

Defense Strategy and the Erosion of Advantage

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An Inescapable Truth?

The American [military] has become the all-around handy man of the Government... You may be called upon at any time to do any kind of service in any part of the world... [Y]ou must do it, and you must do it well.

Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison, 1914

Advantage generated from the possession of joint military capabilities that are agile enough to do many things.

Key Components of 21st Century “Advantage”

- Demands of “advantage” are more substantial than current QDR acknowledges...
- Understanding new limitations (political constraints, resources, etc), U.S. “advantage” springs from the ability to assemble/lead “federated” responses to reach out and...
 - “Slap” — Excise/Punish/Coerce/Compel
 - “Grab” — Seize/Secure/Protect
 - “Block” — Contain/Limit/Mitigate
 - “Push” — Restore/Maintain status quo
 - “Knockout” — Eliminate existential threats
 - “Help” — Underwrite others main efforts

QDR ‘14 cedes “advantage” in “grabbing” and “blocking” at a time their stock should be increasing.

QDR '14 Definitively “Answers” Two Foundational Questions

- Given resource constraints and war weariness will DoD ‘situate its strategic appreciation’ to suit its traditional biases?
 - YES, QDR ‘14 has re-traditionalized the “Defense Problem.”
 - Reset to contingencies that most conform to “traditional bias.”
 - Postures for “preferred” (and testable) challenges.
- Will the most important defense challenges emerge from unfavorable order or disorder?
 - In reality, both and a great deal in between.
 - Yet, QDR went “all-in” versus “unfavorable order” in two regions.

Broad “advantage” is at risk as DoD is now in the near exclusive business of “slapping” misbehaving states and, if necessary, “pushing” them back across redlines... “Knockout” preserved in the nuclear deterrent.

Bottom Line: Increasing Risk to Broad Spectrum Advantage

- On balance, the QDR's force planning vision increases the risk to "advantage" across key measures of merit.
- While changes in "force size" may contribute to this risk, the proposed force "shape" (pacing demands and posited response capabilities) is the most problematic area in this regard.
- DoD will face important challenges posed by both "unfavorable order" (hostile states), "disorder" (the consequential failure of authority in key regions), and combinations of the two.
- Current course raises the prospect of at least half of the force focused on precisely the wrong kinds of challenges.
- This course raises the prospect for the same kind of shock and looming disadvantage we experienced after 9/11.

DoD is commonly the target of..."Don't just stand there do something!"While it is prudent to curb some military commitments...Choosing where to assume future risk merits careful consideration.

