons and more capable delivery systems, and the uneasy nuclear stand-off between India and Pakistan heighten the prospect for regional arms races and potentially regional nuclear exchange. Core American interests lie in the balance in all cases of CBRN development, proliferation, use, or uncertain control.

There are a number of generic ground-force-relevant threats that should be considered with respect to CBRN, including:

- Active pursuit of employable CBRN capabilities by states or groups identified as hostile to the U.S., its allies, or strategic partners;
- Active pursuit or possession of employable CBRN capabilities by states that would fundamentally change or unfavorably impact the military balance in or destabilize key regions;
- Any threatened use of CBRN against the U.S., an ally, or a strategic partner;
- A third-party nuclear war between regional rivals;
- The loss of responsible control over existing CBRN capabilities.
VI. GEOSTRATEGIC INSIGHTS

This section delineates geostrategic insights that are both relevant to the direction of future defense strategy and pivotal to ground force capability decisions. These insights reflect a combination of both assumptions about important international security dynamics, as well as research-derived conclusions relating to (1) conditions under which U.S. interests are likely to be threatened over the next two decades; (2) the nature, durability, and future effectiveness of U.S. military power; and (3) foundational environmental characteristics against which U.S. ground forces will have to operate to defend core interests in the future. These insights guided a number of important lines of inquiry and contextualized regional trends.

Ten Critical Insights

1. For the foreseeable future, the United States will continue to enjoy important military advantages vis-à-vis all potential military competitors; however, these advantages will experience some erosion.

Many strategists and analysts agree that if the United States remains committed to maintaining its qualitative military advantages—in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); power projection; and precision attack—U.S. joint forces will be more responsive, technically advanced, and operationally dominant for the next two decades vis-à-vis all traditional military rivals. While most experts contend that China will not be in a position to supplant the United States as the most dominant military power worldwide in the next 20 years, they also note that U.S. military advantages will experience some erosion in the Asia-Pacific region in particular.

As China progressively improves its posture to compete militarily with the United States in a regional context, for example, the United States will face sophisticated Chinese antiaccess / area denial (A2/AD) capabilities and methods. Thus, from a functional military perspective, it will be necessary for the United States to pursue reasonable hedging and shaping strategies to offset the prospect that China may in the future actively and aggressively attempt to limit U.S. access and freedom of action in Asia and the Western Pacific.

Worldwide, state and nonstate actors will also be able to compete more effectively with U.S. and partner military forces across all domains simultaneously. This will occur in large measure because of the “hybridization” of military conflict, the proliferation of advanced military capabilities, and the atomization of lethality—all enabled by revolutionary advances in communications, networking, and information sharing. Proliferation of advanced lethal technology (including sophisticated A2/AD

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capabilities and CBRN weapons), networking, and increased communication and information sharing, will empower a greater number of hostile actors at lower levels of decisionmaking and action.64

State and nonstate competitors will seek to generate new asymmetric opportunities to thwart U.S. regional ambitions and exploit U.S. vulnerabilities.65 While the United States will remain unrivaled militarily over the next two decades and its capability for military power projection will be a principal strength, A2/AD challenges will still present important threats to the success of U.S. military operations.66 This trend is not only relevant to future high-end military campaigns. It will also complicate, and in some cases constrain, U.S. options across the ROMO.

In the course of this study, participants and interviewees consistently noted that dwindling U.S. forward presence and access to foreign basing would make gaining and maintaining access more difficult for U.S. forces under a wide variety of contingency conditions. Further, they commonly observed that American forces will persistently face very complex A2/AD threats from threat actors spanning the state/nonstate spectrum. In the end, exposure of finite U.S. military capabilities to A2/AD threats in almost all future contingency environments will make U.S. risk calculations more complex and U.S. military access and freedom of action more problematic.

The most sophisticated “antiaccess” threats will manifest from state actors with the means to field advanced integrated military capabilities, whereas both state and nonstate actors will employ a variety of lethal close-in “area denial” capabilities and methods.67 Most relevant to effective entry and follow-on operations of ground forces, these area denial challenges will emerge in both structured and unstructured ways and will have lethal and nonlethal components.68

Structured area denial threats will emerge from state actors and sophisticated state proxies that can network and integrate advanced military systems.69 Unstructured threats will emerge from instances where both sophisticated military capabilities and less technically advanced systems and methods (including nonlethal means of resistance) are employed by multiple actors operating in the same conflict space.70 These actors may collude with one another. However, they may also compete with the United States and each other simultaneously. Without deliberate countermeasures, these structured and unstructured area denial threats will complicate military planning, raise the costs of military operations, and increase risk.

2. Accepting a continued U.S. commitment to deterrence and with concerted U.S. efforts to shape the decisionmaking of the most capable potential state rivals, the United States will be able to avoid conventional conflict with capable regional competitors. However, the concepts of prevention and deterrence will have significant limitations, especially in the areas of spontaneous political instability and proxy resistance.

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64 The JCS recognize this as a key operational challenge and summarize it as such: “How will future Joint Forces with constrained resources protect U.S. national interests against increasingly capable enemies in an uncertain, complex, rapidly changing, and increasingly transparent world?” See JCS, Capstone Concept, 3.
65 UK Ministry of Defence, Strategic Plans Programme, 71.; DoD, QDR 10, 80.
66 At the 2012 Joint Warfighting Conference, the chairman of the JCS, General Martin E. Dempsey, USA, stated that technologies “are proliferating horizontally across advanced militaries, and vertically into the hands of non-state actors. . . . As a result, more people have the ability to harm us or to deny us freedom of action than at any point in my professional life.” He described the current security environment as “far more competitive, . . . where our relative degree of overmatch against many foes has diminished.” See Tyrone C. Marshall, “Dempsey Describes Future Force at Warfighting Conference,” American Forces Press Service, May, 16, 2012, http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=116362.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
Continued American military dominance and global interdependence, accompanied by a shifting balance of power in key regions, will significantly reduce the potential for war between the United States and rising regional powers.\textsuperscript{71} The United States can encourage this trend with active regional shaping activities that include building allied and partner capabilities and capacity. Improved military cooperation between the United States and potential rivals like China would complement these efforts as well.

The factors that could minimize the likelihood of state-based conventional conflict may not deter either proxy war against the United States and its interests (especially in and around the greater Middle East) or future instances of third-party regional war—for example, India-Pakistan, Iran-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Iraq-Syria, China-Russia—that would imperil core U.S. interests indirectly.\textsuperscript{72} Proxy conflicts, in particular, may enable U.S. opponents to threaten U.S. interests in unconventional ways in the absence of an unambiguous casus belli that might expose them to high-tech U.S. advantages. Further, proxy conflicts provide opponents with a competitive outlet (e.g., intrastate war) that current U.S. policymakers prefer to avoid. Proxy conflict enables opponents to push war with the United States offshore, opening a diversionary second front that prevents direct U.S. military pressure on their home territory or bases of support.

In addition, U.S. military power may not be able to effectively deter terrorist attacks or prevent most intrastate conflicts that would threaten core U.S. interests by implication.\textsuperscript{73} A commitment to building partner capacity in the Middle East may increase the ability of local forces to contribute to collective defense against an aggressive Iran. It may also bolster local competency in combating irregular and extremist actors. However, it will not be as effective in altering more fundamental security dynamics that call the current regional political status quo into serious question. Further still, no measure of deterrence or shaping is expected to have an impact on the course of a future North Korean political transition. Thus, U.S. ground forces should prepare to respond in some way to circumstances where consequential disorder threatens the security of important interests.

3. \textit{Over the next two decades, the geographic focus of the most consequential threats to core U.S. interests will emanate from the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs.}

As articulated in the 2012 Defense Guidance, the greater Middle East and South Asia, Northeast Asia, the Western Pacific, and the Indian Ocean regions will be sources for the most important threats to core interests over the next twenty years.\textsuperscript{74} These threats will transcend regional boundaries and may manifest beyond the primary source of conflict. Each region of concern to this report has unique challenges in this regard.

Significant threats and challenges in USCENTCOM will emerge from intrastate and interstate competition over political power, strategic resources, and sectarian/ethnic-primacy. The Middle East is particularly vulnerable to cross-border political instability from revolutionary transitions resulting from the ongoing Arab Spring. In short, USCENTCOM’s challenges will largely spring from disorder. This will occur under the ever-present shadow of a nuclearizing Iran, which has demonstrated the capability and capacity to directly threaten key regional partners, pose access challenges to the strategically vital Persian Gulf, and “free ride” on regional instability through proxy action.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the most profound long-term challenge to core U.S. interests would emerge from an unfavorable balance of military power between the United States and China. Direct military confrontation in the Asia-Pacific between the United States and China may be relatively unlikely in the next two decades. However, a tense Cold War-like competition pitting American and Chinese

\textsuperscript{71} UK Ministry of Defence, \textit{Strategic Plans Programme}, 80-85.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} DoD, \textit{Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership}, 2.
political and economic power against one another, in the shadow of increased military tension, is a distinct possibility.

Because the consequences of a Sino-American war are well understood, such a scenario may have the lowest probability in the near, mid, and long terms; however, security threats in the greater Asia-Pacific region are not defined by U.S.-China relations alone. USPACOM faces an uncertain and potentially highly disordered political transition in an unstable, aggressive North Korea. Fortunately, the United States benefits from a number of strong formal and informal regional partnerships to assist in this regard.

4. Over the near- to mid-terms, war and conflict within states or between nations or peoples and violent, ideologically based extremism will pose direct threats to core U.S. interests and should remain a centerpiece of strategy development and strategic planning.

Increased competition for local authority, resources, or sectarian/ethnic primacy will amplify the prospects for civil conflict, human insecurity, and mass atrocity in regions that are critical to the United States, especially the Middle East and South Asia. These areas also harbor great potential for contagious instability that could undermine core interests. At times, seemingly local conflicts could rapidly transcend boundaries and trigger infectious security challenges, manifesting as direct threats to the commons, strategic resources and infrastructure, vulnerable populations of important U.S. partners, and a stable regional order.

In addition, violent threats from religious or ideologically based extremism will present a persistent threat to core security interests but will also be increasingly atomized and distributed. The most prominent origin of extremist threats will be from violent religiously motivated terrorists, insurgents, and militias. However, new extremist ideologies will probably emerge and accelerate with increased global interconnectivity and the demonstrated success of popular Arab revolutions. While ethnicity and ideology may provide a foundational source of intrastate and transnational conflict, challenges of this kind that imperil U.S. interests will be more diverse.

5. State and nonstate actors will threaten access to strategic resources and secure use of the global commons.

In spite of increasing domestic U.S. energy production, conflict over and threats to secure access to strategic resources (e.g., hydrocarbons, rare earths, and water), critical infrastructure and geography, and the global commons will become more acute. Collectively, these assets are essential to regional stability, human security, continued U.S. and partner prosperity, and global economic health. The USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs remain focus areas in this regard. Threats to strategic resources and the commons will emerge from purposeful state and nonstate actors possessing greater capabilities to effect consequential disruption, as well as contextual challenges emerging from the natural environment and human-driven catastrophes. The most common characterization of these threats involves use and transit of the commons. This report considers these insights, as well as land-based challenges to resources at their point of origin, critical infrastructure, and strategic geography.

Consistent with the likelihood that the United States will remain the world’s most capable military power, it will also continue to act as the primary guarantor of fair and unrestricted access to strategic regions, resources, and infrastructure. With the emergence of regional powers like India and China, there may be increasing opportunities for burden sharing, but the current strategic environment

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76 Ibid., 51–52.
makes this a questionable proposition. Therefore, American officials should anticipate that military action to secure access to resources will increase in likelihood. This does not necessarily mean that such action is imminent or probable, only that conditions that could trigger serious consideration of armed intervention are growing more plausible.

6. **Loss of responsible control over CBRN weapons and know-how or threatened or actual use of CBRN capability will be primary concerns of U.S. strategy planning for the next two decades.**

Proliferation and threatened use of CBRN weapons—particularly nuclear weapons—have become a persistent feature of the security landscape and will have an impact on decisions on the use of force and the conduct of military operations. Possession of CBRN by regional powers (e.g., Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan) will enhance their potential power, constrain U.S. and partner military options, and create planning challenges for military operations.

With the certainty that more states will acquire CBRN capabilities, the effective, secure, and responsible control of CBRN arsenals (e.g., nuclear surety) will be more vulnerable with the passage of time. The potential illegitimate seizure, irresponsible control, and employment of CBRN weapons will become more pronounced. Furthermore, the acquisition of CBRN by states like Iran and uncertainty about U.S. extended deterrence policy could result in a surge of regional CBRN proliferation and arms competition. The Middle East and Northeast Asia are primary candidates in this regard.

Long-held beliefs about nuclear deterrence are most relevant to state actors. Nonstate actors, such as violent extremists or rogue military forces, are less constrained by existing international conventions and protocols. Therefore, their possession of CBRN capabilities would increase the potential for use worldwide. This is more directly threatening to core interests than are state-controlled CBRN arsenals, regardless of the nature of the regime that controls them.

7. **Expanding access to information and increased networking will change the character of future conflicts and crises.**

Access to and rapid dissemination of information is reshaping strategic and operational environments. The information revolution has significant benefits in political and social connectivity, as well as commerce. However, it also enables traditional military and irregular threats. Information technology gives potency to violent extremism and increases the potential for rapid mobilization and transregional action. Thus, addressing physical sources of extremism by itself is inadequate to substantially reduce its persistence or virulence. In addition to its increased potential as a platform for mobilization and agitation, information sharing enables the proliferation of adversary capabilities and methods and complicates operational security. Further still, information technology is a principal conduit for rapid expansion of the conflict space across and beyond specific theaters.

8. **Challenged governance, natural catastrophes, climate change, environmental degradation, and increased competition for strategic resources will be accelerants for future crisis.**

Continuing political instability in key regions of the world may result in new or renewed threats of rapid, uncontrolled, and adverse political change and sanctuary challenges. For example, spontaneous political

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78 The possibility of increased burden sharing was raised by some participants in the January 31 working group.  
82 Ibid., 3.  
83 The prospect of a future nuclear-armed Saudi Arabia that in cooperation with Pakistan would move to balance against a new Iranian nuclear power was raised by one prominent participant in the January 31 working group.  
instability and violence may imperil vulnerable strategic resources, territory, infrastructure, and populations. Conditions of un-, under-, or ill-governed territory may again provide effective safe havens for purposeful actors intent on posing direct threats to core interests. Additional revolutionary political change in key regions (e.g., the Middle East) may alter long-standing political alignments upon which U.S. security depends.

Climate change, environmental degradation, and natural catastrophes may also accelerate strategically consequential challenges, increasing the “frequency, scale, and duration of [future] humanitarian crises,” in particular. The USPACOM AOR is particularly vulnerable in this regard. Finally, increased competition for strategic resources—especially sources of energy—may provide fertile ground for internal conflicts and more intense interstate rivalries that inevitably impact U.S. security.

All five accelerants may present proximate challenges to existing tensions and set conditions favoring hostile “free-riding.” Actors intent on purposeful resistance to U.S. and partner designs may effectively employ these factors as force multipliers to directly or indirectly threaten U.S. interests.

9. The United States will continue to enjoy important bilateral and multilateral partnerships. However, the participation or effective contributions of key partners in future military operations will be context dependent and increasingly constrained materially and politically.

Core NATO members and major non-NATO allies will remain partners of choice for the conduct of military operations worldwide. However, their effective or operationally significant contributions to any particular military action may be highly conditional. All NATO allies are experiencing downward political and fiscal pressure on military capabilities and investments; this trend is perhaps most pronounced in the area of ground forces. The same constraints impacting future U.S. decisionmaking may be at least as strong among traditional U.S. allies and partners, making their interest-threat threshold even higher than that of the United States.

The United States will also continue to have strong relationships with a range of regional partners. In the greater Middle East, these include members of the GCC, Jordan, and Israel. In Asia, the United States enjoys enduring treaty alliances with Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and New Zealand, as well strong bilateral ties with Singapore, Taiwan, and India. While some among these partners will contribute to future military operations within their region—particularly, when they perceive direct, existential threats—they are far less inclined to provide military support outside the region or under less exigent circumstances. In the event of U.S. unilateral or strictly limited combined military action, this may also translate into severe limitations on U.S. basing.

In the end, policymakers will evaluate the strength and utility of future U.S. foreign partnerships on like-mindedness, capability, and will. The United States faces a future marked by distinct partner groups: (1) Some will be willing and like-minded but less capable; (2) others will be capable and willing but not necessarily like-minded; (3) some will be capable and like-minded but less generally willing; and, and, finally, (4) there will be rare instances where partners are like-minded, capable, and willing. However, the overall willingness of this latter group is highly dependent on circumstances. Future U.S. military action will require nimble management of this complex patchwork of international partnerships. Ultimately, it may require the cultivation of partnerships with emerging powers that share common interests, increasingly demonstrate a real capability to defend those interests, and routinely model a willingness to employ those capabilities in operations.

86 UK Ministry of Defence, Strategic Plans Programme, 16.
10. The concept of “strategic warning” is highly conditional, while strategic shock and surprise will be persistent features of the future security environment.

Strategic warning of consequential state-based military threats (e.g., “unfavorable order”) to core U.S. interests will remain long (months) to very long (one or more years). Therefore, the United States will have all the benefit of deliberate response at its disposal in the event of most traditional military challenges. On the other hand, the strategic warning associated with threats springing from disorder may be substantially shorter, extremely short (hours) to moderate (weeks). In the case of disorder, continuing advances in communications technology will make the mobilization of effective resistance to U.S. military intervention easier, compressing U.S. decisionmaking space.

Given the serial shocks and surprises of the last decade—9/11, the Iraq and Afghan insurgencies, the global financial meltdown, the Arab Spring, and the like—the United States and its partners should anticipate unexpected changes in strategic conditions that emerge with little or no warning. This is the case specifically with respect to disordered challenges springing from conflicts between peoples and nations. U.S. policymakers should certainly consider “inevitable surprises” in future contingency planning.89 Many of these can be anticipated and mitigated with prudent horizon scanning.

The core interests and insights described above provided a baseline context for risk assessment. The next two sections outline adverse trends in the two regions of concern to this report. These regional surveys are informed by both the core interests and the geostrategic insights. They are not intended to be exhaustive treatments of all the complex challenges each region manifests. Rather, they are an attempt to provide additional context, describe conditions that will impact future ground force planning, and, finally, establish a backdrop for the kinds of archetypal conditions this report has identified as important for future ground force planning.

89 Schwartz, Inevitable Surprises.
VII. USCENTCOM REGIONAL SURVEY

Regional Takeaways

- The most important near-, mid-, and long-term challenges to core U.S. interests in the USCENTCOM AOR may emerge from protracted disorder and serial failures of authority.
- Regional instability poses direct and indirect threats to global and regional security, vital resources, and strategic geography, as well as responsible control over dangerous military capabilities—specifically CBRN.
- Extremists, state proxies, and hostile states pose direct threats to the United States and important partners and will do so for the foreseeable future.
- States within the region face both internal and external challenges to security and order with growing prospects for contagious political disturbances.
- The stark political uncertainty that exists in the greater Middle East is compounded by an overarching competition for regional primacy between Iran and its Arab neighbors.
- Three confirmed or aspiring CBRN states (Pakistan, Syria, and Iran) are pressing threats to core U.S. interests and should be sources of future U.S. ground contingency planning.
- The U.S. will not be in a position to effectively prevent many of region’s contingency challenges, putting a premium on tailored response.

Key Regional Takeaways

At a tipping point, the Middle East faces a wide gamut of future possibilities from fragile growth to chronic instability and regional conflict. As illustrated in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, the importance of the USCENTCOM AOR as a U.S. defense priority will not diminish over the course of the next two decades. Originally established in 1983 to defend the Persian Gulf region against Soviet invasion, USCENTCOM has responsibility for 20 countries and plays a pivotal role in securing all five core U.S. interests in this region.

The centrality of USCENTCOM to wider U.S. security interests is demonstrated by the frequency of U.S. military operations there over the last 30 years. U.S. forces have engaged in major combat campaigns (e.g., Iraq 1991 and 2003; Afghanistan 2001), humanitarian assistance and human security operations (e.g., Iraqi Kurdistan 1991; Somalia 1992, Pakistan 2005), noncombatant evacuations (e.g., Lebanon 2006), and several other small- and large-scale operations over the recent past in the region.

Table 3 outlines the range of named operations occurring in USCENTCOM over the last three decades.

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91 USCENTCOM’s jurisdiction covers Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.
92 While the purpose of this section is to identify the key negative trends in the CENTCOM AOR, the study group expanded the wider area of interest (AOI) to include the Indian subcontinent, the Levant, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa as potential ethnic, ideological, political, and resource competitors that could result in conflict within the region.
Table 3. Named Operations in the USCENTCOM AOR/AOI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Operation Eagle Claw</td>
<td>U.S. forces attempted to rescue American hostages held in Iran. It was unsuccessful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982–</td>
<td>Sinai</td>
<td>Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO)</td>
<td>U.S. military personnel and equipment participate in the MFO with 11 other nations to supervise and prevent violations of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987–</td>
<td>Persian Gulf</td>
<td>Operation Earnest Will</td>
<td>U.S. forces were employed to protect neutral oil tankers and merchant ships from Iranian attacks while in transit in the Persian Gulf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Persian Gulf</td>
<td>Operation Nimble Archer</td>
<td>A combined force of four destroyers and SOF worked to destroy oil platforms in the Rostam Oil field, and collected intelligence from the platforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997–</td>
<td>Persian Gulf</td>
<td>Operation Praying Mantis</td>
<td>Responding to an attack on a U.S. frigate, forces attacked an Iranian frigate and oil platforms in the Sirri and Sassan oil fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Operation Desert Shield</td>
<td>Responding to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, U.S. forces deployed to deter an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Iraq &amp; Kuwait</td>
<td>Operation Desert Storm</td>
<td>A U.S.-led coalition, under UN authorization, launched air and ground attacks to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991–</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Operation Provide Comfort</td>
<td>A joint force rapidly deployed to northern Iraq to provide humanitarian supplies, construct resettlement areas, and establish a demilitarized zone to protect the Iraqi Kurdish population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Operation Restore Hope</td>
<td>A U.S.-led coalition, under UN authorization, deployed to protect humanitarian operations and to create a secure environment in the clan-war dominated Somalia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Operation Desert Fox</td>
<td>During this four-day mission, U.S. military forces launched cruise missile attacks to impede Saddam Hussein’s WMD capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Afghanistan &amp; Sudan</td>
<td>Operation Infinite Reach</td>
<td>U.S. military forces attacked terrorist facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998–</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>Operation Desert Spring</td>
<td>U.S. Army forces established a forward presence in Kuwait to provide command and control and provide force protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Operation Enduring Freedom</td>
<td>Responding to the 9/11 attacks, a U.S.-led coalition conducted a regime change against the Taliban and continues extensive opposed stabilization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003–</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Operation Iraqi Freedom</td>
<td>In an attempt to disarm Iraq, a U.S.-led coalition conducted a regime change in Iraq and engaged in extensive opposed stabilization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current operations in the Middle East include opposed stabilization and enabling operations, as well as DoD’s largest recurring military exercise. In recent years, USCENTCOM has been responsible for the execution of two major wars and regionwide counterterrorism activities against al Qaeda and its

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95 DoD’s largest recurring exercise, “Bright Star,” takes place annually in Egypt.
affiliates. USCENTCOM has also worked with regional partners to deter and defend against an emerging hybrid Iranian threat.96

Former USCENTCOM commander General James Mattis recently characterized the AORs’ security conditions as tumultuous, stating “change is the only constant, and surprise continues to be the dominant force.”97 Instances of intrastate and cross-boundary disorder, the rise of a hostile regional power, and the proliferation and widely perceived vulnerability of CBRN capabilities reflect the region’s chronic insecurity. This insecurity will remain a principal U.S. and partner concern over the next two decades. Thus, the United States may need to consider future military operations emerging from the region’s myriad challenges. Because of the contentious history of U.S. regional involvement, however, there will be a decline in forward-stationed U.S. ground forces after the Afghan War draws to a close. Therefore, new limitations on presence may challenge both effective peacetime engagement and future U.S. contingency access.

Sources of threat in the region may emerge from a number of underlying regional fault lines. The USCENTCOM AOR has enduring ethnic rivalries, ideological tensions, and disputes over the control and availability of strategic resources. On the latter in particular, USCENTCOM is home to a third of the world’s proven oil and natural gas reserves and three “strategic chokepoints.”98

As populations compete for control of political and security outcomes, strategic states (e.g., Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, and Bahrain) have experienced notable internal instability. The roots of this instability lie in political disaffection and competition, sharp sectarian and ethnic divides, demographics, economic disadvantages, and notable environmental challenges. In addition, religious extremists continue to pose direct violent threats both within and outside the region. These factors will challenge the reach and durability of effective and responsible governance, increase pressure on already weak or vulnerable regimes, and set conditions for continuing instability.

Trends

This study identified three basic trends that warrant continued U.S. attention with respect to ground force contingency planning in USCENTCOM:

• Prolific challenges to the authority and stability of vulnerable regional governments;
• Malign Iranian behavior and Iran’s challenge to wider regional stability; and
• Uncertain control of CBRN capabilities.

1. Challenges to Authority and Stability

Given recent events, it is clear that the greater Middle East is at the beginning of a period of political instability and transition that could threaten regional order and U.S. interests. Several factors challenge the stability and effectiveness of regional governments, leading to the prospect of consequential crisis or conflict within and between states. These factors include: the uncertain future of the Arab Spring, ethnosectarian tensions, energy security, water scarcity, and youth and political disaffection.

The Future of the Arab Spring

The scope and speed of political transitions wrought by the Arab Spring thus far were both unexpected and disruptive. On its face, revolutionary political change in the Middle East has the potential to bring in

nascent governments that exercise newfound authority effectively and responsibly. However, uncertainty about how change manifests elsewhere in the region or how states already affected by change mature over time will determine the region’s overall security trajectory. In the end, the course and pace of the amorphous “awakening” movement may fundamentally alter U.S. regional security calculations.

Ethnosectarian Tensions

A second challenge to political authority and stability is the chronic and potentially destabilizing effect of regional ethnosectarian rivalries. These occur and intensify as identity groups seek greater autonomy, increased representation, local political dominance, or a larger share of the region’s natural wealth. Tensions between disparate religious and political ideologies are particularly pronounced and have an adverse impact on regional stability.

Deep divisions between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, for example, frequently erupt in violence and instability within many of the region’s important states. This is made more profound where newly empowered populations are in the process of overturning minority-dominated regimes. In the worst cases, armed sectarian disputes can result.

Iran supports Shi’a dissident and resistance groups across the AOR and sectarian realignment is occurring within key states. As a consequence, tensions between sects may become even more pronounced. Large Shi’a minorities in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, for example, may increase political agitation at a time when the two monarchies are under growing pressure to liberalize. Likewise, the emergence of a Shi’a-dominated regime in Iraq and the high likelihood of a Sunni-dominated regime assuming power in Syria, indicate great potential for new sectarian flashpoints.

In addition to intersectarian challenges, disputes within identity groups regarding political control may increase. In Egypt, as a conservative Sunni regime attempts to establish a new order, activists seeking a more secular political solution, as well as those seeking even more conservative outcomes, are certain to compete with the center and one another simultaneously. If conditions like those in Egypt migrate elsewhere in the region, this kind of political struggle will recur. Moreover, the persistent presence of violent extremist organizations (VEOs)—which tend to adhere to a more conservative outlook and are willing to use force in pursuit of objectives—may exacerbate challenges like this regionwide.

Conflicts between adherents of different faiths are common as well. The Middle East is the cradle to three of the world’s major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The former two represent a small fraction of the region’s population. The most profound manifestation of this interfaith challenge is the long-standing interstate and intrastate conflict between Arabs and Israelis.

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Energy Security

A third significant challenge to regional authority and stability lies in a generalized competition for the region’s vast oil and natural gas wealth and threats to secure outside access to those resources. Oil and natural gas are both at the heart of a number of the disputes outlined above, as well as one important driver of U.S. engagement in the region. Though U.S. oil imports may be declining, the globalized nature of petroleum markets make continued protection of global supply and distribution a core U.S. interest. In short, while the United States may not have formal treaty allies in the USCENTCOM AOR, it may consider secure access to the region’s resources its most vulnerable core interest.

Chronic instability of the kind described above threatens the availability of energy in far-reaching and profound ways through disruption at the point of origin and, during transit, at critical chokepoints. Regarding the point of origin, disruption is likely to emerge from intrastate conflict. For example, with continuing Arab-Kurd and Sunni-Shia tensions, Iraq’s long-term stability remains uncertain. Given recent popular uprisings, Iran’s long-term prognosis is also unclear. Likewise, Bahrain has witnessed widespread civil disorder springing from its majority Shi’a population, highlighting that the region’s disruptive political transitions are still underway and may continue to place substantial pressure on the Gulf monarchies.

In addition to its oil and natural gas reserves, the Middle East is also home to three of the world’s seven critical energy chokepoints: Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal / Suez-to-Mediterranean (SUMED) pipeline, and the Bab al Mandeb. The Strait of Hormuz alone handles passage of 35 percent of all seaborne-traded oil. Its closure would disrupt almost 20 percent of oil traded worldwide.104 Freedom of navigation and secure commercial passage in these critical throughways is both vital and vulnerable to disruption from myriad sources. This kind of disruption could have disastrous economic effects worldwide.

Water Security

Oil is not the region’s only contentious resource. Due to its scarcity and necessity, water is also a source of regional tension.105 The region’s arid environment, climate change, growing populations, economic development, political fragmentation, poor water management, and migration strain Middle Eastern water supplies. Within the region, only Turkey, Iran, and Lebanon have enough annual rainfall to support their populations; all other nations are vulnerable to shortages. Additionally, some 60 percent of the region’s water flows across international borders, complicating the resource management challenge.106 Water scarcity has the potential both to accelerate already tense interstate and intrastate challenges and cause substantial cross-boundary difficulties in periods of increased scarcity.

Youth and Political Disaffection

While the existence of significant “youth bulges” is not a direct cause of conflict, it may compound existing tensions by adding “pressure to a region’s education and health care systems, natural resources, and labor markets.”107 Struggling Middle Eastern economies may prove unable to accommodate a sudden

107 A “youth bulge” generally describes a large percentage of youth, age 15–29 years, in relation to the total population. The issue of the youth bulge in the Middle East will define the regional context for some time. While some countries’ youth populations are considered to have peaked and are expected to decline by 2020—Egypt’s 29 to 25 percent, and Iran’s 34 to 22 percent—others are expected to increase—Iraq’s 28 to 29 percent, and the West
surge in the labor force. Youth unemployment rates already average 20 to 30 percent across much of the region.\textsuperscript{108} High percentages of unemployed and dissatisfied youth are vulnerable to mass political mobilization and increased recruitment by VEOs. The continued strength and virulence of the latter rely on generalized disaffection. Indeed, relative deprivation and frustrated expectations regarding economic opportunities, political power and influence, and social status are directly correlated to violent extremism, especially among males.\textsuperscript{109}

The prospective loss of the social guarantees provided by the region’s wealthiest governments has the potential to expand youth disaffection even further, undermining the legitimacy of regional governments and swelling the ranks of VEOs and other outlets of popular violent resistance.\textsuperscript{110} Transitional governments—for example, Egypt, Libya, and, in the future, Syria—may also fail to meet popular expectations over time. Unsuccessful transitions have the potential to result in failed, failing, or highly challenged governments which may be unable or unwilling to extend authority across their sovereign territory for an extended period of time.

Finally, the Arab Spring is a prime example of how greater electronic connectivity and networking can enable rapid organization and mobilization of political action.\textsuperscript{111} While clearly having positive potential, the proliferation of networked political agitation and information sharing can also fuel the kind of generalized disaffection that is vulnerable to exploitation.\textsuperscript{112} With increased connectivity and more sophisticated communications and information sharing, individuals can better organize and create networks unconstrained by physical boundaries. Previously isolated populations gain new access to global information systems and shared communication networks.

One potential outcome of this expansion is a heightened sense of grievance or marginalization within and between groups who share ethnic, sectarian, or ideological affiliations. This may increase the potential for popular unrest, human security crises, and intercommunal confrontations. Wider connectivity also increases the potential for local conflicts to migrate and rapidly (and unpredictably) transcend national boundaries.

2. \textit{Malign Iranian Behavior}

The second major trend in the region—malign Iranian behavior—is USCENTCOM’s dominant internal priority. Without question, Iran is actively attempting to increase its competitive advantage within the region by fueling and exploiting instability. Competition for regional primacy between Iran, on the one hand, and the United States and its partners, on the other, is predominantly a state-based hazard, sometimes manifesting itself within the context of complex intrastate disputes.

\begin{itemize}
\item This insight was derived from an interview with a CSIS Middle Eastern expert, February 11, 2013.
\end{itemize}
With the fall of Saddam Hussein and a disruptive revolution in Egypt, many experts note a shifting regional balance of power such that the United States, Iran, and Turkey may be becoming more influential than Arab countries in the Middle East. Some analysts argue the shift is most important with respect to Iran. As Iran attempts to exert greater regional influence, the United States and its partners will view Tehran’s policies as fundamentally threatening. With the rise of a Shi’a-based government in Baghdad, there is a perception that Iran will be more able to actively extend its influence deep into the heart of the Arab Middle East.

Iran’s alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons is an indicator of its resurgent activism. Indeed, much of the United States’ Middle East policy focuses squarely on Tehran’s opaque nuclear ambitions. U.S. and allied decisionmakers believe that a nuclear-armed Iran that persistently supports terrorist organizations, threatens U.S. allies, and actively attempts to destabilize friendly governments would pose serious hazards to core interests. Iranian development of nuclear weapons would change the regional balance of power and heighten the prospect for a destabilizing regional arms race as well. Further development of the Iranian nuclear program might compel regional powers to reconsider their nonproliferation commitments, with Saudi Arabia and Turkey being primary contenders for future pursuit of nuclear weapons.

While the nuclear issue dominates geopolitics, Iran continues to pursue its political agenda and destabilize the region through proxy terrorist organizations and support to Shi’a political groups. Its malign activism has included support of Palestinian Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Lebanese Hezbollah. However, Iran actively supports other armed groups and aggressive political agitation across the Middle East to further its ideological and geopolitical interests.

To bolster its position vis-à-vis the United States and U.S. regional partners, Iran may attempt to demonstrate even greater military capability and regional agitation in the future. Its capacity to do so is based on its oil and gas reserves, its central geostrategic position, and its demonstrated ability to employ nonstate proxies to foment instability. Iran’s propensity to “free-ride” on regional third-party conflicts to advance its interests intensifies the prospect of direct future confrontation with United States and its partners.

3. Uncertain Control of CBRN Capabilities

The unrealized Iranian nuclear threat may not be the most immediate or necessarily the most dangerous CBRN challenge in the USCENTCOM AOR. In general terms, CBRN possession raises two fundamental concerns among U.S. policymakers. First, the possession of employable CBRN capabilities by rival states raises the potential of weakening U.S. political influence and constraining U.S. military options. In practice, a rival’s possession of operational CBRN would undermine U.S. conventional deterrence. Under these conditions, CBRN capabilities are coercive instruments that limit U.S. military options. As the cost of U.S. intervention rises in the face of a mature CBRN threat, adversary freedom of action expands.

113 Frederic Wehrey et al., The Iraq Effect: The Middle East After the Iraq War (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2010), 21.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid., 22.
117 Ibid.
118 National Intelligence Council, Global Trends, 72.
119 Nathaniel Manni, “Iran’s Proxies: State-sponsored Terrorism in the Middle East,” Global Security Studies 3, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 34.
121 Ibid., 5.
122 National Intelligence Council, Global Trends, 72.
A second and perhaps more important concern relates to possession of CBRN capabilities by a fragile, failing, or failed state. As has already been discussed in some detail, these conditions may result in the loss of responsible control over CBRN weapons. In USCENTCOM, Syria and Pakistan are particularly noteworthy in this regard.

Due to ongoing civil war, Syria may experience an extended, volatile postwar political transition. According to General Mattis, a generalized loss of control over Syria’s CBRN arsenal would necessitate intervention by the international community.\textsuperscript{124} Concerns about effective control over chemical weapons in particular will persist in Syria throughout its postwar transition period. During interviews, one influential CSIS Middle East expert observed, Syria’s current instability is only “Act I” in a much longer drama.\textsuperscript{125}

Pakistan is widely viewed as a highly unstable nuclear power with its own persistent internal disputes.\textsuperscript{126} Control of Pakistan’s nuclear material, weapons, and know-how is a very real concern. There are persistent concerns about its nuclear capability falling into the hands of a range of potentially irresponsible actors (e.g., rogue governments, fractured military forces, and/or nonstate actors). This concern is validated by the ease with which A. Q. Khan—the father of Pakistan’s nuclear capability—established a covert proliferation network that ultimately helped Syria, Iran, and North Korea obtain weapon’s designs, materials, and expertise.\textsuperscript{127}

Loss of responsible CBRN control and the potential for hostile use are not unreasonable fears in the two cases outlined above. In addition, tense relations between Pakistan and nuclear-armed India raise the specter of a more traditional nuclear scenario in the USCENTCOM AOR. Finally, Iranian membership in the “nuclear club” may compel other nations to following suit. A sudden increase in regional nuclear powers would increase the potential for miscalculation, use, and loss of control.

