The Future of U.S. Ground Forces

Testimony Before the

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Introduction

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today, and to share my views on the future of U.S. Ground Forces. As we begin a new administration, we are sobered by the security challenges that have emerged in recent years: the attacks of 9/11; the deployment of U.S. troops to Iraq and Afghanistan; the erosion of barriers to nuclear proliferation; and the rapid rise of China and resurgence of Russia. Not surprisingly, there is considerable interest in what this portends for the U.S. military in general and our ground forces in particular.

Of course, any detailed discussion of how our ground forces might best be organized, structured, trained and equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing security environment should be informed by a sound national security strategy. Anything less would be putting the cart before the horse. The Obama administration has a strategy review under way. This review stands to be the most important review since the Cold War's end.

My testimony is focused primarily on the Army, given the dominant position it holds in providing ground forces for our country.[1]

The National Security Challenges Facing the Army

The three challenges confronting the U.S. military today—the war against Islamist terrorist elements, the prospect of nuclear-armed rogue states, and the potential rise of China as a military rival—differ greatly from those confronted during the Cold War era. Nor do they resemble the threats planned for in the immediate post-Cold War era, when minor powers like Iran, Iraq and North Korea which lacked weapons of mass destruction and were assumed to present challenges not all that different from Iraq during the First Gulf War. Nevertheless, this assumption led the U.S. military to focus its attention on waging two such conflicts in overlapping time frames from 1991 until the 9/11 attacks. [2]

For the Army, these new challenges all suggest the onset of an era of persistent, *irregular* conflict. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq show no signs of ending soon. The same can be said regarding the war against Islamist terrorist groups operating around the globe. Moreover, the rising youth bulge in Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia, and in parts of Latin America only promises to increase the strain on governments in these regions, increasing the prospect for further instability and even state failure. As unprecedented numbers of young people in these parts of the world come of age, they will find themselves competing in a global economy in which they are hampered by a lack of education and burdened by corrupt and incompetent governments. The communications revolution will enable radical groups to influence large numbers of these young adults, and attempt to recruit them. Even if radical elements succeed in winning

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[1] My testimony is essentially a summary of my monograph on the Army. See Andrew F. Krepinevich, *An Army at the Crossroads* (Washington, DC: CSBA, 2008).

[2] The two major regional conflict (MRC) posture was succeeded by the two major theater war (MTW) and major combat operations (MCO) postures, which essentially represented variations on the same theme: regional wars against minor powers in the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia. The U.S. force posture did not begin to change significantly until after the 9/11 attacks and the onset of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

over only 1 percent of the young as they rise to adulthood, they will have recruited millions to their cause. For much of history, large numbers of people were required to cause disruption and destruction. Yet as groups like Aum Shinrikyo,[3] al Qaeda, and Hezbollah have shown, thanks to the advent and spread of highly destructive technologies even small groups can create widespread disorder.

It does not end there. Should minor powers hostile to the United States, such as Iran, acquire nuclear weapons, they will likely feel emboldened to take greater risks in backing groups pursuing ambiguous forms of aggression. In Iran's case, this could lead to greater support for radical groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Mahdi Army, as well as others. If the United States is unable to convince China to abandon its attempts to exclude the U.S. military from East Asia and to threaten America's access to the global commons, the competition could spill over into irregular proxy wars in developing nations. China could pursue this path both in an attempt to tie the United States down in costly, protracted conflicts, and to position itself to secure access to important or scarce raw materials.

A Full-Spectrum Force

Given the advent of an era of persistent *irregular* conflict, with its emphasis on manpower-intensive operations on land, the Army is destined to play a central role in U.S. defense strategy. The Service will need to build on its hard-won expertise in conducting these kinds of operations, whether they go by the name of stability operations; foreign internal defense; internal defense and development; stability, security, transition and reconstruction operations; counterinsurgency; or irregular warfare.[4] At the same time, the Army must also hedge against a resurrection of rivals who look to challenge its dominance in more traditional, or conventional, forms of warfare.

