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**NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY**  
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**Strategic Posture and the Use of Joint Rotational Forces  
in an Era of Great Power Competition**

By:

Jason A. Berdou

Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army

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**Strategic Posture and the Use of Joint Rotational Forces  
in an Era of Great Power Competition**

**by Jason A. Berdou**

**Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.**

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U.S. Army, 28, May 2021**

**28 May 2021**

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## **Abstract**

The U.S. military faces unprecedented challenges rooted in fulfilling multiple strategic objectives, which include reassuring our allies, deterring aggression, identifying ways to defeat emerging military technology while modernizing forces to meet these challenges in a resource constrained environment. The Rapidly Deployable Joint Rotational Force concept offers a solution to meet these challenges.

The efficient and effective use of joint rotational forces across the globe supports national security while also giving the U.S. military and supporting government agencies operational experience. In expeditionary training with joint forces, U.S. forces can strengthen relationships, build familiarity and confidence with allies and partners, and creates opportunities for cost savings to force modernization that can be redirected into the development of future capabilities.

Between the end of World War II and the end of the Cold War, the U.S. global posture has included permanent forward stationing of combat forces in multiple countries. This model is no longer either strategically or budgetarily feasible. The new challenges pose an important question, how does the U.S. assert joint and combined military power to demonstrate resolve and commitment to our allies and partners through Theater Security Cooperation Programs (TSCP), exercises and engagements, and execute campaign plans while also when necessary, rapidly respond to a crisis if needed? How do joint forces engage in shaping operations while also being able to transition to dominance on a global battlespace? How do readiness, deterrence, combat power, and lethality balance positions of relative advantage in an environment that is rapidly changing?

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces and other U.S. Departments that selflessly contribute to the service of our nation's security and democracy. Their intervention abroad upholds the international order and improves the lives of millions.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to personally thank Dr. Keith D. Dickson and Colonel Stephen C. Rogers for their assistance on my thesis and guiding me towards completing this research piece for its importance on future conversations about the ways the United States employs forces around the world for security.

To my family, Brandy, Cody, and Tyler; thank you for your continued support so that I can serve my country honorably having lasting impacts on future leaders. One day, these leaders will help guide you, and in turn, you will guide the next generation of America's finest resource, its sons, and daughters.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The 21st century's strategic environment presents many security challenges. There is a new emphasis on great power competition, a worldwide pandemic whose strategic effects on political, economic, and social institutions is still emerging, enduring conflicts in Southwest Asia seeding future terrorists, a revanchist Russia attempting to reassert itself as a major power, and China gaining military capabilities, economic influences, and technological momentum. A key document from the Joint Chiefs of Staffs outlines the situation confronting the United States; essentially the DoD currently requires gaining higher performance at lower costs if it is to meet NDS objectives. "The crises and contingencies that the Joint Force faces today are transregional (cutting across multiple CCMDs), all domain (land, maritime, air, space, and cyberspace), and multi-functional (command and control, intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, sustainment, and information). Today's competitors and adversaries synchronize, integrate, and direct lethal operations and non-lethal elements of power with increasingly accelerated sophistication. Our competitors and adversaries will exploit the seams created by purely regional and functional approaches."<sup>1</sup>

Although the key strategic documents such as the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) are intended to focus America's global efforts, changes in the strategic environment require that leaders must adapt by adjusting strategic ends and ways with strategic means. There is a growing consensus within the Department of Defense (DoD) that the U.S. military must retain its operational

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<sup>1</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI 3100.01D), Joint Strategic Planning System, 20 July 2018, Page A-1. <https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Library/Instructions/CJCSI%203100.01D.pdf?ver=QwWuzeiE721hTQFqaTuQrw%3d%3d>

warfighting strength, while simultaneously transforming into a more strategically agile force in order to meet a variety of critical emerging national security dilemmas.<sup>2</sup> This translates into a requirement for combining conventional deterrence with strategic agility.

The 2017 NSS, laid out a strategic vision through four pillars representing national interests and the strategic ends to protect the American people, promote prosperity, preserve peace through strength, and advance American influence.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, there are similar and timeless themes with the recently released Interim NSS by the Biden administration in March of 2021. The National Defense Strategy lists several objectives to sustain American security and influence through three lines of effort. First, to build a more lethal, resilient, agile, and ready joint force. Second, to strengthen alliances and attract new partners. Lastly, to reform for greater performance and affordability.<sup>4</sup> As noted by a senior DoD official, “These challenges, as recognized in the 2017 National Security Strategy, required a clear-eyed appraisal of the threats the United States faces, acknowledgement of the changing character of warfare, and a transformation of how the Department conducts business.”<sup>5</sup> This necessitates a new approach.

Globally integrated Joint rotational forces located in strategically placed locations, scalable and tailorable as needed, can provide both credible deterrence and a proportional response to a variety of contingencies around the world in support of U.S. and allied

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<sup>2</sup> Kathleen J. McInnis, Goldwater-Nichols at 30: Defense Reform and Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service (June 2016), i.

<sup>3</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, DC: The White House, 2017) II.

<sup>4</sup> Jim Mattis, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy,” n.d., 14.

<sup>5</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, March 2019 for 2020 Defense Budget. [https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2020/fy2020\\_Budget\\_Request\\_Overview\\_Book.pdf](https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2020/fy2020_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf)

regional or strategic objectives to meet the broader post-Cold War security requirements of the U.S. and its allies and partners.

The purpose of this thesis is to take an objective look at how the U.S. is postured globally and to examine whether current unit deployments make strategic sense given U.S. interests and the changing strategic environment. Using a joint rotational force as the way to achieve operational efficiency and strategic agility while providing the combatant commander with the capability to meet shaping requirements while also providing credible deterrence and a force immediately available to respond to a crisis or threat.

A joint task force command assembled and structured according to both CCDR requirements and DoD strategic interests with people, processes, and routines firmly established in advance could support Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) engagements and conduct persistent shaping activities. Moreover, these forces could also rapidly respond to contingencies, up to, and including major combat operations by expanding its operations with additional forces from the Continental United States (CONUS) or joint capabilities from another theater rotational joint command as necessary.

Within the DoD, there is still much debate on the Goldwater-Nichols act and how to organize and use joint forces.<sup>6</sup> In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, or even as programed events are scheduled as part of the Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMP), the services lack an understanding of employing capabilities supporting a Unified Command Plan (UCP). “The UCP establishes Combatant Command (CCMD)

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<sup>6</sup> Kathleen J. McInnis, Goldwater-Nichols at 30: Defense Reform and Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service (June 2016), 7. Note: Necessitated changes with new administrations or in the DoD are anomalous. The Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganization Act of 1986 sought to improve the interoperability, or jointness among the military services at strategic and operational levels. The Act placed responsibility for warfighting and shaping operations on CCDRs regionally located around the world as well as establishing more efficient use of military resources and enhancing the effectiveness of military operations.

missions and a Combatant Commander's responsibility, addresses assignment of forces, delineates geographic Areas of Responsibility (AORs) for Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), and specifies responsibilities for functional combatant commanders (FCCs)."<sup>7</sup>

There is also little consensus on what precisely what direction reform should take. Conversations coalesce around a number of proposals, including defense acquisition process reforms, reducing long procurement timelines, strengthening the Joint Staff, reducing Pentagon staffs, and improving the understanding of all services in joint operations.<sup>8</sup> Most military leaders agree that after 30 years, a complete review of the Goldwater-Nichols Act is necessary with an accord for the DoD to retain strength through a capable ready military force that can meet future threats with strategic agility.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, there are lots of distractions as the environment is complex and changing.

