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BRIEF

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By Philip Ulrich, M.A. in American Studies, University of
Southern Denmark

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A prevalent self-image of the US Army is that of “The small squad of infantry, maybe fewer than 10 soldiers, patrolling a hostile and unknown territory – whether jungle, woodland, or urban. The foremost soldier walks *on point* – the lead; sometimes moving cautiously to develop the situation, other times moving with great speed and purpose in order for the squad to accomplish its mission.”¹ This is the self-image of the US Army as presented in the book *On Point. The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, by Colonel Gregory Fontenot and his co-authors.

Following a decade of being “on point” in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US Army now has to define its future role after its withdrawal from the two countries, thus ending the two major operations in which the US Army has been engaged since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in 2001.

The aim of this brief is to analyze the newly published documents from the Department of Defense (DoD), the US Army and statements by the Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno, in order to determine in which direction the US Army is heading in the new strategic environment.

According to the DoD’s strategic guidance, published in January 2012, the new strategic focus of the United States will be on the Asia-Pacific region. This strategic shift from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region is, however, more of a reorientation, as the orientation towards the Asia-Pacific region was already announced in the DoD’s Quadrennial Defense Review Report from 2001.² This shift is what has prompted the US Army to define its position in future US grand strategy as the US Navy and US Air Force take the lead.

At the moment, there are two major developments going on in the US Army. The first development is driven by the shift in strategic attention towards the Asia-Pacific region, which will result in the US Army moving into a secondary role in US grand strategy. The new role of the US Army in such a strategic environment will be to support the US Navy and the US Air Force, and act as a global deterrent against potential adversaries.

The second major development is doctrinal. The US Army is developing doctrines to counter so-called “Hybrid Threats”, which is seen as the greatest challenge for the United States in the future. The new doctrines seek to incorporate the lessons learnt in the past decade in Iraq and Afghanistan into US Army doctrine. This process is fundamental to the broadening of the US Army’s operational focus as the United States withdraws from Afghanistan, enabling the US Army to focus on other kinds of operations than counterinsurgency and counterterrorism which have dominated US Army doctrine and operations for the past decade.

(1) Col.Gregory Fontenot, et al., “On Point. The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom” (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 2005), p.xi

(2) Department of Defense, “Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review” (Washington, September 2001), p.4

Just as the US Army is having to define its role and doctrines for a future of lowered budgets and withdrawal from Afghanistan, so too is the Danish Defense in the midst of such a process. Because the US armed forces will remain the largest actor in NATO and in potential future coalitions, the future course of the US armed forces is interesting for a small country like Denmark. The way that the DoD is adapting to the new situation is interesting because it may serve as inspiration for NATO countries like Denmark, but also because it can give an idea of where European powers may have to take over from the United States in regards to leadership and material.

Firstly, this brief will analyze the newly published policy of reorientation towards the Asia-Pacific region and its impact on the US Army.

Secondly, this brief will analyze the efforts made in the US Army to revise doctrines to meet future challenges and incorporate the lessons learnt in Iraq and Afghanistan in the past decade.

This dual analysis will firstly show how developments at the grand strategy level influence the US Army, and secondly how the US Army responds to these developments at the theater strategy level through its revision of doctrines.

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A New Strategic Outlook From the DoD

On January 5th 2012, the DoD published its strategic guidance for the priorities of the 21st century. One of the points most emphasized in the new strategic guidance was its shift of geographical focus from being mainly directed towards the Middle East, to being directed towards the Asia-Pacific region. This shift was already presented in the 2001 QDR, but the terrorist attacks on 9/11 postponed the shift, as the United States became involved in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now that these commitments are drawing to an end, the shift in US strategic focus can be effectuated. This represents a significant change in US grand strategy, and it is therefore interesting to analyze how the US Army in particular seeks to adapt.

The objective for the United States in the Asia-Pacific region is to secure its economic interests as well as securing its allies and partners in the region. In order to achieve this, the United States has to ensure, "regional access and ability to operate freely in keeping with our treaty obligations and with international law."^{3, 4}

(3) DoD, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense", p.2
http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf

(4) For a description of the political reasoning behind the shift in strategic focus towards the Asia-Pacific region see: Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century", November 2011
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/11/americas_pacific_century

This renewed emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region will mean a change in which branches of the armed forces become the main actors in US grand strategy. For the past 10 years, because of the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US Army and the US Marine Corps has borne the main responsibility for the operations conducted by the United States. The US Navy and US Air Force will, due to the geographical conditions of the Asia-Pacific region, take the lead in conducting the type of operations necessary to achieve the goals of the strategic guidance. The proposed doctrine for countering a conflict in the region will be analyzed later in this brief.

