Conference Report

The Marine Corps
America’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness

39th IFPA-Fletcher Conference
on National Security Strategy and Policy
CONFERENCE REPORT

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On National Security Strategy and Policy

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Organized by
The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
International Security Studies Program of
The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Co-sponsored by
The Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps
The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
International Security Studies Program of
The Fletcher School, Tufts University
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The Marine Corps is America’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness — a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward-deployed and forward-engaged: shaping, training, deterring, and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our nation’s leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today’s crisis, with today’s force … today. Responsive and scalable, we team with other services, allies and interagency partners. We enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any magnitude. A middleweight force, we are light enough to get there quickly, but heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival, and capable of operating independently of local infrastructure. We operate throughout the spectrum of threats — irregular, hybrid, conventional — or the shady areas where they overlap. Marines are ready to respond whenever the nation calls … wherever the President may direct.

This Report does not necessarily reflect the views of the co-sponsors or organizers.
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As we planned this meeting, two basic facts became immediately apparent. First, in the past 20 years alone – just since the end of the Cold War, the Marine Corps has conducted many missions across the broad spectrum of military operations. This extends from major military combat to peaceful humanitarian assistance. As we look back even further, the Marine Corps has been called upon to perform expeditionary missions and to operate in ground wars from Korea to Vietnam, and Kuwait. Second, in recent years the Marine Corps has been called upon to fight alongside the U.S. Army and other services in Iraq and Afghanistan, leading Secretary of Defense Gates, in an address in San Francisco in August 2010, to call for each of the Services to: “find the right balance between preserving what is unique and valuable in their traditions, while at the same time making the changes necessary to win the wars we are in and prepare for the likely future threats in the years and decades to come.”

In keeping with this imperative, the conference addressed a series of key issues facing the Marine Corps as it works to ensure that its strategy and capabilities are based on the right mix for the threats and challenges of the years and decades ahead.

- Identifying the role of expeditionary forces in an emerging security environment that has changed dramatically in the last
generation with the proliferation of information technologies, weapons of mass destruction, and precision weapons; the effects of globalization and urbanization; and the heightened geostrategic importance of littoral regions;

• Developing, promoting, and sustaining partnerships that are joint, interagency, allied/partner, intergovernmental, and non-governmental in order to maximize capabilities and effectiveness;

• Assuring the ability to maintain crisis response, power projection, and the conduct of operations across a spectrum that extends from forcible entry to humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism, and counterproliferation;

• Supporting and enabling the force to meet emerging and future challenges based on requirements for agility, speed, and robustness in the Marine Corps as a middleweight force; and,

• Addressing challenges and opportunities from a regional or geographical perspective because these may differ dramatically from one region to another, and understanding what is common and what is unique.

These points of emphasis describe the focus of the various sessions and the overall conference itself. Throughout the conference we considered such issues as cyber challenges to military operations, required technology innovations for critical missions, education and training imperatives, reconciling budget constraints with modernization needs, and developing specialized capabilities and tailored forces for access operations.

For each of the sessions, we brought together a broad range of expertise – from the civilian and military communities, from the government and private sector. As a result, this conference provided an opportunity not only for speakers and the audience to learn from each other, but also for all in attendance to benefit from the vast array of expertise, knowledge, and experience represented by conference participants.

For this 39th IFPA-Fletcher Conference we were pleased to have the co-sponsorship of the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps. We worked closely with the Marine Corps leadership in all aspects of conference planning and execution. Because this conference was
designed to look beyond recent and current Marine Corps deployments to address emerging issues and challenges, we publish this report which summarizes and synthesizes presentations and discussions in order to give broader dissemination to the proceedings.

It has been our goal not only to contribute to the ongoing efforts within the Marine Corps, but also to help inform broader national security thinking about the role of expeditionary forces in the years ahead. This report is intended as a contribution not only to the Marine Corps as it adapts to meet new challenges based on its long and illustrious history, but also to a broader understanding of the role of expeditionary forces in a challenging and complex security setting. The report that follows, together with transcripts from the presentations and other related information, can be accessed on our website, http://www.ifpa.org/.

Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr.
President
Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
and
Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Security Studies
The Fletcher School
Tufts University
On April 14–15, 2011, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (IFPA), in association with the International Security Studies Program (ISSP) of The Fletcher School, Tufts University, convened the Thirty-Ninth IFPA-Fletcher Conference on National Security Strategy and Policy at the Marriott Metro Center in Washington D.C. Entitled “The Marine Corps: America’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness,” this conference was co-sponsored by the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps.

The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) conducts missions across the broad range of military operations: from peaceful humanitarian assistance/disaster relief and building partner capacity to major military combat. Its greatest strengths are its broad portfolio of capabilities and its time-tested ability to adapt swiftly to changing needs and circumstances.

A twenty-first-century world characterized by upheaval underscores the need for an expeditionary force that can project U.S. power worldwide. Such power can deter or preempt threats, reinforce and assure allies, and provide humanitarian and other assistance in the face of natural disasters, as in the case of aid given to ally Japan following the March 2011 tsunami.

Several key issues and themes emerged from conference discussions:

- The USMC Force Structure Review (FSR), completed in March 2011, evaluated and refined the organization, posture, and capabilities of the Marine Corps in the post-Afghanistan security environment. The FSR reaffirmed the USMC role as America’s crisis-response, expeditionary force in readiness within the joint force. It called for a restructuring plan over the next several years in which the Marine Corps will field a somewhat smaller force optimized for forward presence, which facilitates both ongoing engagement activities and rapid crisis response, while maintaining capabilities across the range of military operations.

- The Marine Corps is the nation’s preferred crisis response force because it is an expeditionary force in readiness. It is an agile, mobile, and robust middleweight force that travels...
lightly and deploys with its own logistics, a balanced air/ground team designed to respond to today’s crisis today, equipped to commence operations as soon as it arrives at the scene of conflict.

- Unlike the other U.S. military services, the Marine Corps does not have a main battle domain as its principal responsibility. The USMC “lane” intersects the land, sea, air, space, and cyber domains. As a middleweight force, the Marine Corps operates across the conflict spectrum, from high end to low end, in settings of regular, irregular, and hybrid conflict against adversaries that are states and those that are non-state armed groups.

- The Marine Corps capabilities for forward deployment and forward engagement provide an insurance policy that enables the United States both to respond rapidly in armed conflict situations and to mitigate crises before they become armed conflicts. With U.S. forward presence, a leadership vacuum created by a weak, failing, or failed government is less likely to be filled by actors hostile to the United States. The forward deployment of the U.S. Marine Corps also creates “decision space” as well as additional options that are essential to give U.S. policy makers the time to shape crisis response and crisis management. U.S. forward presence provides concrete proof of the U.S. commitment to the security of nations in the region.

- The forward deployment and forward engagement of the Marine Corps also affords increased opportunities for building partner capacity (BPC) such as training and joint exercises with the armed forces of nations in the USMC’s deployment area. The BPC activities of the Marine Corps foster relationships with their military counterparts and with civilian components as well, which can help a nation manage a crisis before it escalates to armed conflict or crisis.

- Interagency coordination for BPC, to help other countries better defend themselves, is being strengthened. However, civilian agencies such as the Department of State (DoS) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
often do not have the resources to cooperate as effectively as possible with the Department of Defense (DoD), the USMC, and other services.

- The top Marine Corps weapon priorities include a new-generation amphibious combat vehicle to replace the assault amphibious vehicle and procurement of the F-35B aircraft. The short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) capability of the F-35B would give the Marines a greater capacity to operate from a variety of ships, roads, and airfields with short and/or damaged runways, providing enhanced flexibility and the ability to project power across a broad range of scenarios.

- The Marine Corps budget, including the amphibious ships and other support provided by the Navy, comprises only 8.5 percent of the total DoD budget but supplies 31 percent of U.S. ground forces, 12 percent of its fighter attack aircraft, and 19 percent of its attack helicopters. These are extremely effective cost ratios and represent a significant return on the nation's investment.

- The land, sea, air, space, and cyber domains are becoming increasingly contested as additional states and non-state groups acquire advanced anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD)
systems and technologies and exploit U.S. vulnerabilities through asymmetrical strategies and capabilities. Aircraft carriers, aircraft, bases, and command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) networks that enable U.S. power projection are becoming increasingly vulnerable to A2/AD systems in the hands of U.S. adversaries.

- The Marine Corps forms an essential component of the joint team with each of the other services, as part of a whole-of-government effort and in concert with allies and coalition partners.
- The Roles and Missions Review ordered by the president in April 2011 will attempt to define the U.S. military’s roles and missions, together with the requisite capabilities to conduct those missions. Given the current fiscal situation and mounting constraints on the defense budget, the services will need to focus on their primary roles, minimizing costly duplication of effort. The U.S. Marine Corps expeditionary force in readiness should remain the nation’s crisis first responder, preparing the way for other U.S. military forces to be brought to the conflict if needed.

These key themes were based on several basic trends and issues, all of which will have important implications for the Marine Corps:

- More than half of the world’s population lives in urban environments, and this percentage will grow in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Eurasia, and East Asia. “Megacities” (cities with a population of ten million or more) and other large urban areas often lack proper governance and increasingly are dominated by tribes and gangs.
- A factor driving urbanization is the migration of large numbers of young people, the so-called youth bulge, to urban areas in search of jobs. High unemployment rates create fertile ground for radical groups to gain support and recruits for their local and global aspirations.
- Access to the world’s littoral areas will be an even greater necessity for the United States because of trends leading to
a growing concentration of populations in urban areas and megacities, most of which are situated in close proximity to the sea. Because 90 percent of world trade is conducted by sea, maritime security will continue to be a strategic necessity, as demonstrated in recent years with the surge in piracy mounted from ungoverned spaces in Northeast Africa and elsewhere.

• Changes in the security environment and the fact that the Asia-Pacific area is fast becoming the epicenter of global economic activity require the United States to look beyond its traditional allies to identify and develop new or expanded partnerships with countries that possess increasing economic and military capabilities and have interests consistent with those of the United States.

• The growing strategic importance of the Asia-Pacific area coincides with a legacy of potential crisis flashpoints—the Korean Peninsula, the Senkaku Islands, the South China Sea, and Taiwan-Mainland China—together with the persistence of devastating natural disasters in recent years. Such events and trends highlight the role of the U.S. military and its civilian and international counterparts both in shaping the security setting and in responding to political-military crises and natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific area.

• U.S. combat operations based on irregular warfare, such as America faced in Iraq and Afghanistan, where non-state armed groups operate among local populations, will become more frequent.

• The Middle East uprisings that began in late 2010 represent the beginning of a crisis of central authority in the greater Middle East that will unfold in the months and years to come. The potential for political fragmentation will be greatest in heterogeneous states, such as Libya, that emerged from the colonial era with no historic internal cohesion.

• A looming dilemma confronts the United States as a result of the rise in threats and challenges that coincides with growing pressures to cut defense spending. The result will be a possible
disconnect between national security requirements and fiscal constraints.

- The proliferation of increasingly sophisticated A2/AD systems and technologies, including long-range offensive missiles, integrated air defenses, and electronic and cyber warfare assets, by states and non-state armed groups, will challenge U.S. power projection into regions that were only recently essentially uncontested. Because power projection remains a crucially important U.S. national interest, America cannot relinquish the ability to operate in such challenging environments.

- The cyber domain holds important implications for U.S. power projection, including the Marine Corps as well as the other military services. Critical military networks, together with civilian networks on which the military increasingly depends, are progressively vulnerable to cyber attacks. Such attacks can form part of A2/AD capabilities designed to challenge U.S. power projection.

Conference participants identified several areas that must be addressed for the Marine Corps to fight “today’s war, today, with today’s force” while still preparing for future contingencies, including the need to:

- Strengthen USMC advisory competency in Afghanistan and elsewhere, especially as part of the building-partner-capacity concept discussed extensively at the conference. In addition, the Marine Corps should increase its BPC activities in other regions consonant with U.S. interests.

- Ensure the active participation of the Marine Corps in the development of strategic planning such as Air-Sea Battle, together with augmented Marine forward deployments in the Asia-Pacific area. As the locus of many decisively important twentieth-century Marine Corps operations, the vast Asia-Pacific area will remain a crucial Marine Corps strategic arena in the decades ahead.

- Craft a tailored strategic communications outreach program targeting audiences on Capitol Hill and in the Department of Defense to garner support for USMC programs and missions.
An outreach effort is particularly critical in the coming era of defense resource constraints and as the Defense Department undertakes and then implements a comprehensive Roles and Missions Review.

- Make the case in the outreach program that the Marine Corps is the nation's first responder, capable of immediate deployment in political-military crises and disaster relief/humanitarian assistance operations.

- Develop greater awareness of the Marine Corps role in the twenty-first-century security environment, especially on Capitol Hill where the knowledge and understanding of military issues is declining in part because fewer members and their staff have served in the armed forces.

- Identify the risks of specific planned or possible force structure decisions, including further reductions in active duty Marine personnel levels; lower numbers of amphibious platforms; reset (replacement of worn-out, damaged, or destroyed equipment) versus modernization; and the potential cancellation of the F-35B. Also articulate the negative impact these decisions will have on U.S. national security.

- Highlight and leverage the naval and self-sustaining characteristics of the Marine Corps when engaging with partner nations that may be wary of a heavy U.S. footprint or that may not have the proper indigenous infrastructure for hosting U.S. troops.

- Develop and improve capabilities for countering A2/AD technology, and continue to make the argument that a forcible-amphibious-entry capability is a strategic necessity for the United States as an essential part of the Marine Corps and a joint force if the nation is to maintain the ability to project power into regions of vital importance. The Marine Corps F-35B STOVL aircraft is required as a key component in U.S. power projection capabilities and in countering A2/AD assets.

- Recognize that at the same time that internet networks are becoming essential features of military operations, the
A number of hackers (states, non-state groups, and individuals) challenging U.S. networks is growing exponentially. Therefore, it is vital that U.S. departments, agencies, and the military services continue to operate even if their networks have been penetrated and compromised. Technologies to allow more open networks with components that do not respond to other nodes in the network unless there is proper authentication and authorization may provide a solution to this growing problem.

- Continue to incorporate cyber issues and cyber capabilities into planning and force structure, given the cyber threat and the fact that the Marine Corps is the nation’s first responder to crisis. This includes further expanding its collaborative relationship with the National Security Agency, developing a strong leadership position at U.S. Cyber Command via Marine Forces Cyber Command, and ensuring that the Marine Corps fully leverages the cyber capabilities of the joint force. The recent increase in Marine Corps personnel devoted to cyber operations is an important step in this direction.

- Develop throughout the Marine Corps the cultural knowledge and language skills necessary for understanding the environments in which Marines operate so that they can adapt even more rapidly to new developments on the ground as part of the Marine Corps’ unique expeditionary mindset.
Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Marine Corps has conducted numerous missions across the broad range of military operations. This extends from major military combat to humanitarian assistance following natural disasters. As we look back even further, the Marine Corps has been called upon to perform expeditionary missions and to operate in ground wars from Korea to Vietnam. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Marine Corps has fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. These conflicts led Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in an address in San Francisco in August 2010, to call for each of the services to “find the right balance between preserving what is unique and valuable in their traditions, while at the same time making the changes necessary to win the wars we are in and prepare for the likely future threats in the years and decades to come.”\(^1\)

It is axiomatic that the Marine Corps must strive to ensure that its strategy and capabilities can meet the threats and challenges of the years and decades ahead. These extend from counterinsurgency to major military operations, from regular to irregular warfare and to hybrid operations comprising various combinations of actors, strategies, and capabilities. At the core of this discussion is the role of expeditionary forces in an era in which there are growing challenges to access that will need to be addressed.

As it develops strategy and force structure in this global setting, the Marine Corps must continue to meet the requirements for agility, speed, and robustness necessary to fulfill its role as a middleweight force: it must be capable of traveling lightly with the ability to complete its mission upon arrival. At the same time, the Marine Corps must be capable of winning today’s battles and preparing for emerging and future threats in a constrained budget environment. Given current fiscal limitations, the Marine Corps must continue to work jointly with the other services, while each defines its “lane” of future operations.

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The United States in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and Opportunities

In his address opening the conference, Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), chairman of the Subcommittee on Seapower of the Senate Armed Services Committee, pointed out the challenges the United States faces today and how the Marine Corps is well positioned to meet many of them. The most serious threat to the United States is actors, especially non-state groups, who may gain access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Such weapons are becoming increasingly available to those who might not hesitate to use them against the United States and its allies. The territory from which these groups operate will probably be expanded in the future as a result of the growth in ungoverned spaces providing safe harbor to terrorists, pirates, and other non-state armed groups. At the same time, national boundaries are becoming less relevant as a result of transnational phenomena such as the internet.

Globalization in the twenty-first century, both in the growth of physical mobility and in instantaneous online communications, means that the United States is no longer protected or isolated by vast oceans. A cyber hacker can attack the U.S. electronic infrastructure from any part of the globe. A commercial aircraft could carry threats that are either intentional, such as a passenger with a bomb, or accidental, such as a traveler with an undiagnosed communicable disease.

Countering these threats requires the United States to be engaged globally. The proliferation of knowledge about WMD may call for

Senator Jack Reed, Chairman, Subcommittee on Seapower, Senate Armed Services Committee
preemptive action against non-state groups in order to deny them safe havens and limit their access to WMD systems. The suicidal bent of these groups makes deterring them extremely difficult. Consequently, the United States must maintain a vigorous preemptive posture towards such groups, while at the same time constraining their access to nuclear materials and other WMD. Senator Reed suggested that the unconventional warfare and cultural skills of the Marines, which were on display in Anbar Province in Iraq and subsequently in Helmand Province in Afghanistan, are critically important especially if the United States is once again compelled to dislodge terrorists and stabilize the territory from which terrorists have operated.

There is a growing need to understand the impact of the cyber domain on conflicts between states and also between non-state actors and states. Referring to the Stuxnet attack\(^2\) that may have set back Iran’s nuclear program and the disabling of South Korea’s global positioning system (GPS) by North Korea,\(^3\) Senator Reed likened the extremely limited knowledge about cyber warfare today to how airplanes were viewed in the 1920s. At that time few understood how

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\(^2\) In September 2010, Iran’s Natanz uranium enrichment plant was attacked by Stuxnet, a computer virus containing specialized malware that monitors and subverts supervisory control and data acquisition systems of industrial equipment, destroying 987, approximately one-fifth, of Iranian centrifuges. The precision of the strike against a critical component of the enrichment facilities, coupled with the sophistication of the attack, led many to conclude that the attack was conducted by a well-financed team supported by a nation-state. For more information see William Broad, John Markoff, and David Sanger, “Israeli Test on Worm Called Crucial in Iran Nuclear Delay,” *New York Times*, January 15, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/world/middleeast/16stuxnet.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1.