Operational Vignettes

These regional trends have uncertain consequences for core U.S. interests in the USCENTCOM AOR. That said, they will combine at times to trigger consequential regional crises. Considerations about specific combinations of trends should guide development and employment of U.S. ground force capabilities. While planners cannot discount the possibility of major combat campaigns in the region, the likelier employment of U.S. ground forces will emerge from disordered threats within states and between peoples.

With these trends as a guide, CSIS identified and considered a range of regional challenges as possible illustrative ground force demands. Eventually, these challenges were distilled down to ten vignettes, reflecting common trends in the AOR and reasonable illustrations of potential contingency events that may trigger large-scale ground force employment. Rather than point predictions of future events, these ten vignettes are emblematic of the kinds of regional developments against which U.S. decisionmakers may want to consider ground force responses. Table 4 provides a brief sketch of each USCENTCOM vignette.

While a more detailed description of the operational vignettes is outlined in Appendix C, key characteristics of the operational vignettes are in Table 5. Both this table and its USPACOM analog (Table 7) provide a brief survey of judgments on:

- core interests at stake;

\textsuperscript{124} Rene Pita, \textit{Analysis of Syria’s Chemical and Biological Threat} (Madrid: Insituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2012), 10.
\textsuperscript{125} Interview with a CSIS expert, February 11, 2013.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 22.
• principal operational type(s);
• predominant “theme” of the operational response;
• time frame;
• degree of anticipated strategic warning;
• level of permissiveness and violence in the operating environment;
• principal adversary types;
• expected cooperation and capability of local authorities and security forces;
• expected cooperation of local populations;
• expected coalition contributions.

Consistent with the study’s purposes, the judgments are qualitative. Appendix C provides more detail about the vignettes.
### Table 4. USCENTCOM Operational Vignettes

**Syrian Sanctuary.** The post-Assad government fails to establish effective and responsible control over major swaths of territory. Competing militant groups establish themselves in these areas and operate beyond the reach of transitional Syrian authorities. Enjoying the benefit sanctuary, these groups initiate destabilizing political agitation, violent attacks, and criminal activities focused against Syria, Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq. The U.S. leads a coalition operation to create a secure buffer against further attacks, help bound the sanctuary problem, and support at risk regional partners.

**Yemen Sanctuary.** Combined pressure from Sunni extremist groups and Houthi separatists results in a total failure of legitimate Yemeni authority throughout much of the country. Even Sanaa, the capital city, is challenged by widespread lawlessness, disorder, and violence. Both the Houthis and Sunni extremist groups use ungoverned Yemeni territory as a platform for wider attacks against GCC states. Ultimately, attacks on U.S.- and partner- flagged shipping, as well as persistent cross-border attacks by Sunni militants and Houthis on a weakened Saudi government results in a U.S./coalition intervention to deny sanctuary and secure passage through the Bab al-Mandeb.

**Iraqi Civil War.** After persistent unrest the fragile political accommodation between Iraq’s sectarian communities collapses and open fighting breaks out between Government of Iraq (GoI) forces and Kurdish Peshmerga in Kirkuk and Ninevah provinces. Simultaneously, renewed Sunni-based terrorist attacks against the GoI and vulnerable Shi’a populations results in a severe government crackdown nationwide. Ultimately, a fragile U.S.-brokered peace agreement results in a joint U.S./Arab League peacekeeping mission to monitor the Syrian-Iraqi border, separate Kurdish and Iraqi-Arab forces, secure critical infrastructure, and protect at risk Sunni populations.

**Pakistani Collapse.** Violence between factions inside Pakistan results in the toppling of the central government. Competing militant and extremist groups, powerful sub-state militias, and elements of Pakistan’s failed armed forces openly vie for control of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and the port of Karachi. Meanwhile, United States gains credible evidence that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons have fallen under the control of competing factions. Fearing the impending use or movement of nuclear weapons, the United States and a limited number of coalition partners intervene to interdict or secure and, subsequently, evacuate Pakistani nuclear capabilities with the limited assistance of local allies.

**Regional Uprising.** A popular uprising across Saudi Arabia is triggered by a government crackdown on Shi’a separatist demonstrations in the Eastern Province. Sympathetic unrest among disaffected populations spreads across the Persian Gulf region and into already vulnerable Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. Iranian proxies further exploit the instability in the GCC with increased direct and indirect support for local resistance movements. Over time, the security of U.S./allied populations, installations, and property are progressively more at risk. In response to the crisis, U.S./NATO partners initiate operations to securely evacuate at risk U.S. and third-country nationals, secure military and foreign-owned commercial installations, and provide enabling assistance to key regional partners.

**Egyptian Civil War.** Persistent challenges to the struggling Islamist government in Cairo result in violent crackdowns by Egyptian security forces and their proxy political allies. Irreconcilable political visions produce unrest and, ultimately, result in disintegration of the Egyptian armed forces. Civil war follows shortly thereafter. The central government loses control of both the Canal Zone and the Sinai Peninsula. The conflict adversely affects secure transit of the Suez Canal and damages the SUMED pipeline. Eventually, all the major commercial lines collectively decide to stop transiting the canal until security is restored. At the same time U.S. naval assets suffer attacks while transiting the canal. In response to these events the U.S., NATO, and Arab partners undertake an operation to secure the canal against further disruption, establish overwatch and secure key nodes associated with the pipeline, and deny effective sanctuary in the Sinai.
Iranian Provocation. In the face of expanding civil conflict, Iran attempts to demonstrate the durability of the regime with an unanticipated underground nuclear test in combination with a number of long- and intermediate range ballistic missile tests. These provocations occur against the backdrop of region-wide political unrest. Iranian authorities are perceived to be “cornered” and unstable, particularly after a number of attacks by irregular Iranian maritime forces against commercial shipping and unattributed attacks against GCC leaders. Repeated attempts by the international community to diffuse the crisis fail. The U.S. and its GCC/NATO partners elect to deny Iran further access to the means of war and assist internal resistance groups with a limited military intervention. U.S./coalition forces move to seize Iran’s offshore oil and natural gas infrastructure, significant portions of Khuzestan Province, and the north side of the Strait of Hormuz to increase pressure on the Iranian regime.

Syria-Iraq Conflict. Tensions mount between the two fragile post-Ba’athist governments of Iraq and Syria. At the same time, a severe drought largely affecting Iraq triggers a border dispute between the two states. Hostile, non-state actors exploit on the conflict to protect their various interests, accelerating tensions on both sides of the border. Recognizing that Iraq is poised to attack Syria, the UN authorizes a peacekeeping mission to prevent conflict between the two countries and assure equitable distribution of shared water resources. The U.S. provides the bulk of the forces, as well as vital support architecture for the wider mission.

Saudi Civil War. Compelled by the regional “awakening,” the Saudi royal family begins a process of modest liberalization. It satisfies none of the competing interests and turns internal constituencies against one another. In the midst of the nationwide security challenge and growing instability, the Saudi royal family splinters. A fracturing of the Saudi security services ensues, leading to open fighting between competing armed factions. In the process, Saudi Arabia’s oil extraction and export infrastructure suffers significant damage. To prevent further irreparable harm, the United States leads a coalition of western and Arab forces to secure critical Saudi oil, natural gas, and port facilities. The intervention occurs with the tepid acquiescence of influential Saudi leaders.

Syria-Turkey Conflict. A hostile and unstable Islamist government emerges out of the political transition in Syria. It retains its WMD and ballistic missile capabilities as a hedge against foreign military intervention. Repeated incidents between Syrian government and Turkish border forces result in a significant militarization of the border between the two states. After an unattributed sarin gas attack inside its borders, Turkey requests support from the NATO alliance to conduct an incursion into Syria to establish a secure buffer and prevent continued attacks. U.S. forces conduct a large-scale enabling operation, occurring for the most part on the Turkish side of the border, to assist Turkey’s combat operation inside Syria.
### Table 5. Key Characteristics of USCENTCOM Vignettes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Op Types*</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Warning</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Adversaries</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Local Population</th>
<th>Coalition Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syria-Turkey Conflict</td>
<td>S, O, C</td>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Enable-Security</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td>S-M</td>
<td>U- (Locally) N</td>
<td>L, I, T, C</td>
<td>Co, Ca (Tu/Ally)</td>
<td>H (Syria)</td>
<td>Co (Tu/Ally) H (Syria)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table Key**

- **Interests**
  - S – Security
  - O – Order
  - SS – Strategic
  - StS – Strategic
  - A – Access
  - C – CBRN

- **Time Frame**
  - N (Near) – 0-5 Years
  - M (Medium) – 6-10 Years
  - L (Long) – 11-15 Years

- **Warning**
  - ES (Extremely-Short) – Hours
  - S (Short) – Days
  - M (Moderate) – Weeks
  - L (Long) – Months
  - VL (Very Long) – Years

- **Environment**
  - P – Permissive
  - U – Uncertain
  - N – Non-permissive

- **Adversaries**
  - S – Sophisticated Military
  - L – Limited Capability
  - FS – Fractured, Sophisticated Military
  - PL – Fractured, Limited Capability
  - M – Militia
  - I – Insurgent
  - T – Terrorist
  - C – Criminal

- **Local Authority/Population**
  - Co – Cooperative
  - I – Indifferent
  - U – Un-cooperative
  - H – Hostile
  - Ca – Capable
  - Ch – Challenged
  - F – Failing

Note: See Appendix A for definitions.
Regional Takeaways

- The Asia-Pacific rebalance will continue to dominate DoD planning for the foreseeable future.
- The most consequential source of potential conflict in the USPACOM AOR is state-based competition over regional primacy, resources, and territory.
- Uncertainty about China’s regional intentions, methods, and military capabilities, and an aggressive, unpredictable, and nuclear-capable North Korea will remain predominant security challenges in the region over the near to long terms.
- Natural catastrophes, environmental degradation, and climate change will persistently threaten the region’s populations, territory, material wealth, and general stability.
- A number of ethnic and ideological disputes will pose internal challenges to important states in the region but will not trigger U.S. intervention.
- Theater shaping is a foundational military activity in the USPACOM AOR.

Key Regional Takeaways

While complex intrastate and interstate conflicts characterize the greater Middle East, great power competition between the United States and China, regional disputes over the control of territory and resources, an uncertain North Korean future, and natural and human catastrophes define the Asia-Pacific security situation. Economic competition, active territorial disputes, widespread and increasing regional militarization, responsible CBRN control, demographic challenges, and natural disasters are among the most pronounced challenges for USPACOM. Combined, they imply a unique set of potential demands for U.S. ground forces.

Under the DoD’s January 2012 Strategic Guidance, U.S. defense planners are shifting their focus toward the USPACOM AOR. The commander of USPACOM has geographic responsibility for 36 countries, which collectively account for over half of the world’s population. The AOR stretches from the western limits of U.S. territorial waters to India’s western border. Further, it encompasses both the North and South Poles and all of Antarctica.

The theater includes the world’s three largest economies (United States, China, and Japan) and four of the ten fastest-growing U.S. export markets (China, Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong). Sixty percent of U.S. exports annually are destined for this region. In addition, the AOR includes seven of the world’s ten largest militaries (Russia, China, the United States, India, North Korea, and South Korea) and five of the world’s eight known nuclear states (Russia, China, the United States, India, and North Korea).

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All five core interests converge and are vulnerable in USPACOM. U.S. allies and partners in the region are increasingly wary of a more assertive and capable China, paying special attention to its military modernization, the pursuit of sophisticated A2/AD capabilities, and new levels of Chinese military activism, which may pose latent hazards to U.S. and partner access, freedom of action, and use of the global commons. Among the five known CBRN states in the region, North Korea is an unstable nuclear power with large stocks of chemical and biological weapons, and control over the Russian CBRN arsenal remains a critical future uncertainty. The region overall, including U.S. territory, is uniquely prone to severe natural disasters with the potential to displace millions of people and undermine regional governments and economies. Thus, among its myriad challenges, disaster response will remain a persistent contingency demand for U.S. forces in the AOR.

U.S. military personnel and capabilities have been persistently present in force in the AOR since before World War II. Today, some 325,000 U.S. military and civilian personnel are stationed in the region, with active duty military strength totaling 20 percent of the total U.S. joint force. Nearly 28,500 U.S. service members are stationed in South Korea, approximately 38,000 more in Japan, with tens of thousands more forward-deployed in Guam, Hawaii, Alaska, and on the U.S. West Coast. Although the stationing of U.S. forces around the region are currently under review, the ongoing defense “rebalance” to the Asia-Pacific region reinforces the historic durability of U.S. military commitment to the region.

The cornerstones of this substantial U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific theater are five mutual defense treaties the United States shares with Australia and New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. Throughout the Cold War, a “hub-and-spokes” policy defined U.S. engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, with an emphasis on bilateral agreements rather than the multilateral security institutions of the European theater. Victor Cha, CSIS Korea Chair, argues this unique difference between the security arrangements of the two primary Cold War theaters came from a U.S. desire to limit the likelihood of smaller Asian partners drawing the United States into a broader war with the Soviet Union.

After the culmination of the Cold War, the United States retained the hub-and-spokes construct to generate new regional partnerships and strengthen existing ones. While bilateral relationships are undiluted by alliance politics, they can also make regional consensus building problematic. This can certainly limit the prospects for the kind of U.S.-led collective action and pressure that multilateral alliances can bring to bear.

Asia-Pacific Rebalance

On January 5, 2012, the Obama Administration released its new strategic guidance, publicly reorienting U.S. defense objectives after the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Following a decade of war in the USCENTCOM AOR, the guidance signaled a fundamental policy shift toward the vast and strategically vital Asia-Pacific region. In practice, the rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region focuses on maintenance of treaty alliances, while strengthening new and existing regional relationships. Beyond engaging current partners, the strategic guidance outlined objectives aimed at building regional networks

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that would enhance “collective capability and capacity for securing common interests.”  

Although DoD has released little additional public guidance since January 2012, the rebalancing of U.S. military priorities and capabilities toward USPACOM is intended to underscore the region’s enduring significance to U.S. security.

Though U.S. policymakers are quick to argue to the contrary, the Asia-Pacific rebalance is directly attributable to U.S. and allied anxiety about the emergence of China as a military and economic power. China has advanced both its military forces’ reach and technical capability over the past two decades, forcing a U.S. review of force structure, military posture, concepts, and plans in the region. Further, concepts like AirSea Battle (ASB) have emerged in an attempt to generate new joint synergies that would be useful in overcoming geographic and technical challenges to U.S. access and freedom of action, particularly in light of Chinese capabilities. With the rebalance, the Pentagon is keen to demonstrate a renewed American commitment and capability to secure interests across the vast Asia-Pacific region.

The top U.S. priority in the AOR is prevention of a military confrontation with Beijing. In general, U.S. foreign and security policy in the region seeks to manage any adverse security effects associated with a rising China. As part of the rebalance, the USPACOM Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) focuses on engaging regional partners and favorably shaping the operational environment to limit the potential for armed hostilities. This shaping activity involves more than deterrence of and preparation for war with China, as the region faces many other (and more immediate) security challenges, ranging from natural catastrophes to North Korean hostility.

In this regard, the TCP serves as baseline for military planning. With shaping and engagement chartered by the TCP as USPACOM’s base plan, the day-to-day mission of assigned and apportioned forces equates to “fighting phase zero.” In this context, “winning” means establishing and maintaining conditions favorable to continued peaceful relations among the United States, its allies, and China; retaining a stable regional balance of power; and maintaining an overall U.S. military posture that is agile enough to contend with the region’s range of defense-relevant challenges. The most militarily demanding potential contingency in USPACOM—war with China—was judged to be preventable and highly unlikely. Thus, within the TCP’s construct, operational plans are “branches” to a base design focused primarily on conflict prevention.

Training exercises will continue to be an important component of the USPACOM engagement strategy. The current slate of military training exercises includes TALISMAN SABRE, KEEN SWORD/KEEN EDGE, COBRA GOLD, BALIKATAN, and RIM OF THE PACIFIC. As resources decline, however, these exercises may become “mission-rehearsal” for anticipated future operations.

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137 DoD, Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership, 2.
141 CSIS Ground Forces Roundtable at USPACOMHQ, January 9, 2013.
142 Ibid.
143 The majority of these exercises—Cobra Gold (U.S. and Thailand), Keen Sword and Keen Edge (U.S. and Japan), and Balikatan (U.S. and Republic of the Philippines)—are designed to improve combat readiness and joint/bilateral interoperability between U.S. and regional allied forces. There are two biennial exercises that take place in the region: the Talisman Saber and the Rim of the Pacific. The Talisman Saber is a bilateral exercise with Australian and U.S. forces that focuses on short warning, power projection, and forcible entry scenarios in order to train the combined forces in mid- to high-intensity level combat operations. The Rim of the Pacific is a large-scale, multinational power projection / sea control exercise. For more information on USPACOM exercises and
The advantages of focusing on engagement and shaping first—especially in a region where the stakes associated with escalation are so great—are clear. The visible employment of forces in mission-focused partnership activities enables the United States to evaluate and help build partner capability and capacity, while enhancing combined interoperability. It also demonstrates American commitment to security in the region. Further, it effectively positions the United States to establish “overwatch” on strategic lines of communication and the commons, as well as reaffirming and recommitting to relationships with allies and partners in advance of contingency employment. These engagements underwrite continued U.S. hedging vis-à-vis potential adversaries without unnecessarily provoking them.

The military services may not view “fighting phase zero” as a defining aspect of their core cultures. However, the distributed peacetime activities reflected the USPACOM’s TCP—especially those that may underwrite future contingency response either within or outside the region—arguably increase the prospects for successful prevention, while effectively posturing forces for future success in region-specific missions if and when prevention fails.

Trends

Long-established as a Pacific power, the United States is working to regenerate partnerships with several regional powers after a long hiatus. Even states with formerly troubled relations with the United States have sought new levels of military cooperation of late. Vietnam and the Philippines, for example, have increased engagement with the U.S. military as illustrated by recent (nonwarfighting) combined exercises, humanitarian assistance agreements, and, in the case of the Philippines, a limited special operations presence. These engagements signify a changing environment seemingly more favorable to limited, rotational, small-scale U.S. presence outside traditional large U.S. bases in South Korea and Japan.

Senior U.S. decisionmakers plan to increase this distributed approach to prevent future conflict in USPACOM. While both senior American political and military leaders pin a great deal of hope on a U.S. ability to favorably shape security outcomes in the region, several regional trends suggest that prudent contingency planning is required. Five trends, in particular, are noteworthy:

- Increasing competition for regional primacy, territory, resources, and freedom of action;
- Alternative China futures;
- The uncertain trajectory of North Korea;
- Natural catastrophes and climate change;
- And, finally, enduring ethnic and ideological disputes.

1. Increasing Competition for Regional Primacy, Territory, Resources, and Freedom of Action

The recent resurgence of military ties between the United States and regional partners, coupled with a general increase in the militarization of a number of interstate disputes, illustrates a marked shift in regional perceptions about the distribution of power and future security in the greater Asia-Pacific. The dominant security dynamic in the region is an active competition between regional actors for primacy, territory, resources, and freedom of action. While many in Washington see this primarily in the context of the U.S.-China relationship, Pacific Rim nations consider it a more fundamental competition between regional powers. For the United States, one prominent uncertainty is whether or not the regional powers

aligned with or friendly to the United States become net providers of security and, therefore, reduce U.S. demands.  

One dominant factor that has the potential to fundamentally undermine regional security affairs is the challenge posed by China’s pursuit of greater influence and control over regional outcomes. With vast economic potential, a large population, growing military capability and reach, expansive territorial claims, and a persistent naval presence in region’s most disputed territory and waters, China exemplifies a rising power with expansive aspirations.

The most visible expression of Beijing’s quest for regional primacy is its claims of territorial sovereignty over an expansive set of islands, island chains, islets, reefs, and bodies of water in both Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. Once confined to the enduring dispute with Taiwan, challenges in this regard are most evident recently in ongoing, multistate tensions in the South China Sea (SCS), East China Sea, and in various other locations across the Pacific. China exploits these territorial disputes for the purpose of expanding its reach, influence, and latent power. Historically, the most enduring territorial dispute is between China and Taiwan. Since Chinese Nationalists fled the mainland and formed the Republic of China in 1949, the People’s Republic of China has continued to claim sovereignty over Taiwan and has resisted any move by the Taiwanese government to establish legal independence. Though tensions have decreased of late, increased Chinese assertiveness regionwide could result in resurgent conflict between the two Chinas.

Recent territorial disputes in the SCS have been more pronounced. According to one CSIS expert, the SCS issue is defined by three dominant factors: access to hydrocarbons, control over fisheries, and expansion of territorial sovereignty. While on the surface SCS tensions are a product of competing claims over the region’s abundant natural resources, in reality, the challenge is deeper and more complex. Should the region’s natural resources vanish overnight, for example, the various states making claim to the disputed territories would not waver in their pursuits as sovereign control is the paramount issue at stake.

Persistent territorial disputes in the SCS naturally heighten insecurity, as smaller nations feel vulnerable in the face of Chinese provocation. In addition, the reality of rival military forces routinely operating in close proximity—coupled with the potential for an inadvertent confrontation or miscalculation—increases tensions substantially. A simmering territorial disagreement could rapidly transition to armed hostilities with very little strategic warning.

Smaller nations have responded to increased Chinese military assertiveness with accelerated defense spending and military acquisition, predominantly focused on naval and air capabilities. States like Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam have engaged in an arms race of sorts. Concurrently, Japan, Australia, Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines have actively sought to enhance security relations with the United States as a counterweight to Chinese material and geographic advantages in the region. This surge in the militarization of the territorial disputes could trigger future miscalculation, leading to a dangerous and unpredictable escalation. The prospect of provocation, counterprovocation, and armed retaliation increases with each successive move by the actors involved.

A majority of U.S. treaty allies and partners in the USPACOM AOR are currently involved in territorial disputes with Beijing. For example, China claims historical sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, a chain of uninhabitable islets under Japanese administration since 1895. In January 2013, China and Japan deployed naval vessels and aircraft to the islets to flex their respective muscles. While the U.S. administration has repeatedly claimed neutrality on territorial issues in the Pacific, the U.S. hand

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146 Interview with a CSIS expert, March 20, 2013.
147 IISS, “Chapter Six,” 207–208.
could be forced in the face of an escalation in tension between parties to the dispute, especially given Japan’s status as a treaty ally.

In addition to strengthening ties between the United States and regional actors, Chinese assertiveness has triggered greater cooperation among regional powers as well. More states are working together to strengthen diplomatic and military cooperation and maritime and economic security. Japan and the Philippines, for example, have recently engaged one another in substantive security talks, resulting in an affirmation of a strategic partnership between the two states on the subject of Chinese naval and reconnaissance incursions. The potential regional blowback related to China’s expansive territorial claims favors the U.S. Asia-Pacific rebalance as states who were once wary of U.S. unilateral hedging activities vis-à-vis China are now finding common ground with both the United States and each other.

Beijing’s Pacific designs have unnerved India as well. Seeking greater international status in its own right, India has kept a watchful eye on China. A 2012 report by a leading Indian analyst warned that “[the] increasing influence of China [in the Pacific] has compelled India to rethink its own strategy toward its neighbors and to recalibrate its ties with the United States.” In general, as territorial disputes simmer, China’s bid for regional primacy may not only reignite historical animosities and translate into open hostilities but also trigger a new “Great Game” of sorts that sees regional states seeking to attain a position of advantage before and at the expense of others.152

2. Alternative China Futures

In strategic calculations with respect to the USPACOM AOR, China figures prominently as a strong and potentially aggressive regional presence; prudent military strategy development and contingency planning needs to account first for this prospect. There are alternatives, however, that merit attention, particularly as this study has a 20-year time horizon.

While forecasts predict a future China defined by political, economic, and military strength, the prospect of a weak, failing, or unstable China would be equally or more disruptive to long-term regional security. From a planning perspective, an internally unstable China would have a more uncertain trajectory; by implication, this would have far-reaching and unpredictable regional effects. China could find itself suddenly in the midst a downward spiral of debt and widespread political disaffection. Plagued by an aging and shrinking population with few or no reliable and capable allies in the region, Beijing could enter a period of persistent political upheaval that manifests both as internal instability and external aggression. This would have an impact on the security of the Northeast Asian littoral and the Russian Far East.

The range of potential defense-relevant contingencies springing from a weak China would be extremely complex and disruptive, ranging from human security challenges, loose CBRN capabilities, and potential regionwide civil conflicts. While a rather unlikely outcome, prudent risk assessment requires the consideration of a weak China as an unexpected or disruptive scenario.

149 Early in January 2013, the Japanese foreign minister began a regional tour in the Philippines.
Yet another alternative is a concerted effort by China to compete with the United States and its partners in all but the military domain. For DoD, it is relatively easy to focus on China’s military capabilities and generate effective countermeasures to a perceived Chinese military threat. There is, however, a more sophisticated course of action open to the Chinese. This course largely circumvents American military capability and “attacks” U.S. vulnerabilities in the political, economic, and social dimensions of conflict. Here Chinese strategists may generate “warlike” effects against the United States employing methods and capabilities far short of armed confrontation, leaving U.S. decisionmakers with no clear casus belli against which they might apply traditional military power. The 1999 book Unrestricted Warfare by two Chinese military scholars is illustrative of this concept (see the text box).

**Unrestricted Warfare** is a book published in 1999 by two Chinese military officers. It describes how less militarily advanced countries like China might compete with the United States. The authors argue that information technology is fundamentally changing the nature of warfare, sparking a revolution in military tactics and strategy. According to the book, the actors, locations, objectives, and the methods of warfare have expanded. This expansion is typified by the role of computer hacking, trade wars, and financial wars. In the authors’ words, “the boundaries lying between . . . war and non-war . . . will be totally destroyed.”


Recent developments in the cyber realm may be a harbinger in this regard. U.S. officials have recently exposed China as the source of deliberate cyber intrusions and attacks on critical government and commercial infrastructure worldwide. Already known to engage in cyber hacking and “virtual” theft of confidential information and intellectual property, a more concerted Chinese effort on multiple nonlethal fronts could collectively threaten core interests in a deliberate and surreptitious manner without resort to armed force. Combining cyber attacks, political action, economic warfare, and proxy violence, Chinese strategists might sideline American military capabilities and push conflict into realms where the United States is least prepared to wage “war.”

Although this section focuses specifically on the USPACOM AOR, such efforts would be globally disruptive. While the United States is moving to confront the cyber components of this threat, it may not be considering a more holistic campaign-like approach to a largely nonlethal conflict with China where cyberattacks are but one component. Some consideration of this prospect is warranted as no amount of military prevention would be wholly effective in response.

3. **The Uncertain Trajectory of North Korea**

North Korea is a “strategic state” whose stable functioning is uniquely important to U.S. security. It represents the most persistent active violent challenge to core U.S. interests in the USPACOM AOR. North Korea’s clear involvement in the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology, episodic nuclear weapons and ballistic missile testing, frequent violent escalation of the tense “cold war” with its South Korean neighbors, and persistent threats of wider war mark North Korea as the gravest near-to mid-term regional threat to the United States and its allies.


While China poses a significant speculative threat to a favorable regional balance of power, unpredictability designates North Korea as a future disorder challenge. Indeed, the possibility of a disordered political transition in North Korea presents a unique challenge to USPACOM contingency planners. While U.S. experts have long warned of the prospect of a collapse, North Korea has a number of prospective paths, ranging from peaceful transition and reunification to overt aggression in the midst of failure to catastrophic collapse involving sudden loss of control over CBRN capabilities. Effective management of and response to all three possibilities are of significant concern to the United States and the states lying in close proximity to North Korea.

North Korea has been a closed society with opaque (at best) politics and unpredictable political leadership for 60 years. That fact, in combination with serial provocations targeted primarily at South Korea, the presence of CBRN weapons, and its significant forward-deployed conventional military assets, makes the future disposition of North Korea an urgent strategic priority for U.S. defense planners and USPACOM. Either “explosion” or “implosion” of North Korea would necessitate a response from the United States on the peninsula. In either case, however, the United States responses would benefit from partnership with South Korea, which has an equal or even greater interest in the outcome.

4. Natural Catastrophes and Climate Change

Natural catastrophes and climate change will continue to have a profound impact on human security throughout the USPACOM AOR. By frequency, natural catastrophes may in fact be USPACOM’s likeliest contingency response demand. Comprising the world’s largest ocean and situated over several continental fault lines, the Asia-Pacific region is plagued by natural catastrophes. Typhoons, annual flooding, tsunamis, and earthquakes ravage the region’s populations. In the coming decades, climate change and rising sea levels will threaten a majority of the small-island and coastal states in the Pacific. Although the United States may not have clearly defined core security interests at stake with respect to victim states, humanitarian and human security concerns will certainly beg a response from the international community, and the United States will continue to be the world’s principal enabling hub for such responses.

Notable recent disasters in the Asia-Pacific region include the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2011 Japanese earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster. Asia-Pacific states sit atop six tectonic plates and dozens of changing faults, making them uniquely susceptible to earthquakes and tsunamis. The frequency and intensity of natural catastrophes is anticipated to accelerate with the advance of global climate change. Each successive disaster in the region provides illustrative conditions against which U.S. military forces may need to be employed.

Both climate change and natural catastrophes may have a catalytic effect on residual security threats as well. While natural catastrophes have immediate and devastating effects on the health and safety of affected populations, they can also serve to magnify preexisting adverse security conditions.


160 One such possibility is the “100-year earthquake” predicted to hit Nepal in the early 2030s. Such a disaster would ignite political, economic, and social instability in a tense region. The massive displacement of an already vulnerable
Physical and economic security are the principal victims of natural disasters, as criminal behavior and generalized insecurity soar and essential industries and basic economic activity cease to function effectively. In some extreme cases, this forces the states hardest hit by catastrophes to be in a perpetual state of rebuilding.

The U.S. military’s disaster response efforts have several effects. First, they relieve human suffering. Second, they are tangible demonstrations of U.S. values and the wider U.S. commitment to an affected region and its people. Finally, they provide U.S. forces with the opportunity to employ military capabilities alongside partners with very little to no strategic warning, in effect serving as a useful demonstration of latent U.S. contingency response capability. This both builds confidence in U.S. regional partners and it serves as a caution to potential adversaries that might be tempted to exploit vulnerable states or test U.S. capability in the future under less benign conditions. One working group participant well summarized the benefit the military disaster relief when he observed “[it] shows that this powerful [military] instrument can be used in a benign fashion.”

In addition to the certainty of future natural catastrophes in the region, populations in the USPACOM AOR are susceptible to pandemics. Large populations, poverty, and weak public health mechanisms make the region a breeding ground for infectious diseases. Rapidly spreading viral infections, such as avian flu, have already challenged states unprepared for large-scale outbreaks of contagious illnesses. Like responses to natural disasters, pandemic diseases are not a traditional military challenge. However, the substantial response and enabling capacity resident in the U.S. military make it an effective first responder when a pandemic threatens U.S. citizens, territories, and allies in any region of the world.

While many may debate the specifics of prospective disasters and the scale of the U.S. response, there is an absolute consensus that natural catastrophes, climate change, and pandemics will have a profound impact on the USPACOM AOR over the coming decades. All three could have wide-ranging adverse effects on U.S. allies, partners, and territories across the Pacific Rim.

5. **Enduring Ethnic and Ideological Disputes**

The Asia-Pacific region exhibits enduring ethnic and ideological disputes affecting security both within and between important states. While this challenge is perhaps more profound and urgent in the USCENTCOM AOR, it also has the potential to encroach on core U.S. interests in the USPACOM AOR as well.

The dissolution of European colonial authority in South and Southeast Asia left arbitrary boundaries between like peoples. Whether by conscious design, indifference, or negligence, the boundaries established by European powers over several centuries have been the source of hundreds of ethnic and ideological conflicts in the region since the collapse of colonialism. As a consequence, persistent societal disputes endure in states like India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and the Philippines.
While the prospect for direct U.S. military involvement in any of these might be low, a confluence of competing trends—including the regional conflict for primacy and territory, natural catastrophes, and climate change—may converge to create pockets of disorder that would elicit some U.S. or coalition military response. Among potential responses, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and human security operations, foreign internal defense, or enabling missions are the likeliest. Most are presumed, however, not to breach the large-scale threshold.

The Philippines, for example, faces both religious and internal political disputes. For the moment, those conflicts have diminished markedly. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front signed a cease-fire with the Manila government in late 2012, due in large measure to joint U.S.-Filipino counterterrorism efforts. However, this agreement does not guarantee that all Muslim insurgent groups will follow suit. For example, the weakened Abu Sayyaf Group and members of the Jemaah Islamiyah remain in Mindanao. The prospect that these groups might again become sources of global extremism remains. The National People’s Army of the Communist Party of the Philippines lingers as an insurgent force as well, although instances of armed activity have substantially decreased. As a long-term ally of the Philippines, the United States will continue counterinsurgency support to the Manila government. However, that support will probably remain small-scale.

Indonesia, a state comprised of over 17,000 islands and the world’s largest Muslim population, faces prolific ethnic and religious tensions that perpetually threaten local security. Though only a fraction of the predominantly moderate population, radical Islamists seeking to establish a Muslim state have resorted to violence against minority religious populations in the past. While these activities have in large measure subsided, extremists remain active in the country and have the potential to break the fragile peace. As in the case of the Philippines, large-scale direct U.S. involvement is expected to be a low-probability prospect in Indonesia.

Thailand, a treaty ally of the United States, is plagued by enduring civil and cross-border tensions as well. Following an uprising in 2005, civil unrest of some description has been a permanent feature of internal Thai politics. At the same time, armed ethnonationalists in the state’s three southernmost provinces have waged a separatist battle against the central government since 2004. Finally, some experts are concerned that the eventual death of Thailand’s king may trigger increased violence by southern separatists and generate increased tensions between the rural and urban populations nationwide.

In all three cases, large-scale direct U.S. involvement in civil conflict is a low-probability event. There is, however, some prospect that U.S. forces may undertake large-scale humanitarian operations or evacuation of U.S. and third-country nationals in these three countries. Further, as this report looks out

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167 Both the MILF and the ASG stem from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).
172 The three southern provinces are populated by Muslim, Malay-speaking people, as opposed to the predominantly Buddhist, Thai-speaking majority of the state. For more information, see Niharika Mandhana, “No Peace: Why Conflict Persists in Thailand’s Deep South,” Time, April 23, 2012, http://world.time.com/2012/04/23/thailand-insurgency/.
years, there is some potential that irregular actors operating in these countries could become proxy instruments in a regional great power conflict that results in deeper U.S. involvement. There is also some potential for the United States to become involved in internal conflicts in the USPACOM AOR as a major contributor or leader of an internationally-mandated peace operation, as occurred in East Timor from 1999 to 2002.\(^{173}\)

Perhaps the most enduring and dangerous regional conflict with roots in a long-standing ethnosectarian dispute is the stand-off between India and Pakistan. Armed conflict between Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan—both nuclear powers—or their proxies has been frequent in historical terms and remains a persistent threat to regional security. In absolute terms, it is the most militarily significant “seam” issue between USPACOM and USCENTCOM. Another escalation to large-scale armed hostility between the two should remain a grave concern to U.S. strategists—especially given the 20-year time frame under consideration here.

An India-Pakistan conflict presents unique challenges to U.S. policymakers and military planners. Relations between the United States and India have dramatically improved in recent years. Conversely, Pakistan—which until recently was a close partner in the U.S. “war on terror”—has recently fallen out of favor given a widely held U.S. belief that it remains complicit in harboring and facilitating violent terrorist groups. Though the United States is not expected to become a direct party to a conflict between India and Pakistan, there is a high probability that it would play a role in ending it.

Finally, an under-considered regional ethnic dispute with a significant disruptive potential over the next two decades lies in the emerging conflict between ethnic Russians and ethnic Chinese in the Russian Far East.\(^{174}\) As one regional expert at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies explained, the Sinofication of Russian territory and fear of increasing Chinese influence within Russia could become a significant source of future conflict between the two countries and within Russia.\(^{175}\) This would be especially troublesome to the extent that this budding dispute results in interstate or intrastate violence. Already wary of its southern neighbor, ethnic Russian nationalist sentiments could result in a direct and potentially violent confrontation on multiple levels over the next two decades.\(^{176}\)

**Operational Vignettes**

Unlike USCENTCOM, there is perhaps more certainty about the potential source of consequential security challenges and threats to core U.S. interests emerging from the USPACOM AOR. Various China futures will dominate U.S. security calculations. The most likely set of circumstances would see China progressively testing U.S. and partner resolve in various territorial disputes without crossing clear red lines that would trigger a direct U.S. military response. Likewise, various branches of the persistent North Korea problem will remain on the U.S. contingency agenda in the region as well. The most dangerous or unpredictable among these involve sudden dissolution of effective political authority north of the 38th Parallel. The frightening array of lethal capabilities at the disposal of the North Korean military and the prospect of those capabilities atomizing into the hands of various competing actors requires significant attention. Catastrophes—including the potential for a pandemic—are a regional certainty. Natural and human disasters can have an impact on both partner nations and U.S. territories at any time. Changes in the global environment may make this threat even more profound over time.

