

## **America's Pacific Power and Pacific Alliances in an Age of Austerity**

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### **Abstract**

The United States is reducing its military forces and budgets even as it “rebalances” towards Asia and attempts to send a signal to the region that it remains firmly committed to its security. But the process is not over. Further American budget cuts are possible. How far might they go? What would be too far? I begin this article with the assumption that allies will largely sustain, but not increase, their own current efforts in the region, that North Korea will do similarly, and that China will continue to increase its military resources and capabilities in a relatively predictable way. Thus, the main variable in the short term is the United States.

**Keywords:** American defense strategy, American allies, Asia-Pacific region, austerity, U.S. defense budget, key scenarios.

### **Ground Forces**

During the Vietnam War, the United States Army's active-duty forces were almost a-million-and-a half soldiers strong. In World War II, the number had approached six million (not counting the Army Air Force or other services).<sup>1</sup> Under Ronald Reagan, the figure was more like 800,000. After reducing that strength when the Cold War ended to less than half a million, and after considering Donald Rumsfeld's ideas in early 2001 to cut even more, the nation built up its standing Army by almost 100,000 troops over the last decade, while modestly increasing the size of the Marine Corps from about 170,000 to 200,000 active-duty Marines as well. We are now on a downward slope again. But how low can we go?

It is easy to see the pros and cons of deeper cutbacks. On the favorable side, we are a nation tired of war, and especially tired of long counterinsurgency missions in distant Asian or Middle Eastern lands—not for the first time in our history. In addition, we have oceans to protect

us from most potential adversaries, and high-technology weapons to try to keep the peace without putting U.S. troops on the ground in distant lands. On the other hand, in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade, we have relearned the lesson that if you want to enhance the stability of a faraway land, you cannot do it with the “shock and awe” of air and missile strikes alone. In addition, if you go in too small, you may only worsen the situation and have to salvage it with larger forces later. Moreover, the size of armies needed to help stabilize such places is partly a function of the size of their populations, not just the quality of our technology or our troops on a person-by-person basis. In a world with more than six billion people, hundreds of millions of whom are still living in turbulent places that could threaten U.S. interests, it is not clear that the American Army can keep getting smaller.

And even if we try simply to avoid manpower-intensive war in the future, we may just fail. We have tried that approach before, deciding that as a nation we were simply done with certain forms of combat. But then we have usually wound up being forced by the course of history to relearn old lessons and re-create old capabilities when our crystal balls proved to be cloudy, and our predictions about the nature of future combat proved wrong. The stakes involved in faraway lands in the age of transnational terrorism and nuclear weapons are too high for us blithely to assume that we have seen the last of complex ground missions in distant lands just because we don't happen to like them.

The American military today is indeed the second largest military in the world, after China's. But it is only modestly larger than those of North Korea, India, and Russia. The size of its active-duty Army also only modestly surpasses that of South Korea and Turkey, among others. So as we begin the debate about its future size, we are not exactly beginning with a huge force as a starting point.

Nevertheless, the U.S. military probably can become smaller as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down. We should not rush into this, and we should not adopt the attitude some advocate that America's main overseas capabilities be reduced principally to Air Force and Navy capabilities. The latter services are formidable and essential. But “standoff” warfare featuring long-range strikes from planes and ships cannot address many of the world's key security challenges today—and possible scenarios in places like Korea and South Asia, discussed further below, that could in fact imperil American security. In the 1990s, advocates of military revolution often argued for such an approach to war,

but the subsequent decade proved that for all our progress in sensors and munitions and other military capabilities, we still need forces on the ground to deal with complex insurgencies and other threats.

An emphasis on standoff warfare is sometimes also described as a strategy of “offshore balancing” by which the distant United States steps in with limited amounts of power to shape overseas events, particularly in Eurasia, rather than getting involved directly with its own soldiers and Marines. But offshore balancing is too clever by half. In fact, overseas developments are not so easily nudged in favorable directions; proponents of this approach actually overstate American power. It also suggests a lack of real American commitment. That can embolden adversaries and worry friends to the point where, among other things, they may feel obliged to build up their own nuclear arsenals—as the likes of South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia might well do, absent strong security ties with America.

But still, once the wars wind down, we should reverse the recent increases in the active forces of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps and return to Clinton and early Bush levels.<sup>2</sup> That would mean roughly 15 percent cuts, relative to current combat force structure—roughly twice the cut currently planned by the services. There was, in fact, a reasonable amount of bipartisan consensus on those earlier force levels, with defense secretaries Aspin, Perry, Cohen, and Rumsfeld all supporting them over a ten-year period.<sup>3</sup> These reductions in ground forces would not quite achieve 15 percent reductions in costs, as certain nonlinearities exist. New weapons must still be developed, regardless of how many will be purchased; weapons unit costs tend to go up when fewer are purchased; some support activities like intelligence do not decline automatically when force structure is cut. But savings would be 10 to 12 percent in the ground forces, or \$15 billion to \$18 billion in annual spending. Commensurately, Air Force tactical combat forces might be cut 10 percent.

To give a sense of the respective facts and figures, today’s U.S. Army has about 550,000 active-duty soldiers. In addition, as of early 2011 data, another 110,000 reservists had been temporarily activated—nearly 80,000 from the National Guard and just over 30,000 from the Army Reserve. The U.S. Marine Corps is about 200,000 strong, with another 5,000 Marine reservists temporarily activated.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, the active Army of 2000 was 472,000 strong, and the Marine Corps numbered 170,000.<sup>5</sup> Excluding activated reservists, therefore, making 15 percent

personnel cuts would reduce current levels approximately to those of a decade ago.

Today's Army likes to organize its forces and measure its strength more in terms of brigades than the old standard of divisions; there are usually now four brigades to a division, and the former have been turned into units that are independently deployable and operable in the field. Today's ground forces include forty-five brigade combat teams in the active Army as well as twenty-eight in the National Guard. The Army also has thirteen combat aviation brigades in the active force and eight in the reserve component. The Marines, organized somewhat differently and using different terminology to describe their main formations, have eleven infantry regiments as well as four artillery regiments.<sup>6</sup> Roughly speaking, a Marine Corps regiment is comparable in size and capability to an Army brigade.

Throughout the 1990s, U.S. ground forces were sized and shaped primarily to maintain a two-war capability. The wars were assumed to begin in fairly rapid succession (though not exactly simultaneously), and then overlap, lasting several months to perhaps a year or two. Three separate administrations—Bush 41, Clinton 42, and Bush 43, and a total of five defense secretaries—Cheney, Aspin, Perry, Cohen, Rumsfeld—endorsed some variant of it. They formalized the logic in the first Bush administration's 1992 "Base Force" concept, the Clinton administration's 1993 "Bottom-Up Review" followed four years later by the first Quadrennial Defense Review, and then Secretary Rumsfeld's own 2001 QDR. These reviews all gave considerable attention to both Iraq and North Korea as plausible adversaries. More generally, though, they postulated that the United States could not predict all future enemies or conflicts and that there was a strong deterrent logic in being able to handle more than one problem at a time. Otherwise, if engaged in a single war in one place, the United States could be vulnerable to opportunistic adversaries elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> While Saddam Hussein is gone, this deterrent logic remains important, a point to which we return below.

