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## Senior Conference 50, The Army We Need: The Role of Landpower in an Uncertain Strategic Environment

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# **SENIOR CONFERENCE 50, THE ARMY WE NEED: THE ROLE OF LANDPOWER IN AN UNCERTAIN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, JUNE 1-3, 2014**

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Charlie D. Lewis  
Rachel M. Sondheimer  
Jeffrey D. Peterson



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and  
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**SENIOR CONFERENCE 50, THE ARMY WE NEED:  
The Role of Landpower in an Uncertain  
Strategic Environment, June 1-3, 2014**

**Charlie D. Lewis  
Rachel M. Sondheimer  
Jeffrey D. Peterson  
Editors**

**February 2015**

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## FOREWORD

The United States Military Academy (USMA) Senior Conference is run annually by the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy on behalf of the Superintendent. This event allows distinguished representatives from the private sector, government, academia, the think-tank community, and the joint military services to discuss important national security topics.

Senior Conference 2014, the 50th iteration of this event, explored emerging trends and their implications for the Army's strategic contribution to national security. As policymakers strive to rebalance U.S. national security investments in a fiscally constrained environment, debates about the future roles and missions of the armed services have intensified. Though many questions related to the future role of military power remain unsettled, the Army will undoubtedly have an important role to play.

The conference consisted of five plenary sessions and five keynote addresses. All presentations and subsequent discussions occurred on a not-for-attribution basis to allow for free testing and expression of ideas. Because of this, the summary report is motivated by ideas offered during the event, but it does not attribute these ideas to specific individuals or organizations.

This Conference Report was prepared under the direction of Colonel Jeffrey Peterson, the Academy Professor responsible for the coordination and execution of the conference. It was edited by Major Charlie Lewis and Dr. Rachel Sondheimer, who also coordinated the team of expert rapporteurs, which included Dr. Steven Bloom, Dr. Hugh Liebert, Major Bonnie Kovatch, Dr. Rob Person, Dr. Thom Sherlock, and Mr. Richard Yon.



Major Joe Da Silva served as the Executive Secretary of Senior Conference 50 and deserves our many thanks for the success of the event. The opinions expressed in this report reflect the notes taken by the authors and not necessarily the position of the United States Military Academy, the United States Army, or any other government agency.

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**Executive Agenda  
Senior Conference 50  
June 1-3, 2014**

**Sunday, June 1, 2014**

Opening Keynote: "Landpower in Time of Complexity, Uncertainty, and Austerity"

**Monday, June 2, 2014**

**Session 1:** Preserving U.S. Influence in an Uncertain, Complex Global Environment

**Motivating Questions**

What are the most significant threats to U.S. national security?

How does Landpower address these significant threats?

What lessons can the nation learn from historical responses to unforeseen threats?

**Session 2:** Understanding the Context of the Upcoming Army Transition

**Motivating Questions**

What is the historical pattern of Army transition periods?

How has the Army dealt with reduced budgets in the past?

What is the current state of Department of Defense and Army budgets?

What is the congressional approach to funding the Department of Defense?

**Keynote Address:** “The Role of Landpower: Deter, Defend, Enforce, Pacify”

**Session 3:** The Army as Part of the Joint, Interagency, and Intergovernmental Team

**Motivating Questions**

What do national security challenges, such as terrorism or conflict in cyberspace, imply about the Army’s needed capabilities?

What are the strategic capabilities and joint force enablers provided by the Army?

How can the Army improve its integration with other instruments of national power, as well as other military services, host nations, allies, and international organizations?

**Session 4:** Toward the Army of the Future: Prevent, Shape, and Win

**Motivating Questions**

What capabilities does the Army need to prevent and shape?

How should the Army balance investments amongst personnel, operational readiness, force modernization, and research?

How should the Army approach innovation and adaptation to better meet the demands of preventing and shaping?

**Keynote Address:** “Managing National Security Risk”

**Tuesday, June 3, 2014**

**Keynote Session:** Leading the Future Army: A Generational Perspective on the Challenges of the Future

**Motivating Questions**

How do junior leaders approach their professional responsibilities in a rapidly changing world while facing fiscal austerity?

What are the biggest threats to the professional satisfaction that junior leaders have experienced during their service to the nation?

What would junior leaders like senior leaders to do in support of mission readiness and professional development?

**Session 5:** Paradigm Shift: How Must the Army Change for the Future?

**Motivating Questions**

How do we rethink and redesign our approaches to U.S. Army material and human capital development in light of current and future strategic imperatives?

How should the Army provide incentives for innovation and creative thinking that lead to agile and adaptive organizations?

What cultural norms and world views, if any, are hindering change and increased productivity?

**Closing Address:** “Combatant Commanders’ Perspectives on Future Landpower Capabilities”



**THE ARMY WE NEED:  
The Role of Landpower in an Uncertain  
Strategic Environment**

The Army is facing difficult times. Many are questioning the Army's relevance and size. The lack of political will for committing land forces is intertwined with strategic challenges of fiscal austerity and rebalancing the national security focus toward the Asian-Pacific region. The Army's strategic role is becoming muddled in the midst of debates about the significance and responsibilities of each service within and among the Department of Defense (DoD), the halls of Congress, and the American public. In spite of the questions and a murky national security strategy, the Army continues to fight in Afghanistan, support training in the Asian-Pacific region, and deploy regionally aligned forces to Africa. Each of these efforts demonstrates the Army's value, but the Army struggles to properly convey its worth to policymakers, Congresspersons, the American public, and—sadly—even itself.

Senior Conference 50, "The Army We Need: The Role of Landpower in an Uncertain Strategic Environment," sought to illuminate the environment in which the Army fights, and how the Army can provide the most utility to the United States of America. Through formal and informal discussions with over 70 participants from the Army, federal government, academia, think tanks, and the private sector, the conference focused on defining the contributions of land forces to national security and how to best provide Landpower capabilities in the future.

Following 3 days of discussion, beginning with an overview of the strategic environment and conclud-



ing with a discussion on shifting paradigms within the Army, the conference concluded with a variety of new ideas on the role of Landpower, a strategic message, and a structure to best maintain the Army's central role in national strategy. This report consolidates the key takeaways of the conference and provides recommendations to policymakers and Army leadership on how to develop the Army we need over the coming decades.

## **MOTIVATING THEMES AND QUESTIONS**

Senior Conference 50 followed a year-long writing campaign on grand strategy by academics, Army leadership, and policymakers. Resulting in a compendium released by the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, the campaign broadly examined the role of all services, agencies, and players in forming a grand strategy for the United States. Taking the lessons learned from this effort and focusing on the role of Landpower in the grand strategic context, Senior Conference 50 sought to outline and debate the role of the Army within the current strategic environment.

Over the course of five keynote addresses, five panels, and myriad informal conversations among participants, the conference explored the central theme of the future of Landpower using six guiding questions:

1. What are the most significant threats and opportunities in the emerging security environment that the Army should be prepared to address?
2. What do transnational security challenges, such as terrorism or conflict in cyberspace, imply about the Army's needed capabilities?

3. What are the strategic capabilities and joint force enablers provided by the Army? How should the Army balance investments among these capabilities and other elements of Army force structure?

4. What capabilities should the Army develop to enhance the benefits of regional alignment?

5. How can the Army improve its integration with other instruments of national power, as well as other military services, host nations, allies, and international organizations?

6. How should education and training, including opportunities such as graduate school, interagency fellowships, and other broadening experiences, prepare officers and soldiers to operate effectively in this uncertain environment?

Several key themes emerged related to the external factors shaping the Army's working environment, the internal factors upon which the Army can act, and three fundamental disconnects that create planning challenges. The themes are outlined on the following pages and the report concludes with recommendations for consideration by key Army leadership and civilian policymakers.

### **External Factors.**

Factors beyond the Army's control make strategic planning difficult, if not impossible. Budgets will not get larger; partisan politics will not get resolved; messaging to the American public will not get easier; and the complexities of globalization will continue to make the crafting of strategic guidance difficult. These challenges are derived from a lack of consensus about the strategic environment and a political context that is not conducive to maintaining a large Army.

## *An Uncertain Strategic Environment.*

The lack of consensus on the global security environment makes it difficult to formulate an agreed-upon national security strategy that clearly establishes priorities among competing requirements and articulates acceptable risk. Policymakers, academics, and national security experts agree the strategic environment is complex and uncertain. They also provide an extensive list of future threats that is wide ranging, inclusive, and generally accepted without debate. However, consensus ends with the list itself.

