

## The Importance of Army Headquarters in the “Now World Order”

by

Lieutenant Colonel Kevin S. Capra  
United States Army

Under the Direction of:  
Colonel Christopher M. Bado



United States Army War College  
Class of 2016

### DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

Approved for Public Release  
Distribution is Unlimited

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2016		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Importance of Army Headquarters in the "Now World Order"			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Kevin S. Capra United States Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Christopher M. Bado			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. Please consider submitting to DTIC for worldwide availability? YES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input type="checkbox"/> (student check one) Project Adviser recommends DTIC submission? YES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input type="checkbox"/> (PA check one)					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5985					
14. ABSTRACT The Army is currently in the process of cutting the size of its headquarters as well as reducing the grade plate structure within them. Although seen as a method of preserving readiness of combat formations, it may be counterproductive given the current strategic environment. By cutting Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), Corps and Division headquarters to preserve force structure and readiness at the tactical level, the Army is creating a capability gap and shrinking readiness at the theater-strategic and high operational level. Winning at the strategic level requires the focus and synchronization of the elements of national power and the integration of allies and other partners, which itself requires well-led, senior staffs. In short, the need for more and permanent Joint Task Force (JTF)-capable headquarters with senior personnel in key positions is growing, rather than shrinking. This paper will examine the challenges with reducing headquarters within three critical Army organizations: the Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), Corps and Divisions based on their requirement to serve as a JTF headquarters and how these cuts have caused a gap between the Army Operating Concept (AOC) and force structure.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Joint Task Force, Strategic Environment, Complex Environment					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 29	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			UU

# The Importance of Army Headquarters in the “Now World Order”

(5985 words)

## Abstract

The Army is currently in the process of cutting the size of its headquarters as well as reducing the grade plate structure within them. Although seen as a method of preserving readiness of combat formations, it may be counterproductive given the current strategic environment. By cutting Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), Corps and Division headquarters to preserve force structure and readiness at the tactical level, the Army is creating a capability gap and shrinking readiness at the theater-strategic and high operational level. Winning at the strategic level requires the focus and synchronization of the elements of national power and the integration of allies and other partners, which itself requires well-led, senior staffs. In short, the need for more and permanent Joint Task Force (JTF)-capable headquarters with senior personnel in key positions is growing, rather than shrinking. This paper will examine the challenges with reducing headquarters within three critical Army organizations: the Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), Corps and Divisions based on their requirement to serve as a JTF headquarters and how these cuts have caused a gap between the Army Operating Concept (AOC) and force structure.

## **The Importance of Army Headquarters in the “Now World Order”**

Army headquarters and forces help impose order in chaotic situations and synchronize plans, programs, and efforts necessary to accomplish the mission.

—The Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World<sup>1</sup>

The Army is currently in the process of cutting the size of its headquarters as well as reducing the grade plate structure within them. Although seen as a method of preserving readiness of combat formations, it may be counterproductive given the current strategic environment. By cutting Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), Corps and Division headquarters to preserve force structure and readiness at the tactical level, the Army is creating a capability gap and shrinking readiness at the theater-strategic and high operational level. Winning at the strategic level requires the focus and synchronization of the elements of national power and the integration of allies and other partners, which itself requires well-led, senior staffs. In short, the need for more and permanent Joint Task Force (JTF)-capable Army headquarters with senior personnel in key positions is growing, rather than shrinking.

Through examining the nature of the current and future security environment and the challenges it presents to Army forces, this paper will demonstrate that cutting headquarters does in fact create a capability gap between the Army Operating Concept (AOC) and force structure and induces unpreparedness at the theater strategic and high operational level. Additionally, it will examine the dilemma imposed on the Army by the current fiscal and budgetary environment; examine the requirement for and doctrinal role of ASCC, Corps and Division headquarters and the capabilities of these headquarters in both doctrine and practice. Finally, it will offer an alternative approach to the current plan to cut these three vital headquarters.

## The “Now World Order”: Hard Times and Hard Choices

There are few things in this country to which everyone will agree. One area of consensus, however, is that the nature of the global security environment is complex and growing more complex over time. At the conclusion of the Cold War, there were many who believed the triumph of democratic ideals would bring about a much more stable and predictable world order. Unfortunately, the opposite seems to have occurred as former alliances have fallen apart and the stability brought on by the formerly bi-polar world has melted away. In the Foreword to the National Military Strategy 2015, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey stated:

Today’s global security environment is the most unpredictable I have seen in 40 years of service. Since the last National Military Strategy was published in 2011, global disorder has significantly increased while some of our comparative military advantage has begun to erode. We now face multiple, simultaneous security challenges from traditional state actors and transregional networks of sub-state groups – all taking advantage of rapid technological change. Future conflicts will come more rapidly, last longer, and take place on a much more technically challenging battlefield. They will have increasing implications to the U.S. homeland.<sup>2</sup>

Rapid communications, cyber-connected communities, decreasing patience, mounting complexity and human interactions and the increasing pace and duration of crises characterize the current strategic environment.<sup>3</sup> The technological advances and distributive tools of innovation that have fostered so much economic and social good have also had a negative impact, increasing the speed of conflict across the world through more rapid personal interaction and communication.<sup>4</sup> Since the end of the Cold War, the world has had a greater number of events and activities over a shorter period of time that has required U.S. military intervention and the deployment of Army headquarters. Like the attacks on September 11, 2001, the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or “ISIS”, the Arab Spring in the Middle East, the Russian incursion in

Ukraine, or the spread of the Ebola virus, these events have required the Army to deploy headquarters to command contingency operations on short notice, in order to shape conditions on the ground and achieve politically important objectives.<sup>5</sup> These events and activities have ranged in scope and scale; however, given the speed at which information, pictures and video travel, even seemingly minor events have had the potential to grow rapidly in scope and in importance to U.S. or allied interests.