As the NSS and NDS indicate today, there are many threats, both conventional and unconventional, that cross regional boundaries and sometimes fall directly on the seams between combatant command's areas of responsibility. Currently, the United States faces global threats from anti-satellite weapons, cyber-attacks, AI-enabled propaganda, or terrorist attacks, further complicated by the diplomatic tensions with both state and non-state actors in an era where individuals and groups are able to represent themselves through information broadcasted across cyber and social media platforms. In the future, the U.S. will face hypersonic capabilities, artificial intelligence,

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<sup>7</sup> Michael A Santacroce, *Joint/Interagency Smart book: Joint Strategic & Operational Planning: Planning for Planners*, 2019, 1-21.

<sup>8</sup> Kathleen J. McInnis, Goldwater-Nichols at 30: Defense Reform and Issues for Congress, i.

<sup>9</sup> Kathleen J. McInnis, Goldwater-Nichols at 30: Defense Reform and Issues for Congress, 1.

nanotechnology, and robotics operating in an increasingly complicated multidomain environments. Yet U.S. forces remain mired in a Cold-War deterrence posture preparing for Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO).

What is old has become new again. The debate regarding the development of a strategy to address great power competitors will only further continue the futile struggle between balance of power politics and arms races with conventional means. This is no longer useful as a strategic concept, especially since CCDRs have both regional and global responsibilities and a mandate to meet a wide variety of contingencies.

In this new strategic environment, the U.S. must be free of old ways of thinking that misapply strategic means to deter or meet an adversary on an imagined battlefield that is no longer relevant. The changing nature of warfare necessitates a hard look at the U.S. force posture around the world with the right mix of forces and enablers from different services. The landscapes that we have fought on in the past have changed and strategists need to adapt forces and functions in new ways to meet future challenges and support U.S. strategic goals.

### **Historical Strategic Derivatives**

President Dwight D. Eisenhower stated in a Special Message to Congress in April of 1958, “Separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight it in all elements, with all services, as one single, concerted effort.”<sup>10</sup> When this thought was written more than 50 years ago, it was before

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<sup>10</sup> Duane Robert Worley, *Shaping U.S. Military Forces: Revolution or Relevance in a Post-Cold War World* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006). Eisenhower Quote from Original Source with significance to the thesis author during Joint Advanced Warfighting School 2020-2021. As the military constantly evolves and takes on joint responsibilities and embraces leadership demands to guide Service

the advent of the internet and the free flow of information to shape the public. With the onset of the Cold War, the U.S. global posture included forward stationing in multiple countries spanning all theaters. The permanent stationing of forces in countries like Germany and South Korea were necessary as a Cold War deterrent against an aggressor that could launch a short warning attack. American strategic interests demanded that the U.S. field a large conventional force defending across a national boundary.

By defending a reorganized national boundary, any violation of that border by an aggressor gave the U.S. and its allies the legal justification for war. This in itself was a deterrent as the penetration by adversarial forces signals the beginning of war; and any war against the U.S would prove too great for anticipated gains. Thus, Western Europe and South Korea enjoyed decades of peace and prosperity behind an American military shield. Now, however, this approach offers little real deterrence in the current strategic environment. The U.S. force deployments gestured resolve and commitment to defense agreements. This strategy has become outdated, and strategists must reexamine the ways military forces are used. Taiwan and the Eastern European theater pose a different kind of challenge in what Joint Doctrine has coined “Competition Below the Level of Armed Conflict.”

We are no longer facing an enemy with large conventional forces poised to attack in the same Soviet, Communist China, and North Korean settings. Our adversaries do not need to defend borders and boundaries with big armies. Instead, as an Army concept paper indicates, strategic factors necessitate a direction that evolves and adapts.

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Members from each component and allies towards the pursuit of achieving theater campaign and national strategic objectives is imperative.

“Strategic competitors like Russia and China are synthesizing emerging technologies with their analysis of military doctrine and operations. They are deploying capabilities to fight the U.S. through multiple layers of stand-off in all domains space, cyber, air, sea, and land.”<sup>11</sup> Cyber security is paramount to prevent disruption. Understanding Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), modernizing and posturing forces with the right capabilities is the best way to meet the challenges of the future as a joint force. The future Joint Force Commander will require multi-domain formations that have modernized systems, leaders, and service members that are durable, and who can operate in highly contested operational environments.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the Joint Force must also engage and train with allies and partners in bilateral and multilateral exercises to build readiness, familiarity, and competence while demonstrating U.S. commitments to global security. There is a historical rationale for our global posture today but relying on Cold War models should be relegated to the past.

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<sup>11</sup> “The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028 Executive Summary,” APAN Community, accessed January 3, 2021, <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/mad-scientist/m/articles-of-interest/266419>.

<sup>12</sup> “The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028 Executive Summary.”

## Chapter 2: Historical Case Studies

With the conclusion of World War II, the effects lingered into a new world order and a struggle to contain the spread of Communism. The Cold War initiated a new American global defense posture. Europe had been divided between a Soviet dominated east and a U.S. protected west. Likewise, in Asia, Korea and Vietnam were similarly divided. Even before the end of World War II, the JCS was already outlining proposals for a network of air bases along Asian and European perimeters fostering power projection and deterrence.<sup>1</sup> “The JCS did not plan on establishing large garrisons with permanently stationed troops and aircraft or naval vessels at all the desired sites. Rather, the service chiefs were focused on obtaining ‘rights’ that could be exercised when necessary.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1946 the Department of State (DoS) opposed this approach and encouraged the JCS to eliminate the proposed basing scheme in the 570/40 plan.<sup>3</sup> The United States did not initiate serious developments until 1947 which were aimed at the USSR. Despite growing friction with the Soviet Union, U.S. leadership was unable to implement a perimeter defense approach until the Korean War. It was the catalyst that helped remove the obstacles in establishing a U.S. military presence globally. This chapter looks at two historical case studies and spotlights how rotational forces were used with the Berlin

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<sup>1</sup> Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783/2011* (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2012), 51.

<sup>2</sup> Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783/2011*, 51. Note: JCS, “Overall Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases and Base Rights,” SWNCC 38/25, November 7, 1945b, in DoS, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1946*, Vol. 1, 1946, 1174-1175.

<sup>3</sup> Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783/2011*, 52. NOTE: While WWII was still ongoing, the JCS conducted two postwar basing studies – JCS 570/2 (identifying 66 foreign sites) and JCS 570/40 (identified 84 foreign locations) which created an extensive network of (primarily air) bases overseas. Some strategic leadership believed that it was too heavily populated outside of the U.S. and costly.

Brigade in Europe as well as units and services members rotating through Korea as illustrated during exercises and as individual replacements.