In response to these, USPACOM appears postured to focus first on shaping long-term security outcomes in ways that are both favorable to the United States and have the greatest potential to limit the

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\(^{175}\) CSIS Ground Forces Meeting with Scholars at APCSS, January 11, 2013.

\(^{176}\) Ibid.
possibility of armed hostilities between it and China. Prevention will probably not be as successful with respect to the North Korean challenge, nor will it have any material impact on the intensity and frequency of natural catastrophes. Thus, preparing for effective U.S. and allied responses to a North Korean crisis or disaster will be of paramount concern. These latter two cases are of unique importance to ground forces.

As in the case of USCENTCOM, the study team developed ten USPACOM vignettes for consideration. These vignettes are the basis for future challenges risk assessment occurring in the next section of this report. They reflect common trends in the AOR. Like USCENTCOM, they are not predictions. Rather, they are credible illustrations of contingency demands given the region’s perceived security trajectory and they are emblematic of a range of possible regional outcomes. Table 6 provides a short description of each vignette.

A more detailed description of the operational vignettes is at Appendix D. The vignettes’ key characteristics are captured below in Table 7.
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<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>USPACOM Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pan-Pacific Tsunami</td>
<td>A massive subsea earthquake creates a large, fast-moving tidal wave that hits Hawaii, Guam, and American Samoa. Property destruction in urban areas is substantial and most residences are uninhabitable in the affected areas. Disruptions of water, power, and sanitation systems pose threats to public health and security. In response, USPACOM is ordered to initiate a large-scale humanitarian assistance effort in all three locations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines Pandemic</td>
<td>A lethal strain of avian flu emerges suddenly in Manila, rapidly spreading throughout the city and all other major Filipino urban areas. Hospitals and clinics are overwhelmed and the death toll soars. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend quarantine for travelers bound for the U.S. and its territories. Cascading quarantine limitations quickly prevent U.S. and third country expatriates from leaving the region. Filipino security forces are increasingly unable to cope with the public health and safety crisis and ask for U.S. and international assistance. USPACOM is directed to secure, evacuate, and treat U.S. and designated third-country nationals and enable and assist Filipino, U.S., and international authorities contain the hazard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal Earthquake</td>
<td>A massive earthquake rocks Nepal, resulting in the leveling of Kathmandu and many other Nepalese cities. USPACOM is ordered to conduct a large-scale humanitarian assistance operation to provide for the near-term relief of the Nepalese people. Ground force contributions center on command and control (C2); intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); combat service support like logistics; medical support and water purification; engineering, fixed and rotary wing aviation; and local security.</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Korean Collapse</td>
<td>Rivalry within North Korea’s ruling elite and military high command leads to splintering in the regime. A palace coup causes the officer corps to splinter into various competing rebel and loyalist factions. As various military units begin pursuing divergent political-military objectives, open civil war breaks out between competing factions. Loyalist leaders vow to employ CBRN against foreign interference but have lost the ability to do so in an organized fashion. With the fear of rogue North Korean CBRN use, South Korean and U.S. forces intervene; the principal mission of U.S. forces is the seizure and security of North Korean CBRN capabilities and facilities, while also providing enabling capabilities to South Korean forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South China Sea Crisis</td>
<td>Incidents at sea involving Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino ships results in a maritime crisis involving their respective naval forces. China declares the South China Sea closed to foreign warships and demands that commercial ships gain Chinese permission before transiting. In response, USPACOM is ordered to undertake a large-scale show of force to demonstrate U.S. resolve to allies and partners around the South China Sea. This includes a surge of combat and enabling capabilities—principally, C2, ISR, theater sustainment and logistics, ground maneuver, and air and missile defenses—to key regional allies in Northeast Asia and around the Southeast Asian littoral.</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Korean Provocation</td>
<td>The Kim family in Pyongyang disappears from view for weeks; rumors of a coup circulate. Without warning, a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) from the North impacts in Seoul. The missile was armed with a nuclear warhead but “fizzles.” Nonetheless, it causes extensive damage and radiological contamination in the South Korea’s capital city. In response, the U.S. provides immediate consequence management assistance, as South Korean forces fully mobilize. In response to additional violent provocations along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and substantial loss of life, South Korean and U.S. forces launch a coordinated “fires” campaign against the North Korean command and control network, its integrated air defenses, and all known and suspected CBRN and missile sites. In response, North Korean artillery and mobile SRBMs inflict thousands of casualties in Seoul and other urban areas. The South Korean and U.S. governments agree to use offensive ground operations to permanently silence North Korean artillery and missile capabilities along the DMZ.</td>
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</table>
**India-Pakistan War** A string of terrorist attacks in New Delhi and Mumbai trigger an Indian punitive military expedition into Pakistan. A mechanized Indian corps begins a “cold start” attack into Punjab. Without warning, Pakistan launches a 10-KT nuclear SRBM and India responds with a nuclear attack on a suspected Pakistani nuclear storage facility. Two more such exchanges occur before U.S. and Chinese officials are able to negotiate a cease-fire and withdrawal of forces. An international peacekeeping force, co-led by the United States (in India) and China (in Pakistan) enters the theater to facilitate the orderly withdrawal of Indian forces and monitor and patrol the disputed border. U.S. forces also undertake a significant consequence management effort inside India.

**Korean Unification.** During a severe famine, a bloodless coup in North Korea topples the dynastic Kim family. The combined effects of famine and political upheaval result in a generalized failure of authority in North Korea and the rapid disintegration of their security forces. The new transitional North Korean regime orders the army to barracks and stands down the border guard, as refugees begin assembling in large numbers along the DMZ and the Chinese and Russian borders. The mounting crisis results in de facto reconciliation between North and South Korea. The South Korean military deliberately moves north with the acquiescence of the transitional Pyongyang government to establish security. U.S. forces follow in support, securing, disabling, and, in some cases, evacuating North Korean military capabilities. Naturally, the problem is most pronounced in the area of CBRN capabilities and explosive ordinance and conventional weapons security and disposal. U.S. ground forces also supply substantial enabling support to South Korean security and relief efforts.

**China Quarantine.** After the election of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government in Taiwan, tensions between China and Taiwan escalate immediately. China establishes a naval quarantine against Taiwan and closes the South and East China Seas and their affiliated airspace to foreign military forces. In response, the United States organizes a “coalition of the willing” to enforce a counterblockade of China-bound commerce and strategic resources. The U.S. mobilizes and deploys a variety of defensive and enabling capabilities region-wide, including logistics, ISR, air and missile defense, and long-range precision fires.

**Taiwan Counter-Lodgment.** Concerned about a return to power of Taiwan’s DPP and facing substantial civil unrest on the mainland, China initiates a covert action against Taiwan to undermine and destabilize its political process, directing clandestine funding and direct support to sophisticated, pro-unification groups inside Taiwan. These groups quickly organize and engage in violent political agitation. Fighting between Taiwanese forces and Chinese-backed paramilitaries, as well as more generalized civil unrest within Taiwan ensues. This threatens both the survival of Taiwan and thousands of third-country expatriates—including U.S. citizens. The United States responds with an expeditionary intervention undertaken with expressed purpose of securing the Taiwanese government against failure and evacuating of foreign nationals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vignette</th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Op Types*</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Warning</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Adversaries</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Local Population</th>
<th>Coalition Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Pacific Tsunami</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>N-L</td>
<td>ES</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Co, F</td>
<td>Co</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South China Sea Crisis</td>
<td>S, O, A</td>
<td>SF/FID/EO</td>
<td>Enable-Security</td>
<td>N-L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P-U</td>
<td>S, T, C</td>
<td>Co, Ch</td>
<td>I-Co</td>
<td>Modest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India-Pakistan War</td>
<td>S, O, C</td>
<td>HA/PKO</td>
<td>Stability-Security</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td>ES-S</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>FS, M, I, T, C</td>
<td>Co, Ch (India)</td>
<td>Co (India)</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table Key**

- S – Security
- O – Order
- SE – Strategic State
- A – Access
- C – CBRN
- N (Near) – 0-5 Years
- M (Medium) – 6-10 Years
- L (Long) – 11-15 Years
- ES (Extremely Short) – Hours
- S (Short) – Days
- M (Moderate) – Weeks
- L (Long) – Months
- VL (Very Long) – Years
- P – Permissive
- U – Uncertain
- N – Non-permissive
- S – Sophisticated Military
- L – Limited Capability Military
- FS – Fractured, Sophisticated Military
- FL – Fractured, Limited Capability
- M – Militia
- T – Terrorist
- C – Criminal
- Co – Cooperative
- I – Indifferent
- U – Un-cooperative
- H – Hostile
- Ch – Challenged
- F – Failing
IX. IMPLICATIONS FOR GROUND FORCES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES RISK

Based on a thorough review of the policymaking context relevant to U.S. ground forces, core U.S. interests, global insights, regional security trends, and the operational vignettes associated with the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs, the study team identified seven implications for U.S. ground forces. These implications include judgments on future challenges risk.

An overarching conclusion is that responses to violent disorder, natural catastrophes, and consequential third-party conflict, as well as major enabling and “theater-setting” actions, are among the likeliest large-scale ground force demands over the next two decades. While this finding applies to USCENTCOM and USPACOM specifically, it probably holds across all COCOMs. This conclusion underpins the detailed findings on risk outlined later.

Seven Key Implications for Ground Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implications for Ground Forces</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future ground operations will be disordered, asymmetric, distributed, and less decisive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The potential ground force demands in USCENTCOM and USPACOM are fundamentally different from one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There may be limited notice of the likeliest ground force warfighting demands and there is greater potential for their simultaneous occurrence—especially in USCENTCOM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground forces need to be more tailorable, scalable, and expeditionary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping and understanding the strategic and operational environments are foundational to future success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five “pacing” archetypes largely capture future large-scale ground force demands — humanitarian response, distributed security, enabling and support actions, peace operations, and limited conventional campaigns. Of the two principal warfighting demands — distributed security and limited conventional campaigns, the former should be the force’s primary warfighting focus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In light of these archetypes and the new warfighting focus, future challenges risk is increasing or static in all six major risk categories.</td>
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</table>

1. Future Environment and Operations: Disordered, Asymmetric, Distributed, and Less Decisive

In spite of the Pentagon’s current priorities, natural and human disaster, intrastate conflict, failing governments, VEOs, or some combination thereof should feature prominently in future U.S. ground force planning. Consistent with the 2011 CSIS ground forces report, the large-scale employment of Army and Marine general purpose forces and SOF will commonly center on the “messy middle” of the conflict spectrum.\(^\text{177}\) Indeed, the future “stock and trade” for U.S. ground forces will focus on securing vulnerable partners, populations, interests, infrastructure, resources, and military capabilities against wide-ranging disorder threats. At times, hostile states will complicate U.S. risk calculations with respect to response. Nonetheless, the principal source of future direct ground-force-relevant challenges will spring from internal state weakness and vulnerability rather than state strength.

Future operations will also occur in increasingly uncertain or entirely hostile environments where the right balance of mobility, discriminating lethal force, and protection will need to be employed consistent with specific operational demands. In short, there will be physical and virtual hazards in almost

\(^{177}\) Freier, U.S. Ground Force Capabilities, vii.
all imaginable contingency circumstances. Of particular note, U.S. ground forces should anticipate the ubiquitous presence of sophisticated means of violent resistance, CBRN dangers, and prolific threats to information and command-and-control systems. In particular, as proliferation continues and responsible CBRN control is under even greater pressure, there is greater likelihood for the requirement to operate in environments affected or influenced by CBRN weapons and capabilities.

Geographical boundaries will be insufficient to the task of containing or limiting future conflicts and crises. All contingencies will harbor great potential for regional spillover, as they are commonly complicated by increased access to and transfer of information. By implication, no contingency operation will occur in isolation and all could be complicated by the proliferation of lethal capabilities. Therefore, no future contingency can be assumed to occur in an entirely benign environment.

Future operations will also generally be less decisive than traditional conceptions of conventional warfighting hold. Complexity and indeterminacy will mark most future crises, limiting the prospect for definitive conflict or crisis resolution. In response, future contingencies of all types will trend more toward military action focused on limited objectives, such as seizing and securing critical infrastructure and capabilities, denying sanctuary, and large-scale enabling.

Competitor states will continue to pose security challenges; however, U.S. competition with adversary states may occur outside the realm of overt and direct military provocation. Those states that choose direct military confrontation will be subject to continued U.S. traditional advantages. Many aggressive state challengers—Iran, for example—are focusing their capabilities on niche areas of asymmetric advantage, including cyber, ballistic and cruise missiles, CBRN, area denial assets, unconventional tactics and warfare, and proxy forces. These offer more affordable alternatives to the buildup of large conventional forces. Further, closed or semiclosed societies, like North Korea, will continue to employ their opaque decisionmaking mechanisms to their advantage to seed doubt about their rationality and intentions.

To lower possible vulnerability and limit the potential for an unambiguous casus belli, hostile actors will foment disorder before exposing their finite military assets to U.S. conventional superiority. Thus, even state-based challenges will often manifest as internal threats to U.S. partners. Less traditional methods like this can serve to push a future adversary’s first line of defense forward away from their home territory or bases of support, offering them the prospect of creating a disordered buffer. Adversaries—both state and nonstate—will not necessarily engage in war-winning strategies focused on comprehensive U.S. defeat. Instead, they will attempt to thwart, complicate, or deter U.S. military action to drive up U.S. risk calculations.

The future reality of fewer U.S. forces and the prospect of more diverse theater-wide challenges indicate that all future ground operations will be distributed as well. At the highest level of intensity, ground forces will need to be able to fight a complex amalgam of regular and irregular adversary forces simultaneously across larger AORs. Further, operations are more likely than not to occur in close proximity to populations whose attitudes about and support for U.S. presence and operations will vary substantially.

2. **Two AORs: Fundamentally Different Demands**

Naturally, there are important differences between the two AORs. USCENTCOM, for example, is defined by greater potential for intrastate or transnational conflict affecting core U.S. interests. These factors may compound to create disordered contingency environments for U.S. ground forces. Ground operations in that region are more likely to result from failures of local authority where U.S. forces are responsible for securing at risk resources, infrastructure, populations, and military capabilities.

USPACOM is defined by a rising China and its potential to bring about an unfavorable regional order. Participation of U.S. ground combat formations in a war with China is improbable; theater-wide enabling efforts in the unlikely event of overt Chinese aggression are likelier U.S. ground force demands.
USPACOM has its own disorder challenges as well. However, these probably emerge from natural and human-driven disasters. The potential for a disordered and violent transition in North Korea is a significant outlier in USPACOM in this regard.

Though there is a very low probability of a conventional interstate ground war in either region—especially one where the U.S. is a direct and original party to the conflict—war with North Korea or Iran presents the most reasonable scenario for major ground combat against sophisticated state adversaries. Both conflicts would be “hybrid” in character from the beginning. The report’s 20-year time horizon leaves a great deal of uncertainty with respect to traditional challenges in both AORs.

3. **Warning and Responsiveness: Limited Notice and Increased Simultaneity**

In terms of strategic warning, the United States would have substantial advanced notice of traditional military aggression, as important technological advantages allow for earlier identification of the movement and buildup of an adversary’s conventional forces. However, there is a significantly smaller chance that significant strategic warning of crises stemming from the failure of competent authority will be present. These potentially violent and disordered environments—which could emerge from relatively minor or lower-visibility disturbances in networked “microclimates”—make accurate prediction of the trigger, timing, and character of an unfolding crisis very difficult to predict.\(^{178}\)

The pace of contemporary events is accelerating as well. This inevitably affects the speed at which insecurity might emerge and migrate. As the speed of insecurity and its potential to metastasize increase, it is reasonable to anticipate that the window of opportunity available to the United States to affect favorable outcomes against it may be narrow and fleeting. This reality puts new pressure on U.S. decisionmakers in the very area of contingency response they most want to avoid. The physical limitations associated with alerting or mobilizing and deploying ground forces that are largely based in the continental United States (CONUS) also increases this pressure.

These latter factors further contribute to the probability that events, loosely connected by motivation alone, will occur simultaneously, necessitating the divided attention of U.S. policymakers and senior U.S. commanders. This implies the potential need to commit smaller packages of U.S. forces to stacked challenges of similar character in different locations at the same time. The prospect for this appears to be much higher in USCENTCOM. Response to 21st-century disorder challenges in particular puts a premium on deploying forces to multiple “hot spots” simultaneously, predominantly from CONUS and a limited number of forward stations. Deploying forces will have to possess sufficient capabilities and capacity to affect entry under opposed or uncertain conditions, operate immediately upon arrival, and quickly achieve operational objectives.

4. **Future Forces: Tailorable, Scalable, and Expeditionary**

An increase in the likelihood of intervention as a result of consequential disorder and disaster, combined with growing requirements to enable large-scale partner operations and actions, will require that U.S. ground forces become more easily and rapidly tailorable to unique operational circumstances. The general demands implied in this report indicate that U.S. ground forces will require new levels of operational adaptability. They will need the flexibility to respond with the right combinations of military capabilities and adjust operations to fast-moving changes on the ground, often under conditions that are either not anticipated or discounted in prior strategic planning.

The methods by which conflicts are prosecuted, as well as the character and capability of consequential adversaries, will change. As perceived U.S. vulnerabilities emerge, U.S. adversaries will seek to exploit them. Thus, the U.S. will need to make prudent adjustments in force design, training, and

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force employment to account for changes in the environment, its diverse actors, and the capabilities and methods at the disposal of opponents, even while in the midst of active operations.

The combined impact of these factors is clear. A “one size fits all,” multipurpose force will not adequately meet future specialized operational demands. In addition to mission tailoring, the force will also need to be rapidly scalable in size to meet emerging demands. Deploying U.S. forces will require the capability to begin operations from a generated, cold start and operate and sustain themselves in a distributed fashion, often in austere and sometimes CBRN-contaminated environments, all without the benefit of well-developed forward basing. By definition, then, ground forces will need to be more expeditionary.179

5. Foundational Activities: Shaping and Understanding the Operational Environment

After substantial interaction with the regional commands, the study determined that shaping of the strategic and operational environments will be a critical component to success in the post-Iraq and Afghanistan era. While shaping may help prevent future interventions, it has a basic utility in contingency response as well. Future shaping relies on innovative approaches to maintaining an effective regional U.S. presence to offset a marked reduction in permanent forward basing.

In the course of shaping, U.S. ground forces should routinely seek to help raise the capacity of the likeliest future contingency partners, establish effective relationships for future operational success, and create and maintain “warm” forward contingency basing options. Focused shaping activities will enable future contingency access and greater interoperability with a wider universe of partners, expand the force’s overall situational awareness, provide early warning of impending crisis, and, under the best circumstances, potentially prevent conflict. The closer a prospective conflict is to traditional military competition, the higher the potential for prevention to succeed. Conflicts emerging from fault lines within states or between peoples are less preventable.

A baseline understanding of strategic and operational conditions is critical to success in all phases of military operations. For example, a broad understanding of the environment will help focus shaping activities and will improve future contingency responses. However, a comprehensive understanding of the likeliest operational environments will be difficult to achieve because of the declining density of forward-deployed forces. This will put a premium on the cultivation of important relationships with foreign partners at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of decisionmaking and action throughout the course of routine shaping activities.

Although force-wide regional expertise is preferred, it is doubtful to fully materialize. It is both cost-prohibitive and unlikely to adequately anticipate precisely where a regional focus will generate the greatest future operational benefits. It also presents significant force management challenges. At a minimum, U.S. ground forces will need to exhibit cultural sensitivity or a generalized and adaptable appreciation of the human dimension of the conflict or crisis. This requires the promotion of a more sophisticated regional and cultural IQ across the force.180

This IQ will clearly fall short of real expertise. However, it will provide a baseline for adaptability to specific contingency circumstances. Toward that end, the force will need to have the ability to track trends in key regions well prior to employment and rapidly map specific political, military, social, economic, information, and infrastructure (PMSEII) dynamics during planning. Once employed on operations, the force will need to adapt to new operational conditions in theater and underwrite force-wide situational awareness with effective mechanisms for the analysis and rapid sharing of relevant information.

180 Interview with a SOCOM representative, February 26, 2013.
6. **Five Pacing Archetypes: Optimize for Distributed Security**

In combination, future large-scale ground operations will fall into one of five “pacing” archetypes: humanitarian response, distributed security, enabling and support actions, peace operations, and limited conventional campaigns. The archetypes are a distillation of the 20 operational vignettes that were identified and scoped with meaningful input of representatives from USCENTCOM and USPACOM. The above order represents assumptions on the general likelihood of these archetypes. Distributed security and peace operations are more likely to occur in USCENTCOM, while USPACOM exhibits greater potential for humanitarian response and enabling and support actions. Both regions have an equal and very low probability for limited conventional ground campaigns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five “Pacing” Archetypes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanitarian response</strong> involves some combination of stability, security, and enabling operations in response to natural or human disasters that would occur in generally permissive environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distributed security</strong> is heavily weighted toward combat and security operations occurring in response to disorder and focused on gaining control over geography, infrastructure, populations, or dangerous military capabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enable and support actions</strong> are heavily weighted toward providing direct theater-level combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities to underwrite third-party efforts—joint, interagency, and foreign partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peace operations</strong> focus largely on security and stability operations, involving employment of forces to maintain a stable peace between parties to a dispute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited combat campaign</strong> involves large-scale combined arms combat action against the organized military forces of an adversary state.</td>
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</table>

Of the five “pacing” archetypes, distributed security proved to be the most prominent cluster of warfighting demands, accounting for seven of the 20 total vignettes identified.\(^{181}\) Distributed security actions involve some level of combat. As combat operations remain a core competency of the joint ground force team, distributed security should be the target for their future optimization. Given the current focus of defense guidance on more traditional deter/defeat missions, this archetype is the most “disruptive” future demand, as it may over time represent a family of contingencies, that by design DoD is progressively less prepared to address.

At its highest level of intensity (e.g., a Pakistani or North Korean collapse) distributed security can presumably trend toward designation as the “most dangerous” prospect as well. Thus, a key finding of this report is the idea that the most demanding potential archetype confronting U.S. ground forces lies in the possibility for distributed security operations in the face of complex hybrid or irregular threats in a failed or failing state with substantial CBRN capability. Of all possible high-intensity warfighting demands for U.S. ground forces, this is more dangerous and disruptive to U.S. interests than is the distant prospect of large-scale major combat campaigns against conventional military opponents. According to

\(^{181}\) The distributed security vignettes are as follows: Syrian Sanctuary, Yemen Sanctuary, Pakistani Collapse, Regional Uprising, Egyptian Civil War, Saudi Civil War, and North Korean Collapse.
one senior reviewer, “Where in the world is the biggest gap between what our forces can do and what might happen: . . . a nuclear failed state.”

This conclusion does not imply that U.S. ground forces should shed capabilities commonly associated with major combat campaigns. Instead, it implies that those capabilities will probably be employed more commonly in a three-dimensional, “three-block war” where the potential for “major combat” levels of violence will occur in a more distributed manner, simultaneous to and side-by-side with security, limited stabilization, and enabling actions. Given the wider universe of disorder challenges that may occur in the face of a failed sophisticated military, high-end ground force capabilities are more broadly applicable to the “messy middle” than many anticipate.

The identified cases of distributed security are presumed to occur in response to conditions of violent disorder. All involve irregular opponents. Three involve substantial CBRN threats. Four feature the potential for confrontation with elements of a failed sophisticated military. Finally, three of the seven occur in the shadow of a competitor state with some potential to either “free-ride” on or foment disorder or intervene militarily.

Although distributed security should be the warfighting focus for U.S. ground forces, the certainty of future catastrophes—especially in the USPACOM AOR—and the benign character of humanitarian response led the study team to identify it as potentially the most common large-scale demand. In many respects, general purpose ground forces represent the only real excess contingency response capacity in U.S. government for hazards whose primary impact manifests on land and whose scale overwhelms the physical capacity of local civil authorities. Therefore, they have potential as a source for thickening U.S. disaster responses both at home and abroad. The challenge of limited strategic warning is pronounced in the area of natural catastrophes. Therefore, standing capability and the means to move that capability quickly to the point of greatest need is at a premium in this regard.

Along with humanitarian response, there was a near equal distribution of vignettes associated with peace operations and enabling and support actions. They ranged from three to four cases each. However, the enabling component of future ground force operations—especially as it applies to the United States Army—is both a stand-alone archetype and a foundational condition-setting feature of all five archetypes collectively. Enabling of some description is, therefore, also considered among the likeliest future demands. As an archetype, the enabling and support category was most diverse, involving the operational types ranging from show of force and foreign internal defense to pure enabling operations and counteraccess/quarantine.

Finally, limited conventional ground campaigns were determined to have an equal chance of occurrence in either theater, but were universally considered to be the least likely prospect. Given the stakes involved in interstate conflict, limited conventional campaigns have the potential to be the most dangerous “pacing” archetype. However, given judgments on likelihood and warning, it is also an area where the United States might be able to assume increased risk.

182 Interview with a senior reviewer, February 11, 2013.
184 Three of the distributed security vignettes involve CBRN threats: Syrian Sanctuary, Pakistani Collapse, and North Korean Collapse.
185 In the Pakistani Collapse, Egyptian Civil War, Saudi Civil War, and North Korean Collapse vignettes, forces may potentially face elements of a failed sophisticated military.
186 These vignettes occur against a backdrop of a competitor state: Regional Uprising, Saudi Civil War, and North Korean Collapse.
Two of three vignettes falling into this category occur in USPACOM.\textsuperscript{187} Regardless of region, each vignette in this category involves CBRN and a sophisticated array of “hybrid” threats.\textsuperscript{188} All are also presumed to be offensive operations from the beginning. Therefore, alongside peace operations, limited conventional campaigns might be the category where U.S. policymakers have the greatest choice over whether or not to commit large numbers of U.S. ground forces. Less choice may exist with respect to war on the Korean Peninsula.

While the potential for military operations involving sophisticated adversary states remains a distant prospect, the study team found that U.S. ground forces may have to conduct large-scale enabling efforts in support of other allied or joint defensive or coercive options emerging from increased tensions. Overall, if a traditional military campaign emerges, it will occur under terms that are highly favorable to the United States and its unique military advantages.

The determination that distributed security was the likeliest optimization point for U.S. ground forces rose from recognition of three fundamental considerations. First, acknowledging that the nation’s political leadership continues to rely on U.S. ground forces for land control and sustained ground combat, the likeliest conditions under which they might have to do so will emerge from the loss of responsible authority over vulnerable populations, territory, resources, or dangerous capabilities. Second, distributed security by definition involves a combination of the most important ground force capabilities essential to success in the other four archetypes. Therefore, it proved to be the best reservoir within which to preserve the most diverse and adaptable portfolio of capabilities. Finally, a focus on distributed security preserves the hard-won competencies achieved by U.S. forces over the past 12 years that many fear will be lost with reorientation of defense strategy on more traditional military challenges. A focus on distributed security should underwrite an ability to flex—with sufficient strategic warning, some depth in the active component, and mobilization—to more expansive or more demanding future challenges. These include a more comprehensive and lengthy combined arms campaign than that suggested by this report or extended opposed stabilization.

\textsuperscript{187} Two of the limited conventional campaign vignettes occur in the USPACOM AOR: North Korean Provocation and Taiwan Counter-Lodgment.
\textsuperscript{188} The North Korean Provocation, Taiwan Counter-Lodgment, and Iranian Provocation vignettes all involve CBRN and “hybrid threats.”
7. Future Challenges Risk: Generally Increasing or Static

Consistent with the caution of the working group that supported this effort, the archetypes—like their supporting vignettes—are not point predictions. However, they benefit from specific regional contexts. The study team found them to be a useful expression of general ground force demand that easily translates in both substance and scale to a range of alternative contingency futures both within and outside USCENTCOM and USPACOM. As such, the archetypes are reasonable illustrations of circumstances that may emerge and could require large-scale ground force responses. They represent the merger of threat and response to contingency conditions that could occur in different places at various times but nonetheless entail similar ground force demands. As representative clusters of demand, they should help senior decisionmakers visualize a range of potential future options and, therefore, assist in future capabilities decisionmaking.

Collectively, specific future challenges risks associated with the general implications and archetypes outlined above are best considered within the context of the six major risk categories identified at the beginning of the study:

- Understanding the strategic and operational environment.
- Shaping strategic and operational conditions and outcomes.
- Projecting forces.
• Employing forces and capabilities to achieve operational objectives.
• Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions.
• Terminating military operations consistent with objectives.

Qualitative judgments are made below as to whether risk is increasing, static, or decreasing in the six major risk categories. Alongside a description of the specific risks by category, the study team offers a number of specific, policy-level risk mitigation proposals for near-term implementation. These do not holistically address the risk problem, as developing a specific risk mitigation strategy is outside the study’s scope. However, both the risks and mitigation recommendations articulated here emerged over time as essential topics for discussion in the forthcoming defense review. Appendix E provides a fuller description of risk mitigation. Overall, the CSIS team determined that DoD is assuming increasing or static risk in all six categories.

A. Understanding the Strategic and Operational Environment and Leveraging Information

Understanding operational challenges through a PMSEII lens, and recognizing the second- and third-order effects of decisions and actions across functional domains and geographic boundaries, is foundational to effective planning and execution of all archetypes. The study team determined that this is an area of increasing risk. In fact, it is arguably the area of highest risk to ground force success. This judgment is founded primarily on the potential impacts presumed to be embedded in DoD’s emerging strategic reorientation on traditional military competition and the implied limitation of irregular challenges to VEOs. Regional strategy and military planning, defense resources, capabilities development, and training will all follow DoD priorities. Those priorities currently undervalue many of the capabilities for distributed security that this report identifies as the optimal future ground force warfighting focus. The “understanding” problem will likely be exacerbated by the anticipated decline in routine U.S. ground force exposure to foreign populations and military forces, except those within the SOF community and those currently preparing for or conducting operations in Afghanistan.

In spite of current policy and service priorities, U.S. ground forces should optimize for warfighting in the “messy middle” where operations routinely occur among vulnerable populations in the face of a diverse array of networked adversaries. The “messy middle” is typically associated with counterinsurgency. However, the lethality and sophistication of challenges in this area could—at their highest level of intensity—be qualitatively more intense than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Though ground forces have demonstrated the ability to adjust to the most recent warfighting theaters over time, the emerging focus of U.S. defense strategy holds no guarantee that this capability will effectively bridge ground forces adequately toward their likeliest future demands. In fact, the current strategy may be misjudging the degree to which disorder will threaten core interests. This could result in an oversimplification of future military demands. This increases the potential for inadequate planning and preparation for the universe of potential challenges imagined in this report. Any artificial limitation of future challenges to state actors and violent extremists, without broader consideration of contingencies that might emerge from spontaneous civil conflict, for example, leaves the hard-won lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan vulnerable to future atrophying, especially in an era of declining resources.
Risk Mitigation—Understanding

- **Increase emphasis on capabilities that cultivate understanding of the human aspects of conflict and crisis.** All five “pacing” archetypes are uniquely dependent on a keen understanding of the operational environment, specifically variables that have an impact on human decisionmaking. Going forward, ground forces must persistently prepare for the complex human aspects of future operations.

- **Expand approach to understanding complex operating environments.** Ground forces must maintain the expanded view of intelligence and information that they cultivated over the last decade. This view transcends enemy “order of battle” considerations and includes innovations associated with accessing and exploiting information from myriad military and nonmilitary sources.

- **Identify innovative approaches to increasing regional IQ of CONUS-based forces.** Full regional expertise will be a “bridge too far.” With an increasingly CONUS-based force, the ability to build relationships and interact with local leaders and populations will be limited. Consequently, ground forces must look for innovative opportunities to increase their regional and cultural IQ.

- **Employ professional military education (PME) institutions as centers of excellence for ground force futures.** The service PME institutions can be critical hubs for visualizing future ground force demands in ways that are less affected by service biases. In the interwar period, the Army and Navy War Colleges were the engines of operational innovation in a period of scarce resources. They should aspire to the same model in the future.

B. **Shaping Strategic and Operational Conditions and Outcomes**

Identification of shaping as a major risk category was unavoidable given its prominence in current U.S. defense and theater strategy. Virtually every ground force stakeholder flagged shaping activities as meriting special consideration in this report. After some consideration, the study team found that shaping was an area of increasing risk.

The principal concerns with the current course of shaping focus primarily on its strategic targeting and synchronization. Broadly, there seems to be an abundance of routine theater-shaping activities that occur across key regions of the world. However, they may not be wholly effective due to an apparent lack of strategic targeting. More problematically, they may be misaligned with what are the force’s likeliest archetypal contingency demands. Further, as the positive effects of shaping can be difficult to measure, shaping efforts too might fall victim to future resource scarcity.

In an era of universally declining resources and the reality of limited U.S. ground force forward presence, success in shaping prospective contingency environments and foreign forces well in advance of future operations will assist in risk mitigation across the other five major risk categories. Ideally, regional shaping should take its cues first from emerging trends and challenges to better prepare U.S. and partner forces for the likeliest, most dangerous, and most disruptive future contingency operations. This includes but should not be limited to deterring conflict between the United States and its regional rivals and preventing destabilizing civil conflicts.
Accepting that deterrence and prevention will inevitably break down, shaping should focus on setting the conditions for future operational success, including enabling future operations. Focused shaping plays a crucial role in contingency response, helping U.S. and partner forces collectively meet desired operational ends in extremis. Effective shaping, for example, enables greater understanding and interoperability with partners, and it can facilitate future access and assist in building trust with foreign military leaders, local authorities, and important populations.

**Risk Mitigation—Shaping**

- **Improve and synchronize shaping initiatives.** The complexity of the future security environment demands a renewed focus on shaping. Success in shaping relies on it being linked to clear objectives, prioritized and targeted, and implemented within a framework that allows for continuous assessment and adjustment. Several shaping initiatives stood out and deserve mention. These include a continued focus on shaping activities in regional campaign plans; integration of the efforts of all forces engaged in shaping; prioritization and funding of joint and combined exercises; and finally, maintenance and enhancement of unique Army “theater-setting” capabilities.

C. **Projecting Forces**

The ability to alert, tailor, and deploy forces in the right composition and combination to meet the multiple demands suggested by the pacing archetypes will be a daunting task. New demands anticipated in this report like distributed security in CBRN environments, infrastructure security, widespread response to foreign disaster, or enabling a comprehensive response to an aggressive regional power call for the unique blending of diverse capabilities under the pressure of time. A number of factors will militate against timely and effective U.S. responses in the future. As a consequence, projecting forces is categorized as an area of increasing risk. In general, the study team concluded that U.S. ground forces currently lack the responsiveness and just-in-time tailorability necessary to effectively confront the likeliest pacing archetypes.

Forward-deployed ground forces are in short supply. Moreover, those that are positioned forward in key regions often lack the intratheater lift necessary to rapidly shift position to the area of greatest need. The existence of forces in theater—whether Joint SOF, Army forward-stationed and RAF, or U.S. Marines on forward presence missions—will mitigate some of the risk associated with projecting power. Indeed, they will often be essential to facilitating of any large-scale employment of follow-on forces. However, they are unlikely to have the full suite of capabilities on hand necessary to address urgent contingency needs. Forward ground forces will also lack sufficient depth and endurance for extended contingency missions or operations that require distributed mass from the outset.

An already-ponderous strategic decisionmaking process, a more generalized preference to avoid intervention, and the increasing speed of contingency events will combine to make a decision to commit the right kinds of forces slower than desired. Responding effectively to the future imperative for speed may well be the most significant strategic casualty of the post-9/11 wars.

After a decision to commit, U.S. ground forces will inevitably confront a number of structured and unstructured challenges to access and operational freedom of maneuver as well. While a great deal of energy has been devoted to an essential ASB concept that would allow U.S. joint forces to contend with

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**Projecting forces.**

This considers the ability of U.S. ground forces to employ combined arms capabilities, integrate coalition and interagency assets, and conduct military operations to achieve desired ends.
an advanced state-based competitor, substantially less attention has been paid to likelier rudimentary entry challenges involving disordered lethal environments (e.g., capable spoilers, mobilized irregular actors, and hostile populations). Synchronizing joint forces and service concepts and capabilities for “gaining and maintaining access” under a range of contingency conditions is essential and undervalued in the contemporary DoD strategy debate. U.S. ground forces will need the ability project forces over strategic and operational distances; “swarm” into theater from myriad, geographically separated bases; and arrive with sufficient maneuver, maneuver support, and sustainment capabilities to conduct large-scale operations immediately with limited requirements to stage and reconfigure.

A final critical component in future U.S. power projection capability is determining the most appropriate roles for reserve component ground forces. Strategic warning and the degree to which reserve component ground forces can achieve the same level of training and readiness associated with active forces are the two most important considerations in this regard. There is a natural division of labor implied in the five archetypes. Cold start distributed security missions and foreign humanitarian responses suggest the need for standing active ground force capabilities that can respond to a crisis with very little advanced notice and arrive in theater with all the capabilities essential to conduct operations. The enduring day-to-day aspect of enabling and support actions likewise suggests a foundational role for active forces that can be augmented by reserve capabilities as needed. Finally, the anticipated warning and degree of choice associated with peace operations and limited conventional campaigns suggest a more substantial role for reserve forces from the beginning.