Rising China, a revanchist Russia, and rogue states with regional hegemonic and nuclear ambitions like Iran or North Korea, as well as transnational terrorist groups challenge the international order at the state and sub-state levels. Technological developments have provided a voice to dissatisfied ethnic, tribal, religious, and other groups that are destabilizing key countries and even entire regions. These technological advances have flattened the geopolitical and economic landscapes and opened windows and doors to other parts of the world where once there were walls.<sup>6</sup> While these windows and doors have offered greater opportunity for increased prosperity, they have also exposed people across the globe to increased risk through rapid interaction and conflict. These high-tech advances have created a “Now World Order,” where the near instantaneous speed of interpersonal communication, messaging and images can rapidly create instability capable of effecting important or vital U.S. and allied national interests.

The Army recognizes the complex nature and the speed at which the “Now World” operates. The Army Capstone Concept states that complexity, as a major facet of the operational environment is not new, however, the signature change is the increased tempo of conflict with a trend towards a greater number of events that will

occur much more rapidly.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the “increasing speed at which the effects of conflict appear in the operational environment will continue to challenge commanders.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, as the world grows more complex each day, so too does the task of developing effective strategic and operational approaches to the application of military power. The question facing the Army is will it have the right force structure to win at all three level of war: strategic, operational and tactical?

### Budgetary Concerns

At the end of 2011, as the United States ended combat operations in Iraq, the Army had 45 brigade combat teams, four Corps and a strength of nearly 570,000 active-duty Soldiers. Since that time the Army has cut 80,000 soldiers and deactivated 13 brigade combat teams (BCTs) and one Corps headquarters. In July 2015, the Army announced another round of reductions that will cut another 40,000 troops and close two more brigade combat teams bringing the active Army’s end strength to 450,000 soldiers by 2019.<sup>9</sup> These reductions did not come as a surprise, but they have cut deeper than anticipated, forcing the Army to make difficult decisions; does it choose to cut headquarters or combat formations? In other words, does the Army sacrifice tactical readiness or theater strategic/operational readiness?

Unfortunately for the Army, force design plans are now shaped more as a result of the budgetary constraints than as a response to strategic requirements or the strategic environment. Four and a half years ago, Congress passed the Budget Control Act of 2011 cutting nearly \$500 billion, over 10 years, from the Department of Defense (DoD) budget. With the implementation of sequestration, the DoD stands to lose an additional \$500 billion resulting in a loss of nearly \$1 trillion to their budget.<sup>10</sup> Due to these reductions, Secretary of the Army, John McHugh and Chief of Staff of the Army,

General Ray Odierno, in July 2014 directed the Army to establish a Focus Area Review Group to explore reducing the Army's Institutional and Operational Headquarters by 25 percent. They believed the Army had to focus on its core operational actions of preventing conflict, shaping the operational environment and winning the nation's wars while sustaining the ability to provide a smaller, more capable Army, able to provide ready land forces to meet the combatant commanders' global requirements.<sup>11</sup> To ensure the Army maintained its readiness at the reduced budget levels, the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army wanted to reevaluate the size of headquarters to find cost savings and maximize the use of its allocated budget.<sup>12</sup> With a proposed 25 percent reduction in headquarters, the Army could save up to 4,400 positions, numbers equivalent to a Brigade Combat Team.

Like General Odierno, the current Army Chief of Staff, General Mark Milley declared readiness to be his number-one priority and affirmed his support for the ongoing 25 percent cut in Army Headquarters and staff.<sup>13</sup> General Milley believes it is a moral obligation to ensure our Soldiers are trained and equipped for battle; he does not want a "hollow army" in which formations are unready for the unforgiving business of war.<sup>14</sup> However, cutting headquarters by 25 percent induces un-readiness at the theater-strategic and high operational level. No matter how you look at the future of the Army, the force structure will be stretched thin and the Army will have to accept risk in either headquarters, combat formations or modernization. Losing another Brigade Combat Team may appear absolutely deplorable, but failing to win the next war or continuing in another stalemated or protracted war could prove even more unacceptable.

GEN Dempsey, the Army's Capstone Concept, the National Military Strategy and many academics agree that the world is complex and continues to grow more so over time. Therefore, understanding the environment and developing effective strategic and operational approaches to the application of military power is harder and more important than ever before. By cutting all headquarters as a way to preserve tactical readiness, we are likely diminishing our readiness at the operational and theater strategic levels.

