



CJCS Guidance for 2008-2009

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance and direction to the Joint Staff for the accomplishment of priorities and strategic objectives for 2008-2009.

Intent

In my initial guidance for 2007-2008, I set three inter-related strategic priorities for our military. First, we must increase stability and defend our vital national interests in the broader Middle East. Second, we must reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our Armed Forces. Third, we will deter conflict and be prepared to defeat foes globally by rebalancing our strategic risk.

Assessment

We are a global force with global responsibilities and will continue to be so. The sustained presence and persistent engagement of our forces are the most effective way to develop the lasting relationships and cooperation necessary to secure our vital national interests. We have the most combat-hardened forces in history. Our Navy and Air Force are unmatched, although our advantage could easily slip. Reenlistments are up; the all-volunteer force is sound.

However, we cannot meet the challenges of today and those of tomorrow with military power alone. We must guard against further militarization of our foreign policy. To achieve our strategic objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan, to reset, reconstitute, and revitalize the force, and to rebalance strategic risk, it is vital that we not only develop our military capabilities, but also strengthen capacity of other government agencies and that of our foreign partners.

The Joint Staff must simultaneously think ahead at the strategic level, stay current at the operational level, and be informed by tactical developments. We must develop the ability to gather and maintain an unprecedented level of situational awareness—not only without being overwhelmed by it, but using it to develop and evaluate coherent long-range strategies. We are all still more reactive, rather than anticipatory.

Priorities and Strategic Objectives

Defend Our Vital National Interests In The Broader Middle East.

The Middle East, South and Central Asia (especially Afghanistan and Pakistan) form a geopolitical ribbon of violent extremism. This region transcends the traditionally defined geographic areas of the Middle East to include the countries of the Maghreb (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia), Yemen, and the Horn of Africa. Additionally, given the impact the countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan have on regional stability, they must be included as part of a comprehensive military strategy.

Combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan remain our immediate priority. We must do all we can to win these two wars. In short, a representative, stable, independent Iraq that is an ally and regional leader, and a representative, stable Afghanistan and Pakistan that are allies and cooperative members of the international community are critical to achieving regional stability and security. Achieving those end states will require years and the support of the American people, our allies and partners, and concerted action by the Iraqi, Afghan, and Pakistani people and their respective leaders.

I believe the nexus of terrorism and the proliferation of WMD remains the greatest threat to the U.S. and our vital national interests. Al Qaeda sanctuaries in the under-governed regions of Pakistan further contribute to regional instability. In the near term, Al Qaeda sanctuaries in Pakistan are the probable source of a terrorist attack on the homeland, as well as a significant source for Taliban insurgents fighting in Afghanistan. The continued confrontational posture of Iran and increasing potential for miscalculation in the Gulf is problematic.

To further this priority, we will:

1. Conduct a continuous assessment, including well-defined metrics and risks, of our Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran strategies and campaign plans.
2. Execute a broader Middle East military strategy to support the forging an overall national strategy for the region.
3. Finish work on complementary country-specific military strategies that support a broader Middle East military strategy.
4. Implement U.S. Security Coordinator (Israel-Palestinian Authority) changes.
5. Assess the implications of U.S.-Iraq security arrangements.

Reset, Reconstitute, and Revitalize our Forces.

To be successful in defeating our enemies and deterring potential foes, U.S. Armed Forces require talented people who are fully trained in their specialties and well equipped with warfighting systems. The pace of ongoing operations has prevented our forces from training for the full-spectrum of operations and impacts our ability to be ready to counter future threats. This lack of balance is unsustainable in the long-term. We must balance the strategic depth requirement for long-term national security against the pace of on-going operations. With overall force planning priorities in mind, reset and reconstitute the force to build strategic depth by 2015. We have been at war for almost seven years and I remain concerned that the high pace of operations will further degrade our warfighting systems, equipment, platforms, and people if we fail to deliver on initiatives such as grow the force and reset funding.

The President reduced the deployment length for active Army units to 12 months. This change will provide some relief to our ground forces. However, multiple deployments and insufficient dwell ratios continue to take a toll. We are still very close to a 1:1 dwell ratio and in some cases even less for our active Army and Marine Corps units. Many units have completed four or more deployments since 2002. We must move deliberately and prudently towards attaining 1:2 dwell ratio for the active Army and a 1:5 for the Guard and Reserve forces, with specific attention to high demand low-density units.

