



# Rethinking America's Joint Force: Strength and Credibility in a Constrained Fiscal Environment

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**ABSTRACT** In today's constrained fiscal environment, we must "re-mission" a smaller, more interdependent Joint Force with an emphasis on capability rather than capacity. America's military is primarily intended to defend the nation from attack, prevent and deter war, and when required, to win decisively in operations ranging from low-end irregular warfare through high-end conventional warfare. In this century, our nation's economic strength, values, and credible influence will play as much a role in sustaining our security and prosperity as will military power. Working closely with other departments of the government as well as with partners and allies, the Department of Defense must rely on three key stakeholders—Congress, the service chiefs, and the combatant commanders—to shape a strong and adaptive military. Rather than focusing on traditional ends, ways, and means, this article addresses the "concept, form, and function" our Joint Force should pursue in support of the National Security Strategy.

**KEYWORDS** capability and capacity; Joint Force; national security strategy; strategic narrative; twenty-first-century military

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## FOREWORD

In the Spring of 2011, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, led by Jane Harman, hosted their first "National Conversation," which featured a panel discussion of a paper—"A National Strategic Narrative by Mr. Y."—that had been released by the Wilson Center a few hours earlier. The distinguished panelists included former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, Princeton professor and former Director of Policy and Plans at U.S. State Department, Dr. Anne-Marie Slaughter (author of the paper's Preface), Minnesota Representative Keith Ellison, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Tom Friedman, Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution, Robert Kagan, and founder of the American Strategy Forum at New American Foundation, Steve Clemons. "A National Strategic Narrative" was written by Navy Captain Wayne Porter and Marine Colonel Mark "Puck" Mykleby—then serving on the staff of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Adm. Mike Mullen; it was released with the appropriate disclaimers that the views expressed in the

paper were the authors' alone and did not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. government. That's not to say that the concepts in their "A National Strategic Narrative" did not resonate among many in and out of official positions.

In "A National Strategic Narrative," Captain Porter and Colonel Mykleby contended that, as Americans, we must approach our enduring national interests—prosperity and security—through the sustainable application of *credible influence* and *strength* within the boundaries of our national values. They believe that to do this we must invest in education to reinvigorate America's competitiveness, innovation, and entrepreneurial drive. They argued that it's time to move the nation from a cold war strategy of *containment* to a strategy of *sustainability* designed to secure our enduring interests in a dynamic strategic environment. The paper spoke of the congruity, complementarity, and synergy of our domestic and foreign policies; it also discussed the need for "smart growth" at home and "smart power" abroad. Growth at home and power abroad will build the national *strength* we need to compete globally and the *credible influence* we need to sustain our leadership worldwide. Porter and Mykleby contended that the tools of development, diplomacy, and defense need to be used functionally through the flexible and agile application of public, private, and civil sector resources rather than organizationally through the inflexible and discrete channels of government. Their intent with the "Narrative" was to help frame our national policy discussions and decisions about investment, security, economic development, energy, the environment, and engagement well into this century. One goal was to look beyond risk and threat—using a more positive focus on converging interests and opportunities.

In January of this year, the President signed a Department of Defense document entitled, "Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense." This strategic guidance recognizes that the challenges of this century cannot be met by the military alone but, rather, must be addressed by strengthening all tools of American power, including diplomacy and development, intelligence, and homeland security. While recognizing our constrained fiscal environment, the President pledges to ensure that our armed forces remain "the best trained, best led, and best equipped" in the world.

In their new paper: "Rethinking America's Joint Force: Strength and Credibility in a Constrained Fiscal Environment," Porter and Mykleby offer a time-phased, prioritized approach to doing just that—by attempting to understand the concept, form, and function our twenty-first-century military should pursue in support of the national security strategy. They recognize the military's role in the three integrated national strategies of defense, diplomacy, and development. Further, they attempt to explain the roles and responsibilities of three key stakeholders—Congress, the service chiefs, and the combatant commanders—in shaping a strong and agile military. This paper is the military instantiation of their National Strategic Narrative. While many may not agree with every aspect, Captain Porter and Colonel Mykleby provide a complex and fresh perspective that merits consideration.

*George D. Schwab*  
*President, NCAFP*

## A NEW JOINT FORCE

As noted in the President's *National Security Strategy*, in the Defense Secretary's strategic guidance for 2012,<sup>1</sup> and in "A National Strategic Narrative,"<sup>2</sup> our enduring national interests—prosperity and security—and our leadership role on the world stage are underpinned and bounded by liberty and the values that have characterized us as Americans since the founding of our Republic. But the complexity, competition, and interconnectedness of a new century require a fresh perspective on how best to secure these enduring interests—our current path is simply unsustainable. The time has come for our military to evolve from a strategy based on containment to a strategy focused on the sustainability of our security and prosperity in a dynamic and uncertain strategic environment. To accomplish this, we will need to apply credible influence and strength through a balanced Joint Force integrated within a flexible interagency construct and interoperable with international partners—a Joint Force with the agility to rapidly transition from low-end to high-end missions when directed to do so by our commander in chief.