These disparate missions argue for an Army that can operate effectively across the entire conflict spectrum. However, because the range of missions is so broad, and the skill sets required sufficiently different, attempting to field forces that can move quickly and seamlessly from irregular warfare to conventional warfare seems destined to produce an Army that is barely a "jack-of-all-trades," and clearly a master of none. This approach becomes all the more problematic when one considers the ongoing erosion of quality in the officer and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) corps, and in the Service's recruiting standards.[5] Yet this is what the Army is attempting to accomplish through its "full-spectrum" force.

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[3] On March 20, 1995, members of a Japanese cult, Aum Shinrikyo, released sarin nerve gas in a coordinated attack on five trains in the Tokyo subway system. Although the attack was botched, 12 commuters were killed and 54 seriously injured, while nearly 1,000 more people suffered some ill effects. Kyle B. Olson, "Aum Shinrikyo: Once and Future Threat?" Centers for Disease Control, accessed at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol5no4/olson.htm, on March 21. 2009.

[4] While the U.S. armed forces appear to have little need to segment conventional warfare into discrete types, the same cannot be said of warfare at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. In addition to the various "flavors" of this form of warfare mentioned above, one might add peacekeeeping and peace enforcement operations, operations other than war (OOTW), among others.

[5] Bill Sasser, "Strained by War, US Army Promotes Unqualified Soldiers," July 30, 2008, accessed at http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2008/07/30/sergeants/index.html?source=rss&aim=/news/feature, on August 29, 2008.

The Army has understandably felt compelled to pursue the "full-spectrum" approach owing to the need to cover a range of missions within the limitations on its size imposed by fiscal constraints and its all-volunteer character. Yet even if this approach were viable, the Army remains too small for larger irregular warfare contingencies, let alone those that occur simultaneously.

Fortunately, the authors of the U.S. defense strategy have wisely chosen to address the gap between the scale of the challenges confronting the nation and the forces available to address them by focusing on building up the military capabilities of threatened states, and of America's allies and partners. The Army must give greater attention to supporting this strategy, especially with regard to stability operations, as the best means of addressing the challenge of preparing to conduct operations at high levels of effectiveness across the conflict spectrum.

The Army has specialized forces. *It will need more.*

The Service has for decades fielded forces specialized for airborne operations and air assault operations. Of course, the Army also has its Special Forces, expert in a range of irregular warfare operations. It has forces specially designed for high-end warfare, and plans to continue in this vein with the Future Combat Systems Brigade Combat Teams (FCS BCTs), which the Army properly recognized are "optimized" for conventional warfare. These kinds of forces are designed to surge on short notice to address conventional contingencies. While it was once argued that such "general-purpose" forces could readily shift gears to handle contingencies at the lower end of the conflict spectrum, the evidence of Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq suggests the contrary. Moreover, the Army's new doctrine confirms the triumph of real-world experience over wishful thinking. Thus what the Army lacks are forces designed to surge in the event of a major contingency at the lower end of the conflict spectrum, as well as forces designed to prevent such a contingency from arising in the first place.

The Army needs to field two surge forces, one for conventional operations, the other for irregular warfare. Should either form of conflict prove protracted, the other wing of the force could, over the course of the initial twelve- to fifteen-month surge, undergo training and the appropriate force structure modifications to enable it to "swing" in behind the surge force to sustain operations.

This approach might be termed the "Dual-Surge" Army, comprising two wings, one oriented (but not uniquely specialized in) operations along the lower end of the conflict spectrum, while the other wing would be oriented on operations along the high end of the conflict spectrum. Structured in this manner, the Army could rightfully claim to be *a truly capable "Full-Spectrum" Force.*

The Need for Irregular Warfare Capabilities

The Army's most immediate and pressing missions are those related to irregular warfare. The Department of Defense (DoD) is pursuing an indirect strategy with regard to the challenges posed by this form of conflict. This makes sense, both as a means of avoiding having U.S. forces tied down in protracted conflicts, and because internal threats are typically best handled by indigenous forces. It is also necessary, as the U.S. military simply lacks the capability to create the security conditions necessary to enable

stability on the scale that might be required. Consider that the Army is fully engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq, countries whose combined populations are under 60 million. Yet countries of significant concern to the United States, like Iran (70 million), Nigeria (150 million) and Pakistan (165 million) have far greater populations. Hence the need to "build partner capacity" in the security forces of friendly countries threatened by instability, and in allied and partner countries which could assist in restoring order should the regime of a hostile state (e.g., Iran) collapse.

