DO FEWER RESOURCES MEAN LESS INFLUENCE?
A COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF MILITARY INFLUENCE IN A TIME OF AUSTERITY

Mary Manjikian

It is common in post-conflict situations for a societal conversation about defense cutbacks to take place. Regardless of the time period or country in which such conversations occur, some universal themes can be identified:

1. A claim (which appears in the media and in the legislature) that cost savings will be realized, and that these savings are collective property “owed” to citizens as a reward for supporting the effort.

2. A redefinition of the utility of traditional military tools in a changed, post-conflict society, accompanied sometimes by a larger conversation about the utility of the hegemons’ leading position in the international system.

3. A tendency for new presidential doctrines to emerge that drive defense policy, including defense cuts.

4. A search for new, “cheaper” military technologies developed during wartime to be used in place of conventional military forces.

5. A sense that the military, which grew powerful during wartime, should now take a backseat in society while problems like social welfare are tackled by policymakers.

6. A tendency for threats to be redefined in both the short and long term.

More information about the programs of the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) and U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Press may be found on the Institute’s homepage at www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil.

Organizations interested in reprinting this or other SSI and USAWC Press executive summaries should contact the Editor for Production via email at SSI_Publishing@conus.army.mil. All organizations granted this right must include the following statement: “Reprinted with permission of the Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, U.S. Army War College.”