While our near-term priority is to succeed in our ongoing campaign in Afghanistan and against the shadowy networks of crime and extremism that promote mayhem, fear, and oppression worldwide, we

must reconstitute our strategic depth by developing the right capabilities and capacity to balance risk and opportunities in the mid- to long term. Over time, the best way to shape the force of the future is to invest in the science, technology, education, and training that will equip our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines to adapt to an increasingly complex and dynamic environment. The hardware and software we buy and build are secondary to the gray matter we must cultivate *now*.

Our goal is to provide the nation with the most flexible and agile military force possible with which to pursue and safeguard our enduring national interests while concurrently sustaining a leadership role for the United States in the greater world order.

## THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

As noted in “A National Strategic Narrative,” security is a state of mind as much as it is a physical aspect of our environment. “For Americans, security is very closely related to freedom, because security represents freedom from anxiety and external threat, freedom from disease and poverty, freedom from tyranny and oppression, freedom of choice and expression, and also freedom from hurtful ideologies, prejudice, and violations of human rights.”<sup>3</sup> Our military’s role since we gained independence has been to safeguard that freedom and guarantee that security while remaining true to the values set forth by our Founding Fathers. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are trusted to demonstrate those values—integrity, duty, honor, courage, commitment, fidelity, respect, and discipline—every day, at home and wherever they serve around the world.

But the tools of defense are only part of what must be employed in pursuit of security. The responsibility for safeguarding our nation does not reside within one government department alone, or even one sector of society, any more than do the values we cherish or the tools of diplomacy and development. In fact, if these values and tools are not employed collectively within the context of a coherent national strategy, versus being narrowly applied in isolation to individual countries or regions, they will fail to achieve a sustainable result.<sup>4</sup>

Security cannot be safeguarded by borders or natural barriers; freedom cannot be secured with locks or by force alone. In our complex, interdependent, and constantly changing global environment, security is not achievable for one nation or by one people; rather, it

must be recognized as a common interest and goal of all peoples. Otherwise, security is not sustainable and, without it, peace of mind is impossible.<sup>5</sup>

Prosperity without security is unsustainable, just as security cannot be sustained without prosperity. The most obvious example of this linkage is the impact national economies have on the pursuit and development of military capability and capacity. As nations gain economic stability and prominence in the world market, they are more inclined to increase their defense spending as they seek the means to secure not only their homeland but access to resources and markets that will help to sustain the growth of their economies. History has demonstrated that this can also lead to dangerous military adventurism. Conversely, other nations may scale back security-related expenditures as their economies slow or weaken, seeking instead to rely more heavily on stronger partners. We cannot isolate our own security from the global system. As we seek to maintain and expand our own prosperity, the welfare of our citizens must be viewed as part of a highly dynamic and interconnected system that includes sovereign nations, world markets, natural and man-generated challenges and solutions—a system that demands adaptability and innovation.

When we speak of the “international order,” “world markets,” and the “global system,” we are discussing a complex and interdependent system of systems—a sort of “strategic ecology”—affected by powerful trends that are the result of conditions left unchecked for many years. These trends include the decline of rural economies, joblessness, the dramatic increase in urbanization, an increasing demand for energy, migration of populations and shifting demographics, the rise of gray and black markets, the phenomenon of extremism and antimodernism, the effects of global climate change, the spread of pandemics and lack of access to adequate health services, and an increasing access to, and dependency on, cybernetworks.

All of these trends affect our security and prosperity, and they are exacerbated by the accelerating dynamics of global power structures, transformative technologies and their application to warfare, the near-instantaneous accessibility of information, and the pervasive explosion of social networking. These global trends, whether manifesting themselves in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Eurasia, South America, or within our own hemisphere, impact the lives of Americans

in ways that are often obscure as they spread over vast areas with cascading and sometimes catastrophic effect. But these trends also represent opportunities.

We cannot pretend that greed, corruption, ancient hatreds, and newborn apprehensions won't continue, over time, to transform into very real risks that could threaten our national interests and test our values. We must recognize this as an inevitable part of the strategic environment and continue to maintain the flexibility and agility that will allow us to minimize, deter, or defeat those with diverging or conflicting interests that threaten our security. At the same time, we must never lose sight of opportunities to shape a better future. This calls for an adaptable, robust, technologically superior military—equally capable of responding to low-end, irregular conflicts and to high-end, conventional contingency operations and asymmetric threats.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, we must consider not only the ends, ways, and means of our long-term military strategy but also be certain that we understand the role of the Joint Force in the larger context of concept, form, and function.