Disagreements arise when the topic shifts to details including the likelihood and severity of various threats. Unfortunately, it is coming together on these details that might enable the Army to prioritize threats. Security experts do not have a great track record for predicting the timing, location, and severity of future conflicts. Some argue that the next battlefield will be in cyberspace or outer space. Others assert that conflict will occur in urban terrain against unconventional forces in a failed state or entail some form of proxy war. Moreover, the sources of future threats are in dispute, with some pointing to challenges posed by particular nations (e.g., China, Iran, and Russia), while others focus on the notion of the “democratization of destruction,” in which small groups have an increasing ability to wreak havoc on various populations. Some view the Pacific region, including the ever present specter of a North Korean attack, as the largest concern, while others consider the Middle East as the primary source of national security threats. Still others point to the inherent risk of deemphasizing areas outside of these two regions. This strategic ambiguity will likely continue. Finally, strategy formulation will

continue to be challenging as the United States accumulates, but fails to shed, additional risk. Absent a unifying existential threat that focuses security efforts, the Army will face continued volatility in its strategic direction as partisan politics increasingly influence security policy.

This lack of certainty in strategic priorities leads to a lack of prioritized capabilities. Without clear direction for which national security threat to prepare, the Army ends up with the ability to do a little bit of everything fairly well at the expense of doing one, or even a few, things very well. In short, the Army becomes the nation's utility player and is expected to conduct operations anywhere, anytime, against anyone. When resources are abundant, the Army can manage this role more effectively. When funding is scarce, trade-offs occur and risks accumulate.

Without clear strategic guidance, decisions about force size, structure, and readiness are informed by factors other than capability requirements. Personnel are cut simply because they are expensive, not because they are no longer needed. Budget allocations are decided by acquisition programs that provide the most jobs for the right congressional districts, not by acquiring capabilities to meet the most likely or most dangerous threats. Technology purchases are made to fit the nation's desired vision of future conflict by substituting materiel for people, not by seeking the right technology to enable soldiers to fight in concert with the true nature of modern warfare.

The Army's precarious position of managing an expanding threat portfolio with a decreasing budget is exacerbated by budget allocation constraints largely determined by factors unrelated to actual threats. As a result, the United States is not only facing the risk

of accumulating threats, it is also facing the risk of accumulating capability shortfalls.

*Political Context.*

In addition to the uncertain strategic environment, the current political context further complicates the Army's strategic decisionmaking process. The seemingly perpetual campaign and election cycle and the complexities of the current partisan terrain make it difficult to formulate and provide comprehensive strategic guidance. As the recent budget impasse highlights, the Army also cannot rely on efficient government operations.

The current political environment, coupled with diminishing public support for boundless military intervention and use of conventional methods, should be taken into account when thinking about the future of Landpower. The Army must face up to the public's exhaustion with financially supporting long-term land wars that achieve ambiguous results. While the American people support the military, that support has financial limits. The lack of a clear enemy creates a public and political climate that is increasingly risk-averse and will not accept the use of ground forces in the absence of an existential threat. Moreover, the domestic reality of the deep economic recession has diminished much of the public's willingness to devote federal spending to the military when it could be spent on domestic programs. While these tradeoffs are not as zero-sum as many believe, perception is as important as reality. The United States will have the Army for which its citizens are willing to pay.

While most would like strategic considerations to drive budgetary decisions, it is increasingly evident

that budgetary and political considerations will drive strategic decisions. There are no indications in Congress that budget austerity for the Army will disappear. Allowing the budget to drive strategic decisions leads to acceptance of large personnel cuts while the Army fights to maintain its acquisition programs. The reasons are straightforward: talented personnel in today's all-volunteer force are expensive, and acquisition programs provide jobs. Personnel costs such as compensation, health care, and pensions have taken over an unsustainably high proportion of the Army's budget. Many hold the perspective that personnel cuts will bring immediate savings, and the risk of a smaller Army is mitigated by the nation's ability to expand or regenerate the Army in times of crisis. Others see shrinking budgets as less of a problem given that today's Army budget remains higher than historical precedent and that modern capabilities should more than compensate for reduced numbers. Another attractive aspect of personnel cuts is that remaining dollars can be spent on materiel solutions. Acquisition programs bring more politically viable outcomes such as increased employment, fighting from a distance, avoiding loss of soldiers, and ensuring short duration conflict.

Conference participants felt that this lack of clear strategic priorities along with a difficult political context impede the Army's ability to arrive at sound strategic decisions. Unfortunately, there are no indications the strategic planning environment will change. The Army should accept the reality of becoming a smaller force that the American public will be hesitant to use in large numbers. There is a danger that America ends up with the Army it can afford rather than the Army it needs. Even so, the Army has a professional obliga-

tion to narrow the gap between what the nation can afford and what the nation requires. The Army should focus on resolving internal debates about capability mix, readiness levels, and productivity enhancement. Once the Army reaches internal agreement, it can begin to shape itself and communicate a message that articulates its value to both key decisionmakers and the broader public.

### **Internal Factors.**

Given the lack of consensus among those outside the Army on the security environment and the nature of future threats, it is not surprising that there is disagreement on these issues within the Army as well. Even if we assume some agreement on the nature of the threat, disagreement persists within the Army on the role of the Army in preparing for the future. This internal lack of consensus results in an identity crisis that fuels disagreement among the Army, congressional leaders, policymakers, and the American public. Regardless of external factors beyond the Army's control, resolution of internal disagreements can improve both the Army's capabilities and the message it sends to others. By embracing the need for institutional reforms and executing cultural change, the Army can do much to mitigate the impact of the political context and what some participants perceived as a lack of strategic guidance.

### *Readiness Portfolio.*

One such locus of disagreement is how to maintain appropriate levels of readiness. While there is agreement that educating, training, and equipping our forces is of utmost priority, there is little consensus on the

substantive nature of what it means to be ready. Do we need a large, active duty Army? Will tiered readiness be sufficient when confronting future threats? What is the role of readiness in achieving deterrence?

Regardless of the final decision on end strength, which will be determined by the budget, the Army should decide how to best manage a readiness portfolio that provides the right capability with appropriate response time. There is disagreement within the Army about some key future decisions. For example, recent competition about the role of combat aviation assets in the National Guard highlight increased conflict between the active component, the National Guard, and the Army Reserve. After 13 years of fighting alongside each other, the Total Army is beginning to compete with each other over increasingly scarce resources. More energy should be spent on aligning capabilities and integrating training rather than on competing for shrinking budgets. There is also significant debate about tiered readiness. Some consider tiered readiness as a necessary condition for allocating scarce training dollars, while others are concerned that tiered readiness will create a divide between units that have sufficient resources to prepare and others that are unable to achieve appropriate readiness levels for their mission. Disagreement on how to best produce readiness hinders the Army's ability to achieve readiness and articulate a need for training resources.

The Army is also vigorously debating the appropriate missions for itself. Very few will debate the necessity of full-spectrum operations, but many disagree about what part of the spectrum the Army should prioritize. The ongoing debate about the relative importance of high-intensity conflict and stabilization operations undermines the Army's definition of readiness.



Some experts emphasize the Army's role as part of the nation's military power with an emphasis on the missions of deter, defend, attack, and pacify. Others focus on capabilities such as rapid response, transition to offensive operations, wide area security, and operating on multiple battlefields. Still others express concern that increased emphasis on shaping and building capacity at the expense of combat readiness will undermine the Army's ability to deter. These debates are not easily resolved. However, failing to do so dilutes the Army's impact on budget decisions because it cannot clearly articulate what capability the Army will provide as a return on investment. Acknowledging tradeoffs and clearly articulating risk can provide the Army a starting point for mission focus. This could prevent what one senior leader described as the true definition of a hollow unit – a unit without a clear mission and path to readiness.

Lack of clarity on required response times adds complexity to the debate. Some argue that the increased "velocity" of conflict requires a "fight tonight" mentality with high levels of readiness across the active force. Others argue that response times can be longer, which leads to concepts of tiered readiness and more capability in the National Guard and Army Reserve.

A final aspect of readiness that needs resolution is the Army's role in the joint force. Many conference participants commented that other services are retreating from the joint force culture. Services are disengaging from a joint culture as each tries to justify and increase its respective budget allocation. The Army contributes many capabilities that are not considered core requirements and that are unacknowledged and underappreciated. Operational concepts such as Air-Sea

battle draw sharp lines between services and set the stage for competition in acquisition programs and relevance. There are no easy solutions to this unfortunate trend, but the Army could improve its own perspective by thinking outside the concept of Landpower and considering the larger concept of military power. Additionally, the Army should embrace its contribution to joint operations and seek improvement in integrating future concepts with other services. One small example of improvement would be a better representation of other services at this conference.

### *Institutional Reforms.*

The first and perhaps most obvious obstacle to institutional reform is the tendency for the Army's bureaucratic culture to grow and entrench during times of austerity. In the name of efficiency and accountability, bureaucratic procedures and culture tend to choke out efforts to innovate. At a time when leaders espouse the need for flexibility, adaptability, and innovation, the bureaucracy can exert itself in ways that diminish these objectives. Examples of bureaucratic efficiency during the last decade of war, such as mine-resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicle delivery, are heralded as evidence that our systems can respond quickly. Unfortunately, these exceptions are not the rule and require significant effort from senior leaders to bypass inflexible, unresponsive systems. Furthermore, these exceptions do not pave the way for reform. Instead, the bureaucracy often finds a way to further entrench itself and exert influence to protect its domain. Clearly, an institution of the Army's size needs bureaucratic management systems. However, if these systems become obstacles to flexibility instead of enhancing flexibility, something ought to change.

