



Chairman talks to Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets at University of Notre Dame, September 2014 (DOD/Daniel Hinton)

# From the Chairman

## The Posture Paradigm

For the first half of my 40 years in the military, we were largely a *readiness*-focused force. We deployed for exercises and demonstrations to send signals to the Soviet Union and to reassure allies. Certainly, we had forces forward based in Europe and the Pacific. But mostly we trained our forces in the continental United States, building readiness in case we had to fight “the big one.”

After the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain was furled in 1991, we reevaluated the cost and size of our military and changed our readiness-focused paradigm to a *presence*-focused one. Now the greater good was in avoiding

conflict—shaping, assuring, and deterring through forward presence. As soon as a Service had a unit ready, it deployed and it went someplace. The general mindset was that if we did not use it, we did not need it.

Today, with the number of complex global security issues we face growing and with resources shrinking, neither of these paradigms is adequate. A Joint Force with global responsibilities and finite resources must prioritize threats and balance today’s risks with tomorrow’s uncertainty.

This is not to suggest we must “do more with less.” Rather, in the highly dynamic security environment that we operate in, we must adapt how we lead,

engage, and posture around the world in a way that is more strategic and more sustainable.

### A More Agile Force

In developing strategy, we have stated that in the face of constrained resources, we are going to be more *agile* and more *innovative*. As we unpack these words, we challenge ourselves to see just how agile we currently are and identify innovative opportunities to become even more so. We can certainly improve our agility in decisionmaking; we tend to be very agile in a crisis but not as agile in our daily operations and long-range planning. We also need to be more agile



First Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, Soldiers review attack plan with Moldovan soldiers before situational training exercise at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, October 2014 (U.S. Army/Sarah Tate)

in the ways we manage our forces—that is, how we dynamically and purposefully employ assets around the globe. We must better identify opportunities that generate the greatest advantages and results using the right tools, in the right places, and with the right partners.

Most of our Joint Force works in either the realm of combatant commands or of the military Services. There is always tension managing the force. The combatant commands tend to want as much forward-positioned force structure as possible not only to shape, deter, and assure and but also to “fight tonight” if required. The Services want to support the demand, but they also have a responsibility to sustain the readiness and health of the force. This is a healthy tension in my view, but one that can get out of balance.

Becoming more agile requires finding sustainable ways to manage the global force to deter adversaries and reassure

allies while not destroying readiness. Concurrently, it means giving the combatant commands a clear understanding of what is possible in terms of resources, balanced with the needs of the Services to maintain a healthy force, as well as constantly assessing risk to mission and risk to force.

### A More Dynamic Global Operating Model

As we look back at the assumptions underlying the balance in our force posture since the end of the Cold War, it is clear our global posture is not—and should not be—immutable. Nor is it one size fits all. Posture evolves over time and should change to adapt to the global security environment and the threats that we face.

Accordingly, we are in the process of adapting our global force management mechanism from strictly demand-based

to something more resource-informed, thereby allowing the Joint Force to protect U.S. national security interests in ways that are different, more deliberate, and more sustainable.

At its core, this means determining the proper mix between *forward-presence forces* in geographic combatant commands and *surge forces* based in the continental United States and U.S. territories. We have kept an eye focused on forward, highly ready forces in part because we have grown accustomed to the big payoff. But now we have to reconsider our “stance” to ensure we maintain our “balance.”

This we know: our Joint Force must be able to dynamically reconfigure and move rapidly, integrating capabilities and partners across domains and boundaries not only to respond to emerging events, but also to surge ready forces from the continental United States or among geographic theaters to seize and maintain the initiative.

The details of how we are going to do this are very much part of the ongoing dialogue. We are discussing how to baseline theater presence, we are determining what innovative ways we can apply to maintain forward presence as we rebuild our readiness, and we are thinking about how best to prioritize capabilities to preserve flexibility. Any choices in these areas must improve our ability to seize opportunities that demonstrate U.S. leadership and strength to allies, partners, and adversaries.

I encourage you to become a part of this dialogue. The decisions we make now will define our future for decades to come, both in terms of how we react to crises and how we can help shape the international environment. JFQ

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