\(^3\) In April 2011, the cyber warfare unit (approximately thirty thousand strong) of the Reconnaissance Bureau of North Korea’s People’s Army launched an attack that jammed South Korean global positioning satellites (GPS) in protest of joint military training exercises between U.S. and South Korean forces. While damage was minimal, the attack was characteristic of a new era of electronic warfare on the peninsula, and it alerted defense officials to future security threats, such as the development of a North Korean electromagnetic pulse bomb. It also prompted South Korea’s Cyber Command to double in size to some five hundred experts. For more information see Joohee Cho, ”North Korea Nears Completion of Electromagnetic Pulse Bomb,” *ABC News / International*, March 9, 2011, http://abcnews.go.com/International/electronic-warfare-north-korea-nears-completion-electromagnetic-pulse/story?id=13081667.
manned flight would be used as a vital component of national security strategy. It took subsequent conflicts to provide a greater appreciation of the potential afforded by airpower. Understanding of the uses and ramifications of cyberspace and cyber war is at a comparably preliminary stage today. Nevertheless, Washington must begin now to factor the cyber domain more fully into its national security thinking and planning.

Speed, Flexibility, Adaptability

In the emerging security environment, speed and flexibility are necessary complements of strategy and force structure. The United States requires forces that can move rapidly and operate with decentralized decision making. U.S. forces must be adaptable to rapidly changing circumstances and situations. As Senator Reed and several other conference participants pointed out, U.S. adversaries are thinking and calculating: they adapt, and the United States must adapt too. Self-examination will be key to learning, but more important will be the ability to quickly incorporate the lessons learned into practice. The Marine Corps has an expeditionary tradition and mindset that uniquely qualifies it to operate in such a security setting. This was another theme that emerged repeatedly during the conference.

Ensuring Access

As an Army Ranger and a paratrooper thirty-five years ago, Senator Reed learned the mantra, “If you can be seen, you can be hit. And if you can be hit, you’ll likely be killed.” He pointed out that U.S. adversaries can now see farther and hostile nations will continue to increase their capacity to target amphibious forces with precision weapons. As the United States strives to maintain battlespace dominance, this challenge makes it more difficult for U.S. forces to presume that they will have largely unimpeded access from the sea. Nevertheless, access remains essential to America’s ability to project power. This is particularly true in the western Pacific with its vast distances and numerous potential crisis flashpoints. In addition to the sea- and cyber-domain challenges, Senator Reed cautioned not to take U.S. air dominance for granted even though the United States
has had overwhelming air superiority since the latter phase of World War II. Although it is unlikely that a hostile air force will successfully challenge U.S. airpower, the United States should be prepared to counter the proliferation of capabilities such as man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS) because of the threat that area-denial/anti-access weapons may pose to its ability to project power. Senator Reed suggested that MANPADS may create threats to U.S. forces comparable to those of improvised explosives (IEDs) that have had to be overcome in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Operational Preferences

Senator Reed highlighted other themes that formed the basis for subsequent discussion. For example, in fighting jointly, the United States seeks to exploit the skills of each of the military services. Just as the services have strengths that collectively are mutually reinforcing, the United States benefits from multinational coalitions that allow it to take advantage of allied capabilities. Furthermore, coalition operations may lessen the U.S. burden and confer the political legitimacy that comes from the United States’ having others fighting alongside its own forces. Despite the advantages of fighting in a coalition, however, such operations introduce delicate issues of command and control, different concepts of operations and tactics, problems arising from lack of equipment standardization, and caveats that may place restrictions on when, how, and where the coalition members’ forces can operate.

Some of these issues are currently on display in the NATO-led operation against Gaddafi in Libya, as they have been in Afghanistan as well. Coalition efforts can be made more effective if nations contributing

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4 National caveats for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (twenty-seven of the forty-eight nations operate with them) restrict state activities in Afghanistan in accordance with national laws and policies. German forces, for example, are authorized to engage in combat only if acting in defense of German positions, but are prohibited from engaging in counterinsurgency operations. French forces must use force “proportional” to a threat, avoid bombing civilian infrastructure, and have “visual recognition” of a target before attacking. For a comprehensive look at various national caveats see “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/November_1230_Report_FINAL.pdf, last modified November 2010.
forces have trained together. For example, some militaries operating alongside U.S. forces have been trained and mentored by the United States. International partnerships must continue to be a key element of U.S. military planning and operations. The Marine Corps has developed partnerships with Afghan forces, as it did in Iraq with Iraqi forces. The relationship between U.S. and Egyptian armed forces can be credited as one of the reasons for the relatively peaceful transition so far in Egypt.

Facing Twenty-First Century Challenges: USMC Force Structure Review

In his address on the first morning of the conference, General Joseph Dunford, Jr., assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, discussed the Force Structure Review (FSR) that the Marine Corps had published in March 2011 (see box on next page). General Dunford recalled that incoming USMC Commandant General James F. Amos viewed Secretary Gates’ August 2010 speech as an opportunity for the Marine Corps to identify those capabilities that would be most relevant for the future. Although it has a long and illustrious history, dating from 1775, the Marine Corps was established as the nation’s force in readiness by the Eighty-Second U.S. Congress in 1952. At that time the USMC was defined as “the force that should be most ready when the nation is least ready.” The twenty-first-century Marine Corps builds on this role, with the 2011 FSR emphasizing a force structure that is “light enough to leverage the flexibility and capacity for amphibious shipping yet heavy

5 Strongly influenced by the recent activity of the Marines in the Korean War, the Eighty-Second Congress in 1952 sought to create a national “force in readiness” that was sea-based and expeditionary: a key goal was a force that could “prevent the growth of potentially large conflicts by prompt action during their initial stages.” A Marine force was established for the purposes of conducting land operations essential to a naval campaign; suppressing minor international disturbances; and such other duties as the president may prescribe. For a detailed description see Navy League of the United States, “Seapower / Marine Corps,” http://www.navyleague.org/seapower/seapower_marine_corps.htm.
enough to accomplish the mission. Larger than Special Operations forces, but lighter and more expeditionary than conventional Army units, we must be able to engage and respond quickly—often from the sea—with enough force to carry the day upon arrival.”

Completed in March 2011, the FSR calls for a restructuring plan over the next several years in which the Marine Corps will field fewer infantry and artillery battalions, armor companies, and aviation squadrons and headquarters elements. The number of active-duty forces will drop from 202,000 to 186,800, with the fight in Afghanistan dictating the timing of the reductions.

**Reshaping Marine Corps Capabilities and Capacities**

The Force Structure Review:

- Reduces the end strength of the active component of the Marine Corps from 202,000 to approximately 186,800 following the completion of Marine Corps operations in Afghanistan
- Provides a force optimized for forward presence, which facilitates both ongoing engagement activities and rapid crisis response
- Provides readiness for immediate deployment and employment
- Reshapes organizations, capabilities, and capacities to increase aggregate utility and flexibility across the range of military operations
- Properly balances critical capabilities and enablers
- Creates an operational reserve component without any reductions in reserve force structure
- Creates opportunity for more closely integrated operations with the Navy, Special Operations, and interagency partners

Despite changes in the security environment and the threats facing the United States, the Marine Corps remains vitally important as the nation’s crisis response force of choice. According to General Dunford, Marines “have to be forward-deployed and forward-engaged to respond to today’s crisis with today’s force today.” Its ability to be forward-deployed and forward-engaged aboard Navy ships gives the USMC a unique capability both to deter conflicts and to build relationships and partner capacity. As General Dunford stated, the Marine Corps is “a force that can immediately deploy to a crisis and buy time and space for decision makers.” Finally, he said, it is “a force that can enable joint and combined operations of any size.” General Dunford pointed out that Secretary of Defense Gates had approved the Marine Corps FSR in early 2011.

The Marine Corps and Declining Department of Defense Resources

General Dunford briefly recounted the proud history of the Marine Corps and listed its numerous and diverse operations even since Secretary Gates’ August 2010 speech: from combat in Afghanistan to humanitarian relief in Pakistan; from fighting piracy to training Jordanian armed forces; from supporting roles in response to natural disasters in the Philippines and Japan to deploying ready forces off the coast of Libya. He acknowledged, however, the economic challenges facing the United States and the likelihood that Department of Defense (DoD) resources will not be as plentiful in the future. As a result, the Marine Corps cannot stake its claim for resources simply on its past contributions and accomplishments, General Dunford cautioned.

At the same time, a lesson from history clearly demonstrates the devastating effect of budget cutting without clear foresight of its strategic consequences for America’s ability to fight and win the nation’s wars. Following World War II, the United States ramped down its armed forces. These reductions were especially deep for the USMC. Some government officials even questioned the need for the Marine Corps because amphibious operations were said to be a relic of the past. As a result of drastic reductions, the U.S. forces were generally unprepared for the expeditionary mission they were called upon to play in Korea in 1950. Initially, U.S. forces were outgunned,
they lacked adequate training, and they did not trust their leadership. Marine Corps forces were, however, the exception. Although small in number, they were extremely effective in combat. Given their effectiveness, along with the success of the Inchon amphibious operation in September 1950, Congress affirmed the Marine Corps as the nation’s expeditionary force in readiness in 1952.

The unique expeditionary capabilities envisioned in the 1950s remain unequivocally valid for the Marine Corps today. The dramatically changed security setting makes the need for robust expeditionary forces even more pressing. A ready expeditionary force provides an insurance policy without which the United States would run the risk of putting inadequately trained units in harm’s way, as was found necessary in South Korea in 1950. America would also face the possibility of not being able to respond rapidly in a non-combatant operation when U.S. citizens and interests are challenged and unable to help coalition partners, allies such as Japan, or other countries of importance to the United States (such as Pakistan, Haiti, or Indonesia) respond to humanitarian crises, including earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis.

As the nation’s crisis response force, the Marine Corps, as the FSR points out, provides “best value” in “terms of capability, cost and readiness relative to the operational requirements of our Geographic Combatant Commanders.” Including amphibious ships and other support from the Navy, the Marine Corps represents 8.5 percent of the DoD budget. Nevertheless, it provides 31 percent of U.S. ground
forces, 12 percent of its fighter attack aircraft, and 19 percent of its attack helicopters. In addition to these cost-effective ratios, the Marine Corps’ forward-deployed, forward-engaged position allows it to leverage its relationships with other countries in times of crisis. The USMC is helping to build partner capacity in part so that other nations with shared interests with the United States will also have greater ability to confront crises before they escalate to armed conflicts. Finally, because it is forward-deployed and forward-engaged, the Marine Corps gains unique and beneficial insights into the security setting that it is helping to shape.

General Dunford underscored the fact that the Marine Corps must prioritize its needs, especially in an era of budgetary constraints. The Marine Corps needs a new-generation fighting vehicle with a ship-to-shore capability, and developing an amphibious combat vehicle and replacing the assault amphibious vehicle are top Marine Corps priorities. In aviation, the Marine Corps is focused on the need to procure the F-35B, a fifth-generation (that is, most advanced generation) fighter. General Dunford noted that, although there are cost concerns about the F-35B, its vertical-landing capability allows for deployment on twenty-two big-deck ships, as opposed to the eleven such ships that can accommodate fighters without a capacity for vertical landing. As a result there will be far greater flexibility in times of crisis, with twenty-two carriers able to deploy with F-35Bs. At a time when fewer aircraft carriers may be forward-deployed because of budget constraints, having twice as many ships capable of carrying F-35B fighters provides additional flexibility and deployment options.

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6 Currently, approximately thirty-two thousand Marines are forward-deployed and forward-engaged in operations supporting U.S. national security interests, conducting security force assistance, and building partnership capacity with U.S. allies. In Africa, Marines assist the African Contingency Operations and Training Assessments in nineteen nations; in the Middle East, they are stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq; in Europe, over fifteen hundred Marines protect U.S. embassies and consulates; across the Pacific, the Marines run cooperative training exercises with Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, Mongolia, and South Korea; and in Central and South America Marines conduct tactical exercises, humanitarian assistance, and anti-drug trafficking operations. For a complete list see “Deployments,” http://www.marines.com/main/index/winning_battles/assignments/deployments/caribbean_central_and_sou.
The conference’s opening session focused on the dynamic security setting in which the Marine Corps will operate in the years ahead. The geostrategic map of the twenty-first century has changed dramatically and rapidly in the past two decades, shifting from competition between superpowers to a world of increasing instability and conflict. The only surprise about the future will be the absence of surprise, noted Dr. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., president of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis and Shelby Cullom Davis professor of international security studies at The Fletcher School, Tufts University.

The twenty-first-century security setting contains many features with which U.S. forces and security planners are familiar, such as: states; non-state armed groups; proliferation; globalization; urbanization; and regular, irregular, and hybrid warfare. However, it also contains many unknowns that inevitably will affect U.S. calculations, plans, and strategies. Given that uncertainty, it is unlikely that the Marine Corps or the other services will get their force

Dr. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., President, IFPA, and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Security Studies, The Fletcher School, Tufts University
structure 100 percent right. However, the Marine Corps cannot afford to be too far wrong in balancing current capabilities with future threats. Central to its efforts to balance capabilities with future threats, the USMC considered the twenty-first-century security environment prior to launching its recent Force Structure Review. The 2010 Commandant’s Planning Guidance envisions “a world of increasing instability and conflict, characterized by poverty, competition for resources, urbanization, overpopulation and extremism.” Such themes were amplified by speakers not only in the first session but also throughout the conference. Especially in the opening session, speakers focused on emerging population trends and the ways in which these trends will threaten the United States and its interests. There was also a discussion of advanced weaponry and other offensive capabilities being developed by states and non-state armed groups. Finally, first-session panel members considered how a forward-deployed, forward-engaged expeditionary force with amphibious assault capabilities would serve as the tool of choice in confronting these challenges, a point that was highlighted numerous times in subsequent sessions.

Major Trends Shaping the Twenty-First-Century Security Landscape

According to Dr. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., president of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, several major trends are shaping the emerging security environment: (1) declining defense budgets at a time when the level and intensity of challenges and threats are increasing in scale and shifting in form; (2) U.S. advantages, including a near monopoly in guided weaponry and precision-guided warfare, are dissipating with the proliferation of capabilities in the hands of others; (3) precision-guided weapons are cascading down to

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irregular forces, and “hybrid warfare” is becoming more widespread; (4) vitally important infrastructure, including oil- and gas-drilling platforms, wellheads, pipelines, pumping stations, switching stations, and fiber-optic cables are becoming increasingly vulnerable; and (5) the potential for cyber war is growing substantially. Dr. Krepinevich also noted a shift in wealth, with low growth rates in Europe and high growth rates in parts of the developing world. This will lead to the need for Washington to look beyond traditional allies to identify other countries with capabilities and interests consistent with its own to the point where America can engage in partnerships. Last but not least, Dr. Krepinevich underscored the importance of demographic trends shaping the future security landscape. He pointed to a declining Russian population and an aging Chinese population, most of which remains impoverished by Western or Japanese standards. In many European countries, the resources available for defense are drastically limited by a population with more older than younger people and expensive social welfare programs. Essentially, he observed, vibrant population growth in the developing world, together with an aging population in much of the developed world, creates a case of the rich millions and the poor billions, the poor young and the wealthy elderly. Youth bulges in parts of the developing world leading to economic frustration and instability will coincide with the ability of such groups to organize themselves, thanks to the proliferation of information technologies, social media, and military capabilities. Subsequent speakers discussed these and other themes and trends.

Dr. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., President, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments
Global Populations Trends

The twenty-first century will be a world of “megacities,” noted author Robert D. Kaplan, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, and national correspondent for *The Atlantic*. Currently, more than half of humanity lives in urban conditions, including 468 cities with populations of over one million. Twenty-five cities today have populations of ten million or more; within the next five years it is expected that this number will increase to forty. At the current rate of growth, two-thirds of the global population will live in urban conditions by 2025, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and across Eurasia. For the most part, these cities will be overcrowded and poorly served by national governments in terms of security, infrastructure, and sanitation. This urbanization is partly driven by migration from rural areas to megacities by young people in search of employment. As a result, these megacities will be increasingly populated by people who are both young and unemployed and therefore highly susceptible to radicalization and recruitment by terrorists and other non-state armed groups, including criminal gangs.

Figure 1: Global Megacities Map

Maritime Security

While the superpower confrontation dominated the Cold War geostrategic landscape, Mr. Kaplan emphasized that the greater Indian Ocean, from the Horn of Africa to the South China Sea, will be the “center stage of operations” in the twenty-first century. This vast area contains huge energy reserves as well as emerging megacities. In particular, China has growing interests that may compete with those of Russia, and India will become a more important actor in and beyond the region. The Indian Ocean spans the littorals of states extending from the African coast to Southeast Asia and Australia. While during the Cold War the Indian Ocean was peripheral to the East-West conflict compared to NATO-Europe and the Western Pacific, today energy resources, together with urbanization trends, are changing this vast region rapidly and dramatically.

The growth in urbanization enhances the importance of the littorals not only in the Indian Ocean area, but elsewhere in the world as well. Most of humanity now lives within two hundred miles of a coast. Megacities are emerging on or near coastlines. In addition to the many other problems confronting these megacities, their coastal locations make them especially prone to natural disasters (and their poor infrastructure makes such disasters particularly destructive). The strategic importance of littoral areas enhances the importance of maritime security because, even in this age of mass air travel and the internet, some 90 percent of intercontinental trade goes by sea. Maritime vulnerability has been highlighted in recent years by the

Robert D. Kaplan, Senior Fellow, the Center for a New American Security, and National Correspondent for The Atlantic
numerous acts of piracy committed against the ships of many nations. Littorals form the support infrastructure for much of the international piracy problem.

Although much discussion was focused on failed or failing states, the emerging security environment was also a topic of concern as it too features not only irregular forces but more sophisticated and advanced military capabilities as well. The Asia-Pacific, including the Indo-Pacific area, is becoming a central part of the global economy with advanced navies and air forces as well as ground forces and cyber capabilities. It is not only China, but also countries in Southeast Asia whose defense budgets are increasing. For example, Vietnam has acquired state-of-the-art Kilo-class submarines. China is building deep-water ports along the Indian Ocean in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Burma. These will not be military bases per se, but instead part of a twenty-first-century trading empire that China will have from East Asia to the Mediterranean.