One of the first areas that can stem the tide of emerging recalcitrant bureaucracy is better integration of the operational and generating forces. Rather than two separate entities operating independently from each other, efforts should be made to merge the operational and generating force whenever possible. Not only would this reduce overhead, but there would be better integration of the operational perspective in the generating force. There are a range of questions the Army should explore. For example, does the Army need separate installations for initial entry training? Are there ways to merge this training to operational installations? Further consideration could be given to the ideal ratio and partnerships of Active duty, Reserve duty, and National Guard troops that comprise America's Total Army. Training and resource sharing could greatly enhance working relationships and increase training efficiency. Finally, a careful examination of the role of civilians is a crucial consideration as the Army thinks through shifting down to a fielded force of approximately 450,000 soldiers. What is the optimal ratio of active military to civilians in the DoD workforce?

The Army should also consider a paradigm shift to talent management of human capital that fosters institutional agility. If the Army is to remain a capable, but smaller force, it should change personnel policies to enhance the balance between productivity and leader development. The Army needs diversity of talent, schooling, experiences, and skill sets to adapt to changing threats and capacities, but it does not have the granular data to reveal individual talents. One participant offered that social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn know more about the talent in the officer corps than the Army itself. Research

and pilot programs indicate that the Army is unaware that talent and preferences are left unutilized because of a personnel system that has remained largely unchanged since the 1950s.

In addition to this breadth of different types of officers, the Army needs depth of knowledge in specific positions. This is particularly true for the institutional management positions that make up the vast majority of senior leader positions. While much can be said for our rotational system creating breadth of knowledge and experiences among the officer corps, it is likely that these high rates of churn in top positions come at the expense of subject mastery for the officer and deleterious behaviors for subordinates in the bureaucracy. There is much shorter average tenure in place in the Army than in corporate leadership. This undermines responsibility and accountability in job performance, as subordinates know they do not have to adapt to change when they can simply wait out the next change of leadership.

While talent management and adaptation in a number of areas seems promising, the Army is not an institution that quickly embraces institutional change. Organizational behavior and psychological research suggests that senior Army leaders are resistant to change because of their personalities, intelligence types, and initial career experiences. Officers come into the profession of arms less open to change but highly productive, with professional drive, strong intellect, and routinely strong moral values. The Army then socializes them, imprints its values, and sends them into first assignments where they get stretched, then rewarded, resulting in a hardening of those imprints. They emerge as senior leaders, relatively homogeneous as a group by both nature and nurture.

Because these leaders shape the Army's culture, the Army is slow to accept innovative, adaptive thinking in an ever changing world. This conclusion does not imply that senior leaders are incapable of leading institutional change, but there may be ways to increase innovation by making senior leaders aware of status quo bias and to surround senior leaders with people who view the world differently.

*Messaging and Narrative.*

Conference participants exhibited remarkable consensus that the Army does a poor job articulating to Congress and the public its contributions to U.S. national security and the hedge it provides against a variety of threats. Throughout the conference, participants highlighted the Army's need to improve its message so that civilian leaders and the American public better understand the need for Landpower capabilities. The discussions highlighted disconnects between civilian experts, congressional leaders, and Army leaders concerning the Army's contribution to national security. Army leaders expressed frustration that civilians did not have a clear understanding of Landpower. Civilians expressed frustration that they did not understand the Army's message and that the Army needed to improve the messaging strategy.

A common refrain throughout the conference was that the Marine Corps does a much better job at messaging than the Army. One participant noted that the Army's message to Congress is that the Army cannot do its mission with anything less than 490,000 soldiers, while the Marine Corps offers that they will accomplish their mission with a handful of Marines armed with plastic spoons. The Marines' message resonates

with Congress, while the Army's does not. Surprisingly, there was very little response from the audience about the veracity of the observation and the differences in messaging requirements. One could argue that the Marine Corps' message is clear and simple because their mission is clear and simple. In contrast, the Army's mission is significantly more complex and not easily reduced to simple phrases that appeal to an audience that wants to hear that missions can be accomplished with very few resources.

Despite agreement that there should be a better message, there was little consensus among participants as to the best messaging strategy for describing Army contributions over the past 13 years or for handling future budget cuts. Some argued that the Army should give away nothing, fighting every cut, while others argued that Army leaders need to recognize that downsizing is inevitable and that damage must be limited through prudent compromise and concession. Regardless of the path chosen to negotiate future budget cuts, it is clear that the Army should improve its messaging to those inside and outside of government.

## **Fundamental Disconnects.**

*Technology: Substitute or Enabler.*

The role of technology was frequently addressed during most panel discussions and keynote speeches. Some speakers extolled the benefits of technology, while others were more cautious about what technology could accomplish. A consistent question in the discussion about technology emerged: Is technology primarily a substitute for soldiers or does it enable

a soldier to accomplish the mission more effectively? The answer is not an either-or proposition, but there should be a clear distinction between these two purposes of technological innovation.

In the ongoing debate on technology versus personnel, technology seems to have the upper hand among policymakers. This critically undervalues the Army's persistent strength—soldiers. Those in favor of spending on technology argue that advances in cyber technology, precision engagement, and robotics provide immense opportunities to address threats to national security without having to commit soldiers for extended, unpopular missions. They acknowledge that technology's rapid speed of development and commercialization pose serious challenges to the Army's acquisition system, but this does not minimize the importance of acquiring the best technology possible. Without continued significant investment, our lead in military technology will erode, and we will lose this advantage in combat. Even the perception of technological erosion can have deleterious consequences. In this rapidly changing technological environment, the United States can no longer assume dominance. Additionally, as these technologies commercialize, they become much more difficult to control and more accessible to our enemies, namely terrorist organizations and other nonstate actors.

While there is a widespread fear of falling behind in cyber and technology research and development, there is also a widespread belief that someday, the Army will be "fighting in the dark" or "fighting unplugged." There is an irony to these seemingly complementary beliefs in that one favors funding technology over personnel, while the other acknowledges that technology will inevitably fail us when we need

it. This can be offered as an argument for more focus on technology, but it seems to speak to the need for investment in soldiers. Leadership is critical to the Army's success. This is the crux of the debate: should the Army be investing in people or in technology? While the easy answer is both, tradeoffs are inevitable, and this is where the Army needs to maintain a clear message to the outside world: our strength is our soldiers.

Another key issue in determining the way ahead for the Army in grappling with technology and personnel is to define the cyber realm clearly. Specifically, which defense or government entity claims cyberspace as its terrain? In some ways, the Army is a logical locus for control because cyber entails the interconnectedness of the physical, social, and human terrains. However, if the Army is thought of as controlling Landpower, control of the cyber terrain is less certain.

The cyber world is in such a state of flux that it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict what it will look like just 5 years from now. The Army's authority in cyber defense only extends to the *.mil* domain. Integration of private, government, and military defenses in the cyber realm to enhance security as well as research and development is needed, but the infrastructure for such collaboration does not yet exist. Recent security breaches sparked debate concerning the primacy of military duties and the public's right to privacy, impeding further discussion of integration and coordination.

The debate about the importance and impact of technology will likely continue indefinitely. However, a nuanced approach to technology and the nation's technological advantage is critical to understanding the full impact of technological investments. It is important to not fall prey to the idea that modern war



can be won solely with precision targeting and technical dominance. Likewise, the Army should not short-change technological investments that enable soldiers to perform more effectively on today's battlefield. The answer to the technology question is that in some cases, technology may be a good substitute for soldiers, but, in other cases, technology is an enabler for decisive victory achieved by soldiers. The Army should find a way to strike this balance based on the nature of war, technological advances available, impact on end strength, and investments into research and development.

*Expanding the Army: How long does it take?*

Civilian policymakers and analysts hold a widespread belief that the Army can easily expand when faced with the next existential threat. This assumption is critical in the debate about personnel cuts. If decisionmakers believe the Army can be expanded quickly, they are more willing to make large personnel cuts. The assumption also provides the veneer of prudent risk management for a smaller active force. If the Army can quickly expand, the nation can accept the risk of a small standing army that retains enough capability to respond quickly, while also buying time for the Army to expand if the threat exceeds the capability of the active force. Proponents of rapid expansion often point to the Army's expansion for World War II as an example for today's Army. This belief significantly changes the risk assessment of a smaller active duty force.