**Risk Mitigation—Projecting Forces**

- **Enhance the ability of ground forces to deploy, conduct distributed entry, and employ forces immediately upon arrival.** To rapidly respond to a contingency, there is a growing requirement to improve the force’s overall deployability. The objective is to eventually have U.S. forces deploy directly to objective areas and employ forces immediately upon arrival, avoiding intermediate staging bases and conduct of lengthy reception, staging, onward movement, and integration. Shortening the deployment process and removing some intermediate steps are important to having the capability where deployment = employment. More finite ground forces and more distributed operations complicate this prospect. This is fundamentally a joint problem-involving improvements to the deployability of ground force capabilities and more capable and responsive air and sea-lift from both strategic and operational distances.

- **Examine overall active/reserve component mix and readiness.** U.S. decisionmakers expect responsiveness and operational adaptability from ground forces. A detailed examination of the active/reserve force mix is necessary to get a holistic picture of aggregate ground force capability. Three reserve component focus areas for large-scale foreign contingencies might be providing depth to limited conventional campaigns and extended distributed security, peace operations, and enhancing enable and support actions.

**D. Employing Forces and Capabilities to Achieve Operational Objectives**

The United States has the most battle-hardened force that it has had in three generations. In theory, this means that it should be prepared to employ forces in complex contingency operations on extremely short notice. The force, however, has honed its skills of late under very specific circumstances. While the Iraq and Afghanistan were useful training grounds for future disorder, they were not as effective in preparing the force for the broad archetypal demands of 21st-century ground operations highlighted in this report. Therefore, the study team judged overall risk in this category to be increasing. This judgment springs

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largely from differences between the nature of the force’s collective experience over the past decade and the character of operations that it is likeliest to confront in the future.

The likeliest, most disruptive, and potentially, most dangerous archetypal warfighting scenarios envisioned in this report are distributed security missions launched with limited or no notice into disordered lethal environments. Like Iraq and Afghanistan, effective future ground operations will require a great deal more than tactical military prowess. Also, like Iraq and Afghanistan, ground forces will continue to find themselves conducting operations alongside local leaders and among vulnerable local populations who vary in their attitudes toward U.S. efforts, from supportive and cooperative to indifferent or hostile.

The operational characteristics that mark these warfighting contingencies as distinct from the post-9/11 conflicts will be the degree of lethal sophistication in the hands of adversaries, their networked character, and the limited degree to which U.S. forces might enjoy host nation support. The most demanding and evocative example of this might be intervention in a failing CBRN state or interventions involving civil conflict where a once-capable and -sophisticated adversary military has fractured. While the United States has become accustomed to distributed operations under generally favorable circumstances—deliberate entry, well-established support bases, and significant advantages in the realm of military escalation, future operations might be marked by conditions that are the polar opposite.

Forcible or uncertain entry might be the norm. The means of effective resistance lie in the hands of multiple competing actors under uncertain command and control. Add to this the innovative and hostile use of advanced communications and networking, the persistent presence of CBRN, and significant numbers of displaced and at-risk populations. Finally, support and sustainment arriving entirely from offshore may be the only viable option.

Responding to this environment requires new approaches to distributed operations. High-intensity combat against sophisticated capabilities occurs at lower tactical levels and will also be less sequential as threats emerge from all domains simultaneously. As fewer forces will be the rule and operations will occur over greater geographical distances, distributed operations will require new approaches and technical solutions to cover the inevitable “dead space” between units operating to achieve vastly different local purposes.

A wholly different set of challenging circumstances would emerge in the event ground forces are employed almost entirely in a support and enable capacity. This might occur in response to a high-end military threat to regional allies exhibiting a complex mix of irregular and traditional capabilities and methods. It may also emerge as a result of natural or human-driven catastrophes where U.S. ground forces provide interagency and regional partners with unique capabilities in the areas of command and control (C2); logistics, protection, security; and ISR.

These conditions would require ground force leaders to employ highly tailored combinations of forces that are unique to the specific operational demands present. They would stress a “one size fits all” approach contingency response and tax traditional methods of force employment. As these enabling operations increase in likelihood, the Army in particular will need to overcome its biases that favor of ground maneuver capabilities, recognizing its inherent strength as the backbone of effective response under any and all contingency conditions.
Finally, this report concludes that all future archetypes will include the material participation of the entire U.S. government. Both strategy and operational design should integrate the various contributions of U.S. civilian and military actors from the beginning. Sometimes military capabilities will bridge important gaps in civilian response capacity. In other cases, U.S. military forces will work directly for civilian leaders in the field. In all cases, civilian and military actors will work side by side on contingency operations to one extent or another.

This relationship is ultimately foundational to all phases of military operations. A key lesson from the post-9/11 wars is that close civil-military relationships should be based on more routine interaction and collective training. As one senior official said, “When you have a hard problem, it’s much easier when you have friends in a room trying to solve it. They trust one another and will take extra risk to ensure [the problem is] solved. If you want to fail, then put a bunch of strangers in a room.”190 With a generalized decline in all U.S. government resources and current priorities that downplay responses to complex human-based contingencies, the study judges that important civil-military capabilities and practices facilitating greater integration may atrophy or disappear over time.

Risk Mitigation—Employing Forces

• **Build a cohesive ground force team.** Individually, Army forces, Marine forces, and SOF have unique capabilities and attributes. The certainty of their side-by-side employment in large-scale ground operations requires greater integration of capabilities planning, concept development, and routine training. All three ground components may also consider rotational alignment of units for training and operations.

• **Enhance regional and global ground force response capabilities.** The circumstances envisioned in this report call for a cohesive, joint global response capability, to include a joint task force headquarters. This joint capability will be required to quickly aggregate crisis-dependent capabilities into a multiservice joint task force. There is also an increased need to position small, forward-deployed forces that can quickly respond to basic security requirements and ensure the safety of U.S. interests. These forces may be the nucleus of a larger U.S. response.

• **Enhance command and control and crisis situational awareness.** There are a variety of important enhancements required to improve expeditionary capabilities to operate from the initiation of operations in a more distributed manner. These include a suite of capabilities for en route planning and situational awareness, standing ground-based regional JTFs, and expansion of command, control, and information sharing networks.

• **Train to and validate large-scale enabling efforts.** Large-scale enable and support actions were identified as an emerging contingency demand for U.S. Army forces in particular. The Army would be well-served to consider contingency demands involving the widespread and highly distributed employment of its enabling capabilities in a theater of operation as its main effort.

• **Develop new capabilities in ground-based fires and counter-CBRN.** In order to thicken joint coercive responses to high-end adversaries, the U.S. Army should consider growing its land-attack missile capability. Both the Army and Marine Corps, may also consider acquiring anti-ship missile capabilities. Further, in response to growing and diverse CBRN threats, all ground forces need to train for and develop capabilities unique to operating in or mitigating tactical, operational, and strategic effects of CBRN.

• **Focus future leader development on “mission command.”** The employment of forces in a distributed manner and within a complex operating environment relies on leaders at all levels who can think critically and operate under decentralized command and control. Routinely training and exercising in ways that persistently stress these qualities are essential.

190 Discussion with a senior military officer, December 21, 2012.
Continue to enhance a “whole of government approach.” Strong partnerships have emerged between civilian and military leaders and agencies over the past decade. Avoiding a loss of capability in this regard requires cost-conscious approaches to maintain essential linkages between civilian and military actors. It is essential to maintain warm civil-military response capacity for future complex contingencies.

E. Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions

While the other strategic risk categories are similar to phases of a joint campaign, this category focuses on two critical functional capabilities—protecting and sustaining forces on operations. These bear special note due to the substantially increased demands in these areas given the archetypal conditions discussed above. In the future, ground forces will be vulnerable to numerous hazards under almost all operational conditions. The study team judged this to be an area of increasing risk.

In terms of protection, forces, hardware, and secure communications and networked information-sharing will all be vulnerable to lethal and nonlethal threats. American and partner forces will be exposed to threats from cruise and ballistic missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, guided rockets, artillery, missiles, and mortars (GRAMM), CBRN capabilities, naturally occurring biological and environmental challenges, cyber threats, and hybrid or irregular methods of resistance. Portable air defense systems and improvised explosives present equally troublesome threats to U.S. forces.

Even operations in the most benign environments conducted in pursuit of purely humanitarian purposes will occur under conditions of persistent threat from a variety of challenges in this regard. Collectively, the threat capabilities listed above are even more challenging to the extent that they fall under the control of actors that do not operate under the strictures of adversary armed forces and are also less inhibited by the traditions and laws of armed conflict. A mix of advanced and less sophisticated hazards will be the norm and U.S. ground forces will encounter them across the ROMO.

As for sustainment, the future more distributed operating environment will stress existing logistics and support capabilities. Recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, have gotten U.S. ground forces accustomed to large intermediate staging bases and vulnerable air- and ground-based distribution networks. In the future, well-developed forward basing will be limited and operations that start with and endure from an austere and widely distributed sustainment foundation will be more prevalent. The challenges of distributed operations under virtually all conditions imagined in this study combined with the likelihood that U.S. forces will operate from fewer well-developed bases of operation indicate that sustaining large numbers of U.S. ground forces in the field will encounter new obstacles. Further, recent operations have proven the grave vulnerability of theater sustainment architecture to unconventional attack.

Risk Mitigation—Protecting and Sustaining Forces

- **Focus on robust air and missile defense.** In order to operate in the manner and in the regions examined in this study, robust and layered air and missile defense capabilities are essential. Traditionally, these are undervalued capabilities and will deserve increased attention in the future in order to build confidence in regional partners and allow joint and ground maneuver forces the freedom of action necessary to conduct operations.

- **Increase the amount and deployability of protected mobility and firepower.** Ground forces will routinely be employed in uncertain or hostile environments. Under these circumstances, a
persistent demand for more deployable protected mobility and precision firepower exists. This is especially true for early-arriving and support forces.

- **Increase ground force self-sufficiency and explore initiatives to secure sustainment against all hazards.** Ground forces will be employed in a more distributed manner against myriad hazards. Sustainment will need to support a larger number of smaller more dispersed nodes that are joined by less secure ground lines of communication. This requires capabilities for greater protection, self-sufficiency, and far less cumbersome theater sustainment architecture.

**F. Terminating Military Operations Consistent with Strategic and Operational Objectives**

Favorable termination of military operations is often the most challenging part of a campaign. Based on the experience of the last decade, there appears to be a consistent desire for future pursuit of more limited operational objectives outlined in specific and measurable terms before the commitment of U.S. ground forces. Of the six major risk categories, this is the one area the study team determined to be static in outlook. If the United States has learned anything from recent military campaigns, it is the importance of visualizing the end state well in advance of transition and withdrawal.

There will be a desire to transfer security responsibility to partners more quickly. Ideally, the terms under which military operations will be terminated across the ROMO will be established before forces are committed. Some mission creep is inevitable. However, fostering a broad understanding of the operational objectives sought by military action as soon as is practical will help focus the conduct of operations and enable a deliberate and effective transfer of responsibilities as a contingency operation concludes.

Finally, this study found that there is an increased likelihood that U.S. forces will either withdraw while still in substantial contact with adversary forces or from an environment where long-term security outcomes are still in significant doubt, leaving open the prospect for withdrawal under uncertain security conditions. This is not necessarily a standard U.S. practice. Developing and refining techniques on various forms of conflict termination and transition are critical to the conduct of future operations.

**Risk Mitigation—Terminating Military Operations**

- **Refine concepts, planning, and training for transfer of responsibility and retrograde.** Successful conflict/contingency termination requires preparation. This preparation should account for new views on the diverse conditions under which conflicts and contingencies will end. This requires greater understanding of the importance of measurable end states, innovative approaches to termination, and the tasks necessary for operational success in this regard.
ON THE BALANCE, THIS STUDY ARRIVED AT FOUR IMPORTANT FINDINGS. FIRST, USCENTCOM AND USPACOM PRESENT POLICYMAKERS AND STRATEGISTS WITH A RANGE OF POTENTIAL GROUND FORCE DEMANDS AGAINST WHICH THEY WILL WANT TO AT LEAST CONSIDER LARGE-SCALE GROUND FORCE OPTIONS. THIS WILL REQUIRE MAINTENANCE OF AN APPROPRIATE MIX OF GROUND FORCE CAPABILITIES THAT CAN AGGREGATE IN UNIQUE COMBINATIONS UNDER THE PRESSURE OF TIME TO CONDUCT OF A WIDE VARIETY OF OPERATIONS. IN THE COMING QDR, THE TOUGHEST CHOICES WILL INVOLVE THE RIGHT MIX BETWEEN THE MILITARY SERVICES (ARMY AND MARINES) BETWEEN GENERAL PURPOSE AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES, AND, FINALLY, BETWEEN THE ACTIVE AND RESERVE COMPONENTS. RECOMMENDATIONS ON FORCE MIX ARE BEYOND THIS STUDY’S SCOPE. HOWEVER, THE STUDY DOES OFFER SOME USEFUL INSIGHTS ABOUT THE OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS AND DEMANDS AGAINST WHICH VARIOUS FORCE COMBINATIONS SHOULD BE WEIGHED.


DISTRIBUTED SECURITY INVOLVES RESPONSE TO DISORDER WHERE POPULATIONS, STRATEGIC RESOURCES, CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OR GEOGRAPHY, AND DANGEROUS MILITARY CAPABILITIES ARE PRESUMED TO BE IN DANGER OF HARM, ILLEGITIMATE SEIZURE, OR HOSTILE EXPLOITATION. IF ARMY AND MARINE GENERAL PURPOSE FORCES ARE TO RETAIN RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SUSTAINED GROUND COMBAT, DISTRIBUTED SECURITY SHOULD BE THEIR FUTURE WARFIGHTING FOCUS. IN ADDITION, DISTRIBUTED SECURITY HAS AN INHERENT CAPABILITIES’ CONNECTION TO THE OTHER FOUR ARCHETYPES. THIS MARKS IT AS AN OPTIMAL FOCAL POINT FOR FUTURE FORCE DEVELOPMENT, AS IT IS THE CATEGORY THAT ALLOWS FOR THE GREATEST ADAPTATION. THIS FINDING HAS THE MOST PROFOUND IMPACT ON USCENTCOM.

THE KIND OF DISTRIBUTED SECURITY DEMANDS SUGGESTED BY THIS REPORT ARE SIMILAR TO THE PREVIOUS DECADE’S COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGNS ONLY IN THAT THEY FEATURE A NUMBER OF POPULATION-BASED CHALLENGES. IN THIS REPORT, HOWEVER, DISTRIBUTED SECURITY OCCURS IN THE FACE OF MORE SOPHISTICATED LETHAL THREATS—INCLUDING CBRN—and COULD INVOLVE SIGNIFICANT HIGH-INTENSITY COMBAT ACTION, ALBEIT AT LOWER TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL LEVELS THAN ARE TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH CONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS. OF THE DISTRIBUTED SECURITY VIGNETTES, THE REPORT FOUND INTERVENTION IN A FAILED CBRN STATE TO BE THE MOST DISRUPTIVE AND DANGEROUS FUTURE PROSPECT. THE POTENTIAL FOR THIS EXISTS IN BOTH COCOMS.

WHILE WARFIGHTING SHOULD REMAIN THE STOCK AND TRADE OF U.S. GROUND FORCES, ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FLOWS FROM THE ARCHETYPES AND BEARS RECOGNITION HERE. IT HAS THE GREATEST IMPACT ON THE ARMY. ALL LARGE-SCALE GROUND OPERATIONS ARE PRESUMED TO HAVE AN EXTENSIVE “ENABLING” BILL REGARDLESS OF THEIR PURPOSE. THE ARMY PROVIDES THE BULK OF THIS CAPABILITY IN THE FORM OF COMMAND AND CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS, AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE, LOGISTICS, ENGINEERING, AND FORCE PROTECTION. THUS, THE ARMY WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL PROONENT OF WHAT THIS STUDY HAS IDENTIFIED AS AN EMERGING DEMAND FOR GROUND-BASED “ENABLE AND SUPPORT ACTIONS” THROUGH THE PROVISION OF THEATER-LEVEL SUPPORT CAPABILITIES. THIS FINDING HAS UNIQUE RELEVANCE TO USPACOM.

Perhaps the most dramatic implication flowing from this study is the idea that major combat operations (e.g., Operation Desert Storm or the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom) are by far the least likely future demand. This finding has significant cultural and capabilities’ implications for the United States Army in particular.

The report’s third major finding is that shaping and persistent engagement are important contemporary ground force demands. The force overall should be designed principally for contingency

191 This was a key judgment of the study’s senior review group.
response. However, it will more routinely engage in peacetime engagement and shaping. Shaping and engagement are commonly associated with conflict prevention and deterrence.

The report finds that these are unproven but also valid pursuits. As a consequence, shaping should both focus on prevention of the most dangerous outcomes (e.g., war with China) while at the same time persistently preparing U.S. forces and partners for contingency response to the most disruptive conditions (e.g., distributed security in a failed CBRN state). Toward that end, shaping and engagement should endeavor to build the capabilities of the most willing regional partners, first with an eye toward cultivating important relationships and setting the conditions for future access and interoperability.

Finally, the report’s last major finding is that future challenges risk is either increasing or static in all the major risk categories. This judgment is founded on a number of interrelated factors. However, two are worth noting here. First, current DoD priorities are focused on traditional state-based challenges. The study team found this perspective to be incomplete, especially as it relates to ground forces. An acute focus on the most obvious traditional challenges may over time leave the ground components underprepared for their likeliest warfighting demands. Second, service culture is biased in favor of large-scale conventional ground maneuver at the expense of other demands like distributed security or large-scale enabling. This hazards preparing for exquisite military challenges that are unlikely to emerge. In short, a perfect storm might be brewing that allows the “comfortable to crowd out a more complex and unpleasant reality.”

In the end, this report suggests that ground forces will need to “evolve, adapt, and innovate” in the face of vastly different strategic and operational conditions than those confronted before and after September 11, 2001. Their evolution will require them to identify and strengthen capabilities and competencies that they mastered in the past but are still appropriate to the contemporary environment. Traditional maneuver and combat, for example, remain relevant but will need to be applied under vastly different circumstances than previously assumed. Likewise, ground forces will continue to confront complex human-based challenges but under conditions of even greater complexity and lethality than those they experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Adaptation requires the force to carry those capabilities and competencies forward with a view toward their application in the unique strategic, operational, and tactical contexts it will encounter in the future. Past or current strengths will not be wholly applicable to future conditions. This requires continuous refinement of capabilities, tactics, techniques, procedures, training, and education; sometimes in the absence of clear precedent. Adaptation also requires persistent exposure of ground force leaders and service members to new or unfamiliar conditions, where the requirement to adapt is at a premium.

Innovation requires that ground forces recognize that they will encounter future missions that present clean breaks from the past. This necessitates peering “over the next hill top” to identify future demands and appropriate responses not previously accounted for in strategic planning. Innovation requires the greatest institutional courage as it may mean dispensing with aspects of culture and core competency that are at once most comfortable and least relevant.

Finally, innovation further requires seeing and seizing on opportunities. This includes recognition that the value of ground forces is routinely displayed more through their adaptability than their battlefield prowess. The latter is a nonnegotiable quality expected of all general purpose forces and SOF. However, it relies on the former. Ground forces will routinely be asked to perform many nonstandard missions. Their ability to adapt to those is the hallmark of their broad and enduring utility.

In the end, one of the study’s senior reviewers observed that the greatest future challenges risk may be that of “denial.” The study team found this to be true on multiple levels. Generalized exhaustion with the post-9/11 wars may result in absolute denial of the potential necessity for future

192 Interview with a senior military official, March 20, 2013.
193 Senior reviewer, March 20, 2013.
large-scale ground operations. Further, long-held traditional conceptions about the immutable nature of war may result in institutional denial of real change in the environment and its future challenges. Finally, the two perspectives combined have the potential to coalesce, resulting in an imperfect compromise on future ground capabilities. The impact could be profound—the denial of real options when they are required the most.
APPENDIX A: LARGE-SCALE OPERATIONAL TYPES

Background
During the course of this effort, the CSIS team identified 13 future operational types that have the potential to meet the “large-scale” threshold by themselves or in some combination with others. The 13 operational types serve as important methodological and definitional background for what ultimately became the five pacing archetypes used by the CSIS study team to assess future challenges risk. Of these 13 operational types, 11 outlined herein and much of this appendix’s content are adaptations of material contained in the October 2011 CSIS report *U.S. Force Capabilities through 2020*.

That report included an original set of 14 operational types ranging in scale from very small to very large. Of the original 14, 11 were selected during the course of this study as having the potential to become future large-scale contingency demands. Two new types (“enhanced shaping” and “counteraccess/quarantine”) were added as a result of research, interviews, and working group sessions occurring between October 2012 and February 2013.

To assess future challenges risk, the study required risk criteria that had been validated in previous work on U.S. ground forces. Thus, a revised subset of operational types and key tasks that had originally been used in the 2011 report was a natural starting point. This appendix provides a “revised subset” of the former; Appendix B discusses the latter. The operational types help key stakeholders visualize military demands associated with the 20 regional vignettes. These demands translated into natural contingency clusters that ultimately became five pacing archetypes.

As was noted in the 2011 report, some of the operational types adhere closely to military doctrine. Others have roots in current doctrine but have been adjusted to limit excessive definitional constraints. Finally, other operational types are new in recognition of emerging operational demands and limitations.

The original operational types from the 2011 report were identified using specific criteria. First, to qualify as distinct operational types, their principal character and conduct had to mark them prominently as ground-based operations. Second, while each may often be an important component of a larger military operation, individually they represented a set of collective military activities that might be reasonably conducted together in a single independent operation. Finally, where individual operational types might resemble others on their face, separate categories were retained in cases where operational types differed substantially enough in some key characteristics. In the end, however, it was difficult to apply single operational types to many of the vignettes identified in the report. Nonetheless, the study team maintained the distinct operational types overall as they were found to be useful to describing components of the vignettes, cluster the vignettes into archetypes, and assess risk.

13 Large-Scale Operational Types
Applying the criteria outlined above and in light of the research undertaken in support of the current study, the CSIS team identified the following 13 operational types as likeliest to define the universe of potential large-scale ground operations over the next two decades:

1. Enhanced Shaping (ES)
2. Show of Force (SF)

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1 This appendix is an adaptation of Freier et al., “Appendix A,” *U.S. Ground Forces Capabilities*, October 2011. Much of the material presented in this section of the study is directly lifted from that appendix.
3 This operational type emerged as a result of the study team’s interaction with the COCOM staffs. USPACOM staff officers were particularly helpful in this regard.
3. Humanitarian Assistance and Consequence Management (HA/CM) 5
4. Foreign Internal Defense (FID) 6
5. Enabling Operation (EO) 7
6. Secure and Evacuate (SE) 8
7. Peacekeeping (PKO) 9
8. Seize and Secure (SSO) 10
9. Human Security (HS) 11
10. Opposed Stabilization (OS) 12
11. Sanctuary Denial (SD) 13
12. Counter-Access/Quarantine (CAQ) 14
13. Major Combat Campaign (MCC) 15

The operational types are described here according to anticipated strategic warning and duration, expected levels of permissiveness and violence, likeliest adversary types, the level of expected cooperation and capability of local authorities and forces, the anticipated attitudes and cooperation of local populations, the likeliest levels allied and coalition military contributions, and the conditions under which military operations are likely to be terminated.

As argued in the earlier report, successful performance of associated tasks was determined to be essential to overall mission success. Thus, in the process of risk assessment, the affiliation of key tasks with operational types and pacing archetypes should help determine key future capabilities, concepts, and planning priorities for risk mitigation. Four tasks or task groups, in particular, will determine the overall operational “theme” of specific missions. These include the conduct of combat, security, and stability operations, as well as the capability of U.S. ground forces to support or enable U.S. joint and interagency partners and foreign governments and militaries. This latter task group includes the capability of ground forces to establish and maintain collaborative partnerships with foreign security and paramilitary forces and the capability of ground forces to underwrite and sustain successful joint, interagency, and combined operations.

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5 Ibid., 26–28.
6 Ibid., 28–30.
7 Ibid., 32–36.
8 See Ibid., 36–39. The concept of “secure and evacuate” operations is adapted from the previous reports “non-combatant evacuation operations” operational type. It was determined that the qualifier “non-combatant” was excessively limiting. It may be, for example, that U.S. ground forces are called on to assist in the evacuation of parties to a conflict (i.e., combatants) in order set conditions for conflict resolution.
9 Ibid., 39–42.
10 Ibid., 42–45.
11 Ibid., 45–46.
12 Ibid., 47–51.
13 Ibid., 51–53.
14 This operational type was added as a result of interviews and working group discussions. It is inspired by T.X. Hammes, “Offshore Control is the Answer,” Proceedings Magazine 138, no. 12 (December 2012), http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2012-12/offshore-control-answer.
15 Freier et al., U.S. Ground Forces, 58–61.
Enhanced Shaping (ES)

The concept of ES is a significant addition to the list of operational types resulting from interaction with the regional commands. While commonly not considered a classical contingency operation, ES was determined in the course of this study to be so critical to U.S. success across the ROMO that its inclusion here was essential. ES actions involve the coordinated peacetime employment of military forces with the express purpose of either (1) preventing future intervention and military conflict with coordinated and visible demonstrations of U.S. military commitment to a key strategic region, or (2) setting the conditions for future military operations by engaging in a series of strategically targeted military activities designed to bolster combined capability for the most likely regional contingencies and adversaries. The predominant focus of ES is combined relationship and capability building with a view toward laying a firm multinational foundation for military operations that might become necessary in the future.

Both the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs have significant near-, mid-, and long-term demands for enhanced shaping. In USCENTCOM shaping activities are likely have a dual focus — containing the aggressive designs of Iran, and limiting partner vulnerability to and the contagious impacts of disruptive internal and transnational political violence and instability. The former is the most attractive focus, as it conforms well to long-held DoD biases about the nature of consequential threats. The latter is perhaps the more immediate, important, and politically sensitive challenge. It requires both a keen understanding of the political aspirations of regional populations and an appreciation of the legitimate internal and transnational security concerns of regional authorities. Of the two priorities, limiting partner vulnerability to internal and transnational threats requires far greater synchronization with the broad instruments of national power and, given the course of recent events in the region, has the greatest possibility of failure. Within these two priorities lie a number of important subcomponents (e.g., contending with vulnerable CBRN arsenals and moderating unstable relations and building confidence between competing sectarian constituencies).

USPACOM also has two overarching military priorities in the area of ES. The first is managing the rise of China in ways that are favorable to U.S. security interests. The second is preparing for the eventual transition of the current North Korean regime. A close third is bolstering region-wide capacity to contend with natural catastrophe and climate change. Combined, these are serially likely to overwhelm local authorities and forces. As in the case of USCENTCOM, there are myriad subcomponents and lesser included priorities with which to contend; among them are the pervasive CBRN challenge, demonstrating a commitment to the security of partner territory and resources, peacefully reconciling competing sectarian and nationalist interests, and managing the various destabilizing paths that may unfold in China, North Korea, and the Russian Far East.

Obviously, ES is focused on enabling and support of regional partners. Strategic warning is irrelevant as ES represents largely steady state military requirements. Likewise, duration of ES is defined by the perceived length of time the United States will remain committed to the targeted region and the resources it is willing to apply over time. Though ES predominantly involves the peacetime engagement of U.S. forces in building regional partnerships, the conduct of operations will bring U.S. forces into contact with actors and forces opposed to American presence and designs. Thus, prudent force protection will be necessary. Purposeful threats might include criminals, terrorists, insurgents, militias, proxy state actors, as well as the armed forces of potential adversary states.

In areas where the United States is engaged, U.S. forces should, as a matter of routine, expect significant levels of cooperation from local authorities and forces. Their capability, however, will vary substantially. Indeed, the purpose of ES is focused on raising partner capability and capacity in areas of mutual interest and recognized deficit. Local populations and their formal and informal leaders will vary in their attitudes about U.S. purposes and designs. A concerted effort to gain their trust will be important to U.S. success in ES. As in the case of all future operations, allied and coalition contributions will be welcome and often pivotal. Indeed, even in peacetime shaping, the opportunity to employ allied forces in
regions where U.S. presence may be provocative or counter-productive may be preferred. Finally, as ES is likely to be an enduring requirement in regions of interest, termination of operations may only occur when the United States needs to apply additional resources to more urgent worldwide demands. Termination of all ES operations regionwide, even under these circumstances, however, would likely be imprudent.

*Show of Force (SF)*

Shows of force (SF) are intended to compel hostile actors to cease threatening behaviors in advance of open hostilities by dispatching or repositioning U.S. forces and/or by increasing the visibility of forward-deployed forces already present in a contested region. SF operations are military in nature but often serve both political and military purposes. These operations can influence various state and nonstate actors to respect U.S. interests as well as international law.\(^{16}\)

The United States initiates SF when core interests and/or foreign order, infrastructure, property, installations, or populations are at risk of sudden loss or harm as a result of imminent or threatened conflict. They may be undertaken to preclude war between or within states. The scale of SF takes its cues from the size and/or intensity of the initial provocation. Therefore the size, type, and mix of forces employed in shows of force rely on the nature of the threat.

Examination of the two AORs of concern in this report indicates that SF might be quite different, depending on circumstances. In USCENTCOM, for example, the targets of SF are as likely to include nonstate or state proxy actors as they are state-based opponents. U.S. ground forces employed in response to an adversary’s provocation therefore might represent myriad U.S. ground capabilities, ranging from the deployment or re-positioning of U.S. SOF to a more robust display of large conventional ground combat and support formations. In USPACOM, SF will likely focus on traditional state-based opponents; thus, necessitating the active display of U.S. conventional military capabilities from the outset. Given the increased missile and CBRN threat in both regions, air and missile defense capabilities will become an increasingly important component of U.S. SF.

Regardless of the responding ground force’s composition, it must be able to rapidly transition to more robust and lethal operations in the event increased tension transitions into open hostilities. An initial smaller-scale display of credible combat capability must be visibly associated with the ability to “ramp up” a U.S. response in the face of additional provocation. Essentially, the force needs to be durable and adaptable enough to operate and survive initially if deterrence fails. Because of this necessity, SF may begin as smaller-scale operations. However, the ability to transition rapidly to large-scale military action is a decisive component of successful SF.

In the context of this study, SF generally falls in the “enable and support” archetype. Conditions necessitating SF may emerge with very little strategic warning. Two regional powers in the AORs of concern to this report—North Korea and Iran—have demonstrated the capability and willingness to heighten physical military threats with little or no notice. Further, territorial tensions between China and regional partners in the USPACOM AOR, as well as a combination of increased military capability, the proximity of that capability to competitor nations and forces, and a heightened sense of insecurity all increase the prospects for hostilities with limited warning that call for a U.S. demonstration of resolve. The duration of SF will likely be limited to days or weeks. Foundational tensions triggering them will either subside or escalate. In the case of latter, a SF might result in a sudden fundamental change of mission.

Regardless of the opponent, SF can be expected to be initiated under permissive but uncertain conditions, as the U.S. deployment occurs under the threat of imminent hostile military or paramilitary action. Targeted adversaries in SF will vary in type, sophistication, and organization. As the U.S. is likely

responding to threats against regional partners, the cooperation of local authorities should be expected but their capability will vary from one contingency to the next. The attitudes and cooperation of local populations will vary as well. In many cases after all, the United States may enjoy friendlier relations with partner governments than it does with that same partner’s population. Indeed, even if friendly, local populations may perceive a U.S. SF as an unnecessary or dangerous increase in regional tensions. Similarly, in the case of SF targeted at nonstate or state proxy actors, local populations may be sympathetic to U.S. opponents.

In the case of state-based opponents in the two AORs of concern, allied and coalition contributions may be significant. However, depending on the root cause of heightened security tensions, their willingness to employ capabilities consistent with U.S. objectives may be somewhat uncertain. Finally, SF will either end with deliberate withdrawal of U.S. forces after reestablishment of a stable status quo or transition to military operations of a fundamentally different nature (e.g., major combat campaign).

Foreign Internal Defense (FID)

Contingency Foreign Internal Defense (FID) operations employ ground forces to support and assist a foreign partner combating serious internal conflict and instability with the purpose of building that partner’s capacity toward security self-reliance.17 Ground forces involved in FID operations do not routinely engage in direct combat operations; rather, they “assist foreign forces of friendly nations in generating, fielding, employing, and sustaining competent security forces in response to armed opposition.”18 This in-country assistance extends to areas including command, control, and communications (C3); operational planning; intelligence; military training and logistics; mobility; and civil affairs and civil-military operations. FID operations are also generally conducted under the auspices of a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and a partner state.

In the context of this report, FID is particularly germane to the USCENTCOM AOR. Contingency FID efforts are likely to include but also transcend efforts focused on the internal security challenges stemming from the post-9/11 war on terrorism and VEOs like al Qaeda. For example, the origin of serious internal security challenges may also arise from state-based opponents like Iran and the universe of actors associated with the Iranian Threat Network (ITN) employing their own proxy allies to “free-ride” on preexisting or nascent instability and violence. As a consequence, U.S. partners in the USCENTCOM AOR face internal challenges that may require contingency FID intervention emerging from some combination of three primary sources—extremists, militias, and insurgents that directly challenge the authority of still-functioning and capable partner governments; forces loosed by the failure responsible authority made possible by revolutionary political transitions in places like Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen; and persistent pressure from outside powers like Iran, leveraging long-standing internal grievance and resistance to their strategic advantage.

While the FID challenge is perhaps less profound, or less perceived to occur in response to direct threats to core U.S. interests in the USPACOM AOR, a 20-year time horizon indicates that contingency FID may become a more significant component of comprehensive U.S. security strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to long-standing conflicts with extremist and separatist movements in the Southeast Asian littoral, the United States may face a significant FID challenge that emerges from what may be a very disruptive North Korean political transition in the event of the failure of the current regime. Further still, in the event that a more aggressive China emerges, the United States may have to respond to

17 In the context of this study (and the previous study), FID specifically refers to the deployment of ground forces responding to an urgent need, differing from routine U.S. military FID activities. For more information on U.S. military doctrine regarding FID, see JCS, Joint Publication 3-22: Foreign Internal Defense (July 12, 2010), www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_22.pdf.
proxy-driven instability in mainland Asia and along the Southeast Asian littoral over the longer term. One regional planner suggested this could emerge from a deliberate Chinese attempt to force the United States to physically defend its interests across the broad sweep of the continental and littoral Asia-Pacific region.19

Traditionally, FID operations have been the purview of Army, Marine, and Navy SOF. However, a large-scale FID contingency could extend to Army and Marine Corps general purpose forces for both FID-specific activities, as well as broad enabling responsibilities. This type of FID mission has been on substantial display over the last decade’s operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

By definition, large-scale FID falls in the “enable and support” archetype. Given the overall purpose of FID operations, their principal theme is enabling with limited advisory roles related to combat and security. However, should the security environment shift toward more overt hostile action, U.S. ground forces may participate in combat or security operations alongside partner forces in support of their broader advisory mission. The nature of this kind of operation is such that U.S. ground forces should expect significant strategic warning of the need to employ capabilities. The duration of contingency FID operations will range from long to very long—lasting from several months to one or more years—depending upon the initial quality of partner forces involved and the overall security environment. Results in FID are often demonstrated over months and years. At the outset, U.S. ground forces should expect to enter into FID operations under permissive but uncertain security conditions and the overall operating environment will routinely remain permissive with the potential for episodic violence directed at U.S. advisors and support forces.

Expected adversaries in contingency FID will include violent criminal elements, networked terrorists and insurgents, well-armed and well-organized substate militias, and state-based and proxy paramilitaries. Every FID effort will also have a significant information component as well. Local authorities and forces will be cooperative as U.S. FID activities are presumed to be occurring with the approval of the host nation. However, the initial levels of capability of these partners will most likely be found wanting in some major areas. As in the case of SF, the attitudes and cooperation of local populations will be highly conditional, ranging from cooperative to indifferent or hostile. Outside allied participation will be highly variable, ranging from modest to significant depending on the degree interests are shared and the scale of the challenge. Finally, in a contingency FID operation, U.S. forces should anticipate a deliberate withdrawal from theater and an assumption of full security responsibility by the host nation government.

**Humanitarian Assistance / Consequence Management (HA/CM)**

Humanitarian Assistance and Consequence Management (HA/CM) operations are undertaken by military forces largely in support of the U.S. Department of State (DoS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. state and local authorities, or a foreign partner government in order to temporarily relieve human suffering, provide basic public goods, and help offset immediate threats to public health and safety in the wake of foreign catastrophes or domestic disasters. According to Joint doctrine:

DoD has unique assets for effective response and can play a key role in foreign humanitarian crises. For example, the U.S. military possesses exceptional operational reach that can be employed to enhance an initial response…Furthermore, the U.S. military’s unmatched capabilities in logistics, command and control, communications, and mobility are able to provide rapid and robust response to dynamic and evolving situations among vastly different military, civilian, and government entities.20

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19 Interview with Senior PACOM Planner, January 9, 2013.
These operations focus on the immediate protection and well-being of affected populations and the near-term restoration of minimal routine civil functions. In HA/CM operations, U.S. forces serve as the most significant and visible (though not necessarily lead) component of a U.S. government response.

