



# Executive Summary

Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press



## AUGMENTING OUR INFLUENCE: ALLIANCE REVITALIZATION AND PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

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Editor

American allies and partners play an important—sometimes critical—role in U.S. national security. For example, in contributing to operations in which U.S. military forces are involved, allies and partners provide political as well as operational burden- and risk-sharing. The most recent, significant example of the important role played by allies and partners was Afghanistan, where non-U.S. troops comprised roughly one-third of the total military force deployed across the country. At times, allied and partner involvement frustrates both policymakers and military practitioners. Nevertheless, American national security strategies for the last 2 decades have made it clear that the United States prefers to wield force in coalitions.

Unfortunately, like the United States itself, many key American allies and partners are reducing their military force structures and cutting modernization budgets. These reductions are largely driven by the necessities of budget austerity, but they are also the product of a natural post-conflict military drawdown. The implications of these reductions across most of America's closest allies and partners could be potentially profound.

All of this occurs as the United States seeks to rebalance toward the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater, redirecting its diplomatic, economic, political, and military tools toward the region of the world seen as most important to America's future. From a security perspective, the rebalancing carries with it implications

for existing American alliances and partnerships, as well as those new relationships the United States seeks to build across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and beyond. In April 2013, as part of the 24th Annual U.S. Army War College's Strategy Conference, the Strategic Studies Institute brought together three distinguished experts in the area of alliances, partnerships, and security cooperation to address these and related issues. Their conference presentations were based on the chapters in this edited volume.

Australian National University's Dr. William Tow spoke on "Pursuing U.S. Strategic Interests in the Asia-Pacific: Pivoting Away From Disorder?" He assessed the utility of the rebalancing strategy, the role of allies in that strategy, and the degree to which Landpower might form a critical implementing element. Tow concluded that the role of Landpower may be severely limited due to sequestration and defense austerity, relegating most of the military components of the rebalance to the Air Force and the Navy.

Dr. Carol Atkinson of the University of Southern California spoke on "Military Soft Power in the 21st Century: Military Exchanges and Partner Development," suggesting one area where Landpower may actually play a critical role despite austerity—namely, multinational military education. She argued that the ability to co-opt, persuade, and influence the thinking of others through combined education programs ultimately supports international peace and stability. Hence American Landpower—

and especially Landpower schoolhouses—seem well positioned to play an important role in facilitating not simply the transfer of doctrinal or factual information, but also the development of relationships that help to shape the security environment.

Finally, in a presentation entitled, “Rebalancing and the Role of Allies and Partners: Europe, NATO, and the Future of American Landpower,” Dr. Sean Kay of Ohio Wesleyan University argued that cuts to U.S. Army forces in Europe make sense, but only in the context of a carefully thought out strategy. In Kay’s view, failure to align military cuts with strategic goals risks further erosion of the transatlantic security architecture and misses an opportunity to gain more operational capacity from America’s allies and partners.

The detailed chapters in this edited volume upon which these three presentations were based provide the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense with an array of critically important insights and recommendations on the future role of American Landpower. As American policymakers grapple with the unfolding implications of defense austerity, the winding down of large-scale American involvement in Afghanistan, and the uncertain future security

environment affecting U.S. interests around the world, they would do well to consider the analyses contained herein.

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