Unconventional Warfare Challenges and Terrorist Threats

Lacking effective governments, many megacities will be dominated by tribes and gangs. Such an environment will also be fertile ground for terrorists and other non-state groups to gain sympathy and recruits by promising to provide essential services. Much of the popular local appeal for Hizbullah in southern Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza derives from these groups’ ability to furnish basic necessities. When the Taliban first consolidated power in parts of Afghanistan, many Afghans were pleased to see an end to the long civil war, even though the price for that stability was harsh Taliban rule. Kaplan encouraged USMC planners to study the lessons of its operations in Fallujah, as well as Israeli operations in Jenin and Russian operations in Grozny.8 These

8 The First Battle of Fallujah (Operation Vigilant Resolve) in Iraq, in April 2004, was initiated by U.S. forces and led by the 1st Marine Division, as an effort to eliminate or apprehend Iraqi insurgents in response to the murder and mutilation of four U.S. Blackwater private-military contractors. It was a watershed moment in the Iraq war
conflicts provide templates for the future urban security setting in which the Marine Corps will operate as an expeditionary force.

In Fallujah, Jenin, and Grozny conventional armed forces faced irregular conflict against non-state armed groups that had taken refuge among local populations. As has been illustrated by the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and as discussed by Dr. Richard Shultz, professor of international politics and director of the International Security Studies Program, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, the trends point to

in which armed insurgents replaced Saddam loyalists as the principal antagonists. The Second Battle of Fallujah (Operation Al-Fajr), in November 2004, was a joint U.S.-Iraqi-British fight against the Iraqi insurgency stronghold in Fallujah. For a detailed discussion see Jonathan F. Keiler, “Who Won the Battle of Fallujah?” http://www.military.com/NewContent/1,13190,NI_0105_Fallujah-P1,00.html, last modified January 2005. The Battle of Jenin took place on April 1-11, 2002, in the West Bank during the Second Intifada under Operation Defensive Shield, where two battalions of Israel Defense Forces entered the Jenin refugee camp to engage several hundred Palestinian guerrillas. For more information see Ken Lee, “Jenin Rises from the Dirt,” BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3015814.stm, last modified June 24, 2003. The First Battle of Gronzy, in December 1994–March 1995, in central Chechnya took place when Russia invaded the capital city of Gronzy, the epicenter of fighting during the First Chechen War. Russia was not prepared for urban conflict. In the Second Battle of Gronzy (1999–2000), Russia altered its previous strategy and attempted to obviate the need for urban conflict by bombarding the city with airstrikes and artillery. However, the siege failed, and the Russian assault on and capture of the city was accompanied by extensive casualties and destruction. For an in-depth examination see Olga Oliker, Russia’s Chechen Wars 1994–2000: Lessons from Urban Combat (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2001).
more U.S. irregular warfare combat operations. About half of the states in the world are weak, failing, or failed. These states are largely ungoverned; they are unable to control their territory and they create conditions for armed groups to be formed or to become more powerful. Their ungoverned spaces may encompass rural areas, including deserts and mountains, or parts of megacities or entire urban areas. The large numbers of failed or failing states will contribute to an increase in irregular warfare because they provide a favorable environment for armed groups to grow and to become empowered. Such groups will benefit from technologies as well as greater mobility conferred by transport assets. In short, chaotic megacities in weak, failing, or failed states provide opportunities for non-state armed groups to pursue their local and global objectives. For example, al-Qaeda may be based in the hinterlands of Yemen, but it is able to take advantage of an interconnected world to recruit globally and to launch attacks against the U.S. homeland or other distant targets. In Afghanistan and Pakistan non-state armed groups are developing cooperative relationships ranging from de facto coalitions to loose affiliations. In Mexico, that country’s major cartels are operating on a regional and global scale. Their operations extend through West Africa and into Europe. These types of relationships exist in other parts of the world as well, and they include alliances between terrorist groups, drug traffickers, and organized crime syndicates.

**Middle East Uprisings: Sign of Things to Come**

The proliferation of satellite television and new information media in Middle Eastern cities has made the Arab world, in Mr. Kaplan’s words, “one virtual community,” a community that has brought together new media and young men without jobs in a volatile combination. As we have seen, an event in Tunisia can spark protests in Syria, Egypt, Yemen, and Bahrain. Because demonstrators may see themselves
on television the same night as their protest, they are likely to be emboldened and to gain self-esteem and confidence that both inspire others and lead to escalating and cascading unrest. Therefore, the United States should view such demonstrations as the beginning of a crisis of central authority in the greater Middle East. The uprisings may have been resolved relatively quickly and easily in Tunisia and Egypt because both are basically homogeneous states with a long history of central institutions and bureaucracies. Such characteristics do not describe states such as Libya, Yemen, and Syria. Therefore, the uprisings in each are playing out differently, with a likely timeframe that is more protracted and with consequences that are likely to be more chaotic.

**Proliferation of Precision-Guided Weapons and Anti-Access/Area-Denial Technologies**

In the western Pacific, China is intent on establishing a position of hegemony, and it is purchasing and developing the military equipment to achieve this status. In the Middle East, Iran—a minor military power—is able to create a challenging operating environment in the Persian Gulf with anti-ship cruise missiles and other anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) technologies. The challenge of precision-guided weapons and A2/AD capabilities does not, however, emanate only from states. During the 2006 Lebanon war, Hizbullah employed C-802 missiles to target an Israeli warship. Dr. Krepinevich noted that during that war Hizbullah fired over four thousand relatively inaccurate projectiles into Israel. However, a direct hit on critical strategic infrastructure such as Haifa’s oil refinery could have caused Israel extensive economic damage. If in a future conflict 10 percent to 15 percent of Hizbullah’s rockets, artillery, mortars, and missiles are guided and able to target strategically vital facilities in Israel, the threats to Israel will rise dramatically.
Conference attendees widely agreed that A2/AD threats to U.S. power projection, especially to amphibious operations, will increase. Each of the services will confront a security environment, including threats on and under the seas and in the air, space, and cyberspace, posing challenges to forcible entry. U.S. power projection operations will be contested by proliferating capabilities, including ballistic and cruise missiles, anti-ship missiles, and swarming speedboats, among others. Because the ability to project military power will be essential to the preservation of alliance relationships and security partnerships, the United States will need either to degrade enemy anti-access capabilities or to abandon regions in which vital national interests are at stake. Because the latter option is unacceptable, the United States has little choice but to develop strategies and capabilities to counter the anti-access efforts of potential adversaries, while ensuring that its expeditionary forces are capable of conducting forcible-entry operations, which remain indispensable to military power projection.

Challenges in the Cyber Domain

Cyber warfare has become a major security challenge. U.S. networks are vulnerable to exploitation and attack with potentially serious national security consequences. Moreover, cyber attacks on critical military networks have shown that these networks are also vulnerable. Time and distance become essentially irrelevant because cyber war can be conducted across global distances in milliseconds. Such attacks can also spread quickly among networks, adding to the difficulty of attributing their source and perpetrator and therefore undertaking retaliatory action.

Matthew Devost, president and CEO of FusionX, described one of the biggest security challenges in the cyber domain: the fact that the network is becoming ubiquitous as an essential feature of everyday life, ranging from entertainment to business and to military operations. The number of hackers challenging U.S. networks is immeasurable. They encompass enemy states, rival states, terrorists, organized crime
groups, and individuals working alone, together, or in concert from around the globe and inside the United States. Some of these groups focus on intellectual property theft, others on espionage or sabotage. Hackers are constantly testing U.S. government and private sector networks for weaknesses. Cyber infrastructure is also vulnerable to physical attack, which can have huge cyber consequences. By the same token cyber attacks can have vast physical consequences. Mr. Devost used the 1993 World Trade Center attack as an example. If a radiological device had been detonated at surface level outside the towers, the economic impact would have been devastating. The buildings would have become uninhabitable with direct implications for the financial services industry and specifically for the use of information systems located in the affected buildings or even in the surrounding area of Lower Manhattan, depending on the size and location of the radiological device.

Because of these challenges, the U.S. government must assume that its networks have been compromised. Operating from that premise, it will become essential to discover how U.S. departments, agencies, and forces can function even when their networks have been penetrated. The cyber domain is one of America’s Achilles’ heels. Cyber deterrence should include efforts to harden vital infrastructure or to build sufficient redundancy. Mr. Devost suggested an approach entailing “identity, authentication, authority,” where not only is a network user properly identified, but the network recognizes whether or not that user is compromised and also knows what the user is and is not allowed

Matthew Devost, President and CEO, FusionX
to do. Mr. Devost described a future in which nodes will not be able to see each other unless their relationship has been authenticated. In other words, it will be necessary to build what Mr. Devost termed mission resiliency to make it possible to accomplish the mission when you do not have a secure network. This has obvious importance for the military services. Devost envisaged technologies that will allow for more open networks but with components that do not respond to other nodes in the network unless some sort of authorization takes place, with the identity, authentication, and authority components being built in at the host level as a means of protecting information.

Deterrence in the cyber domain is challenging because the origin of an attack is difficult to confirm, even if the hacker can be traced to a particular country, because the source of the attack may be an individual or group of individuals rather than the government. Washington must also determine how it would respond to a cyber attack by an adversarial state or non-state group: would retaliation with force require absolute certainty of the attack’s origin? How long would it take to establish definitively the point of origin? What would be the implications of the passage of time? What would be the appropriate retaliatory strike? For example, if a cyber attack produces the death, damage, destruction, or high-level disruption that a traditional military strike would cause, should it lead to the use of force in retaliation? If another party destroys America’s power grid, should the response be kinetic, in the form, for example, of a missile strike against enemy infrastructure? What types of cyber attacks are possible only with government support, contrasted with those that could be carried out exclusively by non-state actors? Does the United States have the tools to deter a non-state group from a cyber attack? When does a cyber attack constitute an act of war? These issues are being addressed in a Department of Defense cyber deterrence concept now under development.

The extent to which large-scale cyber attack is a serious threat was another focal point of discussion. Some participants suggested that there are several factors that may reduce the likelihood of a massive cyber attack. That there are few if any widely accepted rules of conduct in the cyber domain has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side is the fact that we do not know what the retaliatory response would be in the case of a cyber attack. This unknown may
serve as a deterrent to an adversary who may fear forceful retaliatory consequences. On the negative side, the absence of cyber rules of conduct may lead states to undertake offensive cyber operations that underestimate and miscalculate the response of the nation attacked. Of course, the fact that cyber war can be waged by actors other than states introduces an important dynamic. Rival states such as China, Russia, and Iran certainly have the means to conduct varying levels of sophisticated cyber warfare, but they may be deterred in some cases because of concern about escalation or for reasons of economic interdependence. For example, attacks against the economies of other countries may have adverse financial ramifications for the country that launched the attacks. Of course, different nations may respond in different ways, further complicating the problem of how to deter cyber war, so in order for deterrence to function it would be necessary to acknowledge that one size does not fit all. If this is indeed the case, the problem of deterring cyber war is made more complex by the diversity of potential perpetrators of cyber war, the difficulty of identifying them, and the differing ways in which different states might respond.

According to one assessment, terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda may have the desire, but not the capabilities, to carry out a sustained cyber attack on the United States. Even though there may be little that the United States could do to deter them, terrorist groups likely do not yet have the capability to launch such a complex attack. Dr. Richard Shultz disagreed, suggesting instead that his biggest concern, in terms of cost and likelihood, is the potential for a non-state group carrying out an attack of “mass disruption.” Because non-state groups such as drug cartels have been able to recruit engineers to build primitive submarines as well as armored land vehicles for narcotics transport, few people doubt that they could also recruit cyber experts. Dr. Shultz recounted that a Colombian drug cartel was reported to be building a submarine in a jungle on the Colombia/Ecuador border. The submarine could travel up to six thousand miles, remain submerged for as long as eighteen hours, and may have the capacity to carry nine tons of cocaine. The implication was that if an armed group such as a

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9 Narco-submarines, built for as little as $500,000 each, and assembled in under ninety days, are now thought to carry as much as 30 percent of Colombia’s total cocaine exports. For more information see David Kushner, “Drug-Sub Culture,” *New York*
drug cartel was capable of obtaining the expertise necessary to build a submarine, it could also gain access to essential cyber technology and thereby the means to launch cyber attacks.

The cyber threat forms part of the broader problem of A2/AD discussed throughout the conference. U.S. power projection capabilities rely heavily on information dominance, but this dominance is threatened by the growing ability of an adversary to attack U.S. information systems. As part of their anti-access/area-denial efforts, U.S. adversaries can be expected to take steps to control information or to impose an “information blockade,” to use the term employed in writings about China and information warfare. Hence the overall importance of cyberspace in the context of U.S. power projection and of its implications for the Marine Corps as a twenty-first-century expeditionary force.

Conference speakers also discussed possible implications of cyber technologies for catalytic war. Catalytic war is a conflict that unfolds when party A attacks party B as a result of an action taken by party C.

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11 The term “catalytic war” was coined by Herman Kahn. As more countries acquired nuclear weapons, the potential for catalytic war increased. Kahn suggested that “some third, fourth, or fifth power in the international hierarchy might wish to improve its relative position by arranging for the top two nations to destroy each other. It might attack the United States under circumstances which would suggest a Soviet attack counting on our retaliation to precipitate a full scale war.” Today there is discussion of catalytic war in the Middle East. If, for example, Israel struck Iran’s nuclear infrastructure, Iran might retaliate against Israel and the United States. The United States might be drawn into the Iran-Israel conflict in order to prevent Israel’s destruction. In each of these examples, the escalatory process would not be easily controlled. The current Middle East example is not based on any Israeli desire to see the United States and Iran destroy each other. However, the effect of an Israeli strike against Iran’s nuclear complex would be to draw the United States into the conflict. Herman Kahn, Thinking about the Unthinkable (New York: Horizon Press, 1962), 57. See also Herman Kahn, On Thermonuclear War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 231–32; Donald H. Kobe, “A Theory of Catalytic War,” Journal of Conflict Resolution 6, no. 2 (June 1962): 125–42.
Dr. Krepinevich discussed this phenomenon and offered the following example of how cyber tools might trigger catalytic war. Reports in the open literature contend that the Israelis disrupted Syrian radars in 2007 when they attacked the nuclear reactor site then under construction in Syria, allowing time for the missiles to reach their target without being detected. A third party, some years from now, could use cyber technologies in a similar fashion, but this time to mislead Iranian radars to indicate that Israel has launched a massive nuclear attack against Iran. If the missile flight time between Israel and Iran is about six minutes, how would Iran use those six minutes? Would six minutes be enough time to determine that Israel had not launched an attack? At least twice during the Cold War situations arose where either Washington or Moscow thought that one side or the other might be under large-scale attack. However, in that era there was more time—up to thirty minutes—to conclude that no attack was under way. In an Israel-Iran nuclear scenario, decision makers would not have so much time.

The United States also must consider how it can use the networks of others to further its own goals in the twenty-first-century setting. This is an old strategic concept and has been used effectively against the United States. Mr. Devost referred to the ancient Chinese stratagem, “Kill with a borrowed sword.” In the cyber world this means that adversaries increasingly will use America’s own networks against it, but the idea applies in other operations as well: al-Qaeda flew hijacked U.S. commercial aircraft into U.S. buildings. Mr. Devost also recalled the use of the U.S. Postal Service to deliver deadly anthrax. With the cost of a postage stamp, entire U.S. government buildings were shut down. How to make use of others’ networks as enablers to achieve Washington’s strategic goals is a challenging task that Mr. Devost suggested should be addressed.
Leveraging the Expeditionary Forces of the USMC in the Twenty-First-Century Security Setting

The opening panel set the tone for the conference by noting that the emerging security environment will likely be characterized by increased volatility and instability. As a result, there will be a pressing need for forces with expeditionary characteristics that can be deployed swiftly to points of crisis and armed conflict in cities or megacities near or along the vast littorals of the world. The USMC has gained valuable experience in Iraq and Afghanistan directly related to the conflict arena described in the opening session. For example, the lessons the Marine Corps learned in Anbar Province in Iraq will serve it well in the future. In addition to its capability in urban combat, the greatest assets of the Marine Corps in Anbar were its fine-tuned situational awareness and its ability to learn and adapt on the job. As early as 2005 the Marines recognized the role played by tribal sheikhs at a time when some downplayed tribalism as not being part of post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. This awareness led the Marine Corps to work with tribal leaders to build the capacity of local militias to stand up to al-Qaeda. Dr. Shultz emphasized that the ability not to be paralyzed by conventional thinking has served the Marine Corps in the past. It is a skill that needs to be nurtured, reinforced, and actively inculcated into today’s USMC culture.

Understanding and working with local power structures is essential to counterinsurgency success. Here again, the Marine Corps, according to Dr. Richard Shultz, had the flexibility to grasp the essential fact that in

Anbar developing partnerships with the sheikhs would then give access to the population. This meant that the Marines had to understand the place of the sheikhs in Iraqi society rather than write them off as not part of the Iraqi future. Here the lesson is that counterinsurgency strategies must be tailored to specific local circumstances. As Dr. Jacquelyn K. Davis pointed out, in Afghanistan this means that the United States is fighting different kinds of wars in different parts of the country. In Helmand, where the Marines are deployed, there is clearly an insurgency, contrasted with Kabul and around Bagram, where the challenges are from criminal/drug organizations, requiring different strategies. Similarly, different armed groups present different challenges. Anbar, for example, is home to militias as well as criminal networks. According to Mr. Kaplan, it is a mistake to think of tribes and other militias as somehow modern or primitive. He referred to situations where tribal chiefs make use of modern technology such as computers for email to communicate. In fact, tribal structures may be very post-modern in that they represent a conscious rejection of central authority in favor of a wider religious and cultural association with, for example, a tribe in Yemen sharing a desire to be more Islamic and therefore not subject to the secular reach of the central government. According to Mr. Kaplan, we in the West need to move away from our fixation with central government as the embodiment of modernity and progress.