## CONCEPT, FORM, AND FUNCTION

Flexibility, agility, adaptability, innovation, and trust are the building blocks that must be present and in use throughout the Total Joint Force—in concert with a more vibrant interagency and whole-of-nation approach to sustainable security and prosperity and to renewing U.S. leadership. While we certainly must carefully consider ends, ways, and means in our planning process, we cannot allow doctrine to become a substitute for, or to obscure, critical and imaginative thinking. That is the essence of “smart power.” Conceptually, we must ensure that our long-term military strategy complements and expands upon the strategic forms described in the *National Security Strategy*, the *Quadrennial Defense Review*, and the 2012 Department of Defense strategic guidance entitled, *Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for a 21st Century Defense*. We will be safeguarding our security and prosperity through strength and influence by recognizing the value in Joint, interagency, whole-of-government, and multinational interconnectedness, and by functionally applying development, diplomacy, and defense across the spectrum of conflict, transnational crime, and humanitarian crises (see Figure 1).

Within this context, the *concept* of our long-term military strategy is to deliver to the nation a flexible and agile force that can support the renewal of America's leadership role. Such leadership must be

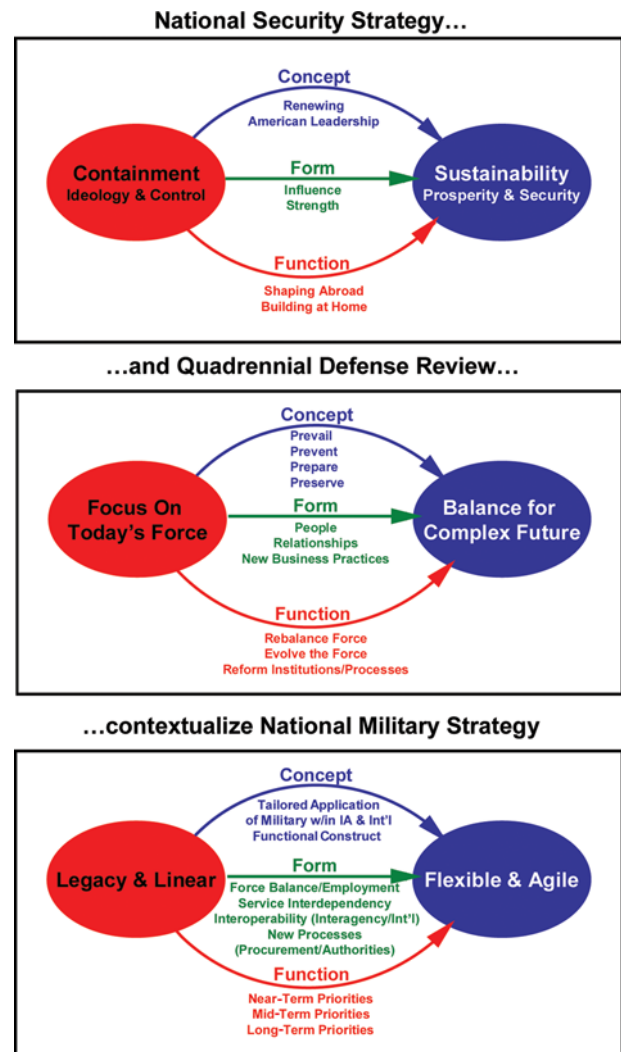
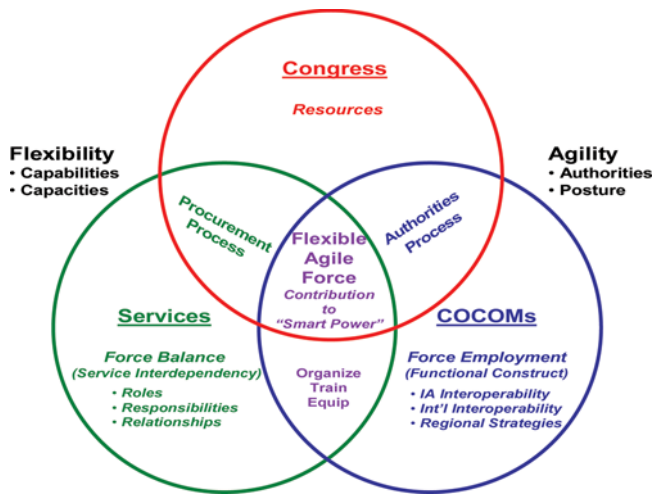


FIGURE 1 Concept, form, and function (color figure available online).

consistent with the direction provided in the *National Security Strategy* and must aim to achieve our national security objectives and meet the priorities delineated in the *Quadrennial Defense Review* and strategic guidance cited earlier.