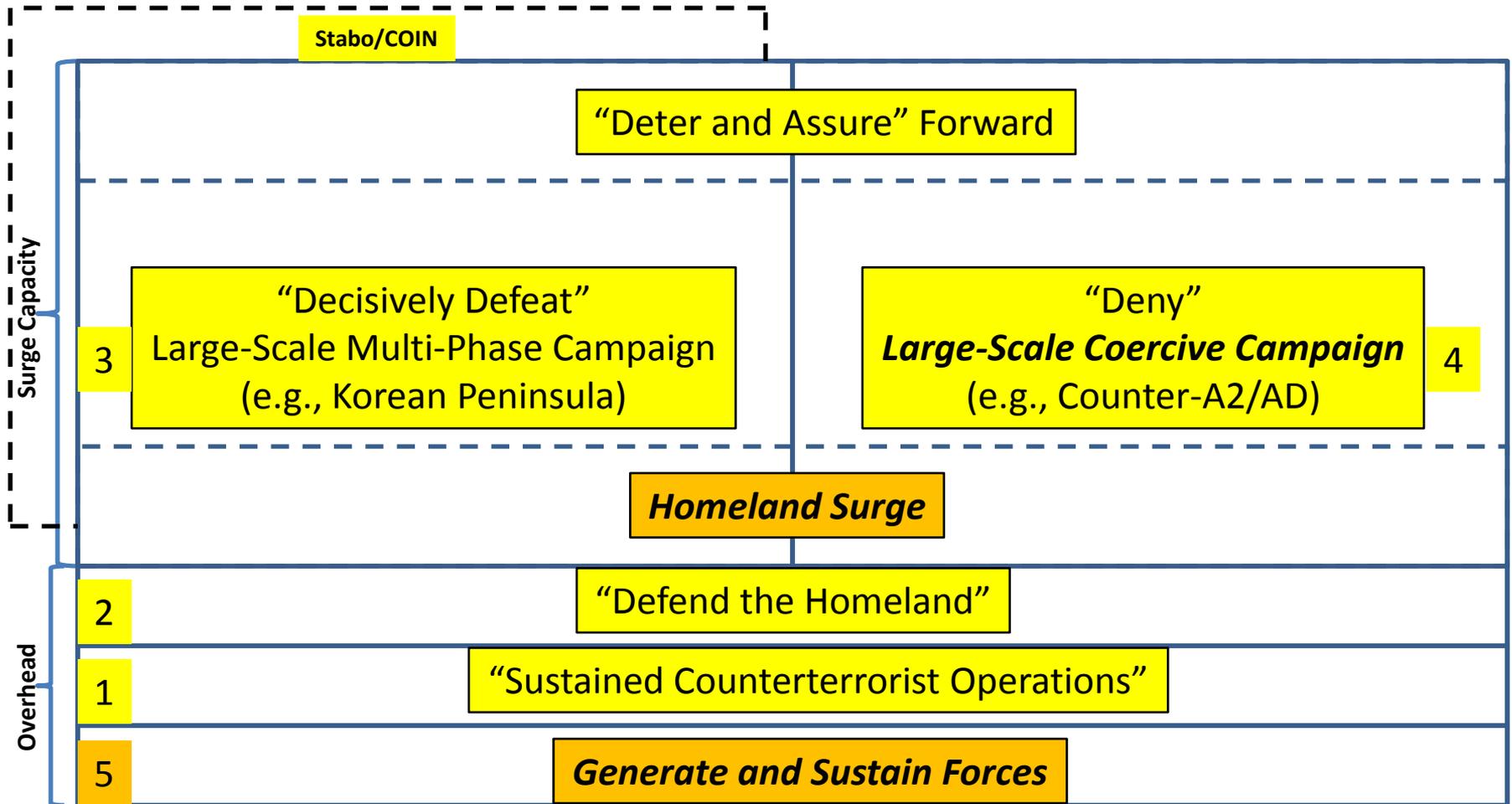
Risk Principles for QDR: How I See It

Does the emerging DoD vision...

- Recognize/account for basic demands of institutional and operational “overhead”?
- Account for/counter new “traditional” challenges posed by “unfavorable order” and sophisticated state-based opponents?
- Recognize/account for new and potentially disruptive “disorder” challenges?
- Demonstrate requisite flexibility to account for unanticipated “surge” demands and “strategic shock”?
- And, finally, does it account for future demands in a balanced, objective, and unbiased way?

Risk = The likelihood of failure or prohibitive cost in securing one or more of your strategic objectives.

QDR '14 FPC — The Official Roadmap for Gaining “Advantage”



QDR '14 sizes and shapes joint forces for two simultaneous major "traditional" warfighting contingencies (although each differs in character and objectives), while defending the homeland and pressuring terrorist networks (Blocks 1-4) and flexing to STABO/COIN with increased mobilization if required.

******Bold italics*** indicates the presenters assumed force characteristics

Risk Principles for QDR: Advantage “Disorder”

Does the emerging DoD vision...

- Recognize/account for basic demands of institutional and operational “overhead”?
 -  Solid on persistent demand for CT/HLD; however, resource constraints and optimism may drive risky future choices vis-à-vis “force generation and sustainment.”
- Account for/counter new “traditional” challenges posed by “unfavorable order” and sophisticated state-based opponents?
 -  U.S. is experiencing erosion in its ability to project lethal force in myriad A2/AD environments; countering erosion requires new “collective” material and conceptual approaches; current vision focuses on this.
- Recognize/account for new and potentially disruptive “disorder” challenges?
 -  Likeliest source of “strategic shock”; unpredictable course of new, violent threats to political authority requires DoD to think more about response to “disorder”; intervention vs. unstructured access challenges, distributed security ops in increasingly lethal environments, etc; “disorder” is too important to wish away.
- Indicate requisite flexibility to account for unanticipated “surge” demands and “strategic shock”?
 -  Deliberate “re-traditionalization” of DoD’s outlook engenders enormous potential for “shock” and “surprise.” Just as DoD began to shift its focus toward a handful of well-defined threats (e.g., China, DPRK, Iran, AQ, etc), it faced a wholly different set of problems (e.g., Syria, Egypt, Ukraine, etc). Most of these present “hybrid” challenges of “disorder” and “unfavorable order” combined; many are “unpreventable” and largely invulnerable traditional military coercion.
- And, finally, does the emerging DoD vision account for future military demands in a balanced and objective way?
 -  Current vision goes “all in” against “unfavorable order” in Asia and the Northern Persian Gulf; odds are the most compelling challenges will emerge elsewhere or under far different circumstances than anticipated.