In these debates in the dozen years following the Cold War and Desert Storm, most considered actual combat in two places at once unlikely. Few predicted prolonged wars in two places at the same time. Yet we got exactly that in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last ten years. Of course, many disagreed with the decision to go to war, in Iraq in particular. But the basic fact that conflict is unpredictable—that, to quote the old aphorism, "You may not have an interest in war but war may

have an interest in you”—endures.

The Obama administration appears to agree; as its 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* states, after successfully concluding current wars, “In the mid- to long term, U.S. military forces must plan and prepare to prevail in a broad range of operations that may occur in multiple theaters in overlapping time frames. This includes maintaining the ability to prevail against two capable nation-state aggressors. . . .”<sup>8</sup> The Obama QDR is actually somewhat more demanding than the military requirements that guided American planners between 1991 and 2001. It adds a stabilization mission and smaller operations on top of the two-war requirement, though it may be overestimating the capacities of its force structure in doing so.<sup>9</sup>

In my judgment, though, a two-land-war capability is no longer appropriate for the age of austerity. The “one war plus several missions” framework proposed here for sizing combat forces is designed to be a prudent but still modest way to ensure this type of American global role. It is prudent because it provides some additional capability if and when the nation again engages in a major conflict, and because it provides a bit of a combat cushion should that war go less well than initially hoped. It is modest, verging on minimalist, however, because it assumes only one such conflict at a time (despite the experience of the last decade) and because it does not envision major ground wars against the world’s major overseas powers on their territories.

More specifically, if there ever was conflict pitting the United States against China or Iran, for example, it is reasonable to assume that the fighting would be in maritime and littoral regions. That is because the most plausible threat that China would pose is to Taiwan, or perhaps to neighboring states over disputed sea and seabed resources, and because the most plausible crisis involving Iran would relate either to its nuclear program or to its machinations in and about the Persian Gulf waterways. It is reasonable for the United States to have the capability for just one ground war at a time as long as it can respond in other ways to other possibly simultaneous and overlapping challenges abroad.

Having such a single major ground-war war capability is somewhat risky, underscoring the risks of even deeper defense cuts than I am outlining here. But it is hardly radical or unprecedented. During the Cold War, American defense posture varied between periods of major ambition—as with the “2½ war” framework of the 1960s that envisioned simultaneous conflicts against the Soviet Union (probably in Europe),

China in East Asia, and some smaller foe elsewhere—and somewhat more realistic approaches, as under Nixon, which dropped the requirement to 1½ wars. Nixon’s “1 war” would have been conflict in Europe against the Warsaw Pact, a threat that is now gone. His regional war capability, or his “½ war” posture, was therefore similar to what I am proposing here.<sup>10</sup> Nor does this proposal lead to a dramatically smaller ground force. Having the capacity to wage one major regional war with some added degree of insurance should things go wrong, while sustaining two to three protracted if smaller deployments, is only modestly less demanding than fighting two regional wars at once. Unfortunately, today’s world does not allow a prudent decision to go to an even less demanding strategic construct or an even smaller force.

Translating this new strategy—one war, plus several smaller missions—into force planning should allow for roughly 15 percent cutbacks. Army active-duty brigade combat teams might number about thirty-eight, with the National Guard adding twenty-four more. Combat aviation units might decline to eleven and seven brigades in the active and National Guard forces, respectively. The Marines would give up perhaps two units, resulting in ten infantry and three artillery regiments respectively in their active forces, while keeping their three divisions and three associated Marine Expeditionary Forces. This force would be enough to sustain about twenty combat brigade teams overseas indefinitely, and to surge twenty-five to thirty if need be. If the United States found itself in a major operation, it could and should begin to reverse these cuts immediately, building up larger active ground forces as a hedge against the possibility that the new operation (or additional ones) could prove longer or harder than first anticipated. But that would take some time, roughly two to five years to make a meaningful difference, and as such the peacetime cuts should not go too far.

The above deployment math is based on the principle that active forces should have roughly twice as much time at home as on deployment and that reservists should have five times as much time at home as abroad. That would be enough for the main invasion phase of the kinds of wars assumed throughout 1990s defense planning and the invasion of Iraq actually carried out in 2003; force packages ranging from fifteen to twenty brigades were generally assumed or used for these missions.<sup>11</sup> So the smaller force could sustain an Iraq-like mission for months or even years while also doing smaller tasks elsewhere.

This capacity falls short of the twenty-two brigades deployed in 2007–8 just to Iraq and Afghanistan, to say nothing of Kosovo or Korea, where additional brigade-sized forces were also present in that time period. If multiple long crises or conflicts occurred in the future, we would have to ratchet force strength back up. Thankfully, the Army and Marine Corps of the last ten years proved they can do this. They added that 15 percent in new capability within about half a decade without any reduction in the excellence of individual units.

Somewhat greater savings--\$5 billion to \$8 billion more per year--could be realized if the same capability was retained but more of it was located within the Army National Guard. Rather than downsize from forty-five active brigade combat teams and twenty-eight Guard teams to respective figures of thirty-eight and twenty-four, as recommended, one might reduce the active brigades to just twenty-eight. The active-duty Army would wind up totaling less than 400,000 soldiers with this proposal. The overall U.S. military might compensate by adding not just ten but twenty National Guard brigade combat teams to its force structure, for a total of forty-four. That would keep unchanged the total Army's ability to carry out a long-term deployment at acceptable deployment rates for reservists. (In other words, it would add enough additional Guard brigades that their numbers would compensate for the fact that they couldn't be used as often as active units.) This would amount to a major shift in the character of the American army and would replace huge faith in the reserve component. Arguably, the reserve component has proven in recent years that it is up to the task. With twenty-eight active brigades, the Army would still have enough capability to conduct two or three missions while having perhaps fifteen to twenty active-duty brigades ready for quick deployment to a war. However, if a war did begin, the Army would need to move very fast to mobilize a dozen or more Guard brigades, to allow them the time needed to train properly so that they could replace the initial response force within a year or so if the operation was not quickly concluded. I am uncomfortable with this degree of reliance on the reserves, given the time pressures involved, but it is worth acknowledging that the option does exist.

Some might question whether we even still need a one-war capability. Alas, it is not hard to imagine plausible scenarios. Even if each specific case is unlikely, a number of scenarios cannot be ruled out. What if insurgency in Pakistan begins to threaten that country's nuclear arsenal

and the Pakistani army concluded that it needed our help in stabilizing their country? Far-fetched at present, to be sure—but so was the idea of war in Afghanistan if you had asked almost any American strategist in 1995 or 2000. Or perhaps, after another Indo-Pakistani war that reached the nuclear threshold, the international community might be asked to lead a stabilization and trustee mission in Kashmir following a ceasefire—not an appealing prospect to anyone at present, but hard to rule out if a nuclear exchange put the subcontinent on the brink of complete disaster. What if Yemen’s turmoil allowed al-Qaeda to set up a major sanctuary there as it did in Afghanistan fifteen years ago? What if North Korea began to implode, and both South Korea and the United States felt the need to restore order before the former’s estimated nuclear arsenal of perhaps eight bombs wound up in the wrong hands?<sup>12</sup>

Consider the Korean case in more detail. This would not necessarily be a classic war; it could result, for example, from an internal coup or schism within North Korea that destabilized that country and put the security of its nuclear weapons at risk. It could result somewhat inadvertently, from an exchange of gunfire on land or sea that escalated into North Korean long-range artillery and missile attacks on South Korea’s close-by capital of Seoul. If the North went down this path, something that its brazen 2010 sinking of the South Korean navy ship *Cheonan* and subsequent attacks on a remote South Korean island that together killed about fifty South Koreans suggest not to be impossible, war might occur out of an escalatory dynamic the two sides lost control over. Certainly the way in which North Korea remains a hypermilitarized state, devoting by far the largest fraction of its national wealth to its military of any country in the World, while accepting the fact that many of its people wallow in poverty or even starve, should make one worry.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps Pyongyang might be inclined to try to use that military—in an attempt at brinkmanship or extortion that was foolish to be sure but that could still prove quite dangerous.

