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NSD-4884  
Strategic Risk Assessment Interview Results

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May 2013

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## **Strategic Risk Assessment Interview Results**

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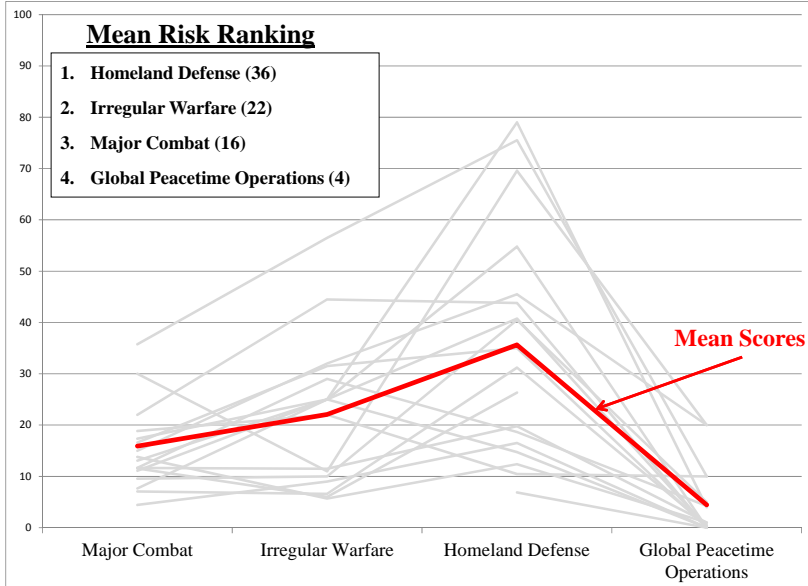
## **Strategic Risk Assessment Framework Background**

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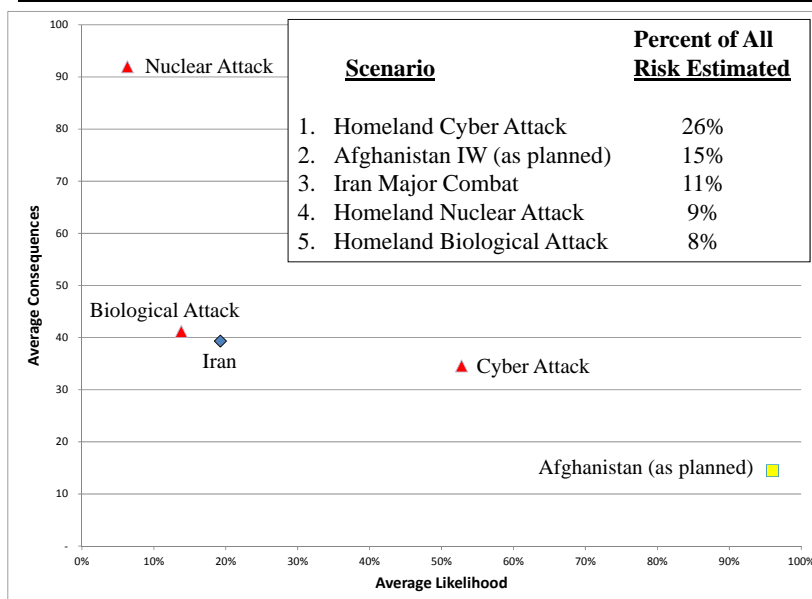
- Strategic risk assessment framework originally developed at IDA in 2005
  - Co-sponsored by OSD(PA&E), OSD(AT&L), OSD(P), and JS J-8
  - Interviews conducted May-December 2005 with 27 senior DoD leaders (including VCJCS, Army CoS, USMC Commandant, VCNO, 6 COCOMs, DJS, DJ8, 5 USDs/PDUSDs, etc.)
- Current effort being conducted in support of DLA Strategic Materials Office
  - Objective is to build and implement an analytically rigorous risk-based process that can help set priorities for risk mitigation concerning strategic and critical non-fuel materials
  - Apply this process to the 2013 National Defense Stockpile Requirements Report to Congress
  - Strategic risk assessment is part of the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Framework for Strategic Materials (RAMF-SM)



## Risk Profiles (All Participants)



## Top-Risk Scenarios



## Majority Viewpoint #1

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**Most (67%) participants saw more strategic risk in Homeland Defense scenarios than any other category of military missions.**

### Key drivers of risk

- A significant successful cyber attack considered both relatively likely and relatively consequential.
- Nuclear and biological attack scenarios would have severe consequences not only in terms of civilian casualties, but also in enduring psychological and economic effects.

### Possible implications to consider

- Homeland security capabilities may remain under-resourced relative to the degree of existing threat.
- Improvements in interagency and intergovernmental coordination remain a top priority, potentially including re-examination of current legal authorities (e.g., for cyber defense of civilian and commercial networks).

## Majority Viewpoint #2

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**Even with the Iraq war over, and the Afghanistan drawdown underway, most (67%) participants saw more strategic risk in Irregular Warfare than in Major Combat.**

### Key drivers of risk

- Operations in Afghanistan will continue to be costly, and the outcome will likely be unsatisfactory.
- While the U.S. may choose not to launch another stability operation of the same scale as OIF or OEF, irregular warfare will be very hard to avoid altogether.

### Possible implications to consider

- Force structure could be further refined to support small-scale, low-footprint, but persistent and distributed counterterrorism operations.
- Mechanisms for “reversibility” of shifts away from forces capable of large-scale stability operations capabilities should be better defined and developed.



## Majority Viewpoint #3

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**Most (67%) participants saw war with Iran as the riskiest of all major combat scenarios.**

### Key drivers of risk

- War with Iran considered significantly more likely than war with other states.
- Would be prompted by conflict over Iran's nuclear program or Iranian attempts to coerce its neighbors.
- Global retaliatory reach of Iran's proxies (e.g., Hezbollah).

### Possible implications to consider

- Any changes to U.S. posture in the Middle East should avoid emboldening Iran.
- Opposing Iranian and Hezbollah activity and influence beyond the immediate region should remain a high priority.

## Majority Viewpoint #4

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**All participants believed that strong global military presence and engagement is important to U.S. national interests.**

### Key drivers of risk

- Reducing forward presence and engagement would increase strategic risk in all mission areas by:
  - Eroding deterrence against regional aggression
  - Undermining confidence of allies and partners in the U.S. commitment to their security
  - Making it harder to maintain dialogue and cooperation with friends and potential rivals alike.

### Possible implications to consider

- Even with sequestration or other budget cuts, priority should be given to sustaining forward presence and operational tempo.



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