### **European Theater: Berlin Brigade Case Study**

Between 1945 and 1965, the allied security force presence in Berlin remained at the center of constant concern. There was a strenuous effort to hold onto a piece of a free Berlin as the Cold War conflict would continue to ebb and flow between periods of heightened tension and relative stability. The U.S. Army's well trained professional separate Berlin Brigade emerged during the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961 and relied on a rotational timeline to maintain constant presence and deterrence as well as demonstrating to allies and adversaries U.S. commitment to a free Berlin and the defense of Europe. "From the beginning the United States took the position that the right to be in Berlin – under wartime and post-war agreements which the Soviet Union had not successfully repudiated – was inseparable for the right to get to Berlin, the right of access."<sup>4</sup>

During the crisis, the president at the time, John F. Kennedy ordered the reinforcement of the Berlin Brigade clearly signaling that the United States had no intention of backing down.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, over 148,000 Reserves and National Guard were called to active duty. Over the next three and a half years, different infantry battalions rotated into Berlin every 90-days. It demonstrated the political and psychological purpose of American intentions to exercise Allied access rights by moving through the territory across the autobahn.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "USAREUR Units - Berlin Brigade," accessed December 29, 2020, [https://usarmygermany.com/Units/Berlin%20Brigade/USAREUR\\_Berlin%20Brigade.htm#BBHistory](https://usarmygermany.com/Units/Berlin%20Brigade/USAREUR_Berlin%20Brigade.htm#BBHistory).

<sup>5</sup> "USAREUR Units - Berlin Brigade," accessed March 06, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> "USAREUR Units - Berlin Brigade," accessed March 06, 2021.

Europe during the Cold War witnessed more than 400,000 U.S. service members permanently stationed there at any given time.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, family members were able to accompany service members there with the intent on stabilizing forces for longer periods. Over time, Europe reduced its assigned forces but through military efforts, large scale exercises were conducted with NATO forces to build combat readiness and interoperability.

One of the most notable exercises that rotated forces through the European theater was REFORGER (from Return of Forces to Germany) which was conducted from the late 1960s to early 1990s. Forces were deployed from CONUS to demonstrate Western commitment to defend against Warsaw Pact aggression.<sup>8</sup> REFORGER was a way to bring rotational forces back to the European theater. It compensated for troop reductions and the U.S. agreed that forces returning to the United States would be held in a high state of readiness and prepared to respond to a crisis on the continent if needed.

### **Pacific Theater: Republic of Korea Case Study**

With the surrender of Japan, American forces occupied Korea south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and Soviet troops occupied the north to repatriate Japanese soldiers.<sup>9</sup> A Soviet-American commission attempted to address the issues of a divided country without success. In 1948, the two countries were established. “The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) were supported by Moscow and

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Feickert and Kathleen J McInnis, “Defender 2020-Europe Military Exercise, Historical (REFORGER) Exercises, and U.S. Force Posture in Europe,” n.d., 3.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Feickert and Kathleen J McInnis, “Defender 2020-Europe Military Exercise, Historical (REFORGER) Exercises, and U.S. Force Posture in Europe,” n.d., 3.

<sup>9</sup> Michael J. Lyons, *World War II: A Short History*, 5th ed (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2010), 303.

Washington, respectively.”<sup>10</sup> The two Korean governments aspired to unify the peninsula through military means. The Korean War (1950-1953) ended in an armistice and with the permanent basing of U.S. forces in the Republic of Korea.

Throughout the next several decades, Korea has seen its share of rotational forces to maintain conventional deterrence along the Demilitarized Zone dividing the country. The buffer runs across the Korean Peninsula, is 154 miles long and 2.5 miles wide and is overseen by a U.N. Command, which also directs several annual rotational exercises such as KEY RESOLVE, FOAL EAGLE, and MAX THUNDER. These exercises use both stationed and rotational forces for a combination of Command Post Exercises (CPX) in conjunction with live fire maneuver exercises supporting U.S., U.N., and Republic of Korea training readiness events. These rotational forces, like REFORGER in Europe, provide deterrence, support to key allies, and serve as a demonstration of U.S. resolve.

### **The End of the Cold War**

With the end of the Cold War, theater security exercises and engagements are using rotational forces more frequently. In Europe, USEUCOM is has already completed DEFENDER 2020 and currently executing a similar exercise in 2021. Additionally, USINDO-PACOM has used PACIFIC PATHWAYS for several years and executed PACIFIC DEFENDER, which is focused on the South China Sea. Just as accomplished in the Cold War, using rotational forces for exercises and engagements allows flexibility for use in crisis and demonstrates strategic agility. A RAND analysis has observed that, “as new and unpredictable threats emerge, alliance relationships are revised, and

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<sup>10</sup> Haruki Wada, *The Korean War: An International History, Asia/Pacific/Perspectives* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), xvi.

resources decline, past efforts are dealing with similar problems may yield important lessons for future decisions.”<sup>11</sup>

The use of rotational force has been a part of U.S. force posture for over 50 years and as part of a liberal world order. The United States’ struggle now, is to help foster its continuation for an American and allied global defense posture. As global strategic conditions change, rotational forces appear to be a solution to overcoming Cold War thinking about permanently stationing conventional forces around the world. While the Berlin Brigade and U.S. forces in Korea are excellent examples of strategic employment for a rotational force, their purpose no longer exists. A new rotational force concept is necessary to meet the new global security threats and demands. Lastly, it is the expanse dispersion of U.S. forces in multiple locations and in constant motion that create a strategic dilemma for our competitors to seize an initiative.

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<sup>11</sup> Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, xi.

### Chapter 3: A Complex Strategic Environment

The global security environment can be described as having multiple layers of systems and subsystems that shift frequently and modern strategists need to understand the interrelations of these systems.<sup>1</sup> To say, the world is complex is an understatement. As Harry Yarger notes, “This environment consists of the internal and external context, conditions, relationships, trends, issues, threats, opportunities, interactions, and effects that influence the success of the state in relation to the physical world, other states and actors, chance, and the possible futures.”<sup>2</sup> The conduct of war in such an environment only reinforces Clausewitz’s diction that the nature of warfare is complex, changes, and that it demands the gifts of intellect and temperament.<sup>3</sup> “Strategy seeks to cause specific effects in the environment – to advance favorable outcomes and preclude to unfavorable ones.”<sup>4</sup>

In consideration of the changing nature of warfare, it takes time for change to reveal successes or failures and for strategic leaders to fully acknowledge the vicissitudes are unfolding. It takes even longer for whole organizations to grasp new concepts since change, at first, goes unrecognized and is often resisted. For the state, the strategic environment is the realm in which the leadership interacts with other states or actors to advance the well-being of the state.”<sup>5</sup> Every state pursues what is in their own best

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<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Dorner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1986) 5.

<sup>2</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michel Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984) 100.

<sup>4</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 17.

<sup>5</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 17.

national interests and governments and strategic leaders will jostle for positions of advantage no matter how small they might be.

A recent Chairman of the Joint Chiefs made the statement, “The U.S. must be prepared to make decisions at the speed of relevance... While the fundamentals of war have not changed, the pace of change and modern technology, coupled with shifts in the nature of geopolitical competition, have altered the character of war in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”<sup>6</sup> Multi-Domain warfare and technology development have progressed into space, cyberspace, electronic warfare, and hyper-information demands from both state and non-state actors. The U.S. cannot afford to take an archaic strategic approach. Information categorized by volume, variety, value, velocity, and veracity can impact the geopolitical settings.<sup>7</sup> While no one can fully predict the future environment, one can discern emerging trends over time through collection efforts. “Our planning must adapt to provide a global perspective that views challenges holistically and enables the execution of military campaigns with a flexibility and speed that outpaces our adversaries.”<sup>8</sup>

The imperative to the Joint Force is obvious: To maintain a competitive advantage, the U.S. must adapt. Presently, joint forces often lack sufficient capacity to meet every combatant commander’s requirement. The Cold War model of permanently based forces defending a border is no longer useful as a strategic concept. The contemporary competitive environment demands a hard look at U.S. worldwide force posture and how the U.S. employs military capabilities in the future.

