



## CJCS Guidance for 2009-2010

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### **Purpose**

21 December 2009

The purpose of this memorandum is to relay priorities for my strategic objectives through 2010. This document directs the Joint Staff and informs the Joint Force.

### **Intent**

The three priorities I established upon becoming Chairman continue to direct our course. We will improve stability and defend our vital national interests in the broader Middle East and South Central Asia. We will focus on Health-of-the-Force by considering holistically how to better prepare our force and care for our people. And, we will balance global strategic risks by deterring conflict, while always being prepared to act decisively should deterrence fail.

### **Brief Assessment**

Afghanistan has deteriorated in the last year, but reversing the Taliban's momentum is achievable. Pakistan has made progress in its fight against militants, but its internal security remains vital for us. Most critically, Iran's internal unrest, unpredictable leadership, and sponsorship of terrorism make it a regional and global concern—a concern heightened by its determined pursuit of nuclear weapons. A responsible drawdown in Iraq can cement past successes, bringing a better peace to a war torn country. Conditions on the ground there have improved dramatically, making our commitment to a responsible drawdown possible.

While Al Qaeda is weakened, its intent to attack the U.S. and our interests remains clear. The threat is still real. Globally, many extremists operate in loosely coupled networks and falsely claim to speak for the vast and peaceful religion of Islam. They are funded by criminal enterprises and by some governments who want to capitalize on their violence and hatred. Military activities can disrupt them, and buy time for diplomatic efforts and terrorism's inherent contradictions to cripple Al Qaeda. But, their eventual defeat requires the support of many global partners and a broad application of civil services--as well as support from those who represent the millions of Muslims seeking a positive future for their children.

## **Priorities and Strategic Objectives**

### **Defend Our Vital National Interests In The Broader Middle East and South Central Asia**

The goal of the President's Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategy is clear: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.

Our main effort now must be to push forces into the theater as quickly as possible--including shifting the balance of enablers from Iraq. We do not fight alone. Ally and partner contributions will speed our success. But combat leaders in all theaters and at all levels must continue to be both creative and efficient in force employment. How force is used often matters more than how much we have. We should extend wartime initiatives like the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell, Afghanistan-Pakistan Task Force, and the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program. Still, far too many of our daily practices do not match the speed of war.

We must continue to push our best talent forward and into the fight. I will take gaps in manning the Joint Staff in order to support the war. I expect Combatant Commanders and Services outside of CENTCOM to consistently make choices, however painful, that fully support the fight.

The President's Strategy sets us on an urgent course in the region. My engagements with Pakistan have convinced me of the importance of a long-term U.S. commitment. To achieve our strategic goals, we must deliver robust civilian and military assistance programs to the government of Pakistan. These and other initiatives will set the conditions for a more stable region and deny a safe haven to those who would do us harm.

In Iraq, there is reason for optimism. In accordance with the President's direction, we will end our combat mission by August 31, 2010, and our forces will transition to advising and training Iraqi security forces as well as providing force protection. Our efforts and those of our allies and partners, coupled with the demonstrated commitment of the Iraqi people, have increased security and stability in Iraq. Drawing down must be closely managed. Lingering tensions could flash. But sustained security gains to date and Iraq's continued progress have placed it on a positive course for the future. We must finish well in Iraq.

The President's efforts at engagement, UN actions, and regional initiatives have given Iran's rulers ample incentive to cease developing nuclear arms. No resolution is yet in sight, but I fully support the effort to focus on diplomatic solutions to existing tensions. My belief remains that political means are the best tools to attain regional security and that military force

will have limited results. However, should the President call for military options, we must have them ready.

The broader Middle East and South Central Asia will remain important to the security of the United States for years to come. Strengthening professional relationships with our regional counterparts is thus essential to addressing our shared interests. Consistency, patience, and respect should guide our long term engagement.

### **Health-of-the-Force**

As a global force with global responsibilities, we shoulder a heavy burden. While we remain the most capable military in the world, the stress on our forces and the strain on our families are real. Deployed forces from our Active and Reserve Components and National Guard will remain high, exacerbating these concerns even further. Though we have made progress, we will not see marked improvements in the ground force dwell time until 2011. Health-of-force goes beyond our people—our systems and capabilities are under extraordinary stress as well, and resetting and reconstituting the force will take significant time and resources.

Our core responsibility is to win wars while caring for our people and their families. They are the heart and soul of our formations, our fleets, and our air expeditionary wings, and our incredible fighting spirit. As a Nation, we have a solemn obligation to support fully, across the spectrum of need, our service men and women, standing and fallen, and their families. As leaders, we must ensure that all receive the care, counseling, training, and financial support they need to become self-sufficient and lead productive and fulfilling lives. We have not yet done enough here, particularly in research and care for the unique wounds of our current wars. We must accelerate our efforts while connecting with community based efforts throughout America. To understand the way forward, we will conduct an independent assessment of the progress—and setbacks—in the care of our warriors over the last two years. We owe this to our warriors who have given the Nation so much.

Our culture must value and support a continuum of care that lasts for a lifetime, and encompasses military members, retirees, and their families. Making that culture shift will require constant attention and cooperation between myself and the Chiefs, and close work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Department of Veteran Affairs.