#### Roles of Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs): Corps and Divisions Headquarters (HQ)

To appreciate why cutting the headquarters, specifically ASCC, Corps and Division, could undermine operational readiness, one must understand the important capabilities they provide and roles they perform for the Army and the joint force. In the Army, these high level headquarters are the ones responsible for designing and developing military strategy and the strategic approaches to the complex problems posed by the security environment. Furthermore, all three headquarters can serve as the core of a Joint Task Force. These three headquarters are the most important for contingency operations, in which the Army must not only develop strategy, but must also integrate joint, intergovernmental, interagency and multinational (JIIM) partners at the ASCC, Corps and the Division level. Cutting them by 25 percent in this strategic environment potentially exposes them to increased risk that they will be unable to design and implement effective solutions or approaches to theater-strategic and high operational challenges in the complex global environment.

Although JTFs are by nature, *ad hoc* organizations, the preferred approach to forming a JTF headquarters (HQ) is to do so around an existing command and control structure; current doctrine recommends a Combatant Command's service component

headquarters or a subordinate service headquarters, like a Corps or Division.<sup>15</sup> JTFs are organized, staffed, and equipped for operations across the full range of military operations but the size, composition and required capabilities will vary significantly based on the mission, the nature of the crises, factors in the operational environment, and the time available to accomplish the mission.<sup>16</sup> The fundamental role of the JTF is to synchronize, coordinate and integrate the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort.<sup>17</sup> JTFs can operate in conjunction with multinational military forces or unilaterally, but even as a unilateral force JTFs often operate with a variety of non-military, interagency partners. These partners can include any combination of United States Government departments and agencies, governmental, nongovernmental organizations, and members of the private sector.<sup>18</sup> In addition to serving as the core of a JTF, each of these headquarters performs missions that contribute to the operational readiness of the Army. To understand this aspect of readiness, one must know the significance of the functions and roles each of these headquarters executes.

Few officers understand what theater armies do and why they exist because opportunities to serve at this level typically occur later in their careers. The theater army serves as the Army service component command (ASCC) to a geographic combatant command (GCC). The six GCC ASCC headquarters are regionally focused and operate at the theater-strategic level.<sup>19</sup> In its the role as the ASCC to a GCC, the theater army is equipped to perform four functions: (1) Execute the Combatant Commander's daily operational requirements, (2) Set the theater, (3) Set the joint operations area (JOA)

and (4) Enable the theater army commander to exercise mission command of immediate crisis response and small-scale operations.<sup>20</sup>

The ASCC serves as the theater-strategic interface and provides direct support to the combatant commander for planning and implementing the theater operational approach. It also performs two of the core competencies the Army has added to the Army Operating Concept: set the theater and shape security environments.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the ASCC enables the operations of units under its control (usually a Corps or Division) by allocating resources and assets. It provides theater level mission command and focus to combat and support forces.<sup>22</sup> It performs Army Force/Title 10 support for any Corps operating in its area while relieving the Corps from performing executive agent responsibilities for the GCC. The importance of the functions performed in the role as the ASCC cannot be understated. Its focus on shaping the theater or JOA and unencumbering allocated organizations from daily tasks allow other headquarters to focus on integrating partners, fighting, consolidating gains and winning.

The theater army also provides the combatant commander with a critical capability: a deployable JTF or Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC) capable headquarters in response to a crisis. The Commander of Central Command (CENTCOM) most recently used this capability when he designated his theater army (3<sup>rd</sup> Army) in 2014 to support Operation Iraqi Resolve. However, the theater army's contingency command post (CCP) has limited capabilities, designed to serve as the core of a JTF for only about thirty days without significant augmentation from the Army and joint forces. Although the theater army grew in size under the Modularity concept in 2004, in order to control Army forces operating across the area of responsibility, the

capability to use it as a field army commanding multiple Corps disappeared when the Army removed the operational command post module built into the design.<sup>23</sup> The theater army no longer has the organization, training or equipment to function as the basis for a land component headquarters for large-scale combat operations. Additionally, the main command post is not mobile and must operate from a fixed location. Finally, some of the theater level capabilities required for major operations are in the reserve component and based in the continental United States which could cause significant delays if required to support long term contingency operations.<sup>24</sup>

Despite all its capabilities, the challenges with the theater army listed above place significant strain on the Army for more expeditionary, operational headquarters capable of serving as the core of a JTF. According to FM 3-94, the Army's preferred expeditionary headquarters element is the Army Corps as it is the Army's most versatile of the echelons above brigade headquarters.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the Corps headquarters has recently undergone a thorough review and redesign to allow it to be more deployable and scalable and to meet almost any requirement of the combatant commander for a senior level headquarters. Doctrinally, the Corps headquarters has the potential to become a joint and multinational headquarters responsible for conducting deterrence, crisis response, and limited contingency operations.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, the Corps' design allows it to conduct campaigns and major land operations, orchestrate and apportion joint capabilities, command land forces in a JOA or serve as a tactical headquarters for major combat operations.<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately, there are only three Corps headquarters remaining in the Army. The Army deactivated the V Corps headquarters in Germany in 2013 as part of the

Army's force structure drawdown. As the Army decreased the number of Soldiers serving in Germany they eliminated the headquarters required to command these units. Although the reduction in the headquarters along with re-stationing the BCTs in Europe made sense based on soldiers-to-headquarters requirements at the time, it decreased the number of Army Corps headquarters by twenty-five percent, costing the Army a critical operational capability in the current strategic environment.