While some participants argued that rapid expansion negated the risk of a smaller Army, several countered the basic assumption that an Army can be

trained and educated quickly. The Army cannot systematically dismantle and systematically rebuild itself during times of necessity without risking substantial losses in the early stages of the next war. The speed, complexity, and scrutiny of modern warfare demands professional soldiers and exceptionally well-trained forces. The Army can no longer compensate for tactical inexperience with firepower because the international community condemns extensive collateral damage. The inability to apply massive firepower will result in higher casualties, an equally unacceptable outcome. Americans underestimate the time required to train a professional army that conducts modern warfare in a way that not only accomplishes the mission, but does so in a manner that represents our nation's values. Assuming the Army can quickly achieve such high levels of proficiency is a dangerous illusion of prudent risk management that actually increases risk to international credibility and U.S. Soldiers.

*Modern Warfare: Differing Definitions.*

There is a dangerous divide about the nature of war, the role of technology on the battlefield, and the time required to develop a professional land force. One side is searching for ways to save money by defining war in ways that support budget savings. The other side is concerned the Army will pay the cost of these savings with blood and potential mission failure. Both sides should work to find solutions that reduce the budget while maintaining required capabilities for the real threats to national security. Clear thinking and reasonable compromise will require extraordinary effort.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Adopt a Cohesive Message: The Army is the Nation's Insurance.** The Army should spend considerable energy adopting and disseminating a cohesive Army message that explains the usefulness of Army capabilities, clearly articulates tradeoffs, and strongly emphasizes risks. The Army's current message focuses on capabilities, which emphasizes products and materiel. A message that focuses on risk management emphasizes senior Army leaders as professional advisors providing input to civilian decisionmakers, a role that is much more in line with the norms of the Army profession.

The Army's message on capabilities is pretty clear. However, the message is not being received because people do not want to commit Landpower in large numbers or incur the cost of a large army. However, emphasis on risks associated with various tradeoffs might resonate more with the American public, particularly in light of recent conflicts around the globe. Clear articulation of risks could focus internal planning and garner support from external players. The Army should constantly outline the risks that are managed by the Army and the risks that remain due to limited resources. When the Army's task is viewed as providing insurance against various risks, the purpose of Army messaging is to provide the nation the knowledge it needs to make an informed decision about whether to maintain its current level of prevention.

The difficulty in justifying military spending in times of austerity is that defense is often viewed as an inherently reactive enterprise. Simplistically, we do not need the military until another nation (or non-

state actor) goes on the offensive. Thought of in this way, the Army is the nation's insurance policy against threats to the land and human terrain. Even though, as a nation, we normally do not need it and are content not to use it, the insurance is invaluable and irreplaceable under dire circumstances. The nation's citizens, as the policyholders, must decide how much coverage they want and how much risk they are willing to accept, given their choices of funding Landpower as an insurance policy. The nation can pay lower premiums over time (lower defense spending) and accept the tradeoff of a higher deductible when disaster strikes (high casualty counts and longer lead times to build up a strong fighting force). Alternatively, the nation can opt to pay higher premiums (increased defense spending) in an effort to deter conflict and decrease our deductible when forced to fight.

Adopting this message does not offer a clear path for the future of Landpower. Instead, the aim is to provide an analogy of the Army as an insurance policy and risk mitigation system with the intent of spurring an informed debate about important tradeoffs. Laying out the debate over the future of Landpower in terms of insurance allows for policymakers, practitioners, and experts to make reasoned claims about the relative need and value of these respective investments within policy circles and to the public at large.

**2. Adopt a Cohesive Narrative: Understanding Warfare.** The defense establishment is enamored with an idea that wars can be won from the sea, air, and cyber domains, where the U.S. technological and scientific advantages over other nations are most evident. This view is a resurrection of the revolution of military affairs based on information dominance that

would provide perfect situational awareness and precision engagement that reduces warfare to a targeting exercise. This is war as they would like it to be, not as it exists. This belief somehow remains alive in spite of the enduring nature of warfare reinforced by the most recent 13 years of conflict. The land domain is more central to war than other domains. Battles may extend to the air and sea but, in the end, people live on land, making it the most important terrain.

Moreover, war involves continued interaction with smart enemies. It is a strategic game with enemies learning and adapting through repeated interactions. Every technological advance can be countered by the enemy. For every armored vehicle, there exists an improvised explosive device (IED) designed to destroy that vehicle. The key to success is creating forces led by talented leaders who can react and adapt to the velocity with which enemies will attack. Given this constant need for adaptation, forces on the scene are more valuable than forces on the horizon.

As Carl von Clausewitz famously stated, war is an extension of politics through other means. As such, consolidation and maintenance of gains are critical to success and are an integral consideration of the planning process. Precision engagements that penetrate defensive architectures and destroy targets are insufficient for decisive strategic results. Reassurance is as important as deterrence in consolidating gains. We cannot expect our American-trained foreign allies to always operate in our best interests. Their values and interests change in repeated interactions just as ours do, which is why the nation cannot depend on other armies to achieve our national interests. The Army is the land-centric expression of U.S. foreign policy in any region. Having soldiers in an area improves our

understanding of the region, increases our ability to respond to unforeseen events, and enhances our relationships with local partners. U.S. land forces cannot effectively shape foreign environments unless they are stationed abroad.

**3. Debunk the Army Expansion Myth.** As previously discussed, the Army faces large personnel cuts driven by budget austerity because policymakers, Congress, and the American public believe it is easier to create a soldier than a piece of equipment. Prevailing wisdom seems to hold that a large Army can be built fast in case of a major land conflict. Reversing the drawdown, however, limits the velocity required to win a major conflict with one of the three major powers trying to change the status quo. The time to build a force of minimal effectiveness is still time taken away from the first (and potentially the last) battle with a near-peer adversary. Moreover, training and educating soldiers and leaders takes time, as evident by recent experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq. More than weapons, skills and tactics are needed to create a strong Army. Trust takes years to create. There must be trust in the skills of the soldier. Trust between soldiers and leaders must exist to provide the necessary development to accomplish a mission. Finally, trust between the American public and its Army requires a strong understanding of the moral and ethical decisionmaking of the Army; this is something that takes years, not weeks, to produce.

While we think of land forces as being able to be dismantled and rebuilt without significant risk, this is a myth. It takes more time to build an effective leader of soldiers than to construct a ship or airplane. Planning under the assumption of an easily expandable Army will lead to unnecessary casualties and collat-

eral damage. Both outcomes are unacceptable to the American public.

**4. Improve Dissemination of the Message and Narrative.** Even if the Army's current message and narrative become coherent and cohesive, the organization is not designed to disseminate the message effectively. The Air Force, the Marines, and the Navy tend to dominate external messaging campaigns, generally leaving the Army to face the brunt of personnel and equipment cuts. To improve dissemination of its message, the Army should improve the education and training of its officers and allow officers longer tours in Washington, DC, which would help nurture relationships with members of Congress and the congressional staff. The other services, especially the Marines, liaise with committees, building relationships with those who craft legislation and conduct hearings. The Army could improve its role in the policy process, by encouraging officers and senior leaders to cultivate long-term relationships with members of Congress and professional staffers who understand the Army's message and support the path it has chosen. Policymakers require knowledge and understanding of the message, best articulated by talented Army leadership and cultivated through long-term relationships with those who will one day lead the Army. Deeper relationships and an understanding of the Army's narrative at the Capitol will help the Army's message to naturally trickle down to the American public.

**5. Continue Implementation of Talent Management Practices.** The Army should continue looking inward to manage talent from the point of accessions to senior officer levels to create a culture that allows

for different ideas, innovation, and adaptation. The Army should focus on placing the right talent at the right place at the right time. Some talent management policies are being piloted and show great promise for increasing officer satisfaction, assignment productivity, and meeting Army requirements. Several senior participants at the conference voiced support for talent management and offered assistance in educating senior leaders on these policies. The momentum of support is steadily growing in favor of talent management; the Army should not waste this opportunity to adopt policies that will ultimately uncover more talent in the Army, place that talent in more productive assignments, and increase retention of the talent the Army needs.

These talent management policies can help create succession plans that ensure the right leaders are available to fill vacancies and to keep leaders in the right jobs long enough to assess, implement, and execute policies. Moreover, limiting churn of senior leaders develops a depth of understanding on the business side of the Army.

Finally, talent management policies can help overcome resistance to change. The reliance on “thinking teams,” like Commander’s Action Groups and Commander’s Initiatives Groups, could be interpreted by some that senior leaders lack trust in their staff to think critically. Creating teams of diverse skills, backgrounds, experiences, and education requires further understanding and control of talent. This will help guarantee that teams are not built to reinforce a commander’s way of thinking.



## KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Opening Keynote on Sunday, June 1, 2014  
Senator Jack Reed, Senior Senator from Rhode  
Island

Lunch Keynote on Monday, June 2, 2014  
Brigadier General (Ret.) Huba Wass de Czege,  
Independent Scholar of Military Theory  
and Practice

Dinner Keynote on Monday, June 2, 2014  
Dr. Ashton Carter, Former Deputy Secretary  
of Defense

Breakfast Keynote on Tuesday, June 3, 2014  
Major General H. R. McMaster, Commanding  
General,  
U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence

Closing Keynote on Tuesday, June 3, 2014  
General Charles Jacoby, Jr., Commander,  
United States Northern Command  
General Vincent Brooks, Commanding General,  
U.S. Army Pacific  
Moderator: Colonel Suzanne Nielsen, Professor and  
Deputy Head,  
Department of Social Sciences, USMA

### **Discussion:**

The five keynote addresses and discussions were an integral part of the Senior Conference and drew on a variety of perspectives, skill sets, and experiences. The speakers sought to connect the domestic political

and economic environment to the strategic landscape, providing insights in a number of areas including readiness and technology. While there was some disagreement on the force structure and size necessary for future engagements, the keynote speakers generally agreed on two points: 1) war is a human phenomenon; and 2) well-trained soldiers are indispensable to our national security strategy.

The domestic political context profoundly shapes the strategic environment. The public is willing to support its military, but that willingness is not limitless. In a democracy, strategy is shaped by the people's shared view of the world, which is grounded in both logic and emotion. Specifically, the current political environment and the diminishing public support for boundless military intervention and use of conventional methods pose difficulties for moving forward. Americans are less inclined to engage large numbers of forces overseas and risk the lives of service members for unspecified time periods, dollar amounts, and purposes. Additionally, as concern for rising income inequality across the United States increases, so too does public reluctance to devote federal spending to another war effort when that money could be used to fund domestic programs.

In the current budget environment, it is almost impossible to make sound strategic choices. As a result of budget stringencies, jointness—the capacity of different services to operate together—has declined, as have civil-military relations. Army professionals have had an increasingly hard time explaining the risks associated with various cuts. Instead, senior leaders are left making hard choices among suboptimal strategic options. In making these choices, Army leaders should prioritize readiness; in the absence of a better idea,

they should train and equip the force. They should then maintain the Army's competitive advantages: the all-volunteer force, jointness, officer education, fighting forward by means of the regional combatant commands, and the industrial base.

Public opinion and willingness to spend have implications in the debate over force size, structure, and readiness. Robust defense spending today may help the budget in the future. This is because an upfront investment in the size and readiness of our fighting force may help decrease costs on the back end. This is best understood when taking into account the importance of velocity. In the face of a conflict with a future adversary, the United States must be able to respond quickly and with overwhelming force to eliminate any prospect for continuation or escalation of the conflict. The justification for a high level of readiness is that the cost of having a protracted land war in terms of blood and treasure is out of the question both economically and with respect to domestic will.

Many are now concerned about a "hollow force," but we should remember that hollowness is not only a matter of training and equipment. The most hollow unit is a unit without a mission. Even if a unit without a mission has all of its hardware, it will be listless, ineffective, and difficult to lead. Even units that are not fully ready by some measures may be extremely effective forces for theater security cooperation missions. The Army should be proactive in offering capabilities to end users as part of a joint, interagency team, to include civil affairs, engineers, and other elements within the Army that could otherwise be overlooked.

The Army should seek to restore a sense of common purpose among all components of the Total Force. Reserve and active units should be incorporated into a shared mission. The choice between hav-

ing a deeper bench of reserve forces or a ready force may be a false one. We must keep calling for a Total Force application. Active and reserve components can build trust by continuing to engage one another and acknowledging that the Total Force works best when each component complements the other.

Of course, the emphasis on the readiness debate may be a fruitless endeavor if strategic thinking about war is more important than robust capacity to wage war. The United States will have the Army its citizens are willing to pay for. It is the responsibility of leaders in the U.S. military to do the best with the resources they are given, which requires thinking clearly about future wars.

Faulty thinking about grand strategy, concepts of military power, and means of execution has led to long and inconclusive military interventions despite the reigning logic appearing to predict quick and decisive success. Without serious attention to reforming this consensus thinking, not only will the Army's relevance be consistently discounted by senior decisionmakers, but young men and women will continue to be killed and maimed in elective enterprises that sound thinking would have either put off or substantially revised in concept. Faulty strategic reasoning also discounts the dangers that could arise from potential conflict among (or between) great powers.

If the United States thinks about war correctly, a reduction in force will not materially weaken U.S. military power. Dividing military power into its **domains**—land, sea, and air—is a misleading foundation for formulating military strategy. It is better to begin from the four essential **functions** of military power: deterrence, defense, enforcement (attack), and pacification. The Army plays a crucial role in each of the

four functions of military power. If the Army (or any of the other services) is disproportionately cut, U.S. military power will decline. As General Omar Bradley said, “American armed strength is only as strong as the combat capabilities of its weakest service.”

U.S. strategists must remember that war is a human phenomenon. The object of war is to alter the enemy’s will and capacity to wage war. A strategy that aims at only one of these goals—by excessive reliance on technology, and the corollary assumption that distant attacks weaken rather than strengthen resolve—will not succeed. The central mistake in U.S. leaders’ understanding of war has to do with excessive faith in technology. We assume that wars can be won from the sea, air, and cyber domains, where U.S. technological and scientific advantages over other nations are most evident. This is war as we would like it to be, not as it is.

War involves continued interaction with the enemy; it should be thought of as a strategic game rather than an interaction controlled by one side. Every technological advance can be countered by the enemy. For every Humvee, there is an IED. American-trained foreign forces will not always operate in American interests. Allies, like enemies, adapt and change over time. Because war is human and characterized by constant adaptation and change, forces “on the scene” are more valuable than forces “over the horizon.” U.S. land forces cannot effectively shape foreign environments unless they are stationed abroad. Land forces cannot be dismantled and rebuilt without significant cost and risk. It takes time to build an effective leader of soldiers—more time than it takes to construct a ship or plane. The last dime allocated in the defense budget should be spent educating soldiers.

**SESSION 1:  
PRESERVING U.S. INFLUENCE IN AN  
UNCERTAIN, COMPLEX GLOBAL  
ENVIRONMENT**

**Panelists:**

Dr. Nora Bensahel, Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the Responsible Defense Program at the Center for a New American Security

Dr. Andrew Krepinevich, President of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Dr. Terrence Kelly, Director of Strategy and Resources at the Rand Arroyo Center

Dr. Conrad Crane, Chief of Historical Services for the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

**Moderator:**

Dr. Scott Silverstone, Professor of International Relations, Department of Social Sciences, United State Military Academy (USMA)

**Guiding Questions:**

What are the most significant threats to U.S. national security?

How does Landpower address these significant threats?

What lessons can the nation learn from historical responses to unforeseen threats?

## **Discussion:**

The first session explored the current strategic landscape, which is rather uncertain. As the United States and its military move away from the past 13 years of war, there is little consensus on future threats and necessary capabilities. While those wars are winding down (or were at the time of the conference, but not at the time of this report), threats still exist. Discussion centered on three areas of risk: geographic, temporal, and scope of capabilities. In navigating these risks, the Army must also deal with four challenges: 1) a shrinking overseas footprint, 2) an internal schism between the active force and the National Guard, 3) the lack of a coherent message with which to justify the Army's necessity to Congress and the public, and 4) the widespread belief in the ability of the Army to regenerate quickly with low monetary and human cost.

The United States faces geographic risk as it balances to Asia, focuses on the Middle East, and places less priority on other regions. In a world characterized by continued instability in failed states, nuclear proliferation, and civil conflict in places such as Syria, the United States must ask itself how much chaos it is willing to accept and where. As it prioritizes certain regions, it faces missed opportunities in other countries that receive minimal attention and support. Moreover, three revisionist powers—Russia, China, and Iran—are dissatisfied with the existing status quo and appear willing to use low-level force to disrupt the current order. These states, and others, feel threatened by U.S. force protection and are developing “keep out” zones that will make projection of forces into their spheres of influence increasingly difficult. The instability in the Middle East, the rise of China, Iran, and Russia, and

America's inability to fully focus on any specific region creates geographic risk as the United States cedes influence in certain spheres to maintain it in others where access is no longer assured.

The second risk is temporal: the United States seems willing to assume more risk in the next 5 years than in year 6 and beyond. Faced with concerns about future capabilities, it is poised to sacrifice current and near-term readiness to prepare for long-term threats. The "democratization of destruction" resulting from continued nuclear proliferation, new technologies, and the loss of superiority in precision warfare means that America cannot assume technological supremacy. The scarce allocation of resources within the United States military means that cutting too much in the wrong place will make it difficult for the DoD and Army to react quickly to various threats; as a result, the United States may not respond in time to emerging threats throughout the world.

The third risk involves capabilities. The American budgetary crisis has affected research and development funds negatively, limiting potential growth while the rest of the world, the revisionist powers in particular, catches up. Coupled with the disarmament of American allies, this decrease in capabilities leads to a widening gap between U.S. strategic objectives and the means by which it deals with them. As such, the United States continues to accumulate strategic risk without the resources to counter them. Because of the geographic risk and the need to maintain technological superiority, it is imperative that U.S. partners maintain their capabilities, which are vital to countering various strategic threats.