It is also possible that if North Korea greatly accelerated its production of nuclear bombs, of which it is believed to now have about eight, or seemed on the verge of selling nuclear materials to a terrorist group, the United States and South Korea might decide on a preemptive but limited strike against DPRK nuclear facilities. North Korea might then respond in dramatic fashion. Such a war cannot be ruled out.

Given trends in the military balance over the years, the allies would surely defeat North Korea in such a war and then occupy its country and



change its government. North Korea's weaponry is more obsolescent than ever, it faces major fuel and spare parts shortages in training and preparing its forces, and its personnel are undernourished and otherwise underprepared.<sup>14</sup> Yet horrible things could still happen en route to allied victory. The nature of the terrain in Korea means that much of the battle would ultimately be infantry combat. Whatever its other problems, North Korea's rifles still shoot and its soldiers are still indoctrinated with the notion that they must defend their homeland at all costs. North Korea has built up fortifications near the DMZ for half a century that are formidable and could make the task of extricating its forces difficult and bloody. North Korea also has among the world's largest artillery concentrations, and could conduct intense shelling of Seoul in any war without having to move most of its forces at all.

Even nuclear attacks by the North against South Korea, Japan, or American assets could not be dismissed. Sure, outright annihilation of Seoul or Tokyo would make little sense, as the United States could and almost surely would respond in kind, and allied forces would track down the perpetrators of such a heinous crime to the ends of the Earth. Any North Korean nuclear attack on a major allied city would mean certain ultimate overthrow of the offending regime, and almost surely death (or at least lifetime imprisonment) for its leaders once they were found. But the point about nuclear war is that it wouldn't necessarily start that way, and therefore it is not so easy to dismiss it out of hand. Perhaps North Korea would try to use one nuclear bomb, out of its probable arsenal of eight or so, against a remote airbase or troop concentration. This could weaken allied defenses in a key sector, while also signaling the North's willingness to escalate further if necessary. It would be a hugely risky move, but not totally inconceivable, given previous North Korean actions.

Possible Chinese intervention would have to be guarded against too. To be sure, in the event of another Korean war, Beijing is not going to be eager to come to the military defense of the most fanatical military dictatorship left on the planet. But it also has treaty obligations with the North that may complicate its calculations. And it is going to be worried about any possibility of American encroachment into North Korean lands near its borders. For all these reasons, a Korean war could have broader regional implications—and pose huge threats to great-power peace. This worry requires that Washington and Seoul maintain close consultations with Beijing in any future crisis or conflict. But it also suggests that U.S. and South Korean forces would want to have the capability to win any

war against the North quickly and decisively. That would reduce the odds that China would decide to establish a buffer zone in an anarchic North Korea with its own forces in a way that could bring Chinese and allied soldiers into close and tense proximity again.

So what does this all mean, in terms of American force requirements for a possible future Korean contingency? Again, let me underscore my hope that such a horrible war will never occur, and, indeed my prediction that it will not. But hope is not a strategy, as Colin Powell liked to say, and in addition, often the best way to preserve the peace when dealing with a state like North Korea is to be absolutely clear in one's own resolve and absolutely prepared in military terms. To accomplish this, necessary U.S. forces would have to be quite substantial. They might focus principally on air and naval capabilities, given South Korea's large and improved army. But they should also involve American ground forces, since a speedy victory would be of the essence, and since, as noted, the fighting could be quite difficult and manpower intensive. While South Korea is very capable, and has a better military than does North Korea, it would be important to win fast to limit damage to Seoul and to seal off North Korea's borders in order to prevent the smuggling out of nuclear materials.

American ground forces would also be important because American mobile assets (such as the 101st Airborne air assault division and Marine amphibious forces) provide capabilities that South Korea does not itself possess in comparable numbers. Perhaps fifteen to twenty brigade-sized forces and eight to ten fighter wings, as well as three to four carrier battle groups, would be employed, as all previous defense reviews of the post-Cold War era have concluded. American forces might not be needed long in any occupation, given South Korea's large capabilities, but could be crucial for a few months.

Forces that were 15 percent smaller than today's would admittedly be hard-pressed in certain other scenarios. They probably could not stabilize a country like Iran, for example. In the unlikely but not impossible event that, due to dramatic Iranian escalation in use of terrorism or weapons of mass destruction, we felt the need to intervene on the ground in that country, a smaller U.S. Army and Marine Corps would be a disadvantage. There is no denying it.

Even in this case, however, we would not lack options. We would retain the ability, even without allied help on the ground, to overthrow a regime such as that in Tehran that carried out a heinous act of aggression

or terror against American interests in the future.<sup>15</sup> Such a deterrent could also be useful against any other powerful extremist government with ties to terrorists and nuclear ambitions or capabilities, should it someday take power in another country (above and beyond a current case like North Korea). This could be a meaningful deterrent against Iranian extremism, as we could defeat and largely destroy the Revolutionary Guard and Qods Forces that keep the current extremists in power if it ever became absolutely necessary. That translates into a meaningful deterrent capability—which is, of course, what we are after, since dissuading the extremists in Tehran from worse behavior in the first place is our real goal. To the extent the international community as a whole then saw the reestablishment of order in Iran as important, it could, if desired, help provide ground forces in a subsequent coalition to stabilize the place—a job that could require half a million total troops. (Thus, even today’s American ground forces would, in fact, be inadequate to the job of stabilizing Iran, which, with 80 million people, is three times as populous as either Iraq or Afghanistan.)

For missions like helping stabilize a large collapsing state, perhaps Pakistan or Nigeria, smaller U.S. ground forces could well prove sufficient as part of a coalition. That is, they might suffice if part of the security forces of the state at issue remained intact, or if a broader international coalition of states contributed to the operation.

Quite worrisome South Asia scenario could involve another Indo-Pakistani crisis leading to war between the two nuclear-armed states over Kashmir, with the potential to destabilize Pakistan in the process. This could result, for example, from a more extremist leader coming to power in Pakistan. Imagine the dangers associated with a country of nearly 200 million with the world’s fastest-growing nuclear arsenal, hatred of India as well as America, and claims on land currently controlled by India. I do not suggest that we should create the option of directly attacking such a hypothetical future Pakistan. That said, some scenarios could get pretty frightening—for example, if that future government in Islamabad had ties to extremists and thought about supporting them militarily. Certainly if such a future government was involved directly or indirectly in attacking us, we would need options to respond. These should include the possibility of a naval blockade and scale up from there as necessary, along the lines of the capabilities discussed above regarding Iran.<sup>16</sup>

Even more plausibly, it is easy to see how such an extremist state could take South Asia to the brink of nuclear war by provoking conflict

with India. Were that to happen, and perhaps a nuke or two was even detonated above an airbase or other such military facility, the world could be faced with the specter of all-out nuclear war in the most densely populated part of the planet. While hostilities continued, even if it would probably avoid taking sides on the ground, the United States might want the option to help India protect itself from missile strikes by Pakistan. It is even possible that the United States might, depending on how the conflict began, consider trying to shoot down *any* missile launched from *either* side, given the huge human and strategic perils associated with nuclear-armed missiles striking the great cities of South Asia. The United States might or might not be able to deploy enough missile defense capabilities to South Asia to make a meaningful difference in any such conflict. But certainly if it had the capacity, one can imagine that it might be prudent to employ it in certain circumstances.