Currently, all three Corps' headquarters are assigned or allocated. This has forced the Army to move down a level to a Division headquarters to serve as a JTF for future contingencies.<sup>28</sup> Although not the preferred headquarters element, Division headquarters, with significant augmentation, can become the base for a JTF headquarters in limited contingency operations involving limited combat, peace operations, or humanitarian operations.<sup>29</sup> A Division traditionally serves as a tactical headquarters in major campaigns and operations, under the operational control of a Corps of Marine Expeditionary Force headquarters, and translates major operations plans into tactical actions.<sup>30</sup> Like with the ASCC and Corps headquarters, there are numerous challenges with using a Division headquarters as the base for a JTF.

Unlike the ASCCs, Corps and Divisions belong to the U.S. Army Forces Command Commander, not the GCC. If a crisis arises requiring the establishment of a JTF, the Combatant Commander has to request an available Corps or Division headquarters to deploy and establish the JTF. This approval could take significant time, likely much longer than the thirty days the ASCC command posts are prepared to operate as a JTF. Even after the designated headquarters deploys it could have to

operate for up to 120 days without receiving critical, required augmentation through a Joint Manning Document; precious time during a crisis event.

	<i>Theater Army</i>	<i>Corps</i>	<i>Division</i>
Primary role:	ASCC to GCC	Senior Army headquarters in joint operations area	Tactical warfighting headquarters
Additional roles:	JTF or JFLCC	JTF or JFLCC or ARFOR	JTF or JFLCC or ARFOR for small-scale operations
Primary functions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete combatant commander's daily operational requirements (Service functions)</li> <li>▪ Set the theater</li> <li>▪ Set the joint operations area</li> <li>▪ Enable theater army commanders to exercise mission command over Army forces for immediate crisis response and small-scale operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide an operational level headquarters</li> <li>▪ Perform whole-of-government tasks during stability operations through execution of stability tasks</li> <li>▪ Conduct shaping operations within the ARFOR</li> <li>▪ Conduct large-scale land operations</li> <li>▪ Task-organize and employ divisions and brigades in unified land operations</li> <li>▪ Integrate and synchronize operations of divisions and brigades</li> <li>▪ Mass effects at decisive points</li> <li>▪ Allocate resources and set priorities</li> <li>▪ Leverage joint capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a tactical level headquarters</li> <li>▪ Perform whole-of-government tasks during stability operations through execution of stability tasks</li> <li>▪ Conduct shaping operations within the division area of operations</li> <li>▪ Conduct unified land operations</li> <li>▪ Task-organize and employ BCTs, multifunctional brigades, and functional brigades in unified land operations</li> <li>▪ Integrate and synchronize operations of BCTs, multifunctional brigades, and functional brigades</li> <li>▪ Mass effects at decisive points (focus BCTs, multifunctional brigades, and functional brigades and joint capabilities)</li> <li>▪ Allocate resources and set priorities</li> <li>▪ Leverage joint capabilities</li> </ul>
ASCC	Army Service component command	JTF	Joint task force
BCT	brigade combat team	JFLCC	Joint force land component command
GCC	geographic combatant command		

Figure 1. Roles and Functions of the Three JTF Capable Echelon above Brigade<sup>31</sup>

### What is the Army Doing to Headquarters?

At the same time the Army is reducing its headquarters structure, we are increasing the operational employment of these headquarters in this challenging and complex operational environment. The use of JTFs has been common since World War II but their rate of use has greatly increased over the past two decades.<sup>32</sup> A 2010 Rand Corporation report “Enhancing Army Joint Force Headquarters” noted how the range of situations the JTFs have been called on to deal with has significantly broadened over this same time.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, their analysis showed a dramatic increase in the number

of JTF operations that continue from the previous year; “from an average of three operations continuing from previous years during the 1980s, to an average of nine in the 1990s, to 18 continuing operations in each of 2003, 2004, and 2005, resulting in the ‘piling up’ of contingency obligations in recent years.”<sup>34</sup> Based both on trends and recent history, Rand concluded that the Army should anticipate that the demand to provide JTFs in the future will continue to remain high and that the Army will be expected to meet the vast majority of this demand.<sup>35</sup>

Over the past five years, the Rand Corporation’s analysis has proven prescient. Currently, all of the theater armies are permanently assigned and allocated to combatant commanders as service component headquarters, with three serving as Joint Force Land Component Commands (See Figure 2). Additionally, with all three Corps assigned or tasked with a mission and ten of eleven Division level headquarters either deployed or returning from deployment, the Army is running out of critical headquarters and mission command capability (See Figure 3). This will require either other services to take the lead for JTF headquarters or for the Army to build ad hoc Joint Task Force headquarters with people who have not worked or trained together. The initial performance of these ad hoc JTFs, not built around an existing headquarters structure, will likely be low as it takes time to receive, train, and integrate new members and then begin functioning as a cohesive headquarters with common processes, standards, and procedures.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, mission requirements, the enemy, or the environment may limit the time available for headquarters to organize into a fully functioning and proficient JTF headquarters during crisis action planning, strategy development, and implementation.

