



Beyond the Last War: Balancing Ground Forces and Future Challenges Risk in USCENTCOM and USPACOM

Report Roll-Out Event
1 May 2013

Study Purpose

The CSIS study on U.S. ground forces and “future challenges” risk in the USCENTCOM and USPACOM AORs:

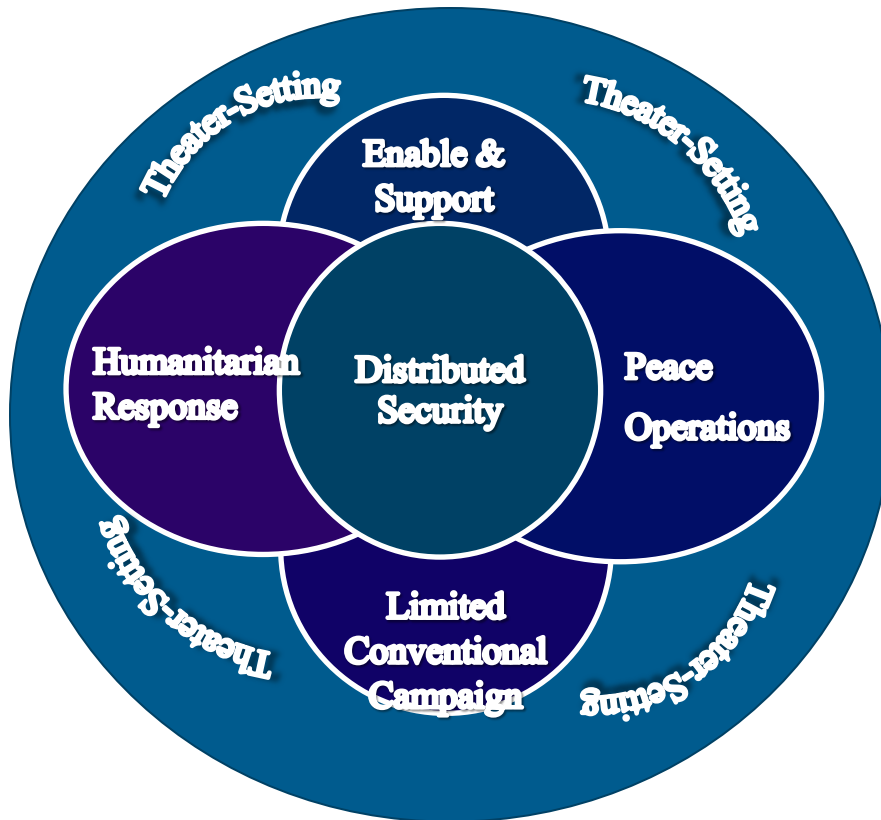
- 1) Identified core U.S. interests in the two regions and the ground-centric hazards likeliest to threaten those interests over the next two decades;
- 2) Defined and assessed ground force-relevant “future challenges” risk in regional contexts, given a set of illustrative vignettes that draw from the study’s comparison of interests and threats; and, finally,
- 3) Compared CSIS’s independent risk assessment with current defense strategy and planning assumptions for the purpose of identifying alternative approaches to risk mitigation.

- ***Focused on “future challenges risk” as it relates to “large-scale” employment of forces (>~15K-20K+).***
- **Judgments are qualitative (capability), not quantitative (capacity); centered around what ground forces might be asked to do, not the extent to which it should be prepared to do it.**
 - **Accounts for both the prospect of “disorder” and “unfavorable order.”**