It is also imaginable that, if such a war began and international negotiators were trying to figure out how to end it, an international force could be invited to help stabilize the situation for a number of years. India, in particular, would be adamantly against this idea today, but things could change if war broke out and such a force seemed the only way to reverse the momentum toward all-out nuclear war in South Asia. American forces would quite likely need to play a key role, as others do not have the capacity or political confidence to handle the mission on their own.<sup>17</sup>

With forty-eight brigade equivalents in its active Army and Marine Corps forces, and another twenty-four Army National Guard brigades, the United States could handle a combination of challenges reasonably well. Suppose, for example, that in the year 2015, it had one brigade in a stabilization mission in Yemen, two brigades still in Afghanistan, and two brigades as part of a multinational peace operation in Kashmir. Suppose, then, that another war in Korea broke out, requiring a peak of twenty U.S. combat brigades for the first three months, after which fifteen were needed for another year or more. That would be within the capacity of the smaller force—though just barely. Specifically, after the initial surge to Korea, the United States would by these assumptions settle back into a set of missions that required twenty brigade equivalents in all for some period of a year or more. The ground forces designed here would be up to the task.

Of course, with different assumptions it would be possible to generate different force requirements, making my recommended force

look too small or alternatively bigger than necessary. But the demands assumed above are not capricious. They are based on real war plans for Korea, and very plausible assumptions about two to three possible missions elsewhere. And they do not take the U.S. military too far below levels that have recently been necessary for Iraq and Afghanistan, given the fact that recent history should remind us of any overconfidence about predicting the end of the era of major ground operations abroad.

One final important point demands attention in this analysis of global: what is the role of U.S. allies in each of them? The fact that America has so many allies is extremely important—it signals that most other major powers around the world are at least loosely aligned with America on major strategic matters. They may not choose to be with us on every mission, as the Iraq experience proves. But when America is directly threatened, as in 9/11, the Western alliance system is rather extraordinary. This has been evidenced in Afghanistan, where, through thick and thin, even at the ten-year mark of the war, the coalition still includes combat forces from some forty-eight countries.

Yet how much help do these allies provide? Here the answer is, and will remain, more nuanced. The other forty-seven nations in Afghanistan have, in 2011, collectively provided less than one third of all foreign forces; the United States by itself has provided more than two thirds. Still, more than forty thousand forces is nothing to trivialize.

The allies have taken the lead in Libya in 2011. But this may be the exception that proves the rule—the mission that they led was a very limited air campaign in a nearby country. The French also helped depose a brutal dictator in Ivory Coast in 2011, and some European and Asian allies as well as other nations continue to slog away in peace operations in places such as Congo and Lebanon. The Australians tend to be dependable partners, Canada did a great deal in Afghanistan and took heavy losses before finally pulling out its combat forces in 2011, and, in Asia, the Japanese are also showing some greater assertiveness as their concerns about China's rise lead to more muscular naval operations by Tokyo.

For future American strategy, however, we should keep our expectations in check. Overall, the allies are not stepping up their game to new levels. Any hope that the election of Barack Obama with his more inclusive and multilateral style of leadership would lead them to do so are proving generally unwarranted. NATO defense spending is slipping downward, from a starting point that was not very impressive to

begin with. The allies were collectively more capable in the 1990s, when they contributed most of the ground troops that NATO deployed to the Balkans, than they are now.

The fraction of the NATO allies' GDP spent on their armed forces has declined to about 1.7 percent as of 2009, well under half the U.S. figure. That is a reduction from NATO's earlier figure of 2.2 percent in 2000 and about 2.5 percent in 1990.<sup>18</sup> Secretary Robert Gates accordingly warned of the possibility of a two-tier alliance before leaving office in 2011.<sup>19</sup> And NATO is also an excellent insurance policy should trouble loom in the future with China, Russia, or another power. As a time-tested community of democracies sharing common values and historical experiences, the alliance offers America a very useful anchor in sometimes unstable Eurasian waters.

The bottom line is this: When allies feel directly threatened, as Japan and South Korea sometimes do now, they will pony up at least to a degree. South Korea in particular can be counted on to provide many air and naval forces and most of the needed ground forces, for any major operation on the peninsula in the future. (South Korea is less enthusiastic about being pulled into an anti-China coalition, and Washington needs to watch not only the substance but even the tone of its comments on this subject.<sup>20</sup>) Taiwan would surely do what it could to help fend off a possible Chinese attack, not leaving the whole job to the American military in the event that terrible scenario someday unfolded, though it is probably under-spending on its military (see below for more on this). Many, if not most, NATO forces will be careful in drawing down troops from Afghanistan, making cuts roughly in proportion to those of the United States over the next two to three years.

In the Persian Gulf, both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have impressive air forces, with at least one hundred top-of-the-line aircraft each. Both countries could certainly help provide patrols over their own airspace as defensive measures in a future conflict. If they had already been directly attacked by Iran, they might also be willing to carry out counterstrikes against Iranian land or sea targets. But, again, there are limits. Neither country trains that intensively on a frequent basis with the United States to the point where combined combat operations in limited geographic spaces would be an entirely comfortable proposition. To put it more bluntly, we might have a number of friendly-fire incidents and might even shoot down each other's planes. Even more concerning, if Iran had not actually attacked their territories, Saudi Arabia and the

UAE might prefer to avoid striking Iran themselves first—since once the hostilities end, they would have to coexist in the same neighborhood again. For that and other reasons, it is not completely clear that we could count on regional allies to do more than the very important but still limited task of protecting their own airspace. We could hope for more, but should not count on it for force-planning purposes. A similar logic would apply to Japan in the event of any war against China over Taiwan.

Britain can be counted on for a brigade or two—five thousand to ten thousand troops, perhaps—for most major operations that the United States might consider in the future. Some new NATO allies like Poland and Romania, and some aspirants like Georgia, will try to help where they can, largely to solidify ties to America that they consider crucial for their security. The allies also *may* have enough collective capacity, and political will, to share responsibility for humanitarian and peace operations in the future, though here frankly the record of the entire Western world including the United States is patchy at best. Numerous countries will contribute modestly to limited and low-risk missions like the counterpiracy patrols off the coast of Somalia. If future naval operations are needed, perhaps to monitor or enforce future sanctions on Iran, and if we are then lucky, we may get a few allies to participate. Maybe, but, that is about as far as it will go.

### **Overseas Basing**

America's military may not be huge, but it is everywhere, and it is busy. Try to find a member of the military who has not deployed over the last decade; there aren't many. Former deputy secretary of defense William Lynn stated recently that two million Americans had served abroad in combat-related missions over the last ten years, and that is hardly the end of it, as the U.S. military presence is also robust in East Asia and Europe and other places where there has been no recent war.