A concern was expressed that, because the Marine Corps gained a nation-building capability in Iraq and Afghanistan, there will be international pressure for such U.S. action when the next state collapses. At the same time, because they are well organized for such operations, the Marines can work with states, together with the Department of State (DoS) and other U.S. civilian agencies, in an advisory capacity. Although the future security environment holds many uncertainties, it is clear that Marines will need to be sufficiently flexible and agile to adjust quickly to rapidly changing conditions in diverse settings. The Marines’ long-established adaptability includes a capacity to learn on the job based on a unique expeditionary mindset that will become an even more valuable asset in the years ahead, especially as the service adapts and builds on its historic role as the nation’s crisis response force capable of operating in diverse environments, including those requiring forcible entry.
As was emphasized several times during the conference, the Marine Corps has a long history of forcible-entry operations. Such operations have often been launched in order to seize a beachhead to prepare the way for a joint land campaign by follow-on forces. The Marine Corps has also undertaken such operations to capture well-defended islands, as in the Pacific in World War II. In both types of operations, forcible entry that included amphibious landings formed part of a broader joint campaign. The future Marine Corps contribution to the joint campaign may be based on littoral maneuver—the ability to land where the enemy is weak and where the landing is least expected. This means that expeditionary operations may take place without immediate access to, or far from, ports or airfields. In some cases, depending on the local terrain, there may be little or no infrastructure. Therefore, the Marine Corps must be able to put combat forces ashore that are prepared to fight immediately. Given the challenges to access and the requirement to maintain a forcible-entry expeditionary capability, the Marine Corps, together with other services and especially the U.S. Navy and Air Force, will need to degrade enemy A2/AD quickly in order to minimize ship-to-shore vulnerability and to move rapidly to secure, extend, and consolidate the beachhead once ashore.
In some respects countries are like private-sector companies, remarked General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret.), former national security advisor, former supreme Allied commander/Europe, and former USMC commandant. In his keynote address, General Jones pointed out that a country cannot compete globally if it does not understand its environment or competitors, or if it is unable to adapt to changing circumstances. Like a business attempting to remain successful, the United States must be clear about what it is trying to achieve and what is possible to achieve in the current national security environment. It must also understand as fully as possible what its competitors are thinking and doing. Last but not least, like a corporate entity, the United States must articulate consistent goals matched by appropriate strategies and capabilities.

The environment in which the United States operates today differs dramatically from the environment of the twentieth century. Today’s world is one of extremes—in ideology, in theology, in culture, and in education. Like the world today, the twentieth century also had its share of have-nots. However, today the internet and other advances in communications have given the have-nots around the world an instantaneous glimpse of what they are missing, as well as the belief that they do not have to live indefinitely as they do today. Events across the Middle East today, the so-called Arab Spring, are expressions of a desire for a better future.

Even though the Soviet Union no longer exists, national security in the twenty-first century still presents state-to-state threats to the United States. However, over the past decade asymmetric threats have gained heightened importance. They are posed by non-state armed groups as well as by states that could challenge the United States in areas of its vulnerability. Asymmetric threats will become even more intense and extensive in the decades ahead. In addition, issues of economics, cyber security, global development, and energy are increasing.

As the world becomes more linked and the global security setting more complex, “the trend lines for more engagement are clear,” said General Jones. In a global setting of interconnected economies and
security concerns, the United States cannot isolate itself from the outside world, as the events of 9/11 amply demonstrated. The United States must decide what role it wishes to play. The idea that the United States is somehow inevitably “destined” for great global influence is false. U.S. influence was codified in the institutions of the twentieth century that the United States helped create, but it will have to work to maintain its global influence in the twenty-first-century world of multiple actors with growing capabilities. One factor that will help maintain U.S. influence is that partners and allies around the world continue to place a high premium on U.S. leadership and participation. According to General Jones, they want the United States to remain committed to its ideals and expectations: democracy, opportunity, and human rights. Therefore, they do not wish to see the United States play a declining role in global affairs.

Although the impending demise of U.S. influence has been predicted at various times for several decades, the current state of affairs is particularly worrisome. General Jones cautioned that history has not looked kindly upon any civilization, empire, or nation of consequence that was unable to maintain fiscal responsibility. The effect of the deficit on the U.S. economy is to restrict growth, investment, innovation, and competitiveness, thus posing “the greatest threat to the security of the United States and its position among nations in the twenty-first century.” Thus there is a close relationship between the U.S. economy and national security. Unfortunately, the United States must address its domestic economic challenges while it copes with threats in a world that contains hostile actors and increasing dangers.

Implications for the Marine Corps and U.S. Forces

The Marine Corps has done some of its best thinking under circumstances of economic stress and other pressure of events. General Jones suggested that the USMC would survive the current
budget constraints because it fills a crucially important national security need at an acceptable cost. If the Marine Corps’ “product” is seen to have great value and to be cost effective and efficient, there is little to worry about. Therefore, the Marine Corps should be focused on building greater awareness and understanding of its indispensable role among members of Congress and the broader public. At the same time, fiscal constraints will curtail the duplication of missions among the services.

The fact that the Marine Corps plays a unique and indispensable role should be highlighted on Capitol Hill and elsewhere. This includes the U.S. forward presence that the Marine Corps can provide as a vital contribution to U.S. national security. U.S. forward presence is necessary to avoid a vacuum into which actors hostile to the United States might insert themselves. If U.S. forces are pulled back to America’s continental shores, the space left behind will be filled by others, whose interests may not be compatible with those of the United States. If the United States is not engaged globally on a continuing basis it will have fewer options for response short of military force when crises erupt. The United States needs to maintain effective relationships with political and military leaderships abroad. This can best be achieved by forward presence that provides tangible evidence of the U.S. commitment to security in regions of great importance to the United States. When the United States is forward-engaged, other nations are likely to see their security enhanced.

General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret.), former National Security Advisor, former Supreme Allied Commander/Europe, and former Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps
U.S. engagement should be based on a new, twenty-first-century triad in which security is but one leg in a construct that also includes governance and development. The United States can enhance governance and the rule of law. Its engagement also can include economic development in the form of government aid and private-sector foreign direct investment in order to improve the lives of a country’s population. An example of this new triad is found in NATO’s new Strategic Concept adopted at the 2010 NATO Summit. A defensive alliance focused on Europe during the Cold War, NATO today has broadened its horizon to help shape security environments beyond Europe. This security-governance-development triad—reflected in the call in the new NATO Strategic Concept for greater partnership with the United Nations, the European Union, and other international partners—has the opportunity to “alter the destiny of certain countries” that might otherwise become future Iraqs or Afghans. As NATO engages proactively, U.S. military forces will be needed for the security leg of the triad. More than just providing security for partner nations, U.S. forces will be needed to train and assist foreign militaries. They also have an opportunity to instill in foreign militaries a greater understanding of democratic values and the subordination of military forces to those values.

Engagement with the world in the twenty-first century requires a whole-of-government approach: all the departments and agencies of government that have a stake in a particular issue, not just the national security bureaucracy, will have to be at the table. To be effective, different departments will need to trust each other and work together in support of shared objectives. This interagency trust, confidence, and cohesion will be increasingly important in future operations because of the need to bring together the various elements of strategy. A greater exchange between the military and civilian agencies can help build greater understanding of the respective interests, perspectives,

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and experiences that each has to offer as part of a comprehensive national security strategy.

Finally, one impediment to engagement in the current fiscal environment is inadequate understanding of the important and necessary role of forward engagement in enhancing productive international relationships. General Jones encouraged the Marine Corps, the Navy, and the other services to raise awareness of the benefits of forward engagement. If the national leadership does not understand the value of having expeditionary capabilities deployed near a potential crisis scene, then Congress cannot be expected to make such capabilities a funding priority. The USMC must be prepared to articulate as fully as possible the importance of forward deployment in order to be at or near the scene of human trafficking, narco-trafficking, organized crime, and piracy. If and when the USMC does so, it can build broader understanding of the unique role of the Marine Corps in providing such capabilities.
The role of the Marine Corps as the preferred crisis response force was a major theme of the conference. Essential USMC and joint capabilities for conducting a spectrum of operations from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to non-combatant evacuations, counter-terrorism and counterproliferation missions, and forcible-entry operations have grown in importance. As the number of crises increases worldwide, conference participants agreed, there will be contending forces shaping the U.S. response, with some calling for some form of continuing forward presence and others advocating withdrawal from overseas. Robert O. Work, under secretary of the Navy, underscored the position that after the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, basing U.S. forces on foreign territory “will be the exception, not the rule.”

In order for the United States to maintain a global power-projection force, it must be prepared initially to create access in uncertain and hostile environments and subsequently to maintain that access. This means that America must be able to inject a ready-to-fight combat force that can move rapidly to where it is needed. It will be essential that ready-to-fight combat forces have the capability for operational maneuver from strategic distances that may be transoceanic and trans-regional. Such a capability is necessarily a joint capability. It will include Marine Corps expeditionary units and Army airborne forces working in tandem, together with the Air Force and Navy as part of the joint force.

Forces operating in hostile environments may face adversaries with their own precision-guided weapons and unmanned aerial vehicles. They are likely to be confronted with a proliferation of increasingly advanced weapons systems and battle networking technologies. Hybrid warfare will be a feature of these environments, with enemy forces hiding among civilian populations and employing such lethal capabilities as IEDs and suicide bombers as well as more sophisticated guided missiles, artillery, and mortars. Here Secretary Work brought into focus major requirements that must be addressed in a new Air-Sea Battle concept.
In discussing access, Secretary Work emphasized the need not only to be able to create access but also to maintain it by rapid reinforcement from the sea. According to Secretary Work, the United States will need to retain the capability to inject three to five ready-to-fight-on-arrival combat brigades into uncertain and hostile environments. Fiscal constraints will lead the United States to be more selective and deliberate in choosing where and how to intervene. However, Washington will nevertheless want to retain operationally responsive forces capable of rapid movement. Quoting then-Secretary of Defense Gates, Mr. Work said, “The strategic rationale for swift-moving expeditionary forces, be they Army or Marines, airborne, infantry, or special operations, is self-evident, given the likelihood of counterterrorism, rapid reaction, disaster response, or stability or security force assistance missions.” Whether from bases in the United States or from forward-deployed positions, the Marine Corps’ rapid mobility means that it will continue to be the expeditionary force in readiness in the future. In this respect, the Marine Corps possesses unique capabilities for crisis response.

Expediting Crisis Response and Building Partner Capacity

In tailoring crisis-response-force packages, USMC units operating jointly with other services must be sufficiently flexible to shift their
role from one operation to another and even to be able to do so at different stages of a single operation. In joint operations, one service such as the Marine Corps may be supported by others and in other cases the USMC will be the supporting service.

As military operations wind down in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. forces will be based increasingly in the United States. As a result, it will be necessary to move forces rapidly from the United States to where they are needed in a crisis. As numerous speakers emphasized, the Marine Corps offers two crucially important advantages in this emerging security setting: (1) a readiness posture that enables USMC expeditionary forces to be deployed immediately; and (2) the ability to deploy from sea-based platforms near a crisis but over the horizon. Expeditionary forces provide a unique capability for the United States to assist allies and coalition partners in training their own forces. Building partner capacity may enhance America’s ability to deter a crisis. Such a capability is preferable to the more costly alternative of responding to such a conflict only after it arises. Expeditionary forces, especially if they are deployed near an emerging crisis, may help to shape the international security setting. Such benefits and trade-offs must be factored into the discussion about post-Iraq-Afghanistan forward deployment.

Another recurring conference theme was nation-building, which was discussed from a broad range of perspectives in several panel presentations. Francis J. “Bing” West, author and former assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, expressed the

**Francis J. “Bing” West, Author and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs**
view that nation-building could succeed only if the United States was prepared to invest perhaps another $1 trillion and deploy as many as one hundred thousand troops for the next decade. He drew a sharp contrast between Iraq and Afghanistan. Unlike what happened in Iraq, when the Sunnis in Anbar and elsewhere came over to the U.S. side, the Pashtun people in Afghanistan have not joined forces with the Americans. Until and unless they do, America’s counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan cannot work, according to Mr. West.

Mr. West also suggested another major difference between Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq a U.S. battalion was paired with an Iraqi battalion. When the battalion commanders agreed that the Iraqi battalion was ready to be stood up, they shifted responsibility for that battle space to the Iraqi battalion. This has never happened in Afghanistan. Furthermore, in Afghanistan there are still two separate chains of command. Operating in the same battle space, the Afghan battalion commander and his U.S. counterpart function well together if they have good chemistry between them. Otherwise, they may be unable to work effectively with each other. Consequently, at present there is no systematic way to extract U.S. battalions and replace them with Afghan battalions.

According to Mr. West, the U.S. advisory role should be strengthened. Both the U.S. Army Special Operations Forces and the Marine Corps—particularly the Marine Corps—should consider building a core competency in advisors to train Afghan forces. He called for an advisory force of as many as twenty thousand. Mr. West acknowledged that such a mission stretches conventional forces because it takes away some of the same officers and NCOs who would otherwise be in the U.S. fighting force. However, he asserted, such a choice may be necessary to increase the prospects for stabilization in Afghanistan. Mr. West noted that building partner capacity is particularly important in Afghanistan. Although the United States wants the Afghan military to be able to operate on its own, it still is incapable of doing so. Therefore, the USMC cannot keep drawing down its advisory role in Afghanistan.
Conducting Amphibious Operations in Uncertain Environments

The focus of vice chief of naval operations Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert’s presentation was the role of naval forces as enablers to project military power into crisis areas. If one looks back only over the last forty years, since 1970 the United States has faced numerous crises that have among their defining characteristics the indispensible role played by naval forces. This means that the combatant commanders have relied extensively on naval forces to move military power to where it is needed before or during crises. The role of the maritime component commander is to allocate and assign tasks to the maritime forces under his command. He has responsibility for positioning and synchronizing maritime forces and integrating command and control, while providing logistics and force protection. Maritime forces need to have the flexibility to meet a range of military operations. This requires that the unique strengths of the Joint Navy/Marine Corps/Air Force team must be leveraged to achieve maximum effectiveness in supporting the Army and other forces ashore.

In the early phases of an operation the Maritime Component Command must be prepared to be the supported command because at this point it is the critical enabler, the vanguard of access, paving the way and establishing the maritime superiority needed to shape the battlespace and create the conditions so that the United States and its coalition partners have freedom of maneuver. Once the joint force goes ashore, the maritime component commander transitions

Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, USN, Vice Chief of Naval Operations
to the role of supporting commander for the military operation on land. Nevertheless, as Admiral Greenert pointed out, the domain or situation can change quickly. There can be terrorist or nation-state threats, possibly including missiles and other kinetic weapons as well as cyber attacks and unconventional tactics. There may be situations of hybrid warfare across a spectrum from high-end state-to-state to low-end (non-state armed groups). States may make use of actors other than states, while terrorists may manipulate states to achieve their goals. Such issues may complicate the question of which of the combatant commands is the supported command and which is the supporting command. Therefore, the operations may not be immaculate or fixed. They may change rapidly, requiring the closest collaboration among component partners. Flexibility remains the key to success, whether in military operations or in responses to humanitarian disasters.

Admiral Greenert pointed out that the joint force maritime component commander (JFMCC), the joint force’s functional maritime component, must be adaptable to the needs of the combatant commander (CCDR) or joint force commander. Every JFMCC is responsible for establishing the task forces necessary to support its combatant command (COCOM). JFMCC components include intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); strike warfare; logistics; amphibious warfare; and support for ground forces.

The USMC and joint and multinational forces must be prepared for permissive as well as uncertain and hostile environments. To operate in such settings the Marine Corps should maintain three to five combat-ready brigades. In general, conference attendees supported the proposition that getting to the fight is itself going to be a fight, a point that was reiterated throughout the conference. Counter-A2/AD operations will be conducted jointly, with each service contributing its unique capabilities. Each service will have a clearly defined role based on its areas of specialization. If they are to optimize joint operations, the services must conduct more frequent joint training exercises that include a counter-A2/AD focus.

The temptation should be avoided to cut defense programs, acquisitions, and capabilities in a tight budgetary environment in the absence of a clear understanding of emerging requirements as well
as the implications of such reductions for the overall force. In other words, such decreases should be based on changing strategic needs rather than simply budgetary constraints. Nevertheless, in the absence of a clearly articulated strategic requirement, it follows that cuts will be made based largely on budgetary considerations, with detrimental national security consequences.

Anti-Access/Area-Denial Operations: The Supporting Role of Airpower and Cyber Power

General Philip Breedlove, Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, further elaborated upon the anti-access/area-denial issue facing the United States in future power-projection scenarios. Succinctly, General Breedlove summarized definitions in reminding the audience that anti-access has to do with efforts to prevent the movement of forces into theater, while area-denial is related to the ability to counter efforts to impede U.S. operations once U.S. forces are in theater. Getting to the fight is likely to be the beginning of the fight. Keeping the U.S. joint force at a range to impede its access is the first and foremost goal of the adversary. Every tanker bridge that American forces are compelled to build, together with other capabilities that are vulnerable to enemy attack, represents problems that will need to be addressed. Access is indispensable if U.S. forces are to conduct operations at the time and place of their choosing. This means that operational access becomes crucially important to operational success. If American troops have lost operational access,
they must regain it. If they have operational access, they must exploit it to enable the joint force to impose its will on the enemy. The vulnerability of American forces is increasing as potential adversaries gain capabilities such as missiles with which, for example, to target U.S. airfields, the point of sortie generation. In other words, the United States will face vulnerabilities at great distance from the theater of military operations, beginning in the United States itself. The U.S. military will need to protect ports, airfields, and other infrastructure from attack. Such attack could come in the form of missile strikes or terrorist operations.

General Breedlove also pointed to the capabilities that the U.S. Air Force brings as part of the joint team as an enabler for Marine Corps expeditionary operations to counter area denial on the part of an enemy. Operational maneuver from the sea requires the cyber capability that the Air Force possesses, together with the ability to engage an enemy at the time and place of the Air Force’s choosing with long-range strike forces equipped with precision firepower in support of Marine Corps units. The considerable Air Force stealth capability includes a sustained ability to strike targets in a high-threat environment.

The Air Force has become quite adept in Iraq and Afghanistan in using airpower to support raids against small lodgments. It has also used raiding parties to take down enemy anti-access/area-denial capabilities. The Air Force has learned much about the use of precise and prompt firepower to support small highly capable teams operating behind an enemy line. Of course, the battlefields in Afghanistan are largely nonlinear. In contrast, they would be more linear if American forces were approaching the coast of a hostile state. The experience in Afghanistan described by General Breedlove was based on joint operations with Marine and Navy teams, including a Naval Air team and a Marine Air team working together. One lesson learned is the need for continuing joint exercises to train in advance for an even more integrated effort based on lessons learned. The joint force has now had extensive experience using Air Force capabilities to focus joint air assets, including space-based capabilities, on specific tactical problems to give the ground forces unprecedented insight into what is happening on and around the battlefield. U.S. forces have an ever-growing ability to make offensive use of cyber operations to help
destroy systems that are necessary for the operation of the enemy precision weapons that will become for the United States a growing anti-access/area-denial problem.