The main type of operations will become so-called Area-Access and Area-Denial operations, which will be conducted by the US Navy and US Air Force because of the geographical conditions in the Asia-Pacific region and also due to the great distances between US bases.

Despite the increased presence of US forces in the Asia-Pacific region, the former commander of US Pacific Command Adm. Robert F. Willard has predicted that it would be highly unlikely that the United States would be seeking permanent bases in the Asia-Pacific region.⁵ Instead the United States would seek more agreements on rotation systems, whereby, rather than permanently stationing troops, troops will rotate in six-month deployments. The rotational system means that rather than administering permanent bases, US forces will use existing bases administered by local authorities.

One such agreement was announced in November 2011, when the DoD announced a rotation system of US Marines to Darwin, Australia, beginning in 2012, which over the coming years will grow to a rotational force of 2,500 soldiers.⁶

Talks are also being conducted with Singapore and the Philippines on rotational deployments of US forces rather than constructing permanent bases in those countries.⁷

Through such deployments, the United States will increase its ability to respond to contingencies in the region as well as secure access to areas of strategic and commercial interest to the United States. Securing the ability to respond to contingencies and secure access to the Asia-Pacific region are the primary objectives of the new Asia-Pacific-centered strategy, and these efforts are some of the ways that the United States means to achieve those objectives.

(5) Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service, "Willard: U.S. Welcomes Rotations, Not Bases, in Asia-Pacific"

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=66961>

(6) Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service, "Obama Announces Expanded U.S. Military Presence in Australia"

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=66098>

(7) Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service, "Willard: U.S. Welcomes Rotations, Not Bases, in Asia-Pacific"

The End of the AirLand Battle Concept

In 1982, the US Army published Field Manual 100-5 *Operations*, in which the AirLand Battle Concept was launched. This battle concept was meant as a way for the United States to counter a Soviet invasion of central Europe. The doctrine emphasized the offensive, and saw it as essential that the United States and its allies were able to quickly regain the initiative against a Soviet invasion. The plan was that in order to achieve this, the US Army and US Air Force should develop a close cooperation. This cooperation would enable US forces to strike deep into Soviet territory, thereby disrupting their lines of communication and logistics.

The 1982 AirLand Battle Concept was an offensive doctrine aimed at stopping a Soviet onslaught, regaining the initiative and rolling back Soviet forces. The close cooperation between the US Army and US Air Force was to be executed by the US Army withstanding the Soviet ground assault, while the US Air Force would attack the Soviet forces in depth. This would break the Soviet momentum, thus enabling US forces to take the offensive.

Throughout both the defensive and offensive parts of the AirLand Battle Concept, great emphasis was put on in-depth strikes against the enemy, employing “improved sensors, long-range weapons, and a responsive intelligence distribution system”.⁸

The great reliance that the US Army has put on technology as a force multiplier since the Vietnam War very much shines through in this concept, as technology should enable US forces to halt a Soviet offensive and regain the initiative despite being heavily outnumbered.

The AirLand Battle Concept relied on technology, maneuverability and firepower. These three components continued to influence US Army thinking all the way up to *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

The central role of the AirLand Battle Concept as the main fighting concept of the DoD will now disappear as the focus shifts to the AirSea Battle Concept.

Because the geographic conditions in the Asia-Pacific region present great distances of open water and a limited number of bases, the US Navy and US Air Force will be the two branches of the armed forces assigned main responsibility for the implementation of the strategy.

The doctrine for the 21st century will be the new AirSea Battle Concept. The initial development of the battle concept has been made by the Pacific Air Forces, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), and the Office of Net Assessment.

(8) Headquarters Department of the Army, “FM 100-5 Operations”, (Washington D.C., 1982), p. 7-2

While the doctrine itself has not yet been developed, a 2010 report from the CSBA gives an idea of what the doctrine will include.

