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Let's Put Our Thinking Caps On

[Maj. Gen. Steven Kwast](#), the Air Force's representative to the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review, has spoken publicly several times in the past few months on how he would like the Air Force to approach this installment of the congressionally mandated review. The QDR, he has said, is a real forum for debate and discussion about the roles, missions, capabilities, and—yes—budgets for the armed services, and shouldn't be treated like just another "political football." There is a need for "air-minded" solutions, but the Air Force needs to be careful not to get stuck advocating for obsolete assumptions about its missions and force structure requirements, said Kwast. The United States is drawing down from a decade of irregular warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, shifting to a new defense strategy, and facing some severe fiscal challenges—all of which give this QDR even more importance, he has argued. "This is not about us protecting the Air Force," said Kwast on March 20 at an AFA-sponsored event in Arlington, Va. "This is about us protecting the nation," and Pentagon leaders need to have the "flexibility" to have conversations that are not bound by dogma, he said. For more, continue to [Pushing the QDR Envelope](#).

—*Marc V. Schanz*

[DARPA to play major role in mapping human brain](#)

Hagel Calls for Sweeping Overhaul of Military Structure

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel used his first major policy address to call for a sweeping overhaul of military structure. During a speech at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, Hagel said the Defense Department must make sure it's "realistically confronting" its "strategic and fiscal challenges." That will require much more than "tweaking past practices," he said. Instead, military leaders must be "steely eyed and clear-headed" as they "explore the full range of options." Hagel said any effort to "reform and reshape our defense enterprise," must first "confront the principal drivers of growth in the Department's base budget—namely acquisitions, personnel costs, and overhead." As Pentagon officials debate tough questions, such as the proper officer-to-enlisted ratio throughout the force, defense watchers also can expect to see a "close scrutiny of DOD's organizational chart and command structures, most of which date back to the early years of the Cold War," said Hagel. "The last major defense reorganization, Goldwater-Nichols, was drafted at the height of the Reagan defense buildup and focused on improving jointness and establishing clear operational chains of command. Cost and efficiency were not major considerations," he said during the April 3 speech. (Hagel [speech transcript](#))

—*Amy McCullough*

Hagel: Personnel Costs Unsustainable

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said on Wednesday the Pentagon must address skyrocketing

personnel costs before they cripple the US military. In his first major policy speech since becoming the Pentagon's boss in late February, Hagel cautioned that cuts to coveted benefit programs such as health care may be coming. "With full recognition for the great stresses that our troops and their families have been under . . . for nearly 12 years of war, and for the essential contributions civilian employees make to the Department's mission, fiscal realities demand another hard look at personnel," he said during his April 3 address at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. This includes "how many people we have both military and civilian, how many we need, what these people do, and how we compensate them for their work, service, and loyalty with pay, benefits, and health care," he said. Hagel said "the biggest long-term fiscal challenge" for the Defense Department is not a declining budget topline number, but rather "the growing imbalance" in how the Pentagon spends its money. "Left unchecked, spiraling costs to sustain existing structures and institutions, provide benefits to personnel, and develop replacements for aging weapons platforms will eventually crowd out spending on procurement, operations, and readiness—the budget categories that enable the military to be and stay prepared," he said. (Hagel [speech transcript](#))

—*Amy McCullough*

[Stratcom Broadens Dialogue on Changing Nature of Deterrence](#)

04/03/2013 10:34 AM CDT

[National Guard senior leaders 'Like' Facebook, Twitter](#)

DVIDS

CAMP MABRY, Texas – Senior **National Guard** leaders are making their voices heard on a new parade ground, in the online auditorium of social media. State and federal military officials have taken to the Internet to send messages directly to their troops ...

