Introduction
Dr. Lani Kass began her talk by noting that her comments will be somewhat constrained since she remains under continuing restrictions placed on her by her former position as an advisor to the previous Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

Concept of “Rethinking” assumes that we had thought about the topics at sometime in the past
- Not clear that was the case
- US has been at war for the last 10 years consuming most of the intellectual bandwidth
  - For DoD and all the defense security community
  - Some new ideas and constructs were discussed
    - For example the USAF initiative on cybersecurity
  - National security and defense strategies were written
  - Most of the effort, however, was spent on Iraq and Afghanistan
- If there is any new thinking out there yet, we can only hope that it is informed by the changed international environment

New Strategic Guidance
- Question: How many in at the Seminar have actually read the new Strategic Guidance?
  - Unusually high number in the audience had
  - Vast majority, including journalists who wrote about it, have not
- Many discussions in the media on the kinds of missions that the military would be shedding
- Guidance was presented in only eight pages of dense prose
- Talked of “Building the Joint Force for 2020”
  - Many in room will remember that this has been discussed for many years
  - So is this really “Rethinking?”
- Striking that the missions that the Joint Force should do in the latest guidance, do not differ from those in previous strategic documents
- Publication of this document was victory for DOD
  - DoD wanted to ensure it had an official list of what it no longer was required to do
  - Joint Chiefs and SECDEF believed that doing the same with less was no longer possible
Military at the breaking point – only doing less with less

- Underlying idea was to stipulate what the Joint Forces are expected to be able to do as strategic objective given what means were available to them
- Strategy is reconciling the objectives and the means available to achieve them
  - The gap between them is the risk
  - For national security the risk involves lives and national treasure
  - Must not set objectives so high that they can’t be met with available means
- There are only a limited number of ways to deal with the gaps between means and desires
  - Increase the means – a non-starter in the current economic environment
  - Scale down appetite – reduce the ends
  - Find more creative ways to do things – aka: efficiencies
    - Also considered bureaucratic BS (work longer / travel less / etc.)
    - Consultants get paid well to help the government get efficient but either:
      - Government can’t learn or
      - Consultants aren’t that good as teachers
  - Bluff – persuade allies and adversaries that you can do more with less
    - Danger is that they will call your bluff
    - Example: DoD has been saying that it could fight 2 simultaneous wars for years
      - Started playing with the definition of simultaneous
      - Played with separation of contingencies to point where lost credibility
    - Must remember that opponents get the vote
      - US rarely starts a war – responds to actions of others
    - Gap between the two contingencies (what used to be major theater wars) got so big that lost credibility
    - Credibility is important because of US global alliances
      - Important that the US can deliver what it says it will
    - Credibility problems go back to the Clinton years when Les Aspen was SECDEF
      - Bottom-up Review made strategic choices
      - Europe was first; Japan and Korea would be on hold until won there
        - Did not go over well with Asian allies
        - The term was “Win-Hold-Win” but is no longer mentioned
          - However, look at Iraq and Afghanistan situation
            - ADM Mullen, then CJCS, said before the Afghan surge
              - In Iraq, we do what we must
              - In Afghanistan, we do what we can
            - This is not the equivalent of fighting Russians in Europe
      - Bottomline: Fighting two regional wars is no longer sustainable

New Strategic Guidance – Technically Shift Emphasis to Asia
- However, the US will continue to fulfill its responsibilities to NATO
  - Especially Article 5 – an attack on one is an attack on all
- US will also maintain a presence in the MidEast
- US will continue building partner capacity worldwide
- The President’s transmittal letter also commits the military to defending US interests worldwide and upholding “human dignity”

Question: So what missions fell off the strategic objectives list?
- None apparently
- Guidance shows that the mission set remains the same or even growing
• Concept of upholding human dignity certainly expands potential missions
• Priorities have changed – homeland defense was first on the list and is now last
  o Most foreign officers would assume this to be the basic mission
  o Homeland Defense is no longer capitalized
  o May not mean less attention will be paid to it

Conclusion
If:
• The DoD mission set has not changed,
• International involvement becomes more dangerous and complex than it was considered in earlier strategic documents, and
• The defense budget is to be cut by up to a $1 trillion
Then:
• How much new thinking was done?
• How much guidance was given to DOD?
• What message was sent to friends around the world?
• What message to support deterrence was sent to adversaries?

Bottomline: Are we still bluffing that we can do it all except with significant less resources?