As the United States develops cyber operations to defeat the A2/AD capabilities of adversaries, it must be prepared to provide more effective defenses against cyber war and to develop strategies designed to deter cyber use. A cyber defense that is effective must protect what is most vital. The need exists to create smaller and therefore more survivable networks. When a private-sector network is attacked, that company usually has the ability to move its entire operation onto another network. The U.S. military should develop the ability to create comparable alternative networks.

The need to develop a comprehensive, joint strategy for assuring that the United States possesses adequate future power projection capabilities was a principal theme of conference presentations. For example, the presentation by Lieutenant General Michael A. Vane, director, Army Capabilities Integration Center, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, compared recent Army efforts to develop future force structure with those of the Marine Corps. The Army continues to refine and strengthen its ability to conduct operations with the Marine Corps. General Vane acknowledged that the Marine Corps plays a unique role in getting forces into places lacking infrastructure such as seaports and airports. Like the Marine Corps, the Army relies heavily on the Air Force, the Navy, and the civilian governmental sectors to conduct its operations across a broad spectrum. The Army faces the challenge of maintaining its

Lieutenant General Michael A. Vane, USA, Director, Army Capabilities Integration Center, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command
dominance against adversaries in major combat operations under the hybrid warfare conditions of the future. With the other services the Army must address capabilities needs by building partnerships for future irregular warfare and counterinsurgency operations. The ability of the Army to maintain battlefield dominance against adversaries depends on close partnerships with all of its joint partners in the other military services. By the same token, the Army also provides specific joint support for the other services, including common-user land transportation, fuel supply, air and missile defense, and medical support, to name but a few.

Reinforcing another major conference theme, General Vane pointed out that the U.S. Army, like the Marine Corps, faces the challenges of getting into places where the infrastructure may be either non-existent or unavailable to U.S. forces. The Army continues to strengthen its ability to conduct simultaneous military operations with the Marine Corps along the littorals in particular, leading into inland areas. In order to maintain battlefield dominance against enemies under conditions of hybrid warfare, the Army needs partnerships with the other services in a security environment that may be difficult to foresee. Therefore, the Army has been engaged in its own force structure review. It is necessary not only to consider what should be the capabilities of the U.S. Army, but also to understand what will be the forces of friends and allies as well as America’s potential enemies. The Army’s force structure review has benefited from lessons learned in recent combat situations as well as wargames.

A fundamental point to emerge from this exercise is that Army forces need to be operationally adaptable. This includes not only those forces in direct combat with the enemy but also how the Army generates and supports forces. General Vane spoke of the need for greater decentralization, a willingness to accept prudent risk, and an ability to make rapid adjustments based on a continuous assessment of the situation. The Army must be organized, trained, and equipped to engage in full-spectrum operations. This requires a high level of versatility that allows combat units to operate either in offense or in defense in combat, or to provide support to civil authorities.

The emerging security environment sets conditions in which the Army, together with the Marine Corps, will operate in and among
the population across ungoverned areas. This will include forcible entry, combined arms maneuver once ashore, and stability operations. America’s enemies are focused on exploiting areas of perceived U.S. weaknesses rather than combating America where it is strong. As areas of U.S. weakness grow as a result of defense budget cuts, American vulnerabilities will necessarily increase. In addition, access issues and chokepoints around the world may increasingly create vulnerabilities for U.S. forces. Therefore, the challenge facing defense planners will be to avoid opening gaps in U.S. military capabilities as reductions are made in program spending.

The Army is working closely with the Marine Corps to establish necessary partnerships. These include relationships between general-purpose forces and special operations in theater engagement groups and capabilities. Army units, as part of the joint team, must have the mobility to travel rapidly over complex and dangerous terrain mounted or dismounted. They must be able to communicate whether mounted or dismounted in mobile operations to accomplish wide-area security and combined arms maneuver missions, including over extended distances. Army forces face the challenges of operating in degraded command and control environments. General Vane pointed out that battalion commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan have operated in, and have responsibility for, areas the size of the entire Normandy landing zone in World War II. In today’s security setting, it will be essential to operate in highly decentralized fashion. Extended distances, dispersed enemies, and non-state armed groups without uniforms create the need for even the smallest Army combat unit, the infantry squad, to operate in highly dispersed fashion. The skills that such forces must have include cultural and language proficiency, negotiation abilities, digital literacy, space knowledge because of contested cyberspace, and weapons technical knowledge.

Forcible-entry operations present a special challenge to which the Army is giving extensive consideration, especially in light of the anti-access/area-denial theme that was discussed extensively at the conference. According to General Vane, the time required to move a brigade is determined by lift capabilities. These include the infrastructure necessary to support major force deployments. The lack of such infrastructure remains the fundamental constraint in
attempting to reduce deployment timelines. Reductions in weight do not necessarily yield major reductions in deployment time. Instead, they produce only marginal increases in the Army’s ability to move a heavy brigade combat team, a Stryker brigade combat team, or an infantry brigade combat team. Therefore, General Vane emphasized, the Army’s airborne forces in conjunction with the Marine expeditionary force capability become the required joint force to fill that crucially important thirty-day gap until heavier forces can arrive in large numbers in a forcible-entry operation. As the Army addresses this and other challenging problems, it is examining joint requirements and attempting to work both with the other services and in a whole-of-government effort to build partnerships. Thus Marine Corps expeditionary forces, together with Army airborne capabilities, Special Operations forces, naval forces, and airpower, constitute the core elements of forcible-entry operations.
The United States has a history of building partner capacity (BPC), to help other countries better defend themselves or to fight beside U.S. forces, that extends back to World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and Cold War Europe. The 9/11 attacks led the United States to focus its BPC efforts on support for foreign military and security forces in order to (1) disrupt terrorist networks; (2) build capabilities to enable legitimate states to prevent terrorists from establishing bases or operating freely within their countries; and (3) strengthening the capacity of U.S. partners to participate in U.S. coalition operations.

Dr. Nadia Schadlow, senior program officer at the Smith Richardson Foundation, underscored the fact that BPC in the twenty-first century not only demands greater interagency cooperation but also requires extensive understanding of the political landscape of partner nations. Such knowledge will be indispensable to the Marine Corps in building partnerships to help counter terrorism and strengthen stability operations. The Marine Corps has identified the need for strengthening partnerships with the geographic combatant commands (GCCs), services, and civilian policy makers.

Lieutenant General George J. Flynn, commanding general of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, further elaborated on the importance of partnerships to the Marine Corps. Such
relationships are essential if the Marine Corps is to maximize its ability to draw on the capabilities of all elements that the U.S. government has at its disposal. Unquestionably, he pointed out, the bond between the Marine Corps and the Navy has always enabled the Marine Corps to operate at a level with greater effectiveness than if it had been alone. This is a need that will be increasingly important in coming years. It will require a shared vision with the other services, but especially with the Navy, of the future world and the required capabilities to meet defense priorities and to take the shared strategic vision to operational reality. In addition to maintaining its integral relationship with the Navy, the Marine Corps sees itself operating forward, especially with the U.S. Coast Guard as well as the Department of State, USAID, and Special Operations forces.

Partnerships are the basis for achieving the mutual benefit of training, planning, and operating together. The result can be a success that exponentially increases the collective ability of U.S. forces to further and protect the country’s national interests. Just as the other services have unique capabilities that they bring to the table, the Marine Corps has many tools that can be used to support its partners’ missions by enhancing the joint ability to operate more efficiently, effectively, and safely. The Marine Corps is working to build relationships with other government agencies and the services that often have capability and expertise in areas not resident in Marine operating forces and from which, therefore, the USMC can benefit. These initiatives are set forth...
in two documents published in 2010: *Naval Operations Concept* and *Marine Corps Operating Concepts*.14

Although it has a long history of partnerships within the U.S. government and at the international level, the Marine Corps must continue to leverage its external relationships to maximize the ability to improvise. This includes developing tailored forces with partnership nations as well as undertaking selective offload across a range of military operations and at-sea transfers of vehicles. The Marine Corps demonstrated such a capability three hundred miles off the coast of Tampa, Florida, when it drove tanks off a larger ship onto another landing platform at sea. Such innovation enhances the ability of the Marine Corps as a sea-based force prepared for operations from a forward-deployed position.

In this session as well as at other sessions, participants discussed the importance of international partnerships and their direct relationship to forward presence. General Flynn posed the question of why we want to engage. He suggested that the purpose of engagement is to build important relationships with existing and potential partners. This should be done before such partners are needed in a crisis situation. Partnerships are also developed because of a mutual desire to benefit from, or to leverage, other nations’ capabilities. Such relationships are even more essential in times of fiscal constraint. Relationships leading to international partnerships are created in order to assure access. In the absence of such partnerships there may be greater political and geographical obstacles to getting to where American forces will need to be. This is essential not only in response to a political crisis but also to a humanitarian disaster.

Last but not least, forward engagement may help to prevent conflict. It is cheaper to deter conflict than to fight wars. Key to preventing conflict, General Flynn pointed out, is the ability of the Marine Corps to respond to crises with operations that can be launched from the sea. Such operations can be mounted in response to crises to help friends, allies, and partners in times of humanitarian disaster or security challenges, or to protect U.S. interests and citizens around the world.

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In sum, forward engagement depends vitally on forward presence, which in turn can succeed only if it is based on partnerships with allies and other coalition members. Among the benefits of forward engagement is the ability of the Marine Corps to develop partnerships with other armed forces, governments, and populations. Forward engagement with U.S. partners, together with other U.S. services and civilian agencies, allows the USMC to leverage—and thus to benefit from—their respective capabilities. Engagement is also necessary for access. A symbiotic relationship exists between engagement and access: engagement helps to promote access, while access furnishes opportunities to forge productive relationships between the military establishments of one country and another. Finally, building partner capacity can contribute to conflict prevention by strengthening partner governments’ capabilities to work together to deter or to manage crises before they escalate or even to avert looming crises.

**Political-Military Tools for BPC**

Traditionally, building partner capacity has been based primarily on a cooperative effort between the Departments of Defense and State. For example, because engagement requires diplomacy, interagency cooperation is essential to successful partnerships, as Kurt Amend, principal deputy assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, pointed out. In outlining the BPC activities funded and coordinated by his office, he said that security assistance funding through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program helps U.S. allies and partners meet their security needs through grants of military assistance. The Department of State oversees grants such as the Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capacity Fund (PCCF), which supports partnership activities to help the Pakistani government to combat insurgents in the regions along its border with Afghanistan.¹⁵

¹⁵ For the remainder of FY11, PCCF funding was transferred to DOD’s Pakistani Counterinsurgency Fund (PCF). See Josh Rogin, “Budget Deal Delays State Department
As Mr. Amend emphasized, the inclusion of the Marine security guard detachment in every embassy country team reflects in microcosm the type of integration that exists between the Department of State and the Department of Defense. In particular, State’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs collaborates on a daily basis with the Department of Defense across a broad range of issues. These encompass security challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Pakistan, together with natural disasters such as the crisis in Japan and simultaneously the civil war in Libya. Mr. Amend reinforced a recurring conference theme that some of the most pressing problems are no longer confined within national borders. These include transnational threats such as terrorism, piracy, illicit arms trafficking, and terrorism. None can be fully or adequately addressed without a multilateral approach. No single government, and certainly no single government agency, alone can deal effectively with these problems. Clearly, what is needed is an approach that includes friends and allies abroad as well as the several relevant agencies, departments, and services within the U.S. government based on a comprehensive strategy. The partnership between the Departments of State and Defense is at the core of such integration within the U.S. government.

One of the central missions of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs is to build and strengthen partner capacity. Essentially, the bureau has four tools for this purpose, all of which Mr. Amend described.
is some detail. The first is grants through the Foreign Military Financing program. The second is the formulation, implementation, and execution of a variety of train-and-equip programs aimed at providing key partners with specific counterterrorism capabilities. The third is the International Military Education Training (IMET) program, designed to professionalize friendly military forces through training and education as well as personnel exchanges. The IMET program helps build professional relationships. The fourth is an effort to build international peacekeeping capacity. In East Africa, for example, American instructors are helping to train the next generation of African peacekeepers at peacekeeping centers that the United States helped to create.

The 2006 National Defense Authorization Act included legislation (Section 1206, the Global Train and Equip Program) to support the efforts of the geographic combatant commands to conduct BPC activities. In some cases such programs included legislative provisions for Department of State concurrence on military training and equipment programs that had been approved by the Department of Defense. Despite occasional bureaucratic frictions, these “dual key” programs have produced substantial benefits. The Department of State, with the approval of the secretary of defense, also formulates, implements, and executes train-and-equip projects through the Section 1206 program. As noted above, there is also IMET, which provides opportunities to professionalize partner countries’ militaries through training, education, and exchanges. The professional and personal relationships between U.S. and Egyptian forces and individuals were cited frequently throughout the conference as examples of IMET’s influence. As Mr. Amend noted, relationships with IMET participants have been crucially important in societies where these individuals often play pivotal roles in supporting or transitioning to democratic rule. How such a transition will work out in Egypt, of course, remains an open question.

Improving U.S. Political-Military Cooperation and BPC Relationships

The Marine Corps participates in the military training and exchange programs overseen by the Department of State. Personal interaction between Marines and the Department of State also helps both sides of the political-military bureaucracy to understand and work with each other. In addition to the three Marine Corps captains in fellowship programs at the Department of State and USAID and the nearly thirteen hundred Marines serving in U.S. embassies around the world, nearly two hundred retired or former active-duty Marines currently are employed by the Department of State. The USMC 2010 CPG also calls for an increase in interagency postings for active-duty Marines.

Thus, civil-military coordination remains a work in progress, noted Ambassador John E. Herbst, director of the Center for Complex Operations, National Defense University. The civilian organizations often do not have the resources to hold up their side of the relationship. This was a theme to which participants frequently returned in discussions about strengthening U.S. interagency BPC coordination.

To offer some perspective, the entire Department of State is the size of only a small Army division, roughly 11,500 employees; and for all the current and former Marines working at State only five U.S. diplomats serve as USMC foreign policy advisors.

Ambassador Herbst underscored the continuing importance of political-military partnerships for the United States. Iraq and Afghanistan are only the two most recent cases in point. Looking back, he pointed out that the United States has established a pattern repeatedly of learning on the job how to conduct what are presently termed complex operations, but previously were known as stability operations and often called irregular warfare or counterinsurgency.

The United States had developed a substantial body of knowledge for dealing with such operations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, having conducted, for example, a successful counterinsurgency operation in the Philippines after the Spanish-American War. Ambassador Herbst reminded the audience that much of this knowledge was distilled in the Marine Corps’ Small
Wars Manual, last edited in 1940. This publication contains enduring points that have relevance for today’s operations. For example, “In small wars, diplomacy has not ceased to function and the State Department exercises a constant and controlling interest over military operations.” In another passage: “The military leader in such operations thus finds himself limited to certain lines of actions as to the strategy and even as to the tactics of the campaign. This feature’s been so marked in past operations that Marines have been referred to as State Department troops.”

Washington learned lessons for interagency cooperation as early as the Philippines operation, together with the need to understand more fully the relationship between the respective roles of the civilian agencies and the military. In the Philippines America conducted a major conventional military operation under the leadership of General Arthur MacArthur, father of General Douglas MacArthur. General Arthur MacArthur thought that he had defeated the rebels, only to find that they returned to inflict substantial casualties. Only after recognizing that the conflict had to be dealt with politically, not simply militarily, did America succeed. The United States sent William Howard Taft to the Philippines to help set up civil governments in areas that had been cleared of rebel forces. Once this effort was underway, the United States began to achieve its stabilization and counterinsurgency goals. Of course, Taft later became president of the United States (1909–1913).

Although these lessons were obscured by the types of military operations conducted in the two World Wars, President Kennedy
came to office with an understanding that America was in a new world facing communist-backed insurgencies. Such conflicts focused U.S. attention once again on the need for joint, civil-military training. The Vietnam War highlighted this need for a whole-of-government integration in place of a fragmented approach to strategy, policy, and political-military operations. During the Vietnam War after Lyndon Johnson became president, it was insisted that all agencies of the U.S. government report to the deputy chief of mission in Saigon.

Subsequently, after the end of the Cold War the United States faced the problems of failed states such as Somalia and Yugoslavia. The Clinton administration began to reinvent how to deal with what came to be called irregular warfare. That reinvention took the form of Presidential Decision Directive 56, or PDD 56. It called for a unified strategy that would bring together necessary civilian and military resources. PDD 56 was never fully implemented, the Bush administration being generally opposed, initially at least, to nation-building. Nevertheless, in 2005 the Department of Defense issued Directive 3000.05 calling for greater civilian-military coordination. This raised stability operations to the level of a core military capability that was to be given priority comparable to other military operations. This was developed, Ambassador Herbst pointed out, in coordination with National Security Presidential Directive 44, which gave the Department of State authority to organize the civilian side of the U.S. government for such operations.

Early in its tenure the Obama administration updated DoD 3000.05, which was reissued in 2009. However, NSDP 44 was left to wither. According to Ambassador Herbst, to this day policy makers have not gotten the civil-military relationship entirely right. They need to create a civilian surge capacity where non-military personnel would work alongside the military and be the essential core of a coordinated U.S. government strategy across the board. To date, however, efforts to achieve political-military coordination remain ad hoc. A civilian surge capability should be developed that can be deployed in advance of a crisis or during and after a crisis. The surge capability should include professionals with the full range of skills that are required where a government is not functioning: lawyers and judges, police, engineers, and economists, public administrators, and health officials,
together with area experts who understand the local political-social environment with requisite language skills. Doctrines need to be articulated for civil-military operations as well as training that reflects that doctrine. Policy makers must build a civilian capability to plan such operations, together with a single command and control structure for such operations, whether they are entirely civilian or civil-military. Finally, the government must have the capacity to develop private-sector or nongovernmental organization (NGO) partnerships, together with working relationships with other governments, international organizations, and regional organizations. Their specific composition of course, will be determined by the particular crisis.