In 2009 the Army redesigned the theater army cutting it from 1066 billets to 700 billets; a loss of 34 percent.<sup>37</sup> The additional required 25 percent reductions will essentially cut the theater armies for EUCOM and CENTCOM by more than 45 percent from their pre-2009 designs and force them to compete for individual augmentees to support mission requirements. In addition, the Army eliminated all operational command posts from theater army headquarters in order to better justify Division and Corps headquarters.<sup>38</sup> These reductions are another reason the theater armies do not have the capability operate as the core of a JTF for much more than 30 days; many have lost their ability to deploy contingency command posts and have become overly reliant on Army Corps headquarters to serve as JTFs.<sup>39</sup>

As mentioned before, the loss of V Corps during the European restructuring has significantly reduced the Army's JTF headquarters capacity. However, what was not mentioned was how the loss of the V Corps affected US Army Europe (USAEUR) during restructuring. Since the closure of V Corps was already programmed in 2013, the 25 percent cuts in Europe did not count against European headquarters cuts. When all cuts are fully implemented, the loss of an additional 25 percent will mean an aggregate loss of nearly 47 percent of Army headquarters capability across Europe, since 2009.<sup>40</sup> This comes at a time when USAEUR is already dealing with the challenges of a revanchist Russia and the Syrian refugee crisis that has greatly affected most of the nations across Europe.

The challenges with the theater army restructure places significant tension on the Army to have adequate Corps/Division headquarters to train brigades at home station while maintaining adequate staffs for the core of several expeditionary, JTFs or JFLCC

headquarters. Although the Corps and Division level staffs likely have areas they can afford to cut, the operational tempo for the deployment of these headquarters has forced many of these headquarters to reach down to their subordinate units for personnel. This usually entails taking senior non-commissioned officers and officers to deploy with them in order to man shortfalls and support their joint manning document, thus effecting the readiness of these subordinate units.



## THE UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE



### Current Employment of Army HQs

#### *Theater Armies/Field Army*

★★★★		<b>USARPAC</b>	Assigned PACOM; T-JFLCC
★★★		<b>ARCENT/Third Army</b>	Assigned CENTCOM; T-JFLCC; initial JTF-OIR/JFLCC-I
★★★		<b>USAREUR/7<sup>th</sup> Army</b>	Assigned EUCOM; EUCOM considering as TJFLCC
★★★		<b>ARNORTH/5<sup>th</sup> Army</b>	Assigned NORTHCOM; TJLCC; CCP for DCSA
★★		<b>USARAF/SETAF</b>	Assigned AFRICOM; CCP initial JF HQs-Liberia
★★		<b>USARSO/6<sup>th</sup> Army</b>	Assigned SOUTHCOM; CCP as contingency JTF
★★		<b>Eighth Army</b>	Assigned PACOM; USFJ ARFOR; Contingency JTF

#### *Other Army Hqs*

★★		<b>I Corps (Fwd)</b>	Assigned PACOM; USFJ ARFOR
★★		<b>7<sup>th</sup> Division (TDA)</b>	Assigned FORSCOM; TAAC-S in ORS
★★		<b>USAAK (TDA)</b>	Assigned PACOM; TRO bdes in Alaska
★★		<b>JTF-HOA (TDY/TCS).</b>	Assigned AFRICOM; Army Lead Svc.

ARFOR- Army Force  
HOA- Horn of Africa  
TAAC-S -Theater Advise and Assist Command-South

CCP- Contingency Command Post  
OIR- Operation Iraqi Resolve

DSCA- Defense Support to Civil Authorities  
USFJ- United States Forces Japan  
TJFLCC- Theater Joint Force Land Component Command

STRENGTH ~ WISDOM

Figure 2. Employment of Theater Armies and Corps<sup>41</sup>



# THE UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE



## Current Employment of Army HQs

<i>Corps/Divisions</i>		
<b>Corps</b>	I Corps	Assigned PACOM; Contingency JTF
	III Corps	Allocated CENTCOM as CJTF-OIR
	XVIII Airborne Corps	Allocated to GLOBAL RESPONSE FORCE (GRF)
<b>Divisions</b>	1st Armored Division	Allocated CENTCOM; CF(JORDAN)
	1st Cavalry Division	Returning from TAAC-South in ORS
	1st Infantry Division	Returning from CENTCOM as JFLCC-I
	2d Infantry Division	Assigned PACOM; Allocated ROK as Combined HQs
	3d Infantry Division	Returned CENTCOM as NSE for ORS
	4th Infantry Division	Allocated EUCOM as MCE for OAR
	10th Mountain Division	Recently returned from OEF- RC (East)
	25th Infantry Division	Assigned PACOM;
	82d Airborne Division	Allocated to CENTCOM; JFLCC-I
	101st Airborne Division	Recently returned from JFC-Liberia

JFLCC-I: Joint Force Land Component Command- Iraq      MCE- Mission Command Element      NSE: National Support Element  
 OAR: Operation Atlantic Resolve      OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom      OIR- Operation Iraqi Resolve  
 RC: Regional Command      ROK: Republic of Korea      TAAC-S -Theater Advise and Assist Command-South