Events that trigger HA/CM operations may be natural (e.g., hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, or pandemics), technical (e.g., nuclear or industrial accident or blackouts), or purposeful (e.g., acts of sabotage, war, or terrorism). Regardless of origin, their human and environmental effects share qualities that require many common military responses and capabilities. These include but are not limited to relieving human suffering, ameliorating the immediate consequences of catastrophe and disaster, and providing security for others’ relief and assistance efforts. Under the worst conditions, HA/CM efforts may occur in CBRN contaminated environments or be focused on overcoming the effects of CBRN hazards.

This study found that HA/CM operations will remain a core demand of U.S. forces in perpetuity. Indeed, they are probably among the likeliest foreign contingency demands. Nowhere is this truer than in the USPACOM AOR. Alongside U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), USPACOM’s natural predisposition to catastrophe, as well as the increasing effects of climate change and environmental degradation in the region make it the locus of future large-scale HA/CM contingency planning. The recent natural and nuclear disasters in Japan point to the prospect of increasing hazard in this regard. USCENTCOM has some potential for interest-threatening natural catastrophe as well. Where it is likeliest to be most pronounced is in the area of access to fresh water. The study team found that catastrophe in this regard, however, is more likely to exacerbate existing conflict fault lines and would not likely be the proximate cause of U.S. HA/CM operations. The prospect of a CBRN-based catastrophe is present in both regions.

HA/CM operations balance the stability and security operational themes and fall in the “humanitarian response” archetype. The strategic warning associated with pure HA/CM mission is extremely short to short and the duration of operations will likely be in the short to medium range. U.S. forces will largely enter theater under deliberate and permissive conditions. But, given the close connection between disaster-prone regions and conflict zones, security conditions in the operational environment may range from permissive to highly uncertain.

While HA/CM operations are undertaken for the purpose of relieving the suffering of local indigenous populations, U.S. forces still should be prepared to defend themselves against the malevolent behaviors of a range of hostile substate actors including criminals, terrorists, insurgents, and militias. A hostile state’s proxy may “free-ride” on disaster as well.

Local authorities are bound to be cooperative in humanitarian relief operations. Indeed, HA/CM missions are not likely to be undertaken without the express permission of the host nation government and the cooperation of local authorities and security forces. However, in spite of their dire circumstances, some segments of the population may not support an increased U.S. presence in spite of its purpose and aims. It is reasonable for U.S. ground forces to expect significant outside allied and partner and interagency assistance, especially from intraregional and extraregional partners with long-standing ties to victim states and their populations. In fact, the successful integration of partner contributions is critical to mission success. However, given the premium on rapid response associated with catastrophe, U.S. forces may intervene unilaterally initially. In HA/CM operations, U.S. forces will more than likely withdraw forces deliberately and cede responsibility for continued relief efforts to host nation or third party authorities as early as practical.

Secure and Evacuate (SE)

Secure and evacuate (SE) operations involve U.S. ground forces protecting U.S. government and commercial possesssions and securely evacuating U.S., host nation, and designated third-country nationals threatened by imminent harm. SE efforts may be reactive or anticipatory, resulting from direct or indirect
hazards emerging from myriad circumstances that include war, internal violence and instability, or natural catastrophe. Ground force activities in SE operations include securing key facilities, cantonment areas, and routes for the safe evacuation of target populations; manning, securing, and servicing distributed—sometimes remote—evacuation sites; and/or providing logistical support and medical care for evacuees. As SE is not necessarily limited to noncombatants (and, therefore, not “NEO” alone), operations may require the secure evacuation of an armed force or population.

SE operations are likely a growth industry in the USCENTCOM AOR. The prospect of generalized violent disorder springing from revolutionary political transformations mean that U.S. ground forces should increasingly prepare to secure key U.S./partner facilities and evacuate at-risk U.S. and foreign nationals from a number of vulnerable locations throughout the AOR. Currently stable states may fall victim to instability with little or no notice. In addition, states already in the midst of turbulent political transition—Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Iraq among them—are likely to be the loci of future SE missions for some time.

The ever-present threat of interstate tension and violence between a number of Gulf Arab partners (and Israel) on the one hand and Iran on the other likewise increases the prospect that U.S. forces may have to move in to secure and evacuate both civilian and military-connected populations with the sudden onset of open hostilities between rival states. SE missions in USPACOM may similarly emerge from North Korean threats against its neighbors, a regional conflict between China and U.S. regional partners, or natural and human-driven catastrophe. The latter is the likeliest prospect.

SE efforts are themed primarily as security efforts with the potential to shift in favor of combat operations should they become necessary. In this study, they fall in the “distributed security” archetype. Ground forces involved in SE routinely have short to extremely short warning of the need to conduct operations. The duration of a SE operation depends on the size and disposition of the population to be evacuated, the scale of the “protection challenge,” the availability and technical adequacy of supporting transportation and facilities, and the security conditions under which the operation will be conducted. By virtue of the logistics involved in moving large numbers of friendly forces and evacuees, large-scale SE operations will be longer than the smaller-scale norm. SE operations can be conducted in permissive, uncertain, or nonpermissive environments. Permissive or uncertain environments will be the norm.

During SE missions, purposeful opponents can range from hostile crowds and criminals to rogue military units and sophisticated military forces. As the trigger and operational conditions under which a SE operation occurs will vary, so too will the cooperation and capability of local authorities and forces, as well as the attitudes and cooperation of local populations. SE missions are typically conducted unilaterally. However, in cases of more generalized threat to either a large or diverse expatriate population, outside allied/coalition contributions (or at a minimum cooperation and coordination) may be significant. Ideally, SE operations will terminate with the deliberate withdrawal of U.S. and partner forces and at risk populations. However, under more dire circumstances, termination of SE missions might occur while U.S. forces are still in contact with armed opponents.

Enabling Operations (EO)

U.S. forces undertake enabling operations (EO) when foreign and/or domestic partners carry the operation’s main effort but who also face critical capability shortfalls that only U.S. ground forces can fill. The United States conducts EO to support the defense of an ally or to underwrite partner-led combat, humanitarian, consequence management, or law enforcement operations and activities. By definition in EO, U.S. ground forces are not the main effort, but instead enable operations conducted principally under

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22 In 1982, 800 U.S. Marines deployed as part of a multinational force (with French and Italian forces) to evacuate 7,000 Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) guerillas from Beirut, Lebanon. See William E. Smith, Johanna McGeary, and William Stewart, “The Marines Have Landed,” Time 120, no. 10 (September 6, 1982).
the leadership of others. Enabling operations are typified by the provision of unique U.S capabilities. These include but are not limited to C3—including cyber; ISR; logistics; engineering, civil affairs; and military information support operations (MISO). Further, while EO should involve few, if any, U.S. combat forces, combat forces may be involved. When combat forces are involved, they are employed principally for self-defense and the protection of important U.S./partner bases, critical support infrastructure (e.g., roads, railways, bridges, and tunnels, etc.), and lines of communication. Air and missile defense might be one of the more important contributions in this regard. In addition, on rare occasions, EO may involve limited provision of specialized offensive combat capabilities like precision/long-range fires and attack aviation.

As EO is a blanket concept involving a wide range of operational circumstances, the specific capability demands are highly variable. Of all the operational types, EO will require the most organizational agility. U.S. ground forces deployed to conduct EO will in all cases be uniquely tailored to the specific demands of the operation. This will necessitate assembly of nonstandard force packages targeted at meeting specific joint and partner capability gaps. It will also require that U.S. forces operate seamlessly inside foreign or interagency partner efforts, often under their direction.

Operation Odyssey Dawn is precedent setting for future U.S. EO. In the realm of air/sea operations, it demonstrated the United States’ ability to establish an enabling foundation for an alliance-led coercive campaign. This report suggests that EO may well become a model for various contingency responses in the future. The United States’ Army’s substantial enabling capability—often captured under the rubric of Army Support to Other Services (ASOS)—is particularly important in this regard.

There are myriad reasons to anticipate that both USCENTCOM and USPACOM will experience growth in future EO demands. As partners become more capable militarily and less prone to host large numbers of U.S. combat forces on their territory, the ability of the United States to render decisive technical and material support to allies confronting challenges that outstrip in-place support infrastructure provides a unique and indispensable instrument of future leverage. Often foreign partners want to visibly demonstrate the capability to act and have many of the means to do so. Routinely many only lack the architecture necessary for sustained or distributed operations. U.S. enabling capabilities of the kind described above can fill this void.

Enabling operations naturally fall in the “enable and support” archetype. The degree of warning, duration of the mission, level of permissiveness and violence, adversary types, and anticipated attitude and cooperation of the local population, as well as external allied/coalition contributions will vary substantially based on each individual mission’s specific purpose and location. However, as EO is always undertaken on behalf of another lead foreign or U.S. agency, U.S. ground forces are likely to enjoy close cooperation with local authorities and forces. Those authorities and forces are likely to have significant capabilities to bring to bear. With respect to the termination of operations, U.S. ground forces can anticipate a deliberate withdrawal with substantial assistance from the host nation. Finally, as U.S. forces are only playing an enabling role, niche support functions are often the only responsibilities they will need to relinquish to foreign or third party forces and authorities as they withdraw.

Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)

Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) are impartial, third party military interventions generally sanctioned by an international organization (e.g., the United Nations, NATO, the European Union) with the consent of

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23 Unlike interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the U.S. military adopted a light-footprint approach to the security situation in Libya, contributing only its unique capabilities to a broader, ally-led air campaign. Although ground forces were not involved in Operation Odyssey Dawn, the operation set a precedent for future enabling operations in which U.S. forces will take a supporting role. See Christopher S. Chivvis, Keith Crane, Peter Mandaville, and Jeffrey Martini, *Libya’s Post-Qaddafi Transition: The Nation-Building Challenge*, (Washington, D.C.: RAND Corporation, 2012), 1–2.
all major parties to a conflict. U.S. ground forces engaged in PKO are employed to divide warring parties or factions, to monitor their activities, to dissuade resumption of hostilities, and to support implementation of a negotiated end to conflict as dictated by the mission’s mandate.

The United States has a recent but somewhat lapsed tradition in PKO. Since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, American forces have quietly maintained some peacekeeping commitments in southeastern Europe but there has been no U.S. peacekeeping commitment that compares in scale to the Bosnia (SFOR) or Kosovo (KFOR) interventions. Though the prospect for future large-scale PKOs is substantially tempered by the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan, there are a handful of significant interstate and intrastate conflict fault lines within or between the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs where new or renewed hostilities would trigger consideration of U.S. PKO.

Within USCENTCOM, for example, dissolution of Iraq’s prior political order has created a number of potential conflict-producing fissures. War or intense civil conflict between sectarian forces in Iraq might generate pressure for a future U.S. PKO presence. Likewise, future cross-boundary conflict between Iraq and its neighboring states would be of enormous concern to the United States. At a minimum, there would be some U.S. moral responsibility for a peaceful resolution of future conflicts that may have their origins in Iraq’s uneven political development and continuing instability.

Further east, in south and south central Asia, there may be an equally important and powerful motivation for U.S. involvement in PKO. This may emerge either from the unstable border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan or the tense and simmering contest between Pakistan and India. USPACOM shares concern over the latter boundary dispute. Elsewhere in USPACOM there exist more distant prospects for U.S. PKO involving the potential for regionally disruptive third-party war between Asian and Eurasian great powers (e.g., India-China and Russia-China). There are other equally tense boundary disputes between regional powers and China, particularly over control of disputed territory in the South China Sea. However, either by virtue of treaty alliance or political alignment, the United States would not be considered a neutral third party in these conflicts. Therefore, while other future U.S. operations may occur as a result of these disputes, PKO is not among them.

PKO are primarily themed as stability and security operations and are the centerpiece of the “peace operations” archetype. The linkage between PKO, diplomatic negotiations, conflict resolution and confidence building, and available resources account for the likelihood that U.S. ground forces would have moderate to long strategic warning for an impending PKO operation. Duration of PKO will be a long to very long proposition, lasting at minimum months and perhaps one or more years. U.S. forces should anticipate deliberate and permissive entry into the area of operations. As PKO proceeds, the operational environment will be permissive but, in most instances, tense and uncertain as well. Thus, US forces should be prepared to transition to offensive or defensive combat operations should security conditions deteriorate.24

As PKO involves either or both state and nonstate contenders, U.S. ground forces should anticipate operating in the face of a range of potential threat actors including criminals, terrorists, militias, paramilitaries, and a variety of military formations of varying levels of capability. U.S. ground forces will have some relationship with local authorities and forces. However, as these forces were likely parties to the original conflict, experience indicates that their level of cooperation will vary significantly between contingencies. In most cases, the terms of that relationship will be predetermined by the mission’s mandate. The course of PKO is greatly influenced by the relationship between peacekeepers and local populations and leaders as well. However, the attitudes and cooperation of local populations and their formal and informal leaders is highly variable.

24 In accordance with the United Nations principles of peacekeeping, force may only be initiated by peacekeeping forces in self-defense or in defense of the mandate. For further discussion on peacekeeping within the United Nations context, see United Nations, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines (January 2008), 31, http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf.
The composition of PKO forces is decidedly international from the outset, as U.S. ground forces most often participate in a PKO within the context of a larger international force consisting of partner military forces, U.S. and foreign civilian government agencies, and international and nongovernmental organizations. Therefore, partner military and civil contributions should be assumed to be significant. Termination of PKO will be under deliberate and permissive circumstances. Close cooperation with host nation and regional partners is vital for transferring responsibility and conducting retrograde and redeployment of forces in PKO. U.S. ground forces can anticipate the transfer of U.S. security responsibilities first to foreign third parties or an international force.

**Seize and Secure Operations (SSO)**

U.S. forces would undertake an SSO in the event that critical foreign infrastructure (e.g., ports, pipelines, or canals), dominant terrain (e.g., strategic choke points), and/or dangerous capabilities (principally CBRN weapons and/or their delivery systems) are actively threatened by intrastate conflict, instability, or illegitimate seizure and exploitation. The key feature of this mission is its very limited scope. In lieu of full-scale invasion and occupation, these operations are designed to control only what is necessary to either ensure the continued security of or deny hostile access to key strategic objectives. SSO might be necessary to ensure friendly access to critical regions and resources, underwrite freedom of navigation, or to deny an adversary access to the critical resources or capabilities upon which they rely. Indeed, denying opponents access to the facilities, infrastructure, capabilities, and territory upon which they specifically rely to gain and maintain leverage and advantage may be an increasingly attractive option short of regime change. The most prominent and growing candidate for future SSO are CBRN capabilities that have fallen out of effective and responsible control.

The uncertain trajectory of security conditions in the greater Middle East and the unique importance of key strategic infrastructure, resources, and geography there indicate that SSO may be an increasing prospect in the USCENTCOM AOR. The questionable security of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal, immediate internal threats to the Syrian chemical and biological weapon arsenal and the potential for an explosion of proliferation region-wide pose additional SSO contingency scenarios. In USPACOM, the future security of North Korea’s CBRN arsenal points to the possibility of SSO there as well. In addition, long-term threats to the Straits of Malacca point to the need to maintain the capability to secure passage through this critical chokepoint over time.

SSO fall in the “distributed security” archetype and are offensive combat actions at the outset, transitioning to a security focused mission after U.S. forces achieve their immediate objectives and are able to assume a more defensive posture. The strategic warning associated with SSO will range from extremely short to moderate, placing a high premium on speed and leaving very little time to marshal an international mandate. The duration of SSO is likely to fall between moderate and extremely long. Entry will occur under uncertain or nonpermissive conditions. Of all the operational types, SSO is most likely to occur under conditions of widespread disorder and has the potential to occur in entirely contested or denied territory.

Opponents in these operations will range from insurgents and militias to sophisticated military forces. Once established on the ground and in addition to the opponents described above, U.S ground forces might expect a more complex set of adversaries, ranging from criminals, hostile local populations, and spoilers. As SSO is likely to spring from disorder, local authorities and forces are likely to either be cooperative but incapable or hostile to U.S. objectives. Likewise, local populations and leaders will range from cooperative to hostile. In many instances, the requirement for a speedy response means that SSO will be initiated unilaterally or with limited early allied/coalition participation. However, over time, allied contributions to the security phase of operations will likely grow. Ideally, SSOs end with U.S. forces transitioning their security responsibilities to local authorities. However, transition to foreign third parties may be more likely. While a deliberate retrograde should be anticipated, U.S. ground forces should also account for a withdrawal from the AOR while still in contact with opposing forces.
Human Security Operations (HSO)

HSO are conducted at the invitation, agreement, or acquiescence of host nation authorities to protect large numbers of innocent civilians from grave harm due to civil conflict when host nation forces are incapable or unwilling to contain the violence.25 Thus, in the course of HSO, U.S. ground forces would be deployed to establish and maintain a secure environment and assist in temporarily providing basic human security needs of at risk populations. These missions include but are not limited to halting mass atrocities and/or preventing predations against vulnerable populations by armed groups.26

Not surprisingly the most immediate prospect for HSO lies in the USCENTCOM AOR. The prospective focus of these operations ranges from the Levant and North Africa (primarily Syria, Egypt, and Libya), Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula; and, finally, South and South Central Asia (principally, Afghanistan and Pakistan). Given the disruptive political transitions currently occurring across the Middle East, prediction of where, when, and under what precise circumstances HSO might occur is problematic. In light of U.S. ties to Iraq, Iraqi civil conflict stands out as one significant trigger. While it is somewhat more difficult to see conditions in the Asia-Pacific region that would trigger large-scale U.S. HSO, the Southeast Asian littoral represents the likeliest future geographic focus of U.S. HSO in that region should it be required.

Human security missions dually focus on stability and security at the outset; however, the preponderance of effort will generally emphasize security. As a consequence, this study finds them to fall largely in the “peace operations” archetype. Ground forces will limit combat actions to self-defense and the defense of vulnerable populations under immediate threat of violence. DoD might anticipate short to moderate strategic warning associated HSO and the duration of HSO missions can be expected to range from long to very long. Despite the existence of consent of the host nation, the environment could range from permissive and nonviolent to locally or regionally violent. Adversaries will vary by context and may range from criminals, armed gangs, and militias to organized and sophisticated military forces.

Because U.S. forces conduct HSO in defense of innocent local populations, HSO cannot rely on the cooperation and capabilities of host nation security forces at the outset. Thus, U.S. forces can anticipate that local forces would be at best indifferent and at worst hostile to U.S. ends. Relationships with local populations and leaders, on the other hand, are very important to overall mission success. However, the degree to which all populations will cooperate with U.S. forces will be highly variable. In the case of sectarian conflict, for example, the level of consent will depend on which side U.S. forces intervene to protect. At least some among the local population should be expected to cooperate with U.S. operations. Ground forces should anticipate that allied and coalition contributions to HSO will be significant and U.S. forces should be prepared to engage in HSO as the operational lead or as a significant contributor to multinational effort. Finally, HSO are likely to terminate with U.S. forces transitioning security responsibilities to impartial third parties first. While transition to host nation authorities is possible, the underlying conditions that necessitated HSO in the first place are not likely to be corrected by the time U.S. forces depart.

25 It should be noted that the definition of protection of civilians (PoC) differs according to actor. For the purposes of this study, human security is primarily concerned with the prevention and limitation of physical attacks on civilian populations and securing humanitarian access. Further discussion on PoC is given by Alex J. Bellamy, Paul D. Williams, and Stuart Griffin, Understanding Peacekeeping (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010); and United Nations Secretary-General, Implementing the Responsibility to Protect, January 12, 2009, http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/SGRtoPEng%20(4).pdf.
Opposed Stabilization (OS)

U.S. forces conduct OS when a partner or adversary state has lost control over security in all or part of its sovereign territory and the associated disorder and internal strife puts core U.S. interests at risk. The minimum essential objective for OS is the establishment of an environment orderly enough for the restoration of routine civil functions. In other words, “All military action should be assessed by its contribution toward achieving stabilization objectives, thus creating a platform for political, economic, and human security.”

This is a lower bar than the full menu of stability tasks suggested in joint doctrine. OS might occur at the request or with the tacit agreement of the legally recognized government of the victim state; however, the most difficult OS operations might be conducted in states where the government and/or large segments of the indigenous population harbor anti-American sentiments. The OS category includes but is not limited to COIN operations.

The scale of OS missions varies significantly by the affected state’s size and population, as well as adversary capacity and sophistication. Due to the high level of violence and the need to bring that violence rapidly under control, the scale of U.S. ground force response will be significantly higher than response to instability under more benign circumstances.

Among the operational types discussed in this report, none is more influenced by the course and cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than OS. There will be a long-standing aversion for future OS for the foreseeable future. While circumstances where OS would be an appropriate response will be common worldwide, actual U.S. execution of OS in the future will likely only occur in cases where U.S. officials perceive a significant threat to core U.S. interests. Recent political disturbances in the Middle East mark USCENTCOM as a continuing theater of note for OS. That said, the costs of Iraq and Afghanistan loom over U.S. decisionmaking with respect to military operations in that AOR. Nonetheless, it is reasonable for U.S. strategists and planners to think through the demands of OS in the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and South Central and South Asia.

In USPACOM, the likeliest potential candidate for OS is a North Korean collapse scenario. However, in that case, the scale of the U.S. effort would be tempered by the presence of a capable South Korean partner. Given deep U.S. ties to a number of states in the Southeast Asian littoral, U.S. strategists would be wise to examine the demands of OS operations in that region for the longer term. Overall, the study team found extended OS to be among the least likely contingency demands on U.S. forces for the foreseeable future.

The differences between HSO and OS operations are worth noting. Where HSO are exclusively limited to protecting innocent civilians, the primary focus of OS is establishing and maintaining broad stability and security through a range of activities that might include quite intense combat actions, especially initially. Thus, OS operations are categorized within the “distributed security” archetype. More specifically, the expected level of resistance upon entry, the sophistication and persistence of violence over time, and the corresponding level of U.S. forces required to reestablish and maintain order will all likely be higher in OS than is the case with HSO. In short, the initial balance in theme between offensive combat and security functions may primarily favor combat with a gradual transition to security and stability operations over time.

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U.S. forces can anticipate moderate to long strategic warning associated with the need to conduct OS. While future COIN operations may have the longest strategic warning (as insurgencies often take longer to emerge and gain traction), classical COIN is also perhaps the least likely OS variant on the strategic horizon. The duration of OS will range from long to very long, but, ultimately, the operation’s duration will depend on the subordinate missions assigned to U.S. forces, as well as the resources apportioned to meet those missions. Entry conditions for U.S. forces will range from uncertain to nonpermissive and the operational environment will remain nonpermissive and hostile for a significant period of time after entry.

Adversaries in instances of OS will include criminals, insurgents, militias, state proxy paramilitaries, and rogue elements of the victim states military forces. Because there are varying circumstances that trigger U.S. intervention—for example, response to collapse of a hostile state or intervention on behalf of a strategic partner threatened by widespread internal disorder—cooperation of local authorities and forces will vary substantially. In this report’s two AORs of concern, the cooperation of local authorities will range from cooperative to hostile. In all cases, local authorities and forces will be challenged, failed, or failing. Similar to local authorities and forces, the cooperation of local populations and leaders will vary significantly as well. In some cases, populations will be largely cooperative. In still others, populations will be overtly hostile, providing material support to the violent resistance. In the end, however, OS efforts should prioritize the creation and rehabilitation of relationships with local populations and leaders in order to establish a stable environment and the effective provision of public goods as rapidly as possible.

The same political forces placing new constraints on intervention among U.S. decisionmakers will be even more at play among U.S. partners. Coalition support would likely emerge out of political rather than practical necessity. Thus, U.S. forces should anticipate modest allied contributions to future instances of OS, except in cases like North Korea where the U.S. enjoys a partner with substantial direct interest in the outcome and significant military capability to bring to bear on the problem. Termination of OS missions might be somewhat unsatisfactory to purists, as U.S. forces might anticipate disengaging from OS only after forcing local violence down to manageable levels for host nation or third-party successor forces. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are instructive in this regard. U.S. forces should anticipate that they will transition the theater responsibilities they have assumed to host nation authorities. However, it may be more common for transition to occur with a capable third-party. Retrograde ideally occurs deliberately. However, U.S. withdrawal in contact may also be common.

Sanctuary Denial Operations (SDO)

SDO are conducted to control and occupy territory in order to preclude its use as a safe haven by adversaries. SDO occurs in response to an imminent threat or a grievous harm to core U.S. interests. Routinely, SDO are undertaken to preclude terrorist or serious criminal activity posing persistent hazards or to disrupt or destroy adversary leadership, networks, and capabilities that enable hostile or illegal actions. A more conservative alternative to OS, SDO might be considered a “management” approach to persistent irregular threats, lying somewhere between stand-off strike and COIN. SDO may involve near-unilateral U.S. actions, under conditions where local authorities have failed to demonstrate either the capability or the willingness to establish and maintain functioning order inside their sovereign territory. The operations consist of simultaneous and often geographically dispersed offensive actions to destroy or mortally degrade an opponent’s capacity to inflict additional near-term harm. They may also involve some level of sustained operations in order to prevent immediate reconstitution of adversary capabilities.

The persistent extremist challenge in the USCENTCOM AOR makes SDO an enduring potential mission there. Further still, the continued violent agitation of state proxies associated with the ITN indicate that SDO may be required to limit their ability to threaten core U.S. interests and further destabilize an already fragile region. SDO are less likely in the USPACOM AOR. Nonetheless, the continued existence of extremist groups in the USPACOM region and their uncertain future strength and
persistence make SDO a reasonable future contingency operation for USPACOM strategists and planners to consider.

SDO are primarily themed as combat operations and fall largely in the “distributed security” archetype. However, a mix of combat, security, and stability actions may be necessary over the course of operations. Security tasks will be limited in most cases to the local defense of affected populations. Stability operations will be limited in scope and duration, lasting only until the end of military action. The strategic warning associated with SDO ranges from moderate to long and the duration of SDO will vary, largely depending on the extent of the challenge, the physical size and location of the operation, and the objectives the intervening force is asked to achieve. However, a large-scale SDO will at a minimum endure for weeks to months.

From the outset, SDO will occur primarily in violent, nonpermissive environments. Adversaries may include sophisticated criminal cartels, paramilitaries, terrorists, and insurgent networks. A majority of them will have access to sophisticated military capabilities that may create early access and area denial challenges for U.S. forces. Local authorities and forces may be cooperative. However, in most cases, they will be largely incapable or unwilling to commit meaningful resources to the operation’s outcome. Likewise, the attitudes of local populations will vary. However, many SDOs—especially those that occur in the greater Middle East—will occur in and around populations that are at best indifferent and at worst hostile to U.S. operations. In the end, although SDO do not have a significant support and enable component, it would be beneficial to the overall mission if U.S. forces were able to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with local authorities, forces, and populations to facilitate their durable cooperation in limiting a resurgent sanctuary challenge in the AOR.

Ideally, American forces will conduct SDO with allies and partners arriving from outside the immediate AOR. However, new political constraints in the post-Iraq/Afghanistan era will likely limit the size and effectiveness of their contributions. Finally, U.S. forces might expect to terminate SDO under fire. While U.S. forces may desire an orderly transition of authority to an effective host nation partner or third party, this will not be the norm.

**Counteraccess/Quarantine (CAQ)**

CAQ operations are speculative future actions by U.S. ground forces to counter a consequential regional adversary’s A2/AD efforts at range.\(^{29}\) CAQ would involve the innovative employment of ground-based U.S. anti-access capabilities such as air and missile defenses, long-range fires, and space/cyber capabilities, in close coordination with U.S. and coalition air and sea forces, in an attempt to deny an adversary freedom of maneuver beyond their immediate territory or area of operations. Through the strategic employment of precision U.S. assets ashore at key strategic chokepoints and along vital sea and air lines of communication, CAQ operations would effectively establish a precision cordon that would enable the United States and its partners to severely restrict an adversary’s use of the global commons without putting finite air and sea assets at substantial risk. CAQ missions would effectively nullify an opponent’s strategic-level A2/AD strategy.

CAQ combine the combat, security, and enable and support themes but under a more passive and defensive posture than in the conduct of major combat campaigns. Thus, the study team determined that CAQ largely falls in the “enable and support” archetype. The strategic warning associated with CAQ is likely moderate to long. The operational environment within which ground forces are employed will in large measure be uncertain, as adversaries may attempt to overcome quarantine challenges with a combination of long-range precision strike and unconventional ground attack.

As CAQ actions are firmly focused on a countering major regional powers’ sophisticated military capability, the principal adversaries will be state opponents and their air, missile, and maritime forces.

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\(^{29}\) The CAQ category was inspired by T. X. Hammes’s conception of *Offshore Control*. 
However, as implied above, that opponent may employ proxy irregular attacks from SOF, terrorists, and insurgents to counter deployed U.S. precision advantages. An effective CAQ operation will rely on the cooperation of host nation authorities and forces. In USPACOM, the principal theater of interest for CAQ operations, those local authorities and forces are likely to be increasingly capable. Indeed, they may ultimately contribute significant complementary counter-access capabilities themselves.

There is more uncertainty about the level of cooperation from and attitudes of local populations. Here the United States might encounter more difficulty, as local populations see the presence of advanced U.S. offensive and defensive counter-access capabilities as an unnecessary escalation in regional tensions. As CAQ is intended to avoid direct military confrontation, allied/coalition contributions to CAQ are likely to be significant. Ideally, CAQ terminates without the need for major military action. Like SF, the intent of CAQ is to lower the profile and vulnerability of forward deployed air and sea forces and to drive adversary risk calculations past the “unacceptable” threshold.

**Major Combat Campaign (MCC)**

MCCs are large-scale military operations focused on the defeat of an enemy state’s conventional and hybrid military capabilities and methods. MCCs involve extended high-intensity combat operations between the U.S. military forces and those of competitor states. MCCs may pursue limited objectives like restoring some previous order, coercing an adversary to cease dangerous or threatening behaviors, or limiting an adversary’s future military options. Aims can also be more expansive, to include overthrowing and replacing an adversary regime. Instances of the latter will likely combine significant combat, security, stability, and support and enabling actions over an extended period of time in order to secure a durable end to hostilities and the establishment of a new political and security status quo.

While MCC is considered to be the least likely among future contingencies over the next two decades, the principal geographic focus of potential MCCs worldwide is assumed in this study to lie in the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs. In the Middle East, the most immediate potential MCC would pit U.S. forces against the Iranian military. Given the uncertain path of a number of states currently in the midst of political transition or that may experience a significant change in political alignment, the United States might consider the prospect of MCCs in defense of core interests against a future hostile Pakistan, Egypt, or Syria as well in the next 20 years.

Perhaps the likeliest region for future MCC is in the USPACOM AOR. It is important to note here that “likeliest” does not mean “likely.” In USPACOM, the United States confronts an immediate threat from a hostile North Korean regime that possesses capabilities that pose fundamental threats to a U.S. treaty ally. Over the long term, the uncertain rise of China makes contingency planning for a major regional conflict with China a reasonable activity for USPACOM strategists and planners. Although all are hesitant to plan for a future MCC in either region, this report has found that this prospect should at a minimum be the subject of some “futures” thinking.

Naturally, MCC falls in the “limited conventional campaign” archetype. If an MCC is preceded by a show of force, initial combat action will be weighted heavily toward defensive operations until such time that U.S. forces can transition to the offensive. This study found that MCC will more commonly occur after hostilities have already begun or the U.S. is initiating a preemptive campaign. Therefore, MCC will likely be offensive in nature from the start and the United States will likely face an opposed entry into the theater.

The strategic warning associated with MCC would be moderate to long with substantial caveats. First, this assumes that efforts at deterrence and prevention have a reasonable chance of success. Second, it assumes that the likeliest regional MCC opponents are prone to avoid war involving the United States and will go to significant lengths to ensure that remains their policy. Finally, U.S. technical capabilities for warning of conventional conflict are effective enough to limit the chance of bolt from the blue conventional conflict. Depending on the specific scenario, duration of MCC will be moderate to very
long. The latter is particularly true to the extent that U.S. forces engage in substantial postconflict stabilization.

In all cases, MCCs involving substantial numbers of ground forces will occur in nonpermissive, hostile, and extremely violent environments. With a presumed increase in irregular and hybrid capabilities and methods by prospective U.S. opponents, MCCs are likely to involve U.S. military action against a variety of adversaries. Though MCCs are focused on adversary states and their militaries, enemy forces will likely employ an amalgam of irregular and traditional capabilities and methods. In addition to the armed forces of adversary states, consequential opponents in a MCC may include criminals, proxy irregulars, terrorists, and/or militias. MCCs will also routinely involve significant threats from cruise and ballistic missiles and CBRN weapons.

Under virtually all circumstances imaginable, MCCs will involve significant cooperation with regional authorities and forces of some capability. However, their participation in combat operations may be highly conditional based on the degree of threat they perceive from U.S. opponents. The populations of regional partners will cooperate with U.S. forces, yet, as in the case of SF, some may perceive that U.S. intervention is counter-productive to conflict resolution.

More distant allied and coalition contributions to MCCs will be highly conditional as well. This will be most true in the USCENTCOM AOR. As has been noted in a number of cases already, the scar tissue associated with the recent Middle Eastern wars will continue to impede thoughtful consideration of future demands for ground intervention. While this is certainly the case for U.S. decisionmakers, it likely weighs even more heavily on U.S. allies and partners who are limited by even greater political and resource constraints. The USPACOM AOR may be an exception in this regard, particularly with respect to MCC against North Korea. MCCs are likely to terminate with U.S. forces transitioning their responsibilities to either host nation or third-party authorities and forces.
APPENDIX B: KEY TASKS

During the course of the study, the CSIS study team revisited the 19 key tasks identified in the October 2011 report “U.S. Ground Force Capabilities Through 2020.” That report surveyed generic ground force demands through this decade, identifying important gaps in current and future ground force capabilities. Some combination of the tasks articulated in that report were determined to be essential to the success of that report’s generic operational types.

In the process of assessing future challenges risk in the course of this study, the CSIS team evaluated the validity of the 19 original tasks. That evaluation ended with an updated key task list. Its 28 amended or new tasks provided baseline criteria for this report’s assessment of future challenges risk in the context of the five pacing archetypes identified in section IX.

The study team suggests that senior defense and military leaders might use these twenty-eight tasks to evaluate the adequacy of current and planned ground forces for the likeliest, most dangerous, and most disruptive future challenges. These key tasks provided a methodological foundation for risk assessment, providing key definitional content for six major risk categories. The six risk categories are:

- Understanding the strategic and operational environment and leveraging information.
- Shaping strategic and operational conditions.
- Projecting forces.
- Employing forces and capabilities to achieve operational objectives.
- Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions.
- Terminating military operations consistent with objectives.

There is significant overlap between the content of this appendix and that located in the earlier October 2011 CSIS report. In some cases, tasks were parsed to add more fidelity and account for capability areas that were more distinct than previously thought. In other cases, tasks were added based on a new appreciation of strategic and operational conditions, as well as the specific demands identified in the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs. A review of the major risk categories in the study’s second working group in January 2013 was particularly helpful in finalizing and validating study insights on key tasks. In particular, the working group validated affiliation of each tasks with one of the six major risk categories.

The tasks are arranged below according to those categories. Successful performance of some collection of these tasks is essential to overall mission success in the five pacing archetypes employed in risk assessment.

Understanding the Strategic and Operational Environment and Leveraging Information

1. Collect, analyze, and exploit all-source information and intelligence.

The information demands of future ground force commanders will transcend the boundaries of classical military intelligence. Success in the large-scale pacing archetypes identified in this report will depend to some extent on the ability of U.S. ground force leaders to exploit all-source intelligence, information, reconnaissance, and surveillance.

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30 Similar to appendix A, this section is also an adaptation of an appendix in Freier et al., U.S. Ground Force Capabilities. Much of the material presented in this section of the study is directly lifted from “Appendix B: Key Task Definitions” presented in the 2011 report.
Every military operation will be marked by some ambiguity. Therefore, U.S. ground forces should be postured to gather information while operating. As no military operation occurs in a vacuum and all U.S. operations occur in a joint or combined context, ground forces must be well-positioned to take full advantage of myriad sources of relevant information, leveraging the relative strengths of advanced technology, sister services, other U.S. government agencies, foreign security forces and intelligence services, and local leaders and populations.

U.S. ground force contingency responsibilities are extensive and varied. Thus, the demands associated with collecting, processing and analyzing the right kinds of intelligence and information—appropriate to specific operational requirements—will stress the limits of technical and human capabilities. As the preponderance of future ground operations will occur amongst foreign populations and against conscious actors exercising judgment within a specific context, understanding the human dimension of the operational environment across its broadest PMSEII dimensions will be important. In addition, U.S. ground forces will need to account for the unique challenges associated with various physical environments as well. As this study found that U.S. ground forces will continue to face environments marked by substantial disorder, this human component of intelligence and information will remain uniquely important to the successful execution of ground operations.

