



Statement of

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Hearing on

Recommendations for a Future National Defense Strategy

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Thank you, Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee on Armed Services for the opportunity to evaluate how the Department of Defense should effectively develop and implement a new National Defense Strategy.

Stop Repeating Past Mistakes

It's long past time for a new National Defense Strategy that seeks to break the mold in honesty, clarity, conciseness, and fresh thinking. Since the end of the Cold War, these documents have repeatedly served as opportunities to redefine American force structure and interests globally. Unfortunately, the most recent generation of strategies has become increasingly unmoored from the strategic reality the country faces. Since the end of the Cold War, the Pentagon's force-sizing construct has gradually become muddled and watered down at each iteration—from the aspirational objective of fighting two wars at once to the declinist “defeat-and-deny” approach—without enough substantive debate over the wisdom of the progressive abandonment of the two-war standard.

Even before debt reduction became a Washington priority in 2011, defense planning became increasingly divorced from global strategic realities. American experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan exposed the limited utility of a force-sizing construct based on wars. The challenge in prosecuting two large stabilization and counterinsurgency campaigns during the past decade-and-a-half laid bare the discrepancy between our stated defense capabilities and our actual strength. The wars that planners envisioned were not the ones the military was called upon to fight.

A lack of definitional clarity and policy consensus about terms like “war,” “defeat,” “deny” and even now “deter” is far from the only problem with previous strategies. A combination of shrinking global posture, force reductions, overly optimistic predictions about the future, and a deteriorating security environment have led to a crisis of confidence in defense strategy making. The Budget Control Act further compounded the difficulty of aligning resources with strategy through clear and thoughtful prioritization and adjudication between tradeoffs. The need to build a defense program to fit declining spending caps accelerated the reduction in relevance and scope of Pentagon strategy documents.

Even with declining force-sizing constructs, US forces have largely continued to do all that they have done under previous super-sized strategies. Consequentially, there is now a general dismissal of strategy because the reductions in force structure proposed in each iteration have not resulted in substantive changes in operations of the force. Instead, the armed forces have been asked to do more with less and continue to plan campaigns, conduct global counterterrorism, reassure allies, and provide deterrence as operational tempos remain unwaveringly high.

Meanwhile various missions and efforts are being shortchanged, ignored or dropped altogether as the supply of American military power is consistently outstripped by its demand. Some uniformed leaders would argue that the challenge is broader, and that the real issue is a military endstate-policy outcome incongruity that exists where policymakers expect military power to achieve outcomes beyond its scope. Both interpretations are correct, and each contributes to the lack of credibility in new strategic guidance in the minds of its consumers. This lack of faith in

defense strategy making and planning has contributed to America's global retreat and the worsening international security situation.

Crafting an Impactful New Defense Strategy

The writers of the newest strategy need to face some hard truths.

- Policymakers cannot wish away the need for strong American presence in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. This includes assuming America's commitments in the Middle East will go away, get easier or eventually become a lesser burden on the military.
- Constructing budgets and then divining strategies, as the Budget Control Act has encouraged, is putting the cart before the horse.
- Pentagon reforms and efficiencies are noble goals and should become standard operating procedure to encourage good governance. But the belief that ongoing organizational changes will result in tens of billions in potential savings that can be reinvested elsewhere within the defense budget has yet to be proven.
- An obsessive hunt for technological silver bullets could be our military's ruin, not its salvation—if it comes at the expense of medium-term needs.

To endure as a global power, the United States must never be in the position—as it is now in danger of finding itself—of committing its last reserves of military power to any single theater. Instead, force planners need to grow the size of the armed forces using the capabilities on hand. American forces must commit to permanent forward presence where they can effectively deter threats before they rise to the level of hostilities.

To facilitate these goals, the strategy should focus not only on the need to decisively defeat our enemies, but also to support the steady-state operations American forces undertake each day to deter our adversaries and reassure our allies in priority theaters abroad.

What follows are various thoughts on how to break from a status quo in defense planning that has failed policymakers and military leaders alike, in order to construct a National Defense Strategy that is both useful and able to be executed by our nation's armed forces:

The National Defense Strategy must answer what missions the military should prioritize—by extension, it must clearly delineate what it can *stop* doing. In the last decade, the US military outsourced airlifting of troops to Iraq to Russian companies, NASA hitched rides into space also from Russia, Marines embarked on allied ships for missions patrolling the African coast, cargo shipments to Afghanistan were delayed due to inadequate lift during hurricane relief efforts, a private contractor evacuated US and Nigerian troops after the recent ISIS ambush in Niger, and the Air Force has outsourced “red air” adversary training aircraft to contractors. This is just a sample of tasks that are being curtailed as the military struggles with fewer resources and finds it cannot actually do “more with less.”

Yet not all of these capabilities need to be restored—in some instances, it may be more efficient to continue to outsource ancillary assignments that don't necessarily require military forces to prosecute. Instead of papering over these realities, the new strategy should spell out explicitly what sacrifices the force could make, and signal to allies and partners where they could be most helpful, in order to allow the Department of Defense to concentrate on its most critical missions.

Rosy assumptions need to go. Assumptions about international affairs that underpinned the last administration's force planning—that Europe would remain peaceful, that the United States was dangerously overcommitted across the Middle East, and that a “rebalance” to East Asia could be accomplished without a substantial increase in forces—have all proven incorrect.

The new strategy also has to combat unrealistic assumptions about the Department of Defense—such as the belief that reforms and efficiencies will generate significant savings that can be reinvested elsewhere in the defense budget, and that the Pentagon will certainly become more innovative when money is tight.

Global force management is not a substitute for strategy. Because campaigns can now occur across geographic boundaries and within multiple domains of warfare at the same time, the default strategy-in-motion has become global force management. Despite the flexibility it generates, centrally-overseen crisis management is not a substitute for strategy. The world is not one global combatant command, nor does any one leader, commander, or service have the ability to manage complex contingencies as if it were. The forthcoming strategy must restore classic force planning and development to Pentagon processes and build up a new generation of policymakers and uniformed leaders used to operating within these constructs.

Claiming the “five challenges” of China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and persistent counterterrorism operations are all equally important is not strategy—it is the absence of one. Former Defense Secretary Ash Carter's list of five challenges—synonymous with the Joint Chiefs' “four-plus-one” list—has persisted into this administration. This construct identifies threats, but it needs to rank their relative severity in order to have strategic meaning. Given the finite supply of American defense capacity, not all of these threats can receive the same amount of attention or bandwidth—nor should they. Our force deployments must be rationalized to prevent the use of capabilities intended for high-end wars or deterrence being worn down in the long grind of ongoing anti-terror operations. Stealth aircraft should not be performing fire support missions against the Taliban that could be handled by robust army artillery, for example.

The Pentagon is bigger than a Department of War; it is a Department of Defense. Fighting and winning the nation's wars is an essential core mission of America's military. Preventing them is equally important. Daily, the US military is active in maintaining a regular presence around the globe, cooperating with allies, and checking potential aggression. These “peacetime” presence and steady state activities are the most effective—and certainly the cheapest—use of military power. The Pentagon must more accurately size the military to not only fight and win multiple contingencies at once, but also to conduct the multitude of routine missions, deployments, and forward presence that advance and protect American interests overseas.

It's getting harder to differentiate between war and peace. The force-sizing construct should reflect this reality. The dangers of assuming Europe is a net producer of security became apparent the moment Russia annexed Ukrainian sovereign territory. In a single stroke, the Pentagon's last strategy was rendered moot. The rise of ISIS further showcased the perils of American withdrawal from the Middle East. Coupled with increasing Chinese and North Korean bellicosity, three theaters are obviously vital considerations for US military planning, even if active hostilities involving American troops are not underway in all of them simultaneously.

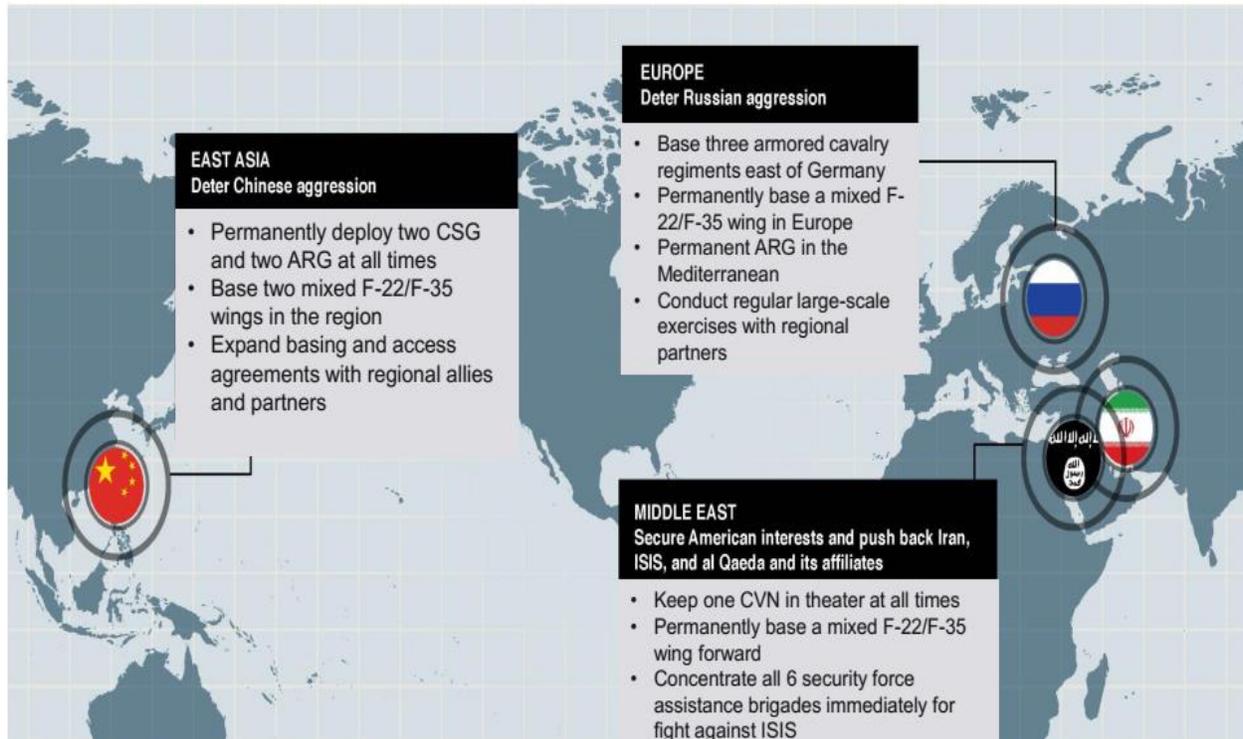
Each of the five challenges to American security is unique and requires tailored responses to mitigate, even in peacetime. Ballistic missile defenses have immense use against North Korea, but little utility against ISIS. As each of our competitors focus on a particular suite of niche capabilities—from Chinese maritime capabilities to Russian land power and electronic warfare—America is in the unenviable position of needing to respond to all of them. To manage the expense of this endeavor, efficiencies must be found to deter and mitigate certain threats within an acceptable margin of risk in order to concentrate additional resources on more pressing ones.

The clearest example is terrorism, which is a relative threat and not an existential one. The National Defense Strategy must recognize that countering terrorism will be a generational struggle that can be managed more gradually and cheaply than efforts to counter immediate and monumental threats, such as North Korean ICBMs.

Organize for three theaters, not two wars. The degradation of the two-war standard since the end of the Cold War has left the nation with a one-plus-something strategy that is neither well understood nor universally accepted by policymakers or service leaders. Planners should size forces to maintain robust conventional and strategic deterrents in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, and equip a force for decision in the event deterrence fails.¹ The National Defense Strategy must make a clear distinction between the forces, capabilities and posture required to *prevent* a war against a near-peer state versus those needed to *win* one should it break out.

While deterring further Russian and Chinese aggression requires advanced aerospace capabilities, the principal presence missions would fall on maritime forces in the Pacific and land forces in Europe. In the Middle East, the situation is quite different; there is no favorable status quo to defend. Securing our regional interest requires not just presence, but an active effort to reverse the rising tide of adversaries: Iran, ISIS, al Qaeda and its associates, and now Russia. If we hope to remain safe and prosperous, America cannot swing among these theaters, nor can we retreat to the continental United States. This does not mean each theater requires the same amount of assets; forces can and should be tailored to the needs of each.

Goals for the Three-Theater Force



Conventional military deterrence is changing. The calculus of deterrence is never certain as success is measured in the mindset of the adversary, not by a simple count of troops, planes, or ships. Thus as situations change, the US military must possess both ample and heavy operational reserves and the logistical ability to rapidly deploy large and fully joint forces in times of crisis or conflict. This force for decision would supplement forward forces to either bolster deterrence or successfully prosecute a major conflict if it fails.

These forces must be of a size and quality to be operationally decisive. Given the global interests of the United States and complex and divergent terrains of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, this reinforcing force for decision must possess a wide array of capabilities across the air, land, sea, space, and cyber domains. Such a balanced “capacity of capabilities” is necessary to provide the widest possible set of options to campaign planners (and the president). Although the forward deployed forces in any given theater can be more readily tailored to steady-state missions, in times of crisis or conflict the need for effectiveness and overmatch supplants the need for efficiency. In order to maintain the ability to intervene both quickly and decisively, defense planners should favor maintain active-duty, highly trained units in both the forward-deployed forces and the force for decision based in the continental United States.

Development of new capabilities should concentrate on securing tactical overmatch.

Presence missions and train-and-advise efforts are crucial to support our allies, but firepower is ultimately what deters our foes. The new defense strategy should concisely outline the core competencies required of each service by region and threat, and over varying time horizons and levels of risk. It should concentrate development of new capabilities to restore as much

technological overmatch as is possible. Planners should also seek opportunities to generate efficiencies when possible. For example, introducing a series of Armored Cavalry Regiments permanently stationed in Eastern Europe comprised of combined arms units would not only provide a powerful US presence to counter Russia, but would allow regional partners to better develop their domestic capabilities through increased opportunities for bilateral training and exercises.

The American military needs more inter-service competition, not less. In some respects, the individual services have become too dependent on one another. Having the entire military rely on an individual service as the sole provider of a given capability can introduce risks and decrease the efficiency of US forces. One obvious example is the degradation of US Army short range air defense (SHORAD) and an overreliance on increasingly scant air force interceptors to maintain air superiority. Competition among the services—for missions and for resources, for example—is the key to innovation. Beyond the advantage of having redundant tactical and operational tools at hand in the event one fails or proves to be easily countered, competition fosters a richer and more diverse discussion of the nature of war and serves as a check on the American propensity to rely too heavily on technological solutions to military problems. As much as the new administration needs to put more forces in the field and modernize weapons systems, its most important task may be to rebuild the service's institutional capacities that are essential for sustaining the breadth and depth of military leadership that global power demands.

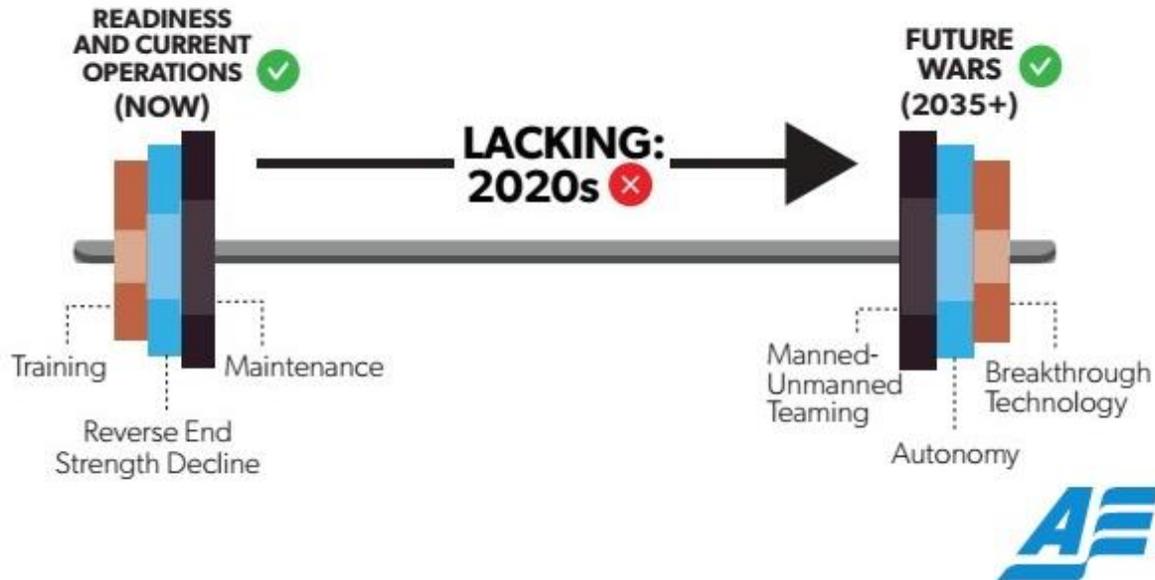
The Budget Control Act must no longer be the scapegoat. By attributing most or all of the current force's problems to sequestration and ignoring their historical context, policymakers wrongly assume that solutions are simple (e.g., higher defense topline alone will solve the military's woes). The next National Defense Strategy will need to account for two compounding problems. First, the international situation is deteriorating. Second, our fiscal ability to support all instruments of national power is declining. Higher spending can alleviate the latter challenge, but new investments will need to be tied to clear strategic goals in order to address the former. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the early 2000s where billions were squandered on cancelled research and development programs that fielded little to nothing because they were not tied to the threats America faced.

Funding for Canceled Programs, FY02-12

Service	Program	Sunk Cost	Future Funding	
			Deferred	Follow-On
Army	Future Combat Systems	\$20,334	\$158,819	Numerous
Army	RAH-66 helicopter	\$10,013	\$50,678	ARH helicopter
MDA	Airborne Laser	\$5,020	\$2,921	N/A
Air Force	TSAT satellites	\$3,916	\$23,857	AEHF/WGS comms satellites
Navy	Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle	\$3,690	\$13,746	Amphibious Combat Vehicle 2.0
Army	MEADS missile defense	\$3,444	\$20,320	PAC-3 missile modification
Air Force	DWSS weather satellites	\$3,407	\$9,006	JPSS weather satellites
Navy	VH-71 presidential helo	\$3,033	\$4,657	VH-72A presidential helicopter
Army	Crusader artillery	\$2,903	\$12,029	N/A
Army	JLENS radar blimp	\$2,590	\$6,034	N/A
Air Force	C-130 AMP avionics	\$2,394	\$4,461	AMP Inc-1 avionics
Army	ATACMS BAT missile upgrade	\$1,884	\$5,382	N/A
Army	JTRS GMR radios	\$1,799	\$19,000	JTRS (Harris) radios
Army	Inc-1 E-IBCT brigade upgrades	\$1,382	\$1,679	N/A
Air Force	ECSS planning software	\$1,065	-	TBD
Joint	DIMHRS HR software	\$934	-	Multiple
Navy	ASDS minisub	\$904	\$1,591	JMMS, DCS minisubs
Air Force	B-1 CMUP upgrades	\$854	\$1,229	N/A
Army	Land Warrior soldier enhancements	\$781	\$9,849	Nett Warrior soldier enhancements
Navy	RMS mine hunter	\$770	\$816	TBD
MDA	KEI/MKV kill vehicle upgrades	\$763	\$5,879	RKV/MOKV kill vehicle upgrades
Air Force	E-10 radar plane	\$728	-	JSTARS recapitalization
Navy	ADS surveillance system	\$630	\$1,053	N/A
Army	ARH helicopter	\$612	\$5,414	Future Vertical Lift
Navy	ERM naval gun shell	\$465	\$1,269	TBD
MDA	PTSS radar satellites	\$426	\$1,256	N/A
Army	Joint Common Missile	\$369	\$9,895	Joint Air-Ground Missile
Navy	CG(X) cruiser	\$166	-	Future Surface Combatant
TOTAL		\$75,275	\$370,840	

Investments must balance between the immediate needs of today, the medium term, and wars of the 2030s. To alleviate strain on the current force, it will need to grow. This expansion of capacity should be undertaken immediately and with currently available equipment and technology rather than forestalled in pursuit of tomorrow's super weapons. Overly investing in near-term readiness and speculative capabilities not only introduces a large amount of acquisition risk, it also creates a dangerous situation where adversaries know we are weak today and will be strong tomorrow. Facing this scenario, they would see that it's better to strike now than later. In this way, more investment in our military could worsen American security unless it is properly managed to alleviate any potential gap in American readiness to deter and, if necessary, defeat our foes. Policymakers must avoid a "barbell" investment strategy that deemphasizes the medium-term needs of the 2020s.

A “Barbell” Investment Strategy is Flawed



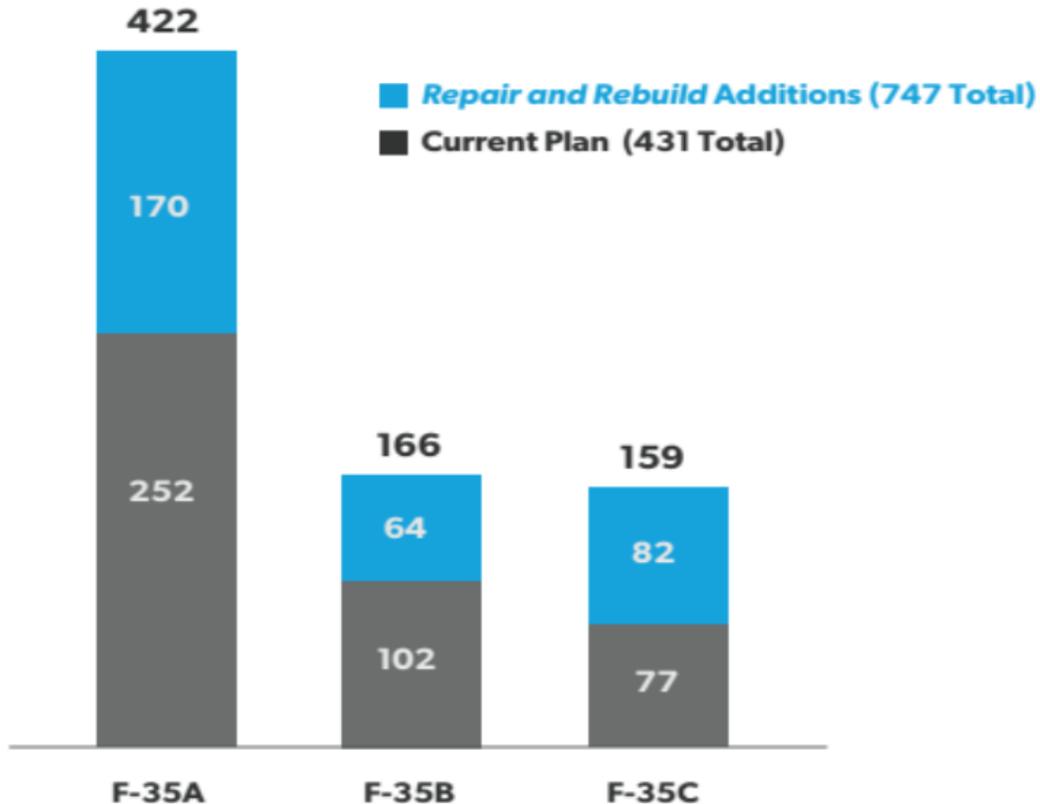
Repairing and Rebuilding the Armed Forces by 2023

In my new report, *Repair and Rebuild*, I present a Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) highlighting the needs of our Armed Forces over the next five years in addition to the last official FYDP conducted by the Obama Administration in 2017.ⁱⁱ While that report contains my complete recommendations for a force sized for three theaters, the top five programmatic priorities emphasized in the report can be summarized as follows:

1. Embrace stealth and sensor fusion en masse.

- Purchase an additional 316 F-35As above the 431 aircraft planned over the FYDP, accelerate crucial F-22 upgrades, provide extra funding for the B-21 Raider, and expand that program of record beyond 100 bombers.

Proposed F-35 Purchases, FY18-22



2. Disperse power projection.

- Procure an additional 64 F-35Bs above the 102 planned, accelerate aviation-focused America-class production instead of developing a light carrier, expand KC-130J procurement, and buy five extra ESBs.

3. Allow the Navy to focus on sea control.

- Free up destroyers and attack subs to focus on sea control while accelerating new large surface combatant development.
- Heavily invest in small surface combatants (with unmanned craft) to conduct lower-end naval missions.
- Expand ground-based ballistic missile defense capacity to lessen burden on Navy surface combatants.

Proposed Shipbuilding Plan, FY18-22

● Current Plan ● Repair and Rebuild Additions

SHIP CLASS	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	TOTAL
CVN	●				●	2
LHA			●			1
LCS	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	12
FFG			● ●	● ●	● ●	6
LXR	●	●	●	●	●	5
ESB	●	●	●	●	●	5
TAO	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	10
SSN	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ● ●	11
DDG	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	10
ATS	●	●	●	●	●	5
SSBN				●		1
AGOS					●	1
AEGIS BASELINE 9 UPGRADE	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	26

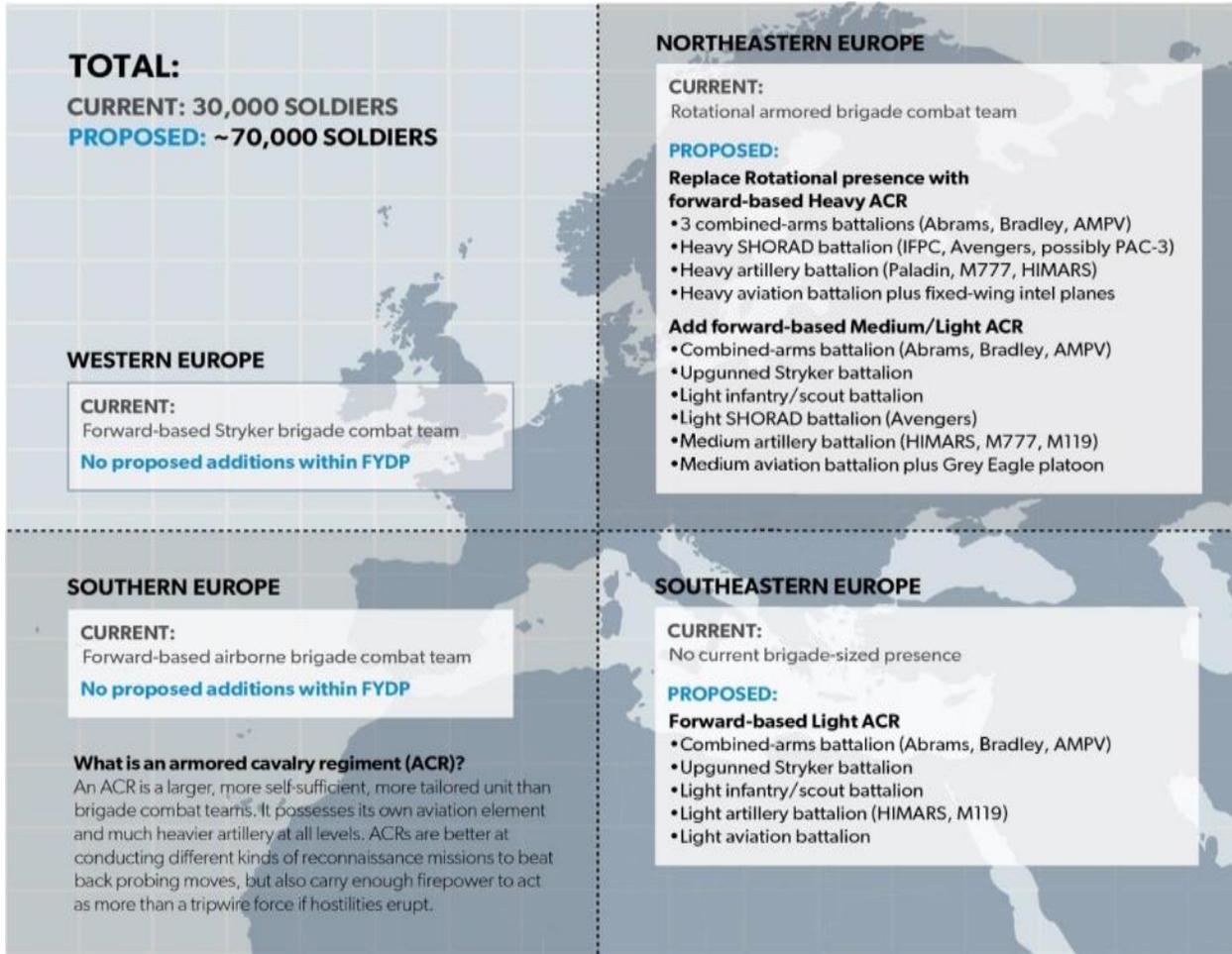
4. Build sustainable long-term fire support capacity.

- Move away from using expensive, high-demand assets (e.g. carriers, fourth-generation fighters, bombers) for fire support.
- Expand and upgrade Army tube and rocket artillery to improve organic fire support.
- Expand Reaper buy and procure two wings of light attack fighters for air support in permissive environments.

5. Increase Army lethality.

- Upgrade Abrams, Bradley, Stryker, and Paladin at scale; ensure LRPF fields on time; rapidly invest in electronic warfare; and accelerate FVL helicopter replacements.
- Expand US Army Europe presence to incorporate heavier units prepared to act as more than a tripwire in the event of hostilities with Russia and otherwise capable of boosting regional capabilities of partners through increased opportunities for training and exercises.

Proposed New US Army Europe Presence by 2023



ⁱ Thomas Donnelly, Gary Schmitt, Mackenzie Eaglen et al., *To Rebuild America's Military*, American Enterprise Institute, 2015, <http://www.aei.org/publication/to-rebuild-americas-military/>.

ⁱⁱ Mackenzie Eaglen, *Repair and Rebuild: Balancing New Military Spending for a Three-Theater Strategy*, American Enterprise Institute, 2017, <http://www.aei.org/publication/repair-and-rebuild-balancing-new-military-spending-for-a-three-theater-strategy/>.