Based on a series of war games, the CSBA predicts that an eventual conflict between the United States and China will be initiated in the same manner that Japan initiated hostilities in World War II. Hostilities will, according to CSBA, be initiated by Chinese strikes against US forces, in order to deny American striking capability against the Chinese mainland and the ability of the United States to support regional allies.⁹ It is in this context that the CSBA thinks that the AirSea Battle Concept should be able to “set the *conditions* at the operational level to sustain a stable, favorable conventional military balance throughout the Western Pacific region.”¹⁰

The CSBA AirSea Battle Concept campaign has two stages, with the initial stage comprising four lines of operation:

- “-Withstanding the initial attack and limiting damage to US and allied forces and bases
- Executing a blinding campaign against PLA [People’s Liberation Army] battle networks
- Executing a suppression campaign against PLA long-range ISR [Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] and strike systems
- Seizing and sustaining the initiative in the air, sea, space and cyber domains”¹¹

This stage begins at the commencement of hostilities, while the second stage would have the aim of resolving a prolonged conventional conflict by:

- “-Executing a protracted campaign that includes sustaining and exploiting the initiative in various domains
- Conducting ‘distant blockade’ operations
- Sustaining operational logistics
- Ramping up industrial production (especially precision-guided munitions)”¹²

As we can see, both the AirLand Battle Concept and the AirSea Battle Concept emphasize the offensive, and regaining the initiative after an initial onslaught from a foreign power. Both concepts rely heavily on technology as a force multiplier and as a way to regain the initiative.

The current military focus of China is on so-called area-access and area-denial capabilities with the aim of keeping the United States and American regional allies from getting close to the Chinese mainland. The weapon systems that China

(9) Jan van Tol et al., “AirSea Battle. A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept” (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010), pp. xi-xiii

(10) Ibid., p.xi

(11) Ibid, p.xiii

(12) Ibid., p.xiii

is pursuing also have the aim of challenging the United States in areas normally completely dominated by the United States.¹³

The CSBA report therefore recommends that the United States also increases its focus on area-access and area-denial capabilities so that the United States is not kept out of the Western Pacific area, which would restrict its strike capability against China and its ability to support its allies. The AirSea Battle Concept is thus intended to contain an initial Chinese onslaught, and then stabilize the situation so that the United States can counter the Chinese offensive.

The US Navy and US Air Force have not released their version of the AirSea Battle Concept, and therefore the CSBA report is currently the closest available material that gives an idea of what the concept will be like. The joint development of the AirSea Battle Concept has begun however, as the Air-Sea Battle Office was established in August 2011 to provide a framework for the joint implementation of the AirSea Battle Concept.¹⁴

The Army on its way out of the Limelight

The new concept means that the role of the US Army in American grand strategy will decrease over the coming years, as the US Navy and US Air Force take over this role from the US Army and US Marine Corps.

As part of the process of refocusing the US military, in April 2012 the US Army published the *Army Strategic Planning Guidance (ASPG)*, which is part one of the *Army Plan* that aims at determining the future force structure and focus of the US Army.

Taken together, the ASPG, statements by Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno, and the DoD's budget proposal for fiscal year 2013, provide a clear indication of the US Army's new role after Iraq and Afghanistan.

The budget cuts put forward in the DoD's budget proposal for fiscal year 2013 will mean a cut in the size of the US Army. Despite its diminished size, the US Army is still supposed to be able to conduct operations ranging "from humanitarian through full-scale combined operations".¹⁵

How the US Army intends to achieve this ambitious goal is not yet fully defined. It does seem, however, that the US Army intends to follow the school of thought that Frank Hoffman called the *Utility Fielders* in 2009.

(13) For a report on Chinese area-access and area-denial capability development see, Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Why AirSea Battle?" (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010)

(14) Department of Defense, "Multi-Service Office to Advance Air-Sea Battle Concept" <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=14910>

(15) Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service, "Odierno: Army to Create Leaner, More Agile Force". <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116363>

This is one of four schools that, according to Hoffman, were debating the future structure of the US Army, and how big a role COIN should play in the post-Iraq/Afghanistan environment. The four schools were:

- The *Counterinsurgents*
- The *Traditionalists*
- The *Utility Infielders*
- The *Division of Labor Proponents*