The *form* this takes will be shaped by our requirement to achieve the proper force balance to address future challenges within an interservice, interagency, and international framework. This force balance is largely determined by the three key stakeholders shown in the diagram below: our Congress, our services chiefs, and our combatant commanders. Congress provides for the procurement of capability and capacity that results in force balance and flexibility. Congress also determines the authorities that shape our services and hold us accountable for the manner in which our Joint Force interacts with





**FIGURE 2** Three key stakeholders (color figure available online).

other government agencies, nations, organizations, and the private sector. Our service chiefs provide for the force composition, balance, and training—the flexibility—required to meet the demands of every mission, whenever and wherever that force is needed. Our combatant commanders provide the President with the options he needs to execute U.S. policy through credible influence and strength. They must be able to put in place and move those forces with agility whenever ordered to do so by the President (see Figure 2).

The *function* of our long-term military strategy is to provide vision, to identify challenges and solutions in the strategic environment, and to set priorities, based on foreseeable constraints and acceptable risk, that will allow our military leadership to execute the orders of the President whenever and wherever necessary in keeping with the concepts cited in the *National Security Strategy*.

## CONSTRAINTS, RISKS, AND PRIORITIES

A strategy that assumes unlimited resources is merely an academic exercise. Having identified a vision and some of the global trends that will continue to shape our strategic environment throughout this century, we must identify the constraints and risks that necessarily force the prioritization of our planning.

These constraints include an economy already heavily burdened with debt, in which the Department

of Defense is likely to be asked to share some proportion of its budget with other departments and agencies. Fiscal constraints will significantly affect end strength and entitlements, equipment procurement and modernization, recruiting and training, force readiness and employment, and force balance and basing. But other constraints beyond cost of the force are present. Part of our agility—the ability to more effectively interact with and share responsibilities and resources with other government departments and agencies (e.g., State, Homeland Security, Treasury, Commerce, Justice, Transportation, Energy)—is determined by U.S. law and code. As we seek more effective, whole-of-nation means to sustain security and prosperity, Congress may choose to review the authorities that govern shared resources, begin taking a more functional approach to diplomacy, development, and defense, and allow greater movement of funds across departments. In the complex strategic environment of the twenty-first century, the Department of Defense will need to be far more integrated within the interagency than ever before.

Further constraints may include our partners' sensitivities to a U.S. military footprint abroad, the need to reduce the deployment time of our forces, the high cost of energy, and maintaining our commitment to fully support an all-volunteer force—a force our nation expects and deserves. Our long-term challenge is to wrest from this very complex calculus sustainable solutions and the tools necessary for success. Likewise, the flexibility and agility of our future force will largely be determined not only through force balance, capacity, and capability but by recognizing our role within the interagency structure and within the larger international order.

Perhaps our greatest challenge is dealing with uncertainty. Uncertainty defines our strategic environment—and that brings to mind risk. Our military strategy cannot be limited to addressing only near-term priorities—we must begin now to lay the groundwork for a more effective force in the future. Accordingly, we must also look beyond immediate threats and carefully consider what risks we are willing to assume in the mid- and long term. This is where uncertainty complicates our planning and analysis and forces us to make hard decisions. Rather than allowing risk to drive these decisions, we need to accept risk where we can and move on.

## CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

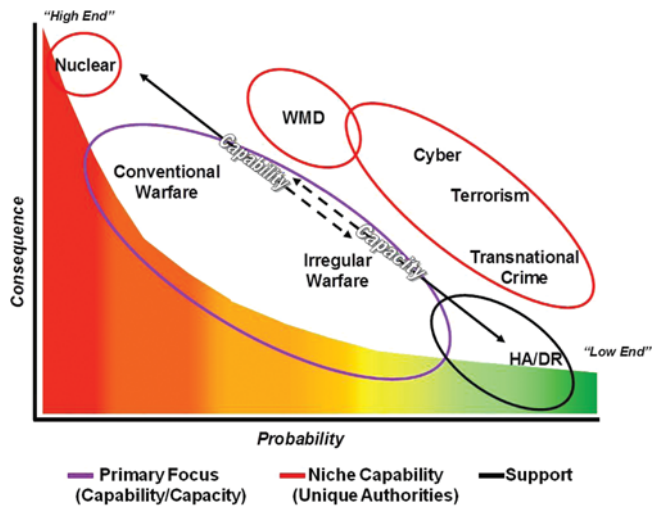
In the near term, we have already accepted risk in several areas. We have essentially shifted the focus of our force toward low-end conflicts, counterinsurgency operations, stabilization, reconstruction and training, and irregular warfare in our campaign in Afghanistan and in confronting violent extremism. In so doing, we have accepted some risk in high-end, state-on-state, conventional warfare. We have accepted open-ended risk because of concern for the welfare of our military families—minimizing repeated combat deployments and deployments to other high-stress environments. In taking on many nontraditional aspects of reconstruction and stabilization in Afghanistan and Iraq, we accepted the risk that our credibility as a conventional fighting force would not be eroded. We decided that responding to humanitarian crises and demonstrating restraint in our counterinsurgency operations took precedence and that we would risk the perception (not the reality) that our fighting forces and fighting spirit had diminished and that the deterrent effect of our military's overwhelming advantage in fighting capability and capacity would be lessened.