As a consequence, commanders will need to employ the full suite of intelligence- and information-gathering and analysis assets. Beyond traditional intelligence and reconnaissance tradecraft, this involves drawing relevant information from the lowest levels in the field and calling on experts from outside the military and/or intelligence communities to help develop and continuously update a comprehensive picture of the relevant operating environment.

2. Map and understand the operational environment.

Employing intelligence and information gathered through the various instruments described above, U.S. ground forces will need to establish and maintain—through constant updates—the best possible picture of the operational environment and its nuances. This process begins with training and education and proceeds through operational execution. Continuous learning within the AOR will be essential. In the field, ground forces operate within a context. No two operations are alike. Further, to the extent an operation is undertaken in response to the disordered conditions of intrastate conflict or natural or human disaster, sensitivity to local context and nuance becomes increasingly important.

In addition to differing threat dynamics, each individual operation features different joint, interagency, and foreign partner perspectives as well. Further, differences in the physical environment and

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31 See United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Pamphlet 525-3-1: The Army Operating Concept 2016-2028 (Fort Monroe: TRADOC, 2010), http://www-tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp525-3-1.pdf. The concept describes the idea of fighting for information in this way: “[e]ffective reconnaissance requires the ability to fight for information in close contact with populations and enemies, constant vigilance, and available reserves to reinforce units once they gain contact with the enemy.” (18).


33 TRADOC, Army Operating Concept (2010), 15.
PMSEII conditions will have profound effects on the course and conduct of operations. Thus, operational success requires a thoroughgoing assessment or map of operational conditions.

Mapping the environment includes detailed understanding of the baseline cultural and environmental features of the AOR; an analysis of friendly and adversary networks, capabilities, and relationships; as well as a sophisticated perspective on how all of these factors relate to the AOR’s PMSEII dynamics. Ground force leaders and their subordinates will need to know what to protect, what to attack, and what conditions to exploit or build on, as well as the corresponding effects their decisions and actions in any of these areas have on tactical, operational, and strategic outcomes. Knowing what is important in the environment and how to map it well in advance of contingency operations will assist U.S. ground forces in setting favorable conditions before and during operations.

Over time, the map will change. Therefore, adjusting to change is paramount as well. In the end, focusing on mapping the environment’s key systems and dynamics and adjusting that understanding over time will lead to enhanced understanding of key threats and PMSEII dynamics that should be accounted for in operational planning. Experience shows that this results in smarter decisions and a greater sensitivity to cause and effect.


Situational awareness and local sensitivity are broad concepts. Consistent with the two tasks outlined above, both involve much more than the military aspects of a specific operation. They must also account for the broader PMSEII dynamics outlined in the previous task. As it is impossible to fully prepare for every conceivable contingency operation in advance, force-wide situational awareness and local sensitivity rely on some combination of pre-contingency education and training, operational learning, and persistent adjustment to new or unexpected operational developments.

The foundation of situational awareness and local sensitivity lies in the ability of U.S. soldiers and marines to understand changes in context and rapidly share information as contingency conditions unfold. Further, it requires a greater appreciation of local sensitivities and the potential effects of U.S. and allied military actions, as well as the actions of others operating in the environment.

Force-wide situational awareness and local sensitivity begins with the exposure of ground forces to foreign environments through training and routine engagements abroad. Some advanced regional orientation—through regional alignment and missioning—will assist in enhancing ground forces cultural and regional IQ as it will allow senior ground force leaders to focus education, training, and foreign engagement opportunities on those areas that are most likely to underwrite future operational success. Once contingency operations are underway, the force requires an all source command, control, and information network that enables U.S. and partner ground forces at all levels to see and understand their conditions in context and rapidly disseminate relevant changes in circumstances across the force. This enables shared understanding, more precision in effects, and higher operational tempo.

Shaping Strategic and Operational Conditions and Outcomes

1. Gain and exploit information advantages and exploit advantages in the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS).

Gaining and exploiting information advantages early and continuously is essential to success across all pacing archetypes anticipated in this report. Skillful employment of information operations and information-related capabilities by U.S. forces keeps relevant populations informed and serves to advance the U.S. strategic and operational narrative. Further, they can limit the impact of false or inaccurate information that inevitably surrounds all U.S. military interventions and undermine a potentially harmful adversary information campaign.

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Skewed perceptions of reality are unavoidable features of 21st-century military operations. The proliferation of cheap communications equipment and the reality of increasingly networked contingency environments has literally put the ability to shape worldwide perceptions at the disposal of those most keen to exploit it. The successful use of information as an instrument of both warfighting and peacemaking increasingly makes the capabilities and concepts for the operational employment of information as critical to mission success as most or all coercive or lethal instruments.

Skilled mastery of the cyber and EMS environments is a critical component of this task. For example, cyberspace is now so important to future operations that it is included in U.S. joint doctrine as one of five principal warfighting domains—joining land, sea, air, and space. Technical advances have enhanced U.S. offensive possibilities in this regard—demonstrated most recently by alleged U.S. cyber attacks against Iran using the STUXNET virus. As all opponents—state and non-state—increasingly rely on cyberspace, U.S. ground forces need to have the capability to master and manipulate the cyber environment—sometimes with very precise micro-targeting of individual systems—in order to degrade and/or exploit an opponent’s cyber and cyber-based capabilities. Further, offensive cyber operations and the broader use of cyber tools to advance U.S. information objectives will be relevant to all future operations.

2. **Establish and maintain collaborative partnerships with foreign security and paramilitary forces.**

In an era of fewer forward deployed ground forces, declining force structure, and fiscal constraint, productive and collaborative relationships with foreign security and paramilitary forces are essential to achieving myriad U.S. security objectives. Ground force efforts in this regard should naturally focus on extant allies and partners first, but, increasingly, U.S. ground forces should build new relationships with emerging allies, whose security influence is expanding and that share common security interests.

There are distinct advantages for the United States in continuing a deliberate program of partnering with foreign forces under routine and contingency circumstances. As a matter of routine, ground forces should strategically target those partners that will most likely help physically underwrite the security of shared interests. The ability to improve the quality of foreign security and paramilitary forces or build new foreign security capabilities from whole cloth may relieve U.S. forces of some future contingency demands. Helping build partner capacity, for example, potentially expands the pool of contingency forces that would be available to respond to crisis. Further, building partner capabilities or exercising with foreign forces in key strategic regions will increase the likelihood of future U.S. access to important bases of operation in the event of large-scale contingency operations. Finally, stronger and more capable partners can serve as an effective “economy of force,” freeing up U.S. forces for contingency employment in other more critical regions of the world that are either more important to U.S. interests or more at risk.

Similarly, advantages exist for building effective local partnerships under contingency conditions. Successful completion of some military operations, for example, may require deliberate efforts to

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35 JCS, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*, August 11, 201 1, xv–xvi.
improve the capability, capacity, and performance of foreign security and paramilitary forces. A more capable indigenous foreign security partner, for example, may be the “road out” for U.S. forces, as was the case in Iraq and Afghanistan. Efforts to build foreign forces under contingency conditions may speed the departure of U.S. forces from theater, allowing the United States to deliberately cede to local forces who are demonstrating increasing competence and capability in security responsibilities that U.S. forces had previously assumed. This task encompasses both improving the capability, capacity, and performance of a foreign partner’s official military and paramilitary forces, as well as performing similar functions in support of foreign irregulars threatened by or at war with an adversary of the United States. The Son’s of Iraq, Anbar Awakening, and Afghan Local Police are useful examples in this regard.36

Routine and contingency partnership efforts may vary significantly between regions. Too often lately, this task has been exclusively associated with irregular warfighting and, more specifically, to the post-9/11 war on terrorism. However, threats differ significantly between regions. The USCENTCOM region, for example, faces complex nonstate disorder-based challenges, as well as hybrid state-based threats that range from violent political agitation and proxies to ballistic missiles and CBRN. In USPACOM, purposeful threats impacting core U.S. interests are more traditional in character. Thus, there is no “one size fits all” solution to partnership. In an era of declining resources, it will be important for DoD to recognize and target its engagement and partnership activities accordingly.

3. Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with local populations and leaders.

Ground forces are increasingly likely to deploy and employ forces simultaneously on very short notice. Ideally they will have already established working relationships with some of the most important local leaders and populations in the AOR as a matter of routine engagement. Opportunities for this are declining, as U.S. ground forces are increasingly CONUS-based and regional partners are hesitant to host large numbers of general purpose ground forces—even on a temporary basis. Ultimately, U.S. ground forces are more likely to deploy forces from a cold or generated start into new and relatively unfamiliar operating environments without the benefit of advanced interaction with local populations and leaders. Often these populations will be at best indifferent and at worst open hostile to U.S. presence and aims. Under these more difficult and complex contingency circumstances, ground forces will have to establish important civilian relationships “in train,” as operations commence. The early cooperation with or, at a minimum, acceptance of U.S. presence under these circumstances will be more difficult to achieve, but, no less critical to meeting operational objectives.

While U.S. ground forces should be prepared for favorable, uncertain, and hostile relationships with local populations and leaders. The latter two—representing higher bars and being increasingly more likely—require the greatest attention. However, U.S. ground forces leaders should be equally prepared for all three conditions. In the first instance, ground operations will benefit from preexisting networks of trust. In the latter two cases, U.S. ground forces will need to quickly and effectively establish relationships with the most important and influential populations and do so with a keen understanding of the local environment and its complex PMSEII dynamics.

The ability to plug into a well-developed trust network or rapidly build one in the face indifference or hostility in large measure depends on success in the previous five tasks. Further, it requires that ground forces are persistently exposed to opportunities in training and operations that force them to build working relationships with foreign civilian populations.

Projecting Forces

1. Tailor forces for conditions unique to specific operations.

The inherent diversity of future ground force missions requires that the right mix of combat, combat support, and combat service support forces and capabilities can effectively aggregate on order—often in innovative or non-standard combinations, deploy as a cohesive whole, and operate under a coherent command and control architecture. This is the hallmark of a truly modular force. It enables different ground formations to “plug and play” into task-oriented organizations that are purpose-built for the conditions presented by the operating environment. Further, it enables the effective sequencing of force application, ensuring the right forces arrive in theater and are employed at the right time.

The ability to tailor forces applies both within individual ground force components, as well as across components. The emerging “Special Operations Joint Task Force” (SOJTF) concept, for example, envisions the task-based organization of special operations and general purpose forces under a single SOF-led chain of command. Faced with the inevitability of more limited ground force capacity in general, the three major ground force components, should be prepared to blend their unique capabilities and strengths together on operations to meet emerging contingency demands. This calls for new levels of SOF-General Purpose Force (Army and Marine) integration, as well as more formalized integration of Army-Marine Corps concepts and capabilities in advance of contingency operations.

Mission-tailoring forces requires a training and exercise program adequate to the task as well. Ideally, a revitalized postwar joint exercise program would be region-specific, focus on employment of new combinations of joint ground capabilities against the likeliest, most dangerous, and most disruptive missions anticipated in specific regions well prior to actual force employment. This is especially important for more specialized forces. With the benefit of significant advanced consideration of where and under what circumstances specific forces are likely to be employed together, specialized capabilities and forces (e.g., intelligence, Counter-CBRN, logistics) can move beyond “garrison generalization” onto a more mission-focused path.

2. Project forces over strategic and operational distances.

Power projection is the ability of U.S. forces to (1) deploy the right mission-tailored combinations of general purpose and special operations forces and (2) establish adequate theater support architecture to sustain those forces on operations consistent with the mission’s specific demands. Power projection is enabled by five elements: forward deployed forces (permanently stationed or rotational), prepositioned stocks (ashore or afloat), strategic lift (both air and sea), modularity, and adequate theater opening capability. The latter is discussed in more detail in the next two task descriptions.

Forward-deployed forces provide the U.S. with visible presence and immediate response capability. However, forward deployed ground forces—especially those permanently stationed abroad—

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This task is derived from a list of “Refined Army Capstone Concept Required Capabilities.” The original Army capability is described as the ability to “project forces to positions of advantage” TRADOC, *Army Operating Concept*, 46.
will, with the end of the Iraq and Afghan wars, largely become artifacts of the past. In the near future and at a new post-Iraq/Afghanistan steady state, for example, the Army will only have three of its planned 32 active component Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) stationed outside CONUS.\textsuperscript{38} Those forces that are rotationally present or permanently stationed abroad are for the most part out of position for the most disruptive scenarios as well. And, certainly, even if they were positioned in close proximity to their next contingency mission, they are insufficient in both numbers and material capabilities to fight or operate effectively without significant reinforcement from outside of the theater. An additional challenge is the perceived decline in U.S. access to foreign bases—even warm facilities that may serve as effective intermediate staging bases for contingency deployments.\textsuperscript{39} Combined, new limitations on forward deployed ground forces and increasing constraints on access and basing will no doubt complicate the power projection equation for military planners well into the future.

By necessity then, the ability of the United States to project ground forces in the future will rely more heavily on the other four elements outlined above. Prepositioned stocks enhance the quality, size, and capability of early deploying ground forces. Strategic lift is the backbone of the nation’s power projection capability. It delivers the bulk of deploying forces from their bases in CONUS and around the world, and it sustains those forces over time. Modularity underwrites the ability of the force to tailor the right force packages for contingency conditions. Finally, the ability to project forces is predicated on successfully opening the theater, setting the conditions for follow-on forces to arrive, receiving those forces, and, finally, securing their onward movement.

The United States will need to take measures to close the time/distance gap that currently exists with respect to responsive power projection. In the event ground force intervention is required in the future, success will rely upfront on the ability to alert or mobilize, tailor, and deploy forces in sufficient time and in sufficient numbers to succeed under the specific contingency’s unique operational conditions. By definition then, future power projection will require that U.S. forces increase their capability to deploy from afar—most often from CONUS—directly into operational theaters to conduct high-tempo ground operations immediately upon arrival with minimal requirement to stage and reconfigure. Given the distribution of forces in CONUS and around the world, future large-scale ground operations in particular will see various components of a ground-based joint task force converge on the theater of operations from a variety of distant stations. By necessity, those forces will arrive via both air and sea and speed will be required in many instances.

3. **Conduct deliberate theater entry and opening.**

The concept of theater entry and opening—introduced above as one of five key pillars in power projection—is likely to occur under three basic conditions—permissive, non-permissive, or uncertain. In deployments where permissive conditions are anticipated, U.S. ground forces conduct deliberate theater entry and opening. Deliberate entry implies arriving in an AOR and conducting reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) without an immediate threat from enemy action.

In cases of deliberate entry, U.S. forces generally enjoy two key advantages. The first of these advantages is time—time to deliberately alert, embark, and move forces into a foreign theater and on arrival stage and reconfigure without the pressure to conduct operations immediately. Second, U.S. forces are likely to enjoy the support or guaranteed acquiescence of host nation authorities in the AOR. In short, deliberate entry generally implies that the United States enjoys a willing partner who will help facilitate the movement of U.S. forces into theater. Finally, deliberate entry generally implies that the threat of direct hostile resistance is minimal or non-existent. There may be threats from irregular spoilers and/or


\textsuperscript{39} A consistent theme in interviews and roundtables with military professionals was the growing likelihood of fewer secure overseas bases.
ballistic missiles that have to be accounted for in operational planning, but, in general, deliberate entry occurs under extraordinarily favorable security conditions. Deliberate entry has long been assumed in operational planning—even in the case of major combat campaigns. Increasingly, however, this study finds that U.S. forces should assume less favorable circumstances.

4. **Conduct forcible theater entry and opening.**

In hostile environments where entry will be opposed either by sophisticated A2/AD threats or where substantial structured or unstructured area denial challenges are present, U.S. ground forces will have to overcome resistance of some description and set conditions for the entry of follow-on forces through offensive action. In some cases, A2/AD threats may be advanced, highly sophisticated military capabilities in the hands of foreign military forces—all specifically focused on denying U.S. entry. In other cases, they may be far less sophisticated adversary capabilities, methods, and forces that are nonetheless still lethal or problematic. For most anticipated ground force contingencies, the norm will likely will be some combination of the two.

Forcible theater entry and opening relies on the same set of capabilities that enable deliberate entry, but also requires ground force and other joint enabling capabilities that allow U.S. forces to seize a lodgment in the face of certain resistance via amphibious, airborne, or helicopter assault and expand the lodgment to enable the arrival of follow-on forces. Forcible entry could focus on one or more points of entry. The latter might rely on a number of simultaneous, geographically dispersed and mutually supportive offensive actions for entry. Thus, the ground force and wider joint capability sets that support this more complex form of entry varies in both scale and substance, ranging from conventional combat to special operations capabilities. This form of distributed entry—where U.S. ground forces “swarm” into theater from multiple points of departure and entry—appears to be the future ideal for the conduct of forcible entry operations.

5. **Conduct entry under uncertain or ambiguous conditions.**

Given the proliferation of effective lethal and non-lethal means of resistance, as well as the likelihood of increasingly networked opponents unified only by common opposition to U.S. presence and designs, ground forces will most often conduct entry under uncertain or ambiguous security conditions. In military planning, there is a temptation to minimize risk by assuming an opposed entry. However, increasing constraints on military action and the need for greater precision in the application of lethal military capabilities makes this assumption impractical.

Uncertain or ambiguous conditions may be present for a variety of reasons. First, U.S. forces may be entering a theater where the actors are predisposed to hostility but do not believe they have the means for effective resistance initially. Second, U.S. forces may be entering a wholly hostile theater, yet do so “offset” from their adversaries’ principal area of operations. This requires the entry force to maneuver over some distance to confront opposing forces. Finally, U.S. ground forces may enter under uncertain or ambiguous circumstances when capable actors of unknown intentions are present and operating in the AOR.

From a capability perspective, successful execution of this task involves most or all of the same capabilities required for forcible entry. However, application of lethal force is a branch or contingency of the base entry plan. As a consequence, forces will need to enter theater with the benefit of greater protection than is the case for deliberate theater entry and they will need to be prepared to transition to a more offensive posture immediately upon arrival. As in the case of forcible entry, the capability to “swarm” or enter the theater in a distributed fashion will be at a premium.

Employing Forces and Capabilities to Achieve Operational Objectives

1. Conduct distributed military operations.

Advances in communications, information-sharing, and networking have enabled previously unimagined levels of decentralization in ground operations. Sustained military actions over the past 12 years conducted over great distances have established a precedent for successful distributed operations in the future. Unlike most of the rest of the world, U.S. ground forces are further distinguished by their ability to aggregate small units operating semiautomatically into larger military formations as needed. In the future, U.S. ground forces will be asked to routinely employ the best of these qualities on large-scale operations abroad.

In future contingency operations, for example, U.S. forces will need to engage in a variety of tasks that span classical warfighting functions simultaneously. The ability to conduct discrete small unit actions and sustained larger-scale operations provides U.S. ground forces with clear competitive advantages over adversaries and provides senior U.S. decisionmakers with a unique scalable capability with which to respond to a variety of contingency needs worldwide. Most future operations require an amalgamation of these same advantages in a single military operation.

Going forward, U.S. ground forces will need to operate over great distances, often semi-autonomously, with sufficient freedom to exercise initiative, control tempo, and achieve the theater commander’s overall intent with minimal oversight—all within the context of a larger military operation focused on a common purpose. The kinds of operations anticipated in the future will stress this capability even further.

As this report has identified distributed security contingencies springing from disorder, humanitarian response, and enable and support actions as the most common demands, dispersed operations are likely to take on new levels of complexity. Not only will U.S. forces have to have the capability to tailor force packages for unique operational demands with little advanced warning, but they will have to do so at range, forcing employment of forces that are culturally and materially distinct, not routinely based together geographically, and administratively under the control different chains of command or authority. Further, limitations on theater sustainment, fires, and ISR will require new levels of self-sufficiency on the part of ground units conducting distributed operations.

2. Integrate interagency and foreign military and paramilitary capabilities in operations.

Under ideal conditions, future operations will involve foreign military and security forces, as well as the assets and capabilities of foreign and U.S. civilian agencies. Successfully integrating this universe of potential partners into future U.S. ground force operations will require new technical, structural, and training solutions. Fewer resources overall—both within U.S. ground components and within other
foreign and U.S. military and non-military partners demand new initiatives to bolster interoperability, as new human and material constraints require new levels of cooperation and burden-sharing.

The speed at which future contingencies will unfold calls for early integration of partner military and civilian capabilities into contingency planning and exercising. In the end, establishing these relationships on the fly is an imperfect and dangerous solution jeopardizing future success. As resource constraints become even more pronounced, there will be a natural tendency among the various stakeholding communities to protect their own capabilities at the expense of others. This threatens unnecessary and expensive redundancy, as well as resource competition that may harm overall effectiveness. Thus, future integration will rely on close coordination of capabilities development, underwriting a deliberate program of burden-sharing.

3. **Employ combined arms forces in combat.**

Employing combined arms forces in combat involves all offensive and defensive actions in an active theater of conflict specifically focused on defeating armed opponents and securing U.S. and/or partner forces against enemy action. In addition to standard offensive and defensive operations against conventional, hybrid, and unconventional opponents, combat operations also include routine force protection and defeat of adversary indirect fire, missile, and air attacks. New levels of adversary capability imply that any future operation where substantial combat action is anticipated will require a number of common combat capabilities. For example, while armored capabilities and indirect fires may not be applied in the same manner in distributed security or peacekeeping as they will in limited conventional campaigns, they will be required to one extent or another.

Successfully conducting combat operations includes the capacity for effective maneuver as well. The capability and capacity to securely maneuver and reposition forces rapidly in response to operational needs is essential. This aspect of the combat task requires the capacity to leverage air, sea, and protected ground transport assets to rapidly shift forces to the point of greatest need within a theater of operation. As the pressure to generate capabilities for more distributed entry and follow-on operations increases, all ground forces would benefit from greater protected maneuver and firepower.

4. **Employ combined arms forces in security operations.**

Operations that are principally “themed” as security missions appear to be growing in importance for U.S. ground forces according to the findings of this study. This is perhaps most apparent in this report identifying distributed security as the future warfighting focus for general purpose Army and Marine forces. Employing combined arms forces in security operations involves the deliberate use of U.S. ground forces to protect and control critical infrastructure, vital territory, vulnerable populations, and/or dangerous military capabilities like CBRN from threat of seizure, destruction, or harm. Security operations may involve substantial combat action, particularly in the beginning and especially under conditions where the assets, populations, or territory to be secured are actively threatened by armed adversaries.

5. **Secure, safeguard, and evacuate CBRN weapons and capabilities.**

This study has determined that U.S. ground forces should be prepared to conduct a range of security-themed operations involving a variety of contingency circumstances. However, one set of conditions—involving insecure CBRN—is particularly noteworthy and merits separate consideration. In both the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs, U.S. ground forces may be compelled by circumstances to

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42 TRADOC, *U.S. Army Operating Concept 2016-2028*, 47–48. Defeat indirect fire, missile, and air attack was inspired by the discussion of “protection.”
43 See DoD, *CCJO V3.0*, 16. Security here includes but is not limited to the activities described under the category of the same name in the CCJO.
secure, safeguard, prepare to render safe, and evacuate significant CBRN capabilities that are either vulnerable to falling or have fallen into the hands of irresponsible actors who are not constrained by the norms of international behavior long-governing their possession and use.

Recent events in Syria and fears of a Pakistani or North Korean collapse have heightened U.S. concerns in this regard. In response, U.S. ground forces must be prepared to physically secure loose or unprotected CBRN capabilities and delivery systems, safeguard them from irresponsible possession or use, render them safe if possible, and securely transport them out of harm's way when conditions allow. This is a resource intensive mission that not only includes general purpose warfighting capabilities essential to physically securing and defending CBRN but also the technical capabilities essential to rendering those capabilities safe or inert and securely evacuating them out of theater without further incident.

6. Conduct stability operations.

Some future operations will require forces to conduct stability operations. Unlike the experience of the past 12 years, new constraints on future operations will see stabilization—from its purely doctrinal perspective—in decline as a dominant “theme” of future operations. Nonetheless, stability operations—on some level—will remain a core component of a larger operational context in many future ground operations. The joint and Army operational construct of offense, defense, and stability operations, for example, remains valid.44

Stability operations involve providing for the emergency restoration and temporary delivery of essential services and basic public goods as a result of catastrophe or conflict.45 Stability operations are undertaken—often in conjunction with host nation civil authorities and other U.S. government agencies to ameliorate adverse conditions in one or more of five “stability sectors”—security; justice and reconciliation; humanitarian assistance and social well-being; governance and political participation; and economic stabilization and infrastructure.46 One area of unique concern in this regard, is the ability to conduct stability operations that may occur as a result of the use of CBRN. This study has concluded that there are an increasing number of circumstances where CBRN use or CBRN-related catastrophe will be a component of the operational environment.

7. Enable joint, combined, and interagency operations.

This study found that an increasingly important, but also underappreciated task for U.S. ground forces is enabling the efforts of others charged with carrying the burden of the main effort in future military and civil-military contingency operations. This task is particularly important to general purpose Army forces. However, it can apply more broadly across the three ground force components.

This task is most evident under the rubric of Army Support to Other Services (ASOS), where U.S. Army forces specifically “set the theater” under routine and contingency conditions, providing the theater-level combat, combat support, combat service support, and force protection backbone for missions. The archetypal contingency circumstance where this task is most profoundly in play is a large-scale conventional campaign involving significant land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace activities.

In other cases, a speculative future coercive air and sea campaign against a regional opponent, for example, ground forces may provide essential enabling capabilities like theater opening, ISR, communications, logistics, key point security and defense, air and missile defense, and long-range fires as part of a foundational or condition-setting architecture upon which the broader joint or combined

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46 U.S. Army, FM 3-07, 2–5.
campaign is conducted. In still other cases, U.S. ground forces may provide a theater backbone for U.S. interagency-led efforts in humanitarian assistance and consequence management, leveraging unique command and control, logistics, and CBRN response and mitigation capabilities. Further, U.S. ground forces may set conditions for future operations led and largely conducted by allied or other foreign partner militaries or civilian agencies.

Protecting and Sustaining Forces Consistent with Operational Conditions

1. Conduct operations under uncertain security conditions.

Very few of the operational environments posited in this report are entirely benign. Indeed, realistically the most dominant set of contingency circumstances encountered by U.S. ground forces in the future will be those in which security conditions are neither entirely benign nor entirely contested or hostile. As in the case of entry described above, U.S. ground forces will often conduct operations under uncertain security conditions where the need to transition to a more aggressive posture can emerge with very little warning. An example of these circumstances might be those where a fragile peace is constantly under pressure, where local populations or forces are hostile to U.S. presence but also consider themselves unprepared to engage U.S. ground forces in a direct confrontation.

Many disordered environments are marked by enormous uncertainty. Under uncertain security conditions where the threat of violence against U.S. forces is ever present and somewhat undefined, ground forces need to have all the mechanisms in place appropriate to operating in non-permissive, denied, or contested territory while demonstrating restraint in employing them so as to avoid unnecessarily pushing potential opponents in unfavorable directions. The prospect of military operations under uncertain security conditions has a substantial impact across military functions but is particularly stressful in the area of intelligence, force protection, maneuver and mobility, and sustainment.

2. Conduct operations entirely in contested or denied territory.

While the norm for future operations may be entry and operations under uncertain or ambiguous conditions, the nature of contemporary threats—increasingly irregular and/or hybrid—and the growing challenge of un-governed, under-governed, and irresponsibly governed territory suggest that future military operations will increasingly occur “in the round” with no discernible secure “rear area” presumed safe from hostile action. Therefore, U.S. ground forces must be capable of conducting operations entirely in contested or denied territory for extended periods of time.

Under these conditions, the potential for violence is geographically unbounded and populations can shift between indifferent, uncooperative, and openly hostile. With the benefit of lessons learned over twelve years of persistent combat operations in largely contested territory, all U.S. ground capabilities and forces, regardless of their operational function will need to be sufficiently hardened against physical attack. Further, the ability to identify, engage, and defeat physical threats in a discriminating fashion will
be critical to most future operations. Experience has demonstrated that future operations—regardless of overall operational theme—will routinely occur in contact with or in close proximity to innocent populations. While some, most, or even all among the population might be hostile to U.S. presence and designs, they will not all be active combatants. A number of the vignettes presumed to be of merit for future planning involved operations in foreign territory where the population may be initially predisposed against cooperation with U.S. and partner opponents.

3. **Defend networks and conduct operations in degraded information environments.**

There are perhaps no more hostile or contested environments than the information, cyber, and wider EMS domains. U.S. opponents will continue to seek asymmetric capabilities to defeat U.S. ground forces in future contingency operations and will increasingly enjoy both the means and the opportunity to exploit information and cyber vulnerabilities to their advantage. The same kinds of cyber tools that enabled successful U.S. attacks on Iran’s nuclear production facilities, for example, will be increasingly at the disposal of U.S. adversaries regardless of their apparent resource disadvantages or military disposition.

Successfully attacking U.S. command and control and information networks is perceived as one effective route to disrupt U.S. military decisionmaking and slow the operational tempo of U.S. forces. Indeed, as U.S. operations become more distributed, defending friendly networks and securing the ability to control forces and share information are arguably among the most fundamental tasks underwriting future operational success. U.S. reliance on commercial networks and capabilities, as well as a lack of robust and secure network infrastructure in key regions of the world, increase the potential for operating in degraded information environments from the start of operations. As a consequence, future ground force operations will require technical capabilities and knowhow that enable the effective defense of networks and the continuation of operations regardless of information and communications conditions. Redundancy of capability is one key desired attribute in this regard.

4. **Defend against air and missile attacks.**

One key combat capability that merits particular attention in the emerging security environment, especially given the security dynamics of the two regions of concern to this report, is air and missile defense. The requirement to provide effective ballistic and cruise missile defense in particular is increasingly important to future operations in both the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs. Given the wide proliferation of ballistic and cruise missiles and unmanned aircraft technology around the world, U.S. ground forces—and, particularly, U.S. Army forces—will play a pivotal role in defending against effective air and missile attacks in all of the most dangerous scenarios in these regions.

Even under conditions of heightened tension between the United States, U.S. partners, and adversaries armed with sophisticated missile capabilities, U.S. ground forces must increasingly be prepared to quickly establish a ballistic and cruise missile defense network theater-wide to offset the potentially game-changing presence of large numbers of missiles and UAVs. Defending against air and missile threats includes detecting, identifying, and engaging adversary missiles and UAVs posing threats to U.S. and combined forces, as well as defending the populations, assets and infrastructure, and military forces of vulnerable foreign partners. This is important both as an enabling capability for large-scale U.S. joint and combined operations, and as an operation undertaken to enable and support key U.S. partners.

5. **Operate against and recover from a CBRN hazard.**

States and groups opposed to the United States, its partners, and its interests are all seeking niche asymmetric advantages, increasing the potential for CBRN attack. Further still, natural and human-driven catastrophes can also be the origin of important CBRN hazards. These CBRN hazards in particular may either complicate or drive initiation of future contingency operations. Recent experiences with swine and avian influenza and the Japanese earthquake and nuclear disasters, for example, illustrate that CBRN hazards can emerge purely by chance.
This study has determined that U.S. forces are increasingly likely to have to prepare for and potentially operate in environments contaminated by CBRN hazards. This threat is particularly pronounced under circumstances where a state previously in control of its militarized CBRN assets suddenly loses control over them. All CBRN hazards share some key response characteristics. However, there are key differences between them as well.

While the resources required to develop effective CBRN capabilities remain the primary province of states, the barriers to entry into the CBRN club appear to be falling. This is especially true as a number of CBRN states appear either to be predisposed to behaviors consistent with future proliferation or are in danger of disruptive internal instability that might result in an unintentional loss of control over their assets. Thus, the CBRN threat is likely to grow with time. This trend—combined with the threatened pursuit of CBRN capabilities by violent extremist groups—indicates that the potential that U.S. ground forces may have to operate in environments marked by substantial CBRN hazard is at a new post–Cold War high.

The growing CBRN threat is emerging at a time when 12 years of counterinsurgency has seen the material and intellectual capability and physical capacity to operate in contaminated environments substantially atrophy. In the end, as deliberate use or accidental release of CBRN hazards has enormous potential to fundamentally impact the mission performance of the forces involved. The effects of CBRN assets and materials have the potential rapidly transcend boundaries and adversely impact the PMSEII conditions in a number of AORs. Planning and preparation for operations in CBRN environments and retaining material capabilities and competencies that enable post-CBRN recovery are essential components of an effective future ground force.

This requires that U.S. forces maintain the ability to sense, warn of, defend against, and recover from CBRN threats without losing the ability to continue performing their assigned military missions. Beyond a need for the capabilities essential to functioning effectively in contaminated environments, the emerging demands suggested by this task may also involve the ability to establish and/or enforce large secure cantonment areas and quarantines, facilitate the provision of widespread logistics, medical, and/or engineering support, as well as the capacity to secure and evacuate CBRN assets.

6. Sustain distributed operations for extended periods under austere conditions.

As an extension of tasks concerning power projection and the employment of forces, large-scale military operations under all contingency circumstances will require sustaining those operations across considerable distances over extended periods of time. The increased reality of more dispersed operations, the requirement to stage more from CONUS or other theaters, and assumed limitations on future basing abroad, make this task much more complex and daunting. The capabilities necessary to support sustained, distributed ground operations under austere—and often uncertain or hostile conditions—will be crucial to the success of virtually every pacing archetype described in this report.

The manner in which the force is sustained in the field could vary substantially. Planners should assume the worst—sustainment from intermediate staging bases geographically separated from the immediate AOR, unimproved forward bases, and ships at sea. Ideally, U.S. ground forces will have access to relatively well-developed commercial facilities in and around the principal AOR. However, this study found that, given the inevitability of new constraints on forward basing, this is likely not the norm.

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48 The “sense, warn, defend against, and recover from” construct was in part derived from the discussion of “protection” located in the Army Operating Concept. TRADOC, U.S. Army Operating Concept 2016-2028, 47–48.
Terminating Military Operations Consistent with Objectives

1. **Transfer responsibility to host nation authorities and security forces.**

   Joint doctrine clearly emphasizes that military commanders “should consider moving from an international military security lead to an indigenous lead as soon as practicable.” The ability to conduct this transfer is dependent on the capability and capacity of local authorities and forces, as well as the cooperation of concerned regional powers. In some cases, these “concerned regional powers” will not be wholly friendly to the objectives and outcomes preferred by the United States and its partners.

   Transfer of responsibility may be to either indigenous civilian or military responsibility. Critical to the process of effective transfer is early recognition of which type of security arrangement will work best given security and governance conditions. An appreciation of local population’s expectations in this regard is paramount. Force-wide situational awareness and cultural sensitivity will be essential to this process. Additionally, it is essential to recognize the potentially disastrous consequences of premature transfer. Though ideal, immediate transfer to indigenous authorities may not be possible. This will require that U.S. forces affect a handover of security responsibility to a capable third party.

2. **Transfer responsibility to a foreign third party, coalition, or international force.**

   When a transfer of operational responsibility to a host nation and its civilian and military authorities is not yet possible, U.S. ground forces may find themselves handing responsibility for security and rudimentary governance to capable third parties. This may include a transition of authority to a coalition or international military force.

   Transfer of lead responsibility to third party groups like this may generate positive attention internationally and will certainly lessen the future burden on U.S. forces. Ultimately, substantial resources may be saved as the human, financial, and political costs of intervention are shared. Ground force commanders will have to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the risks associated with the transfer to third parties. Effective transfer will also rely on an early collaborative relationship with the force assuming responsibility for follow-on missions. Sharing of all relevant information will be a critical enabler in this regard.

3. **Conduct a deliberate retrograde and redeploy forces.**

   The physics of military operations often mean that it takes much longer to get out of a contingency operation than it does to get in. Ending the U.S. missions in Iraq and Afghanistan are the most recent examples in this regard. Once security objectives are attained, ground forces will be charged with withdrawing U.S. forces in an orderly fashion and under circumstances that do not harm hard-won gains.

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Ideally, this occurs under conditions where U.S. forces have the time, security, and local cooperation necessary to deliberately disengage from previous responsibilities in the AOR and prepare for and execute an orderly retrograde from the theater of operations. The withdrawal of forces should be done with the full cooperation of host nation and regional partners and in ways that tangibly demonstrate host nation or third party control over security conditions on the ground. The conduct of retrograde and reset of forces should also enable timely U.S. preparations for future operations and limit residual U.S. military responsibilities in the AOR.

4. **Conduct an opposed retrograde or withdraw and redeploy forces under uncertain conditions.**

Due to the increased potential for shorter-duration operations with more limited objectives, there are likely conditions where U.S. ground forces would conclude operations and withdraw from the AOR under opposed or uncertain conditions. Therefore, U.S. forces should prepare for future contingencies where the operational objectives are such that hostile forces of some description will remain engaged with U.S. forces from initiation of operations through U.S. withdrawal.