Question & Answer Session

Regarding Dropped DoD Missions and other US Government Agencies Picking Up Those Missions
The military cannot carry out all of its assigned missions alone, especially tasks like building stability
• Need all elements of national power
• DoD has been doing most of the tasks over the years
• Consider Stalin’s supposed comment when he was asked if he wanted to send an ambassador to the Vatican: How many divisions does the Pope have?
  o The State Department really has the mission of building stability
  o It now has its largest embassy in Iraq with the military gone, but the question remains: Can the State Department do in Iraq what DoD did?
    • Answer: No!
• In Afghanistan military officers are doing civilian duties for which civilians are better suited
  o When Gen McCrystal convinced the President that the US needed the military surge in Afghanistan for 1 year, he also wanted a civilian surge to follow it
  o Civilian surge never happened
  o Military with its can-do attitude stepped in to do what was not being done
  o No other agency is stepping in to fill the voids
    • They don’t have enough people trained and ready to go
    • All agencies are also facing budget cuts and hiring freezes
• Not an encouraging answer and there are no good answers
• Don’t like strategies that say: Let’s what happens
• Hope is not a good course of action

Regarding Cybersecurity: Its Importance and What Are We Doing About It
Cannot say too much about this topic, but people are trying very hard to improve US cybersecurity
“We are seized of the issue”
The problems are understood
Risk is so overwhelming that it may be easier to just bury our heads in the sand
Just think of how much of everyday life is tied up with the electro-magnetic spectrum
  o US is the most technically advanced country
  o US has always relied on technology as a force multiplier
  o US is more vulnerable than any other country to attacks on its infrastructure

Know that people are working on the issue
  o However, cuts in the Defense budget are coming and this work is costly
  o Exacerbated by the asymmetric nature of what we face
    o No one will go up against the USAF or USN directly given their superiority
    o Before IEDs, would say the same thing for the USA or USMC
    o The way to fight a superior force is with much cheaper weapons
  o The US has invested billions in IED countermeasures but do not have them yet
    o Asymmetric countermeasures are usually significantly cheaper than the weapon systems they go up against
    o Examples:
      ▪ IEDs used against expensive HumVees caused building of more costly MRAPs because of vulnerability
      ▪ Flying planes against cellphone-detonated bombs is not cost effective
  o Such countermeasures can’t defeat the US except at its most vulnerable points: concern for human life and the will of the American people

Regarding Deterrence in the 21st Century
Deterrence is based on the idea that there is a penalty associated with an action we want stopped
  o Any parent knows about this concept – I’ll cut off your allowance if you ....
  o More complicated once scientists, economists, and political scientists get involved
    o Any potential gain you might get for your action will not be worth it if you cross this line
  o Things to understand about deterrence
    o It is a strategy of a negative aim – measurable only in the breach
      ▪ You only know if it works if something does not happen
    o Example: I believe putting baby powder in the yard keeps elephants from trampling tulips
      ▪ Wake up the next day to find the tulips are fine and no footprints visible
      ▪ Possible conclusions:
        • The baby powder is effective
        • There are no elephants in Virginia
        • Elephants don’t want to trample tulips
    o All these conclusions are logical – much like what was said about the USSR for 60 years:
      ▪ US military strength deterred a Soviet invasion – but can you prove it?
      ▪ The Soviets said they wanted to trample the US but did they really have the capability or intent to do so?

Deterrence is in the eye of the beholder
  o Think of deterrence as an equation involving:
    ▪ Your capability to spank your opponent for bad behavior
    ▪ Your willingness to do so
    ▪ Your opponents perception of your capability and your willingness
  o Example: every time we tell N. Korea not to do something they do it anyway
We don’t react so they do it again
How credible does that make our deterrence posture?
We must make good on our commitments

Our national security community members are not the only ones who can read and count
We can say we will do something but our actions must support our words

It is easier to deter nations than organizations
You can react to a country’s behavior because you have their “zip code”
Terrorists, criminal organizations, and cyber criminals don’t have zip codes
   They find protection in anonymity
   They lack a clear address for retaliation

We have not yet done the intellectually hard work on deterrence in the 21st century
Looking back on it, MAD (mutually assured destruction) was somewhat endearing
   The Soviets wanted to live

Side comment on “hackers”: Why avoid using the term when talking about cyber security
Hacking connotes juvenile behavior by kids working from their mothers’ basements
   While there may be many of them, they are not a big concern in cybersecurity
Worry about cyber attacks that are really a form of warfare and a strategy
   Attacks involve intelligent, intentional behaviors
   Not “hooliganism”
   Not the “riot in the mall” concept

Regarding the Congressional Super Committee and Defense Budget Cuts
If no agreements on the budget are made and the Super Committee does what it said it would do, there would the salami slice approach to cutting the defense budget?
   Not likely to happen
   Would be the dumbest thing the Congress could do even given its low reputation
Problems with such cuts include:
   Some missions can’t simply be cut in half
   Service Chiefs and SECDEF are committed to not hollowing out the Force
   At least to the extent of what they can decide
   Also won’t give up readiness needed for deterrence
But will a smaller force be hollow or can it be as capable or more capable?
Every citizen, government employee, and civilian contractor has a vested interest in not having a hollow force
Some officials have said that we have always cut the military after each war since the Civil War and then in a decade or so we would have another war
   For which we would not have adequate forces
   In some place where we did not expect to fight against a surprise foe
As with the deterrence discussion above, you can’t prove that cutting the forces causes the follow-on war
   US may fight a war about every decade no matter what happens to the budget