These are risks we have had to accept in our current fight. But there are further risks in the mid- and long term that we cannot accept as we seek to carefully reset our priorities. One risk is that by overfocusing on today's threat environment, we will fail to prepare our forces for tomorrow's challenges. Another risk is overcompensating as we seek to rebalance. Still another is the long-term risk of having our current force balance be too centered on irregular warfare, while the threat from ideologically motivated, sociopathic mayhem becomes unsustainable over time. Fiscal pressure could cause us to question the social contract we have made and the obligations we have to our military families; in so doing, we could break a solemn commitment and lose the faith of the American people. Our focus on force protection brings the risk of possibly distancing our military families from full participation in and social integration into American communities at home and from sharing experiences with diverse cultural communities abroad. There is a risk that having our military services continue to shoulder a greater burden of development and diplomacy than departments better suited to fulfilling these functional areas will cause service members to become less integrated into and more alienated from the rest of our national institutions.

The spectrum of conflict and crisis management runs from high-end, nuclear confrontation to low-end humanitarian disasters and relief efforts, with the likelihood of U.S. involvement running from low probability (in the case of high-end confrontation) to high probability (for continued involvement in humanitarian assistance and partner building). It is useful to consider this spectrum in terms of capability and capacity to help best determine where the U.S. Joint Force, interagency departments, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international partners can be most effective in establishing ongoing security and stability. In the middle of this spectrum falls a range of activities from irregular to conventional warfare. Clearly, this is where the main Joint Force effort needs to be in the future—core competencies that range from expeditionary warfare to strategic deterrence and decisive action. Within this space, our services must develop complete Joint Force interoperability built on unique and interdependent service capabilities, roles, and responsibilities.

A convenient way to consider force balance across the spectrum of conflict is in terms of capability and capacity. Economic strength and military *capability* are critical to deter and to counter the threat in the low-probability/high-end conventional warfare quadrant; on the other hand, *capacity* in terms of personnel, systems, and dwell time is predominant in the high-probability/low-end quadrant. This leads to the conclusion that, in the future, our military should plan on assuming risk more in the low-end quadrant where development, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief operations can—with the proper relationships and authorities—be shared among other U.S. departments, NGOs, international organizations, and partner nations' militaries (see Figure 3).

Consequently, our Joint Force should be prepared to place more emphasis on developing the proper capabilities and capacity that will allow us to prevent and deter, prevail, and prepare to defeat in operations ranging from low-end irregular warfare through high-end conventional warfare. This argues for a balanced and expeditionary force at the low end and a decisive and deterrent force at the high end. A large part of this high-end capability will come



**FIGURE 3** Spectrum of conflict, crime, crises (color figure available online).

from technological and innovative dominance versus numeric superiority of personnel and equipment. At the low end, we will need the capacity to aggregate forces for expeditionary warfare and to disaggregate to provide rapid response to regional threats, theater security engagement, support for noncombatant evacuation operations, and limited humanitarian assistance as required. But, wherever we employ our Joint Force in the spectrum of conflict, crime, and crisis, our nation's economic strength, values, and credible influence will play as much a role in sustaining our prosperity and security as will military power.

## NEAR-TERM PRIORITIES (~2 YEARS)

### Defend the United States

In defense of the homeland and our interests abroad, including the threat from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and cyberattack, the Joint Force will be as flexible as possible within the law, supporting interagency, law enforcement, international, nongovernmental, and private sector efforts to counter transnational terrorism, crime, and the effects of natural and human-generated disasters.

### Accomplish Today's Missions

The reality is that our course for the next two years has largely been set. We will remain focused on continuing the transition of security responsibility

in Iraq to the Iraqis and build on our investment of blood and treasure to craft a sustainable partnership. In Afghanistan, we will remain focused on successfully meeting our military objectives while setting the conditions there for a more stable partnership in the war against violent extremism. Likewise, we will continue to strengthen our relationship with Pakistan, India, and other partners throughout the region to demonstrate our commitment to a more stable and secure South Asia and broader Middle East.

The threat from violent extremism cannot be considered to be geographically defined or to be simply an organizational problem. Recognizing this threat as a complex and adaptive network with tangible objectives and inherent weaknesses, rather than focusing solely on the tactics of its operations (individual acts of terrorism and combat), requires a much broader and more focused global effort. The unique aspects of radical and violent Islamism must be countered with the help of the global Muslim community. Hateful ideologies cannot be destroyed, but violent extremists can be discredited and rendered irrelevant. What is required is persistent patience and remembering that any ideology that promotes fear and lethal attacks against innocents is ultimately unsustainable.