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Sequestration Hits Air Force Museum

On May 1, the National Museum of the US Air Force will shutter its Presidential Gallery and its Research and Development Gallery "until further notice" due to the budget cutbacks resulting from sequestration, according to a museum release. "This was not an easy decision, as we have several popular exhibits in the Presidential and R&D Galleries, including President Kennedy's Air Force One and the XB-70 Valkyrie," said Museum Director [Jack Hudson](#) in the April 2 release. "Our goal has been to make every effort to maintain museum operations to the maximum extent possible, and we hope to reopen these galleries as soon as possible," he said. The museum will remain open during normal business hours, and the Air Force and Air Force Museum Foundation will fund the utility costs each day the museum is open, according to the release. "These are challenging times," said Hudson. "However, we will continue our mission of sharing the Air Force story with the public and inspiring our youth." (Dayton [report](#) by Rob Bardua) (Museum [website](#))

About the Air Force Association

Tougher rules for tech school washouts

New guidelines on technical school are giving little leeway for new recruits who fail in their initial skills training classes. Officials have also reduced the number of jobs airmen can reclassify into if they washout of technical school and put a time limit on getting reclassified. [[Read More](#)]

Airmen share tales of drastic dieting and lost careers

No one can escape the career-ending noose of the Air Force tape measure, not even a full colonel. In a first-of-its-kind move since the service introduced strict standards for waist measurements, a wing commander was relieved of his command for failing his physical training test. [[Read More](#)]

Air Force leads Angel Thunder S&R exercise

The largest search and rescue exercise in the world is about to kick off, with the Air Force leading scenarios based on real-life problems the military and civilian agencies are likely to experience. [[Read More](#)]

Whither the hunter-killers? AF ponders post-Afghan glut of Reapers, Predators

A handful of unarmed MQ-1 Predators are flying from a new base in Niamey, Niger. They're part of the effort to help France tamp down civil war in Mali, but the deployment also says a lot about the future of the Air Force's huge and still growing fleet of medium-sized unmanned aircraft. [[Read More](#)]

· [13th MTI pleads guilty in sex scandal case](#)

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· [Whit Peters among group to review AF structure](#)

THAAD Going to Guam

The Defense Department on Wednesday [announced](#) that it would deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system to Guam in the coming weeks "as a precautionary move" to strengthen the US regional defense posture against North Korean ballistic missile threats. The Army-owned, land-based missile defense system will strengthen defenses of the US territory, said DOD's April 3 release. Guam hosts a broad array of American military forces, including a large air presence at Andersen Air Force Base. THAAD comprises a truck-mounted missile launcher, complement of anti-missile missiles, tracking radar, and integrated fire control system. The North Koreans have unleashed a torrent of bellicose statements in recent weeks, including threats to launch missiles against US bases on Guam and Hawaii. DOD's announcement came one day after Pentagon Press Secretary George Little told reporters that the United States already had "a range of assets" in the Asia-Pacific region, including two Navy ships, "poised to respond to any missile threats to our allies or our territory" emanating from North Korea. (See also [North Korea Announces Nuclear Reactor Restart](#) and [North Korean Threats and Nuclear Renewal](#).)

Air Show Presence Demonstrates Asia-Pacific Commitment

[Heidi Grant](#), deputy undersecretary of the Air Force for international affairs, attended the 2013 Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition in late March at Langkawi Island, Malaysia, as part of the Air Force's ongoing efforts to build relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, announced Pacific Air Forces officials. Grant said the Air Force remains committed to engaging US partners and allies in the region—and around the world, for that matter—by participating in aerial events such as LIMA-13, even during periods of constrained fiscal resources such as under the current budget sequester, according to PACAF's April 3 [release](#). "Sequestration, as a near-term fiscal challenge, should not be interpreted as a lack of long-term commitment," said Grant. LIMA-13 took place from

March 26 to March 30. PACAF cancelled the F-16 demonstration team's participation in the show due to sequestration's spending cutbacks, but sent the C-17 demo team to preserve the Air Force's aerial footprint at the biennial event, according to the release.