Managing these three risks requires a broad U.S. strategy that seeks to prevent international aggression.



Such a strategy would have the following characteristics. First, the United States must help create a stable international environment that makes escalation of conflicts less likely. Political leaders must have policy options and responses that do not escalate crises, but seek to mitigate them through diplomacy. Second, an improved strategy bolsters the defensive capabilities of our partners, both in the diplomatic/political and military realms. Because the most likely conflicts affecting U.S. national interests will be ground conflicts involving allies, the United States needs to work closely with those countries to develop their land capabilities even as they disarm. Third, senior leaders and key thinkers need to ask the right questions. Perhaps the most important is, "How does the United States maximize its interests given its capabilities?" Leveraging continued advantages in the technological realm will be important in this regard, especially as the United States faces a new form of a standoff strike: cyber. To take advantage of our current position, the United States must retain a full array of military options because regenerating force structure and technology in a timely manner will be difficult. Justifying this large force is difficult when it is seldom used. However, having a force ready to face the inevitable surprise is vital to securing national interests.

This changing risk profile gives rise to four challenges for the Army. First, the Army will become a U.S.-based garrison force with the smallest overseas footprint since World War II. It will take longer to project force abroad, and the force projection will be limited as revisionist powers and nonstate actors continue to grow their force size. Second, the Army must work to heal and repair the internal rift between active duty Army and the Reserve and Guard com-

ponents created by recent capabilities debates. Third, while the Army focuses internally, it must also find a method to convey its message to Congress and the American public more clearly. The Army must advocate for its role in the face of these various challenges and the broad strategy of this administration to those in Congress. Finally, the Army must consider the issues of reversibility of the impending drawdown and the future regeneration of the force. The current view is that manpower as a capability is easier to replace than technology and equipment, hinting at an inclination toward increased personnel cuts.

The Army mitigates these risks if it recognizes that irregular warfare is here to stay. This includes knowing how to wage it and how to fight it. The Army must be prepared to deal with irregular warfare while preparing for Phase III: Dominate operations to help deter large threats. The Army must also consider cross-domain warfare, under which artillery (broadly conceived) may be a key area of development during the next 10 years due to its force projection capabilities and effectiveness in a Phase III conflict. Finally, the Army must learn how to work within the domestic political realm. The inability to articulate its contributions to Congress and the public, while the Navy and Air Force succeed at that same skill, makes the Army a loser in the funding and personnel debate every time it occurs. Adjusting its domestic strategy, tied with preparing for both irregular and Phase III conflicts, ensures the Army can face strategic risks.



**SESSION 2:  
UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THE  
UPCOMING ARMY TRANSITION**

**Panelists:**

Brigadier General (Ret.) Mike Meese, Chief Operating Officer at the American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association (AAFMAA)

Mr. Todd Harrison, Senior Fellow,  
Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Ms. Mackenzie Eaglen, Resident Fellow at the  
Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies

Mr. Jeff Bialos, Executive Director of the Program on  
Transatlantic Security and Industry at the Center for  
Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University's  
School of Advanced International Studies

**Moderator:** Dr. Steven Bloom, Assistant Professor,  
Department of Social Sciences, USMA

**Guiding Questions:**

What is the historic pattern of Army transition periods?

How has the Army dealt with reduced budgets in the past?

What are the current states of Department of Defense and Army budgets?

What is the congressional approach to funding the Department of Defense?

## **Discussion:**

Session 2 focused on understanding the context of the impending Army transition by looking at past transitions, present conditions, and suggestions for how to navigate the inevitable change successfully. The Army has plenty of experience with downsizing, and history tends to repeat itself. The Army has gone through periods of downsizing and transition before. The political and budgetary climate does not bode well for future strategic planning, but the Army is still quite capable of fielding an exemplary force and should not claim otherwise. However, the Army must make clear that the concept of reversibility, that the Army can quickly and easily regenerate when faced with conflict, is a myth. While the Army can rebuild itself in times of need, the cost will be high in terms of both blood and treasure. In considering the drawdown, the Army will be confronted with tradeoffs between technology and personnel. While the current zeitgeist seems to favor technology, the core strength of the Army is its people and that should not be sacrificed for the latest gadgets.

One way to understand the current Army transition is to review the lessons from previous drawdowns. By looking at the Army's past, four tendencies emerge. First, while the Army's emphasis is on people, those people tend to be traded off for everything else, especially modernization of weapons systems. In the past, the Army has eventually recognized that, while the quantity of personnel is very expensive, the quality of those people is vital. Therefore, it is especially important for the Army to concentrate on investing in leader development programs and entitlement reforms during a drawdown. Second, the Army tends to opt for a larger expansible infrastructure, rather than smaller more robust units. Then, when it is directed

to downsize it hollows those structures, which can lead to a “hollow Army.” Effective incorporation of the Reserve and National Guard components is imperative to mitigate this hollowing. Third, it is important to make decisions about transition with a holistic approach. Often there is too strong an emphasis on equity across the Army’s branches and units instead of wholesale reductions of those units that contribute least to effectiveness. The Army tends to make salami slice cuts, in which no real decisions are required, instead of making tough decisions and standing behind these decisions. Finally, the Army tends to confuse Army doctrine with national doctrine. Amid budget reductions, the Army tends to create its own, smaller version of national strategy, instead of concentrating on its most effective contributions to the Joint Force.

Another key point of study is the domestic political climate. In austere times, the budget is a critical component for any discussion of the Army’s transition. As such, careful attention must be paid to the political terrain. Since 2010, the President has routinely requested spending above the base budget while Congress continues to cut the budget. This results in massive uncertainty due to a growing gap between what the President requests and what is allocated by Congress. For example, in 2010, the gap equaled \$6 billion. By 2013, this gap had mushroomed to \$37 billion. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) effectively established budget caps and brought conclusion to the U.S. debt ceiling crisis, which had threatened to lead the country into default of its debts. If Congress exceeds the budget cap, which it did in 2013, it triggers sequestration, a compulsory enforcement mechanism affecting government spending across the board. In response, Congress raised the cap and proposed \$1.2 trillion in budget cuts to be spread over 9 years, thereby reduc-

ing much of the gap in the out years. The President's spending request for 2015 equals the budget cap level, but if in 2016 the President's request exceeds the cap, it will trigger sequestration once again.

Cycles in the defense budget are nothing new. In the drawdown of forces following the Cold War, Congress appropriated funds below what were requested after considering the unrealistic projected growth in a time of decline. What is unique to this drawdown is the size of the force. In previous drawdowns the military declined by one-third or more; the size of the force is decreasing while the defense budget continues to grow. One reason for the escalating defense budget is the cost of acquisition programs that fail to field any systems. Another explanation centers on costs per person. In order to reach the one-third drawdown benchmark, the budget is being cut alongside the number of forces. There will most likely be more cuts in the future and the possibility of a projected force smaller than 420,000.

While this drawdown may be comparable to those in the past based off of the number of personnel cuts, it will feel much worse because of the political atmosphere. Discussions regarding budget cuts tend to focus on two different trains of thought: readiness is too low due to the cuts and more is not always better. There is currently a lack of awareness in Washington, DC, that sequestration is unlike other budget cuts, and therefore there has been minimal reprieve. Politicians are quick to congratulate themselves for passing the BCA and think they have saved the military. However, subsequent deals provide little relief because the end state will not change in the near term. Members of Congress are still driving toward the same goals. For example, one participant noted that the Chairman

of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) has been pushing House leadership to pay attention to the effects of sequestration on the military. HASC even offered the House insight into secret briefings, but only one member of Congress showed up for the briefing. Additionally, HASC is only given 60 seconds to address a bill. While anecdotal, these examples provide a sense of the political climate today. The reality is that most members of Congress will not lose an election over the defense budget. Ultimately, we have dialed down strategy and readiness of our military forces while dialing up risk.

Regardless of the difficulties posed by the austerity measures, the Army will continue to operate at a tempo necessitating and guaranteeing a robust budget. The Army should be able to field a capable fighting force within the Army's budgetary allocations and it is culpable if it cannot field this force. However, some participants felt that the Army needs to decide on its core mission and focus on it. Some believe that the Army must adapt its mindset in order to stay relevant and there is risk of being institutionally resistant to change. Some argue that technology, e.g., cyber, unmanned aerial vehicles, etc., has replaced much of the need for a large standing Army. Others feel that the strength of the Army is its people, and that we should not sacrifice people for technology.

The Army has spent the last 13 years fighting low-intensity conflicts. It must now decide if this is the Army's strength. The Army must also consider whether it is still prepared to fight large scale wars and if this is even likely. Most threats will remain low-intensity type threats, e.g., humanitarian missions, counterterrorism, proxy wars, etc. The only peer competitor the United States faces is China, and it is unrealistic to



see high-intensity conflict with them. Given this, the Army might consider allocating heavy units to the Reserve while also establishing a command specifically focused on low-intensity warfare.