To form a mental map of where America routinely deploys forces abroad, think of it this way. One major concentration is in Europe, centered on Germany but also with substantial numbers of forces in the United Kingdom and Italy, and a more modest presence in countries like Spain. A second major capability is in the dynamic East Asia region, with large standing American forces in both Korea and Japan and large numbers of ships routinely on station in the western Pacific as well. The third main area of focus is, of course, in the broader "Central Command" region. GIs in Iraq have almost all now come home, but the United

States retains numerous capabilities throughout the Persian Gulf region, on land and at sea. And, of course, America still has very large numbers of troops engaged in combat operations and stabilization activities in Afghanistan. These big force laydowns in eight or ten locations around the globe are complemented by smaller numbers of troops in a large number of additional places on every continent except Antarctica, sometimes maintaining a durable presence and sometimes rotating to carry out exercises, handle crises or just show the flag.

In playing its worldwide military role, the United States has more than sixty formal allies or other close security partners with whom it teams in one way or another. Its national security strategy for decades has viewed virtually the entirety of Eurasia's coastal regions as important American national security interests. South Asia and Southeast Asia have sometimes been within this perimeter, sometimes not, but Europe, the Middle East/Persian Gulf region, and East Asia have consistently factored critically into the U.S. national security equation. And today's American military is sized and built not just for hypothetical conflict scenarios, not just for the ongoing mission in Afghanistan, but also for sustained deployment and presence in much of that region.

This sounds enormously ambitious and costly. In some ways, it surely is. Defending America's own territory would surely be feasible at far less cost, with far fewer forces, than maintenance of this global network—at least for a while. The key reason is *not*, as some wrongly suggest, that having the forces overseas per se is necessarily a lot more expensive than basing them at home.<sup>21</sup> Especially in places where bases are well established on the territories of other modern nations, the incremental costs of having them outside American territory are typically at most a few percent of their total expense and often less. What is expensive is having a large military, regardless of where it is based. Operating abroad in austere environments like Iraq and Afghanistan is also costly.

But many of these costs may be worth paying. If we drew back, allies and interests might start to be threatened around the world, Iran might menace friends and oil interests in the Middle East, and China might find it more advantageous to push its growing weight around in East Asia. Numerous friends and allies of the United States might then pursue larger armies and in some cases nuclear arsenals in response to unchecked dangers that they had to face alone. Previous periods in human history in which multiple states competed for influence and



security without strong security alliances or structures to regulate and constrain the competition, such as Europe for most of the centuries leading up to the world wars, should give ample pause to those who believe that an international system without a strong central power could remain stable for long. The general absence of major interstate war that has, with very few exceptions, characterized most of post–World War II history would be put at serious risk.

Take a moment more to focus again on China. This enormously impressive yet challenging country requires a sophisticated American approach. It is neither really pure friend nor adversary. We are in both a partnership with China *and* a competitive relationship. We are not used to playing this role and so sometimes America’s China policy seems to oscillate between hopes for sustained friendship, on the one hand, and occasional bouts of fear or anxiety, on the other. Yet what we need is a policy that addresses *both* China’s promise and its potential perils simultaneously. One can think of this as pursuing a positive relationship while hedging against the possibility that things go south. But it may be even more useful, and accurate, to think of America’s challenge as setting the conditions that maximize our odds of getting along well with China. That requires, among other things, a military policy that is not provocative or belligerent—but that is instead resolute and clear. Even during the Obama presidency, China has been trying to muscle its neighbors in the South China Sea area into accepting Chinese dominance of most of that international waterway, while also trying to pressure the United States not to operate its Navy in the Yellow Sea (also an international waterway) and getting tough with Japan over disputed territories in the East China Sea. Its goal seems not so much to prepare for open hostilities as to follow the dictums of the great ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu and win without fighting.<sup>22</sup> The United States has pushed back; operating its Navy where it has chosen and organizing a coalition of countries to assert their rights to disputed maritime regions so that Beijing cannot play divide and conquer. Backing it all up has been the presence of American forces in the region. That capability has reminded all parties that the United States is a Pacific power that will stand up for its friends in that region. Washington also thereby provides the glue needed so that the region’s democracies (and some not-so-democratic states like Vietnam) can stand firmly together against any external threat, if need be. This approach works. We should not lightly discard it. It is with this philosophy in mind that we need to shape and

structure our future East Asia/Pacific military deployments.

To play this global role, the United States alone among the world's major powers, today has a substantial overseas military presence. It possesses enough capability in numerous strategically important parts of the world to make a difference in normal day-to-day regional balances of power, and to train vigorously with allies on a routine basis. Not only does the United States have a great deal of firepower stationed abroad, it has the infrastructure, the working relationships, and the transportation and logistics assets needed to reinforce its capacities quickly as needed in crises. This has been continuously true since World War II—so long that we now take it for granted. But stationing hundreds of thousands of troops abroad is not an automatic or inherent characteristic of major powers, especially in the modern postimperial era. No other major power has more than twenty thousand to thirty thousand forces abroad, with Britain and France leading the way after the United States. Substantial powers such as Russia, China, and India deploy forces totaling only in the thousands normally, as do several countries that participate frequently in peacekeeping missions.<sup>23</sup>

In some cases, foreign bases in the right place can actually save substantial sums of money. For example, being able to base U.S. tactical airpower at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa, Japan, arguably saves the United States several billion dollars a year. If the United States had to sustain a comparable airpower capability continuously in that region through other means, the alternative to Kadena might well be a larger Navy aircraft carrier fleet expanded by three or four carrier battle groups with an annual price tag of some \$20 billion.<sup>24</sup>

As noted, American forces abroad are concentrated in three main zones—Europe, with close to 100,000 GIs; East Asia, with a comparably sized force; and the broader Middle East. In Europe, the largest presence by far is in Germany (some 55,000 troops currently, though under the new Obama defense plan, the number of Army brigades in Europe will be cut from four to two, and total forces in Germany reduced perhaps 10,000 to 15,000 as a result). The United States also has almost 10,000 troops in the United Kingdom, mostly airmen and airwomen, and almost another 10,000 in Italy, distributed relatively evenly among Air Force, Navy, and Army personnel. There are more than 1,000 U.S. troops per country in Spain, Belgium, and Turkey as well as more modest numbers elsewhere in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

In Northeast Asia, the largest presence is in Japan with about 35,000

American uniformed personnel, but U.S. capabilities in Korea with almost 30,000 GIs are not far behind. Even though they are obviously American soil, Hawaii, Alaska, and Guam are of course highly relevant to the Asia-Pacific region too—and they have about 40,000, 20,000, and 3,000 uniformed personnel on their territories, respectively.