Under these conditions, though desired objectives may well have been achieved, U.S. forces nonetheless disengage from a theater of operations while still in contact with adversaries. Effectively executing retrograde under these conditions necessitates deliberate planning, cooperation with regional partners, and a broad understanding of potential implications of early U.S. departure.
APPENDIX C: USCENTCOM OPERATIONAL VIGNETTES

The following ten vignettes were determined to be illustrative of large-scale ground force demands in the USCENTCOM AOR. None represent point predictions.

Syrian Sanctuary (Distributed Security)

The post-Assad government fails to establish effective control over major swaths of territory in the north and east of Syria. Various competing militant groups establish themselves in this area and operate largely beyond the reach of transitional Syrian authorities. In addition, this area becomes the principal proxy battleground between external supporters of the new Sunni-dominated Syrian government and Iran. Soon militant groups, enjoying the benefit of sanctuary, initiate destabilizing political agitation, violent attacks, and criminal activities focused against the transitional Syrian government, Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq.

Tension is particularly pronounced between the Syria, Turkey, and Iraq over the Syrian transitional government’s failure to control its border and re-establish control. A number of destabilizing military capabilities—for example, chemical and biological (CB) weapons, portable air defense assets, armor, antitank weapons, indirect fire systems, and explosive ordnance—are either known or believed to be under the control of rogue actors operating from Syrian sanctuary. The prospect for Turkish intervention is very high. In response to intolerable levels of violence and instability, and spiraling out of Syria, the United States leads a coalition operation to create a secure buffer against further attacks, to help bound the sanctuary problem for the transitional Syrian government, and to support at-risk regional partners.

The principal operational theme and focus of U.S. and coalition military operations in this vignette is combat with the limited objective of denying hostile groups effective sanctuary. This vignette has significant security and enabling components as well. U.S. forces are likely to have to secure dangerous military capabilities that they target or encounter during operations, as well as vulnerable populations put at-risk as a result of U.S. and adversary actions. Additionally, the U.S. will need to provide enabling ISR, logistics, and air and missile defense to regional and coalition partners through the duration of operations. Durable outcomes will rely on the progressive development of the Syrian transitional government’s security capabilities. While stability operations are not the focus of the mission, some minor stabilization efforts will be required during the course of military action.

The potential presence of CB weapons and other sophisticated military capabilities raises the stakes significantly. Strategic warning of the need to conduct military operations is judged to be moderate to long. However, the imminent or actual use of CB weapons would likely compress U.S. decision making. The operating environment is presumed to be universally non-permissive and extremely violent. While the adversaries are assumed to be armed with substantial advanced weaponry, gained via the collapse of the Assad regime, they will primarily consist of militias, insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Some will enjoy significant external support from Iran. U.S. forces can also expect to encounter clandestine Iranian forces. To the extent local Syrian forces and authorities operate in the AOR, they will likely range from cooperative to indifferent to U.S. presence and failed or substantially failing in capability. The attitudes of local populations will likely vary, ranging from indifferent to hostile.

Yemen Sanctuary (Distributed Security)

Combined pressure from Sunni extremist groups and Houthi separatists results in a total failure of legitimate Yemeni authority throughout much of the country. Even Sana’a, the capital city, is challenged by widespread lawlessness, disorder, and violence. Both the Houthis and Sunni extremist groups increasingly use ungoverned Yemeni territory as a platform for wider attacks against Saudi Arabia and commercial shipping through the Bab al Mandeb (BAM). Violent extremist groups move with increasing freedom between the Horn of Africa, Yemen, and the Arabian Peninsula as well. As in the case of the
Syrian vignette, this scenario assumes that ITNs are present and “free-riding” on the instability. Ultimately, catastrophic attacks on U.S.- and partner-flagged shipping, as well as persistent cross-border attacks by Sunni militants and Houthis on a weakened Saudi Arabia results in a U.S. coalition intervention to deny sanctuary and secure passage through the BAM.

U.S. operations in this vignette are predominantly themed as combat operations. However, there is likely to be a significant security component. In particular, U.S. forces will need to secure key geography that makes persistent threats to international shipping in the BAM and Red Sea possible. Likewise, there will be general enabling of U.S. and coalition joint operations, as well as some efforts to build the capacity of local security and paramilitary forces. Minor stabilization is only anticipated for the duration of operations.

The strategic warning of the need to employ U.S. forces was determined to be moderate. However, the vulnerability of the BAM and the potential for attacks against commercial shipping with little or no advanced notice could challenge this assumption. The operating environment for U.S. forces is non-permissive and violent, with the potential presence of man-portable advanced systems. Principal adversaries in this vignette are a complex mix of militias, insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Some will be enabled by direct Iranian support. As in the case of Syria, the cooperation and capability of local authorities and forces is in substantial doubt. While ostensibly a U.S. intervention would occur on their behalf, they will nonetheless range from cooperative to uncooperative and failed or failing. Local populations are likely to be less inclined to support U.S. efforts than some in the regime. Therefore, this vignette assumes that their attitudes about U.S. presence would range from uncooperative to hostile.

Iraqi Civil War (Peace Operations)

Persistent political violence and unrest in Iraq results in a resurgent three-way civil conflict between competing Iraqi constituencies. The challenge is substantially accelerated by the symbiotic relationship between Iraqi and Syrian unrest. Ultimately, the fragile political accommodation between Iraq’s sectarian communities collapses with catastrophic effects. Open fighting breaks out between Government of Iraq (GoI) forces and Kurdish Peshmerga in Kirkuk and Nineva Provinces. Simultaneously, renewed Sunni-based terrorist attacks against the GoI and Shi’a in Baghdad, Babil, and Diyala provinces results in a severe crackdown by GoI security forces nationwide. Sectarian militias re-emerge to protect vulnerable populations. Increasingly, all parties to the conflict assume an offensive stance against one another. After several months of open conflict, a fragile U.S.-brokered peace between the parties results in a joint U.S.-Arab League peacekeeping mission to monitor the Syrian-Iraqi border, separate Kurdish and Iraqi-Arab forces, secure critical infrastructure, and protect at-risk Sunni populations.

While there is very little appetite for a return to Iraq in strength, there are compelling moral and strategic imperatives that would force consideration of future peace operations there. First, the United States is, by virtue of Operation Iraqi Freedom, an original party to the most recent political dispute. Second, Iraq’s continued instability is a potential cockpit for future sectarian and proxy conflict region-wide. Circumstances would have to deteriorate substantially for a U.S. intervention to be realistic. Yet, the continued conflict in Syria and its potential as a near-term accelerant make the prospect of escalating civil conflict in Iraq more likely.

The theme of U.S. operations in this vignette is stability and security. Ground forces will need to provide foundational enabling capabilities to joint and Arab League partners participating in the operation. And there will be a modest enabling effort with respect to Iraqi and Kurdish security forces to increase some of their capabilities, build confidence, and foster the responsible use of force and forces. If combat operations are required, they will only be necessary on a very small scale to restore local order.

Strategic warning of the need to employ U.S. forces is considered in this case to be moderate to long. Though the United States would enter the theater in support of a negotiated peace agreement, the prolific presence of small arms and explosives, ungoverned sanctuary in adjacent Syria, and the near-
certainty of Iranian “free-riding” will mark the overall operational environment as highly uncertain. While the intent of the operation involves monitoring opposing sides and preventing resurgent violence, the human security aspect of this operation will put U.S. forces at odds with GoI security forces. This means that potential adversaries—should more aggressive peace enforcement operations become necessary—will range from criminals, terrorists, insurgents, and militias to uncooperative Iraqi military formations. Local forces will vary in their attitudes and capability. GoI forces are likely to range from indifferent to uncooperative in their attitude and challenged in their capability; whereas, Iraqi Kurds will likely be cooperative and challenged. Local populations, too, will vary in their view of U.S. presence—based on their perspective and perceived vulnerability.

**Pakistani Collapse (Distributed Security)**

Violence between factions inside Pakistan—including fighting between various elements of the security forces—results in the toppling of the state’s central government. Infighting between powerful constituencies within the military and intelligence services leaves no natural alternative authority to re-establish control. Competing militant and extremist groups, powerful substate militias, and elements of Pakistan’s failed armed forces openly vie for control of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and the port of Karachi. In the midst of nationwide civil conflict, the United States gains credible evidence that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons have fallen under the control of competing factions, including rogue elements of the Pakistani military who threaten their use both against intervention and internally against their opponents.

Many of these assets are believed to be on the move and under the control of a variety of actors. Further, preemptive Indian air attacks against Pakistani nuclear sites and delivery systems have already created areas of local contamination. Fearing further movement or transfer of nuclear weapons, the United States and a limited number of coalition partners intervene to secure and, subsequently, evacuate Pakistani nuclear capabilities with the limited assistance of local allies on the ground.

The study team determined that this is the most dangerous challenge facing USCENTCOM over the near- to long-term. The capability to contend with it appears to hinge on two “hopes.” The first is that Pakistan will maintain control of its nuclear weapons in perpetuity and, failing that, the second “hope” is that the United States will be able to contend with the challenge employing a light SOF-based commitment. The team encountered a number of views to the contrary on both counts.

The operational response to a generalized loss of control over Pakistani nuclear weapons was themed as a combat and security mission in this report. Generalized enabling activities will be required to conduct joint operations in and adjacent to the immediate area of operations and only limited stabilization is anticipated to ameliorate the immediate impacts of violence and instability in and around the territory where U.S. forces are operating.

The study assumes that U.S. forces would have short to moderate warning of the need to initiate military operations. In the main, this vignette assumes a universally non-permissive environment with the potential for substantial distributed combat action. Pakistan has and will maintain substantial military capability. Post-collapse, that capability will remain albeit under the decentralized control of multiple competing groups. Further, Pakistan is already home to a number of well-armed substate militia, insurgent, terrorist, and criminal organizations. All of these actors would comprise the universe of U.S. adversaries. Under the circumstances posited here, local authorities and forces are assumed to be hostile and failed. Likewise, local attitudes about to U.S. intervention will range from indifferent to hostile.

**Regional Uprising (Distributed Security)**

A nationwide popular uprising across Saudi Arabia is initially triggered by a government crackdown on Shi’a separatist demonstrations in the Eastern Province and new austerity measures undertaken in response to a significant drop in oil prices. Widespread sympathetic unrest among disaffected populations spreads across the Arabian Peninsula, wider Persian Gulf, and into already vulnerable Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. In addition to the popular political groundswell, Iranian proxies exploit the instability in the
GCC in particular with increased direct and indirect support for local resistance groups. Credible evidence of Iranian meddling increases military tensions between the region’s Arab governments and Iran.

U.S. citizens and third country nationals increasingly become the target of kidnapping and violent attack. The security of U.S. and allied populations, installations, and property are progressively more at-risk. In addition, major foreign-owned and joint commercial enterprises and infrastructure are frequently attacked, causing hundreds of millions of dollars in damage. The sources of the attacks vary and the volume of attacks overwhelms local security officials.

In response to the crisis, the United States and NATO partners initiate operations to securely evacuate at-risk U.S. and third country nationals, secure military and foreign-owned commercial installations, and provide enabling support—like ISR, air and missile defense, and critical infrastructure protection—to key regional partners. In some cases, these operations come at the request of the host nation. In others, the United States enters into the AOR only with the host nation’s acquiescence.

The precise scope of this challenge is unknowable. However, the speed with which events unfolded in the “Arab Spring” and the increasingly networked nature of a young Middle Eastern population indicates that political contagion of this kind is a reasonable contingency future to plan against. This is a near- to mid-term challenge, assuming revolutionary transformations in the Arab world continue over the next decade.

This vignette focuses primarily on security. Limited combat may be required to establish local security conditions necessary for the evacuation of at-risk populations and prevent further harm to critical infrastructure and assets. To the extent stabilization activities are undertaken, it would only be under the limited mandate of restoring critical functions damaged in civil disturbances and violence. There will be significant foundational enabling as well.

Strategic warning that military operations might be required range from extremely short to moderate. For example, a large-scale response may evolve, as serial interventions become necessary in different geographic locations over time. In general, the operating environment for U.S. forces will be highly uncertain. However, military action may occur in local, non-permissive environments. U.S. adversaries will range from armed irregulars like insurgents and terrorists to criminals. Less purposeful adversaries may emerge from hostile demonstrations. The attitude and capability of local authorities and forces will range from cooperative to uncooperative. In all cases, the scale of the unrest would define nearly all local authorities and forces involved as challenged, failed, or failing. Likewise, the attitudes of the effected local populations will vary significantly as well. Some will be cooperative, some indifferent, some uncooperative, and, finally, some overtly hostile.

Egyptian Civil War (Distributed Security)

Persistent, popular challenges to the struggling Islamist government in Cairo result in violent crackdowns by Egyptian security forces and their proxy political allies. Protests against and increasingly violent resistance to the status quo government emerges from three irreconcilable visions. The first sees Egypt becoming more secular and progressive; the second wants an even more conservative and religious political order; and the third, based around the previous regime’s elites, seeks reversion back to a form of centralized authoritarian rule that favors restored order. All three visions have politically significant constituencies.

An extended period of unrest results in failure of the Egyptian armed forces. Civil war follows shortly thereafter. As Cairo struggles to retain control over the country, it loses its grip on security outcomes in the Sinai. Multiple competing irregular armed groups establish bases of operation there. The security of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Red Sea transit are all adversely affected.

In the course of the expanding civil conflict, the Suez-to-Mediterranean (SUMED) pipeline is heavily damaged. Fighting also begins to adversely affect transit of the Suez Canal, as government forces...
lose control of significant tracts of adjacent territory. There are repeated unattributed attempts to attack and sink vessels in the canal. After numerous warnings from international shipping companies and insurers, all the major commercial lines stop transiting the canal. Shortly thereafter, an American naval vessel is also attacked in the canal zone.

In response to these events and at the request of a severely weakened Egyptian government, U.S., NATO, and Arab partners undertake an operation to secure the canal against further disruption, establish “overwatch” and secure key nodes associated with the SUMED pipeline, and deny effective sanctuary in the Sinai. The conditions described above may be more likely than the U.S. response posited here. Nonetheless the study team found that the capability to seize and hold critical infrastructure is a demand that merits close attention. The importance of the canal as an important U.S. and coalition sea line of communication alone underscores this point.

This vignette is considered a near- to mid-term challenge. The principal operational themes of this vignette are combat and security. The latter is particularly important as it affects the canal and pipeline. U.S. ground forces will also have a substantial role in enabling wider joint operations and partner participation. Stabilization will likely be limited to the repair of damaged infrastructure.

Given the complex sovereignty issues involved, the strategic warning associated with the need to conduct military operations is moderate. Overall the environment within which U.S. operations are conducted would be non-permissive. While U.S. entry is assumed to be at the request of Egyptian authorities, U.S. ground forces might expect to encounter resistance from some elements of Egypt’s failed or failing military. Those forces will have access to advanced military capabilities that Egypt has acquired over the past several decades. Therefore, local forcible entry may be required.

The vignette assumes a wider and more complex spectrum of threat actors as well. These include hostile militias and insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Given the broad uncertainty of the conditions, the attitudes of local authorities and forces can be assumed to range from cooperative to uncooperative or hostile. Their overall capability is assumed to be failed or failing. Local populations are similarly likely to range from indifferent to hostile.

**Iranian Provocation (Limited Conventional Campaign)**

Already under coordinated internal pressure, Iran attempts to demonstrate the durability of the regime with a sudden and unanticipated underground nuclear test and a number of long- and intermediate range ballistic missile tests. These serial provocations occur against the backdrop of regionwide political unrest, as well as a series of thinly deniable Iranian proxy attacks against GCC authorities.

Repeated attempts by the international community to diffuse the crisis fail. The Iranian regime is increasingly isolated. Iranian authorities believe themselves to be cornered with few outlets short of confrontation. This becomes apparent after armed confrontations between Iranian maritime forces and commercial ships in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. and its NATO and GCC partners elect to assist internal resistance groups and deny Iran further access to the means of war with a limited military intervention. U.S. and coalition forces move to seize much of Iran’s offshore oil and natural gas infrastructure, significant portions of Khuzestan Province, and the north side of the Strait of Hormuz. The intent of the operation is to establish sanctuary for anti-regime forces, secure passage through the Strait of Hormuz, and deny Iran access to oil and natural gas revenues.

This study assumes that Iran will attempt to maintain some ambiguity about its nuclear intentions. However, a combination of internal political threats and a perception by Iranian authorities of an adverse change in the regional balance of power might trigger more bellicose behavior in the future. This vignette is considered to be a near- to mid-term prospect.

The principal operational theme is combat. As in the case of all operations, significant ground force capabilities will enable U.S. and coalition operations and there will be a demand to secure at-risk
populations and infrastructure after ground forces achieve their immediate objectives. Over all, stabilization will be a minor component of the operation, limited to the restoration of function to damaged infrastructure in the immediate area of operations and meeting the near-term needs of populations effected by U.S. operations.

Strategic warning of the need to conduct military operations might be short. The operating environment for U.S. and coalition forces would be non-permissive and extremely violent. U.S. forces would face an Iranian military that employs advanced capabilities. However, Iranian commitment to their “mosaic defense” doctrine indicates that the most persistent threats would emerge from insurgents and terrorists organized and employed by the Iranian regime. Local authorities and forces would be hostile and challenged in light of U.S. military advantages. As this vignette assumes intervention in the midst of anti-government resistance, U.S. forces might expect cooperative relations with some among the population. However, local populations will primarily range from uncooperative to hostile.

**Syria-Iraq Conflict (Peace Operations)**

As the internal stability of Iraq and Syria remain under substantial question and tensions mount between the two fragile post-Ba’athist governments, a severe drought largely effecting Iraq triggers a border dispute between the two states. A range of regional spoilers including local and transnational jihadists, competing armed militias, Iranian proxies, and the intelligence services of the Gulf Arab countries “free-ride” on the conflict to protect their various interests, accelerating tensions on both sides of the border. Their involvement threatens to further destabilize an already unstable region.

Recognizing that Iraq is poised to attack over control of water, the United Nations authorizes a large peacekeeping and monitoring mission with the purpose of preventing conflict between the two states and assuring equitable technical management of the water resources. Both the Syrian and Iraqi governments agree to the mission’s mandate. Given the United States’ recent history with Iraq, it becomes the most natural candidate for leading the operation. The United States provides the bulk of the non-Arab forces, as well as vital support architecture for the mission. The United States also provides essential humanitarian assistance to drought victims in Iraq. While this portion of the response relies on the technical support of civilian U.S. government agencies, the U.S. military provides an enabling and security backbone necessary to see it through.

There is substantial and increasing likelihood that new tensions between Iraq and Syria will emerge during the post-Assad transition period. The precise form that these tensions take and the prospect that they will translate into armed confrontation are open questions. This vignette is judged to be a mid- to long-term contingency.

It is themed primarily as a security and stability action. U.S. ground forces will naturally enable joint operations and coalition forces as well. This vignette sees only limited need for combat actions. If it occurs at all, it will be under the terms of the mission’s mandate and only in self-defense.

The strategic warning associated with the requirement to employ U.S. forces is considered to be moderate to long. The environment within which U.S. forces would operate is uncertain with the potential for significant local violence directed at the U.S. peacekeeping and humanitarian mission. Though U.S. forces will be operating in close proximity to two state militaries, both are assumed not to pose direct threats to U.S. forces. They will both be challenged to meet security demands and their attitudes about U.S. presence will range from cooperative to indifferent. A number of militias, insurgent groups, terrorist actors, and criminals would pose local violent threats to U.S. forces and operations. Local populations will likely be more diverse in their attitudes about U.S. presence and intentions. They will range from cooperative or indifferent to uncooperative and hostile.
Saudi Civil War (Distributed Security)

Under pressure from a widespread regional awakening, triggered by uprisings against the Moroccan and Jordanian royal families, Saudi Arabia begins a process of modest liberalization. The process satisfies none of the country’s competing interests and serves to turn important constituencies against one another. These forces include liberal reformers, religious conservatives, and the Arab Shi’a in the Eastern Province.

Saudi authorities face a nationwide security and governance challenge. A significant drop in oil prices also robs the royal family of effective economic tools to head off increasing disaffection. In the midst of growing instability, the Saudi royal family splinters creating a direct internal challenge to the current status quo. Tribal allegiances collapse over the failed course of government reforms and the fissures in the monarchy. A fracturing of the Saudi security services ensues, leading to open fighting between competing armed factions. In the process, Saudi Arabia’s oil infrastructure suffers significant damage. To prevent further irreparable harm, the United States leads a coalition of Western and Arab forces to secure critical Saudi oil, natural gas, and port facilities to prevent further losses. The intervention occurs with the tepid acquiescence of influential members of the royal family.

Like the Egyptian vignette above, this scenario represents archetypal threats to critical infrastructure. The study team considers this vignette to be a mid- to long-term challenge. However, it is difficult to precisely project the course of the “Arab Spring,” and, therefore, circumstances like this may emerge more quickly than anticipated.

The operation would be primarily themed as a combat and security mission. Routine enabling will be required for the conduct of wider joint operations and the United States will play a substantial enabling role in building successor indigenous forces. As in the case of response to other instances of civil violence anticipated by the report, stabilization will be a component of the operation but will also be strictly limited to restoring the function of damaged infrastructure and meeting the needs of populations in the immediate U.S. and coalition AOR.

U.S. forces might anticipate moderate strategic warning of the need to conduct military operations. However, this is a highly conditional and context-dependent judgment. The environment within which U.S. operations would be conducted would be uncertain or non-permissive. U.S. adversaries will consist of elements of Saudi Arabia’s failed or failing military, insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Significant advanced military capabilities once under the control of the regular Saudi military will be in the hands various parties to the expanding dispute. Local authorities and forces will range in attitude from indifferent to hostile, as will local populations.

Syria-Turkey Conflict (Enable and Support Actions)

Out of the transition process in Syria, a hostile, fractious, and unstable Islamist Syrian government emerges. It retains its CBRN and ballistic missile capabilities as a hedge against foreign military intervention and agitates against Israel and Turkey. Repeated incidents between Turkish border forces and Syrian transitional government forces result in a significant militarization of the border between the two states. Syria also ignores the increased presence of armed militias in the north and east of the country. Repeated incursions by these militia groups result in limited Turkish military actions inside Syria.

Rogue possession of CBRN remains a persistent concern with the fall of the Assad government. An unattributed sarin gas attack inside Turkey results in its requesting Article V support from the NATO alliance as it conducts a major incursion into Syria to establish a secure buffer and prevent continued attacks. In support, U.S. forces conduct a large-scale enabling operation, occurring for the most part on the Turkish side of the border, to assist Turkey’s combat operation inside Syria. Simultaneously, the U.S. deploys missile defense, ISR, and support forces to Israel, Jordan, and Iraq in order to demonstrate its commitment to regional security.
Throughout this study Syria emerged as a significant seam issue between USEUCOM and USCENTCOM. Syria’s uncertain future makes it a major focus for future U.S. military contingency planning. The study team judged this vignette to be a mid- to long-term prospect. The predominant theme of operations would be enabling and security. Combat operations are only envisioned in self-defense and stabilization activities are presumed to be very modest.

After a Syrian transition, U.S. forces might anticipate short to moderate strategic warning of the need to conduct military operations. The urgency of response could be dictated by the involvement of CBRN weapons. As the majority of U.S. operations would occur inside friendly territory, the operating environment would be uncertain. However, continuing threats of CBRN use and the persistent presence of armed irregular groups could mark conditions in this vignette as locally non-permissive as well. Principal adversaries in the environment range from a Syrian military of limited but, nonetheless, lethal capability to armed to insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. A number of local authorities and forces will be involved in this vignette. They will be cooperative and capable for the most part. Local Syrian authorities would be hostile and challenged. Similarly, the local populations of allied and partner states will largely be cooperative with U.S. presence and operations, whereas, Syrian populations might be largely hostile.
APPENDIX D: USPACOM OPERATIONAL VIGNETTES

The following ten vignettes were determined to be illustrative of large-scale ground force demands in the USPACOM AOR. None represent point predictions.

Pan-Pacific Tsunami (Humanitarian Response)
A massive subsea earthquake creates a large, fast-moving tsunami that hits U.S. Pacific territories and protectorates (Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands) as well as a number of allies and partners (Republic of Palau, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, and French Protectorates, like Tahiti). In the affected areas, property destruction is substantial and most residences are uninhabitable. Power, water, telecommunications, and sanitation systems are similarly destroyed across the region, overwhelming the response capacity of both the public and private sectors. In the wake of the tsunami, hundreds of thousands of people are displaced and in need of shelter, sustenance, and medical assistance. There are also immediate and mounting threats to public health and security.

Due to the widespread nature of the disaster, Australia and New Zealand—the U.S.’ typical partners in Oceania—are forced to concentrate on relief efforts in their own territories. The scope of the disaster, the remoteness of the island nations affected, and the profound threat to lives and property, overwhelms the international humanitarian community and requires immediate response by a large number of CONUS and Pacific-based DoD assets.

Natural disaster is the most persistent and durable threat in the USPACOM AOR. The prevailing operational theme for U.S. ground forces is balanced across three primary areas: stability, enabling, and security operations. Combat is not expected in this vignette. However, prudent attention to force protection will be required given the widespread devastation and its dislocating impact on effected populations. In the event of tsunami, warning is extremely short. Warning associated with other disasters varies from hours to days. Response to disaster occurring on U.S. territory would occur largely in permissive environments. Purposeful threats would be confined to criminal behavior. Local authorities and security officials will be failed or challenged but nonetheless cooperative. Local populations will be cooperative as well.

Philippines Pandemic (Humanitarian Response)
A virulent and lethal strain of avian flu emerges suddenly in Manila and rapidly spreads throughout the Philippine Islands. No area of the archipelago is safe from the expanding public health emergency. Hospitals and clinics are overwhelmed. As the death toll mounts, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend quarantine for travelers bound for North America and U.S. territories. Others follow suit as public health and immigration officials worldwide bar entry from the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

U.S. and third country expatriates, looking to escape infection, begin congregating at Filipino airports and port facilities. Cascading quarantine measures throughout the region limit their options. In addition, Filipinos and foreign nationals are increasingly threatened with spontaneous acts of violence and local security public health authorities are increasingly unable to cope with the crisis. Ultimately, they ask for U.S. and international assistance. U.S. ground forces become part of a region-wide U.S. government response. USPACOM is directed to evacuate and treat U.S. and designated third-country nationals, while helping Filipino authorities contain the hazard and mitigate the effects of the public health emergency.

Like more traditional natural disasters, consequential public health emergencies are a persistent threat in the USPACOM AOR. After consultations with USPACOM, the study team determined that a widespread public health emergency in a state or region with especially close ties to the United States may be among the most challenging natural disasters confronting U.S. forces. As in the case of the
tsunami outlined above, the principal operational themes for this vignette are balanced across the stability, security, and enabling functions. Violence might erupt locally. Therefore, prudent attention to force protection will be essential.

Demands for quarantine, treatment, decontamination, and security alone may move well-beyond areas most immediately affected by the outbreak. U.S. forces would have short to moderate warning of the need to act, provided effective mechanisms for monitoring were in place. Panic is a common feature of public health crises; therefore the operating environment for U.S. forces would be uncertain. The universe of threats in this vignette include criminals, insurgents, and terrorist groups that operate in the Philippines, although there may be spontaneous violence emerging from populations under severe duress as well. This vignette posits local authorities and security forces that are failing but cooperative and a population that is cooperative.

**Nepal Earthquake (Humanitarian Response)**

A massive earthquake rocks Nepal, resulting in the leveling of Kathmandu and many other surrounding population centers. The U.S. and India lead a broad coalition of countries, international organizations, and NGOs providing assistance inside Nepal. USPACOM is ordered to conduct a large-scale humanitarian effort to provide for the near-term relief of the Nepalese people. Ground force contributions center on C2, ISR; and support functions like logistics, engineering, aviation, and local security.

Consistent with the previous two USPACOM vignettes, this challenge conforms to the region’s most persistent and enduring threat—natural disaster. The U.S. response is heavily themed in favor of stability, enabling, and security operations. There will be a need for prudent force protection as well.

Events like this will be a persistent feature of the security landscape in USPACOM. Strategic warning of earthquakes anywhere in the world is extremely short. The security environment will be uncertain. While the purpose of U.S. military operations is strictly humanitarian in nature, there is the potential for local threats to U.S. forces. Challenges might include criminals, terrorists, and insurgents who operate in U.S. AORs and see the catastrophe as an opportunity ripe for exploitation. Again consistent with the previous vignettes, local authorities are likely to be failed or failing and cooperative. The local population will range from cooperative to highly indifferent.

**North Korea Collapse (Distributed Security)**

Rivalry within North Korea’s ruling elite and military high command leads to splintering in the regime in Pyongyang. A palace coup causes the officer corps to splinter into various competing rebel and loyalist factions. Centralized command and control of the North Korean armed forces fails, as military units of various sizes and composition begin pursuing divergent politico-military objectives.

Civil war breaks out between various the various factions. With a sudden collapse of the North Korean Army, control over North Korea’s CBRN assets is in considerable doubt. Under pressure from attacks by a number of loyalist factions, rebel forces along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) ask for South Korean intervention. Loyalist leaders vow to repel foreign interference and threaten to employ CBRN. However, their ability to do so effectively is in doubt. With the fear of North Korean CBRN in the background, South Korean and U.S. forces intervene.

The principal mission of U.S. forces is the seizure and security of North Korean CBRN capabilities and facilities. While South Korean forces carry much of the burden, U.S. ground forces retain a tight and expanding “inner cordon” in support to guard against loss of control over CBRN or CBRN use. U.S. ground forces also supply substantial enabling capabilities to South Korean forces.

Like the others, there is persistence to this threat. North Korea’s impending implosion has been consistently “around the corner,” according to many experts. However, the regime has endured already through two potentially disruptive succession processes over the last 20 years. In this vignette, it is assumed U.S. forces will have to fight to gain and maintain control over substantial amounts of North
Korean CBRN capabilities. While combat, security, and enabling are the principal themes of this vignette, stabilization will occur, and over time, U.S. stabilization responsibilities may be substantial. However, any stability operation will be undertaken in response to South Korean needs and specifically to address gaps in South Korean and international community contributions.

The vignette assumes moderate to long strategic warning of the need to act. However, the opacity of North Korean political affairs may limit warning. The environment will be extremely violent, with widespread employment of a mixture of advanced and less sophisticated lethal capabilities. Adversaries will range from elements of a failed sophisticated military to insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Within North Korea, local authorities will be failed and hostile, and the local population will range in attitude from indifferent to hostile.

**South China Sea Crisis (Enable and Support Actions)**

Incidents at sea involving Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino ships result in maritime crisis involving their respective naval forces. China declares the South China Sea closed to foreign warships. It further demands that commercial ships gain Chinese permission before transiting or face boarding and potential seizure. In response, USPACOM undertakes a large-scale show of force to demonstrate U.S. resolve. This includes a surge of combat and enabling capabilities—principally, C2, ISR, theater sustainment and logistics, ground maneuver, and air and missile defenses—to key regional allies and partners. In addition, U.S. SOF and conventional forces provide surge Foreign Internal Defense capacity to partners who sense direct or proxy threats to their territory.

According to feedback from working groups and others, China is likely less inclined to take overt military action as suggested here and instead opt for deliberately ambiguous moves in support of its expansive territorial claims. However, tensions are such between all parties in the South China Sea, that rapid escalation is possible. This vignette assumes a balanced enable and security theme. The combat component of this vignette involves the latent demonstration of lethal capability. Stability operations will largely be limited to measures undertaken to ameliorate the adverse effects of proxy violence on at risk or vulnerable populations.

While not anticipated on the immediate time horizon, a scenario like this could unfold late in the near-term but much more likely over the mid and long terms. Establishing an exclusionary zone of the type suggested here would require substantial military capabilities in the field. Thus, the U.S. would have, at a minimum, moderate strategic warning to respond. The environment will range from tense but permissive with respect to forces operating entirely on U.S. territory (e.g., Hawaii, Guam) to highly uncertain for forces operating elsewhere in the theater.

As military tensions mount, there will be an increasing threat to ground forces from missiles and CBRN. Adversaries will include sophisticated military forces, terrorists, and criminals. Proxy use of violence and intimidation is likely. For the most part, local authorities and forces will be cooperative but also challenged. Local populations and leaders will range from cooperative to indifferent.

**North Korean Provocation (Limited Conventional Campaign)**

The Kim family in Pyongyang disappears from view for weeks; rumors of a coup circulate. Without warning, a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) from the North hits in Seoul. The missile was armed with a nuclear warhead. The warhead “fizzles” but still causes extensive damage and radiological contamination in the South Korea’s capital city. In response, the U.S. provides immediate consequence management assistance, as South Korean forces mobilize. With steadily rising tensions, the United States begins deployment of additional forces into the theater, as well as simultaneous, noncombatant evacuation operations. As these actions get under way, coalition ISR detects ambiguous but troubling military activity along the DMZ, in Pyongyang, and at known CBRN and missile sites in the north.
The South Korean government chooses not to wait for Pyongyang’s next move. It senses that either North Korea is going to attack or it has lost centralized control of CBRN and missile capabilities. As a result, South Korean and U.S. forces launch a coordinated “fires” campaign against North Korean command and control networks, their integrated air defenses, and all known and suspected CBRN and missile sites. Combined U.S./South Korean air forces also attempt to neutralize North Korean artillery positions north of Seoul.

North Korea responds with artillery and SRBM attacks, inflicting thousands of casualties in Seoul and other urban areas. The South Korean and U.S. governments agree to use limited offensive ground operations to permanently silence North Korean artillery along the DMZ. Policymakers eventually move the ground campaign’s stop line up to 39.50 degrees north latitude, the narrow neck of the peninsula.

While overall, this study assumes that major combat operations are among the lowest likelihood contingency demands over the next two decades, it considers offensive operations in response to lethal provocations more likely than traditional defense of an ally against a coordinated, combined arms attack. The consequences associated with successful rogue use of CBRN on a vulnerable allied population, for example, makes offensive operations to neutralize that threat more likely than most other traditional combined arms scenarios. The objectives pursued by U.S. (and South Korean) forces in this vignette are limited, in keeping with the overall insights in this report.

The team judges this scenario to be a mid- to long-range prospect. There are no other analogs to a scenario of this type anywhere in the world. Iran, for example, presents a fundamentally different challenge. The predominant theme of operations is combat. U.S. forces will also be responsible for major enabling requirements. Further, there will be a security component to the vignette most likely associated with the establishing and maintaining control of CBRN weapons and delivery systems, as well as other destabilizing military capabilities targeted or encountered during operations. U.S. stabilization efforts will largely take their cue from South Korean authorities. While stabilization requirements may be substantial, they will principally fill notable gaps in South Korean and international community capabilities.

Because of the proximity of North Korean forces to the DMZ, U.S. ground forces might anticipate short to moderate strategic warning in advance of military operations. North of the 38th Parallel, the environment will be hostile, contested, and contaminated. Adversaries will range from sophisticated military forces to insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. The United States can expect a capable but challenged South Korean ally. North Korean authorities and forces will be hostile and challenged. Local North Korean populations will range from indifferent to hostile.

India-Pakistan War (Peace Operations)
A string of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) attacks in New Delhi and Mumbai trigger an Indian punitive military expedition into Pakistan. A mechanized Indian corps begins a “cold start” attack into Punjab. Indian forces rapidly advance. Without warning, Pakistan launches a 10-kiloton nuclear SRBM at what it believes is an assembly area for an Indian second echelon well-inside Indian territory. India responds with a nuclear attack on a suspected Pakistani nuclear storage facility.

Two more such exchanges occur before U.S. and Chinese officials negotiate a cease-fire and withdrawal of forces. An international peacekeeping force, co-led by the United States and China, enters the theater to facilitate the orderly withdrawal of Indian forces and monitor and patrol the disputed border. U.S. forces also undertake a significant consequence management effort inside India.

This is a mid to long-range scenario. It will be made more complex with the proposed development of tactical nuclear weapons by Pakistan. The overarching themes of this vignette are security and stability. U.S. ground forces will also carry the burden of enabling international forces, as

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well as Indian forces and civil authorities. Combat action will be limited to the strictures of the international mandate and will no doubt be confined to self-defense.

Warning of the terrorist attack that initiates this chain of events is expected to be extremely short to short. However, the warning associated with actual execution of the peacekeeping operation will be moderate overall. As the environment is certain to be marked by deep distrust between two capable military opponents and because of the prolific presence of armed irregular forces and terrorists, the operating environment will be uncertain. Under these conditions, the Pakistani armed forces will be a latent potential adversary. More likely active threats will emerge from nonstate armed groups, terrorists, and criminals operating on both sides of the border. Indian authorities and forces are likely to be cooperative and challenged, whereas Pakistani forces will range from indifferent to hostile and challenged to failing in light of the nuclear exchange. The two populations will mirror the disposition of local security forces and governments.

**Korean Unification (Enable and Support Actions)**

During a severe famine, a bloodless coup in North Korea topples the dynastic Kim family. Famine and political upheaval results in a generalized failure of authority in North Korea and the rapid disintegration of their security forces. The new transitional regime orders the army to barracks and stands down the border guard.