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<sup>6</sup> “From the Chairman: The Character of War and Strategic Landscape Have Changed.”

<sup>7</sup> Open Systems Media, “The Big Data Battlefield - Military Embedded Systems,” accessed December 21, 2020, <http://militaryembedded.com/ai/big-data/the-big-data-battlefield>.

<sup>8</sup> “From the Chairman: The Character of War and Strategic Landscape Have Changed.”

The key strategic question is this: Is there a way to posture joint forces to meet current strategic requirements that contribute to cost savings while giving CCDRs the operational capability to link tactical actions to strategic objectives using scalable joint forces in time, space, and purpose?

To answer this question, the Future Study Program 2020 on Calibrated Force Posture Experiment is an excellent place to start. It asserted that the future global levers of influence and deterrence should bring to bear all the elements of national power.<sup>9</sup> If the U.S. and allies are to realize the full potential of our strategic assets and possibilities, we must implement a whole of government approach that encompasses messaging from diplomatic, economic, military, and values-based themes outlined in key strategic guiding documents. Sometimes, the military arm of national power is not the right tool. Waging modern war today includes the idea of “not quite war – not quite peace.”<sup>10</sup> Wright states, “governments should attempt to stave off war by skillful diplomacy. . .”<sup>11</sup> He cautioned that peace is not a natural condition and international competition is something that is continuous in an infinite game.<sup>12</sup> New Joint Doctrine is capturing this through the expressions on competition below the level of armed conflict.

“For the joint force to play its role in advancing national interests, it must adopt a better framework for understanding, describing, and participating within a competitive operational environment. Rather than a world either at peace or at war, the competition continuum describes a world of enduring competition through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Email, Future Studies Program 2020 on Calibrated Force Posture Experiment Executive Overview.

<sup>10</sup> Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, 1st ed (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 19.

<sup>11</sup> Quincy Wright and Louise Leonard Wright, *A Study of War*, 2nd ed, Midway Reprint (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 396.

<sup>12</sup> Byron E. Greenwald, Essay, “Thinking About War,” Joint Force Staff College (JFSC), 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, Competition Continuum, 03 June, 2019, [https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn\\_jg/jdn1\\_19.pdf](https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_19.pdf)

This is a complete break from the Cold War model. It emphasizes that forces and capabilities are readily available to adaptable to changing conditions, scaling responses to the degree necessary to maintain a relative advantage in a complex strategic environment. Warfare is changing, yet some DoD entities are still committed to posturing large forces forward with basing and support structures that are costly and seem better suited to fighting old wars than to meet current challenges. If the U.S. is going to maintain a relative position of advantage, strategists need to see potential adversaries as they are, not as they want them to be. This necessitates looking at the global force posture and examining how joint forces are employed and structured.

## Chapter 4: Assessments and Strategic Posture

This chapter assesses different locations where U.S. forces are currently postured while considering the strategic environment, hostilities, deterrence, asymmetric means, and geopolitical factors. There are similarities on assigning forces stationed forward and positioned in Germany, South Korea, and in the Middle East as a deterring factor or to seize an opportunity to further security aspirations if one is presented. The debates over the scope, scale, and locations of deployed forces are not without precedent; policymakers evaluate U.S. forward military presence, and it is essential that they understand how and why forces are stationed around the world.<sup>1</sup> This chapter lays out the processes that are used for force posturing decisions and the advantages of maintaining footprints in key strategic locations. While posturing of forces enables a rapid response and extends operational reach, it requires constant review to ensure the U.S. can meet the current and emerging threats with the right kind of capabilities.

With the intent to modify U.S. overseas military posture to make it more agile and expeditionary, the Bush administration initiated the Global Defense Posture Review (GDPR) in 2004. “Foreign and overseas posture is the fundamental enabler of U.S. defense activities and military operations overseas. . .”<sup>2</sup> With some of the traditional states-based threats still in existence in North Korea and Iran as part of his termed “Axis of Evil,” which also included the recently toppled Iraqi government, the Bush

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<sup>1</sup> Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783/2011* (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2012), xi.

<sup>2</sup> DoD Instruction 3000.12, Management of U.S. Global Defense Posture, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Change 08 May 2017, 6. accessed April 15, 2021. <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300012p.pdf>.

administration focused on the fact that it confronted a different arrangement of threats including asymmetric approaches like terrorism and insurgencies.<sup>3</sup>

Today, to gauge assessments annually, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy reviews the U.S. Global Defense Posture (GDP) and Theater Posture Plans (TPP) with DoD oversight. It includes DoD Components, the National Security Council Staff (NSCS), and the Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (DoS/PM).<sup>4</sup> There is a process that is currently in place that assesses several different agencies' estimates to determine what U.S. forces, if any, should be applied towards theater challenges. This includes ready forces strategically and regionally position to respond as needed.

The Global Posture Executive Council (GPEC) reviews the U.S. Defense posture and includes OSD, Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Staff, the National Guard Bureau, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, and other Defense agencies.<sup>5</sup> It looks at the forces, basing, and agreements the U.S. has with host nations (HN) with the aim to prioritize and support joint and combined global operations and plans in foreign countries. It also clearly communicates Americas strategic interests to allies, partners, and adversaries. Each location is potentially enabled with contractors to optimize allocated forces, capabilities, and equipment. Often there is a supporting

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<sup>3</sup> Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture*, 87.

<sup>4</sup> DoD Instruction 3000.12, Management of U.S. Global Defense Posture (GDP), Change 08 May 2017, 1. accessed December 21, 2020.  
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300012p.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> DoD Instruction 3000.12, Management of U.S. Global Defense Posture (GDP), 4.

network of infrastructure, facilities, land, pre-positioned stocks, and wartime reserve material.<sup>6</sup>

As part of the Global Defense Posture (GDP) review process, Service Chiefs review CCDR posture plans and provide feedback on feasibility, executability, and resource and capability constraints. Additionally, they support CCDR posture-planning by providing required cost data and estimates for enduring locations.<sup>7</sup> This process helps to develop the dialogue between the critical agencies to evaluate the capability of current posture plans supporting campaign plans to achieve associated military objectives. There are never enough resources to fully commit to every CCDR's requirements and this thesis attempts to communicate a dialogue to use efficiencies while still maintaining effectiveness in theaters. The GPEC also helps "determine the appropriate senior governance body for further action for all posture matters where a deputy (OpsDepts) or Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Tank, Three-Star Programmers may be required to resolve resourcing or friction between key stakeholders."<sup>8</sup>

This answers the key strategic question, and this process is a way to determine ways to posture joint forces to meet current strategic requirements contributing to cost savings while giving some CCDRs the operational capabilities to link tactical actions to strategic objectives using joint forces in time, space, and purpose. This body of strategic leaders on the GPEC reviews the U.S. Global Defense Posture and prioritizes where U.S. Joint Force, whole of government efforts, and strategy should focus.

