

《美国裁军英文报道（带视频）》

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The Pentagon plans to scale back the US Army by more than an eighth to its lowest level since before World War Two, signalling a shift after more than a decade of ground wars.

Nearly three years ago - May 2nd, 2011 - An elite unit of U.S military troops stormed Osama Bin Laden's compound in Pakistan -and killed the mastermind behind the devastating 9-11 attacks.

As the U.S. military prepares to make deep cuts, as it transitions from wartime - the Obama administration wants more of these elite units.

"We made choices based on strategic priorities, clear facts - unbiased analysis and fiscal realities," Chuck Hagel, U.S. Defense Secretary, said.

No longer saddled with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that obligates hundreds of thousands of troops.

The U.S. wants to cut the number of ground troops -from a high of 570-thousand in the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9-11 --- to about 440-thousand.

That would be the LOWEST number of US armed forces, since the end of World War II.

"We are all willing to take risks, but none of us are willing to take a gamble. Because at the end of the day it's our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen - America's sons and daughters who will face tomorrow's challenges," General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said.

At a time when China is increasing its military spending by more than 12-percent, and tensions flare in Ukraine, the U.S. is planning to eliminate old mainstays, such as the A-10 warthog jet and the U-2 spy plane. The U.S. does plan to spend more on drones. And, billions more on the next generation of fighter jet - the F-35. And, the F-35 is already wildly over budget.

"You have fewer troops, fewer ships, fewer planes, readiness is not the same standard - of course there is going to be risk," Chuck Hagel, U.S. Defense Secretary, said.

Defense expert Michael O'Hanlon calls the cuts cautious and reasonable.

"Even with these cuts, the U.S. will outspend China 3:1. You add in our allies, and we will outspend five or six to one. And we have a cumulative weapons inventory of somewhere around three trillion dollars of modern high tech weapons," O'Hanlon said.

The Obama administration has touted its "Asian pivot" - changing the focus of military attention from Iraq and Afghanistan - to the Pacific. China caught the U.S. flat-footed in November when it began enforcing an Air Defense Identification Zone over the disputed Diaoyu Islands.

U.S. officials fear the zone will escalate tensions - and perhaps lead to a military confrontation that could morph into something much worse.

Cuts are coming - but there will be wide spread pressure to make sure troops have pay raises, adequate housing and most importantly the skills and tools needed for the battlefield.

"Our most sacred obligation is to make sure they are never sent into a fair fight which is to say that they must be the best led, best trained, and best equipped in the world," Dempsey said.

This is the first step of what will be a long budget process. Military officials say it is still too early to speculate on what the cuts could mean to troops - weapons programs and facilities. But, to put costs in perspective, U.S. military costs make up more than 50% of the discretionary spending of the federal budget, far exceeding any other nation on earth.