

# Methodology

## Service Assessment Explanatory Language

**Overall Assessment.** The overall assessment of a military service is measured against its ability to perform its respective role in a two-major regional contingency (MRC) scenario. The assessment of the U.S. Marine Corps is sized against a single major regional contingency (MRC) scenario. This benchmark is the *minimum* standard for U.S. hard-power capacity with the understanding that maintenance, operational tempo, training cycles, crisis response, treaty commitments, and/or strategic reserve considerations can cause some forces to be unavailable. Other factors that influence this assessment are the availability of logistical support to enable combat power (fueling ships, supply ships, cargo aircraft, etc.) and the ability to reconstitute combat power for protracted conflict (defense industrial base capacity, etc.).

**Capacity.** The U.S. military must have a sufficient quantity of the right capability or capabilities to meet its mission sets. Capacity (numbers) can be viewed in at least three ways:

- Compared to a stated objective for each category by each service;
- Compared to amounts required to complete various types of operations across a wide range of potential missions as measured against a potential adversary, and
- As measured against a set benchmark for total national capability.

**Capability.** Examining the capability of a military force requires consideration of:

- The proper tools (material and conceptual) with the design, performance characteristics, technological advancement, and suitability that the force needs to perform its function against an enemy successfully;
- The sufficiency of armored vehicles, ships, airplanes, and other equipment and weapons needed to win against the enemy;
- The appropriate variety of options to preclude strategic vulnerabilities in the force and give flexibilities to battlefield commanders; and
- The degree to which elements of the force reinforce each other in covering potential vulnerabilities, maximizing strengths, and gaining greater effectiveness through synergies that are not possible in narrowly stovepiped, linear approaches to war.

**Readiness.** While capacity and capability considerations are central to the warfighting ability of the U.S. military, readiness performs a crucial role in determining whether combat power is prepared when it is needed. Factors that are considered include (among others):

- Sufficient staffing levels,
- Fulfillment of training requirements, and
- Age and maintenance of equipment.