



National Commission on the Future of the Army

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: Operational Sub-Committee for the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Minutes - 14 JULY 15, Operational Environment Horizon Scan

Date: 14 July 2015

Time: 1500-1700

Location: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Format: Preparatory meeting with security policy experts

Attendees:

COMMISSION PARTICIPANTS: HON Dr. Kathleen Hicks, GEN (R) Carter Ham, MG (R) Raymond Carpenter; MAJ Vinson Morris [Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO)]

ACADEMIC PARTICIPANTS: LTG (R) David Barno, Dr. Douglas MacGregor, Dr. Gian Gentile, Dr. Nora Bensahel, Dr. Nadia Schadlow, Mr. Frank Hoffman

Documents Submitted to Commission: NCFA staff slides presenting future operational environment and future force mission areas

Meeting Summary

The Operational Sub-Committee met with six security policy specialists to discuss the future operational environment that will drive Army mission requirements. After some opening remarks and introductions, the ADFO discussed the applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act to the sub-committee meeting. Afterwards the Operational Sub-Committee staff presented 3 slides to initiate discussion. Unclassified slides relied heavily on information from the Army G-2 presentation to the full Commission in May.

The participants generally agreed the Army must be adaptable and determine a priority for its missions. In future conflicts the Army can expect increased casualties, less technological advantage, and less superiority in other domains (air, space, sea, cyber). Changes to technology will continue to accelerate to a point where the US acquisition apparatus is unable to keep up. As the influence or strength of entities possessing WMDs declines, the propensity to utilize WMD increases, as does their overall risk tolerance. Regular Army units provide more capability faster, but USAR and NG units provide structure necessary for contingencies. One member commented the Army still labors under restrictions of the 1947 Defense Organization act and how it is worth some research and updating. The Army must be able to provide a forward presence, support forward deployments, and establish sufficient deterrence effects.

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The participants disagreed on the effects of Cyber and other new technologies in future conflicts. There was general disagreement about Army priorities in the future. The group discussed the importance of hedging against/preparing for the wide range of missions future civilian leaders will order the Army to execute versus focusing on “prompt and sustained combat” as articulated in Title 10.¹ The group discussed the difficulties of working with a hostile populace. All agreed understanding populations is important and the Army cannot control hostile populations. However, they disagreed about the importance of understanding populations. One side argued for limiting operations to punitive actions with minimal desire for controlling terrain or populations. Others argued for working with, influencing, and understanding the sources of influence for an ambivalent or hostile population to advance U.S. security interests.

During the meeting, members offered several ideas for consideration. First, each service is trying to do everything, which creates redundancy and not enough interdependence. If the Army has difficulty with kinetic operations, it is unlikely to successfully perform other missions. In the future the US cannot assume a large army will provide sufficient deterrence due to changing technological capabilities. For capability not immediately required, the Sub-Committee should look to the Guard and Reserve.

The participants discussed a need to look at the whole mission priority set through a more "joint" and “combined” lens. As one participant offered, "We need to be sure we (Army) bring unique capabilities our Allies don't have" or can't achieve, and the same would apply in the US joint perspective with regard to Department of Defense- e.g., if USMC does "X," Army must shape to do "Y," or in any case be complementary and take "X into consideration as it differentiates what to bring to the table in a resource and time constrained environment.” Another member said, "Everyone wants to fight the total war on their own, but we can't afford to do that."

The subcommittee identified the following ideas from the discussion:

1. Maintain Active Component readiness and improve Reserve Component readiness by using National Guard and Reserves for predictable missions.
2. Review/emulate USMC model of multi-compo integration
3. Increase integration (blending) of components within units.
4. Continue to invest in technological advantage.

¹ There was some back and forth about the actual language – sustained land operations vs. fight and win the nation’s wars. Specific Title 10 language is:

(a) It is the intent of Congress to provide an Army that is capable, in conjunction with the other armed forces, of -

- (1) preserving the peace and security, and providing for the defense, of the United States, the Commonwealths and possessions, and any areas occupied by the United States;
- (2) supporting the national policies;
- (3) implementing the national objectives; and
- (4) overcoming any nations responsible for aggressive acts that imperil the peace and security of the United States.

(b) In general, the Army, within the Department of the Army, includes land combat and service forces and such aviation and water transport as may be organic therein. It shall be organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained combat incident to operations on land. It is responsible for the preparation of land forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war except as otherwise assigned and, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Army to meet the needs of war.

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5. Find a better way to align civilian occupations with NG and USAR occupations.
6. Conduct a review of service roles and missions to find efficiencies and increase service interdependence.
7. The future operational environment should include two, near simultaneous, high-end items such as defending NATO territory from Russia while conducting another major operation.