I am concerned that we still do not have a holistic and clear way of measuring all the components of health-of-the-force, ranging from unit readiness, training, and age of weapon systems to retention/recruiting and personnel challenges, like suicide or divorce. In measures like dwell time, we still do not have sufficient fidelity below the unit level, down to

the impacts on individuals and families. We do not yet have a common understanding of the time and costs to reset and reconstitute our forces—but just how fast and how well we reset will become a driver for global risk. We must make all of these a higher priority.

The country faces mounting deficits and growing debt. That will require difficult budget decisions for our government. As we carry out our assigned missions and reset a tired force, we must guard against growing hollow. The quality of the force remains paramount.

That our people continue to excel under stress and strain is a testament to our remarkable military culture and core values, as well as great support from the Congress and many of our fellow citizens. Professionalism, standards of conduct, discipline, mutual respect and mutual support are the basis of our resiliency. We must sustain the strength of character that is the heart of our armed forces. It is a strength that comes from the remarkable diversity of the citizens we protect. As always, first class training and elite leaders will be imperative. We must continue to emphasize and improve the diversity of our military across ethnic and gender lines, especially for the officer corps.

I remain concerned that the pace of operations prevents us from training for the entire range of war and erodes our ability to counter future threats. Current operations place at risk our ability to generate additional ground forces for another contingency, should one arise.

Ensuring the health-of-the-force will require a broad set of flexible capabilities that deter aggression globally. With this in mind, we must make wise investments in our fleets, formations, and aerial systems (manned and unmanned), and especially in the capabilities that tie them together. We have important steps ahead to return our units to the desired levels of readiness, articulate vital national interests, and determine the best mix of capabilities and programs to protect those interests. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq will end, and we must think today about how the US military will need to adapt to future threats. The health-of-the-force investments that we make today will pay dividends in national security tomorrow and well into the next generation.

### **Properly Balanced Global Strategic Risk**

Properly balancing global strategic risk begins with appreciating the complexity of our current security environment. Geographically, that means understanding the criticality of the Pacific Rim, of Africa, and our own hemisphere. It means monitoring the spread of technology that could empower new threats. And it means appreciating the fundamental need to secure the global commons: sea, air, space and cyberspace. This year's Chairman's Risk Assessment and National Military Strategy will frame our

approach to defending our nation against the full range of threats and addressing our own vulnerabilities.

Increasingly, freedom of movement and peaceful use of the global commons are being challenged as well as exploited by transnational threats—among them terrorism, proliferation, natural disasters, illicit trafficking, piracy and cyber attacks. We have given the cyber domain more organizational effort. But we must put more resources—intellectual, money, and people—into accelerating development of our cyber capabilities and integrating them into our daily operations. Impeded progress here is a serious risk in our national security posture.

Tensions also persist between nations as they compete for energy, water and other scarce resources. Climate change and environmental degradation increase these tensions, putting pressure on vulnerable populations while changing our operating space, in the Arctic and elsewhere. We do not yet understand the military implications of the changing global environment, and must examine them closely to be ready.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technology is a pressing concern. We must continue to work with the international community in the areas of counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, and crisis response to ensure the safety of nuclear arsenals and to prevent enabling technologies, materials and know-how from falling into the wrong hands.

Critical to balancing global risk are improving processes to assess it. We need to listen more carefully to the Combatant Commanders, cross-level their views of threats and opportunities, and independently convey the risks involved to executing plans with available forces. I expect us to constantly improve here, with better mechanisms for coordinating between the Joint Staff, the Services, and Combatant Commanders across geographic and functional boundaries. We must build a common understanding of global risk, regardless of where we sit.

In the near term, we will maintain focus on regular and irregular threats to vital national interests and to our forces directly in harm's way. We must continue to build proficiency in irregular warfare while restoring the balance and strategic depth required to assure national security. This means finding the right size, shape, and posture to globally detect, deter, and defeat current and future threats. Enhancing deterrence is critical in balancing our global risk, and updating our warning processes is essential. We must rethink what deterrence means where familiar problems are coupled with transnational, non-state and proliferation threats. Increasing our pool of talented minds to address these issues is critical, and we should look outside traditional frameworks for solutions.

Persistent global engagement underpins our strategic priorities. It supports our allies and partners through programs abroad and at home—programs that are best conducted hand-in-hand with our interagency, commercial partners, and non-governmental organizations to achieve sustainable results. Our capacity building efforts are good examples of long-term investments that bolster security and stability by helping emerging powers become constructive actors. Enduring international relationships are essential to our strategic priorities, global security and stability, and securing our vital national interests. Our military must be capable of reassuring our allies while tempering potential adversaries' offensive designs, by imposing prohibitive costs on those who would destabilize the commons or attack our interests.

### **Conclusion**

In providing my best military advice over the past two years, I have emphasized that military activities must support rather than lead foreign policy. We have learned from the past eight years of war that we serve best when we are part of an approach that employs all elements of national power. By operating hand-in-hand with allies and partners, supporting the interagency, and working outside organizations, we will provide the Nation with the security the Constitution guarantees.

Thank you for your superb performance during a critical time in our Nation's history. Your sustained and unwavering investment of intellect, time, and energy has enabled me to provide my very best advice to the President and the Secretary of Defense.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. G. Mullen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

M. G. MULLEN  
Admiral, U.S. Navy