With respect to friendly states the best strategy is to build partner capacity and engage in other preventive measures *before* a friendly country is at risk. The Army must be prepared to engage in substantial steady-state peacetime training and advising of indigenous security forces, when requested by the host nation. These efforts should be undertaken on a scale appropriate to the situation, and within the host nation's "comfort level." In an era of persistent irregular conflict, the Army will need to conduct persistent training and advising operations, much as maritime forces over the years have conducted peacetime forward-presence operations as a means of maintaining stability by reassuring partners and demonstrating resolve to rivals.

In the event preventive measures fail, the Army must have the ability to build partner capacity rapidly, creating an indigenous/allied "surge" capability that can begin to restore stability to the threatened area. In circumstances where U.S. vital interests are at stake, the Army must also be able to surge its own forces into the gap while partner capacity is being created. The effort to build partner capacity will typically find the Special Operations Forces (SOF) in the lead. However, given their relatively small size, the large demands placed on SOF by the protracted war against Islamist terrorist groups, and the prospective scale of the contingencies involved, the Army and its sister Services must be prepared to conduct training and advising of host-nation and, where necessary, allied and partner militaries. Moreover, if the Army's partners in the U.S. Government's interagency element—e.g., the State Department, the Intelligence Community, USAID, etc.—prove unable to meet their obligations as partners in restoring stability, the Army must also be prepared to engage in operations to help restore the threatened state's governance and infrastructure, and the rule of law.

Consequently, the Army must maintain a significant standing training and advisory capability that can be deployed on short notice, when necessary. This capability can reside within the institutional Army, in the form of officers and noncommissioned officers assigned to Army schools as instructors or students; at Army headquarters (e.g., the Training and Doctrine Command, or TRADOC); or as staff, faculty and students at a school where instruction is given on how to serve as a trainer or advisor. Rather than stripping existing brigade combat teams of their officers and NCOs to support the training and advisory mission, thereby eroding their effectiveness, the institutional Army can provide a surge capability while the Service leverages its existing school-house facilities to generate additional trainers and advisors.

Since the Army may need to fill gaps in the U.S. interagency effort to restore governance and enable economic reconstruction and sustained growth, it must remain capable of responding quickly as part of any surge effort. Given this requirement, the Army should strongly consider maintaining the ability to field, on short notice, Civil Operations, Reconstruction and Development Support (CORDS) groups capable of

providing advice, mentoring, and support to the host nation's non-security institutions (including its civil administration and its legal, economic, and healthcare sectors). The CORDS groups should be capable of creating parallel advisory offices to host-nation ministries at the national, regional, provincial, and (on a rotating basis) local levels. They must also have the ability to undertake quick impact projects immediately upon deployment; develop annual plans for civil operations, reconstruction, and economic development; and engage in longer-term capacity-building efforts. The Army's CORDS groups would vary in size depending on the circumstances, but they should include military personnel (including personnel from the other Services), civilians made available from other executive departments and agencies, and expert personal services contractors.

Maintaining Dominance in Conventional Warfare

The Army also needs to maintain a dominant capability for high-end conventional warfare, of which the most demanding form is likely to be major combat operations whose objective is to effect regime change of a minor nuclear power. The Army must preserve its dominant position in this form of warfare to dissuade rivals from contemplating threatening U.S. security interests by employing conventional forces. It is important to remember, however, that modern conventional operations are inherently joint, and U.S. dominance in air power provides the Army with a priceless advantage in conducting conventional operations, as we have seen in both Gulf Wars, the 1999 Balkan War, and during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001-02. While these factors may enable the Army to take more risk in the area of conventional capabilities, it does not obviate the need to sustain the Service's dominant position. The focal point of this effort should be creating a combined-arms battle network land force linked to the U.S. military's overarching joint battle network.