Third is the Central Command region. Afghanistan is currently the dominant deployment, of course, with close to 100,000 Americans in uniform there. Some 50,000 uniformed personnel are in the general Persian Gulf area, though those numbers continue to drop with the ending of the U.S. mission in Iraq. There are smaller but significant forces also in Egypt and Djibouti. Diego Garcia Island, in the center of the Indian Ocean, is a very important base as well.<sup>26</sup>

In many regions abroad, American forces are present but distinguished by their small numbers. In Latin America, responses to disasters like the Haiti and Chile earthquakes of modern times have typically involved only a few hundred troops, often National Guard men and women, for sustained periods.<sup>27</sup>

The Bush administration conducted a fairly thorough review of global basing known commonly as the Global Posture Review. It was intended to make sense of new strategic conditions brought about by 9/11, the rise of China, and other geostrategic changes. It was a positive legacy of an otherwise highly controversial secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, and has been largely sustained by the Obama administration.<sup>28</sup>

The Global Posture Review encompassed everything from the creation of new, generally modest bases in central Asia and Eastern Europe to the further downsizing of the U.S. military presence in Germany to a reduction and realignment of the American presence in South Korea as well as Okinawa, Japan, along with increases in Guam. Of course, there have also been enormous changes in the Persian Gulf, related to the war in Iraq as well as the subsequent removal of American combat forces from Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

There is still a good deal of continuity with the past, though. Even with the implementation of the plan, the United States will retain some five hundred overseas sites with a combined value around \$100 billion.<sup>29</sup> The budgetary costs of relocating forces, especially in Korea and Japan, could range up to \$50 billion. Most would be associated with moving some seven thousand Marines from Okinawa to Guam—costs that would be likely borne in part by Tokyo, if it can sort out the Japanese domestic politics of getting the basic idea approved in the first place. Opposition

on Okinawa to building a new airfield on a different part of the island may sink the whole concept.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, while big, the Rumsfeld review was hardly radical or unprecedented in scope. Less than twenty years ago, in the aftermath of the Cold War, much larger changes occurred in America's European base network, and 200,000 GIs came home as a result. The Vietnam and Korean wars had themselves produced much larger overall shifts in forces in previous decades. The British departure from the broader Middle East region in the 1960s and early 1970s, together with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, led to momentous shifts in the American role in that region. And, of course, these changes pale in comparison with what happened in the 1940s and early 1950s, when America fully became a global power, then tried to come home after World War II, and then realized it could not do so once the Cold War began.

But the recent modifications have been big nonetheless. Moreover, the Bush review was done with a broader approach than most previous base realignments, governed as they often were by the simple need to downsize after war or "upsized" for possible war against a specific foe such as the Soviet Union. By contrast, the latest review was guided by an effort to prepare for various possible scenarios—"planning for uncertainty" as the Rumsfeld Pentagon liked to say. It was nearly as notable for its decisions to increase certain forces and capabilities overseas as its decisions to cut others back.

Of course, global presence is not just about permanent facilities ashore. It also involves naval presence in key waterways. And it involves the ability to reinforce capabilities in the event of crisis or war. The U.S. Navy these days is maintaining a robust global presence with only about 286 major warships. That is still a formidable force of generally high-technology and large vessels, including 11 large-deck aircraft carriers, 11 large amphibious ships with aerial capability themselves, and more than 50 state-of-the-art nuclear-powered attack submarines.<sup>31</sup> But it is a fleet only half the size of its peak under Ronald Reagan. Yet it is maintaining 15 percent more overseas deployment time than it did a decade ago, just before 9/11. The Navy finds this an uncomfortably high tempo and wants to expand the fleet by about 10 percent, to 313 ships.<sup>32</sup> My own views, discussed below, are that there are innovative ways to use the fleet at its existing size to get the job done without such an expansion.

The United States has other assets that should be seen as part of its

prompt global reach capabilities. Chief long-range strike assets feature the Air Force's roughly 180 bombers—65 B-1, 20 B-2, and 94 B-52 aircraft. These, as well as transport planes, tactical aircraft, and support aircraft for purposes such as intelligence, make use of roughly 60 KC-10 tankers as well as nearly 200 KC-135 tanker aircraft (and more than 300 additional KC-135s in the Air Reserves and Air National Guard). These tankers, combined with America's dispersed base network, also allow tactical combat aircraft to be deployed quickly, assuming bases can be found for them in the region of operation. The United States Air Force has 1,700 such combat aircraft in its active-duty inventory alone, so, depending on base access, this can be quite a potent capability (as the planes can, of course, deploy within days if they have somewhere to operate once reaching their destination).

Then, there are prepositioned supplies in key overseas theaters that facilitate rapid reinforcement of additional combat capabilities, if needed. They include huge ships stocked with enough weaponry and ammunition for several ground combat brigades in places like Guam and Diego Garcia, as well as ground-based facilities storing weaponry and supplies in places like Kuwait.

So where do we go from here in an age of austerity? In light of the above, what considerations should guide us as we seek to save money in our global basing and deployment practices?

As noted above, building new facilities is costly. Operating forces in austere environments like Afghanistan is also very costly. And keeping forces in the military that would otherwise be unnecessary is expensive too. Any basing concepts that involve such choices have major budgetary implications.

That said, the year-to-year budgetary importance of overseas basing is not great in places where established facilities exist and allies help support them. In these cases, U.S. military salaries are not higher abroad; the cost of maintaining and operating facilities is not notably different; the price of weaponry operated by troops is generally the same; the civilian labor hired to work at the various defense installations is typically comparable as well. It is only more minor areas of expenditure where there could be some differences, for example, in moving people around and providing them home leave in the United States, or providing American schools abroad. But these costs are modest—typically in the hundreds of millions of dollars a year for forces numbering in the tens of thousands range, for example.<sup>33</sup> Real savings thus come from bringing

troops home from war theaters, or from not only shutting down bases abroad but eliminating the units that were previously stationed abroad from the force structure (and thereby making the net size of the U.S. military less than before).

On balance, the total costs to the American taxpayer of having U.S. forces abroad in Europe and East Asia total in the general range of around \$3 billion a year. Perhaps \$1 billion of that comes from the added expenses of moving people around and taking care of them with amenities like military schools. The other \$2 billion comes from standing overseas military commands—which often exist for each individual service, as well as in the overall joint commands like European Command or U.S. Forces/Korea. There are at least a dozen such headquarters spread around Europe and East Asia, each typically manned by up to several hundred troops and comparable numbers of civilians. Factoring in their equipment, a \$2 billion annual estimate seems accurate. However, the American forces that sometimes are based on these foreign lands, being usable elsewhere in the world, are flexible enough that their costs should not be assigned directly to the defense of the country in which they are located.<sup>34</sup>

The above considerations suggest that the main way we can save money from our current global patterns of deployment, apart from ending the wars as effectively as possible, probably involves Navy capabilities rather than permanent bases on land. After an impressive decade or so of innovation, largely in the 1990s, the Navy has slowed down some of its efforts to be more creative and reverted to a more classic approach of arguing for a larger fleet. But there may be other options.

Historically, the Navy has wished to sustain major deployments continuously in the Mediterranean, Persian Gulf area, and western Pacific. Since the Cold War ended, the Mediterranean has been deemphasized to a degree, but the Persian Gulf area has received even more attention than before, with no sign of that abating despite the overthrow of Saddam and the departure of most U.S. forces from Iraq. On balance, as noted above, naval requirements have not diminished in recent years, yet the size of the fleet has.