Key Findings

- **The U.S. faces future contingencies where policy makers will want to consider large-scale ground force responses.**
 - All five core interests identified in the report converge and are vulnerable in the two AORs.
 - Report envisions expansive contingency role for Army and Marine GPF and SOF in both regions.
 - The more conflicts involve disputes between and among populations, the more ground forces provide qualitative advantages.
- **Future large-scale ground force demands generally fall into one of five “pacing” archetypes: humanitarian response, distributed security, enable and support actions, peace operations, and limited conventional campaigns; “distributed security” should be the centerpiece ground force capability and “warfighting” focus.**
 - Over the next two decades, ground forces will be much likelier to respond to foreign internal/cross-boundary “disorder,” natural/human catastrophe, third-party conflict, or large-scale enabling requirements than to overt state aggression.
 - “Distributed security” is the most likely and disruptive (and, potentially, most dangerous) warfighting demand.
 - “Classic” major combat campaigns and extended opposed stabilization are new “lesser included” cases; success in both cases hinges on the ability to succeed in the archetypes, as well as sufficient warning, AC depth, and mobilization.
- **Regional “shaping” will dominate the ground force peacetime agenda.**
 - Shaping should focus on preventing the most dangerous and preparing for the most disruptive outcomes.
 - Partnership activities should prioritize the willing and the capable first.
- **Current defense and service priorities may not align well with important future demands associated with the “pacing” archetypes.**
 - Future challenges risk is increasing or static in all six major risk categories.
 - Strategy and policy too focused on the most obvious state challengers (and terrorists) and not enough on consequential disorder; “enable and support actions” require greater emphasis as well.
 - “Distributed security” is inconsistent with current policy priorities; enabling and support run counter to service culture.
 - Forces are currently conditioned to one “large-scale” demand — COIN from a significant (and fixed) support architecture.

5 Pacing Archetypes



Humanitarian Response: A combination of stability, enabling, and security operations in the event of natural or human disaster.

Distributed Security: Gaining control over and securing geography, infrastructure, populations, or dangerous military capabilities threatened by disorder.

Enable and Support Actions: Underwrite joint, interagency, and foreign partner efforts, largely through employment of direct combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities at the theater level.

Peace Operations: Maintenance of a stable peace between parties to an armed dispute.

Limited Conventional Campaign: Large-scale combined arms combat action against an adversary state.

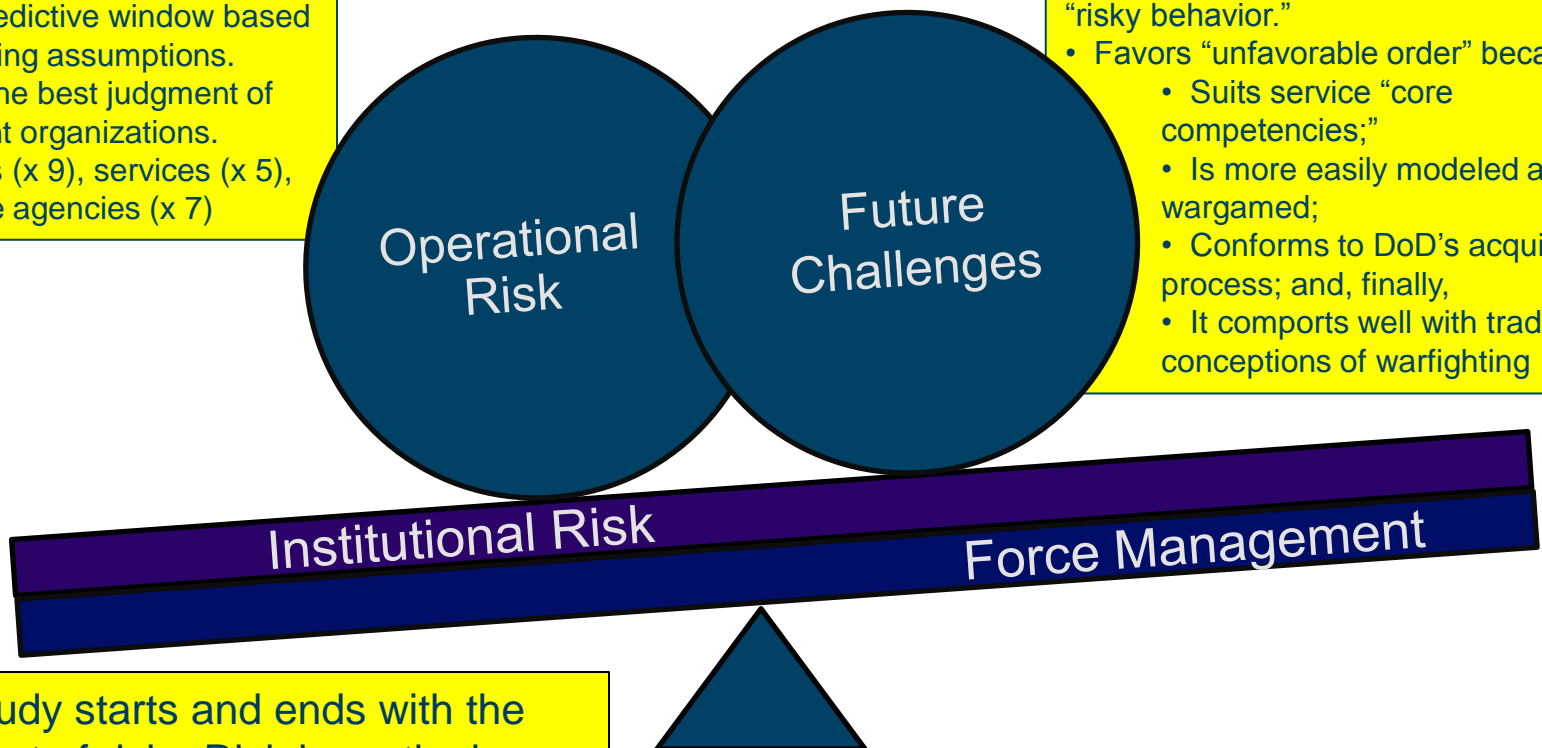
Risk Assessment: Current DoD Risk Framework