Defending the U.S. Homeland

The Army must also meet its obligations to defend the U.S. homeland. Most of the skills and capabilities required to support this mission are also required to conduct the two basic missions described above. Stability operations involve Army units engaged in providing population security, securing key infrastructure, enabling reconstruction, restoring governance, and numerous other tasks associated with defending the homeland and supporting post-attack recovery. The same can be said of Army capabilities at the other end of the conflict spectrum, which may involve defense against WMD attack, damage limitation in the event of an attack, and consequence management following an attack. The same can be said of the skill sets and capabilities required to deal with the so-called hybrid threat, such as that confronted by the Israelis in combating Hezbollah in the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

Security Cooperation Brigade Teams

A requirement also exists for an Army "surge" capability for stability operations in the form of Security Cooperation Brigade Combat Teams, or SCBCTs. These brigades should also serve as the Army's "Phase O" forward-presence forces, designed to keep weak states from becoming failed or ungoverned states. The SCBCTs, while similar to Infantry Brigade Combat Teams (IBCTs) in many respects, would incorporate some significant differences. They would have one artillery battery instead of two in their fires

battalion. Relative to IBCTs, SCBCTs would have an augmented Special Troops Battalion, while their military intelligence company would be increased in size and accord greater emphasis on human intelligence and expertise in operating on complex human terrain. The SCBCT's military police contingent would have two companies, not one, as in the IBCT. Strong consideration should be given to increasing the SCBCT's battalion's engineer component relative to the IBCT, and to embedding civil affairs and psychological operations units. If necessary, the SCBCT could also be augmented with (or supported by) quick-reaction-force (QRF) squadrons, which could be drawn from Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCTs) or Heavy Brigade Combat Teams (HBCTs). Depending upon the contingency, SCBCTs could also be augmented by weapons of mass destruction (WMD) rapid-response forces, military advisory teams, and air and missile defense units. Soldiers serving in SCBCTs would also be expected to spend most of their troop time in these brigades, although they should serve at least one and perhaps two tours in other units (e.g., IBCTs, HBCTs, SBCTs, Airborne or Air Assault Brigades, or SOF units) oriented more heavily on traditional, or conventional operations. This will enable these soldiers to reorient their SCBCT units more effectively should they be needed to support a surge at the high end of the conflict spectrum as a follow-on force behind the HBCTs.

The Decline in Quality of the NCO and Officer Corps

Irregular warfare demands will require a higher density of officers and noncommissioned officers than exists in the current force to support training and advisory missions, and to fill out CORDS units, and perhaps SCBCTs as well. Yet the Army has been experiencing a decline in quality of its officer and non-commissioned officer corps. NCOs mentor junior enlisted soldiers in soldier skills and leadership, setting an example for them and providing an indispensable link between officers and their troops. For this reason the NCOs are often referred to as the "backbone" of the Army. The NCOs' importance is clearly seen in the institutional crisis that confronted the Army during the Vietnam War when the Service found itself compelled to adopt accelerated promotions to fill shortages in the NCO ranks. The widespread promotion of enlisted soldiers (often referred to as "shake-and-bake" sergeants) unprepared to handle NCO responsibilities played a major role in the breakdown in order, discipline, and unit effectiveness during that war.