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<sup>6</sup> DoD Instruction 3000.12, Management of U.S. Global Defense Posture, 7.

<sup>7</sup> DoD Instruction 3000.12, Management of U.S. Global Defense Posture (GDP), Change 08 May 2017, 5. accessed December 21, 2020.  
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/300012p.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> DoD Instruction 3000.12, Management of U.S. Global Defense Posture (GDP), 8.

As strategy is hierarchical, the development seeks to increase the probability of policy success and favorable outcomes which can have cascading effects in the operating environment. “Strategy has an inherent logic that can be understood and applied but differs from planning. Both strategy and planning use ends, ways, and means, and are bounded by the criteria of suitability, feasibility, and acceptability.”<sup>9</sup>

First, both Joint Doctrine and Yarger refer to “ends” as objectives and what strategic leadership is trying to accomplish and reaching an end state or desired conditions in the operating environment. Second, strategic concepts are the “ways” and provide the “how” we achieve or accomplish our objectives. “They link resources to the objectives by addressing who does what, where, when, how, and why, with the answers to which explaining ‘how’ the objective will be achieved. Since concepts convey action, they often employ verbs in their construction, but are actually descriptions of ‘how’ the objective of a strategy should be accomplished.”<sup>10</sup> Lastly, U.S. joint force capabilities, funding, and host nation access to locations are the means and resources that we use. “In strategy, tangible resources include forces, people, equipment, money, and facilities; intangible resources can include willingness, courage, spirit, intellect and are much more difficult for the strategist to measure.”<sup>11</sup> On occasion, the military instrument of national power is not the right tool to use.

As the U.S. faces multiple contests in a complex national security environment, national strategic leadership should reflect and recognize that the military is stretched thin

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<sup>9</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, Letort Papers, no. 12 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 16.

<sup>10</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 69.

<sup>11</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 70.

and, in some cases, is not the correct instrument for challenges the country faces.<sup>12</sup> With the pandemic's effects on the economy, China's technological gains, and the subversion of our country influenced by foreign intervention in information, the U.S. needs to allocate budgets wisely. Senior U.S. military strategists and think tanks know the strategic processes that capture "how (concept or ways) leadership uses power (resources or means) to exercise control over sets of circumstances and geographic locations to achieve objectives (the ends).<sup>13</sup>

The DoD must continue to analyze the strategic environment and understand how adversaries, aggressors, and competitors are able to close the technological superiority gap that the U.S. possesses. If we fail to truly understand and realize that we are losing an advantage and misapply resources and budgets this increases risks. Strategists take an optimization approach to carefully look at risks, what is postured around the world, assess, and re-evaluate the costs associated with forces that we have positioned abroad.

### **Forces Currently Deployed as a Deterrent**

There are limitations on how much military conventional power the U.S. can station forward or, conversely, there is only so much that the U.S. can draw down if it wishes to remain a global power. There are associated financial expenses and potential political costs. On a reduced scale having the right capabilities to meet the challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is an art that requires careful attention and constant assessment. The

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<sup>12</sup> Nicholas Burns, *The state of the State Department and American Diplomacy*, The State of the State Department and American Diplomacy by Ambassador (Ret.) Nicholas Burns, Professor of the Practice of Diplomacy & International Politics at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Former Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and Ambassador to NATO, 92. accessed December 21, 2020. [https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/GD19\\_Burns.pdf](https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/GD19_Burns.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 6.

growing focus on the Indo-Asia Pacific region is generating new demands for greater U.S. involvement to strengthen partners and alliances and to develop technologically with the intended purpose to have overmatch if we ever go to war with China. This future may never happen, but the U.S. should modernize and dynamically employ the force to meet current and potential future problems.

America is caught oscillating back-and-forth like a tennis match between a re-balance to the Pacific, back to Europe, and a new shift back to re-balancing back to the Pacific as China gains more economic and military inertia. This is a symptom of strategic idiocy that the Joint Planning Executive Council (JPEC) needs to provide a solution on. Acknowledging, the U.S. must remain poised in a “boxer stance” or risk losing strategic advantages, how does moving more forces or capabilities into the region create more deterrence to counter China’s activities? What strategic purpose does it serve? And is it balanced by assessing costs and risks with efficiency and capabilities on activities we are not currently doing?

Research for this thesis included analysis on the DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports and Publications. The table below lists some of the major locations in the Pacific, Europe, and one can assume a split of forces withing the Middle East. This data reflects personnel who are permanently assigned for duty at these locations but fluctuates.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, this is reported to OSD and Congress quarterly and the information captured in the table is dated December 2020. It begs the question, do we have the right quantity, capacity, and capabilities postured forward? Or is this another illustration of old styles of deterrence postured across the globe? It shows the mismanagement of a clear

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<sup>14</sup> NOTE: Author monitored minor changes to Service Members reported at specific locations between September 2020 – March 2021.

process with no clear guiding purpose as national policy responds to political turbulence and events in the operating environment.

Table 1: Quarterly Report – Overseas Assigned Personnel<sup>15</sup>

JURISDICTION		TOTAL	ARMY	NAVY	USMC	USAF	USCG
Pacific	South Korea	~ 26,500	~ 17,000	~ 300	~ 200	~ 7,900	~ 5
	Japan	~ 56,500	~ 2,500	~ 19,900	~ 18,700	~ 12,700	~ 20
	Australia	400-1,000	< 50	< 50	~ 900	< 100	0
Europe	Germany	~ 34, 000	~ 21,000	~ 500	~ 400	~ 13,000	~ 15
	Italy	~ 12,500	~ 4,000	~ 3,700	~ 100	~ 4,600	~ 5
	United Kingdom	~ 9,400	~ 150	~ 300	~ 50	~ 8,800	~15
	Unspecified	~ 11,000	~ 6,300	~ 15	~ 2,800	~ 1,150	~ 900

The past several decades has challenged strategists and the U.S. experienced several major realignments. “The first, following the end of the Cold War, substantially reduced the number of overseas bases and returned thousands of troops to bases in the United States. The second, following the events of 9/11, expanded some overseas bases, created many new ones, and deployed close to 200,000 U.S. military personnel at the 2008 peak.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Table Source: The DMDC (Defense Manpower Data Center) data only reflects personnel who are permanently assigned for duty at these locations. The table does not include personnel on temporary duty or deployed in support of contingency operations.  
[https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp\\_reports.jsp](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp)

<sup>16</sup> William M. Hix, J. Michael Polich, and Thomas F. Lippiatt, “Army Stationing and Rotation Policy,” RAND Study, December 31, 2002,  
[https://www.rand.org/pubs/documented\\_briefings/DB421.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/documented_briefings/DB421.html).

With operations in Afghanistan sustaining minimal activity, the political friction between changing administrations, the desired negotiated withdraw with the Taliban, a diplomatic dialogue to withdraw or leave troops in Germany, and China presently gaining ground on economic and military fronts, the U.S. is entering another global posture realignment. The JPEC should re-convene as programmed with the new information it possesses to prioritize efforts in a wholistic manner. Currently, there are roughly 60,000 Service Members in Europe, 130,000 in the Pacific, which includes forces assigned in Hawaii, and 10,000 to 20,000 in the Middle East.