The *Utility Infielders* advocated that the US Army should not specialize in one specific kind of operations as has been the case in the past 10 years. Rather, the US Army should, “adequately deal with both strictly conventional tasks and irregular threats.”¹⁶

Although the language of the new policy documents and, as we shall later see, the new doctrines of the US Army seem to embrace the ideas of the *Utility Infielders*, history suggests that this might not become reality. Historically the US Army has had its focus squarely on conventional big-unit warfare. COIN was removed from the US Army’s organizational memory following the Vietnam War, and although the same kind of removal of COIN experiences from the US Army is not likely to happen after Iraq and Afghanistan, the kind of tasks facing the US Army indicate that a more *Traditionalist* approach is going to be the most likely reality.

The tasks that primarily face the US Army are those of acting as a deterrent and supporting the US Navy and US Air Force and their AirSea Battle Concept.

The role as deterrent is most effectively executed by the ability of the United States to engage any large conventional threats to the survival of US allies or which may threaten US interests. Because the underlying doctrine of the future for the DoD, the AirSea Battle Concept, is primarily conventional in nature, so too must the focus of the US Army be on conventional warfare in order to better support both the US Navy and US Air Force.

So although COIN and knowledge of “small wars” will be well established intellectually in the US Army’s organizational memory, future tasks seem to indicate that the focus will again move to conventional warfare.

The proposed budget cuts will mean a reduction in the total number of personnel, including Reserve and National Guard units, from 1,115,300 in 2013 to 1,048,200 in 2017, equating to a 6.8 percent reduction. ¹⁷

The budget for the US Army in fiscal year 2011 came to a total of \$240 billion divided between a base budget of \$140 billion and an Overseas Contingency Operations

(16) Frank G. Hoffman, “Hybrid Threats: Reconceptualizing the Evolving Character of Modern Conflict”, *Strategic Forum*, (No.204, April 2009), p.3

(17) Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) / Chief Financial Officer, “United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request”, p.4-2

(OCO) budget of \$100 billion. The appropriation for fiscal year 2012 has been set at a total of \$203 billion divided between a base budget of \$135 billion and an OCO budget of \$68 billion. The requested base budget for fiscal year 2013 stays at \$135 billion with a decrease in the OCO budget to \$50 billion.

Compared to an increase in the budgets for development of new aircrafts for the US Air Force and new aircraft carriers for the US Navy, the budget for the US Army signals that it is no longer the primary branch in the new strategic environment.

These budget cuts could, however, become more extensive, as the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction failed to present a bipartisan proposal for reducing the US deficit. The worst case scenario for the DoD is that it will have to cut \$500 billion across its budget, without being able to prioritize where to cut. While this is a scenario which the DoD could be faced with, the plans presented by the DoD are based on its own budget proposals.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Odierno sees three challenges for the US Army in the coming years, “declining budgets, due to the country’s worsened fiscal situation; a shift in emphasis to the Asia-Pacific region; and a broadening of focus from counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and training of partners to shaping the strategic environment, preventing the outbreak of dangerous regional conflicts, and improving the army’s readiness to respond in force to a range of complex contingencies worldwide.”¹⁸

The role of the US Army in the future strategy, as Gen. Odierno sees it, will be to act as a global deterrent against potential adversaries, “The presence of army forces in the region [Asia-Pacific] is an essential component of deterrence against aggression, complicating the potential adversaries’ planning and diverting their resources from other investments.”¹⁹ The previously mentioned agreements on rotational deployments of US forces in the Asia-Pacific region is a central way for the US Army to act as deterrent in the region, along with bilateral agreements on exercises and training.

The ASPG emphasizes rotational deployments as a way for the US Army to shape the strategic environment in which it operates, along with a multitude of other tasks such as, “building partner capacity, security force assistance, civil affairs support for stabilization, reconstruction and development efforts.[...]”²⁰

The final challenge is the broadening of operational focus for the US Army from counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations to more shaping operations in

(18) Raymond Odierno, “The U.S. Army in a time of transition. Building a flexible force”, Foreign Affairs, May/June 2012

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137423/raymond-t-odierno/the-us-army-in-a-time-of-transition>

(19) Ibid.