The vast majority, although not all, of the tools required to discredit and defeat an enemy dependent on asymmetric tactics and a theocratic strategic campaign are nonmilitary and non-kinetic. Our national power must be used more broadly to foster education, human rights, humanitarian assistance, economics, religious dialogue, science and technology, and cultural awareness. In a world where a bullet can create more enemies than it eliminates and a classroom full of women can pacify a province, a broader understanding of our national power and how we deploy and use it is required.

### Deterrence and Decisive Action

Even as we reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our arsenal in accordance with the *Nuclear Posture Review Report 2010* and the New START Treaty, and actively pursue counterproliferation, we will maintain a prudent nuclear deterrence and robust ballistic missile defense at home and abroad.

We will provide the President with options should international efforts to deter Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability fail, and we will actively seek to expose and diminish malign Iranian influence in the Gulf, Afghanistan, and the Levant. Likewise, we will remain alert and ready to take decisive action in response to further provocation from, or significant instability in, North Korea even as we begin to transition the security lead on the peninsula to the Republic of South Korea. In Asia and the Pacific, we will begin to rebuild strong relationships that encourage human rights while providing an environment for further economic development and growth.

## **Partner Building**

Our Theater Security Cooperation Program and other military-to-military engagements will remain critical as we seek to improve partner capability and interoperability. This will require maximum flexibility in aggressively pursuing reform in the security sector. During this period, we will continue efforts to improve the capability and interoperability of our own interagency, NGOs, and the private sector, so that one day the U.S. Joint Force may function in support of, rather than leading, international humanitarian assistance missions, thus freeing some military capacity for more traditional military roles.

## **Commitment to the Military Family**

Recognizing that operational tempo will remain high in the near term, we will mitigate related family and service member distress by demonstrating our commitment to honor all entitlements (including access to appropriate health care, preventive medicine, employment, and education), just as our service members and their families have honored their commitment to the nation. For those who choose to separate from the active military, we will explore opportunities for a continuum of service through the Reserve or other government agencies and address any gaps that exist in the transition from active duty to veteran status. We will improve support to families who have lost loved ones in the active duty and reserve components, providing programs that help families cope with the loss of loved ones in the line of duty.

## **Energy and Environmental Awareness**

It is time for the U.S. military to seize the initiative as a champion for clean and sustainable energy, as well as for solutions to the second- and third-order effects CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and climbing oil prices are having on the strategic environment. The Department of Defense (DoD) is the single largest energy consumer in the United States (approximately 78 percent of the federal sector, with 536 installations on 29.8 million acres worldwide); the United States is the largest energy consumer in the world. While each of the services has already undertaken laudable alternative energy initiatives, including the Navy's Green Fleet, bringing these together under a sweeping unified effort would greatly compound the Department's savings and progress toward energy sustainability. Finding a source of clean and renewable energy is this century's great challenge; the solution or solutions will be as liberating, far-reaching, and empowering as was the Advanced Research Project Agency-Network (ARPA-net) in spawning the information age. The pursuit of solutions to this challenge will necessarily address access to existing sources of energy and the development of clean, affordable, and renewable alternatives, the mitigation of the effects of high carbon emissions on the climate and our environment as well as the effects of climate change on shifting demographics and global markets, and the ability to counter the spread of extremism as a second-order byproduct of energy-disenfranchised cultures. By leveraging organizations like the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), service institutions like the Naval Postgraduate School (where a renewable energy curriculum is already being implemented), and cooperation with advanced civilian laboratories and the commercial sector, the military will play a key role in advancing the nation's vital interests well into this century.

## **MID-TERM PRIORITIES (~2–7 YEARS)**

### **Begin Transition to Sustainability**

In the mid-term, we will begin to take positive steps toward a more sustainable, flexible, and agile Joint Force that is well-integrated with other



government agencies and interoperable with a variety of international partners—a Joint Force that is manned, trained, and equipped to operate in uncertain environments ranging from expeditionary, low-end irregular war to decisive action in high-end conflict. The transition from a strategy of containment to a strategy of sustainability will go beyond simply resetting the Joint Force—it will require the cooperation of Congress, the service chiefs, and the combatant commanders. While we expect the DoD to be working in an austere economic environment in which a greater proportion of the national budget is being shared among agencies, we also expect Congress to have addressed constrictive authorities and processes to allow for more interaction and sharing of funds between the DoD and other departments. Such interaction and fund sharing should level the load across functional areas of diplomacy, development, and defense.