Most authoritative risk assessments in DoD are concerned with near-term operational risk:

- 24 month predictive window based on ever-changing assumptions.
- Assembles the best judgment of 21 independent organizations.
 - COCOMs (x 9), services (x 5), and defense agencies (x 7)

“Future Challenges Risk” not formalized and, thus:

- Heavily influenced by “biases” and “risky behavior.”
- Favors “unfavorable order” because it:
 - Suits service “core competencies;”
 - Is more easily modeled and wargamed;
 - Conforms to DoD’s acquisition process; and, finally,
 - It comports well with traditional conceptions of warfighting



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.

Five Core Interests

An enduring condition upon which the U.S. depends that, if compromised, could imperil its survival, well-being, prosperity, or international standing.

- 1) Physical and virtual security of the U.S., its citizens, its allies, and its partners.
- 2) A U.S.-led international political and economic order conducive to continued U.S. security and prosperity, the rule of law, and universal human dignity.
- 3) Stable functioning of “strategic states.”
- 4) Secure, unrestricted access to strategic regions, resources, and the global commons and prevention of their hostile domination.
- 5) Prevention of the continued development, proliferation, use of, or loss of control over chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) capabilities.

All five interests converge and are vulnerable in USCENTCOM/USPACOM.

Geo-Strategic Insights

- For the foreseeable future, the U.S. will continue to enjoy important military advantages vis-à-vis all potential military competitors; however, these advantages will experience some erosion.
- Accepting a continued commitment to deterrence and shaping, the U.S. 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.
- 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.
- Over the near- to mid-term, 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.
- State and non-state actors will threaten access to strategic resources and to the secure use of the global commons.

Geo-Strategic Insights (Cont'd)

- Loss of responsible control over CBRN weapons and know-how or the threatened or actual use of CBRN will be primary concerns of U.S. strategy and planning for the next two decades.
- Expanding access to information and increased networking will change the character of future conflicts and crises.
- Challenged governance, natural catastrophes, climate change, environmental degradation, and increased competition for strategic resources will be accelerants for future crises.
- The U.S. will continue to enjoy important bi-lateral and multi-lateral partnerships. However, participation or effective contributions of key partners in future military operations will be context dependent and increasingly constrained materially and politically.
- The concept of “strategic warning” is highly conditional, while strategic shock and surprise will be persistent features of the future security environment.