(20) Department of the Army, “2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance”, (Washington D.C., 2012), p.5

order to prevent conflicts. The challenge for the US Army is increased due to it having shifted its focus solely to COIN over the past 10 years, neglecting more conventional operations. The challenge then will be to move the US Army away from its singular focus on COIN and on to a more diverse range of operations.

How is the US Army planning to achieve this transition? The next section of this brief will look at doctrinal developments in the US Army, which will give an idea of what the US Army seeks to do to broaden its operational focus.

New Doctrines for Future Challenges

A new initiative at Fort Leavenworth called *Doctrine 2015* aims at preparing US Army doctrine for the future by streamlining the doctrine writing process as well as limiting the length of new doctrine publications. “2015” has been chosen because in 2015 the United States will have withdrawn completely from both Iraq and Afghanistan, and 2015 therefore represents the unknown future for which the US Army must prepare. *Doctrine 2015* was initiated by the publication of *Army Doctrine Publication 3-0 Unified Land Operations* (ADP 3-0) in October 2011.

ADP 3-0 is one of two capstone publications in the Army, and it represents the “overarching doctrinal guidance and direction for conducting operations.”²¹ ADP 3-0 serves as “the common operational concept for the Army”²², and it is on this, and Field Manual 1-0 *The Army*, that all other doctrinal publications for the various branches of the US Army is based. It also updates previous concepts and puts them into the context of new operational environments.

One of the major problems for the US Army in Iraq was that the situation on the ground failed to evolve in accordance with the US Army’s doctrines. In Iraq, hostilities continued into what the US Army called Phase IV, which was supposed to be the phase of operations where stability operations could be conducted without major hostilities occurring at the same time.

The reason for this lack of doctrine was the intentional removal of knowledge of counterinsurgency following the Vietnam War. This led to a division in US Army doctrine between doctrines for combat operations and doctrines for post-hostilities operations. The revival of counterinsurgency doctrine in the US Army during the past decade helped to close this doctrinal gap, and helped stabilize the situation in Iraq.

The most likely threats posed against the United States in the future, according to ADP 3-0, are so-called “hybrid threats”. Hybrid threats are the “diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, terrorist forces, criminal elements,

(21) Headquarters Department of the Army, “ADP 3-0 Unified Land Operations” (Washington D.C., October 2011), p.ii

(22) Ibid, Foreword

or a combination of these forces and elements all unified to achieve mutually benefiting effects.”²³

In order to counter hybrid threats, ADP 3-0 seeks a combination of three kinds of operations which is to form the foundation for future US Army doctrine. The new doctrine seeks to combine “offensive, defensive and stability operations”.

This combination of offensive, defensive and stability operations is a way for the US Army to combine its traditional role of a big-unit fighting force with its experiences of COIN operations from the past decade of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, thus ensuring what Gen. Odierno sees as the US Army’s goal to, “preserve the intellectual and organizational knowledge it has gained about counterinsurgency, stability operations, and advice-and-assist missions.”²⁴ In order to perform offensive, defensive and stability operations, the US Army is to rely on its two primary competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security. This new combination of offensive, defensive and stability operations is what ADP 3-0 calls “Unified Land Operations”.

Because the focus of the US Army for the past decade has been on counterinsurgency operations, there has been a growing fear that its competencies in other areas have diminished. This fear is evident in an article by Major General Michael S. Tucker in *Military Review*. In his article, Tucker draws attention to a new problem that has arisen for the US Army. Because of the challenges encountered in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US Army had to change the focus of its training of personnel, thereby downgrading training in conventional warfare.²⁵ Tucker fears that the US Army has lost capabilities in many conventional units, based on the fact that the training and operational experiences of many US Army units have been in capacities other than those for which they were intended.

In order to refocus some of the US Army’s attention on combined arms maneuver, the Joint Readiness Training Center has developed a new training concept called the *Decisive Action Training Environment*, which seeks to ensure that the US Army is “well grounded in the basics and fundamentals of war fighting.”²⁶

The aim of the new training concept is to prepare the US Army to counter hybrid threats by combining various elements into the training. In the new training concept, “there are going to be villages they’ll have to engage. There’ll be multinational partners they’ll have to engage. There’ll be intergovernmental agencies they’ll have

(23) *Ibid.*, p.4

(24) Raymond Odierno, “The U.S. Army in a time of transition. Building a flexible force”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2012

(25) Michael S. Tucker and Jason P. Conroy, “Maintaining the Combat Edge”, *Military Review*, (May-June 2011), pp.8-16

(26) Michelle Tan, *DefenseNews.com*, “DATE Gives Training a Reboot”
<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120411/TSJ01/304110003/DATE-Gives-U-S-Army-Training-Reboot>

to engage. Now it's a guerilla force, insurgents and a criminal element, and they may all be working together."²⁷ This new training concept adds to the new efforts to combine offensive, defensive and stability operations to enable the Army to better counter hybrid threats.