To achieve the proper balance and force readiness required to provide the President with the capability and capacity to execute a range of options, three aspects of our strategy must be addressed: our force, our people, and our posture. Each of these requires transformative innovation, ingenuity, and vision if we are to maintain our global leadership role and competitive edge. They will also require a strong economy and the continued support of the American people, further evidence of the linkage between prosperity and security.

## **Our Force**

To reset the Joint Force, we must address head-on any gaps or duplication of effort that exist as a result of parochialism or redundancy among services. Operating as a Joint Force does not mean abandoning service-specific roles and responsibilities—to the contrary, efficiency requires clear delineation of service lanes in the road as well as interoperability and interdependency among them. The Army and Air Force, supported by the Navy, will need to focus primarily on conventional deterrence and decisive action. The Marines and Navy, supported by the Army and Air Force, will need to deliver expeditionary capability and capacity for irregular warfare. Special Operations Forces will engage in tailored missions ranging from low-end partner building and security force assistance to countering the

proliferation and use of WMD. Our Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance capabilities and capacity must be matched by automated processing and analysis that can synthesize great volumes of information in near-real time for decision makers. Further, unmanned platforms will play a larger role in all aspects of war; our command and control will need to be survivable and resilient. As has been stated, the entire Joint Force will also need to be more interoperable and integrated with other elements of national influence and international coalitions.

To properly equip the force of the future to deter or win high-end conflicts in complex and adaptive environments requires a much more dynamic procurement process. Such procurement process must be able to design, build, and deliver at the speed of modern war as well as the accelerating rate of technological advancement. System-build cycles that exceed five years will not provide our force with the flexibility to stay ahead of the threat. A revolutionized process of developing, manufacturing, and fielding new weapons systems—such as the DARPA Adaptive Make initiative<sup>7</sup>—would dramatically improve the capability and capacity of our force. The Department of Defense can and must be a leading supporter and consumer of high-technology innovation and creative thinking, including the means to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and to increase the resiliency of our infrastructure and bases to hedge against the effects of climate change and the threat of asymmetric attack.

To maintain a more dependable force, and to shape a less energy-competitive environment, the Department of Defense must continue to work closely with academic and commercial research partners to develop sustainable and reliable sources of clean energy. Just as we have outpaced the adequacy of sail, carbon-fired steam, and petrochemical-based fuels over the past two centuries, so too must we now recognize the benefits inherent in developing more sustainable sources of energy to fuel our economy and our military.

## **Our People**

In a constrained fiscal environment, tough decisions that balance end-strength (both capacity and capability) with entitlements will need to be made. By sharing responsibility at the low end of the

spectrum with interagency and international partners, we will trim some of our required capacity. In terms of capability, one of our highest priorities is to invest in innovative and critical thinking—the cognitive, technological, and linguistic tools our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines will need to apply at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. We must foster the mental, physical, and moral strength, adaptability, and resilience they need to overcome challenges and to anticipate, recognize, and seize opportunities. This requires a commitment that extends from education and professional training, to family readiness and support, and beyond separation to post-military opportunities or retirement. Assured access to the capacity and unique skills available through our Reserve and Guard programs will remain a critical element of our Total Force (active and reserve components) as part of our operational and strategic reserve. Additionally, we need to be more savvy about and adept at managing contracted services. Creativity will be required to ensure a sustainable quality of service for our military families without sacrificing the capacity to fulfill our missions. By helping each service member plan and provide for financial stability, professional growth, and family well-being, we can sustain the right balance without jeopardizing our all-volunteer force.

## **Our Posture**

Our force posture, at home and abroad, says much about our national security strategy, our military strategy, and U.S. policy. In many ways, it's where the "say-do gap" has to be closed. Strength is about much more than military power, with many components of strength equally important to our nation's credible influence—strength of character, resilience, and compassion. One of the surest indications of real strength is restraint—only the weak seek to intimidate. Our military and economic strength provide us a voice, but what truly speaks of our character as a nation is the resolve to use these in a manner consistent with our values. This resolve forms the basis of our force posture.

The credibility of our military is determined by the world's perception of our commitment and resolve as much as it is by our overwhelming capabilities and capacity. We must maintain forward presence

even while we are sensitive to our footprint abroad, continuously demonstrating the expeditionary flexibility of our force. Our Army and Air Force provide a strong presence through regular military-to-military engagement and combined operations globally, while our Navy–Marine Corps team continues to demonstrate additional flexibility with our Partnership Stations, Carrier Strike Group, and Expeditionary Strike Group deployments. This presence is proof of our commitment to be a force for good—focused on building partner capacity and keeping the so-called global commons open and free—and is a constant reminder of the awesome power that is always available to support our international partners. The same is true of our forward bases.