Air Guard-run Rescue Center Completes 5,000th Mission

The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, located at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, completed its 5,000th mission since Alaska Air National Guardsmen began running the site some 20 years ago, according to an Alaska Air Guard release. The center hit the milestone on March 27 when controllers there coordinated the successful recovery of a pilot involved in the crash of a Super Cub aircraft near the state's Bering River, states the April 1 release. (Camp Denali [report](#) by Kalei Rupp)

[National Guard to sponsor Cyclone Relays](#)

Russellville Courier

According the Russellville High School head track coach Charlie Goodman, this year's 58th annual Cyclone Relays on Friday at Cyclone Stadium looks to be bigger and better than ever before, due the Arkansas **National Guard's** contributions to this year's ...

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[National Guard open house planned](#)

The News Herald

PANAMA CITY -- The local Panama City **National Guard** Unit, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-153 Cavalry Regiment will be holding an open house to showcase the unit's state and federal mission preparedness between 1 and 4 p.m. on April 13.

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[Intel CEO Paul Otellini visits Hillsboro to honor veterans. Guard and Reserve](#)

OregonLive.com

Outgoing Intel chief executive Paul Otellini made a rare appearance in Oregon today, honoring employees who serve in the military and receiving thanks from the Oregon **National Guard** and the U.S. Department of Defense for the company's support of ...

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[Budget Constraints Forcing An Overhaul In Military Operations, Hagel Says](#)

(New York Times) - Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, facing inevitable steep cuts in military spending even as global threats remain high, said Wednesday that he is being forced to consider fundamental changes in how the Pentagon defends American interests and conducts its daily business.

[Pentagon OKs Lockheed Or Boeing Fighters Sale To South Korea](#)

(Reuters.com) - The U.S. Defense Department said on Wednesday it has approved the sale of either the Lockheed Martin Corp F-35 stealth fighter or Boeing Co's F-15 Silent Eagle fighter to South Korea, which is expected to announce the winner of a 60-jet competition later this year.

[The Sequestered Ball](#)

(Washington Post) - This year, sequestration and tight fiscal times are playing the spoiler, at least for the Army, which has canceled its annual fancy-dress Birthday Ball because of the budget cuts, according to a recent memo from Army Secretary John McHugh and Gen. Raymond Odierno.

[US Navy Relieves 4 From Grounded Minesweeper](#)

(Yahoo.com) - Four officers of a U.S. Navy minesweeper that ran aground on coral reef in the Philippines are being relieved of their duties.

Civilian Doctors Wary Of Military's Tricare

(USA Today) - An estimated 620,000 Pentagon health care recipients -- a group that includes military retirees, National Guard members and reservists and the children of some active-duty troops -- struggle to find private doctors who will accept them as patients, according to a new government study.

Audits Preventing Taxpayer Overcharges Impeded By Pentagon Cuts

(Bloomberg.com) - U.S. budget cuts may delay the Defense Departments plan to eliminate a \$400 billion backlog of unaudited contractor bills by next year, a Pentagon official said. The Defense Contract Audit Agency has frozen hiring and will lose about 5 percent of its workforce, or 250 employees, this year as the Pentagon absorbs \$41 billion in automatic reductions, said Patrick Fitzgerald, the offices director.

Hagel Outlines His Plan For Defense Spending Cuts

(Wall Street Journal) - Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Wednesday outlined his vision for reducing defense spending in the coming years, saying he was taking a hard look at weapons programs, overhead and personnel.

S. Korea: North Korea Moved Missile To East Coast

(Yahoo.com) - North Korea has moved a missile with "considerable range" to its east coast, South Korea's defense minister said Thursday, but he added that there are no signs that Pyongyang is preparing for a full-scale conflict.

U.S. Speeds Missile Defense To Guam After North Korea Bars South's Workers

(New York Times) - The United States announced Wednesday that it was speeding the deployment of an advanced missile defense system to Guam in the next few weeks, two years ahead of schedule in what the Pentagon said was a precautionary move to protect American naval and air forces from the threat of a North Korean missile attack.

