

DOD must meet new challenges with smaller force, Fox says to Army War College students

DOD Must Meet New Challenges With Smaller Force, Fox Says

By Amaani Lyle

American Forces Press Service

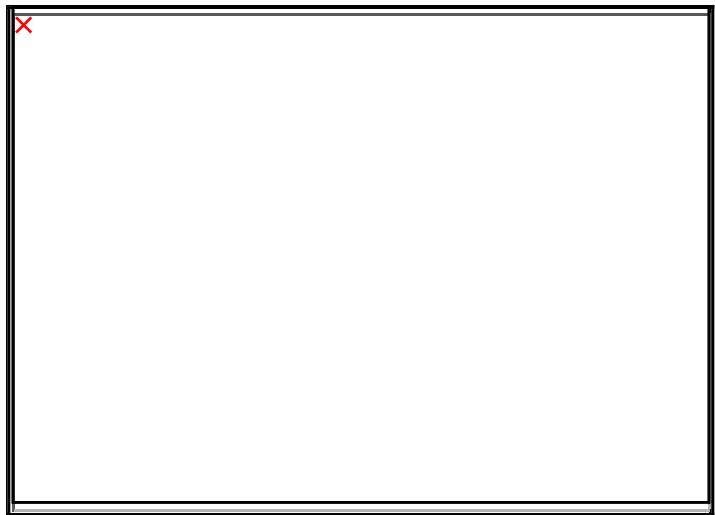
WASHINGTON, April 7, 2014 – The Defense Department’s fiscal year 2015 budget request recognizes that the U.S. military must meet homeland and global objectives with a pared-down force, acting Deputy Defense Secretary Christine H. Fox said at the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

“The budget is based on strategic imperatives and recognizes a time of continued transition and uncertainty for the U.S. military in terms of its roles, missions and the available resources,” Fox said. “The last decade has been dominated by protracted land wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, ... but now our focus has to move to preparing to counter a variety of security threats and embracing opportunities on all points of the compass.”

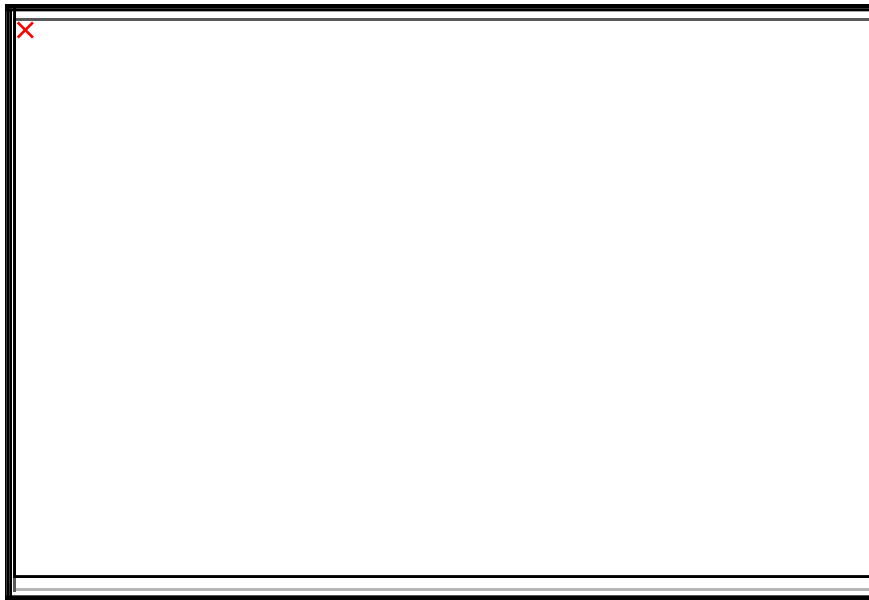
The decision to maintain the U.S. technological edge at the expense of size was based not only on stark lessons of history, Fox said, but also on rigorous analysis.

Acting Deputy Defense Secretary Christine Fox addresses the defense budget and leadership challenges in her remarks to the students of the Army War College at Carlisle.