As Ambassador Herbst pointed out, there is broad support for greater interagency and whole-of-government approaches. The Bush administration had even devised a system of unified command and control for stability operations that was never put into effect. What was called the Interagency Management System has since been replaced by the Operational Response Framework, which has yet to be fully developed by the NSC staff. The essential point, Ambassador Herbst suggested, is that the U.S. government still lacks a system for organizing a response effort across the interagency when a crisis hits. This remains a serious national security deficiency.

Last but not least, Ambassador Herbst referred to a point made in the opening session, where participants expressed concern that after the United States leaves Iraq and Afghanistan it will once again declare that America will not engage in future nation-building operations. This would be a mistake because the result could once again mean the loss of the nascent capability built in recent years in Iraq and Afghanistan, including by the Marine Corps. If the emerging security environment features large ungoverned spaces, it necessarily follows that they will present a major national security challenge to the United States. Some such ungoverned spaces are close to the United States, in Haiti and northern Mexico, for example. Ungoverned spaces are the natural terrain for Special Forces, and the Marine Corps if a larger force is needed. In order to increase their readiness for such missions as evacuation of civilians, suppression of pirate bases, overseeing the delivery of supplies to prevent disease and starvation, the interdiction
of narco-trafficking, and the training of local military units for stability operations, the Marines will require civilian partners and capabilities.

Jim Thompson, deputy special representative for global partnerships in the Office of the Secretary of State’s Global Partnership Initiative (GPI), offered creative ways for building partner capacity for governance and stability. Noting that less than 18 percent of the funding from the United States comes from the public sector (7.4 percent for Iraq and Afghanistan alone), he encouraged the Marine Corps to consider reaching out to non-traditional partners, such as the private sector (see figure on next page). GPI has worked with the Foreign Service in efforts to develop partnerships within government and with the private sector. The office took note of the many U.S. private-sector companies with corporate social responsibility programs worldwide and urged U.S. embassies to serve as catalysts for enhanced collaboration. As an example, GPI’s Global Alliance for Clean Cook Stoves brought together interagency, nongovernmental, and private-sector partners to address a major health concern. It was suggested that such programs contribute to stability as well as popular support for representative governance.

Mr. Thompson also described recent efforts by the Department of State to use YouTube as a global platform to promote democracy in a public/private partnership called the Democracy Video Challenge. Rather than relying solely on traditional public affairs channels, the Department of State has reached out to YouTube as a private-sector partner. People around the world have been invited to contribute

Jim Thompson, Deputy Special Representative for Global Partnerships, Global Partnership Initiative, Office of the Secretary of State
up-to-three-minute videos of what democracy means to them. According to Mr. Thompson, seventy videos were submitted from Iran and more than two hundred from China. As a result of this public/private-sector partnership, the Department of State was able to get its message out in a way that State on its own could not do.

With these examples Mr. Thompson highlighted the benefits of thinking creatively about partnerships. Planners and policy makers must work across bureaucratic and national boundaries inside and outside government. This includes partnerships with the private sector that make it possible to gain maximum leverage from limited resources.

Funding Flows from United States
Source: USAID and conference presentation of Jim Thompson, U.S. Department of State.
According to Mr. Thompson, the combatant commands have also recognized the potential inherent in partnerships. The Department of State is in close contact with SOCOM and SOUTHCOM in particular for this purpose. State is also working with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which has created a public/private partnership unit. The Department of State is developing partnership training modules that can also be used by the military services.

Conference participants devoted substantial time to discussing the phasing of military and civilian roles. A common approach has been for the military to establish a degree of security as the first phase of an operation. The civilian sector would then step in, working with the host country’s population to create stability and working to eliminate some of the principal causes of unrest, especially in ungoverned spaces. Instead, Ambassador Herbst suggested that it is essential to have joint military and civilian action from the very beginning. With the emphasis on unity of effort in all phases, the challenge is to develop appropriate command and control relationships. Since this requires an understanding of necessary capabilities for each phase, it is important to bring together the key civilian and military players for training exercises. The military, including the Marine Corps, has had extensive training experience. In contrast, the civilian agencies lag behind the military in their participation in such exercises. It is often difficult to find civilians in the interagency prepared to take part in training programs sponsored by the military. Conference participants saw this as a factor working against smooth operations between the civilian and military components in a crisis.

**Partnering to Counter Irregular Threats**

The interagency and the private sector are valuable partners with the military for crisis prevention and response. However, insurgencies and other irregular threats bring into sharp focus the need for military partnerships that include the various military services and commands, tailored, of course, to the specific crisis situation. Because ungoverned spaces are the domain of Special Forces and expeditionary forces, the Marine Corps has developed important collaborative
relationships with other services based on a clearly defined role that takes maximum advantage of the unique capabilities of each partner. Conference participants proposed the use of regionally focused joint task forces that include the Marine Corps for the specific mission at hand. Such joint task forces would coordinate crisis response against a range of regular (state) and irregular (non-state) threats as well as hybrid warfare.
A dynamic security environment increases the types and number of crises that will confront the Marine Corps in the years ahead. Although extensive discussions took place throughout the conference on global threats and opportunities, one session offered representatives of the geographic combatant commands a forum to discuss challenges from their perspective. In this session, senior military leaders particularly emphasized the importance of engagement, access, crisis prevention, conflict management, and support for civil authorities. It is apparent that much creative thinking is needed to guide U.S. force development and operational concepts, as Dr. Jacquelyn K. Davis, IFPA executive vice president, noted. This session furnished the opportunity to discuss implications of the changing security setting for Marine Corps component commanders and to understand how best to integrate littoral warfare as fully as possible into joint and GCC planning.

REGIONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: COMBATANT COMMAND PERSPECTIVES

Dr. Jacquelyn K. Davis, Executive Vice-President, IFPA, and General Joseph Dunford, Jr.
U.S. Southern Command

As characterized by Major General (Sel) Juan G. Ayala, USMC, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) chief of staff, SOUTHCOM’s area of responsibility (AOR) is more closely linked culturally, socially, and economically than ever to the United States. By 2050, it is projected that about one-quarter of the U.S. population will be of Hispanic descent, much of it from nations in this AOR. As this population grows, U.S. engagement within SOUTHCOM’s AOR will increase in importance. In addition, SOUTHCOM’s AOR accounts for about 20 percent of U.S. energy imports. Trade between the United States and South and Central America is about equal to U.S. trade with Europe and Japan together.

The emerging threats of greatest concern in the SOUTHCOM AOR include narco-terrorism, illicit trafficking, illegal immigration, criminal groups, and natural disasters. The challenges faced by narcotics production and smuggling create formidable problems for the United States and its hemispheric neighbors. The United States remains the largest narcotics market in the Western Hemisphere. The problem cannot be solved solely on a state-by-state basis because of the "balloon effect" if narcotics operations are pushed down in one country they will inevitably pop up in another. Illicit trafficking also provides the potential nexus for transnational terrorism and the proliferation of WMD. The region is also prone to natural disasters, such as the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti and Chile.

Outside powers have growing interests and are increasing their presence in the SOUTHCOM AOR. China, Iran, and Russia have
each strengthened their diplomatic, economic, and military ties in the region. The Chinese want to ensure access to natural resources and are also increasing weapons sales and training. China’s growing economy requires large-scale imports of raw materials and commodities such as Brazilian iron ore, Chilean copper, Peruvian zinc, Argentine soybeans, Venezuelan and Ecuadorian oil, and Uruguayan meat. China is making major energy investments in SOUTHCOM’s AOR, especially in the oil and natural gas sectors. With its growing presence in Latin America, China seeks to be viewed as a reliable partner of choice. Its advantage over the United States results in part from Beijing’s lax criteria for meeting human or labor rights standards as a precondition for providing aid. The United States, on the other hand, demonstrates its commitment to the region partly through partner engagement and joint military exercises. Further, U.S. engagement allows Latin American nations to develop mutually beneficial relationships with the American military and permits their forces to receive the benefit of U.S. military training. Because of its close links with the other U.S. services, the Marine Corps is particularly well positioned to meet the needs of SOUTHCOM to work more closely with Latin American armies, navies, and air forces. In addition, the USMC’s ability to conduct operations from the sea that do not require forward bases on shore enhances its value to SOUTHCOM. Although regional partners want the United States to remain engaged, any in-country U.S. military presence can aggravate political sensitivities, as is also the case in other regions. Marine Corps maritime platforms have the advantage of keeping U.S. forces engaged, but deployed offshore. Maritime platforms can operate in parts of the AOR where other U.S. services may be limited by the lack of infrastructure. Thus, the forward-deployment capability of the Marine Corps provides a unique flexibility to SOUTHCOM.

**U.S. Central Command**

Priorities in the Middle East and Central Asia include the protection of global energy supplies, providing for secure maritime trade,
coping with the challenges of failed states, and shaping the political
changes sweeping the region, including notably Egypt, Tunisia, Libya,
Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. Major General Michael D. Jones, USA,
U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) chief of staff, underscored the
likelihood that the CENTCOM AOR will remain volatile and unstable.
The recent unforeseen events, including the toppling of regimes and
uprisings across the region, provide a perfect example of how the only
constant is change and how difficult it is to foresee the unfolding
future. Few predicted the events that have already swept some
longstanding regimes from power and pose threats to the future of
others. Nevertheless, military-to-military training and procurement
relationships will probably remain strong between the United States
and partners in the CENTCOM AOR such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan,
the United Arab Emirates, and even Egypt, despite the events of
recent months. However, there will be even greater sensitivities to a
U.S. military presence because governments will need to appear even
more responsive to popular sentiment. As a result the U.S. military
footprint will need to be light. Again, the Marine Corps represents
the kind of over-the-horizon offshore forward presence that is well
suited to operate under such political constraints.

The region holds a high concentration of weapons in the hands
of states as well as non-state armed groups. Hostile relationships
between states themselves and between state and non-state armed
groups, including notably (though not in the CENTCOM AOR)
Israel and the Palestinian groups, heighten the volatility of the region.
Issues such as water shortages and the failure to control migration and
weapons transfers across borders, as well as the purposeful transfer

Major General Michael D. Jones, USA, Chief of Staff, U.S. Central Command
of weapons, will exacerbate hostility and increase the possibility of miscalculation leading to conflict. The May 15, 2011, confrontations between Palestinian refugees and Israel Defense Forces on Israel’s borders—allegedly encouraged by the Syrian government—illustrated the dissatisfaction over the continuing failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, thus reinforcing conference discussions of this issue. This incident also demonstrated the possibility that Syria and other regional regimes under pressure will exploit that conflict in an effort to distract attention from their own internal crises. To divert the focus instead toward Israel, other states, notably Syria and Iran, may even encourage non-state armed groups such as Hizbullah and Hamas to provoke Israel into an armed conflict. Such non-state armed groups themselves may seek to advance their cause by encouraging and manipulating states to take military action against Israel. Thus we may think of states and non-state armed groups as proxies for each other, with each using the other for its own political-military purposes.

The Marine Corps possesses forces that meet CENTCOM needs, including the ability to arrive quickly at the scene of action because Marines may be forward-deployed at sea over the horizon. The Libya crisis was mentioned several times throughout the conference. The Marine Corps has had units deployed on ships in the Mediterranean that could be put ashore immediately if called upon to do so. Such forces possess a range of capabilities that allow them to operate across a broad spectrum, from amphibious assault to urban combat. The Marine Corps can also operate independently for extended periods of time. Given the importance of the AOR, U.S. forces in the region most possess an unprecedented level of cultural knowledge and language skills. Finally, General Jones made clear that the United States faces state and non-state adversaries that are adaptive and creative. U.S. forces must be adaptive and creative as well.
As Lieutenant General Duane D. Thiessen, commander of USMC Forces in the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), pointed out, more than half the world’s population, including the four most populous nations, falls within in the Asia-Pacific area. The AOR contains six of the world’s largest militaries, including China’s and Russia’s. Asia is a major world economic engine and a key player in the U.S. economy. The Pacific Rim is home to nine of the world’s fifteen largest economies, with China, Japan, and the United States together accounting for 41 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP).

General Thiessen maintained that the overall stability in the PACOM AOR provided by U.S. forward presence over the past sixty years has underwritten the region’s strong economic growth. Nevertheless, Asia has been the scene of several wars: on the Korean Peninsula, in Vietnam, and between India and Pakistan, and there have also been several crises between Mainland China and Taiwan.

A dynamic manufacturing sector, one of the region’s largest sectors, requires large-scale resource imports. Therefore, trade and freedom of navigation will remain pivotal issues in the PACOM AOR. One-quarter of global trade passes through the Strait of Malacca, into or out of the South China Sea. Some 90 percent of the oil imported by China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea transits the Strait of Malacca. Although Pacific countries themselves will act to maintain unimpeded access, the United States has a major interest as well in ensuring
freedom of the seas and continued economic growth in PACOM’s AOR. Without a U.S. security presence, the stability of this vast area would be in question.

The United States has five treaty allies in the Pacific: Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand, each of which has major concerns about trade and navigational access in the region. General Thiessen stressed not only that stability in Asia requires forward presence and credibility, but that U.S. credibility is based on its physical presence and the tangible evidence that leads allies, partners, and adversaries alike to conclude that the United States will remain actively engaged in the region. “Virtual presence is absolute absence,” he said.

In light of the sheer size of the PACOM AOR, encompassing the Pacific and Indian oceans and extending to the eastern coast of Africa, the Marine Corps has a vital role to play in ensuring forward presence whenever and wherever needed throughout this vast geographic and maritime area. Its indispensable role is a function of its niche capabilities: readiness, an expeditionary focus, force protection, and sustainment. Forward-basing remains important both for troops and for warehousing and maintenance, as well as for purposes of dissuasion and deterrence. For example, the United States seeks to dissuade countries presently benefiting from U.S. security guarantees from going nuclear and to deter the outbreak of armed conflict, on the Korean Peninsula, in the Taiwan Strait, and between India and Pakistan, for instance. Additionally, PACOM needs strategic-lift capabilities in order to be able to respond rapidly in crisis situations.

General Thiessen described in some depth many sectors in PACOM’s AOR that rely on the USMC’s special capabilities. As a forward base, Okinawa remains strategically important because it is ideally situated in close proximity to potential crisis points in Northeast Asia. Basing in Guam also addresses a key need to cover a geographic area larger than the size of the United States that includes the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca.

The South China Sea is the setting for conflicts as well. Both China and Vietnam have territorial interests in the Spratly Islands. Vietnam
also asserts claims to the Paracel Islands, which China seized from South Vietnam in 1974. The South China Sea is contested because of the vast oil and gas deposits said to exist under the seabed. It is estimated that over fifty billion tons of crude oil and twenty trillion cubic meters of natural gas could be found in the area, for which China, Vietnam, and the Philippines are conducting extensive deep-water exploration.\footnote{Zou Le, “Oil Bonanza in South China Sea,” \textit{Global Times} [China], April 19, 2011, \url{http://special.globaltimes.cn/2011-04/645909.html}.
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According to General Thiessen, the United States is engaged with countries on the South China Sea not only because that region is vital but also because those nations see the United States as a stabilizing influence. U.S. allies and partners have requested training from and military-to-military exchanges with U.S. forces because they want to avoid becoming irrelevant in the shadow of Chinese hegemony should that occur. There is increasing concern about China’s growing military power and assertiveness over its South China Sea territorial claims and goals elsewhere in the region.

As an essential element of its overall strategy, China is developing anti-access/area denial capabilities. China’s goal is to gain a range of offensive capabilities extending far into the western Pacific in order to achieve greater strategic depth. People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy strategists have discussed two island chains that together comprise China’s maritime perimeter. The first extends from the southern coast of Japan, includes Taiwan, runs adjacent to the western coast of the northern Philippines and parts of Malaysia, and contains the South China Sea. The second runs from the eastern coast of Japan to the easternmost parts of Indonesia and includes all of the Philippines.

Simultaneously China is developing systems and operational concepts to impede or prevent outside powers from projecting their power in the western Pacific, perhaps even into the vast area occupied by the two island chains. Such capabilities include the ability to dominate information across the battle space, including cyberspace and space. The Chinese are investing in advanced electronic warfare systems, counter-space weapons, and computer network operations. Other programs that are part of China’s A2/AD strategy include anti-ship ballistic missiles to locate and target forces at sea; conventional
and nuclear-powered attack submarines; surface combatants such as guided-missile destroyers; and maritime strike aircraft. China is building conventionally armed ballistic and cruise missiles, special operations forces, and cyber warfare capabilities.\(^{18}\)

A U.S. presence in the Pacific enhances the ability of the United States to work with states in the region in bilateral and multilateral relationships. In the absence of U.S. engagement that includes forward presence in the Asia-Pacific area, the likelihood increases that future crises will arise perhaps as a result of miscalculation on the part of other states in the absence of perceived U.S. resolve in advance of the crisis. Crisis prevention is enhanced by a U.S. forward presence that dissuades and deters.

**Expeditionary Force and the U.S. Coast Guard**

Although a unified, whole-of-government effort presents many challenges, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) operates within a setting that includes not only other services, but also civilian departments and agencies. As Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., commandant of the USCG, pointed out, the Coast Guard was established in 1790, four years before the U.S. Navy was created in 1794. While it is one of the U.S. military services, the Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Before the creation of DHS in 2003, the Coast Guard was a part of the Department of Transportation. As a result of what it does and how it is organized within the U.S. government, the Coast Guard has had a long history of cooperative relationships with civilian and military entities. Admiral Papp joked that if it is wet and it is a problem short of war then it falls to the USCG to handle. The Coast Guard’s niche capabilities are tapped

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\(^{18}\) For a discussion of China’s anti-access/area denial strategy and emerging capabilities, see *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2010 Annual Report to Congress*, 29–34.
by the GCCs and by joint-force commanders, especially in law enforcement situations, some far from U.S. shores. For example, the operation to retake the Magellan Star from Somali pirates off the coast of Yemen in September 2010 is generally known, as it should be, for its important Marine contribution. However, this is an example of a joint operation between the USMC, the Navy, and the Coast Guard. After Marines had pacified the pirates, a USCG law enforcement detachment (LEDET) came aboard to gather evidence and prepare the case against those taken into U.S. custody. As Admiral Papp pointed out, the Coast Guard also had a major role in combating piracy in its early years at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Coast Guard also serves an expeditionary role as part of the joint force in situations such as the response to the Haiti earthquake in January 2010. The USCG commandant is an operational commander and therefore is able to direct assets on his own authority. Thus, the day after the disaster, the first U.S. responders to Haiti were three USCG ships. The Coast Guard conducted reconnaissance and damage assessment, and it put medical teams and security forces ashore. Several days later the Navy and Marine Corps arrived after a national-level decision was made to deploy assistance.