U.S., Uganda Halt Hunt For African Warlord

(Washington Post) - Ugandan and American troops have suspended their joint hunt for war crimes suspect Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army, delivering a major setback to efforts to capture a notorious warlord accused of abducting tens of thousands of children.

Radar Shows U.S. Border Security Gaps

(Los Angeles Times) - A sophisticated airborne radar system developed to track Taliban fighters planting roadside bombs in Afghanistan has found a new use along the U.S. border with Mexico, where it has revealed gaps in security.

. Hagel Pulls Rank - With Caution - On Thinning The Ranks

(Washington Post) - Chuck Hagel was taking questions at Fort McNair on Wednesday after his first major speech as defense secretary when a man rose to ask about his recent comments on North Korea.

. The Defense Department's One Smart Pay Trim

(Washingtonpost.com) - Kudos for Hagel. When the former enlisted soldier was named to the position, many remarked that having the first former grunt (sort of) leading the Pentagon would make Hagel particularly attuned to the needs of the militarys rank-and-file. Yet in choosing to voluntarily cut his own pay, Hagel is also demonstrating to the Pentagons civilian employees that he is aware of the sacrifices theyre being asked to make -- and is willing to share in them.

U.S. Dials Back On Korean Show Of Force

(Wall Street Journal) - After a high-visibility display of military power aimed at deterring North Korean provocations, the White House is dialing back the aggressive posture amid fears that it could inadvertently trigger an even deeper crisis, according to U.S. officials.

Pentagon To Keep Buying Russian Helicopters, Carter Says

(Bloomberg.com) - The Pentagon has decided its in the national interest to keep buying MI-17 transport helicopters for the Afghan military from a Russian company thats been scrutinized by Congress over its arms sales to Syria.

. Fears Increase Of Taliban Surge

(Financial Times) - Afghanistan is braced for high-profile attacks and assassination attempts by Taliban militants as

the summer fighting season begins and western armies withdraw thousands of troops, according to General Joseph Dunford, commander of the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force.

[. Gen. Dunford On 2014 Elections, Relations With President Karzai](#)

(CBS) - Part two of a CBS Evening News interview from Kabul with Gen. Joseph Dunford, commander of ISAF and U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

[Obama To Take Pay Cut To Support Federal Workers Facing Furloughs](#)

(Washington Post) - President Obama plans to give up 5 percent of his salary this year to draw attention to the financial sacrifice of more than 1 million federal employees who will be furloughed by automatic spending cuts starting in less than three weeks, the White House said Wednesday.

[Power Struggle Gripping Iran Ahead Of Vote](#)

(New York Times) - In Irans complex politics, these struggles are typically waged under the watchful eye of the countrys supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who ultimately decides the winners and losers, carefully balancing competing interests, to make sure no faction amasses too much power. But this time, the jockeying for power is more than politics as usual.

[New Rebel Gains Reported In Southern Syria With Seizure Of Military Base](#)

[A Rational Approach To Managing The Spread Of Nuclear Weapons: Deterrence](#)

(Washington Post) - Is the United States entering a period in which it has to learn to live with "the bomb," as in the spread of nuclear weapons? Compare the apparent contradiction between the way Washington is dealing with North Korea and Iran and the effect this could have on other countries.

[N. Korea Threats Masking Internal Divide?](#)

(Miami Herald) - Despite the harsh rhetoric from North Koreas military and even as the United States plans more defensive moves experts say they regard a nuclear attack on the U.S. as highly unlikely.

[3In China, Slogans Vs. Action](#)

(Washington Post) - The Chinese could begin to play a valuable and prominent international role right now, one that would win their government friends and admirers and might even, over time, reduce the U.S. military presence in North Asia by eliminating one of the region's most serious potential conflicts: Starting today, the Chinese could put an end to the grotesque farce that is the North Korean regime and, together with the United States, usher in the reunification of the Korean peninsula.