Regarding Potential of Major DoD Budget Cuts if Congress Fails to Agree on Other Economic Changes
Dr. Kass believes that the idea of automatic across board cuts came from the Hill not the White House
Plan uses same sort of thinking as in deterrence – result designed to be so irrational to ensure that the unwanted behavior won’t happen
This is what happens when you bluff
Prediction:
- Since 2012 is an election year, there will be no cuts until the next Congress sits
- New Congress will not give in to this stupidity
  - Not quite insanity but close
  - Like threatening to commit suicide over something very minor
- No doubt that Congress needs to fix its economic house
  - The Defense Budget is not bleeding the US economy
    - As a percentage of GDP, current budget is within historical norms; may be lower
  - Entitlements are causing the problems
    - Outside the scope of this talk and this expertise on how to fix it
- None of the potential Republican contenders are offering any new ideas
- Dr. Kass agrees with ADM Mullen that our greatest national security threat is the national debt
  - Especially when you see to whom we owe that debt – China is our “near peer” competitor
  - So how does deterrence work in this case?

Regarding China’s Reaction to the New US Strategy (Pivot toward Asia)
On Kass’ recent trip to China with the Chairman, JCS, Chinese pulled out all the stops for the visitors
- Saw how new, well-kept the infrastructure was – no potholes
  - Bridges and buildings are quite new and not just in Beijing built for the Olympics
  - Saw the same level of new construction everywhere
- Saw a sense of entitlement in the people – most frightening
  - Not just the young people who are products of the one-child policy families where they were doted on and spoiled
  - Also seemed to have the attitude of “this is our time to shine”
  - Reminded of the Sound of Music moment when the young Nazi sings “The Future Belongs to Me”
- Heard Chinese people say: Don’t underestimate us
  - We can do more than copying things
  - We are an industrious, innovative country
  - We have been inventing things for 5,000 years

Adding all three impressions together does not make Dr. Kass optimistic about China’s peaceful rise
- Compares China today to Germany in 1938 or Russia in 1947 or 1950
- Concept of national pride and entitlement is strong
- Leaves the idea of “If you don’t step aside, we’ll push you aside.”
- Those in this room, except the youngest, probably won’t be around to see the outcome
  - China is very patient and has no need to provoke the US right now

China’s military made a conscious choice 15 years ago to allow the country to build its economy
- Military was significantly underfunded for years
- In last 5 years military has been getting a disproportionate amount of the national budget
  - Now it is the military’s turn
  - Acquiring lots of shiny new stuff

US pivot toward Asia is designed to deter China
- US wants China to rise peacefully
- However, can’t recall from history a country that felt entitled to take its place in the world actually rising peacefully
Regarding China’s Navy
- China is currently building up its navy
- However, it is not in China’s interests to interfere with freedom of the seas given its dependence on sea-going trade
- China is working to define its sphere of influence
  - Wants to be counted and have its interests recognized
  - Wants to bring back the traditional “kowtowing” – ask me nicely, pay me tribute and I will let you do what you want

Regarding India and Other Regional Concerns
For the first time Indian relations are mentioned in Strategic Guidance as a “long-term strategic alliance”
- Used to avoid mentioning India in strategic documents to avoid upsetting either China or Pakistan
- By calling out this alliance with India, the US is taking sides without saying so
- Why has this taken so long since India is a natural ally for the US
  - World’s biggest democracy
  - Yet US downplayed relations and kept India at arm’s length
- Military-to-military relations will be important in the new Strategy
  - State Department or USAID won’t be that involved in building pol-mil capacities
  - Training is time-consuming and expensive
  - The hand-holding acquires a life of its own
  - Training in Iraq and Afghanistan will go on

Given its geo-political position, China has lots of buttons it can push in its own region to concern the US
- Taiwan: US has a responsibility to protect Taiwan but also a one-China policy
  - China is unlikely to invade Taiwan; more likely to absorb it like Hong Kong
  - Won’t want to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs
- China is working throughout a whole region of a rising power to establish itself as its leader
  - Sees the US as yesterday’s power still in their sphere
  - And China holds much of the US debt
- No good answer to: How can a smaller, leaner military which is to focus on the Pacific going to deter China from doing what it wants?
- During visit to China could see that the US does not want to have to go into China
  - Quantity has a quality of its own

Being realistic, we can say that:
- Taiwan will remain a bone of contention
  - How realistic is the US commitment to defend Taiwan
  - Would we really trade Chicago for Taipei?
- Back in the early Cold War, French President De Gaulle believed that NATO’s deterrence plans were not credible
  - MAD was only a mutual suicide pact
  - US would never trade Chicago for Hamburg
  - Since promises to protect France were not credible, De Gaulle invested heavily in France’s own nuclear deterrence capability
- Today, how confident can Taiwan be that the US will fulfill its protection promises?

Back to the basic problem: There is a yawning gap between the ends and the means. What will happen when someone calls our bluff?