The challenge that the Coast Guard confronts is that it is not organized to sustain long overseas deployments. The USCG does not have the capacity to lead joint forces, but its niche capabilities are in high demand. USCG patrol cutters are sought by the GCCs, from patrols to halt narcotics smuggling in the SOUTHCOM region.
to ensuring the safety of oil shipments in the CENTCOM area of operations. As a civilian agency, the Coast Guard’s ability to be “bureaucratically multilingual” because of the broad constituency that it serves enhances its attractiveness in a joint setting that also requires civilian-military cooperation. The USCG has had extensive experience throughout its history in working with other services as well as the civilian community within government and in the private sector.
As numerous speakers pointed out, the USMC Force Structure Review sets forth the role of an expeditionary force in readiness in present and future security settings. It recognizes that certain core capabilities, capacities, requirements, relationships, and interdependencies will be necessary for the Marine Corps to operate most effectively. Beyond the assumption that such forces must be sufficiently light and agile to deploy and employ rapidly but robust enough to carry the day, given the continuing demand for adaptable forces to respond to complex needs, what specific capabilities will the Marine Corps need to have in its inventory? As Dr. Charles Perry, IFPA vice president and director of studies, pointed out, this discussion was intended to address the question of what should be the essential features of the Marine Corps of the future and how the USMC should be positioned to operate effectively across the full spectrum of conflict in a “lane” that intersects the land, sea, and air domains.

Dr. Charles M. Perry, Vice President and Director of Studies, IFPA
Meeting Demand to Engage, Respond, and Project Power

The twenty-first-century world is only the latest setting in a security environment that is familiar to the Marine Corps. Today the United States faces ungoverned spaces or failed states where al-Qaeda and other non-state armed groups can take advantage of vulnerable populations. It is clear that the USMC will continue to be needed to operate in such areas, keeping these groups under unrelenting pressure. Beyond immediate operations to defeat terrorists, the Marine Corps, with civilian agencies in the lead, can help build the capacity of partners to spread and consolidate governance. As a middleweight force, the Marine Corps possesses great versatility extending from the battlefield to the post-conflict setting.

Lieutenant General John E. Wissler, USMC, deputy commandant for programs and resources, outlined the factors for designing a middleweight force capable of operating at the high end and the low end of the conflict spectrum—fighting as part of the joint force in regular warfare operations against states and in irregular operations with non-state armed groups. A middleweight force has essentially four tasks: (1) to conduct forward engagement and provide security force assistance; (2) to project both hard and soft power; (3) to assure access; and (4) to fight above its weight if necessary—to be able to conduct major combat operations and counter irregular threats with the skill that the Marines and other military services deployed in Iraq

Lieutenant General John E. Wissler, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources
and now Afghanistan have shown in the last decade. These four areas were the focus of the recent Marine Corps Force Structure Review. Despite the need for creative thinking about the future security setting, the number-one UMSC priority is to be able to respond to crises today with today’s force. As General Wissler described it, crisis response is the “sweet spot” for a middleweight force, and the Marine Corps’ expeditionary capability is necessary for its role. The Marine Corps’ commitment to readiness means that it is prepared to deploy “when the bell sounds.” Given the importance of their expeditionary role, it would be unacceptable for the Marine Corps forces to operate from a position of tiered readiness, which presumes that time will be available to permit forces to flow sequentially, either earlier or later, into a crisis theater. Instead, the highest state of readiness across the board must be maintained to allow immediate response if the Marine Corps is called upon to do so. To be expeditionary means that the force must be able to operate with efficiency in austere environments, bringing to the battle the capabilities that will be needed when the forces arrive and being able to sustain the fight once they are there. This means that the Marine Corps must ensure that its capabilities can be deployed from amphibious ships, which allow expeditionary forces to operate immediately from positions as close to the scene of action as possible.

Global USMC engagement capabilities should be viewed as a U.S. insurance policy. Forward engagement is about building friendships and relationships. It also is based on the need to become culturally attuned to the decision-making processes of allies and coalition partners. Forward engagement focused on security force assistance also offers opportunities for crisis prevention by being at or near the scene. If a crisis breaks out, it is essential to be on the scene before the crisis becomes a war. Investment in BPC and forward engagement is likely to save the United States from greater spending on conflict.

19 Tiered readiness is a concept for reducing U.S. forces’ operating costs by categorizing forces based on their presumed arrival to a combat theater. Later-arriving forces would not be maintained at their highest states of readiness, thereby saving near-term costs. For an in-depth discussion of tiered readiness see Michael A. Longoria and Michael C. Ryan, “Military Readiness: Background to Congressional Debate over Tiered Readiness,” CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service), August 31, 1998.
response down the road. The Marine Corps must be able to work with others who may have capabilities that can augment the Marine Corps, or simply adapt quickly to circumstances in keeping with the expeditionary mindset of the Marine Corps. Marines may need to deploy to locations without airports or other key infrastructures, or partners may seek USMC engagement without a big U.S. footprint on the ground.

Dr. Eric J. Labs, senior analyst for naval forces and weapons at the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), shared his personal views about the long-term outlook for an amphibious expeditionary force, given recent changes in the Navy’s thirty-year shipbuilding plan. In 2009 the Navy and the Marine Corps agreed to maintain thirty-three amphibious ships over the span of their 2010–40 procurement plan. This plan was a compromise, driven by fiscal constraints, from the Navy’s agreed-upon requirement of thirty-eight ships. Dr. Labs’ presentation illustrated how decisions made over the last three years had the likely effect of creating a gap between the thirty-three ship Navy objective and the actual inventory.

In 2011 the Navy added two landing platform docks (LPD-17s) to its 2010–40 procurement plan, which was originally drafted in 2009. This addition is the only inventory increase to the original plan. Even before the recently announced Roles and Missions Review of U.S. defense spending, the Navy had revealed new cuts, delayed plans, and accelerated decommissionings. One Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future), or MPF(F), squadron was canceled, which cut two amphibious

Dr. Eric J. Labs, Senior Analyst for Naval Forces and Weapons, Congressional Budget Office
assault ships (LHA/LHD) and three large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships (LMSRs). An additional LHA-6 was cut and another’s delivery was delayed from 2012 to 2013. Meanwhile, scheduled LHA and LHP (another amphibious assault ship) replacements are anticipated to increase from three-year centers to four- or five-year centers. Two LHA-1 class decommissionings have been accelerated by nine years, and LPD-4 decommissionings by five years. Finally, procurement of a new class of amphibious landing ship dock, known as the LSD(X), has been delayed from 2016 to 2017.

These procurement changes will result in a declining amphibious force capability over the next thirty years. The Marine Corps’ compromise objective of thirty-three ships will be reached by about 2016. Then, from about 2030 forward, a yawning gap will open that will be difficult to close, warned Dr. Labs (see figure below). Even so, this reflects the most optimistic outlook, assuming a fully funded annual ship procurement program. The Navy estimates that it would need $18 billion a year, while the CBO believes that it would require $20 billion. However, over the last few years the United States has spent only about $15 billion annually on shipbuilding. In addition to the decline in amphibious ship inventory, between the 2009 and 2011

Projected Inventory of Amphibious Ships 2010–2040
procurement plans, the capability of the LSD(X) was scaled back. This replacement for the LSD-41 and LSD-49 classes was originally to be based on an LPD-17 hull; but the new plan calls for reducing the cost by 48 percent by making the ship 32 percent smaller.

In his presentation, Ron O’Rourke, senior analyst for maritime forces, Congressional Research Service, encouraged the Marine Corps to better explain the risks involved in reducing its amphibious ship fleet. There may be more awareness now on Capitol Hill about the risks the Marines took in reducing from thirty-eight to thirty-three ships. However, few in Congress are aware that the original USMC objective was closer to forty-two ships. Even thirty-eight ships, therefore, is not risk-free; and reducing the procurement plan to thirty-three ships involves taking on even greater risk that the future force structure will not be adequate. To help rectify this situation, the Marine Corps needs to be more visible and credibly explain (within the Pentagon and especially on Capitol Hill) what it will not be capable of doing operationally with fewer ships. If the USMC is not prepared to identify the added operational risk, the logical conclusion will be that any risks are trivial and that the planned cuts can be made without great sacrifice to capabilities. Similarly, the USMC must be able to explain the operational implications of not procuring the F-35B, and only getting the F-35C instead.

At the same time, the Marine Corps is not getting enough credit for the value and capabilities of its maritime prepositioning ships.

Ron O’Rourke, Senior Analyst for Maritime Forces, Congressional Research Service
(MPS). These craft are being used individually for engagement operations, but few outside the USMC are aware of this use. In addition, the Marine Corps should promote its design changes to the mobile landing platform (MLP) that sustain 75 percent of what the hoped-for full-up MLP would do, for much less than 75 percent of the cost.

**Amphibious Assault and Counter-A2/AD Capabilities**

Forward-basing is highly preferable if partner nations are prepared to accept a U.S. presence on their soil. When this is not the case, however, the United States still needs the ability to deploy forces rapidly to regions where important U.S. interests are at stake. Because adversaries are gaining anti-access/area denial capabilities, America cannot be complacent about its ability to project power against states and non-state armed actors who are obtaining new capabilities that the United States has not yet had to confront. U.S. power-projection capability, including amphibious assault, creates opportunities and additional options for decision makers.

David A. Ochmanek, deputy assistant secretary of defense for force development, stated that the Department of Defense and the services are focused again on the difficult problem of balancing today’s force requirements with the modernization to prepare for the world of tomorrow. The essence of force planning is the ability to anticipate as accurately as possible those capabilities that will be needed in the future. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of 2009 had three significant ideas directly related to this balance. First, the imperative is to win today’s wars, with major emphasis on capabilities to conduct effective counterinsurgency and stability operations. The second is that as the United States draws down forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the level and distribution of effort against terrorists and other non-state armed groups will shift from large-scale U.S.-led forces to
smaller-scale indirect operations in which the United States assumes a background role in building partner capacity and advising partners. The third is that the United States must begin now to strengthen capabilities to counter anti-access/area-denial threats. According to Mr. Ochmanek, the focus of force structure planning will be at the edges of the conflict spectrum: on the low end countering insurgents and terrorists and at the higher end countering adversaries with much greater capabilities than America has faced in recent decades. The post-Cold War conflict spectrum focused at the middle. In today’s post-post-Cold War world, the emphasis must be simultaneously on the low and high ends. Although the Marine Corps is a middleweight force, this does mean that it is optimized for the middle of the conflict spectrum. In fact, this is clearly not the case. The Marine Corps has both the capability and experience to conduct operations against regular and irregular adversaries, against states and non-state armed groups. The Marine Corps has been responsive to the needs of the warfighter at both ends of the high-low spectrum. This includes the conduct of urban warfare and support to special operations as well as forcible-entry operations.

Turning to the high end of the conflict spectrum, Mr. Ochmanek cautioned against complacency about America’s ability to project military power against adversaries who are gaining new capabilities not confronted in recent operations. In recent years the United States has initiated or accelerated efforts to field a new generation of electronic attack systems, ramped up investment in standoff weapons.
such as tactical Tomahawk, and explored concepts for making its forward bases more resilient to attack. Attention has been directed toward dispersal as a complement to hardening. Nevertheless, there is still much that the U.S. military does not know about how to cope successfully with anti-access/area-denial threats. Each of the services needs to speed up its efforts to develop, examine, and evaluate new operational concepts, including base protection, designing electronic attack weapons to minimize or negate A2/AD capabilities, and developing a new bomber capable of defeating air defenses. In this regard, the F-35B is much more than just an aircraft, it is a "game changer." The F-35B allows the Marine Corps to operate wherever necessary by providing a capability to address the A2/AD threat.

The Air-Sea Battle concept represents an important first step in countering the A2/AD threat. Air-Sea Battle is based on the premise that combined air and naval capabilities can address threats across a spectrum of military operations, including adversaries with advanced A2/AD capabilities. These may include anti-tank guided weapons, advanced surface-to-air missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), reconnaissance, and intelligence collection and transmission. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) specified that Air-Sea Battle should focus on the integration of air and naval capabilities across all operational domains, including air, sea, land, space, and cyberspace. Air-Sea Battle needs to be developed down to the operational level, addressing such questions as how to operate forces in contested environments. It will be essential to develop innovative planning scenarios that include non-state entities and proxies as well as state adversaries prepared to combine regular and irregular capabilities and tactics into hybrid operations. These operations may include a mix of irregular tactics and high-tech anti-access weapons. Although no regional adversary is specified, it is evident to many that the investments being made by China and Iran in capabilities to counter U.S. power projection provide important areas of focus for Air-Sea Battle.

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If the Marine Corps is to operate as a key player in forward presence, it must take into account the projected A2/AD capabilities of countries in regions of importance to the United States. For example, as overseas bases become increasingly vulnerable, it is essential to develop dispersed basing, an option compatible with the forward-presence approach of the Marine Corps. Mobile offshore deployment options, such as those offered by Marine Corps expeditionary forces, are an indispensable part of the joint team and they heighten the importance of Air-Sea Battle to the USMC. This underscores the need for the Marine Corps to be fully a part of the Air-Sea Battle concept as it evolves and to help shape its development.21

Unmanned aerial vehicles have assumed a role of growing importance in twenty-first-century warfare. This platform has great potential both for reconnaissance and intelligence collection and as a weapons platform for the United States to counter adversary A2/AD strategies, tactics, and capabilities. Since they are remotely piloted, function without a human operator onboard, and therefore do not risk the loss of pilots’ lives, UAVs expand the risks that policy makers and the military are prepared to take in support of important U.S. national security interests. In recent years in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps and other services have effectively demonstrated that UAVs allow a greater level of flexibility in twenty-first-century military operations. However, as Mr. Ochmanek pointed out, UAVs in the hands of adversaries could be used against U.S. forces. This is yet another dimension of the challenge to U.S. access in future operations that must be addressed in the development of concepts such as Air-Sea Battle.

The United States is entering a period where the threats and challenges it faces are both increasing and shifting in form, while simultaneously the U.S. defense budget is experiencing significant cutbacks. In a luncheon address on the first day of the conference, Representative Todd Akin (R-MO.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee’s Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, described “out of control federal spending” as one of the key challenges facing the United States. Representative Akin’s remarks underscored the points made earlier by Senator Reed that the growing U.S. deficit will result in fewer resources for the Department of Defense than it has been accustomed to over the past decade. The deficit reduction plans of both political parties will result in reduced defense spending, calling into question the ability of the U.S. military to meet the demands of the security environment.

Representative Akin explained that entitlement programs and debt service together total $2.2 trillion. This figure is approximately the same amount that the United States takes in annually from taxes. The discretionary portion of the budget, which includes defense and the other traditional functions of government, is approximately $1.6 trillion. Viewed in this fashion, the defense budget and other discretionary spending are about the size of the deficit. Of course, the deficit is financed with borrowed money. Unless drastic changes are made in federal spending, including entitlements, there will be no funds for necessary defense and other discretionary programs. Within the defense budget itself, personnel costs consume approximately 65 percent of all expenditures. This leaves diminishing funds for the replacement or modernization of defense capabilities.

These figures provide vivid evidence that serious steps must be taken to address the fiscal crisis. Deficit reduction efforts extend to
pressure to cut defense spending. This problem is compounded by the fact that many members of Congress want to slash federal spending dramatically across the board. They apparently do not understand the need to protect military spending from drastic cuts, believing instead that the defense budget is similar to other government programs as a legitimate and appropriate target for cutting to help reduce the deficit. To help prevent the defense budget from being gutted, Representative Akin emphasized that the White House, DoD, and the services must help educate members of Congress and their staffs on both sides of the aisle to understand the importance of a strong U.S. defense and an adequately funded military.

Another way of looking at the problem is to grasp the essential fact that America’s domestic well-being depends vitally on providing for the common defense. Until and unless national security is ensured, there will be no sustainable basis for economic growth and prosperity. The United States exists in a dangerous world, as it discovered once again on 9/11. Americans may seek to ignore or wish away their enemies, but they will not necessarily reciprocate. Conference speakers generally agreed that the real problem contributing to the widening deficit is out-of-control entitlement spending, not the defense budget. For example, Congressman Akin pointed out that in 1965 defense spending represented 9 percent of the U.S. GDP. Today, this figure has dropped to 4 percent. However, over the same period, entitlements have grown from 4 percent of GDP to approximately 13 percent. This number is

Representative Todd Akin, Chairman, Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, House Armed Services Committee
projected to escalate in the years ahead, especially as baby boomers increasingly draw Social Security, Medicare, and other entitlement benefits. The fact that people are living nearly a generation longer than was the case when many entitlement programs were originally created further intensifies the deficit problem. Representative Akin asserted that modifications in entitlement programs need to be made to reflect the current fiscal realities. He conceded, however, that enacting entitlement changes is one of the most contentious and difficult challenges in U.S. politics.

Representative Akin also explained that many on Capitol Hill are not aware that the United States has approximately 50 percent fewer soldiers, ships, and aircraft today than it had as recently as 1995. This is a serious problem because history shows that when defense is neglected the cost of this neglect will be extremely high. As Ronald Reagan once stated, no war has broken out because the United States was too strong. Congressman Akin expressed his concern that U.S. force structure will be so hollow that America will not possess the capabilities to deter or prevail in future wars. This situation is compounded by the fact that much of the military equipment used in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars needs to be replaced. This “reset” issue was discussed several times during the conference. With large reductions in defense spending, however, funds may simply not be available for the replacement of worn-out, damaged, or destroyed equipment.

Congressman Akin turned to another issue that Congress should address: the number of competing and overlapping committees having defense-related responsibilities and the need to make organizational changes in Congress, particularly the committee system. There is excessive duplicative authority among the various committees, resulting in inefficiencies at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, including the number of committees to which the executive

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branch must respond, together with possible redundant congressional oversight functions. This is especially the case in the defense authorization and defense appropriations process. Congress needs to draw a clear line of jurisdiction to delineate various committee responsibilities in order to control and manage finite resources wisely, even though, as Congressman Akin admitted, such reorganization will not be easy to achieve.

**Working in a Constrained Budget Environment**

With the Marine Corps and the entire DoD already operating under constrained budgets, a major conference theme was the USMC’s need to publicize the fact that it has already made budget cuts while taking on additional essential national security tasks. The Marine Corps will have to clearly present the cuts that it has already made and to underscore the national security implications of further reductions.