USCENTCOM TRENDS

- **Prolific challenges to the authority and stability of vulnerable regional governments.**
- **Malign Iranian behavior and its challenge to the wider regional stability.**
- **Uncertain control of CBRN capabilities.**

USCENTCOM Regional Takeaways

- The most important challenges to core interests may emerge from protracted disorder and serial failures of responsible authority.
- Regional instability poses direct and indirect threats to global and regional security, vital resources and strategic geography, and the responsible control over dangerous military capabilities — specifically CBRN.
- Extremists, state proxies, and hostile states will pose direct threats to the U.S. and important partners the foreseeable future. States within the region face both internal and external challenges to security and order with an increasing likelihood of contagious political disturbances.
- The stark political uncertainty of the region is compounded by an overarching competition for regional primacy between Iran and its Arab neighbors.
- Three confirmed or aspiring CBRN states within USCENTCOM (Pakistan, Syria, and Iran) are pressing threats to core interests and should be sources of future U.S. contingency planning.
- The U.S. will not be in a position to effectively prevent many of the region's most complex security challenges.

USPACOM TRENDS

- **Increasing competition for regional primacy, territory, resources, and freedom of action.**
- **Alternative China futures.**
- **The uncertain trajectory of North Korea.**
- **Natural catastrophe and climate change.**
- **Enduring ethnic and ideological disputes.**

USPACOM Regional Takeaways

- The Asia-Pacific rebalance will dominate U.S. defense 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-term.
- Natural catastrophe, 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.

USCENTCOM/USPACOM Vignettes — Illustrative Examples of Threat/Response

USCENTCOM

- Syrian Sanctuary
- Yemen Sanctuary
- Iraqi Civil War
- Pakistani Collapse
- Regional Uprising
- Egyptian Civil War
- Iranian Military Provocation
- Syria-Iraq Conflict
- Saudi Civil War
- Syria-Turkey Conflict

USPACOM

- Pan-Pacific Tsunami
- Philippines Pandemic
- Nepal Earthquake
- North Korean Collapse
- South China Sea Crisis
- North Korean Provocation
- India-Pakistan War
- Korean Unification
- China Quarantine
- Taiwan Counter-Lodgment

Risk Assessment — Implications for Ground Forces

- The future operating environment and future ground operations will be disordered, asymmetric, distributed, and less decisive.
- USCENTCOM and USPACOM are fundamentally different with respect to their potential ground force demands — (USCENTCOM: Distributed Security/Peace Ops, USPACOM: Enable and Support/Humanitarian Response).
- There may be limited notice of the likeliest ground force warfighting demands (“distributed security”) and there is greater potential for their simultaneous occurrence.
- Ground forces will need to be more tailorable, scalable, and expeditionary.
- Shaping and understanding the strategic and operational environments are foundational to future success.
- Five “pacing” archetypes define future U.S. ground force demands — humanitarian response, distributed security, enabling and support actions, peace operations, and limited conventional campaigns.
- Risk is increasing or static in all six risk categories.