For decades we have maintained forward bases worldwide. Increasingly, though, these bases have elicited mixed reactions from the citizens of our host nations. Some have brought pressure on their governments to remove our bases, others have actively sought an increased U.S. presence. What is very clear is that we have much to offer to one another if we can get the balance of partnership and protection right. This is a second-order effect of the dynamic relationship between prosperity and security. By assuming some risk in the area of convenience and hardened force protection, we might better integrate our military families into local host nation economies and cultures. This could include quotas in DoD schools for children of the host nation, less dependence on U.S. commissary and exchange services, and more fiscally sound housing policies. The better integrated our military families can become in host nation economies and cultures—as well as within our own communities at home—the more trust will develop. But trust also comes from commitment and the resolve to use our strength wisely for common benefit. Much of this has to do with deterrence.

Deterrence and countering the proliferation of WMD and the threat of catastrophic attack, in the truest sense, are built on military and economic strength and credibility; they cannot be achieved through intimidation and threat alone. For deterrence to be effective, it must leverage converging interests and interconnectedness, while differentiating and addressing diverging and conflicting interests that represent potential threats. Limiting our discussions of counterproliferation to the physical dimensions of

the problem (spread of WMD or cyberattack, consequence management, detection capabilities) prevents us from recognizing a broader and more relevant context.

The pace and complex nature of technology development and dissemination could eventually outrun our ability to physically control materials and actors, let alone respond effectively in all sectors in which American interests reside. The desire to acquire and employ WMD (or to anonymously employ offensive cyber-operations) is an intrinsic issue of motivation and behavior that reflects the systemic logic of how our adversaries perceive and interpret the environment around them and U.S. resolve to prevent the spread of WMD or cyber-mischief. The physical efforts of defending against material proliferation and potential attacks will buy us the time we need to establish an enduring counternarrative of credibility, strength, and influence that will render the ideological foundation of our adversaries indefensible and irrelevant. This approach, though, will require further investment in nuclear, biological, chemical, and cyber forensics and clear policy redlines for measured response. Our Air Force, Army, and Strategic Forces have the lead.

## **LONG-TERM PRIORITIES (>7 YEARS)**

### **A Flexible, Agile, and Adaptable Force**

Safeguarding the sustainability of our nation's prosperity and security as a leader among nations, while remaining true to the values that characterize us as Americans, calls for a robust, technologically superior, disciplined, and agile military—equally capable of responding to low-end, irregular conflicts and to major conventional contingency operations. But sustaining prosperity and security also requires a strong and unshakable economy, more diverse and deployable instruments of national influence, and a well-informed and supportive citizenry. We must remain committed to a whole-of-nation approach to development, diplomacy, and defense. Our ability to look *beyond* risk and threat—to accept them as realities—and to focus on opportunities and converging interests will determine if we succeed in pursuing our national interests in a

sustainable manner while maintaining our national values. This requires confidence in our capabilities as a military and as a nation.

Let the honor and courage of our men and women in uniform, and their families, inspire that confidence and the same sense of commitment within and from all Americans.

Building on the groundwork we established in our mid-term priorities, our Joint Force will have the proper authorities and procurement processes, force posture, and personnel to adapt in the uncertain and complex strategic environment of this century. Our infrastructure, bases, and deployed forces will be less dependent on nonrenewable sources of energy and more responsive to and resilient in the face of asymmetric threats and the effects of global climate change. We will have begun to better integrate our military families into local communities both at home and abroad to increase our understanding of diverse cultures and peoples; our forward presence and interoperability with regional militaries will underscore our commitment to maintain freedom of access to the global commons and to help secure scarce sources of food, water, and energy. Our technological and innovation dominance will provide a deterrent edge in high-end conflict, while our people-centric, expeditionary capacity will provide the agility necessary to prevent conflict or win irregular warfare.

Over the next seven to fifteen years—as part of an integrated, whole-of-nation and international effort—the focus of our military will be on positively influencing the global trends that will shape the environment for this century and on providing an unshakable hedge against the threats that will inevitably develop. By investing in education and technology that inspires and supports critical thinking and innovation, we can sustain a sufficiently adaptable force to provide the President, and the nation, with the right capabilities and capacity. This vision for our twenty-first-century military is intended to provide the direction necessary to embrace this challenge now for a more sustainable, prosperous, and secure future.

## **Notes**

1. "Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for a 21st Century Defense" (Department of Defense, January 2012).

2. Mr. Y, "A National Strategic Narrative," with preface by Anne-Marie Slaughter (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, 2011).
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. "Future Defense Manufacturing: DARPA's Adaptive Make Initiative," Paul Eremenko, Program Manager, DARPA Tactical Technology Office; Lt. Col. Nathan Wiedenman, Program Manager, DARPA Tactical Technology Office; Barry Ives, Deputy Director, DARPA Tactical Technology Office; Kaigham Gabriel, Deputy Director, DARPA; Regina Dugan, Director, DARPA. November 20, 2011.



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