STRENGTH—WISDOM

Figure 3: Employment of Theater Armies and Corps<sup>42</sup>

In addition to reducing the structure of these headquarters, the Army may reduce the grade plate structure within them. This means the Army will convert some officer positions to warrant officer or enlisted ranks and downgrade others to a lower grade, such as recoding a lieutenant colonel's billet to a major's billet or a major's billet to a captain. With the reduction of these officer billets likely comes a loss of experience expected of personnel assigned to a JTF headquarters. When planning and executing operations with strategic level effects this could become critical. Colonels are indicative of an education or experience level; so are lieutenant colonels and majors. There are also differences within these ranks based on whether or not these officers have completed their key and developmental jobs for their grade. The expectations and experiences of a field grade versus a company grade officer are even more substantial. At a time when the world is becoming more complex, we are looking to place less

experienced officers in our headquarters to develop the approaches to deal with these critical problems.

Planning and conducting operations that require integrating joint, intergovernmental, interagency and multi-national partners usually requires experienced, well-led senior staffs. Multinational staffs are naturally large and rank heavy as each member nation of a coalition will likely send higher ranking officers to ensure they have the greatest possible voice in planning and execution of operations. Based on the force structure cuts and lessons learned from the past fourteen years at war, we are likely to do very little unilaterally and must therefore plan for operations with JIIM partners. Therefore, reducing the grade plate of some of these positions, may prove costly in regards to effective planning of contingency operations especially with respect to the effective integration of multinational partners. Therefore, the Army has created a paradox for itself in which it is reducing both capacity and capability of headquarters, while the requirement for both headquarters capability and capacity are rising.

#### An Alternate Approach

Army forces provide foundational capabilities to combatant commanders that are essential to securing our nation's strategic objectives. Over the past several decades the Army has performed exceptionally at the tactical and operational levels of war but, it is less clear that it has performed well at the theater-strategic and high operational levels. Instead of mandating a 25 percent cut to all headquarters, the Army should look at the capability it requires from JTF capable headquarters and advance and resource these capabilities. The already mandated headquarters reductions have created a mismatch between the Army's strategy outlined in the AOC and the capability to provide

strategic approaches to the complex problems in the strategic environment. Instead of cutting, the Army should invest in theater-strategic and high operational level readiness and accept risk elsewhere.

As discussed throughout this paper, the organizations most often tasked to develop the strategic approaches to deal with the complex issues across the strategic environment are Army headquarters as part of a JTF. Unfortunately, the Army is making cuts to the very headquarters it requires to win at the strategic level as outlined in the Army Operating Concept. To remedy this the Army should re-establish a fourth Corps headquarters; restore contingency command posts to the ASCCs, and re-evaluate how they train and man the headquarters personnel serving in the ASCC, Corps and Division headquarters. Before discussing final force structure numbers, it is important to discuss the capability shortfalls if we cut critical Army headquarters.

As stated in Joint Publication 3-33, the preferred approach to forming a JTF headquarters (HQ) is to do so around an existing command and control structure. For the Army, the Corps is the preferred headquarters for joint augmentation and employment as a JTF based on its ability to exercise command over a large number of subordinate Division sized organizations and prioritize support provided by the theater army. With the current pace of operations expected to continue or increase, the “piling up” of contingency operations and the significant strain having only three Corps headquarters, establishing another Corps sized, JTF- capable headquarters would provide flexibility for the Army with regard to developing and implementing the approaches to help meet strategic level ends.

Nobody wants to say they need more headquarters at the expense of combat troops or readiness, but the Army cannot fall victim to what LTG H.R. McMaster refers to as the “RSVP Fallacy” of future war; that we can solve the problem of future war by opting out of armed conflict.<sup>43</sup> The United States may not want to get involved large scale or long duration contingencies, but these global challenges may find us. LTG McMaster writes, that when contingencies arise, the military needs to have the ready joint forces capable of operating in sufficient scale and in ample duration to win.<sup>44</sup> The Army must also have the headquarters capable of providing command and control of these joint forces and capable of integrating JIIM partners in sufficient scale for ample duration. The headquarters that provides this capability and provides the most flexibility for the Army is the Corps.

Second, the Army should re-establish a more capable contingency command posts (CCP) in the ASCC to provide Combatant Commanders an immediate response capability for any sized contingency. The personnel assigned to the CCP must be highly trained and flexible. The CCP should remain a stop-gap measure to provide more time and flexibility for the Army and Combatant Commander when contingencies arise or until a Corps or JTF can assume the mission. An additional benefit of having a more capable CCP, is that the personnel in this command post have regional expertise that should help with the development and implementation of the strategic approach and integration of regional and multinational partners. No Division or Corps has operated fulltime in a given contingency area, unless tasked as a JTF to perform this duty. They have little resident expertise in the regions to which they may be assigned, and likely little cultural fluency. ASCCs live and operate in the potential conflict’s environment

fulltime, interacting with partner nations through theater security cooperation through which they form relationships with indigenous leaders and populations, and maintain focused intelligence. Lastly, the more capable CCP would allow for more effective operations during the development, approval and sourcing of a joint manning document required to support a Joint Task Force.