Furthermore, after two decades, there is a constant struggle to pull out of Afghanistan. Four presidents began their terms with a focus on “nation building at home” and a determination to limit overseas commitments. Yet each had trouble, some more than others, marrying words with deeds, and they ended up taking on more and more global responsibilities with little obvious benefits. Most Americans understand instinctively the connection between disciplined American leadership abroad and that of their own citizens.<sup>17</sup> However, this does not clearly articulate the reasons we refocused our efforts back toward Europe after Russia seized Crimea and executed incursions into Eastern Ukraine in 2014. This is just one illustration on how the JPEC is mismanaging a process with no clear guiding purpose.

The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) demanded a careful balancing of requirements on a new threat. Seemingly, over time, the GPEC executed the arrangement of forces and rotations through the Middle East quite well but now give the appearance that we are conducting business as usual. Are strategic leaders too preoccupied to

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<sup>17</sup> William J. Burns, William J Burns, “The Lost Art of American Diplomacy,” May 1, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-03-27/lost-art-american-diplomacy>.

reevaluate the changing strategic environment, the changing nature of war, and simply posturing forces in the GCC with the combatant commander that makes the loudest and compelling argument? Forward posturing has some advantages; however, do we still need the same quantities that we have today, or can we meet future challenges with tailored joint forces along with a whole of government approach? The Joint Staff in conjunction with other services are attempting to improve how decisions are framed for the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) and looking at all domains and force management processes are struggling to keep up with the pace of supporting NDS objectives in a rapidly evolving operating environment.

### **Posture Turbulence for Rotational Forces**

The latest administration's concerted effort to turn the attention and budget towards the U.S. military with the focus to defeat ISIS, stabilize Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, balancing growing Russian power in Eastern Europe, and a newly assertive China in the Pacific is still shaping as the strategic environment changes.<sup>18</sup> The struggle is continuing the annual programmatic processes to assess and evaluate global posture in the face of a high OPTEMPO and a demanding strategic environment that pulls planners in multiple directions creating distractions. Additionally, services continue to battle for greater defense budget percentages for their programs and facilities. In the end, no service will obtain enough funding to achieve everything it would like to, and the defense budget tied to supporting foreign policies is faced with cuts to address domestic issues

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<sup>18</sup> Nicholas Burns, The state of the State Department and American Diplomacy, The State of the State Department and American Diplomacy by Ambassador (Ret.) Nicholas Burns, Professor of the Practice of Diplomacy & International Politics at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

and concerns over COVID-19. This thesis is not recommending that the U.S. recoil back into isolation creating a black-hole and a power vacuum by removing our forces completely in order to budget modernization efforts.

The U.S. has become hyper-alert by other Great Power's new interwar developments and space and cyberspace seem to be of particular concern for the future. By using rotational forces this frees up the ability to shift funding towards keeping pace with our adversaries. It allows flexibility to use forces that are rapidly deployable where they are needed in comparison to having large conventional forces overseas. In some cases, rotational forces could already be in a theater that only need to be dynamically re-tasked with a different mission and where there is a crisis building.

There are several advantages to using joint rotational forces. First, as we conduct strategic movements from theater to theater, it helps to develop realistic expectations on how cumbersome and how quickly we could dynamically employ forces globally. Second, as we exercise with partners and allies, it strengthens relationships and the bonds that we have with other nations around the world and builds trust. Third, by working in a joint capacity with other U.S. services, air, ground, sea, and cyber service members, civilians, and contractors gain an understanding of service specific capabilities, cultures, and requirements.

Moving joint forces from theater to theater, at any scale, demands careful planning to ensure proper execution and to generate combat power when needed. All the services rely on the United States Transportation Command to deploy or move forces. Details on Time Phased Force Deployment Data load plans and experience in deployment systems increased efficiency when they are used frequently. Gaining this experience

helps generate momentum and increases the ability for the speed of assembly at the right time to achieve the effects and a desired end state. Additionally, there are qualitative messaging themes as we are able to rapidly project power anywhere in the world.

Secondly, as joint rotational forces arrive in a theater of operation for theater security cooperation, or in a time of crisis, it reinforces our commitment to our partners and allies. It strengthens our relationship with those that we have commitments to and helps to generate familiarity and interoperability. In any conflict, the United States cannot operate unilaterally in conflict or during a crisis. It is our relationships abroad that help support the liberal world order.

Lastly, as the military gains experience through the deployment process, working in a joint capacity helps develop leaders and contributes to their understanding of the capabilities and limitations that our forces have. Training opportunities are enhanced because they are free from family distractions or a “nine to five” workday mentality. Rotational forces gain an advantage by experiencing deployment like environments and are used in ways that are dynamic. Experienced is gained as we use joint forces, acculturate the total force from each of the services with the entire work force in or out of uniform. Civilian contributions that help to rotate or move the joint forces around the world provide continuity and contribute towards achieving strategic objectives.

In contrast to using rotational forces, there are, however, some clear advantages that the U.S. gains by stationing overseas. Logistically, it reduces transportation timelines with a Jominian approach and there is risk associated with reducing our overseas footprint too much. Some argue that it is in the U.S.’ best interest to maintain large units forward postured and reducing troop levels is a step in the wrong direction.

Logistics and sustainment of forces for continued operations can be its own challenge before the enemy seizes an opportunity to impact operations. The tyranny of distance is an expression that offers some concerning mathematical equations on time distance factors to meet an adversary. Antonine-Henri Jomini writes about getting Soldiers and materiel to the right place at the right time and the sustainment of those forces to achieve military, or in some cases, political objectives. Jomini concentrated a whole section in his book, *The Art of War*, on logistics and expresses that it is a constant care of defense forces and the art of moving armies.<sup>19</sup>

As movements are the logistics' bridge between strategy and tactics, the CCDR's perspective is vital.<sup>20</sup> Inevitably and understandably, CCDR's want capabilities easily accessible, close by, and ready for their immediate employment. This thesis argues for the use of joint rotational forces with a historical view to assert and interpret the past for the purposes of envisioning and managing the future.<sup>21</sup>

As we position forces for the relative position of advantage, "strategy must be consistent with national values and acceptable to international norms."<sup>22</sup> With domestic politics and budget expenditures, the way we posture forces must also adhere to administrations and the will of the population. "For the United States, this can be particularly problematic as liberal culture (free markets, equal opportunity, free elections, liberal democracy, constitutionalism, rule of law, and individualism) fundamentally

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<sup>19</sup> Antoine Henri Jomini, *The Art of War* (Mineola, N.Y: Dover Publications, 2007), 69.

<sup>20</sup> Scott W. Conrad, *Moving the Force, Desert Storm and Beyond*, (National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), McNair Paper 32, Washington D.C., 1994), 11.

<sup>21</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*, First issued as an Oxford Univ. Press paperback (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), 11: "To accumulate experience is not to endorse its automatic application, for part of historical consciousness is the ability to see differences as well as similarities, to understand that generalizations do not always hold in particular circumstances."

<sup>22</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 41.

clashes with that of many other societies. . . In the end, we must learn to see ourselves, our allies, our adversaries, and others as an integral part of strategy.”<sup>23</sup> National leadership and the population appear to have reached a point of exhaustion in Afghanistan.