There are signs of the same phenomenon today. In 2005 the Army began automatically promoting enlisted personnel in the rank of E-4 to E-5 (sergeant), based solely on the soldiers' time in service, without requiring them to appear before a promotion board. In April 2008 the policy was extended to include promotions from E-5 to E-6 (staff sergeant). Although a soldier's name can be removed from consideration by his or her commander, each month the soldier's name is automatically placed back on the

promotion list.[6] The Army was short over 1,500 sergeants when the policy went into effect. Since then, the shortage has been reduced by over 70 percent; but numbers do not reveal quality—or lack thereof.[7]

The shortage also finds the Army increasing the number of involuntary extensions of duty—the "stop-loss" policy. The number of soldiers affected by the stop-loss increased by 43 percent between 2007 and 2008. Revealingly, nearly half of those affected by the stop-loss are NCOs. Army leaders believe the program will have to be extended at least through 2009.[8] Fortunately, this practice seems to be coming to an end. However, as the Army suffers from a shortage of junior officers as well, many enlisted personnel with high potential are being diverted into Office Candidate School, further diluting enlisted leadership quality. This situation will only be exacerbated by the planned 65,000 increase in the Army's end strength.

Nor is the problem limited to junior NCOs. An Army study of soldiers' mental health found that 27 percent of NCOs on their third or fourth combat tour exhibited post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, vice 18.5 percent of those who had completed their second tour, and 12 percent of those who finished their first tour. The Army study found that NCOs who had served multiple deployments reported "low morale, more mental health problems and more stress-related work problems."[9]

The Army's problems extend to the officer corps as well. In 2003, roughly 8 percent of the Army's officers with between four and nine years of experience left the Service. Three years later, the attrition rate had jumped to 13 percent. Of the nearly 1,000 cadets from the West Point class of 2002, 58 percent are no longer on active duty.[10] An effort in the fall of 2007 to entice 14,000 captains to extend their commissions fell short by roughly 1,300.[11] Making matters worse, the Army will need another 6,000 captains as it expands by 65,000 soldiers and six new BCTs and their associated supporting elements.[12] There is a projected shortfall of roughly 3,000 captains and majors until at least 2013, with the Army counting only about half the senior captains that it needs.[13]

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[6] While a soldier's commanding officer can remove his or her name from the promotion list, there are pressures at work that discourage this. Failure to advance a soldier to NCO rank could make the soldier less willing to re-enlist. It could also hurt unit morale if other units in the same organization (e.g., other companies in a battalion) are promoting soldiers as they hit their time-in-service points, but one unit is not. Failure to promote, which results not only in an increase in rank but in pay and status, can also be seen by soldiers as a social issue, in terms of how a soldier is viewed in his or her community, and the level of support they can provide to their family.

[7] Bill Sasser, "Strained by War, US Army Promotes Unqualified Soldiers," July 30, 2008, accessed at http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2008/07/30/sergeants/index.html?source=rss&aim=/news/feature, on August 29, 2008.

[8] Tom Vanden Brook, "More Forced to Stay in Army," *USA Today*, April 22, 2008, p. 1; and Pauline Jelinek, "General: Army Will Need 'Stop-Loss' Through '09," *Houston Chronicle*, April 22, 2008.

[9] Thom Shanker, "Army Worried By Rising Stress of Return Tours to Iraq," *New York Times*, April 6, 2008, p. A1.

[10] Andrew Tilghman, "The Army's Other Crisis," Crisis," Washington Monthly, accessed at http://www2.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2007/0712.tilghman.html, on September 8, 2008.

[11] Tom Vanden Brook, "Deployments Strain Army Recruiting, Retention," *USA Today*, p. 6.

[12] Bryan Bender, "Military Scrambles to Retain Troops," *Boston Globe*, March 7, 2008.

[13] Andrew Tilghman, "The Army's Other Crisis," Crisis," Washington Monthly, accessed at http://www2.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2007/0712.tilghman.html, on September 8, 2008.

An increasing percentage of the Army's new officers, however, are not being commissioned from the traditional sources of West Point and ROTC programs, which supply recruits fresh from college. Rather, the Army has been increasingly compelled to pull soldiers, most of whom have not graduated college, from the ranks and send them to Officer Candidate School (OCS). The number of OCS graduates has grown dramatically since the late 1990s, rising from roughly 400 a year to over 1,500 a year, or more than the graduating class at West Point.[14] Again, as with the NCO corps, as officer quality has declined, promotion rates have increased. Instead of the traditional promotion rates of 70 to 80 percent of eligible officers to major, now over 98 percent of eligible captains are promoted to major.[15]

These trends are worrisome, especially for an Army that intends to place greater demands on its soldiers and their leaders to be highly proficient at irregular warfare while also mastering the complex battle networks and advanced equipment that comprises its Future Combat Systems.