Risk Assessment — 5 “Pacing” Archetypes

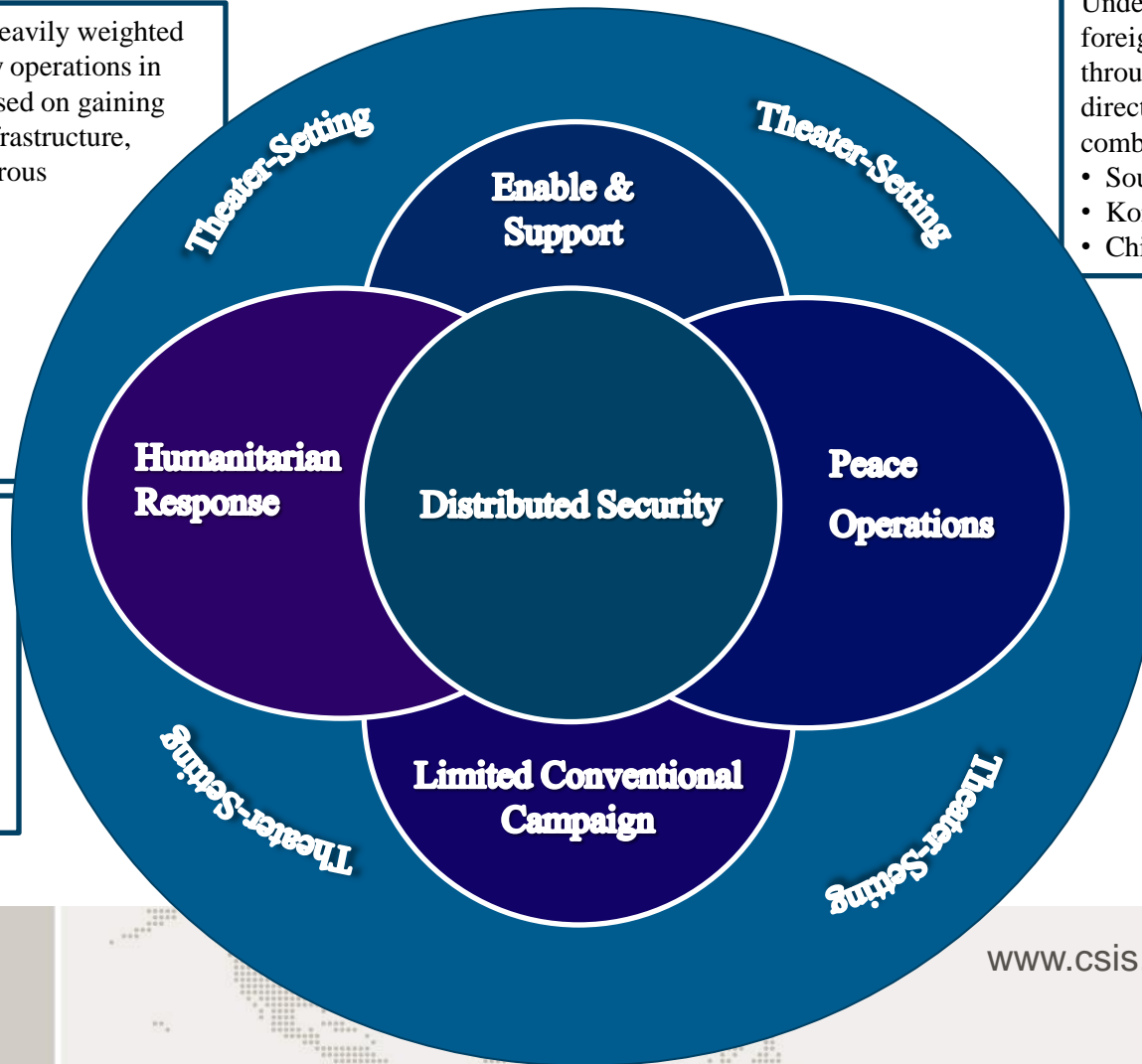
Distributed Security — Heavily weighted toward combat and security operations in response to disorder. Focused on gaining control over geography, infrastructure, populations, and/or dangerous capabilities.

- Syrian Sanctuary
- Yemen Sanctuary
- Pakistani Collapse
- Regional Uprising
- Egyptian Civil War
- Saudi Civil War
- North Korean Collapse

Humanitarian Response

— Some combination of stability, enabling, and security operations in response to natural or human disaster.

- Pan-Pacific Tsunami
- PI Pandemic
- Nepal Earthquake



Enable and Support Actions —

Underwriting joint, interagency, and foreign partner efforts largely through theater-level employment of direct combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities.

- South China Sea Crisis
- Korean Unification
- China Quarantine

Peace Operations —

Focused largely on security and stability operations, involving employment of forces to maintain peace between parties to a dispute.

