

# From the Chairman

## *Working Together: Modern Challenges Need “Whole-of-Nation” Effort*

**E**very morning as I walk to my office at the Pentagon, I pass a corridor that pays tribute to one of our Nation’s finest leaders, General Omar Bradley.

A consummate gentleman and warrior, Bradley played historic leadership roles in World War II and the Korean War and served as the very first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—casting a long shadow for his successors to follow. He also happened to be a superb strategic thinker who thought deeply about how the Nation must marshal

its resources—all of them—to overcome its gravest challenges.

Known as “the Soldier’s General,” he intuitively understood the limits of what the Soldiers he loved could—and could not—accomplish alone: “Battles are won by the infantry, the armor, the artillery, and air teams, by soldiers living in the rains and huddling in the snow. But wars are won by the great strength of a nation—the soldier and the civilian working together.”

General Bradley was right. But while many Americans associate his words with the unprecedented national effort the United States dedicated toward winning World War II, those words equally apply to another time of testing in our Nation’s history: the Cold War.

During this 40-year struggle, our Nation mounted a wide-ranging and comprehensive international effort to counter the Soviet Bloc. State Department diplomats, U.S. Agency for International Development administrators, Voice of America broadcasters, and Peace Corps volunteers, among many others, joined in this fight, and, just as importantly, represented America’s promise to the rest of the world.

And although these comprehensive efforts did not guarantee that we would succeed—or that our leadership would get every decision right in our struggle against

a tough and determined adversary—they undeniably contributed to our victory in the Cold War. As the Nation approaches its tenth consecutive year at war, General Bradley’s wisdom endures and his words are, quite frankly, worth revisiting.

Today, we are engaged in wars the military will not win alone. Just as we learned in Iraq, we are not going to kill our way to victory in Afghanistan.

In fact, when I contemplate our current and future conflicts, I have concluded that military power should not—maybe cannot—be the last resort of the state. There will certainly be times when the military, because of its flexibility and speed, may be the first, best tool to use. But it should never be the only tool.

More broadly, defense and diplomacy cannot be discrete choices, applied sequentially after the other fails, but rather must complement one another throughout the often complex and messy process of international relations.

And I would argue that in future struggles that involve counterinsurgency and asymmetric warfare, we should commit our troops only when other instruments of national power and our allies are ready to engage as well.

Right now, U.S. foreign policy is still too dominated by the military. As President Obama noted in his West Point speech announcing his strategy for Afghanistan, we can’t count on military might alone. We have to strengthen homeland security; we have to improve and better coordinate our intelligence; and we will have to use diplomacy, because no one nation can meet the challenges of an interconnected world acting alone.

This will require investment. Secretaries Clinton and Gates have called for more



Portrait of General Omar Bradley by Clarence Lamont MacNelly



Chairman answers questions during town hall meeting at U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan

funding and more emphasis on our soft power, and I could not agree with them more. Should we choose to exert American influence solely through our troops, we should expect to see that influence diminish in time.

Yet these challenges are not just budgetary; they are institutional. Generating civilian capacity in a war zone for agency employees who had no expectation that they would serve in such a capacity is no easy process. Identifying, training, and placing—and ultimately building—the right leaders for the right place at the right time, over time, will be critical to creating this civilian capacity overseas.

This process will not occur overnight, but we are seeing some progress in our efforts to take a “whole-of-government” approach in Afghanistan. Recently, I visited with the men and women serving at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. These professionals representing the 1,100 U.S. Government civilian employees currently serving in Afghanistan, as well as the 600 Afghan nationals working there, are, like our military, making great efforts and personal sacrifices at an important time in history.

They represent a critical part of our success.

Of course, Iraq and Afghanistan are not the only places where cooperation between civilians and Servicemembers is increasing. Both U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Southern Command have demonstrated

how integrating non-Department of Defense capacity can improve U.S. Government efforts including disaster response, counternarcotics interdiction, and theater security engagement. The enduring challenges we face don’t merely require a whole-of-government approach—they demand a “whole-of-nation” effort. And transparency, collaboration, and inclusiveness must be our watchwords if we want our long-term success to mirror that of previous generations like General Bradley’s.



Chairman holds shura with Afghan leaders in Marjah after troops pushed Taliban forces from area during Operation *Moshtarak*

As we think about enhancing our whole-of-nation efforts, important questions remain. What are the fundamentals in a campaign? How do we educate and train ourselves to build the capacity for a broad-based national effort? How do we work together before we are in a conflict? How do we plan together?

Many of these answers will come from you, leaders who have returned from Afghanistan and Iraq—leaders both military and civilian who have witnessed our progress *and* our setbacks. Leaders we need to listen to and learn from.

Because ultimately, the challenges that we face in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the world in general are not “DOD” issues or “State” issues or even American ones; they are *global*.

The future includes all of us. And safeguarding that future warrants a comprehensive effort using every instrument of power we have. Sometimes that first, best tool will be our military, but rarely should it serve alone. **JFQ**

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