To further this priority, we will:

1. Identify and rapidly change peacetime processes to reflect a wartime footing within both the Joint Staff and in the Services.
2. I am concerned about Health of the Force metrics. We must continue to evaluate with output focused metrics the impact that initiatives such as dwell modifications and end-strength increases have on readiness and other Health of the Force metrics, to include personnel measures (e.g. suicide, divorce rates, disciplinary), recruiting, retention, and family support measures. Conduct quarterly sessions in the Tank with the Chiefs to review progress and risk mitigation opportunities.
3. Develop and execute options to increase the “enabling” forces identified by our operational analysis process and Combatant Commander requests.
4. Develop an understanding of the time and costs associated with reconstituting and revitalizing the total force, to include full spectrum training and family support measures.
5. Identify required changes in the way we care for our wounded and fallen and their families, execute a comprehensive campaign plan for implementation, and conduct quarterly sessions in the Tank with the Joint Chiefs to evaluate progress and implement risk mitigation strategies.
6. Support the development and funding of an operational reserve in our Guard and Reserve forces:
 - a. Continue support of Total Force integration policies.
 - b. Fund the requirements necessary to conduct Defense Support to Civil Authorities and homeland security.
 - c. Institute financial visibility and accountability of Reserve Component equipment to ensure adequate mission capability.
 - d. Increase mid-level officer and NCO manning to ensure adequate capability.

7. Accelerate and resource our cyberspace efforts—more skilled network operators, a robust global network infrastructure, and a force capable of continued operations while defending against cyber-attacks.
8. Conduct additional cost analysis to assess the following options vis-à-vis future DOD budgets:
 - a. Top line increase.
 - b. Zero top line increase.
 - c. Top line decrease.

Properly Balanced Global Strategic Risk.

We must take a global and long-term view of our posture and its implications for strategic risk. It is imperative that we remain capable of executing our war plans, and engaged around the world--building partner capacity, improving international and interagency cooperation, and fostering both security and stability. It is particularly crucial that we be alert to and deter threats during the period of transition as the national command authority stands up in the next administration.

The imbalance between our readiness for future global missions and the wars we are fighting today limits our capacity to respond to future contingencies, and offers potential adversaries, both state and non-state, incentives to act. I remain concerned, as are the Combatant Commanders and Joint Chiefs, that we lack the resources to meet all of our needs. We must maintain our strategic depth and create and sustain a high degree of readiness, especially the Air Force and Navy, to deter and, failing that, defeat all military threats to our vital national interests.

To further this priority, we will:

1. Work with the administration on way ahead for the National Military Strategy.
2. Support and assess the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review in accordance with Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 118.
3. Articulate a vision for the future force, including an estimate of future threats and the military requirements to counter those threats.
4. Assess the military level of planning and ability to respond to non-terrorism related transnational issues, particularly with respect to climate change, food, energy, water, and narcotics. Assess our level of expertise and planning on the Joint Staff and make recommendations for improvement.
5. Identify instruction, policy, and technology approaches that remove impediments to information sharing with each other, our partners and leverage our combined knowledge strengths.

6. Provide national security policymakers viable options for the employment of our Armed Forces during transition.
7. Identify and steward key issues, critical to securing our vital national interests, through the transition of presidential administrations in close coordination with the White House, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Services, and other interagency transition efforts.

Execution

The Joint Staff must be capable of responding at the speed my job requires, not the speed that a particular process currently allows. To that end, the Director of the Joint Staff (DJS) shall: 1) assign lead directorates and set due dates to meet the goals outlined herein, 2) ensure my priorities are assessed during monthly Strategic Reviews, and 3) provide amplifying direction to the Joint Directorates by 30 November 2008 that executes my guidance and direction. No process is sacrosanct—DJS shall break and redesign as needed—outcomes are what counts.

Conclusion

As I have stated before, underpinning my priorities is our responsibility to preserve the trust and confidence of the American people in the institution of the military. From our stewardship of scarce resources to the care we provide those who serve, our wounded, our fallen, and their families, every action must be above reproach and indicative of the high level of integrity the American people expect of us and deserve from us.

I am pleased with your performance and I recognize how hard you are working. Your superb efforts have informed my views, and your recommendations over a wide variety of issues have been crucial to providing my advice to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Congress. You have provided the analysis, developed the strategies, defended the budget, assessed the risks, and written the orders that have helped to sustain the joint force. Your professionalism has been exemplary. I also thank you for your support to the Combatant Commands, the Services, and the interagency. Our continued dedication to assuring the best, most informed military advice to our nation's leaders is vital. Let us continue to devote the full weight of our efforts to that task.



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