- Iraqi Civil War
- Syria-Iraq Conflict
- India-Pakistan War

Limited Conventional Campaigns —

Combat action against the organized forces of an adversary state.

- Iranian Provocation
- North Korean Provocation
- Taiwan Counter-Lodgment

Risk Assessment: Increasing or Static in all Six Categories

- **Understanding the strategic and operational environment and leveraging information – Increasing.**
 - Second and third order effects of DoD’s re-orientation on traditional threats and terrorism, as well as reductions in forward presence compound to potentially undermine future effectiveness.
- **Shaping strategic and operational conditions and outcomes – Increasing.**
 - It is difficult to demonstrate the value of shaping. Reduced resources will make targeting and prioritizing shaping essential. Current approach may neither be targeted effectively nor consistent with future contingency demands.
- **Projecting forces – Increasing.**
 - Demands identified in this report call for unique blending and projection of capabilities under the pressure of time; “Deploy = Employ” needs to be the norm; numerous trends militate against this — lift, tailorability, reduced forward presence, A2/AD, etc.
- **Employing forces and capabilities to achieve operational objectives – Increasing.**
 - The force’s operational experience over the past decade and its likeliest operational future are not the same, substantial adaptation required; current policy trends indicate adaptation may be problematic.
- **Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions – Increasing.**
 - Forces will be more vulnerable to myriad threats across the range of military operations — missiles, UAVs, G-RAMM, CBRN, cyber, hybrid/irregular methods; further, sustainment of distributed operations in the absence of mature support bases and infrastructure appears problematic as well.
- **Terminating military operations consistent with strategic and operational objectives – Static.**
 - Understanding the conditions under which operations will be terminated is critical; “staying green” requires new concept work and training on how operations end.

Risk Assessment: Risk Categories and Mitigation

Understanding the environment... and leveraging information

Mitigation

- Increase emphasis on capabilities that cultivate understanding of the human aspects of conflict.
- Expand approach to understanding complex operating environments.
- Identify innovative approaches to increasing the regional IQ of CONUS-based forces.
- Employ professional military education (PME) institutions as centers of excellence for ground force futures.

Shaping strategic and operational conditions and outcomes

Mitigation

- Improve and synchronize shaping initiatives.

Projecting forces

Mitigation

- Enhance the ability of ground forces to deploy, conduct distributed entry, and employ forces immediately upon arrival.
- Examine the overall active / reserve component mix and readiness.

Employing forces and capabilities to achieve operational objectives

Mitigation

- Build a cohesive ground force team.
- Enhance regional and global ground force response capabilities.
- Enhance command and control and crisis situational awareness.
- Train to and validate large-scale enabling efforts.
- Develop new capabilities in ground-base fires and counter-CBRN
- Focus leader development on “mission command.”
- Continue to enhance “whole of government approach.”

Protecting and sustaining forces consistent with operational conditions

Mitigation

- Focus on robust air and missile defense.
- Increase the amount and deployability of protected mobility and firepower.
- Increase ground force self-sufficiency and explore initiatives to secure sustainment against all hazards.

Terminating military operations...

Mitigation

- Refine concepts, planning, and training for transfer of responsibility and retrograde.

Conclusion

- Four key findings:
 - The U.S. faces future contingencies where policy makers will want to consider large-scale ground force responses.
 - Future large-scale ground force demands generally fall into one of five “pacing” archetypes; “distributed security” should be the “warfighting” focus.
 - Regional “shaping” will dominate the ground force peacetime agenda.
 - Current defense and service priorities may not align well with important future demands.
- USCENTCOM/USPACOM may provide an adequate “pacing” snapshot for capabilities’ prioritization/development. However, ground forces play an important role in mitigating “rest of the world risk” as well.
- In general, “pacing” archetypes appear to hold up against a variety of demands worldwide; an assessment “rest of the world risk,” however, requires review of the unique intersection of interests, trends, threats, and potential U.S. responses within and between the other regions.

Thank You