Going Where?

Having been the most prominent branch of the US armed forces for the past decade, the new strategic priorities of the United States seem to relegate the US Army to a secondary role in the coming years.

Because the major commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan are drawing to an end, and the focus is shifting to the US Navy and US Air Force, the US Army is entering a period where they have to establish a new role in American grand strategy. This means that the future focus of the US Army is going to be on its traditional role of preparing for a major conflict as well as acting as a deterrent against potential adversaries of the United States or her allies, in support of the US Navy and US Air Force.

The program launched to rework the doctrines of the US Army, *Doctrine 2015*, seeks to incorporate the lessons learnt from the past decade of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan into these new doctrines, in order to better counter what are seen as the new threats. The new major threat to the United States is what is termed *Hybrid Threats*. Hybrid threats are a combination of both conventional and unconventional threats that are employed by an enemy in order to exploit the weak spots of the United States armed forces. In order to counter this, the new doctrines of the US Army seeks to enable it to use its forces across the entire range of operations, ranging from conventional combat, to unconventional combat, to stability operations, thus combining the lessons learnt from the past decade of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan with the traditional role of the US Army.

This then is the future role of the US Army, according to the DoD and the US Army itself. It is to act in a secondary role as a deterrent against potential adversaries, while being able to conduct various kinds of operations simultaneously. The considerable priority given to the US Navy and US Air Force in, for instance, the budget proposal for fiscal year 2013, emphasizes this point. The aim for the US Army has been to find out what its future role is to be in order to remain relevant. The answer seems to be the *Hybrid Threat* concept. This concept is what the US Army is preparing for, as it makes itself relevant in deterring aggression against the United States or her allies, as well as operations more in line with the ones faced at the moment, such as threats from failed states against American interests, terrorism and stability operations. In this way, the US Army seeks to remain relevant compared to the other branches of the US armed forces, which in turn might mean better conditions for the US Army in future budget discussions.

(27) Ibid.

The official policy documents give a picture of the future capacities of the US Army as ranging across the entire spectrum of operations. Historically though, the US Army has not been able to successfully be a full-spectrum force, and, given the diminished size of the US Army as well as cuts in budgets, it seems unlikely that the US Army will be able to become a truly full-spectrum force. Rather, it is more likely that it will focus on the primary tasks it is given as a result of the new strategic situation, which means a return to a focus on conventional warfare, with COIN and stability operations being primarily stored in the organizational memory of the US Army.

The consequence of the United States' shift in strategic focus to Asia-Pacific for her European NATO allies will most likely be that the European allies will have to play a more prominent, and even independent, role in case of contingencies in their own part of the world. The United States is more likely to pursue a "lead-from-behind" approach like the one pursued during Operation Odyssey Dawn against Libya.

Such an American approach, as well as the lesser availability of American material as it is moved to Asia-Pacific, will force the European allies to seriously consider their future strategic priorities and procurement of material. This is necessary as they can no longer rely on large automatic commitments of American men and material for contingencies such as Libya.

The implications of the ongoing developments in the US armed forces for the European powers, including Denmark, is that they will have to shoulder a larger share of future operations compared to previous operations.

A way forward for a nation like Denmark would be to determine the future tasks for the Danish Defence, and customize its forces for these tasks. NATO's concept of "Smart Defense" is a way for member nations to prioritize their national defenses while maintaining a broad set of capabilities as an alliance, as it is unlikely that all member nations will be able to maintain national full-spectrum capabilities due to the fiscal situation in the European nations.

It is for such a future strategic environment that the European powers will have to prepare, as lowered budgets, withdrawal from Afghanistan, and focus on Asia-Pacific will mean a relocation of American resources to other theaters of the world than before, and an assumption of different roles than previously.