“Past major drawdowns -- World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Cold War -- all kept more force structure in the military than could be adequately trained, maintained and equipped given the defense budgets at that time,” she said. This, she explained, forced the U.S. military at those times in history to



disproportionately cut into accounts that fund readiness and modernization, which created a hollow force.



To determine the size of the forces needed, Fox said, officials used two critically important inputs: existing operational plans and the global force management allocation plan that provided an estimate of steady-state requirements for U.S. forces to support the day-to-day needs of combatant commanders.

“This analysis showed that for the active Army, a force size of

440,000 to 450,000 was adequate to meet these demands when accompanied by a reserve force of 195,000 and a [National] Guard of 335,000.”

Together, Fox added, this force of 980,000 soldiers would meet the priorities specified in the strategy as laid out in the Quadrennial Defense Review, which ultimately means that after years of growing the Army, the time has come to shrink it.

Responding to student question, Fox emphasized 3 themes: DoD commitment to prepare for strategic challenges; the alignment of the proposed DoD budget with strategic realities; and the expectation that War College graduates will apply creativity and the lessons of the past to reshape the military forces the nation will need.

“[The current] Army has born the burden of battle in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it’s a bitter pill to be rewarded in this way,” Fox said. “We have no choice but to get smaller for all of the services.”

Still, Fox noted, the opportunities for the future U.S. forces will be endless. “There are tremendous opportunities for Army to contribute in securing the gains in Afghanistan, keeping the peace in Korea, engaging in Africa, or delivering humanitarian relief to countless nations,” she said.

The specific tenets of



the president's
strategic defense
guidance weighed
heavily in DOD
budget request
choices, Fox
explained, include
shifting operational

focus and forces to the Asia-Pacific region while sustaining commitments to key allies in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Fox also underscored the concurrent need to be able to defeat a major adversary in one part of the world while denying victory to an opportunistic adversary elsewhere and reducing the force planning requirement to conduct large, prolonged counterinsurgency and stability operations.

DOD also will aggressively pursue terrorist networks and counter weapons proliferation while enhancing cyberspace and missile defense capabilities and maintaining a smaller but credible nuclear deterrent, the acting deputy secretary said.

When the Deputy Secretary of Defense spoke to the Class of 2014 at the Army War College, she received as many questions from international members of the class as from the US students about the implications for landforces, regional commitments, the strategic rebalance to the Pacific, force readiness, the future for military compensation plans and healthcare benefits, the tempo and degree of drawdown and the challenge of nondeployable personnel.

“The world has gotten no less dangerous, no less turbulent or in need of American leadership,” Fox said. “And unlike previous drawdowns, there is no obvious peace dividend as there has been in the past, such as at the end of the Cold War.”

At the same time, Fox said, there is a strong possibility in fiscal year 2016 that national defense resources may not reach the levels envisioned to fully support the president's strategy.

While Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel had no choice but to prepare for the current austere budget environment, Fox said, the president's fiscal 2015 budget request provides \$115 billion more over the next five years than sequester-level funding. Meanwhile, current law requires sequester-level spending cuts to resume in fiscal 2016.

“This budget plan and the associated proposals provide a sustainable path toward shaping a balanced force, a force able to protect the nation and fulfill the president's defense strategy, albeit it with some additional risk,” Fox said. “Attempting to retain a larger force in the face of potential sequester-level

cuts would create a decade-long readiness and modernization holiday on top of the program cancellations and delays that we've already had to make."

Going forward, Fox said, DOD must figure out a way to institutionalize the lessons from the past 13 years knowing that the desire of the nation is to move away from these wars.

"The Army cannot turn into a large garrison force waiting for the next land war," Fox said. "There is just too much to do in the world, and we need clever ideas on how to be everywhere, do everything with fewer forces across the entire joint force."

The challenge persists to regrow and reshape the Army into the future, Fox said.

"We must determine what we need to retain in the smaller force to allow you to get to a larger force quickly if necessary when needed in the future," she added.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 08 April 2014