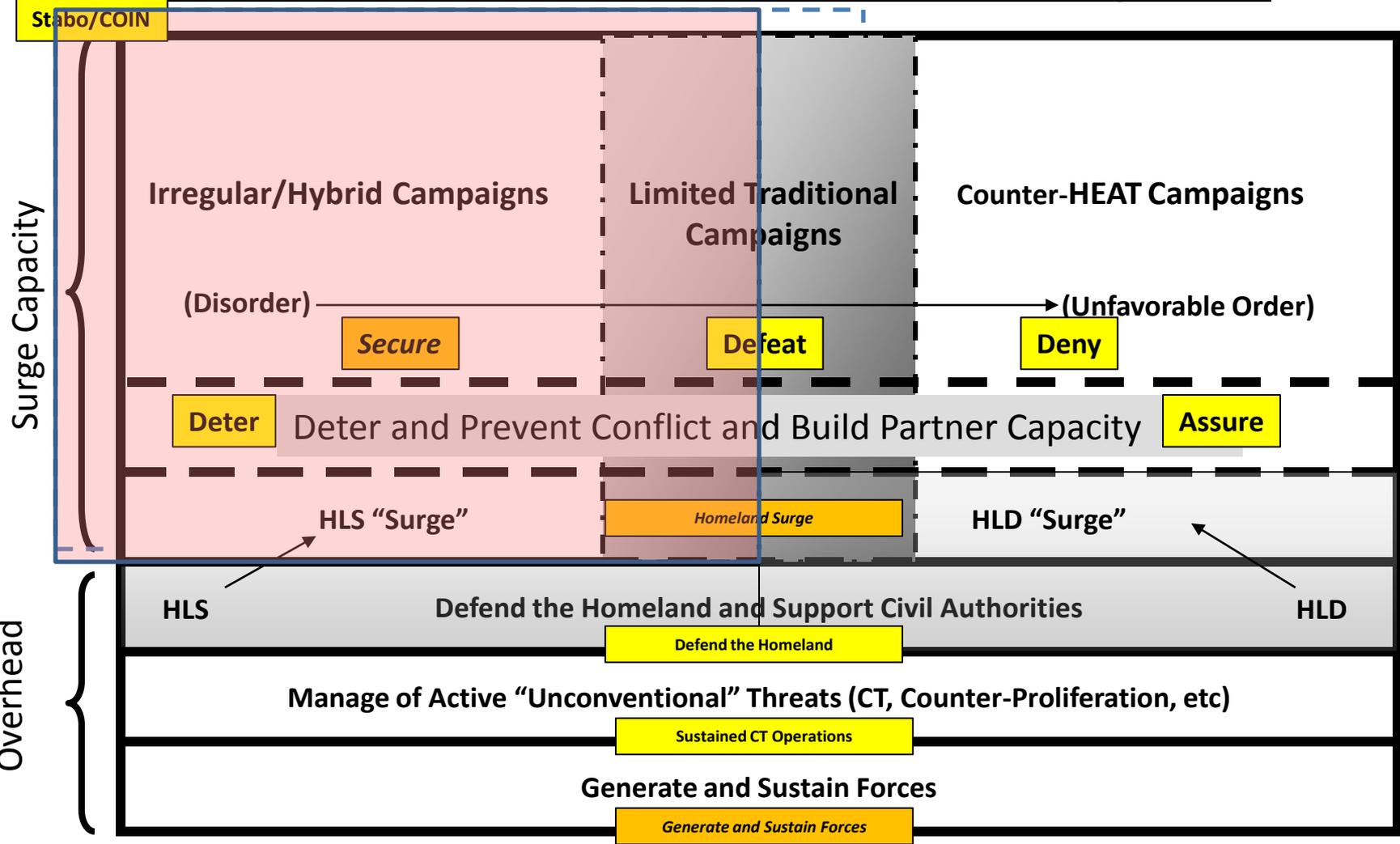
Current vision is “high risk”; The greatest looming risk is in “disorder” challenges that are fundamentally beyond our control.

 Decreasing Risk

 Undetermined Risk

 Increasing Risk

A Different View: Consistent with QDR with Some Modification



This view accepts QDR's "Defeat" an important but potentially "lesser included" mission; It conceptually reinforces the ability to "Grab" and "Block" in the face increasing "Disorder" challenges.