Rebalancing the Force Structure

What changes in the Army's force structure and program would be necessary to field the "Two-Surge" Force? The following recommendations are provided for consideration. While these recommendations might be further refined through more detailed analysis than is practical here, I am confident that they represent a significant improvement over the Army's current approach. It is assumed that force structure modifications will be completed at the same time as the Army's planned completion date for the Modular Force, in FY 2013. At that time, it is also assumed that overall Army requirements for Afghanistan and Iraq will be significantly reduced from the levels reached during the Surge in Iraq, perhaps by half.

The Army must rebalance its force structure to enable persistent support for Phase O stability operations, to include building partner capacity where needed. This requires converting fifteen Army IBCTs to the SCBCT configuration described above, as well as fifteen Army National Guard (ARNG) IBCTs to an SCBCT configuration. Given a 3:1 rotation rate for the Active Component, and a 6:1 rate for the Reserve Component the force generation process should be capable of fielding 7½ SCBCTs on a sustained basis. In Phase O operations, these BCTs would typically operate in small force packages conducting a range of stability operations missions, to include building partner capacity. In the event of a major stability operations contingency, the Army would have a force of thirty brigades to draw upon for surge operations for up to twelve to fifteen months, to enable the Army's other wing to reorient itself to sustain the initial surge and to build up partner capacity within the threatened state and among allies and partners, as necessary.

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[14] Idem.
[15] Idem.

The Full-Spectrum Force and Dual-Surge Force

AC/RC	Modular "Full-Spectrum" Force	Modular "Dual-Surge" Force
HBCTs	19/7	13/9
SBCTs	6/1	6/1
IBCTs	23/20	8/0
SC BCTs	0/0	15/15
Total	48/28	42/25

Source: Department of the Army, CSBA

Should the Army be confronted with an irregular force capable of posing a hybrid warfare threat, HBCT elements (and, perhaps eventually, FCS BCTs) might be deployed as part of the initial surge force. The stability operations surge force could also be supported by the four Army airborne brigades of the 82nd Airborne Division, as well as the four brigades of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and the six middle-weight Stryker brigades, for a total of fourteen BCTs. To this might be added the ARNG's single Stryker BCT.

The Army's heavy force oriented primarily on conventional operations would comprise twelve HBCTs, perhaps eventually migrating to twelve FCS BCTS, and an armored cavalry regiment, along with nine National Guard HBCTs (an increase of two HBCTs over the current force). This would provide the Army with a heavy surge force of up to twenty-two HBCTs, with six AC SBCTs and one ARNG SBCT available if needed, along with the four brigades of the 101st, for a total of thirty-three heavy or "middle-weight" brigades, far in excess of what is likely to be required for the major combat operation (MCO) portion of regime change operations against a nuclear rogue state like Iran, assuming its anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD)[16] defenses can be reduced to a level that would permit the introduction of large U.S. ground combat forces.

The above recommendations result in an overall force structure of forty-two BCTs in the Active Component (AC), and twenty-five BCTs in the Reserve Component (RC), for a total of sixty-seven BCTs. This represents a reduction in the Army's Modular Force goal of forty-eight AC BCTs and twenty-eight RC BCTs. This reduction in the level of BCTs (which would be matched by a corresponding reduction in support brigades) offers several important benefits.

