



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**BRIEFS**

## **Backgrounder: Operating from Range to Defeat Iran's Anti-Access and Area-Denial Threats**

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The Obama administration has released new strategic guidance for the Department of Defense (DoD) that announces its intent to “rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region” and maintain the capability to “project power despite anti-access and area-denial challenges.” As the U.S. military assesses planning and resource initiatives required to support these objectives, it should not forget the need to address Iran’s emerging anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy and the threat that it represents to the peace and stability of the Persian Gulf.

In the wake of the U.S. military’s withdrawal from Iraq, the so-called Arab Spring, and Iran’s increasingly transparent efforts to develop nuclear weapons, DoD has an opportunity to re-think its future plans and force posture for the Persian Gulf. The last such major review occurred when the threat of Soviet aggression drove the Defense Department’s planning and resource priorities. Many of the assumptions stemming from this review, such as the belief that the United States would enjoy nearly unfettered access to close-in bases and few challenges to its air and sea supremacy in the Persian Gulf, may now be obsolete. Over time, these assumptions have underpinned defense budget decisions that have favored short-range aircraft, non-stealthy systems, and other capabilities that are best suited for operating in permissive environments.

Based on an assessment of how the Persian Gulf security environment may continue to evolve over the next twenty years, CSBA's latest report, *Outside-In: Operating from Range to Defeat Iran's Anti-Access and Area-Denial Threats*, proposes a new set of assumptions, a candidate operational concept, and a supporting force posture to maintain a stable military balance in a region of critical interest to United States, its allies, and its partners. Specifically, *Outside-In* addresses an emerging Iranian A2/AD strategy that is designed to control the Strait of Hormuz and prevent the U.S. military from conducting timely power-projection operations in the Persian Gulf.