Finally, even if the Army does not invest heavily in its headquarters as suggested, it should mitigate the resultant risk with respect to headquarters by investing in quality officers, training and education. The Army must build and train the ASCC, Corps and Division staffs differently. If the Army wants to win at the strategic level, then it needs to have great talent in the staffs at the operational and theater-strategic level. If Army leaders truly value higher-level thinking, then they should encourage and incentivize officers to serve on these senior level staffs where they will conduct operations linked to strategic ends.

The Army needs to invest in the education of these leaders and staff officers with the training for high-level thinking and integration. More of these staffs should have officers who have completed the School for Advanced Strategic Studies or who have attended Joint Professional Military Education Level II. If they have not, then upon receiving orders to serve on higher level staffs, officers should attend the 10-week Joint and Combined Warfighting School course at the Joint Forces staff college, or create a similar course to better prepare officers to serve in these positions. Although this will not make officers experts in strategy or higher level planning, it will provide them the opportunity to critically analyze the complexities of working at the operational level of war and educate them in the art and science of joint, intergovernmental, interagency

and multi-national warfighting. Although the price of this education may be expensive in time and dollars, the cost of ignorance at the operational and theater-strategic level of war could be incalculable.

In addition to properly training senior level staffs, the Army must man them appropriately. If commanders are only as good as their staffs, then the Army needs to staff its most important war-fighting headquarters with top quality officers. The Army highly values command, but does not traditionally reward higher level staff service, unless they are in key positions like the Chief of Staff or one of the primary General Staff officer positions. In order to incentivize officers to seek positions in these headquarters, the Army must ensure it provides them with quality officers and the promotion board results should reflect the importance placed on service in these headquarters. In 2015 the promotion rates for lieutenant colonels and majors serving in theater army positions was 17.2 percent and 54 percent respectively.<sup>45</sup> The FY 15 promotion rates across the Army were 39 percent to COL and 60.4 percent to LTC. Over the past few years, service as a centrally selected battalion commander has been a prerequisite for selection to COL. Typically, few former battalion commanders are distributed to ASCC headquarters as they are typically sent to Joint and other nominative assignments. If this disparity continues, then it shows the Army does not value service on these critical staffs and are not resourcing some of our most important staffs with the highest quality officers. Higher-level staffs should not be a place where careers go to die.

### Conclusion

As Joseph Nye wrote, military power is always in short supply and consequently must be rationed among competing goals: "the paradox of American power is that world

politics is changing in ways that makes it impossible for the strongest world power since Rome to achieve some of its most crucial international goals alone.”<sup>46</sup> Although some may argue that the current strain on headquarters is only a temporary situation due to the extension of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army clearly has a capability shortfall. With only three Corps headquarters available, the Army does not have enough Corps to cover global commitments (extant) and potential global commitments (contingencies). The speed and complexity of a “New World Order” has increased the requirement for headquarters capable of developing strategic approaches to complex problems and integrating JIIM partners. Therefore, the Army must find a way to add an additional JTF-capable Corps headquarters and ensure enough capability resides in its theater-strategic and operational level headquarters.

One of the most important capabilities of the US Army is the ability to rapidly deploy, respond to crises, address the drivers of conflict, and achieve sustainable political outcomes that require the application of all elements of national power. Army headquarters are the forces that provide the foundational capabilities to integrate these efforts through the projection of scalable forces tailored for the mission, rapidly deployed to complex environments.<sup>47</sup> In this time of constrained budgets everyone understands the need to reduce the size and scope of bureaucracy that slows down decision making and stifles initiative. The desired cuts serve as a forcing function to try to make headquarters, more agile, adaptive and deployable to support the needs of the combatant commander in response to contingency operations. However, the universal demand to cut 25 percent of all two star-level staffs and above may be taking a chainsaw to a problem that requires a more delicate approach.

Some of these larger staffs play a critical role at the strategic and operational level of warfare; most specifically the Army service component, Corps and Division level staffs. These are the headquarters responsible, in theory and practice, for designing the strategic and operational approaches to the complex problems posed by the global security environment as well as the ones designated to serve as the core for JTF operations. As seen over the past ten years the Army has deployed headquarters above the Division level to contingency operations around the globe as part of a JTF more than twenty times. These deployments include support to major combat operations, Defense Support to Civilian Authorities during Hurricane Katrina, and for Humanitarian Support like in Liberia to contain the spread of the Ebola virus disease. Instead of reducing these headquarters, the Army needs to build more capability in them, reestablish a fourth Corps headquarters based on the current operating environment and man them with the highest quality personnel.