Refugees begin assembling in large numbers along the DMZ and North Korea’s northern borders with China and Russia. In relatively rapid order, the north’s transitional government seeks relief aid from and political reconciliation with South Korea. Shortly thereafter, what is left of North Korea’s armed forces collapses and deserts, leaving an enormous disarmament challenge. Naturally, the problem is most pronounced in the area of CBRN capabilities, but there is an expansive explosive ordinance and conventional weapons threat as well.

As a major exodus of refugees north into China and Russia and south into South Korea occurs, an active reconciliation and unification process begins. In coordination with China, this includes the movement of South Korean and U.S. military forces into North Korea. This does not occur without incident as repeated violent encounters with rogue elements of North Korea’s military and security apparatus occur. As the South Korean army moves north to establish security, U.S. forces follow in support securing, disabling, and, in some cases, evacuating North Korean military capabilities—including CBRN and their delivery systems. U.S. ground forces also supply substantial enabling support to South Korean security and relief efforts.

The study team judged this scenario as a long-term prospect but also found it to be as credible as either violent collapse or North Korean provocation. The principal themes of U.S. operations in this vignette would be enabling and security. U.S. forces might anticipate some limited combat action against elements of the North Korean armed forces that resist reconciliation. However, combat would be limited, localized, and confined to self-defense and security of North Korean military capabilities. Given the range of military capabilities in North Korea, combat action at any level could be quite lethal with the potential for rogue use of CBRN. As in the case of the other North Korean vignettes, U.S. stabilization efforts would be undertaken at the request and largely under the control of South Korean forces.

There would be moderate to long-term strategic warning of the need to conduct military operations. The environment would be uncertain and locally non-permissive. Principal adversaries would primarily be insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. However, U.S. forces should expect episodic encounters with elements of North Korea’s failed military. U.S. forces would benefit from a capable and cooperative ally in South Korean forces and authorities. In fact, U.S. forces should expect that South Korea would provide the bulk of the intervening force. What is left of failed North Korean authorities and forces will range from cooperative to indifferent. Attitudes of the North Korea population may range from indifferent to hostile.
China Quarantine (Enable and Support Actions)

After the election of a Democratic Progressive Party government in Taiwan, tensions between China and Taiwan escalate. China establishes a naval quarantine. After several attempts at a diplomatic resolution, the United States surges enabling forces and additional security into the region as a demonstration of U.S. resolve. This includes air and missile defenses and long-range precision fires. China responds by declaring the South and East China Seas and airspace closed to foreign military forces and declares the right to seize sea-borne commerce bound for the U.S. and its allies.

The United States organizes a coalition counterblockade of China-bound commerce and strategic resources. The U.S.-led coalition declares its intention to search any vessel transiting the Strait of Malacca, the Indonesian Straits, as well as China-bound commerce approaching the First Island Chain from the east. In support, the U.S. organizes a massive Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) effort, requiring reorganization and re-missioning of significant Army and Marine Corps maneuver and sustainment forces. The U.S. also warns Chinese naval vessels and military aircraft to avoid interference in the quarantine.

While this might be a low-probability outcome, it demonstrates concepts and capabilities U.S. ground forces might explore. These would be complementary to and potentially limit the exposure of vulnerable U.S. sea and air forces in high threat A2/AD environments. New capabilities might include INF-compliant short-range cruise and ballistic and cruise missiles with the capability for precision attack against ships at sea.

Strategic warning of the need to conduct a quarantine was judged as medium to long. The overall theme of this operation would balance enable, security, and combat functions. However, like the South China Sea crisis described above, combat would only be necessary in the event of hostilities. The latent demonstration of combat capability would be essential to overall mission success. U.S. ground forces would play a substantial role in enabling coalition operations, including extensive deployment of air and missile defense capabilities. Stabilization requirements would be minimal, limited only to circumstances where open hostility between U.S. and coalition forces with China resulted in adverse impacts on local populations.

The environment would range from permissive in some instances (e.g., U.S. territories) to highly uncertain. The potential for ballistic and cruise missile attack in the event of hostilities would be especially pronounced. The principal adversary would predominantly be Chinese air and naval forces and their increasing capacity for sophisticated over the horizon strike. However, over the long-term, the potential for the PLA to leverage proxies for violent resistance should not be discounted. For the most part, local authorities and forces in areas where U.S. forces will operate will be cooperative and capable. The local populations, on the other hand, may sense the increased hazard associated with U.S. presence and, therefore, would range in attitude from cooperative to indifferent. In some cases, the latter might trend toward uncooperative and hostile.

Taiwan Counter-Lodgment (Limited Conventional Campaign)

Fearing a return to power of Taiwan’s Democratic Progressive Party and facing substantial civil unrest on the mainland, China initiates a covert action against Taiwan to undermine and destabilize its political process and directs clandestine funding and support to sophisticated, pro-unification groups inside Taiwan. At the urging of Beijing, these groups undertake coordinated political action and targeted violence Taiwanese leaders nationwide.

Widespread street protests and violence ensue. The violence intensifies as pro-unification forces become more organized and gain control of significant areas of Taiwan. China’s political leadership moves toward more overt and direct support of Taiwan’s pro-unification movement, calling for “patriotic volunteers” to enter Taiwan from the mainland. Increased confrontations between Taiwanese armed...
forces and armed pro-unification paramilitaries result in Chinese military intervention into “liberated territory” at the request of the different pro-unification groups.

This occurs against the backdrop of an internal Chinese political crisis, pitting groups advocating increased liberalization against China’s traditional political authority. Fighting between Taiwanese forces and Chinese-backed paramilitaries and more generalized civil unrest in Taiwan intensifies. This threatens both Taiwan’s survival and the security of thousands of third-country expatriates. The United States responds with an expeditionary intervention undertaken with expressed purpose of securing the Taiwanese government against failure and the secure evacuation of foreign nationals.

Of all of the vignettes in the USPACOM AOR, this is both the most speculative and the most dangerous as it puts U.S. ground forces in direct physical contact with a great power rival. The study team found it to be a long-term, low-probability event. However, it is also an event that merits advanced consideration.

The strategic and operational risks of execution are such that it would likely only occur under circumstances where China is substantially weakened or distracted internally. As this is often the least considered set of conditions with respect to China, it is also therefore, the most unexpected and disruptive. Thus, given a 20-year time horizon, it is a reasonable contingency to consider. The overall theme of U.S. operations would be combat. U.S. forces would also play a substantial role in enabling U.S. joint and Taiwanese operations and would have to secure vulnerable and at risk populations. Stabilization may be substantial but would be limited to requirements levied by obvious gaps in Taiwanese and international community shortfalls.

The strategic warning associated with this vignette is long to very long. The operating environment for U.S. forces would be non-permissive. The principal adversaries would range from the sophisticated adversary military forces and militias to insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Local Taiwanese authorities and forces would most likely be cooperative and challenged. Loyalist Taiwanese populations would be cooperative. However, given the divisions in the population posited in this vignette, the attitudes of significant elements of the local population might be hostile.
APPENDIX E: DETAILED RISK MITIGATION

This appendix expands on the risk mitigation recommendations outlined in section IX. The material is presented according to the six major risk categories.

Risk Category 1: Understanding the strategic and operational environment and leveraging information.

Risk Mitigation
- *Increase emphasis on capabilities that cultivate understanding of the human aspects of conflict and crisis.*

Conflict prevention, contingency access, and operational execution require persistent ground force focus on the unique “human dimension” of contingency environments. Maintaining this focus may be difficult in the current policymaking environment. It is nonetheless an essential hedge against future surprise and costly operational adaptation. Keen understanding of the most relevant political, military, social, economic, information, and infrastructure (PMSEII) factors in the world’s most important regions remains critical to operational success in all five “pacing” archetypes. Of specific importance are variables that impact human decisionmaking, such as “values, ethics, preferences, beliefs, fears, prejudices, dreams, and perceptions.”51 This is particularly important to distributed security, humanitarian response, and peace operations.

- *Expand approach to understanding complex operating environments.*

Ground forces must maintain the expanded view of intelligence and information cultivated over the last decade. This view transcends enemy “order of battle” considerations and includes innovation associated with accessing and exploiting information, knowledge, and intelligence from military and nonmilitary sources. The study team recognized that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have had a positive influence in this regard. However, deep understanding of Iraq and Afghanistan are insufficient for future operational demands. With the end of the war in Afghanistan, there is a danger that the hard-won progress in this area will stall or reverse as DoD reorients on the military-technical challenges posed by adversary powers in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions.

Key features of the pacing archetypes emerge from disturbances in complex “microclimates.” With the end of the current conflicts, these conditions may not be monitored and assessed in detail. This could be most true for issues not directly connected to threats from violent extremism. This finding has a direct connection to the aforementioned recommendation on minding the human aspects of prospective contingency environments.

At the strategic level, continued visualization of the operating environment from a holistic systems’ perspective is particularly relevant. This is most important with respect to regional problems that are currently under-considered in operational planning. For example, understanding the importance of key

infrastructure, critical commercial nodes, influential social networks, and formal and informal power structures in this report’s focus regions may be as important as knowing the technical specifications of adversary weapons systems.

Translating this holistic perspective into an operational net assessment will enhance the performance of a smaller future force that will inevitably be deployed in a more distributed fashion. At operational and tactical levels, ground forces will require even more capability to gather information, analyze and turn that information into intelligence, share that intelligence across networks of common interest, and exploit it effectively. Further, all forces must be able to benefit from reach back into a wider pool of subject matter experts. This includes tapping into SOF, Marine, and active and reserve Army forces and personnel who have extensive experience and personal relationships in critical regions. As uniformed and civilian government capacity declines, ground forces will also need to leverage open source options, including the civilian research and analysis community.

Intelligence tradecraft should remain sharp. Skills are perishable; it takes time to build and sustain effective formal and informal information networks as well. Therefore, as U.S. ground forces become more CONUS-based, it is essential that ground force intelligence professionals maintain strong connections to key AORs. This includes routine forward stationing and deployment. During training, it is important to increase emphasis on the most relevant PMSEII factors in the theaters of likeliest future employment. That knowledge should be frequently tested in realistic training. The most effective training should be linked directly to prospective contingency operations.

Finally, enhanced understanding must benefit from improvements in information-sharing networks. The capability to continuously share and analyze information across regional COCOMs, service components, regionally-aligned, assigned and apportioned forces, the interagency, and multinational partners are critical factors in this regard. Further, both in advance of and in the event of crisis, U.S. ground forces need the ability to rapidly connect to the universe of uniformed subject matter experts with deep regional experience. This includes greater visibility on the location and types of forces already in the region or with substantial recent regional experience.

Similarly, a multinational network, like the current theater-level “CENTRIX” system, is required to fully integrate coalition partners to enhance shared understanding and ease transition to contingency planning and execution. The current inability to fully leverage the knowledge of trusted foreign partners in real-time inhibits future operational success.

• Identify innovative approaches to increasing the regional IQ of CONUS-based forces.

A largely CONUS-based force will need the ability to build relationships and interact with local leaders and populations. Consequently, ground force leaders must look for innovative opportunities to increase their regional and cultural IQ of their forces. More opportunities to serve abroad as advisors, observers, military diplomats, and PME students will be increasingly important, particularly to the extent that these opportunities are focused strategically. When security conditions might limit these opportunities, DoD should explore expanding the training and education opportunities for foreign forces and military leaders inside the United States.

A creative alternative is CONUS-based security force assistance. This includes increasing opportunities for foreign military leaders to pursue training and education at U.S. military schools, creating more regional structures similar to the Army’s Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), as well as expanded foreign military involvement in U.S. combined training center (CTC) rotations. The latter would be particularly useful to the extent that training focuses on specific, sometimes sensitive, missions where U.S. and foreign forces are likely to operate side-by-side. Programs such as this have many intangible benefits that enhance cooperation with partners and allies.

U.S. ground forces should also expand regional engagement through combined exercises. The U.S. Army’s recent shift to regionally aligned forces (RAF) is a good first step toward recognizing the
value of an increased regional IQ. As the concept of RAF matures and combined exercises both within and outside the United States increase, the force’s overall understanding of the operating environment will expand. The challenge will be determining what the appropriate and achievable depth of knowledge is for RAF units and the feasibility of maintaining habitual alignment over time.

In addition, the most mature conception of RAF would see specific U.S. forces not only gaining a general appreciation for their associated region but benefiting from aligning training with unique regional demands. For example, distributed security operations are most likely to occur in USCENTCOM. Ultimately, regionally aligned Army forces might orient their cultural IQ development, training, and CTC certification on the most demanding distributed security missions in the AOR. Likewise, enable and support actions, in this report’s view a hallmark of USPACOM, might become the contingency focus of regionally aligned air and missile defense forces assigned to USPACOM. Though finite forces imply the requirement for global employment, the best aspects of “mission rehearsal” honed over the last decade might be retained for at least some of the forces that are regionally aligned.

- **Employ PME institutions as centers of excellence for ground force futures.**

In the interwar period, the Army and Navy War Colleges were the engines of operational innovation. These institutions identified and tested the demands that would ultimately be required in wars with Germany and Japan. Students were assigned tangible planning challenges and “learned by doing.”

As in the case of the 1920s and 1930s, the United States is entering a new “inter-war period” defined by declining resources. As a result, the Army, the Marine Corps, and SOF should employ their senior PMEs as innovative futures centers. The PMEs are natural homes for exploratory consideration of the future demand associated with distributed security, humanitarian response, enabling and support actions, peace operations, and speculative limited conventional campaigns. The status quo is insufficient. Current “futures” mechanisms are too close to service bureaucratic priorities and, therefore, are challenged to offer alternative futures that are not heavily influenced by inherent senior leader biases.

The PMEs, on the other hand, are in a position to leverage the joint, interagency, and combined nature of their respective student bodies to identify and test future alternatives that can be chartered in the name of pure academic excursion and will benefit from perspectives unencumbered by institutional preferences. Under ideal conditions, the three primary institutions—the U.S. Army War College, the Marine Corps War College, and the Joint Special Operations University—might employ a task force approach, where elements from all three combine in teams to perform competitive analysis on challenges that are to date under-considered in regional contingency planning.

### Risk Mitigation

- **Improve and synchronize shaping initiatives.**

Finite resources, reduced forward presence, and declining access makes shaping the environment a new imperative. Success in shaping relies on it being prioritized, focused, linked to clear objectives, and

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implemented within a framework that allows for continuous assessment and adjustment. Full realization of the potential of shaping requires new levels of integration of various stakeholder activities to ensure unity of effort.

Within DoD, there are several additional issues. First, shaping should receive a prominent position in planning. Shaping activities should be crafted in ways that integrate interagency perspectives and recognize foreign partner interests. Ideally shaping prevents or delays conflict and crisis. Failing that, it provides a deeper understanding of regional dynamics, facilitates access for U.S. forces, and enables regional participation in crisis response. Shaping activities include traditional train and equip tasks, security force assistance, combined exercises, and routine presence and should consistently involve intelligence sharing and provision of critical enabling capabilities. Both allow host nation forces to conduct operations independently.

Second, COCOMs will need to ensure integration of various competing ground force efforts in theater, to include SOF, Army RAF, forward-stationed Marine capabilities, and National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) activities. In practice, all of these forces are “regionally aligned.” Thus, their actions should complement the overall theater campaign plan (TCP) and avoid overshaping, undershaping, and “shaping fratricide.”

In particular, the Army’s RAF initiative could prove helpful in that it will ultimately provide COCOMs with a Joint Task Force-capable headquarters and a variety of tailorable and scalable capabilities for shaping and contingency response. Ideally, there will be sufficient habitual alignment of units to regions that will enhance the added value of the initiative, especially as the Army looks to better align the regional focus with region-specific missions. To some degree, the Army will have come full circle from the 1980s and 1990s, where units had habitual relationships with regional war plans. However, RAF places much greater emphasis on developing force-wide regional IQ and addressing smaller-scale COCOM requirements.

Third, joint and combined exercises need to be reinvigorated, prioritized, and funded. Toward that end, mechanisms should be in place to help policymakers and senior military leaders determine what exercises are essential to meeting COCOM objectives and addressing new conditions falling outside current planning priorities. A more robust strategically targeted joint approach is required. A useful initiative in USPACOM is the concept of the “Exportable Training Capability,” where the United States Army would maintain a portable Combined Arms Training Center set that enables conduct of combined, conditions-based training with foreign partners abroad.53

Fourth, DoD should work with host nations in both USCENTCOM and USPACOM to expand prepositioned stocks that could be used for both exercises and limited objective contingency operations. This would greatly enhance the ability of U.S. ground forces to conduct meaningful regional training and facilitate forward positioning of key military capabilities. Finally, the Army specifically must maintain, enhance, and routinely exercise its unique capability for “theater-setting.” Ideally, U.S. forces deploy into theaters that benefit from a preexisting intelligence, protection, sustainment, and communications architecture. This will not always be the case. The Army’s “theater-setting” capabilities underwrite conduct of the five pacing archetypes anticipated in this report.

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53 Interview with an Army planner, January 10, 2013.
Risk Mitigation

- **Enhance the ability of ground forces to deploy, conduct distributed entry, and employ forces immediately upon arrival.**

In order to rapidly address a crisis, there is an increasing demand to improve the force’s deployability. The objective is to have U.S. forces deploy directly to objective areas and employ forces immediately upon arrival, avoiding intermediate staging bases and conduct of lengthy reception, staging, onward movement, and integration. Shortening the deployment process and removing intermediate steps are keys to making “deployment = employment,” creating additional opportunities to influence adversaries’ and outcomes as early as possible. Additionally, this “deployment = employment” paradigm could reduce the requirement for U.S. forces to pass through a nation hesitant to accede to U.S. staging requirements. This is fundamentally a joint problem, involving improvements to the overall deployability of critical ground force capabilities, as well as more capable and responsive air and sealift.

The “deploy = employ” paradigm requires adoption of a number of initiatives. First, the focus of future airlift should be on developing the capability to deploy protected mobility directly into a high threat AOR in close proximity to key objectives. This includes both strategic (intertheater) and operational (intragtheater) lift. This will require close cooperation between ground forces and the U.S. Air Force in the development of the right ground tactical platforms and corresponding air-delivery capability, whether super short take-off and landing or a vertical take-off and landing capability.

Second, future sealift should provide a similar capability for forces and capabilities arriving from off shore (e.g., a tactical configuration that facilitates rapid transition ashore). Future sealift should have the capability to deliver forces to unimproved or shallow-draft ports, eliminating or limiting reliance on large coastal logistics hubs. Due to sealift shortfalls, it is worth considering even greater investment in innovative ideas like afloat forward staging bases.

Third, due to the limitations associated with establishing ground-based headquarters and logistics hubs in uncertain or nonpermissive environments, ground forces require the capability to conduct robust command and control and support from the sea. Similarly, the force requires improved planning and situational awareness tools for forces transiting to theater from strategic and operational distances. In particular, forces arriving via air have virtually no capability to conduct en route planning, access CONUS-based expertise, or maintain situational awareness while moving. This requires improvement in various U.S. lift platforms. It also requires pushing new capabilities down to lower echelons, as widely distributed operations employing smaller force packages become the norm.

Fourth, a thorough review of prepositioning is required. This includes where prepositioned stocks are (or should be located), what capabilities they include (or should include), how prepositioned stocks are configured (combat or administratively loaded), and how well these capabilities can be deployed within and outside of theater. One key finding by the study team in this regard is that the majority of early arriving general purpose ground forces (e.g., Marine Expeditionary Units and Army Airborne forces) lack sufficient up-armored protection. Any future evaluation of prepositioned stocks, should look into how the Pentagon might innovatively marry protected maneuver and firepower with early arriving light and middleweight forces via intra-theater lift.
Finally, the “deploy = employ” paradigm requires a postwar commitment to routinely exercise the capability. Similar to the Cold War era “Return Forces to Germany” (REFORGER) exercises, which effectively functioned as a dress rehearsal for response to a Soviet ground attack in Europe, smaller-scale demonstrations of joint ground force power projection capability will serve as a routine deterrent to potential adversaries and will effectively help adjust ground force culture toward more expeditionary operations that envision deployment of ground forces directly into contact. Ultimately, this might become a capstone for Army RAF certification. In a joint context, exercises like Bold Alligator and Bright Star may become useful platforms to test joint and combined ground force power projection. Enhancements like these will speed up ground force responsiveness and help policymakers visualize the “art of the possible” for regional contingencies.

- Examine overall active/reserve component mix and readiness.

U.S. decisionmakers will expect responsiveness and operational adaptability from the ground forces given the complexity of the environment. A detailed examination of the active and reserve force mix is necessary to get a holistic picture of aggregate ground force capability. The study group concluded that executing major combat operations and enduring opposed stabilization operations of the kind experienced over the last decade will require mobilization of substantial reserve forces. Three reserve component focus areas for large-scale foreign contingencies are likely—providing depth to limited conventional campaigns and distributed security, conduct of peace operations, and thickening enable and support actions in a crisis.

### Risk Category 4: Employing forces and capabilities to achieve operational objectives.

### Risk Mitigation

- Build a cohesive ground force team.

Individually, Army, Marine, and SOF have unique capabilities and attributes. The certainty of their side-by-side employment in large-scale ground operations requires greater integration of capabilities planning, concept development, and routine training. This will be especially important as the overall size of aggregate ground forces decreases. In addition, as the Army is in the early stages of regionally aligning forces, all three ground components may consider rotational alignment of units for training and operations.

Greater integration of the Army-Marine-SOF team will be pivotal to success under each of the archetypal condition envisioned in this report. They should not only routinely train and operate together but they should also become more accustomed to working for one another in the field as well. Each will have primacy under different circumstances, but are reliant on the others’ contributions. In terms of integrating SOF, the study team found the emerging Special Operations Joint Task Force concept to be particularly noteworthy; however, it is unclear if it is also envisioned to potentially command and control conventional capabilities for emerging crises.54

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54 SOCOM Roundtable, November 16, 2012.
• **Enhance regional and global ground force response capabilities.**

In order to rapidly respond to an array of potential crises, DoD directed the establishment of a “Global Response Force (GRF)” capability.\(^{55}\) The ground force component of the GRF includes Army, Marine Corps, and SOF capabilities. Over the last decade, portions of the GRF were alerted and deployed, but largely as “surge” ground forces for Iraq or Afghanistan. The circumstances envisioned in this report call for a cohesive, joint global response capability that quickly aggregates context-dependent capabilities into a multiservice joint task force.

Some of these capabilities will already reside in theater, where they provide quick response to basic security requirements and ensure the safety of U.S. interests. Others will be CONUS-based, where they will remain at a high state of readiness and rapidly deploy from strategic distance. To enhance its responsiveness, the GRF should be founded on a fully established JTF-capable headquarters staffed with a full complement of joint expertise.

Furthermore, the GRF must include the capabilities required to succeed across the most demanding archetypes suggested in this report. Critical is the ability to conduct en-route mission planning and command and control forces from the sea, air, and land. Early arriving forces should enjoy greater protected mobility and firepower as well. The most intense distributed security demands reflect this requirement. As a consequence, the study team found that any future GRF concept must expand beyond rapid deployment of light infantry forces that are generally immobile and lack essential firepower and should benefit from more timely infusion of heavier armor and more potent ground-based fires. GRF-based operations should also plan for the early employment of counter-CBRN capabilities. These more robust additions to the GRF may come intact from CONUS or aggregate in theater having married up with prepositioned stocks. This puts new demands on intratheater lift.

Equally important to the GRF’s operational effectiveness is getting its assigned and apportioned forces back to a culture of “no-notice readiness” and enhancing the joint training and exercise regimen so that GRF components routinely train together before employment. Training and exercising together builds trust and confidence and allows the forces to uncover friction and capability gaps. Executing a robust and stressful joint exercise program serves as a proof of concept and demonstrates capability. It also serves as a flexible deterrent option to influence the behaviors of potential adversaries.

In short, DoD should make a fully joint GRF a priority and resource it accordingly. This includes sufficient support to routinely exercise the capability for large-scale short-notice deployment against a variety of contingency demands. In addition, given the nature of many of the archetypes anticipated in this report, there is a need to broaden and expand contingency planning efforts and consider developing standing plans for a wider range of exigent contingency operations.

• **Enhance command and control and crisis situational awareness.**

There are a variety of important enhancements required to improve the capability to operate from the initiation of military action in a more distributed manner. First, as mentioned above, the force should have a greater suite of capabilities to enable forces to plan and maintain situational awareness en route. Second, there is a need for a standing contingency JTF headquarters residing in COCOMs. These will benefit from established relationships in the region, while being able to rapidly assimilate follow-on forces. This initiative would include maintenance of forward deployed, regional experts that plug into forces arriving from outside the theater. Establishing standing ground-based JTFs under COCOMs is not a new idea. However, its importance is increasing in light of the decline in forward-stationed forces. Finally, information and command and control networks should expand down to lower levels and horizontally to interagency and international partners. This is critical to fully realizing enhanced command and control and situational awareness.

\(^{55}\) The exact composition and missions of the Global Response Force are not available in an unclassified form.
• **Train to and validate large-scale enabling efforts.**

Large-scale enable and support actions were identified as an emerging contingency demand for U.S. Army forces in particular. Army operational doctrine that favors combined arms maneuver (CAM) and wide area security (WAS) does not adequately consider the prospect of Army Support to Other Services (ASOS) as a potential ground force main effort under certain high-end warfighting contingencies. One senior reviewer observed that “the theater sustainment command may be the decisive force” in future contingencies.

The study team found this to be an underconsidered area in concept and capabilities development. As a consequence, this study concludes that the United States Army would be well served if it thoughtfully considered contingency demands involving the widespread and highly distributed contingency employment of its enabling capabilities in a theater of operation. These include the Army’s extensive theater-setting assets, as well as air and missile defense and force protection assets. In the future, this may also include augmentation of main effort air and naval assets with additional precision long-range fires.

• **Develop new capabilities in ground-based fires and counter-CBRN.**

In order to enhance joint coercive responses to high-end adversaries, the U.S. Army should consider increasing its land-attack missile capability. Joint force commanders may face restricted availability of naval and air strike capabilities. Both are increasingly vulnerable to adversary precision attacks. The Army’s ATACMS missile, mounted on dispersed and mobile transporter erector launchers and with a range of 300 kilometers, could hold critical adversary assets at risk when coalition air and sea power may lack the capacity to do so.

The Army should also consider a program to extend ATACMS’ range up to 500 kilometers, the limit imposed by the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty. This would enable Army forces to attack critical, time-sensitive targets at range limiting the exposure of air and sea forces in high threat A2/AD environments. Furthermore, the Army and Marine Corps should consider acquiring a mobile, deployable, shore-based, over-the-horizon antiship cruise missile system. A shore-based antiship missile will hold adversary warships at risk and provide a persistent threat for adversary naval planners to consider.

The Navy and DARPA have programs underway to extend the capabilities of existing missiles, such as JASSM-ER and Tactical Tomahawk Block IV, for long-range antiship missions. The Army and Marine Corps might consider joining the effort. It should take only a modest additional cost to adapt these systems to existing Army and Marine transporter erector launchers. The Air Force, for example, operated a truck-mounted nuclear-armed Tomahawk missile in the 1980s. Dispersed, mobile, and shore-based antiship cruise missiles would be especially valuable in the USPACOM AOR, where their presence in the First and Second Island Chains would present an additional persistent threat to adversaries.

The persistent threat from and proliferation of CBRN assets is present in both regions. This increases the potential for ground force employment within or near a states’ chemical, biological, or nuclear umbrella. Additionally, there is an ever-present threat of an unstable, failing, or failed CBRN state in both AORs. Collectively, this creates a new or reemerging problem for U.S. ground forces.

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57 Senior reviewer, March 20, 2013.
In response, U.S. ground forces must first train and equip to operate in CBRN environments. Training in this regard has deteriorated over the last decade and will require new emphasis, necessitating also a detailed examination of whether or not existing and future systems are adequately prepared for operations in CBRN environments.

There is an increasing prospect for ground forces to be used to interdict, seize, secure, render safe and, potentially, evacuate CBRN assets in hostile environments as well. In order to accomplish this mission, greater emphasis is required regarding intelligence collection and analysis, as well technical handling of CBRN. This implies greater force-wide sensitivity to the complexity of both CBRN systems and CBRN production chains—including components, weapons, sites, intellectual capital, and the process by which the CBRN capabilities are developed and employed. The U.S. remains committed to act when necessary in order to prevent CBRN from falling into the wrong hands. Currently, however, capabilities do not appear to match requirements. CBRN response missions will place a high demand on ground forces as they can rapidly translate in large-scale missions.

• Focus future leader development on “mission command.”

The employment of forces in a distributed manner and within a complex operating environment reinforces the importance of “mission command,” which relies on subordinate leaders who think critically and operate well under decentralized command and control. Commanders will often employ their forces over greater distances. As a result, they will be less able to have direct oversight of their actions. This requires new levels of trust and confidence between ground force leaders and their subordinates. Subordinates must demonstrate initiative and innovative problem-solving approaches within the commander’s intent and operate on intuition. Building leaders who can operate under these conditions is essential given the archetypal conditions suggested by this report and the certainty of reduced numbers of forces overall. Routinely training and exercising in ways that persistently stress mission command is essential.

• Continue to enhance a “whole of government approach.”

Strong partnerships have emerged between civilian and military leaders and agencies over the past decade. Avoiding a loss in this regard requires cost-conscious approaches to maintain essential linkages between key actors that will inevitably find themselves operating together on operations again. Although this will be challenging in the current fiscal and policy environment, it is essential to maintaining warm response capacity and greater unity of effort for future contingencies.

Risk Category 5: Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions.

Risk Mitigation

• Focus on robust air and missile defense.

Robust and layered air and missile defense capabilities are essential, as they are condition setting and critical enablers for joint campaigns and operations. Traditionally, such capabilities have been undervalued, though they deserve increased attention going forward. In addition to greater emphasis within U.S. ground forces, DoD should make an effort to encourage partners and allies to invest in similar capabilities. Many of the Gulf Arab states have already made significant investments in the Patriot
system. This has helped create an allied air and missile defense umbrella in the face of increasing Iranian capability. These systems are likewise important in the Asia-Pacific region.

- **Increase the amount and deployability of protected mobility and firepower.**

A clear conclusion of this report is the greater likelihood for ground forces to be employed in uncertain, semi-permissive, or opposed operational environments. Often these forces will conduct forcible or uncertain entry. Under these circumstances, there is a demand for greater protected mobility. Further, current early entry forces are built around light airborne infantry or middleweight amphibious forces. Both lack sufficient protection and firepower for many of the circumstances anticipated in this report. Thus, the study group found it essential for ground forces to explore innovative ways to incorporate existing protected mobility into rapidly deploying forces. In addition to early deployers, there is a more generalized need to maintain an “up-armored” posture for all forces regardless of where they lie on the response spectrum.

In terms of future research and development, a focus should remain on providing sufficient armored-protection for the most likely and dangerous threats, greater onboard precision in firepower, off-road maneuverability, and greater ease in deploying on existing and future air and sea lift platforms. Clearly, one type of vehicle will not be the answer, but developing a balanced set that can more quickly and safely transport forces to and within areas of greatest need is necessary.

- **Increase ground force self-sufficiency and explore initiatives to secure sustainment against all hazards.**

As ground forces are likely to be employed in a more distributed manner across AORs against myriad hazards, sustainment will need to support a larger number of smaller more dispersed nodes that are joined by less secure ground and air lines of communication. This will severely constrain ground-based resupply—especially in uncertain or hostile environments. Thus, ground forces will by definition need to be more self-sufficient for longer periods of time. Additionally, the overall weight of the force will need to be reduced and equipment will need to be more fuel efficient, leveraging “renewable” energy where practical.

| Risk Category 6: Terminating military operations consistent with strategic and operational objectives. |

**Risk Mitigation**

- **Refine concepts, planning, and training for transfer of responsibility and retrograde.**

Successful mission termination requires preparation. U.S. ground forces have new experiences in this regard. Likewise, new assumptions regarding senior-level decisionmaking, with respect to limited objectives, implies different conflict termination demands as well. Concepts and planning should account for these new conditions. Higher-level staff training and exercises should periodically include planning and execution of the deliberate transfer of responsibility, as well as the deliberate or opposed retrograde. Training these tasks infuses a greater understanding of the importance of termination objectives, innovative organizational approaches, and key tasks necessary for success under a wide variety of operational conditions.
APPENDIX F: ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are employed in this report. Some represent accepted doctrinal terms. Others are associated with unique concepts generated during the course of this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2/AD</td>
<td>antiaccess / area denial</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOR</td>
<td>area of responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>APCSS</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies</td>
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<td>ARCENT</td>
<td>U.S. Army Forces Central Command</td>
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<td>ARCIC</td>
<td>Army Capabilities Integration Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASB</td>
<td>AirSea Battle</td>
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<td>ASOS</td>
<td>Army Support to Other Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAM</td>
<td>Bab al-Mandeb</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCT</td>
<td>brigade combat team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>command and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>combined arms maneuver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAQ</td>
<td>counteraccess /quarantine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>chemical and biological</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBRN</td>
<td>chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCJO</td>
<td>Capstone Concept for Joint Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>combatant command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COIN</td>
<td>counterinsurgency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONUS</td>
<td>continental United States</td>
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<td>CSIS</td>
<td>Center for Strategic and International Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>DMZ</td>
<td>Demilitarized Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoS</td>
<td>Department of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>electromagnetic spectrum</td>
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<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Enabling Operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Enhanced Shaping</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEMA</td>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>FID</td>
<td>foreign internal defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORSCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Army Forces Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoI</td>
<td>Government of Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRF</td>
<td>Global Response Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>HA/CM</td>
<td>Humanitarian Assistance/Consequence Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQDA</td>
<td>Headquarters, Department of the Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQMC</td>
<td>Headquarters, Marine Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSO</td>
<td>Human Security Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>Information Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>Information Related Capabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISR</td>
<td>Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>JFCOM</td>
<td>Joint Forces Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>JTF</td>
<td>Joint Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>LeT</td>
<td>Lashkar e-Taiba</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARFORCENT</td>
<td>Marine Forces Central Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Major Combat Campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPLAN</td>
<td>Operational Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Opposed Stabilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKO</td>
<td>Peacekeeping Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestinian Liberation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PME</td>
<td>Professional Military Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMSEII</td>
<td>Political, Military, Social, Economic, Information, and Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoC</td>
<td>Protection of Civilians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QDR</td>
<td>Quadrennial Defense Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>QDRO</td>
<td>Quadrennial Defense Review Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Regionally Aligned Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMA</td>
<td>Revolution in Military Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROMO</td>
<td>Range of Military Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCS</td>
<td>South China Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Sanctuary Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Secure and Evacuate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Show of Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOF</td>
<td>Special Operations Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO</td>
<td>Seize and Secure Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMED</td>
<td>Suez-to-Mediterranean Pipeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCP</td>
<td>theater campaign plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPP</td>
<td>Trans-Pacific Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRADOC</td>
<td>U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCP</td>
<td>Unified Command Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USARPAC</td>
<td>U.S. Army Forces Pacific Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>USASOC</td>
<td>U.S. Army Special Operations Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCENTCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Central Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USEUCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Europe Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNORTHCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Northern Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USPACOM</td>
<td>U.S. Pacific Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSOCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Special Operations Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEO</td>
<td>violent extremist organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAS</td>
<td>Wide Area Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHINSEC</td>
<td>Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the operational types and key tasks at Appendices A and B, the CSIS team identified and employed a number of new concepts and terms to illustrate future ground force demand. They include the following.

**Unfavorable order.** The threat of regional military rivals irresponsibly exercising power or exerting control.

**Disorder.** Failure of responsible authority to control territory, populations, resources, and capabilities in a key state or region.

**Strategic state.** A nation whose stable functioning is uniquely important to the United States, its partners, and favorable international order.

**Pacing archetype.** Generic clusters of common operational conditions and demands used to visualize future operations and assess their requirements.

- **Humanitarian response:** Some combination of stability, security and enabling operations in response to natural or human disasters that would occur in generally permissive environments.

- **Distributed security:** Combat and security operations occurring in response to disorder and focused on gaining and maintaining control over geography, infrastructure, populations, or dangerous military capabilities.

- **Enable and support actions:** Operations undertaken to provide direct theater-level combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities to underwrite third-party efforts — joint, interagency, and foreign partners.

- **Peace operations:** Employment of forces to maintain a stable peace between parties to a dispute.

- **Limited conventional campaign:** Large-scale combined arms combat action against the organized military forces of an adversary state.


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David J. Berteau is senior vice president and director of the CSIS International Security Program, which encompasses the entire range of national security programs, including defense policy and resources, homeland security, nuclear arms issues, the development-security interface, security economics, and defense and military strategy. He is also director of the CSIS Defense-Industrial Initiatives Group, covering defense management, programs, contracting and acquisition, and the defense industry. Recent projects include the CSIS study on U.S. forward presence in the Asia-Pacific region and presentations on the impact of sequestration on national security. In addition to CSIS, he is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, a director of the Procurement Round Table, and a fellow of both the National Academy of Public Administration and the Robert S. Strauss Center at the University of Texas. Prior to joining CSIS, he was the faculty director of Syracuse University’s National Security Studies Program, and he has 15 years of senior corporate experience. He held senior positions in the U.S. Defense Department under four defense secretaries. He graduated from Tulane University in 1971 and received his master’s degree in 1981 from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs.