



— Defense Budget Cuts — Implications for America's War Fighting Capabilities

In accord with JINSA's mandate to promote the importance of a strong American defense capability commensurate with our country's global responsibilities, JINSA's military advisors were asked to provide brief accounts on how the proposed defense budget cuts could affect the U.S. Armed Forces.

JINSA Visiting Fellow and defense analyst Peter Huessy addresses this question in a compelling historical analysis. This is followed by short commentaries on how the budget cuts will affect the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces by General James T. Hill, USA (ret.), General Louis Wagner, USA (ret.), Lieutenant General Thomas Griffin, USA (ret.) and Major General Sid Shachnow, USA (ret.) on the United States Army; Vice Admiral Robert T. Conway, USN (ret.) and Rear Admiral Terence E. McKnight, USN (ret.) on the United States Navy; Major General Larry Taylor, USMCR (ret.) on the United States Marine Corps; Rear Admiral James Olson, USCG (ret.) on the United States Coast Guard; and Lieutenant General Charles A. May, USAF (ret.) and Major General Robert Eaglet, USAF (ret.) on the United States Air Force. These military officers traveled to Israel over the years with JINSA's annual Generals and Admirals Trip. Many of them serve on JINSA's Board of Advisors.

Peter Huessy *JINSA Visiting Fellow*

Tremendous changes can occur over the course of one year. Regarding defense spending, the Administration is now planning to pay out between \$4.5-\$5 trillion over the next ten years on defending the country, compared to nearly \$6 trillion just 12 months ago. This, in part, reflects the debt ceiling agreement of last summer when Congress and the Administration called for reducing a ten-year deficit of \$10 trillion to \$7.5 trillion.

Many Americans would no doubt applaud such a reduction. They would probably also assume the spending cuts reflect America's withdrawal from Iraq, and the drawdown in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, what the citizenry probably does not know is that while the cuts in funding for the two wars will occur, they cannot count toward the required budget cuts agreed to in August 2011 as part of the debt agreement.

What then is being cut? The Administration is cutting the base force, the defense budget that does not include the costs of what is called the Overseas Contingency Operations—i.e., Iraq and Afghanistan.

There are four parts to this story:

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Defense expenditures since 2009 have already been cut \$430 billion. Only the initial cuts of \$487 billion required under the 2011 deal will be reflected in the President's new defense budget.

Projected cuts of \$800 billion in war costs over the next decade cannot be part of the agreed upon budget deal.

The 2011 debt agreement assumed the Congressional "super committee" would come up with a budget deal to avoid drastic defense cuts.

And, finally, the failure of the super committee means an additional \$600 billion has to be taken from defense accounts over the next decade. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta described this prospect as potentially "devastating" to our security.

When added up, the defense budget, including war costs, is now 16% of the Federal budget. By comparison, under President John F. Kennedy, defense was nearly 50% of the Federal budget and, at the height of the Cold War, it was 26%.

But the prospect is that just one-sixth of the Federal budget—defense—will account for 76% of the budget cuts, or a \$2.7 trillion reduction in spending over ten years compared to the current baseline of \$3.6 trillion in annual U.S. government spending (which will grow to more than \$5 trillion in the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office).

So where does that leave the United States? The new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, says the threats facing America are greater today than they were just after 9/11. Iran is pursuing nuclear arms. A report from the *Washington Post* says Tehran is seeking to carry out attacks inside America, apparently unaware of a New York court having found Iran complicit in the 9/11 attacks a decade ago. North Korea, says Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper, will continue to proliferate weapons, including ballistic missiles. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency continues to give safe harbor, financial resources and weapons to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. And it is in Pakistan's Waziristan region where Taliban and al-Qaeda operatives hide and from where they launch attacks into Afghanistan and plot attacks elsewhere.

The Administration, in its new national security strategy, rightly identifies ballistic missile threats as a continued and growing concern. Piracy and attempts to stop the flow of trade through the Straits of Malacca and Hormuz require a strong U.S. and allied naval presence to keep oil flowing to economies everywhere. Cyber security requires new investment as does maintaining a viable presence in space for reconnaissance, surveillance and intelligence purposes, as well as for the myriad support this gives to our economy. And America must maintain its presence in places such as South Korea to avert adventuresome acts by North Korea.

Unfortunately, the cuts to the defense budget now being contemplated preceded the adoption of the new strategy. One former Secretary of Defense said there is an "iron chain" between resources and strategy, and cutting resources up front by more than \$2 trillion is by necessity going to harm our security. A strategy to protect America should have been adopted first and only after that should it have been decided what resources would be required for its execution.

Further adding to the dangers facing America is the all too facile assumption that current cuts in defense are no deeper than the cuts made after the Korean and Vietnam wars as well as those made after the end of the Cold War. This is repeated in much of the media without examination. This assertion is used to dismiss concerns that the new defense budgets are seriously inadequate to protect America's security. One

CNN anchor claimed because the congressional super committee failed to come up with an alternative spending plan, the Department of Defense “deserved to be punished” with major cuts, irrespective of whether it made sense.

A brief examination of defense spending levels from the past is illustrative. Just prior to the Korean War, America was spending \$12 billion a year on defense. A decade later, when John F. Kennedy was elected President, spending was \$43 billion, a massive 387% increase. It is true that at the peak of the Korean War spending was \$44 billion but the war ended in 1953. Wars use up military equipment, and modernization and refurbishment were necessary. On top of which President Eisenhower’s defense policy — called “New Look” — emphasized building up nuclear deterrence, which also required new investments..

Now what about Vietnam? The United States was spending \$50 billion — half the Federal budget — on defense prior to the war. By 1975, when the war was over, the United States was spending \$90 billion a year. Spending on Vietnam peaked at \$82.5 billion in 1969, but even as the United States withdrew from Vietnam the need to modernize was necessary, especially to pay for a new all-volunteer military.

By 1980, the United States was spending \$134 billion on defense, some 75% more than what it was spending in 1973, the low-point of spending in the post-Vietnam era. But despite this increase in resources, the American military became known as a “Hollow Army” because the necessary amounts were not spent on modernization, sustainment and maintenance.

Now, what about spending in the years right after the Cold War ended? Surely the drawdown then was greater than what the Administration is now contemplating. The Reagan modernization plan began in 1981 and defense spending peaked at \$299 billion right at the end of the Cold War in 1990. But, remember, America had signed major arms control agreements with the Soviet Union, including a Conventional Forces in Europe agreement, which cut Warsaw Pact and Soviet conventional forces some 70%. Furthermore, the United States had committed itself to two major nuclear arms reduction treaties, INF and START, which reduced Soviet nuclear weapons by 8,000 warheads. In short, the treaties reduced the threat.

Unfortunately, no such treaties have been signed that dramatically scale back the threat from North Korea, Iran, China, cyber warfare, piracy, state terrorism, ballistic missiles and other proliferation threats.

With the end of the Cold War, the U.S. government was able to reduce defense spending to \$265 billion a year by 1996. But needed modernization brought defense spending back to \$304 billion a year by 2000. Overall, the post-Cold War defense budgets over a decade were some \$204 billion less than what would have been spent if the 1990 spending level had simply continued. That was a 5.5% cut.

What then is the Administration planning to do today?

One of the oddities of the 2011 budget agreement is that the deficit reduction of \$2.5 trillion cannot come from reducing the costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus, to cut defense spending requires the United States to cut the base force that would be in place even after we fully withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan. But this force is required to deter, persuade and otherwise defend the United States from the threats we face including a rising China, a still troublesome Russia, piracy that threatens trade and ocean-going freight, the requirements of nuclear deterrence, missile defense and counter-proliferation, and defending such allies as the Republic of Korea and Taiwan.

These cuts are going to be very large. From today’s budget of \$525 billion for the Department of Defense (not including the two wars), to achieve the budgetary goals in the 2011 agreement would

require a cut of at least 26% every year for the next decade. If adjusted for inflation, the cut would approach 30% or more.

But it gets worse. According to defense officials, investment accounts—which include acquisition and research and development—will bear 55% of the defense cuts. Should this occur, an analysis by Credit Suisse says these accounts—now at \$218 billion annually—may lose up to 38% of their current budgets.

Some analysts have concluded that this is really not a problem because after the Korean and Vietnam wars and after the end of the Cold War, defense spending similarly declined. As we noted earlier, this is not true. From 1950 to 1960, defense spending increased 292%; in the post-Vietnam era, from the peak of spending in Vietnam (1969) to 1979, spending increased 70%, and this was *before* the Reagan administration build-up.

As for the post-Cold War era, defense spending bottomed out in 1996 at 11% below the 1990 peak of \$299 billion a year in defense spending. But by 2000, defense spending was back to \$304 billion a year.

In short, the cuts now being contemplated vastly exceed anything the United States has experienced in the post-World War II era. While projections of future defense increases after many years of decline make the scenarios being used look less severe, there is nothing to assure the American people and our allies that, given the serious fiscal condition in which we now find ourselves, defense spending will not only continue to decline as required by the 2011 budget agreement, but may be cut further as our political leadership avoids reforming our entitlement culture and bringing the U.S. fiscal house, tax code and investment strategies into the 21st century.

— Post World War II Defense Spending: Peaks to Troughs —

Korea		Vietnam		Cold War		Now	
Year	In Billions	Year	In Billions	Year	In Billions	Year	In Billions
1951	12.0	1965	50.6	1980	134.0	2012	525.0
1953	43.0	1969	82.6	1990	299.3	2017	445.0
1956	35.6	1973	76.7	1996	265.7	2021	472.0
1960	41.3	1979	134.0	2001	304.7		
10 Year (1951-60)	+292.0%	10 Year (1969-79)	+63.0%	10 Year (1990-2000)	+2.0%	10 Year Investment	-20.0% - 36.0%
						10 Year Overall DOD	-30%
Peak to Trough	-18.0%	Peak to Trough	-7.0%	Peak to Trough	-11.0%	Peak to Trough (includes OCO)	*-30%

10 Year		Peak to Trough	
Korea	+292.0%	Korea	-18.0%
Vietnam	+63.0%	Vietnam	-7.0%
Cold War	+2%	Cold War	-11.0%
Projected	-20.0% - 36.0%	Projected	*-30%

* Assumes no growth in FY 2017-FY 2021 Budget

As the defense budget discussion moves forward, nonsensical comparisons to what “others” spend are an unhelpful distraction as they do not take into account the much higher personnel costs the United States incurs, and the security responsibility America bears, especially extended deterrence. After all, the United States is the leader of the Free World.

Furthermore, such comparisons do not account for countries such as China that do not include in their official spending totals much of their military costs including their nuclear modernization work.

In the past 75 years, since World War II, such enormous reductions in defense spending as are now required have never happened before. Secretary Panetta is dead right.

Although the United States has withdrawn from Iraq, global threats have not gone away. Iran and North Korea remain serious WMD proliferation threats with hegemonic intent. Egypt and Libya may fall into the orbit of the terror masters, further threatening the Middle East. Russia and China are modernizing their military—rapidly, while aiding Iran. And Venezuela arms in cooperation with Iran. Piracy and cyber threats to our security continue to grow.

It is true that the government has no responsible long-term fiscal reform package. Having failed in such an endeavor, however, it would be the height of irresponsibility to put on the backs of our military men and women drastic cuts in military modernization and investment—cuts that have never before been attempted in the post World War II era. Cuts that will prevent the most modern of technology to be available to our soldiers and, as a result, would jeopardize our security, demoralize our allies, and embolden our adversaries.

— United States Army —

General James T. Hill, USA (ret.)

There is a lot of talk and debate today over the ramifications of a changing national security strategy including how America can prepare for and fight the next war and whether the U.S. military can accomplish the country’s strategic aims with one less aircraft carrier and a few less F-35 Joint Strike Fighters and brigade combat teams.

Smart, well-meaning people (but all with different agendas) are working hard to convince the rest of us that they can peer into the future. And all of them are right because the reality in Washington is there are no “facts” - unless you buy into my opinion, which is exactly that, an opinion. It becomes fact when you believe it.

We have the greatest military the world has ever known not simply because of our technology and material resources but because of our people - our courageous, adaptable, committed and selfless people. My very deep worry is that as we adapt the strategy to meet the budget shortfall (because that is what we always do), we will tinker with and screw up what is absolutely critical to our national defense - the ability to attract and retain the very best of our countrymen.

We better have a thoughtful debate and understanding of what it really takes to attract and retain such people. We must not get this wrong. This essential part of the ongoing national security discussion must not be trivialized. It must not be left only in the hands of lawmakers, most of whom have never been in harm’s way and have no idea what it takes to lead young men and women in uniform. We must find a way to keep faith

with those who are serving, those who have served, and those who will be asked to serve before we kill our commissaries and drastically alter our medical support system and our family support programs and activities.

These are but a few of the intangibles that attract and retain. And we have huge problems looming on the family horizon, e.g. we have no idea of the real cost on our military children who have gone through three to five deployments. We, as a nation, have put them through a decade of turmoil - better keep faith with them, if only as a matter of moral responsibility. This will require our senior uniformed leaders to stand up, be counted and not roll over to save some part of a weapons system.

So, I offer up two "facts." One, we will, as always before, albeit with greater risk and cost, prevail in any future combat irrespective of what we do about downsizing. Second, we will do so only if the very best stay in service to the nation. If the really good ones walk, we can return to the military of the mid-1970s, a military I refer to as the "awful military." We simply cannot, as a nation, afford to return to the dark days of the early all-volunteer force. The nation and the world require us to have the military we have, not the one we had.

General Louis Wagner, USA (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

The Department of Defense has been directed to reduce the defense budget by nearly \$500 billion over the next ten years. Based on the premise that ground forces will not be engaged in a large-scale conventional or insurgent conflict in the future, the Army force structure will be cut substantially. As currently projected, they will be reduced by 72,000 over a period of five years. Once this reduction starts, intake of personnel will be reduced and leaders at all grades will be lost. In the case of unforeseen contingencies requiring additional ground personnel, rapid mobilization cannot be achieved overnight. With a reduced budget, the Army will also not be able to quickly replace vast quantities of equipment, which are either old or worn out by heavy use during the last ten years of war.

The basic premise of the nature of future conflicts is questionable, to say the least. Instability in the Middle East, the Arab Spring activities, the Iranian nuclear weapons threat, the threat of a nuclear capable North Korea, and instability of our neighbors in Central and South America are all strong indicators that the world is not going to be peaceful in the foreseeable future. Ground forces are very likely to again be involved in a large-scale irregular war or even a conventional conflict. The capability to execute robust full spectrum land operations remains absolutely essential if the United States is to remain a preeminent world power.

There is no question that economic problems will result in reduced resources for our Armed Forces, but common sense must be applied when determining the priorities among Air, Sea, Land and Cyber warfare. The Army must retain sufficient end strength to immediately respond to conventional or irregular contingencies. Equally important, it is essential that their equipment is capable of meeting these contingencies. This will require funds to repair and upgrade current equipment to meet emerging threats. Increased research and development and procurement funds will also be required to replace outdated equipment. The third leg of readiness is a robust training and education program to assure our soldiers are able to fulfill whatever future mission they are assigned. It is essential that the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command not be reduced in resources to perform its critical training and education mission during this critical period.

It will be difficult for the Army to perform the missions indicated if some of the numbers that are being bantered about to achieve the \$500 billion reduction become fact. If sequestration for another \$500 billion becomes a reality, it will be devastating for the Army and the national security of the country.

Lieutenant General Thomas Griffin, Jr., USA (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

I believe it most dangerous to be initiating the cuts to all the services in a time of war with the outcome far from foreseeable. Our men and women in uniform and the equipment they use are all well worn.

It appears that not only the budget cuts but the timetable for execution are not being mandated due to the situation we face but due to the upcoming election. This is absolutely foolhardy. Given the realities of the world today it does not make sense to weaken our defense capabilities and to let our adversaries (and allies) and potential troublemakers know the time line. Have we forgotten that they get a vote?

Our decision makers need to remember that their primary function is to provide for the national defense.

I do not remember a time when so many of the benefits of being a soldier were under attack. We have an all-volunteer force at war. The President, unlike in the past, cannot call up a few hundred thousand young men to fill the ranks. Yet, in spite of the operational tempo and the losses suffered, the attack on retirement, health care, education, schools, commissaries coupled with the announced reductions in force levels and – oh, by the way - reduced promotion opportunities are certainly applauded by those who would wish us weaker.

We need to man, equip and train the force for maximum effectiveness and not for political expediency. The soldiers are not stupid. They know what is happening and will demonstrate their dissatisfaction by leaving. The ones we want to keep are the ones that will leave first.

We have experienced too many times in the past when we have been found ill-trained and ill equipped for conflict. Our soldiers paid in blood and suffered while we caught up. That should never happen again.

In the universe of special interests in this country, the only one that does not appear to have a loud voice that transfers to votes is the Defense Department. It is also the lone entity, as I see it, that states it has to cut. The Secretary of Defense's comments differ mightily from the unions, or AARP or the teachers or seniors, etc.

Major General Daniel A. Hahn, USA (ret.)

The current cuts to the defense budget will have a big but manageable impact on the Army. The most noticeable change will be to the Army active duty end strength of 547,000 that will be reduced to 490,000. The Reserve and Guard end strength will not change but the type and mix of units may. The Army plans to reduce the number of combat brigades in the active force and the number discussed is at least eight brigades. Two of the brigades will come out of Europe and the plan will be to have a Brigade Combat Team rotate into Europe (Eastern Europe). The frequency or duration of this rotation is not clear at this time. Where and the exact number of other brigades that will be cut is unclear. Another initiative will be to increase the number of battalions in a brigade to make them more robust and this will determine the actual reduction of brigades. The change in brigade structure is based on lessons learned in combat.

Other challenges for the Army will be the light tactical vehicle fleet (HMMWV). Rather than recap the fleet to the greatest capability, the Army may put this money into the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle Fleet. With more than 120,000 vehicles in the light tactical fleet this is not an insignificant decision. Modernization of the fleet will take many years particularly without any supplemental funding. The Joint Air to Ground Missile program may be affected and it appears the Army will go with the Hellfire missile instead. The future Army Ground Combat Vehicle will see further delays and it is unclear the direction this program will

take. The Army will clearly extend the life of the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle and continue to rely on the Stryker vehicle system. The above decisions may have been made even without budget cuts.

I believe the biggest challenge for the Army will be in Aviation modernization. The helicopter has proven vital during operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and so resetting and modernizing the current fleet will demand dollars that will put pressure on delaying and not funding other items in the budget. If the Defense budget is further hit by sequestration proceedings, then all of the modernization programs will be affected. Ground tactical and combat vehicles and especially the aviation fleet have seen intense operation for more than 10 years and will require funding to replace, recap and to modernize (in order to take advantage of lessons learned in combat).

Regardless of what happens, the Army plans to prevent a hollow force through balancing personnel, training and maintenance and equipment funding. The leadership does not want to pursue or protect one aspect at the expense of the other areas. Modernization will be a part of this but clearly this will be the most challenged area. The Army will most likely continue to protect the development of network systems to ensure interoperability of systems across the Army and Joint Force. They will also pursue cyber warfare capability to protect the force.

Major General Sid Shachnow, USA (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

There is much discussion in defense circles about how deep the defense budget is going to be cut, after the political maneuvering subsides. Needless to say there are going to be winners and losers. Possibilities are starting to crystallize.

The “strategic guidance” announced by the Commander-in-Chief indicates a scaling back particularly in the greater Middle East and Europe. The so called “pivot” to East Asia gives the Navy and Air Force considerable hope that their share of the budget cuts will be tempered. Cuts will be focused on land forces - Army and Marines. The reductions will bring the U.S. Army and Marine Corps down to pre- 9/11 levels of strength. We will swallow a Counter Insurgency (COIN) appetite suppressant. Army equipment worn down by war will be a critical requirement to be addressed by a limited army budget.

We will be forced to accept greater risk as a nation. Since we have no peer competitors, accepting greater risk is an attractive option. The Army’s expeditionary operations, decisive operations, “blitzkrieg” type operations will be a thing of the past. The emphasis will be assisting allies to fight their own battles, committing U.S. ground troops only as a last resort. The Army will have to embrace military assistance more enthusiastically. In order to do that, the Army will reconfigure to include more officers and NCOs. These additional officers and NCOs will give the Army the strategic flexibility for advisors and technical support to allies without ripping out the chain of command to do so. A reasonable pool of experienced personnel will also permit expansion and mobilization.

The Army will strive to maintain the maximum number of combat ready brigades with the appropriate back up from the National Guard and Reserves. A balance of Heavy, Light and Airborne brigades will need to be achieved. Military schools will take in greater number of allies, giving them the capability to address issues themselves.

In an effort to avoid lengthy commitments of conventional troops, there will be greater reliance on an emerging low visibility warfare. That means that Army special operations units will experience minimum impact from budget cuts. As a matter of fact, budgetary increases are conceivable with modest growth.

Special operations units, UAVs and cyber warfare will play a significant role in the future. It simply offers a greater return on the investment.

General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, captured the essence of the challenge when he said, “As the Army gets smaller, it is the *“how we reduce”* that will be critical. We must do it at a pace that allows us to retain a high quality All-Volunteer Force that remains lethal, agile, adaptable, versatile and ready to deploy with the ability to expand if required.” As for achieving victory, that is a separate subject.

— United States Navy —

Vice Admiral Robert T. Conway, USN (ret.)

First of all, there will be a great deal of political maneuvering on the part of Congress as next year’s (2013) budget goes to the Hill. The Navy faces a readiness downward spiral, as major acquisitions program will be pressurized in an already tight budget and be forced to move to the right. This will result in increased costs in the out-years and, in turn, squeeze the life out of other required programs that directly effect sailors and their families. Specifically, this will negatively impact both Fleet Maintenance and Shore Infrastructure (Base Operational Support). As this evolves in the months to come, coupled with no plan to recover the billions of dollars in Operations and Maintenance cuts, the Navy’s Operational Readiness will decline.

As for Sequestration, this will add to the degradation of operational readiness and subsequently force a downward trend to Force Structure. Also, due to the upcoming election, one would not expect a Congressional rescue to prevent sequestration. Why? It is a “hot button” and popular election issue, for both sides to run on during the election campaign. The bottom line to all of this is more nonsense, rhetoric, and posturing by politicians, and the real loser here is military readiness.

Rear Admiral Terence E. McKnight, USN (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

In the 1980s there was a major movement in the defense budget to fund the 600-ship navy. This navy included 15 aircraft carriers, the re-commissioning of four World War II-era battleships, over 50 attack submarines and numerous state of the art AEGIS cruisers. The Berlin Wall came down and the Cold War era came to a close. Since those glory days, the size of the navy has started on a downward spiral. Just over ten years ago, the Navy had a manpower strength of 400,000. Today, the Navy musters 323,000 and, for the first time in many years, held a “selective early retirement board” to tell sailors that their service to the country is no longer required. The number of ships today stands at 285, which compares to the levels of the Depression Era. That’s the good news . . . the bad news . . . things are about to get worse.

Without “sequestration,” the Defense Department will be faced with over \$450 billion in cuts over the next ten years. With “sequestration,” defense budgets will fall well below pre-9/11 levels and be the lowest as a percentage of the national budget in decades. As many defense analysts have stated - there is no low hanging fruit remaining, there will be some major programs taking cuts, and nothing will be left off the table.

There are rumors circulating that the Navy is looking at decommissioning nine surface combatants in the next few years. The possible AEGIS cruisers mentioned for decommissioning include: USS Normandy (CG 60), USS Anzio (CG 68), USS Vicksburg (CG 69) and USS Cape St George (CG 71), USS Princeton (CG 59), USS Cowpens (CG 63), USS Gettysburg (CG 64), USS Chosin (CG 65) and USS Hue City (CG 66). Other platforms discussed for possible decommissioning were identified as the USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41), USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43) and the USS Tortuga (LSD 46).

Other major programs that could face cuts or elimination include the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (both carrier and vertical takeoff variants), the Littoral Combat Ship, the V-22 Osprey, and the replacement for the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine. Additional manpower reductions (in the thousands) are also possible.

As a result of some of these proposed budget cuts, the House Armed Services Committee has pointed out, “some decisions would be irrevocable. A shipyard closed because of program cancellations will not be there when we are ready to buy ships again.” With the reductions in ships and manpower the Navy will be stretched to the limits and major mission areas and overseas commitments will have to be eliminated. In the words of that great “naval” strategist Bob Dylan: “For the times they are a-changin’.”

Operational commitments - Last year during the Libya crisis, the U.S. Navy had to wait several weeks to have an Amphibious Ready Group on station. In the past, the Navy would have ships ready to assist for possible evacuation of civilians within days. The USS *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group deployed in March of 2011 to support the crisis and will not return home until February of 2012. In terms of deployments, this is extraordinary. Even in an age when seven months appears to be the standard, is this going to be the benchmark of deployments to come with the latest proposed reduction in forces?

The Navy will not have the forces to protect the high seas as in years past. With a strategy to move forces to the Asia-Pacific region and the requirements for Burke-class AEGIS destroyers on station for missile defense, some major mission areas will have to be reduced. The Navy will no longer be able project power in such regions as the Caribbean, Mediterranean, or possibly the Middle East.

The current Chief of Naval Operations has asked his planners to dust off the old “*sea swap*” program to see if keeping ships on station and rotating the crews rather than returning to home port to keep platforms on station. In the past, this program had very little success with surface ships.

No matter what doctrine is implemented in the future, there will simply not be enough ships to cover the current commitments.

— U.S. Marine Corps and Reserve Components —

Major General Larry S. Taylor, USMCR (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

The following are my unofficial opinions:

Your Marine Corps is a “middleweight” expeditionary force-in-readiness, able to project the power of the United States from the sea onto the littoral regions of the world, across the entire spectrum of conflict, from “small-wars” and complex, irregular operations, all the way up to high-intensity conventional warfare. In order to fight as a “heavyweight” when needed and to provide some operational tempo relief, the USMC

calls upon its Reserve force to augment and reinforce the active duty forces. The United States Marine Corps Reserve provides additional capabilities of all kinds, but especially those capabilities that are needed at the high-intensity end of the spectrum of conflict, such as artillery and tanks.

In my opinion, the danger of massive cuts in defense spending will not be so much in the lack of expensive, high-tech weapons systems, but rather in the more subtle shortages of spare parts for maintenance and ammunition for training. This is what occurred during a previous round of defense cuts in the immediate post-Vietnam years and the combat readiness of all the services suffered. This is especially true of the reserve components.

Naturally, those forces that are “first-to-fight” will be first-to-equip and supply, and follow-on forces will get, at best, the hand-me-downs. At worst, the Reserve gets next-to-nothing. For example, the next-to-last Carter defense budget provided my AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter squadron with only enough 2.75-inch rockets (the primary weapon of the Cobra at that time) to fire no more than *one* rocket sortie *per pilot per year!* I think we are heading in that same direction, and that spells trouble for our combat readiness.

— United States Coast Guard —

Rear Admiral William Merlin (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

The recapitalization figure of approximately \$1.5 billion for FY2012 is estimated to be only 60% of that needed to replace the old and aging fleet of Coast Guard Cutters. The acquisition segment of the Coast Guard budget has been and continues to be inadequate to maintain the seagoing operational capability of the Coast Guard, and delaying this program adds to the cost of eventual replacement of seagoing assets.

Rear Admiral James Olson, USCG (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

This year, the Coast Guard will make difficult, albeit necessary, trade-offs to sustain front-line operational capacity and invest in critical recapitalization initiatives. To fund higher order needs the Coast Guard will seek efficiencies and make targeted reductions in administrative functions. These decisions are necessary in the current fiscal environment but do not come without impact to readiness and operations. FY 2012 administrative savings initiatives include a reduction in non-operational travel, a cutback in professional service contracts, a decrease in the computer support through consolidation of support units and help desks, and further reductions in service-wide support for engineering and logistics, financial management, and human capital initiatives such as recruiting, innovation, professional development and training opportunities.

The much needed and long delayed recapitalization of the Coast Guard continues to be funded at less than optimal rates of production. The 2012 budget does provide funding for long lead time materials to construct the sixth National Security Cutter, but the actual funding for the cutter must still occur in future budgets. The Fast Response Cutter funding was increased from four to six hulls this year, and the Response Boat Medium continues at 40 boats this year, a solid production rate. An additional replacement H-60 helicopter, one C-130J long-range surveillance plane and two Maritime Patrol Aircraft are also included. Our nation’s small polar ice breaker fleet received some support and Congress funded a National Incident Management and Assist Team to better enable the Coast Guard to respond to major disasters like the Deepwater Horizon. Shore side infrastructure of the Coast Guard remains at inadequate funding levels given the age and environmental locations of those resources.

Future budgets are projected to become increasingly lean even with the priority on Homeland Security. The Coast Guard will be forced to make difficult trade off decisions between the desperately needed replacement vessels and aircraft required to rebuild the Coast Guard, and sustaining current front-line operations. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated the changes in discretionary and mandatory spending that would occur if the automatic enforcement mechanisms (sequestration) were triggered. The reductions range from 7.8 percent (in 2013) to 5.5 percent (in 2021) for non-defense related agencies (including the Coast Guard, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security). The extent of possible reductions in Coast Guard funding remains undetermined, but would nevertheless seriously impact a traditionally underfunded agency in many areas, causing significant reductions in services to the public.

— United States Air Force —

Lieutenant General Charles May, USAF (ret.) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

The major concern for many is the lack of a coherent national military strategy that is responsive to real world threats. Without this foundation, it is impossible to judge whether the defense adjustments will provide the necessary security for Americans over the next two decades. Obviously there will be less capital expenditure, less budget authority to maintain current systems and programs and fewer troops to carry out the ill-defined USAF mission. We all understand that strategy should come first but it is obvious that budget changes are being made first and some public pronouncements are being made to justify these changes. But coherence is lacking, preventing a thorough and in-depth analysis of the impact.

The fighter force will be the most severely affected because of the reduction in the F-35 inventory and the lack of funds to properly maintain and modernize a current force structure that is unprecedentedly old, averaging more than 40 years of service. Long-range strike modernization has been on the table for more than 20 years with no discernable progress because of inadequate technical solutions and lack of funding. So far, tanker modernization is on track but one should not hold one's breath in spite of the vital nature of this modernization effort. Finally, quality Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) is vital to military operations in the 21st century. The space and UAV inventory must be maintained and improved.

Major General Robert D. Eaglet, USAF (ret) *Member, JINSA Board of Advisors*

The budget for our national defense programs should be based on the amount of resources required to achieve national security objectives established through the usual processes. Our national security is too important to constrain it to whatever might be achievable within some arbitrary reduced budget target.

The present approach would tailor national defense budgets to a level determined without adequate consideration for the impact on our ability to achieve and maintain national security objectives. This approach, derived from failure of the so-called congressional super committee to achieve its charter, constitutes an unwarranted gamble with our nation's future.