First, by reducing the need to generate large numbers of new officers and NCOs, it stems the highly corrosive decline in the quality of the Army's leadership. At the same

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[16] "Anti-access/area-denial" (A2/AD) capabilities are those designed to delay the arrival of U.S. forces, to keep them beyond their effective range, and to defeat them if they try to penetrate the denial zone. While many military forces and capabilities can contribute to the A2/AD mission, those most closely associated with it include: ballistic and cruise missiles that can strike forward air bases and massed troop concentrations; submarines; anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs); land-based anti-ship systems (e.g., strike aircraft, ASCMs, and ballistic missiles that target carrier strike groups); and counter-command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) capabilities, such as anti-satellite weapons, cyber weapons, and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) generators designed to fracture U.S. battle networks.

time, it enables the Army to restock the "institutional Army"—the Services schools, staffs, etc.—that enable officers and NCOs to receive the training and education needed to enable a surge of trainers and advisors when needed, as opposed to pulling from deployed brigades to fill the need. Along these lines, doctrine for advisors and trainers needs to be developed, along with a school to ensure they receive the proper training.

Second, reduction of six AC BCTs and two RC BCTs along with programmed new support brigades also mitigates the erosion in the quality of the officer and NCO corps stemming from the decision to increase dramatically the size of the US military's Special Operations Forces. This has created a whipsaw effect within the Army, as it sees the quality of its recruits declining while the best of those who remain in the Service are being recruited by the Special Forces.

Third, a smaller force structure also reduces the pressure on manpower that has led the Army to lower its recruiting standards. Finally, it also has a beneficial effect on the Army's budget: fewer soldiers reduces strain on the personnel accounts, while fewer brigades takes some of the stress of the procurement accounts, since there are not as many of them requiring updated equipment.[17]

The revised force structure is also more evenly weighted between the Active and Reserve Components. Current plans call for an Active Component of nineteen HBCTs out of a total of forty-eight BCTs, or approximately 40 percent of the force. Yet the Reserve Component would field only seven HBCTs out of its planned twenty-eight, or 25 percent of the force. For an Army waging persistent irregular conflict, it makes little sense to have the Active Component, whose BCTs can be deployed on a much more frequent basis than the Reserve Component, be the principal "hedge" force for conventional warfare. In the Dual-Surge Army proposed here, roughly a third of the RC force would be comprised of heavy brigades, while HBCTs represent slightly less than a third of the AC.

To be sure, there are risks involved in reducing the Army's projected force structure. However, the risks of continuing the decline in officer and NCO quality; accepting a lack of capacity to support the defense strategy's focus on building up the capabilities of allies and partners; and promoting the flawed assumption that a general purpose Army that remains overly weighted toward conventional warfare can quickly and effectively shift to conduct irregular warfare operations far outweigh the risks associated with the Dual-Surge Army recommended here.

Equipping the Force – Rethinking the FCS

There is also the matter of equipping the force. The Army's centerpiece modernization program, the Future Combat Systems, is really a cluster of fourteen systems of various types. These systems will rely heavily on being linked as part of an overarching battle network that ties them together with individual soldiers and the U.S. military's joint battle network. While revolutionary in its concept, the FCS program may not be executable at an acceptable cost, given the many technical challenges confronting the program. Moreover, it may not be possible to create the battle network as currently

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[17] It is estimated that the addition of 65,000 AC soldiers and 27,000 marines will incur an annual sustained cost of $13-14 billion per year.

envisioned by the Army, or to create it within the timeframe projected. If this proves to be the case, the Army needs to have a plan to harvest as many FCS capabilities as possible while identifying an alternative modernization path. Thus far the Army is moving FCS components into the current force as they become available. However, to date these capabilities are relatively modest compared to the program's stated goals and the level of resources being invested. A thorough program review is warranted before making a commitment to continuing the FCS program in its current form.

What might an alternative modernization path look like? In addition to harvesting as much of the FCS program as possible, such as the unmanned aerial systems, unattended ground sensors, and ground robotics, the Army would need to experiment with various options for building a battle network that is feasible, affordable, and that enables a major boost in military effectiveness across the entire conflict spectrum. Since the effectiveness of the combat systems associated with the network is heavily dependent upon the network, final decisions on the major combat systems' designs should be held off until the network's form and capability are well understood. In the interim, the Army needs to continue recapitalizing the existing force, while engaging in selective modernization only when necessary.