Additionally, the United States must realize the ways our competitors are approaching competition below the threshold of armed conflict. The U.S. cannot afford to continue to develop systems to fight old wars because that is how they want adversaries to fight. China and Russia are using archaic American strategic leadership and bureaucratic systems to their advantage by exploiting small gains through grey-zone strategies.

### **New War Theory**

Acknowledging there are new war theorists who propose that with the changing nature of war, it is not probable that we will witness a Clausewitzian example of state-on-state lethal war at a scale akin to WWI or WWII, at least not in the immediate future. Furthermore, with the advent of nuclear weapons, states will steer clear of all out, unleashed military capabilities. In fact, joint publication is expressing military employment in terms of competition below the level of armed conflict. Mary Kaldor posits that, “War is a societal activity and involves the mobilization and organization of individual men for the purpose of inflicting physical violence. It is a phenomenon which took shape in Europe with the creation of states between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. War was recognizably the same phenomenon and a construction of the

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<sup>23</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 12, 42.

centralized rationalized, hierarchically order, territorialized modern state. Additionally, there have always been rebellions, colonial wars, or guerrilla wars both in Europe and elsewhere, but were given the description of irregular warfare or else not called wars at all.”<sup>24</sup> Today, these activities sometimes start with social unrest, protests, uprisings, and lead to more violence with criminal activity, murder, insurgencies and low-intensity conflicts.<sup>25</sup>

She argues against the Clausewitzian definition of war between states for a definable political end. War will stay below a threshold of major war which is contrary to how Clausewitz stated that, “war therefore is as an act of violence intended to compel an opponent to fulfill our will.”<sup>26</sup> With the acknowledgement that there are smaller wars, or low-intensity conflicts this thesis argues that state-on-state wars still occur and the recent skirmish between Azerbaijan and Armenia is a perfect example.

On a grander scale, the question remains on when, if ever, we will see superpowers go to war with each other that devastates the landscapes that we know today. While these questions complicate our understanding of war, there is a cognitive process that is presented by theorists dating back to antiquity with Thucydides, to the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Clausewitz, and even more contemporary with Quincy Wright.<sup>27</sup> What this really means is the ability to possess power in influence over world affairs. However, when it comes to LSCO, “What sets those scholars apart from others is their creation of metacognitive models that cast war as a phenomenon. Their greatest contribution was to

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<sup>24</sup> Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*; with an Afterword, January 2001, Repr (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 15-16.

<sup>25</sup> Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, Michael Eliot Howard, and Peter Paret, *On War*, First paperback printing (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> Byron Greenwald, Essay, “Thinking About War,” Joint Force Staff College (JFSC), 2020.

write about war broadly and develop useful theories as to the purpose, essence, character, and causes of war.”<sup>28</sup> There is a strategic culture within nations and its strategic leaders adopt it as their own. “In terms of chaos or complexity theory, the strategic environment is in the process of bifurcation. The order or relative balance of the bipolar Cold War becomes part of the past as a new order is formed.”<sup>29</sup>

As the lexicon of Great Power Competition weaves its way into military, strategic, and academic discussions, the U.S. security posture necessitates applying the appropriate ways and means to meet our strategic objectives. “The sad fact is that international politics has always been a ruthless and dangerous business, and it is likely to remain that way. Although the intensity of their competition waxes and wanes, great powers fear each other and always compete for power. The overriding goal of each state is to maximize its share of world power, which means gaining power at the expense of other states.”<sup>30</sup>

The discussion this thesis covers include the expressions captured in state competition. One assumes that great powers will continue to avoid great power war. However, the ability to respond rapidly with joint forces is paramount to meeting that objective for continuation of a relatively peaceful and stable global environment. Assessing our current posture and continuing to observe changes in the environment is the first step to ensuring we possess the right balance to meet future challenges.

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<sup>28</sup> Byron Greenwald, Essay, “Thinking About War,” Joint Force Staff College (JFSC), 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, 26-27.

<sup>30</sup> John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. (W.W. Norton & Company, 2014).

## **Chapter 5: The Cold War Model is No Longer Valid**

Nearly three decades have passed since the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Still, some leaders think in terms of large slow lumbering forces meeting on some forward battle front. The world has changed and moves at a much quicker pace and the speed of information is relentless. Rapidly deployable joint forces can help to meet or defeat adversaries preventing them from exploiting U.S. or allied weaknesses or vulnerabilities. Joint rotational forces located in strategically placed locations can provide both credible deterrence and a proportional response to military threats around the world to achieve military and political objectives. They integrate globally meeting broader security requirements of the U.S. and its allies. As they are assigned to a CCDR they are mission focused and mostly free of distractions as it takes on a deployment-like characteristic.

Rotational forces that are in constant movement around the globe could possibly create a dilemma for a great power competitor or maintain stability in a region as an adversary decides to use overt action to take advantage of the operating environment. This is the fundamental aspect of deterrence which creates risk for an adversary where competition, including the use of military capabilities to exploit an advantage. “Deterrence for the twenty-first century will not be the nuclear deterrence that keeps superpowers from engaging each other, nor the ad-hoc conventional deterrence that fails to keep perhaps thousands of smaller conflicts from erupting across the globe. Additionally, Effective twenty-first century deterrence needs to be national and multi-

national, multidiscipline, and multidomain, combining diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) actions, ways, and means.”<sup>67</sup>

As the nature of warfare changes, the Cold-War ended, and there are new emerging threats, Senator Sam Nunn, Chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee (SASC) stated, “We should not go into the future with just a smaller version of our cold war forces. We must prepare for a future with a fresh look at the roles and missions that characterized the past forty years. We must reshape, reconfigure and modernize our overall forces – not just make them smaller.”<sup>68</sup> We cannot afford to make the next twenty-years creating a ‘Cold War Lite’ version of our military that leaves Services battling each other for larger shares of the defense budget. The world has witnessed evolutions in military affairs, shifting political landscapes, and changes over time that leave some countries in a better strategic position after events have unfolded. Strategists should look carefully at how we proceed forward.

As an example, both the Army and the Air Force have significant changes every three years when Soldiers and Airmen rotate out through permanent changes of station (PCS). This de-stabilizes families and replaces roughly 30,000+ Service Members every three years in Europe alone.<sup>69</sup> Restationing and implementing rotations at some scale

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<sup>67</sup> Bryan Boyce, Twenty-First Century Deterrence in the Space War-Fighting Domain, Not Your Father’s Century, Deterrence, or Domain (Air & Space Power Journal; Spring 2019), 34.

<sup>68</sup> Senate, Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia speaking on The Defense Department Must Thoroughly Overhaul the Services’ Roles and Missions to the Committee on Armed Services, 102<sup>nd</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., Congressional Record (2 July 1992).

<sup>69</sup> Andrew Tilghman, “PCS Costs Rising across the Force, Even as Moves Decline,” Military Times, August 8, 2017, <https://www.militarytimes.com/2015/09/12/pcs-costs-rising-across-the-force-even-as-moves-decline/>. NOTE: Across the force, spending on what the military calls permanent-change-of-station moves is up 13 percent since 2001, increasing from \$3.8 billion that year to \$4.3 billion in 2014, according to the GAO. According to Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, March 2019 for 2020 Defense Budget, the government also incurs unique costs associated with oversea stationing with cost-of-living allowances, housing, childcare and youth programs, Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools for dependents, commissaries, medical and dental facilities, and a whole host of other sustainment enablers.

could reduce the effects on this turbulence within units. The optimized solution maintains a footprint overseas to assist in the logistics of rotating forces through the geographic combatant command's area of responsibility and keeps higher headquarters elements in place to ensure conventional deterrence and strengthens alliances through key engagements. Furthermore, the demand for specific fires as well as cyber targeting and defense niche capabilities are beneficial in theaters.