**SESSION 3:  
THE ARMY AS PART OF THE JOINT,  
INTERAGENCY, AND  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL TEAM**

**Panelists:**

Lieutenant General Edward Cardon, Commander,  
U.S. Army Cyber Command

Dr. Kori Schake, Research Fellow,  
Hoover Institution, Stanford University

Brigadier General Guy Cosentino, Commandant of  
the National War College

Lieutenant General Charles Cleveland, Commander,  
United States Army Special Operations Command

**Moderator:**

Colonel Jonalan Brickey, Research Fellow at the  
Combating Terrorism Center, USMA

**Guiding Questions:**

What do transnational national security challenges,  
such as terrorism and conflict in cyberspace, imply  
about the Army's needed capabilities?

What are the strategic capabilities and joint force en-  
ablers provided by the Army?

How can the Army improve its integration with oth-  
er instruments of national power, as well as other  
military services, host nations, allies, and interna-  
tional organizations?

## **Discussion:**

Panelists in this session discussed the Army in the joint environment and the capabilities the service provides to the joint and interagency force. As the Army moves through this period of downsizing, it must seek to operate within an integrated environment, relying on partners and allies. The difficulty here is that other services and allies are starting to abandon the joint concept. Despite this resistance, the Army must continue to develop integrated, joint options. Two key areas for such development include the cyber domain and special operations. However, as the Army continues to pursue the joint environment, it can lose focus on its key strength: soldiers.

The other services have defected from the concept of jointness with the Army. They have walked away from it intellectually and programmatically, as evident in a variety of cuts. Some participants felt that the Marines never believed in jointness except when the Army provided them support capabilities for the duration. The Army cannot walk away and must be the joint force by supplying the underlying infrastructure for land-based strategies such as providing Patriot missile defense, helicopters, engineers, special ops, signal, logistics, intelligence, and medical support. For years, the Army filled that niche but never received credit due to failures to communicate success to policymakers and political leadership. Some argue that instead of accepting cuts and moving forward, the Army must message its role within the joint force and preserve its vital role by fighting every cut. Without the Army, competitors will soon catch up to American defense strengths. At that point, it will be too late to support the joint force properly. Others think the

Army should be willing to compromise as a means of controlling the extent and locations of budget cuts.

Within the joint force, the Army provides two key areas for integration. The first is within the cyber realm. Constant daily threats give us real-time contact every day on the virtual frontline, thereby driving adaptation and evolution. Attacks are much easier now than ever before, and online hacking applications no longer limit attacks to the state actors. Strategically, the Chinese hack in order to steal from us. We need to think about how to combat this strategy because commercial theft threatens our national economic assets. It is particularly important to protect Silicon Valley because the military cannot compete on the same scale of technological innovation with the private sector. Private sector innovation must be a national priority as it is an essential asset underpinning our economy, highly valuable, and susceptible to Internet theft.

One challenge is that the Army's authority in cyber defense only extends to the *.mil* domain. Recent reports sparked debate over the primacy of military duties and the public's rights to privacy that has stopped progress of discussion of integration and coordination. There needs to be an integration of private, commercial, government, and military defenses in the cyber realm, and the infrastructure for that does not exist yet. This can be an Army focus because many of the effects are felt within the land domain.

The best means of improving the Army's role within the cyber sphere is to assess, train, manage, and retain good people. Managing talented cyber professionals requires a new approach to developing and managing those who understand the changing domain and how to best integrate across defense, private, public, and government sectors.

The second area of integration involves special operations forces (SOF). The past 13 years saw a supportive relationship between conventional and SOF forces that must be solidified through doctrine. SOF and the Army operate together but use distinct doctrines that limit planning and communication. In 2012, Army special operations doctrine added two “exquisite capabilities”: surgical strike and clandestine kill/capture. At the same time, the Army integrated special operations as a core competency allowing the Army to claim the world’s finest irregular warfare force. This move, however, requires the Army shift its own doctrine and phasing model to fit different types of war. The current model of Phase 0 through 5 wars does not fit irregular models and limits the ability of the Army to claim special operations as part of its narrative. By incorporating SOF into conventional structures and combining doctrine, the Army can better integrate and increase its value to the nation.

Developing a force that provides “strategic Landpower” requires understanding that the Army must dominate on land, win wars, and prevail in the human domain. Given density of populations, Landpower is accruing a heightened strategic quality. After all, land presence is still nonsubstitutable. Land and the need to secure it will not disappear. The Army must continue to demonstrate its successes in the joint environment to politicians and the public alike. Moreover, it must manage its talent in ways that provide the nation the best force possible in the human, land, and cyber domains.

**SESSION 4:**  
**TOWARD THE ARMY OF THE FUTURE:**  
**PREVENT, SHAPE, AND WIN**

**Panelists:**

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Technology

Dr. Mike O'Hanlon, Director of Research, Foreign  
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Lieutenant Colonel Chris Danbeck, Commander's  
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Mr. Jim Hake, Founder and Chief Executive Officer,  
Spirit of America

**Moderator:**

Lieutenant Colonel (P) Tania Chacho, Academy Pro-  
fessor and Director of Comparative Politics, Depart-  
ment of Social Sciences, USMA

**Guiding Questions:**

What capabilities does the Army need to prevent  
and shape?

How should the Army balance investments among  
personnel, operational readiness, force moderniza-  
tion, and research?

How should the Army approach innovation and ad-  
aptation to better meet the demands of preventing  
and shaping?

## **Discussion:**

In this session, panelists and participants explored future capabilities and means of achieving those needs through innovation and adaptation. The rapidly changing security environment, regional power shifts, and internal political turmoil experienced in Asia pose both challenges and opportunities for the U.S. Army moving forward. In looking to the future, the Army must be prepared to use nontraditional methods to achieve its mission. Regionally aligned forces and private sector partnerships offer possible solutions, but their costs must also be carefully considered before making wholesale changes to Army functionality.

The Asian security environment is changing rapidly and is undergoing regional power shifts. The recent U.S. rebalance is one factor of change, but it is not universally viewed in a positive manner. While most countries in the region support the rebalance, some question whether the United States has the capacity and political will to implement and sustain it. China, on the other hand, views the rebalance as damaging to regional security, and hopes it will not occur. Many Asian countries are looking to build up new capabilities in order to contend with nontraditional security threats in the region. In addition, countries such as Thailand and Myanmar (Burma) are experiencing internal political change that has security ramifications beyond their borders.

Increasingly, Asian countries perceive their greatest threats to be maritime-related and are therefore rethinking the role of ground forces, posing a challenge for the U.S. Army to rethink its role in the region. While Asian nations grapple with this issue, they still desire an American presence. Even so, the United

States must realize that it is not the only partner in the area. Increasingly, the Army will have to compete to be the partner of choice, be perceptive of allies' needs as cooperative relations and expectations change, invest in building regional expertise, and embrace new and rapidly emerging partners in the region. These challenges are further complicated by the fact that China is an appealing economic and/or security partner to many countries in the region.

As the United States contends with the rapidly changing strategic environment in Asia, it must also behave with more restraint while striving to achieve its broader objectives in the region. More specifically, the United States must work with allies to prevent the rise of a hegemon in Asia, defend against terrorists who possess global reach, and manage the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Given the rapidly changing strategic environment, threats in the region, and the resource constraints the nation faces, the Army must reevaluate and conceptualize its role moving forward. Some have argued for fewer ground troops (drawdown to 20 brigades), a larger Navy, and more Special Forces and intelligence gathering capabilities. While the easy path for the Army might be to pursue a bit of everything, the Army is not at its best when it tries to do too much. Some felt that the Army should take its own version of an appetite suppressant when considering the use of military power. In many ways the Army is pursuing the same path that it followed in the post-Vietnam era, "a go anywhere Army." The Army should focus its efforts instead on mid-to-high intensity combat as its core competency. This requires a new framework for a sizing force structure for the Army of 1+2, in which "1" is a major regional war or major theater of war and "2" consists of smaller missions.



Globally, there are 4 scenarios that the Army must seriously consider:

1. If a Middle East Peace Agreement is executed, it would require a U.S.-led stabilization force (1-2 Brigade commitment for the foreseeable future);

2. If negotiation with Iran fails and the United States determines to strike Iranian nuclear facilities, the United States would need to secure Persian Gulf oil and battalions would need to be centrally placed in the Arabian Peninsula to reassure allies in the region and provide security immediately after a strike;

3. If a conflict develops between India and Pakistan, a negotiated deal would require U.S. presence to provide stability in the region; and,

4. Various scenarios that lead to a catastrophic natural disaster would require more than a few thousand American troops to provide humanitarian relief.