In the first decade after the Cold War, seeing the writing on the wall, the Navy became more innovative. It based some specialty ships like minesweepers overseas, rotating crews by airplane to allow sailors a break without having to waste time bringing the ships home. It also

chose to tolerate gaps in naval presence in some theaters, viewing predictability and consistency as less important than before, and “surging” forces at unpredictable times and places instead. Where some degree of steady presence was viewed as necessary, the Navy would sometimes provide that capability with smaller surface ships or large-deck amphibious vessels rather than aircraft carriers as well. All of this made sense.<sup>35</sup>

However, the Navy appears to have stalled a bit in its innovations. While crews are rotated with minesweepers, a handful of coastal patrol craft, and (as has long been the case) the ballistic missile submarine force, the practice has not been extended to other ships. Successful experiments have been done with larger vessels, but the Navy has not chosen to adopt the crew-rotation practice. This means that a typical surface combatant, like a cruiser or destroyer, spends about six months in home port training for a deployment, then sails for a six-month mission abroad but consumes perhaps two of those months in transit, and then spends another period of at least six months back in home port for recovery and maintenance and other such activities. The net effect is four months on station out of every eighteen-to-twenty-four-month period, a very inefficient cycle.

There is a better way. By keeping a given ship abroad for a couple years and having two crews share that vessel overseas as well as a training ship at home, the Navy can do more with less. In fact, it can improve its deployment efficiency by up to 40 percent per ship, accomplishing with about three-and-a-half ships, on average, what previously might have required five. Focusing on the Navy’s large surface combatants, cruisers and destroyers, this approach could allow roughly 54 ships to maintain the global presence that the Navy says it needs (of about twenty-one of these ships deployed abroad at a time) rather than the target of 88 ships it currently is pursuing.<sup>36</sup>

This logic should not be pushed to extremes. Not all of the Navy’s ships can be rotated in the same way. It is very difficult to imagine applying this concept to aircraft carriers, with their combined crews of up to five thousand (in contrast to more like three hundred sailors on major surface combatants). For carriers, the main alternative to the current practice is probably to focus somewhat less on the Mediterranean in normal times, and to use large-deck amphibious ships (with their short-takeoff, vertical landing planes and helicopters) rather than carriers for some routine missions.

This new system of crew rotation would have certain modest additional costs (e.g., flying crews around the world), but it would also yield operating savings by reducing wasted steaming time crossing oceans. It would take time to implement, however. New practices would have to be worked out, and access to overseas port facilities expanded for routine sustenance and maintenance functions. The Navy is already seeing higher maintenance deficits, due to strains on equipment, and cannot implement such a new approach to presence until it has facilities abroad that can keep its fleet shipshape.<sup>37</sup>

One more reason for caution: the Navy cannot lose sight of new operating regions, such as the increasingly ice-free and thus navigable Arctic. One need not imagine a new “cold” war in the far north to be aware that the defense of basic Western interests requires some degree of occasional American and allied presence.<sup>38</sup>

Any new plan for how the Navy can size, and operate, its fleet also needs to bear in mind possible war fighting requirements. Among other things, the Navy needs extra ships as an attrition reserve should some vessels be sunk in future conflict. Thus, Navy force structure should not be reduced by the full amount that a simple and comprehensive arithmetic application of this crew-rotation concept might theoretically allow—with reductions of dozens of ships.<sup>39</sup> A reduction of about twenty surface combatants would be a more reasonable and prudent change.

An additional way to get more out of a smaller fleet is to homeport more ships near the theaters in which they operate. That helps reduce time wasted in transit. Indeed, about a decade ago, the Navy started down this path in another important way, basing three attack submarines on Guam.<sup>40</sup> But the Navy can go well beyond the idea of stationing three submarines there; in fact, there is room to add at least eight more. The average number of mission days for a submarine stationed so near the western Pacific theater might be about one hundred a year, roughly three times what a submarine stationed in the continental United States can muster. Adding six more submarines to Guam would allow a reduction of up to ten attack submarines in the overall force structure and save an annual average of roughly \$1 billion without a reduction in mission effectiveness.<sup>41</sup> Planning to station up to four Littoral Combat Ships in Singapore is also a good plan by the Navy.

Forward homeporting can in principle go further, too. Even with the Navy’s new approach to flexible deployments, homeporting a second



carrier closer to a key theater of operations makes good sense. The idea of moving a carrier from California to either Hawaii or Guam merits serious attention.<sup>42</sup> By previous patterns of carrier deployments, homeports in California necessitated travels of some two weeks to East Asia and three or more weeks to the Persian Gulf.<sup>43</sup> Homeporting in Hawaii or Guam can shave five to ten days off that time, each way.

A carrier based farther west in the Pacific may prove somewhat more vulnerable tactically than one based back home—good reason not to extend this idea to several carriers. But on the other side of things, stationing multiple carriers in a single port *anywhere* creates the possibility of a single point of failure or vulnerability. So taking an aircraft carrier out of a port like San Diego where several are normally present, and instead stationing it in Hawaii or Guam where we presently have none, makes logical sense from a force protection standpoint as well. Although it seems unlikely, given political constraints in Japan, there is even an argument for homeporting a second carrier there, whether in Yokosuka or somewhere else.<sup>44</sup> Even with such a change, though, the Navy will need ample carriers for sustained crisis response in a place like the waters near Taiwan—again, placing a floor below which force structure cuts should not descend.

On balance, the Navy does not need to add 10 percent more vessels to its force structure to carry out current practices and presence. Indeed, it can probably do well with 10 percent less, or about 250 major ships. One part of the current U.S. plan for relocating facilities abroad does need rethinking—the previously mentioned idea of relocating several thousand Marines from Okinawa to Guam while also relocating a key Marine Corps airfield known as Futenma to a more northern area on Okinawa as an offshore facility. In addition to the political problems it has created in Japan, this plan would cost the United States more than \$15 billion. It is a dubious proposition. Instead, many of these Marines can be brought back to bases in the United States (where space will be available as the Marine Corps gets smaller in the years ahead). To shore up allied capabilities and make it clear that we are not weakening our combined commitment to East Asian security, Japan and the United States could take several compensating measures, such as purchasing at least one regiment's worth of equipment and a prepositioning ship to store it on, and basing that ship permanently in Japanese waters. Marines from California or Hawaii could then fly in to meet that equipment in the event of a crisis, marrying up with it in Japan or perhaps somewhere else

in the region. That capability, plus more rigorous allied planning to allow Marines also to redeploy to Okinawa in a crisis (using Japanese military and civilian facilities as well as U.S. bases,) would signal resolve and maintain rapid-reaction capability at lower cost. Meanwhile, a smaller Futenma replacement airfield might be built within one of the larger existing American bases in northern Okinawa.

## Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for 2012* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2011), p. 232, available at [http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2012/FY12\\_Green\\_Book.pdf](http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2012/FY12_Green_Book.pdf) [accessed September 9, 2011].

<sup>2</sup> For a similar argument see Sustainable Defense Task Force, “Debt, Deficits, and Defense: A Way Forward,” available at [www.comw.org/pda/fulltext/1006SDTFreport.pdf](http://www.comw.org/pda/fulltext/1006SDTFreport.pdf) [accessed September 15, 2010], p. vii.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), pp. 180–97, 222–36, 281–86.

<sup>4</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2010* (Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 2010), pp. 32–38.

<sup>5</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2000* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 26–30.

<sup>6</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, February 2010), p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> For discussions of the force-sizing debates in this period, see for example Kagan, *Finding the Target*, pp. 196–97, 281–86; and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Defense Policy Choices for the Bush Administration*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2002), pp. 9–17, 63–71.

<sup>8</sup> Gates, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, p. vi.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Richard L. Kugler, *New Directions in U.S. National Security Strategy, Defense Plans, and Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 2011), pp. 30–33.