With the use of rotational forces, some of these expenses are eliminated and can better serve the military or the nation in other areas including modernization. Requirements for commissaries, schools for dependents, and family programs abroad could be optimized for the force that remains easing budget requirements overseas.

Future methods of employing military capabilities demand the use of smaller, more rapidly deployable joint capabilities coupled with a whole of government approach towards addressing future challenges. Future conflicts that use lethal and non-lethal military means are likely to engage for very limited periods of time with limited aims. However, the U.S. must be cognizant of changes in the strategic environment, learn from past engagements, and focus on a strategy that makes sense paving a way for the future.

As one looks at modernization and military capabilities, AI enabled warfighting is going to make future warfare hyper-active and at an intense pace. Robotics will add a new element to capabilities aiding in capacity within a theater that may be more politically acceptable than risking human lives. The ability to operate in space unencumbered by threats from competitors will be increasingly more important as we build a dependency on satellites and cyberspace connectivity for a host of GPS, telecommunication, and economic and financial activities.

The interaction between countries and militaries where humans make decisions and build relationships and alliances is becoming increasingly important as globalization impacts societies and the psychology of people. Citizens of states want to have security and trust. When states assert power through coercive military means, destroy property, and kill to impose their will, allies need assurance.

The military faces unprecedented challenges rooted in multiple strategic objectives, which include reassuring our allies, deterring adversarial aggression, identifying ways to defeat new, cheap, and lethal emerging technology techniques, and modernize our forces with optimum means in a resource constrained environment. rapidly deployable joint rotational forces offer a solution to meet threats before an environment erupts into crisis.

The efficient and effective use of joint rotational forces across the globe helps maintain security and gives the U.S. military and supporting government agencies operational experience. It includes expeditionary training with joint forces and strengthens our relationships, familiarity, and confidence with US allies and partners; and creates opportunities for budget shifts to modernize and develop future capabilities to achieve our strategic objectives holistically. The United States needs to continue to send a potent signal on our commitment to our allies and partners and enhances our capabilities through interoperability.

In addition to using rotational forces, the Department of Defense is embracing Multi-Domain Operations while facing civil military fusion with the informational, and economic elements of national power. Russia as a malign influencer in Europe could progress a position to gain control of Mariupol, Ukraine and NATO appears to be

developing a strategy for the U.S. to focus efforts on the Pacific. There is a critical capability in developing ISR capabilities to prevent China gaining a fait accompli in their pursuits to gain a strategic advantage. The United States is still the security partner of choice around the world and to our detriment, China is rapidly becoming (or has become) the economic partner due to low costs. As China continues to gain momentum, it demands that the United States use whole of government approaches and the military more efficiently.

## Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion

Post-Cold War deterrence is not new, but it is young.<sup>1</sup> U.S. strategists, in some cases, are still operating like Cold-Warriors with regards to the application of military means. Large forces built up on a border no longer serve the purpose that it once did. The U.S. stationed forces in anticipation of a particular type of scenario based on Cold-War models prepared to meet aggression. General Rupert Smith states in his book, *The Utility of Force*, “This endemic problem is the result of the shift in the paradigm of war and the continued resistance to it: politicians and soldiers are still thinking in terms of the old paradigm and trying to use their conventionally configured forces to that end – whilst the enemy and the battle have changed.”<sup>2</sup>

After Vietnam, the United States and adversaries engaged in an arms race building up technological capabilities to meet forces with an active defense strategy. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the United States used massive Cold War forces during the Gulf War and had an extremely successful operational military campaign. Until 9/11 we used forces in small incursions around the globe but now the geopolitical and military landscapes are changing.

The 21st century’s strategic security challenges place a new emphasis on great power competition, enduring conflicts in Southwest Asia including the removal of forces from Afghanistan, Russia attempting to reassert itself as a major power and a recent buildup of forces for a snap exercise on the border of Ukraine in the spring of 2021, and

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<sup>1</sup> Bryan Boyce, Twenty-First Century Deterrence in the Space War-Fighting Domain, Not Your Father’s Century, Deterrence, or Domain (Air & Space Power Journal; Spring 2019), 35.

<sup>2</sup> Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, 1st U.S. ed (New York: Knopf, 2007), 7.

China gaining global influences inching closer towards gaining a military advantage to approach their goal of gaining control of Taiwan. “The crises and contingencies that the Joint Force faces today are transregional (cutting across multiple CCMDs), all domain (land, maritime, air, space, and cyberspace), and multi-functional (command and control, intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, sustainment, and information). Today’s competitors and adversaries synchronize, integrate, and direct lethal operations and non-lethal elements of power with increasingly accelerated sophistication.”<sup>3</sup> There is no such thing as an end state, there is only a desired condition in an infinite game.

The efficient and effective use of joint rotational forces across the globe supports national security while also giving the U.S. military and supporting government agencies operational experience. In expeditionary training with joint forces, forces can strengthen relationships, build familiarity, and confidence with allies and partners, and creates opportunities for cost savings to force modernization that can be redirected into the development of future capabilities. Lastly, globally integrated Joint rotational forces located in strategically placed locations, scalable and tailorable as needed, can provide both credible deterrence and a proportional response to a variety of contingencies around the world in support of U.S. and allied regional or strategic objectives to meet the broader post-Cold War security requirements of the U.S. and its allies and partners.

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<sup>3</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI 3100.01D), Joint Strategic Planning System, 20 July 2018, Page A-1. <https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Library/Instructions/CJCSI%203100.01D.pdf?ver=QwWuzeiE721hTQFqaTuQrw%3d%3d>

## **Acronyms**

AOR – Area of Responsibility

CCDR – Combatant Commander

CCMD – Combatant Command

CONUS – Continental United States

CJCS – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

CPX – Command Post Exercise

DMZ – Demilitarized Zone

DoD – Department of Defense

DoDEA – Department of Defense Education Activity

DoS – Department of State

DoS/PM – Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs

DPRK – Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

FHA – Foreign Humanitarian Assistance

FTX – Field Training Exercises

GCC – Geographic Combatant Commands

GDP – Global Defense Posture

GFMP – Global Force Management Allocation Plan

GDPR – Global Defense Posture Review

GPEC – Global Posture Executive Council

HN – Host Nations

JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff

JP – Joint Publication

JTF – Joint Task Forces

LSCO – Large Scale Combat Operations

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDS – National Defense Strategy

NSC – National Security Council

NSCS – National Security Council Staff

NSS – National Security Strategy

OAI – Operations, Actions, and Investments

OPTEMPO – Operational Tempo

OSD – Office of the Secretary of Defense

PCS – Permanent Changes of Station

PRC – People’s Republic of China

REFORGER – from Return of Forces to Germany \*(NATO military exercise)

ROK – Republic of Korea

SECDEF – Secretary of Defense

TPFDD – Time Phased Force Deployment Data

TPP – Theater Posture Plan

TSC – Theater Security Cooperation

UCP – Unified Command Plan

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## Vitae

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