Mr. Ron O’Rourke suggested that the Marine Corps must make its case more cogently and persuasively. For example, the Marine Corps should highlight its necessary contribution to the overall U.S. effort to counter rising Chinese maritime military forces. There is a wide-ranging discussion among analysts and policy makers about the place of naval forces, including both the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, as Washington contemplates cuts in defense spending. A key factor in that debate will be the place of China, with increasing willingness in national security circles to talk openly about China and the problems that its growing military capability will pose for its neighbors and for the overall security of the Asia-Pacific area. Clearly, the United States as a general strategic principle should not fight a land war in Asia or mount an amphibious landing on an East Asia coast. However, in combat scenarios, the Marine Corps may be given the task of seizing and holding one or more smaller islands in the Asia-Pacific area and elsewhere as forward operating bases. The value of the Marine Corps as an instrument for maintaining U.S. naval presence and engagement in the Asia-Pacific area and elsewhere, such as the Middle East, should be given greater emphasis. This requirement comes more fully into
focus as the Air-Sea Battle concept is developed. What needs to be added in the Air-Sea Battle discussions is the role to be played by the Marine Corps in gaining and maintaining access in regions of great importance to U.S. security.

The USMC Force Structure Review proposes a force that will be numerically smaller than today’s Marine Corps. The budgetary savings to be accrued have not been fully calculated or adequately explained so that there can be greater understanding of their potential implications for the combat capability of the Marine Corps. As DoD reviews its budget for additional reductions, the Marine Corps will want to be able to demonstrate that it has already done its share. Thus it is in the interest of the Marine Corps to calculate how the Force Structure Review will contribute to the DoD top-line savings goal, both cumulatively and annually. For example, the FSR calls for reducing the active USMC component from 202,000 to 186,800. However, even though the budget debate has already begun in Washington, as of the time of the conference the Marine Corps had not articulated the cost savings of decreasing the force by over 15,000 active Marines. Of course, such cost savings should be balanced against the implications of cuts in personnel for Marine Corps combat capability.

The changes in how U.S. forces fight, and how they will fight in the future, mean that the Marine Corps will need to maintain a force that is quantitatively smaller but with qualitative improvements whose effect will be to enhance overall capabilities to operate in the transformed twenty-first-century setting. Especially given the fiscal challenges, achieving the appropriate balance between force reset and force modernization will not be easy. The Marine Corps has concluded that its reset cost is $10.6 billion, $5 billion of which is to be held until the end of Afghanistan operations. In the FY11 federal budget, $2.8 billion was set aside for USMC reset.

The priority for the Marine Corps is to develop the force so that it is best able to respond to today’s crises while preparing for the future. For example, the Marine Corps is balancing between reset and modernization by investing in future readiness within current operations in Afghanistan. Marines in combat are now using advanced combat optics and shooting with much-improved weapon systems as current capabilities are replaced and upgraded. The USMC has
improved counter-IED capabilities, and Marines are now locating about 70 percent of IEDs. Given the need to reset, or replace equipment, for today’s fight, however, some modernization will necessarily be deferred. In certain instances the USMC will not reset to a previous condition, instead replacing an existing capability with a more modern one. For the first time, the Marine Corps Program Objective Memorandum (POM) goes through every single Marine Corps program to ensure that it is procuring what is needed to serve as a middleweight force. The USMC is also in the process of evaluating all the hidden costs of the FSR.

On May 12, 2011, then-Secretary of Defense Gates held one of his final meetings with Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C., before leaving office. The secretary announced that in shaping the military budget for the coming years he is “determined that we will not repeat across-the-board cuts that will wind up hollowing out the Corps.”23 The priorities are USMC recruitment, training, and funding for essential weapons. The Marine Corps can assist the DoD leadership in defending its budget by speaking out about its needs and the risks the United States faces if its most important needs are not met.

In his address, General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, reiterated the USMC role and its meaning for the future USMC force structure. His presentation helped to integrate the various conference discussions on such topics as the future security setting, U.S. engagement in the world, and fiscal constraints. General Amos built not only on the conference discussions of previous sessions but also his Commandant’s Planning Guidance (see box on next page) to highlight the role of the Marine Corps in U.S. national security.

Creating Decision Space

For the United States to remain globally engaged, a deployable expeditionary force that can bring its equipment with it remains an indispensable national security capability. Logistics management is critical to the Marine Corps because crises do not wait for U.S. forces to pack their equipment, place it on ships, and arrive at the crisis weeks or months later. This means that the USMC must be a balanced air/ground logistics team built to respond immediately. What the Corps carries when it deploys must be able to fit on amphibious ships and transport aircraft. General Amos illustrated the ability of the Marine Corps to deploy immediately upon receiving the order to do so with a recent example: the surge in Afghanistan. On December 1, 2009, President Obama ordered the deployment of thirty thousand additional U.S. military personnel to Afghanistan. By the next morning, on December 2, 2009, the lead elements of the first battalion of the ten thousand additional Marines were airborne en route to Afghanistan. By December 21, the entire battalion was on the ground with all its equipment. Half of the second Marine Corps battalion was also in Afghanistan with half of its equipment. By the middle of January 2010, three Marine Corps battalions with their equipment were fully deployed in Afghanistan.
The ability of the Marine Corps to respond to today’s crisis today carries over to humanitarian operations. As General Amos pointed out, the USMC brings a range of resources, including medical personnel and supplies, and other essentials such as food and drinking water to the scene of a natural disaster. The Marine Corps works as part of an interagency and international response to such a crisis. In other words, the Marine Corps operates at the tip of both power projection and assistance projection as first responder. Its power-projection capabilities contribute decisively to the USMC ability to act swiftly in response to humanitarian disasters such as the March 2011 tsunami in Japan.

In order to respond to today’s crisis today, the USMC constantly focuses its planning on ways to improve rapid deployment and mobility and to make the Corps a lighter but more lethal force. The Marine Corps has canceled certain systems that were too big and/or too heavy for speedy deployment on existing transport platforms. Moreover, the Corps redesigned and reengineered some of its weapon systems, reducing, for example, a thirty-five-pound weapon with...
ammunition to half that weight while simultaneously improving the weapon’s effectiveness. General Amos stated that making the Marine air/ground task force lighter and more mobile is a top Corps priority. A critically important role for the Marine Corps is to create additional options by increasing the time available to decision makers to choose how to cope with the crisis. By having forward-deployed USMC units available offshore when the conflict erupted in Libya, the United States could have moved Marines into place for immediate action if called upon to do so. As a result, the U.S. leadership gained additional decision space—to decide whether or how to intervene. In providing capabilities for immediate response, the Corps recognizes that responding to today’s crisis next week will be too late.

Moreover, the Marine Corps’ forward-deployed, forward-engaged position frequently entails BPC training and joint exercises with the armed forces of nations in the deployment area. With its extensive training capabilities, experience, and BPC activities, the Marine Corps fosters strong and lasting relationships with its military counterparts and the civilian components as well, allowing the USMC to make use of these relationships during times of crisis. Such partnerships

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**General James F. Amos, USMC, Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps**
contribute to regional deterrence and would be important to the United States and its partners in the event of an actual crisis. Among its many current BPC efforts, General Amos noted that the Marines are training two infantry battalions in Liberia as part of Operation Onward Liberty, and providing border control training to the police and military forces in several other nations.

The war in Afghanistan is currently the Marine Corps’ top priority. General Amos noted that sixty thousand Marines, or approximately 55 percent of the USMC operating forces, are focused on that conflict. This breaks down to the twenty thousand Marines now deployed in Afghanistan, the twenty thousand just returning from the war, and an additional twenty thousand preparing for the next deployment. However, as the Afghan war winds down, General Amos believes that the Marine Corps will need to reengage in the Pacific with augmented forward deployments. As other conference speakers also noted, the Asia-Pacific area is becoming the center of global economic activity, with several nations in the area devoting increased resources to defense, developing robust maritime, air, command, control, and communication, and cyberspace assets. The Marine Corps has to be forward-engaged to safeguard growing U.S. interests in this important area.

The Marine Corps’ “Lane”

Since August 2010 following then-Secretary Gates’ speech in San Francisco the USMC FSR has been refining the “lane” in which it operates. General Amos delineated the respective roles of the services and their relationship to the unique capabilities of the Marine Corps (see figure on next page). The U.S. Army’s primary domain is land. The primary domain of the U.S. Air Force is above the ground, including space. The U.S. Navy’s domain is on and below the seas. The U.S. Marine Corps does not have a primary domain—it has a “lane,” which intersects the other domains as the expeditionary middleweight force in readiness that functions on land, air, and sea
at the high and low ends of the conflict spectrum, and in any setting where it is directed to operate.

General Amos stated that the Roles and Missions Review, ordered by the president in April 2011 as part of the effort to cut $400 billion from the security budget, will attempt to delineate the U.S. military roles and missions, together with the capabilities needed to carry them out. Given budgetary constraints, each of the services will face an even greater need to focus on its primary roles without costly duplication of effort. Because the nation cannot afford for all the services to be equally ready to respond to today’s crisis today, the Marine Corps furnishes that immediate readiness and prepares the way for other U.S. military forces to be brought to the conflict if required. The Marine Corps constantly strives to improve its capacity to move as rapidly as possible to where it is needed. Therefore, as General Amos emphasized, logistics is the “heartbeat” of the Marine Corps. So important is logistics that the Marine Corps is an air/ground logistics

The Marine Corps “Lane” of Operations

[Diagram of the Marine Corps “Lane” of Operations]
balance team, another theme that other speakers as well emphasized throughout the conference.
The major conference conclusions emphasized the importance of capabilities for immediate crisis response, forward presence, and forward engagement. There was extensive discussion of the need to combat anti-access/area denial threats and to address issues of cyber security. Major conclusions focused on the requirement for forces that are flexible and adaptable to conduct joint operations based on maximum interagency cooperation as well as affordability.

Commitment to Readiness
Following the abundantly apparent unpreparedness of U.S. forces at the beginning of the Korean War, the Eighty-Second U.S. Congress established the Marine Corps as the nation’s expeditionary force in readiness in 1952. The Marine Corps’ commitment to readiness means it is prepared to deploy as soon as directed. To fulfill this role, the USMC has set its reserve forces as interdependent with its active forces. This will allow for rapid movement to crisis points by reserve and active forces based in the United States, as well as by forward-deployed Marine Corps forces. Whether based in the United States or forward-deployed, USMC forces must be sufficiently light and agile to deploy and employ rapidly, but robust enough to carry the day, given the continuing demands for adaptable forces to respond to increasingly complex needs. Given the importance of their expeditionary role, Marine Corps forces cannot achieve maximum effectiveness from a position of tiered readiness; instead, the highest state of readiness must be maintained to respond rapidly. While there are costs in maintaining the Marine Corps’ readiness, there are potentially greater costs in not being prepared: the risk of not being able to respond in a non-combatant operation when American citizens and interests are challenged, the risk of being unable to help coalition partners and allies respond to humanitarian crises and other needs.
Forward Deployment and Forward Engagement

The United States must be engaged globally to counter the threats that it faces. It is the role of the Marine Corps among all the services to be forward-deployed and forward-engaged. Key partnerships need to be identified that can facilitate access and meet the demands of the twenty-first-century security setting. Maintaining these partnerships will require a deep knowledge of the political and cultural landscapes in host countries. Partner nations often welcome U.S. engagement because they want the United States to be present when threats emerge. U.S. forward deployment creates a perception of credibility that such presence will continue in the future. Partner governments in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America demand U.S. engagement. However, their populations are frequently sensitive to an in-country U.S. presence. Therefore, in most cases the U.S. footprint will need to be light. The Marine Corps can leverage its maritime character by basing offshore. This will also be necessary when engaging countries with limited indigenous infrastructure such as bases and airports or even electricity and clean water. Forward engagement also contributes to building partner capacity. The USMC’s BPC engagement helps prevent conflicts by strengthening the ability of partner governments and militaries to de-escalate crises before they become armed conflicts. At the same time, engagement with foreign militaries, governments, and populations is a requirement for access. Military planners frequently think of access in terms of territory, littorals, and airspace. However, the United States also needs to maintain access to other countries’ military, national, and political leadership based on effective working relationships that are best fostered by forward presence leading to partnerships.
Countering Anti-Access/Area Denial Threats

A recurring conference theme was that the greater availability of weapons systems for anti-access/area-denial will pose challenges for U.S. power projection. In the future getting to the fight itself is going to be a fight. The USMC and joint and multinational forces must be prepared to operate in uncertain and hostile environments. Although force requirements will be uncertain, it was suggested that a minimum of three to five combat brigades should be available at all times for immediate deployment. U.S. counter-A2/AD operations will necessarily be joint operations, with each service leveraging its capabilities in order to exploit opportunities and overcome obstacles. Among its future capabilities, the Marine Corps needs the F-35B if it is to conduct operations in variegated terrains. A forcible amphibious entry capability remains a continuing strategic necessity for U.S. power projection. Conference speakers recalled that forcible amphibious entry seemed unlikely ever again after World War II. Subsequent events, including the brilliantly executed Inchon landing during the Korean War, soon proved this assessment wrong. Once again, some analysts have concluded that anti-ship missiles and other proliferating technologies will make amphibious assault obsolete. Such assessments are no more valid today than they were in the years immediately after World War II. The Marine Corps needs to demonstrate that advanced anti-access weapons in the hands of our adversaries can and will be countered. At the same time, the United States must develop and improve the tools for defeating A2/AD threats so as to allow the Marine Corps and the other services to maintain necessary capabilities to project power into hostile environments.
Cyber Security

Given the seriousness of cyber attacks, DoD has formally recognized cyberspace as a domain. However, the United States is still in the early stages of developing an understanding of the role of the cyber domain in state-to-state conflicts and in the broader security setting of non-state cyber warriors. In order to enhance America’s ability to protect infrastructure from cyber attack, there is an obvious need to create smaller and more survivable networks. Most importantly, U.S. leaders must determine the defining features of an effective deterrent in the cyber domain against states and non-state actors. It may be that the best way to deter a non-state actor is by denying it the means to carry out a successful cyber operation. Doing so may be even more difficult than in the case of WMD. If deterrence fails, the United States must be able to identify the origins of the cyber attack confidently and also decide how it will respond. Attribution may be difficult, given the vast number of potential perpetrators of a cyber attack. Nevertheless, the more sophisticated the cyber attack, the more likely it is that another state directly or indirectly is the source. It is also essential to understand that cyber attacks may come in the form of a massive strike designed to destroy the nation’s economy. However, cyber attacks may also consist of more protracted efforts against government facilities as well as selected private-sector entities. This latter form of cyber war has been taking place in the United States and elsewhere in recent years. Finally, offensive cyber operations may be used in an effort to defeat an adversary’s A2/AD capabilities, just as they can be employed by U.S. enemies as part of an overall anti-access/area-denial strategy. U.S. cyber policy must catch up to military capabilities and technologies in the cyber domain.

Flexibility and Adaptability

Throughout the conference, speakers emphasized that the United States must maintain forces that are adaptable, flexible, and capable
of learning on the job, as exemplified by the Marine Corps with its expeditionary tradition and mindset. The United States faces state and non-state adversaries that are adaptive and creative. U.S. forces must be equally adaptive and creative. The Marine Corps’ situational awareness is a skill fine-tuned in Iraq’s Anbar Province and in other operations throughout its long history. It is important that the USMC continue to incorporate lessons learned into its strategy and capabilities. Building such situational awareness includes the need for Marines to acquire an unprecedented level of cultural knowledge and language skills to understand the environments in which they operate. For USMC units working jointly with other U.S. services, maximum flexibility, based on an expeditionary mindset, will also be vital to success.

Joint Force Operations and Interagency Cooperation

The joint force maritime component commander must be flexible and responsive to the needs of the U.S. combatant commander or joint force commander. JFMCCs will need the agility to shift quickly from one operation to another and even to do so at different stages of a single operation. The Marine Corps must develop a broad range of partnerships to collaborate with other services, with each service having a clearly defined role that takes advantage of its unique capabilities. To optimize joint operations, services must conduct training exercises frequently with one another.

Twenty-first-century global engagement requires a whole-of-government approach. Each of the departments and agencies of government having a stake in a particular issue, not just the national security bureaucracy, should be at the table. Unfortunately, the Department of State, USAID, and other civilian agencies often do not have the resources to hold up their side of the relationship. Along with military surges, such as those conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan,
there is a need for a civilian surge capacity, prepared to take the necessary action before the crisis escalates to war and to play a leading role throughout the crisis as the civilian counterpart to the military component. In addition, the military and civilian sides must train together. Otherwise when a crisis erupts the interagency may not be adequately prepared to act in a cohesive, concerted fashion. The civilian agencies, however, often do not have the personnel to spare for joint training or simulation exercises in advance of a crisis. Another impediment to interagency cooperation is that the civilian side lacks an understanding of “jointness” comparable to that of the military. Thus a gap exists between the civilian and military communities in their respective experience in having worked together. Especially since the Goldwater-Nichols legislation in 1986, the military has acquired unprecedented knowledge of what it means in practice to cooperate between the various services. Such experience is simply lacking in the civilian sector and between the military and its civilian counterparts. A true interagency joint effort between the civilian agencies and military services demands strong leadership from the highest level comparable to that which brought the military services together to provide greater jointness more than a generation ago.

Budget Constraints

The U.S. fiscal situation requires a reassessment of the role that each service plays in national security. Mission duplication has to be addressed so that the services will remain focused on their primary roles without duplication. The Marine Corps needs to make the case that not only has it already cut back and assumed future risks, but that the USMC is both necessary and unique in its national security role as an expeditionary force operating in its own lane. In the current budget environment, the concept of forward deployment provides exceptional leverage for security in a world that is becoming less predictable and therefore more insecure. By maintaining a global forward-deployed, stabilizing naval presence and engaging with
partners in East Asia, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Marine Corps is able to address current and future challenges in a manner that is less expensive than responding with military force after such conflicts break out. The Marine Corps needs to explain the operational implications of not procuring the F-35B and how reductions in personnel and other capabilities will affect its combat power. At the same time, while maintaining its role as a forward-deployed middleweight expeditionary force in readiness, the Marine Corps must prioritize its needs and emphasize its continuing relevance and importance across the conflict spectrum, encompassing the high end and the low end and including state as well as non-state armed groups.