<sup>10</sup> Robert P. Haffa, Jr., *Rational Methods, Prudent Choices: Planning U.S. Forces* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1988), pp. 77–82, 110–26; Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, *How Much Is Enough?: Shaping the Defense Program 1961–1969* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2005, original publication date 1971), pp. 214–16; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of*

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*Containment* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 297, 323.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1993), pp. 12–20; Thomas Donnelly, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: A Strategic Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 2004), pp. 32–51; Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 2006), pp. 37–40; Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), pp. 38–54; and Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1997), p. 315.

<sup>12</sup> See Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Quadrennial Defense Review: Rethinking the U.S. Military Posture* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2005), pp. 63–65; Michael O’Hanlon, *Defense Strategy for the Post-Saddam Era* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2005), pp. 95–118; and Michael O’Hanlon, *Dealing with the Collapse of a Nuclear-Armed State: The Cases of North Korea and Pakistan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Project on National Security, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Bruce E. Bechtol, Jr., *Defiant Failed State: The North Korean Threat to International Security* (Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2010), pp. 45–47, 186–88.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, International Institute for Strategic Studies, *North Korean Security Challenges: A Net Assessment* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), pp. 47–64.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack, Daniel L. Byman, Martin Indyk, Suzanne Maloney, Michael E. O’Hanlon, and Bruce Riedel, *Which Path to Persia: Options for a New American Strategy Toward Iran* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2009), pp. 94–98.

<sup>16</sup> See Bruce Riedel, *Deadly Embrace* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> See Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2011* (Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 2011), p. 472; International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2001–2002* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 299; and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1991–1992* (London: Brassey’s, 1991), p. 212.

<sup>19</sup> Thom Shanker, “Defense Secretary Warns NATO of ‘Dim’ Future,” *New York Times*, June 10, 2011, available at [www.nytimes.com/2011/06/11/world/europe/11gates.html?\\_r=1&emc=eta1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/11/world/europe/11gates.html?_r=1&emc=eta1) [accessed August 1, 2011].

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<sup>20</sup> As one example, see Choe Sang-Hun, "Island's Naval Base Stirs Opposition in South Korea," *New York Times*, August 19, 2011, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/19/world/asia/19base.html?\\_r=1&emc=eta1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/19/world/asia/19base.html?_r=1&emc=eta1) [accessed August 19, 2011].

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Mark Thompson, "\$1 Trillion to Spare," *Time*, vol. 177, no. 16 (April 25, 2011), p. 27.

<sup>22</sup> See Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2011* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2011), pp. 4, 109, 146.

<sup>24</sup> Michael O'Hanlon, "Restructuring U.S. Forces and Bases in Japan," in Mike Mochizuki, ed., *Toward a True Alliance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1997), p. 161.

<sup>25</sup> See Department of Defense, "Department of Defense Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country," March 31, 2011, available at [siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil](http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil) [accessed August 8, 2011].

<sup>26</sup> Andrew S. Erickson, Walter C. Ladwig III, and Justin D. Mikolay, "Diego Garcia and the United States' Emerging Indian Ocean Strategy," *Asian Security*, vol. 6, no. 3 (2010), pp. 214–37.

<sup>27</sup> Posture Statement of General Douglas M. Fraser, Commander, U.S. Southern Command, before the House Armed Services Committee, March 30, 2011, pp. 17–18, available at [southcom.mil/AppsSC/files/634370842750468750.pdf](http://southcom.mil/AppsSC/files/634370842750468750.pdf) [accessed August 8, 2011].

<sup>28</sup> One modest change to date is in Europe, where the Obama administration plans to keep three Army brigades rather than a smaller number. See Thom Shanker, "U.S. to Keep Three Brigades in Europe," *New York Times*, April 9, 2011, p. A5.

<sup>29</sup> Frances Lussier, *Options for Changing the Army's Overseas Basing* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office, May 2004), pp. 52, 54; *Strengthening U.S. Global Posture*, p. 13; and General Accounting Office, *DoD's Overseas Infrastructure Master Plans Continue to Evolve*, GAO-06-913R (August 22, 2006), p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Government Accountability Office, "Defense Management: Comprehensive Cost Information and Analysis of Alternatives Needed to Assess Military Posture in Asia," Washington, D.C., May 2011, available at [www.gao.gov/new.items/d11316.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11316.pdf) [accessed August 1, 2011].

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<sup>31</sup> See Statement of General James F. Amos before the House Armed Services Committee on the 2011 Posture of the United States Marine Corps, March 1, 2011, p. 13, available at [http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File\\_id=6e6d479e-0bea-41a1-8f3d-44b3147640fe](http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=6e6d479e-0bea-41a1-8f3d-44b3147640fe) [accessed August 10, 2011].

<sup>32</sup> Statement of Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, before the House Armed Services Committee, March 1, 2011, pp. 3–5, available at [navy.mil/navydata/people/cno/Roughead/Testimony/CNO%20Roughead\\_Testimony\\_030111.pdf](http://navy.mil/navydata/people/cno/Roughead/Testimony/CNO%20Roughead_Testimony_030111.pdf) [accessed August 6, 2011].

<sup>33</sup> Lussier, *Options for Changing the Army's Overseas Basing*, p. xiv.

<sup>34</sup> Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Budgeting for Hard Power* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2009), p. 94.

<sup>35</sup> See Eric J. Labs, *Crew Rotation in the Navy: The Long-Term Effect on Forward Presence* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office, October 2007), p. 17; Ronald O'Rourke, "Naval Forward Deployments and the Size of the Navy," Congressional Research Service, November 1992, pp. 13–23; and William F. Morgan, *Rotate Crews, Not Ships* (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, June 1994), pp. 1–9.

<sup>36</sup> Labs, *Crew Rotation in the Navy*, pp. 7–14.

<sup>37</sup> Sam Lagrone, "USN Relying on 'Cannibalisation' to Stay Afloat," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, July 27, 2011, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> On Russia's interests, see Marlene Laruelle, "Russian Military Presence in the High North: Projection of Power and Capacities of Action," in Stephen J. Blank, ed., *Russia in the Arctic* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), pp. 63–89.

<sup>39</sup> The Sustainable Defense Task Force concurs; see Joshua Stewart, "U.S. Budget Debate Could Cost a Carrier," *Defense News*, August 8, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> With the fleet response program, the Navy no longer insists on scrupulously maintaining an absolutely continuous presence in the Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, and western Pacific regions. Now it is more inclined to make deployments unpredictable, sometimes using more and sometimes fewer assets than before.

<sup>41</sup> Eric J. Labs, *Increasing the Mission Capability of the Attack Submarine Force* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office, 2002), pp. xvii, 11–13.

<sup>42</sup> Al Cornella, Anthony A. Less, H. G. Taylor, Lewis Curtis, Keith Martin, and James A. Thomson, *Overseas Basing Commission* (Arlington, Va.: Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States, May 2005), p. 28.

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<sup>43</sup> See, for example, O'Rourke, "Naval Forward Deployments and the Size of the Navy," pp. 13–23; and Morgan, *Rotate Crews, Not Ships*, pp. 1–9.

<sup>44</sup> O'Hanlon, "Restructuring U.S. Forces and Bases in Japan," in Mochizuki, ed., *Toward a True Alliance*, pp. 171–72.