Addressing the G-RAMM Threat

The Army also needs to move energetically in developing air and missile defense capabilities to address the nascent G-RAMM[18] threat before it matures and the Service finds itself engaged in another round of "reactive" transformation, as it has experienced in Afghanistan and Iraq. The challenge here is not only to develop effective capabilities, but capabilities that are *cost-effective*. At present, given the high cost of kinetic interceptors, the most promising developments in this area are in the field of solid-state lasers (SSLs). A substantially greater effort should be devoted to translating this rapidly-progressing potential into fielded military capability.

Maintaining an Equipment and Production Base

The era of persistent irregular warfare presents the Army with the challenge of training *and equipping* indigenous and partner forces engaged in stability operations on a major scale. The Army must also be prepared to replenish damaged or destroyed equipment of Army units engaged in stability operations. Given the importance of preventive action and exploiting the opportunities presented by the "golden hour,"[19] the

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[18] G-RAMM refers to guided rockets, artillery, mortars and missiles. In the Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah fired some 4,000 RAMM projectiles into Israel, causing several hundred thousand Israelis to be evacuated from their homes. The Israelis also shut down their oil refineries and distribution system for a time, out of concern that a lucky hit would cause untold damage. The problem will only become more acute as irregular forces gain access to guided weaponry. (Hezbollah fired guided antiship cruise missiles at an Israeli patrol boat, damaging it. Hezbollah also employed several unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, during the conflict.)

[19] The "golden hour" is the brief period after the introduction of U.S. troops "in which we enjoy the forbearance of the host-nation populace. The military instrument, with its unique expeditionary capabilities, is the sole U.S. agency with the ability to affect the golden hour *before* the hourglass tips" and the local populace becomes disaffected. An Army called upon to surge BCTs to exploit the golden hour is not likely to have months to restructure and train them to a high level of expertise in stability operations. James Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour*, (Washington, DC: Potomac Press, 2007), p. 98.

equipment to support a sustained surge in stability operations must be available to the combatant commands on short notice, and not cobbled together on the fly. Thus equipment stocks to outfit host-nation forces being trained should be stockpiled, similar to the POMCUS[20] equipment that was positioned to support U.S. forces during the Cold War. A warm production base must be capable of surging equipment to replace those items lost during operations.

Concluding Observations

The Army's leadership has rightly concluded that it needs a force capable of performing across the full spectrum of conflict at a high level of effectiveness. But in its attempts to become equally effective across a range of conflict types, it risks becoming marginally competent in many tasks, and highly effective at none. In attempting to increase the size of the Army to field forces large enough to deal with a range of contingencies, the Service risks becoming incapable of creating the needed scale by building up the capabilities of America's allies and partners, a key part of the defense strategy. It also risks a catastrophic leadership failure of a kind not seen since the late stages of the Vietnam War, a failure that took the Army over a decade to repair.

Squaring this difficult circle will require the Army to put more faith in the joint force's ability to dominate conflict at the higher end of the conflict spectrum, and resisting the temptation to return to a general-purpose force posture by another name (i.e., the "full-spectrum" force). The Dual-Surge force will allow the Army to truly orient itself on fielding forces that are highly competent across the spectrum of conflict by fielding forces focused on irregular warfare on a scale and level of effectiveness comparable to its world-class conventional forces.

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[20] The term "POMCUS" stands for Prepositioning of Materiel Configured in Unit Sets. During the Cold War large quantities of equipment were prepositioned in Europe to facilitate the rapid reinforcement of U.S. forces there. By having a unit's equipment prepositioned, and thus not having to transport it from the United States, the Army's airlift and sealift requirements were greatly reduced. The Army eventually prepositioned roughly four divisions' (or twelve brigades') worth of equipment in Western Europe. Colonel (Ret.) Gregory Fontenot, LTC E. J. Degen, and LTC David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, p. 40, accessed at http://books.google.com/books?id=7x8U4t-oJvcC&pg=PA40&lpg=PA40&dq=POMCUS+Cold+War&source=web&ots=ERAs40Gn8o&sig=f3YuMfJ4OujYdk2gRJFAPmgfqbg&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=10&ct=result#PPR16,M1, on September 29, 2008.