



DOD (Cherie A. Thurby)

Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN, takes the oath of office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from outgoing Chairman, General Peter Pace, USMC

Priorities and Strategic Objectives of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The following is an excerpt from the Chairman's Guidance to the Joint Staff for 2007–2008

1. *Develop a strategy to defend our national interests in the Middle East.* Our immediate concern remains the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But we cannot dismiss the efforts by other state and nonstate actors to foment instability in the Middle East. The increasingly hostile role being played by Iran; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Sunni-Shia rivalries; the rise of radical jihadists; and the resurgence of al Qaeda all threaten to tear at fragile seams and all bear directly on the security of the United States. We need a strategy to manage U.S. military presence in the Middle East that adversaries must take seriously and which reassures our friends, allies, and partners.

Therefore, we will:

- Develop a comprehensive Middle East security strategy, tied to a larger global view but focused on our vital national interests. This effort will address long-term security in Iraq and Afghanistan, potential threats from Iran, and movement toward reducing major

sources of conflict, with a goal of ultimately achieving regional stability.

- Ensure that our strategic plans are sustainable over time and provide flexibility for escalation, de-escalation, and a wide range of options.
- Integrate our capabilities within the interagency process to develop and execute this long-term strategy, while leading in the interagency community wherever appropriate.
- Improve international cooperation in the region.

2. *Reset, reconstitute, and revitalize the Armed Forces . . . particularly ground forces.* Though recruiting and retention figures remain good and morale is still high, we cannot take for granted the service of our people or their families. We must rapidly mitigate the toll that our current pace of operations is taking on them, our equipment, and our ability to respond to other crises and contingencies. We must recognize that new asymmetrical threats call for different kinds of warfighters, mission systems, and strategies. We need to be smarter, lighter, more agile, and more lethal. Only by applying our own asymmetric advantages—our people,

intellect, and technology—and by maintaining a force correctly shaped, sized, trained, and equipped can we adequately defend the Nation.

Therefore, we will:

- Determine the true health of our ground forces in terms of people, training, equipment, and family support to ensure these forces are ready to serve effectively over the long term and across the full spectrum of operations.
- Provide clear estimates of resetting our units in each Service and Defense agency. Assess how long it will take and what resources will be necessary to regain full-spectrum capabilities across all our forces. We must make this issue a priority in our program and budget process and prepare to execute it in the long term without substantial support from supplemental funding.
- Improve the capabilities of our Reserve Component as it continues to become a more relevant contributor to the operational joint force. We must also ensure that it preserves a significant “strategic reserve” capability and capacity.
- With an understanding of its unique domestic responsibilities, support National Guard Bureau efforts to improve readiness, leverage existing forces, streamline organizations, and make units leaner, smaller, and more effective. We must likewise ensure that the National Guard preserves its own strategic reserve capability and capacity.
- Improve requirements, acquisition, and technology development efforts to ensure rapid, predictable delivery of needed combat capabilities to our warfighters.
- Develop and help integrate realistic, complementary, jointly interdependent, prioritized Service modernization plans.
- Develop implementation plans to ensure effective execution of pending Base Realignment and Closure and joint basing initiatives.
- Engage in the development of a broad-based, flexible, effective, and affordable joint military health care system that provides superb care for combat wounded (to include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder/traumatic brain injury patients), and improves wellness initiatives, military care, family care, and retiree care.
- Prepare plans, to include strategy-driven prioritization, in order to sustain and modernize our joint forces during a time of civilian administration transition and potential fiscal constraints.

3. *Properly balance global strategic risk.* We must stay mindful of our many global security commitments and of the core warfighting capabilities, resources, and partnerships required to conduct operations across the full spectrum of peace and conflict. A larger, longer view of risk assessment that helps us maintain a position of global leadership and preserves our freedom of action remains critical. I want the Joint Staff focused on rebalancing strategic risk.

The demands of current operations—however great—should not dominate our training exercises, education curricula, and readiness programs. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan will one day end. We must be ready for who—and what—comes after.

What “comes after” is hard to predict. Conflict in the future will most likely—but not exclusively—demand increased precision, speed, and agility. We may face state as well as nonstate enemies, including some who may only appear in cyberspace. The target could be America’s infrastructure and the new weapon could be a computer-generated attack on critical networks and systems. It could just as likely be a chemical, biological, or nuclear weapon of mass destruction.

Future war may therefore be borderless, or it could exist completely within the confines of small, urban areas. It may require of our people skills that they do not yet possess and capabilities we do not yet field. In some conflicts, information and nonkinetic means may prevail, while in other places at other times only “boots on the ground” and precisely delivered fires will carry the day.

The American people expect the Armed Forces to maintain sufficient capability and capacity to deter and, failing that, defeat all such military threats to their security and the security of our vital national interests: a homeland secure from attack; sustained global influence, leadership, and freedom of action; sustained strategic endurance and military superiority; flourishing global and national economies; assured access to strategic resources; and regional stability in the Middle East.

Where conflict threatens these interests, U.S. forces must be able to rapidly respond, providing political leadership with a range of options for deterrence, escalation, and de-escalation, in coordination with other elements of national and multinational power.

Therefore, we will:

- Develop—through the combatant commanders and in cooperation with our partners—integrated theater engagement plans that strengthen relationships with enduring allies, improve ties to emerging partners, and engage and better understand potential competitors.

- Build and reinvigorate relationships through Theater Security Cooperation with a focus on capacity-building, humanitarian assistance, regional frameworks for improving governance, and cooperation in enforcing the rule of law.

- Rapidly develop an enduring cultural, historical, and linguistic expertise in our total force to ensure effective interaction with diverse international partners.

- Establish and quickly achieve reasonable goals and expectations for deployment rotations of our Active, Reserve, and National Guard Bureau Components. For our Active forces, this deployment-to-dwell ratio should be no greater than 1 to 1 in the near term with a view toward an equilibrium level of 1 to 2 while at war.

- Since the vast majority of focus in people and capability resides in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility (and rightly so), work to rapidly rebalance this capability when conditions permit.

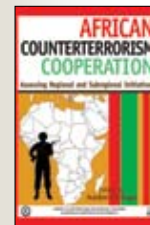
- Pursue a comprehensive approach to deterrence. Put in place a new concept of strategic deterrence for the 21st century in terms of training, equipping, theory, and practice appropriate to a range of state and nontraditional threats in both nuclear and conventional realms.

- Develop an effective military strategy for cyberspace to protect and defend against infrastructure attacks, reduce our vulnerabilities, and ensure our capability to operate in this vital realm.

Underpinning these priorities and strategic objectives is our responsibility to preserve the trust and confidence of the American people. To the degree we allow ourselves to disconnect from them, we allow the very foundation upon which our success rests to crumble—not only in terms of recruiting and resource allocation, but also in terms of the moral support so critical for the preservation of an all-volunteer force. Every action we take, every day, must be executed in a way that strengthens and sustains the public’s trust and confidence in our ability and our integrity.



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