In this environment it is easy to say cut headquarters to save BCTs force structure and readiness because most officers do not understand what headquarters at echelons above the brigade combat team do for the Army. As former Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, stated in his testimony to the Senate Armed Service Committee:

I have seen countless Washington reform efforts over the years result in mindless salami slicing of programs and organizations. That is not reform. It is managerial and political cowardice. True reform requires making trades and choices and tough decisions recognizing that some activities are more important than others. It is hard to do, but essential if you want to re-shape any organization into more effective and efficient enterprises.<sup>48</sup>

By reducing headquarters, we may be preserving tactical readiness at the expense of operational and theater-strategic readiness. We must not allow reducing the

size of all headquarters to turn in to the “mindless salami slicing” and realize that some headquarters are more important than others. Headquarters reductions must merit the same careful consideration as proposals to eliminate brigade combat teams. The Army would never make a statement to arbitrarily cut 25 percent of their combat units without careful analysis.<sup>49</sup> If the Army wants to win at the strategic level, not just win at the tactical and operational level of war, then it needs to be able to integrate JIIM partners and consolidate the gains made by the tactical victories. The best way accomplish this is to link the whole of government approach using the Army’s headquarters at the theater-strategic level to ensure ways and means are properly applied to effectively to achieve the political ends. Although losing more BCTs is not palatable, not having the ability to support the combatant commanders due to shortage of headquarters or having to slowly build ad hoc headquarters may be worse.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, October 31, 2014), 23.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015* (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 2015), [http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/National\\_Military\\_Strategy\\_2015.pdf](http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/National_Military_Strategy_2015.pdf) (accessed November 30, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Capstone Concept*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0 (Fort Eustis, VA: Training and Doctrine Command, December 19, 2012), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat, A Brief History of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2005), 48-51.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Capstone Concept*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Michell Tan, "Army Lays out Plan to Cut 40,000 Soldiers," *The Army Times Online*, July 10, 2015, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/07/09/army-outlines-40000-cuts/29923339/> (accessed November 30, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> David Adesnik, "A Strong Defense Is No Luxury," *U.S. News and World Report*, February 27, 2015, <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2015/02/27/budget-control-act-sequestration-defense-cuts-must-be-reversed> (accessed October 20, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> John M. McHugh and Raymond T. Odierno, *2013 Focus Area Review Group*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, July 23, 2014), [http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/SecArmy\\_Collection\\_1.html](http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/SecArmy_Collection_1.html) (accessed December 21, 2015). (Government issued CAC card is required to access)

<sup>12</sup> John M. McHugh and Raymond T. Odierno, "Focus Area Review Group Decision Implementation," memorandum for See Distribution, July 23, 2014, [http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/SecArmy\\_Collection\\_1.html](http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/SecArmy_Collection_1.html) (accessed December 21, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Conrad Crane and John Bonin, "The Next Task Force Smith: The Danger of Arbitrary Headquarters Reductions" *War on the Rocks*, October 27, 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/10/the-next-task-force-smith-the-danger-of-arbitrary-headquarters-reductions/> (accessed November 6, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Michelle Tan, "New Chief: 'We Cannot Allow a Hollow Army'," *Army Times Online*, October 14, 2015, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/defense/show-daily/ausa/2015/10/24/new-chief-we-cannot-allow-hollow-army/73560482/> (accessed December 21, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*, Joint Publications 3-33 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, July 30, 2012), x.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., ix

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., I-3

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Theater Army Operations*, Army Techniques Publication 3-93 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, November 26, 2014), 1-3.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, iv.

<sup>22</sup> John Bonin, "US Army Echelon above Brigade Headquarters: Roles and Responsibilities," lecture, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, November 2015, slide 35.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Echelons Above Brigade*, Field Manual 3-94 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, April 21, 2014), 1-5.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 2-4.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1-6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 5-1

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> As of this writing of this monograph, all three corps are currently employed. I Corps is assigned to USPACOM as a contingency JTF. III Corps is allocated to CENTCOM as the lead for a Combined Joint Task Force to conduct Operation Iraqi Resolve. And XVIII Airborne Corps remains the as the Army's contribution to the Global Response Force (GRF), leaving little to no flexibility for the Army to deploy its preferred JTF headquarters in case of another large scale contingency (See Figure 2).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 1-6.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Echelons Above Brigade*, 1-7.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Theater Army Operations*, 1-7.

<sup>32</sup> Timothy M. Bonds, Myron Hura, and Thomas-Durell Young, *Enhancing Army Joint Force Headquarters Capabilities* (Arlington, VA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2010), xiv.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 9

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. xiv-xv.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*, II-1

<sup>37</sup> John Bonin, "On Headquarters Use and Abuse of Army Operational Headquarters from 2001-2015," Unpublished essay, December 3, 2015, 9. Cited with permission of Dr. Bonin.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 11

<sup>40</sup> John Bonin, "US Army Central: Command Structure & Theater Army Responsibilities," lecture, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Barracks, PA, December 16, 2015, cited with permission of Dr. Bonin.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> H.R. McMaster, "Continuity and Change: The Army Operating Concept and Clear Thinking About Future War," *Military Review*, March-April 2015, 14.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> William J. Tolbert, email message to author, January 21, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Nye, "U.S. Power and Strategy after Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July/August 2003): 72, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2003-07-01/us-power-and-strategy-after-iraq> (accessed February 2, 2016).

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> Robert M. Gates, "Testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee," *Congressional Record* (October 21, 2015): [http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Gates\\_10-21-15.pdf](http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Gates_10-21-15.pdf) (accessed November 5, 2015).

<sup>49</sup> John Bonin, "On Headquarters."