While none of these scenarios are guaranteed to happen, they represent the threats the Army must be prepared to confront. Planning for just one of these scenarios is insufficient. It is important the Army be sizable enough to handle 1+2 wars

Regionally aligned forces (RAF) foster potential opportunities for the future of the Army. More specifically, from a tactical perspective, the RAF model motivates soldiers immensely in an uncertain future in which opportunities for deployment are appearing to dwindle. Operationally, RAF units create adaptive leaders and inspire them to learn about cultures and languages. This allows the Army to continue to prevent conflict and shape environments, while also maintaining its global relevance and responsiveness.

In order to cope with the instability of resource constraints and the future of the Army's sizing force structure, private sector companies can also be leveraged. Spirit of America, a privately funded 503c nongovernment organization, provides direct assistance to U.S. missions abroad under the guidance of three principles: 1) decentralization (Spirit of America works side by side with those deployed), 2) private funding (funding comes from individuals, foundations and businesses), and 3) lack of neutrality. The benefit of these types of public/private partnerships derives from the organization's ability to act with speed and flexibility and helps connect the 99 percent of Americans who do not serve with the 1 percent that do. This helps to make the American people partners in U.S. missions.



**SESSION 5:  
PARADIGM SHIFT: HOW MUST THE ARMY  
CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE?**

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**Moderator:**

Colonel Jeffrey Peterson, Academy Professor and  
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ences, USMA

**Guiding Questions:**

How do we rethink and redesign our approaches to  
U.S. Army material and human capital development  
in light of current and future strategic imperatives?

How should the Army provide incentives for inno-  
vation and creative thinking that leads to agile and  
adaptive organizations?

What cultural norms and world views, if any, are  
hindering change and increased productivity?

## **Discussion:**

The final session explored a range of internal changes the U.S. Army needs to make regardless of threats emerging in the domestic and global environment. One of the biggest, yet least discussed, threats is internal and centers on the Army's inability to adapt to a changing world. While it is true that some of this is engrained in the organizational culture due to self-selection of senior leadership, there are changes that can be made to improve the management of the Army's vast trove of talent.

The first problem is that, when confronted with uncertainty, the Army tends not to take the long view in terms of both personnel and strategy. In the absence of a clear national security strategy, it is left with a series of fragmented policies and short-term actions. These short-term policies will have long-term consequences. The long-term result of current personnel decisions will be an Army without middle managers (E7s and O4s).

Second, the Army strategy often seems based on what it is capable of doing, rather than what it should be doing. The Army examines its capabilities and then asks what missions it can execute to use these capabilities. Army policies often seem focused on execution but not consolidation. The organization often forgets that it always takes more resources to hold a hill than to take that same hill. This is not dissimilar from other fields. Most businesses fail in the first year because it is easier to start a business than to keep it running successfully over time.

Third, the Army must not let itself become overly bureaucratic. Recent history indicates that drawdowns tend to result in a broken Army. This is because exces-

sive bureaucracy tends to dominate. In the 1990s, the senior leadership gutted the officer corps, leaving behind a bureaucracy concerned more with protecting its own interests than strengthening brigade combat teams. The lesson learned with this experience was to bypass bureaucracies rather than work within them. The Army may be getting itself into a similar situation today: the requirements, acquisitions, and resourcing processes drive decisionmaking. To improve efficiency, the Army must effectively and efficiently blend its operating force in the field with the generating force in Washington.

To many, the acquisitions process is broken. The length of the procurement cycle impedes innovation and development. Despite this, because it wants to project a positive image, some felt that the Army will re-label abject failures in bureaucratic operations as victories. For example, the bureaucracy initially opposed up-armorings vehicles to adapt to IEDs in the field. As such, the mine-resistant armor protected program was actually a bureaucratic failure, not a success story. U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command educational programs are also slow to change. Only by taking back the bureaucracies will the Army be able to return to its core objective to “organize, train, and equip soldiers to go to war.”

One way to mitigate these three problems is to adapt during the drawdown. This seems unlikely, though, in light of recent failures to change when faced with existential threats. Given the tendency of bureaucracy to entrench, some felt that it is not surprising that the Army has not yet adapted or evolved its personnel or procurement systems to the major shock of the September 11, 2001, attack and the advent of global terrorism. There is increasing evidence that

the Army should shift to a new paradigm to foster institutional agility. As Secretary Robert Gates said, we need to break up the institutional concrete. The Army must rethink the way it deals with personnel because innovation and adaptability requires talent; the Army needs to get the most out of the talent it has.

The U.S. Army Personnel Management System has not changed since its creation in the 1950s. This is affecting the Army's ability to assign soldiers and officers to jobs in which they are primed to excel. Being good out in the field may be the path to promotion, but once officers move to higher ranks, the skill sets needed to succeed change. Instead of excelling at taking hills, officers need management and business acumen. Moreover, the Army's evaluation system is weak and unable to provide information necessary for optimal matching of talents and assignments. The typical officer evaluation report form offers no way to capture relevant depth and breadth of human capital in the dimensions needed to meet the demands of today's Army. If the Army does not capture the necessary information, then it will not have the data needed to make proper allocation decisions across functions, branches, and regions of the world; it will fall short of placing people in positions to capture their highest and best use value. Moreover, those officers who do rise through the ranks have higher degrees from a concentrated number of sources, specifically masters' degrees from intermediate level education (ILE) or war colleges, resulting in little diversity of experience, perspective, or background among general officers. This syndrome tends to promote a group-think tendency in most decisionmaking at senior levels. There is also an over-reliance on replacement planning to backfill the excessive churn among leadership positions at all

ranks. The alternative would be true succession planning like that employed in the private sector. There is much shorter average tenure in the Army than in corporate leadership, and this undermines responsibility and accountability in job performance. This is because subordinates know they do not have to adapt to change when they can simply wait out the next change of leadership.

The Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA) designed and tested a new Army talent matching program to put officers with broadly diversified skills into positions in which they can most contribute. The result is an efficient allocation of human capital that moves the Army toward a better distribution of talent. The program addresses the four essentials in any human resources system: accession, development, retention, and employment. As an example, OEMA created a portal called Green Pages, which was built based on resumes and listed talents of participating officers. This information can be reviewed by battalion commanders as they consider which officers to select with the hope that these commanders will attempt to hunt for talent matches. The idea is that the program forces leaders to really think about what they need. This is a portal to match the supply of talent with the demands of commanders' needs in future officer talent. This allows for an efficient blending of the operating force and the generating force. It should be noted that, in testing the system, it was easier to elicit talent data from the officers than candidate requirements the commands needing to fill open positions. The hope is that personnel officers will become more comfortable with the system over time.

Another approach to talent management is to drive to career stakes in the ground at ILE and the war col-



lege level. Officers will have to apply to get into ILE, and then get immersed in a year-long rigorous course. If the officer gets through, he/she will face an human resources board that will become her talent manager/promotion board going forward until the next rung is reached. The same approach would apply at the war college level as an officer moves upward from there into senior leader ranks. Under this approach, education would be built upon a more rigorous professional military education system.

There are innovative ideas, like talent management, to move the Army forward. What is impeding the service from broader implementation of some of these ideas? Research shows that senior leadership within the U.S. Army characteristically is resistant to change and adaptation. For example, a recent survey showed that 50 percent of the soon-to-be strategic leaders of the Army were uncomfortable with General Eric Shinseki's shift to the objective force. Why is it so hard for the military leadership to embrace reform even in the face of pressures to adapt? Organizational behavior and psychological research suggests resistance to change by senior Army leaders is a result of both nature and nurture of the individual leaders themselves, including their personality, intelligence, and life experiences. On the nature side, research shows that openness of personality, capturing intellectual curiosity, and willingness to change are rooted in genetics and largely inherited. At the U.S. Army War College, Army officers are below average in openness relative to the population as a whole. Intelligence and productivity are also largely inherited, and here Army officers are significantly higher than the average in society. However, research shows the smarter you are, the more you tend to defend your

own position and the less you bend through reassessment. So, the personality traits of Army leaders generally promote complacent, conservative thinking. Their high productivity and intelligence empower them to rationalize but also to defend their entrenched positions effectively.

On the nurture side, research identifies the importance of career imprinting in influencing the behaviors of career professionals, including in the profession of arms. Imprinting relates to things that happen early in a career that influence professionals disproportionately later in a career. The U.S. Army accentuates career imprinting through regimentation and its strict chain-of-command authority structure. The Army places junior officers through stretch training, and their demonstrated success then gets rewarded with promotions which serve to imprint acceptable behavior.

So where does this leave us? Officers come into the profession of arms less open to change but highly motivated, with professional drive, strong intellect, and routinely strong moral values. The Army then socializes them, imprints its values, and sends them off into first assignments where they get stretched, then rewarded, resulting in a hardening of those imprints. They emerge as senior leaders, relatively homogeneous as a group by both nature and nurture. As a result, the Army has little capacity for innovative, adaptive thinking in an ever changing world. Acknowledging this tendency is the first step toward positive change.



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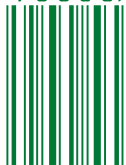
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