



## STUDIES

# Strategic Choices Exercise Outbrief

May 29, 2013 | **Todd Harrison, Eric Lindsey, Zack Cooper, Jim Thomas, Mark Gunzinger, Andrew F. Krepinevich, Evan B. Montgomery**

Resources: Budget & Resources

As the Pentagon nears completion of its ongoing Strategic Choices and Management Review, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments conducted an external *Strategic Choices Exercise* with teams of experts from three other prominent think-tanks—CSIS, AEI and CNAS—to inform public debate.

Each team was asked to develop a defense strategy and rebalance DoD's portfolio of capabilities in a reduced budget environment. Using CSBA's rebalancing tool and methodology, the teams chose from several hundred pre-costed options to add or cut from the projected defense program over the next ten years, including major units of force structure, end strength, bases, readiness, civilian personnel, weapon systems, and modernization programs. Each team had to weigh its decisions within the context of both Budget Control Act (BCA)-level cuts in defense spending and a lower reduction of half the BCA cut. Each team's cuts and adds had to be consistent with the budget-level options considered by the Strategic Choices and Management Review that the Pentagon is wrapping up this week. The exercise was timed to inform the thinking on the way defense resources are allocated in light of declining budgets.

On May 29, 2013, CSBA hosted an outbrief, where all four teams presented their strategies, outlined how they approached their strategic choices, and where they chose to take risk. Following the team presentations, Todd Harrison presented his comparison of choices across all teams.

**Briefing Slides (PDF):**

*Introduction and Exercise Overview* (<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/1-Intro-Slides.pdf>),

**Todd Harrison**, CSBA

*Presentations of Rebalancing Strategies and Team Approaches:*

- **Thomas Donnelly**, AEI (<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/2-AEI.pdf>)
- **Robert Work**, CNAS (<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/3-CNAS.pdf>)
- **Jim Thomas**, CSBA (<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/4-CSBA.pdf>)
- **Clark Murdock**, CSIS (<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/5-CSIS.pdf>)

*Comparison of Choices* (<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/6-Comparison-of-Choices.pdf>), **Todd Harrison**, CSBA