The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015

The United States Military's Contribution To National Security

June 2015

Chairman's Foreword

Today's global security environment is the most unpredictable I have seen in 40 years of service. Since the last National Military Strategy was published in 2011, global disorder has significantly increased while some of our comparative military advantage has begun to erode. We now face multiple, simultaneous security challenges from traditional state actors and transregional networks of sub-state groups – all taking advantage of rapid technological change. Future conflicts will come more rapidly, last longer, and take place on a much more technically challenging battlefield. They will have increasing implications to the U.S. homeland.

This National Military Strategy describes how we will employ our military forces to protect and advance our national interests. We must be able to rapidly adapt to new threats while maintaining comparative advantage over traditional ones. Success will increasingly depend on how well our military instrument can support the other instruments of power and enable our network of allies and partners.

The 2015 NMS continues the call for greater agility, innovation, and integration. It reinforces the need for the U.S. military to remain globally engaged to shape the security environment and to preserve our network of alliances. It echoes previous documents in noting the imperative within our profession to develop leaders of competence, character, and consequence.

But it also asserts that the application of the military instrument of power against state threats is very different than the application of military power against non-state threats. We are more likely to face prolonged campaigns than conflicts that are resolved quickly…that control of escalation is becoming more difficult and more important…and that as a hedge against unpredictability with reduced resources, we may have to adjust our global posture.

Despite what is likely to be a difficult future, we are blessed to be able to count on the young Americans who choose to serve, to live an uncommon life, and to defend their fellow citizens. Our focus must remain that they are the best-led and best-equipped force in the world. The 2015 National Military Strategy of the United States offers a blueprint towards that end.

This 2015 National Military Strategy addresses the need to counter revisionist states that are challenging international norms as well as violent extremist organizations (VEOs) that are undermining transregional security. We are working with allies and partners to deter, deny, and – when necessary – defeat potential state adversaries. Concurrently, we are leading multiple coalition efforts to disrupt, degrade, and defeat VEOs. Central to these efforts is strengthening our global network of allies and partners. This integrated strategy requires us to conduct synchronized operations around the globe, implement institutional reforms at home, and sustain the capabilities, capacity, and readiness required to prevail in conflicts that may differ significantly in scope, scale, and duration.

I. The Strategic Environment

Complexity and rapid change characterize today's strategic environment, driven by globalization, the diffusion of technology, and demographic shifts.

Globalization is impacting nearly every aspect of human activity. People, products, and information are flowing across borders at unprecedented speed and volume, acting as catalysts for economic development while also increasing societal tensions, competition for resources, and political instability.

Central to globalization is the spread of new technologies that enable a global information environment and empower people to see more, share more, create more, and organize faster than ever before. Individuals and groups today have access to more information than entire governments once possessed. They can swiftly organize and act on what they learn, sometimes leading to violent change. States, meanwhile, are using information sharing to develop advanced capabilities of their own. When applied to military systems, this diffusion of technology is challenging competitive advantages long held by the United States such as early warning and precision strike.

KEY FACTORS

- Globalization
- Diffusion of technology
- Demographic shifts

These changes are amplified by shifting demographics. Youth populations are rapidly growing in Africa and the Middle East, regions that face resource shortages, struggling economies, and deep social fissures. Meanwhile, populations in Europe and across northern Asia are set to decline and get older. Around the world, millions of people are flowing from the countryside into cities in search of work where they are exposed to cultural differences, alienation, and disease. They also are moving across borders and seas in growing numbers, accepting great risk and placing strain on nations that receive them.

Despite these changes, states remain the international system's dominant actors. They are preeminent in their capability to harness power, focus human endeavors, and provide security. Most states today — led by the United States, its allies, and partners — support the established institutions and processes dedicated to preventing conflict, respecting sovereignty, and furthering human rights. Some states, however, are attempting to revise key aspects of the international order and are acting in a manner that threatens our national security interests.

While Russia has contributed in select security areas, such as counternarcotics and counterterrorism, it also has repeatedly demonstrated that it does not respect the sovereignty of its neighbors and it is willing to use force to achieve its goals. Russia's military actions are undermining regional security directly and through proxy forces. These actions violate numerous agreements that Russia has signed in which it committed to act in accordance with international norms, including the UN Charter, Helsinki Accords, Russia-NATO Founding Act, Budapest Memorandum, and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

Iran also poses strategic challenges to the international community. It is pursuing nuclear and missile delivery technologies despite repeated United Nations Security Council resolutions demanding that it cease such efforts. It is a state-sponsor of terrorism that has undermined stability in many nations, including Israel, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Iran's actions have destabilized the region and brought misery to countless people while denying the Iranian people the prospect of a prosperous future.

North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technologies also contradicts repeated demands by the international community to cease such efforts. These capabilities directly threaten its neighbors, especially the Republic of Korea and Japan. In time, they will threaten the U.S. homeland as well. North Korea also has conducted cyber attacks, including causing major damage to a U.S. corporation.

We support China's rise and encourage it to become a partner for greater international security. However, China's actions are adding tension to the Asia-Pacific region. For example, its claims to nearly the entire South China Sea are inconsistent with international law. The international community continues to call on China to settle such issues cooperatively and without coercion. China has responded with aggressive land reclamation efforts that will allow it to position military forces astride vital international sea lanes.

None of these nations are believed to be seeking direct military conflict with the United States or our allies. Nonetheless, they each pose serious security concerns which the international community is working to collectively address by way of common policies, shared messages, and coordinated action.

As part of that effort, we remain committed to engagement with all nations to communicate our values, promote transparency, and reduce the potential for miscalculation. Accordingly, we continue to invest in a substantial military-to-military relationship with China and we remain ready to engage Russia in areas of common interest, while urging both nations to settle their disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law.

Concurrent with state challenges, violent extremist organizations (VEOs) — led by al Qaida and the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) — are working to undermine transregional security, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. Such groups are dedicated to radicalizing populations, spreading violence, and leveraging terror to impose their visions of societal organization. They are strongest where governments are weakest, exploiting people trapped in fragile or failed states. In many locations, VEOs coexist with transnational criminal organizations, where they conduct illicit trade and spread corruption, further undermining security and stability.

In this complex strategic security environment, the U.S. military does not have the luxury of focusing on one challenge to the exclusion of others. It must provide a full range of military options for addressing both revisionist states and VEOs. Failure to do so will result in greater risk to our country and the international order.

II. The Military Environment

The United States is the world's strongest nation, enjoying unique advantages in technology, energy, alliances and partnerships, and demographics. However, these advantages are being challenged.

For the past decade, our military campaigns primarily have consisted of operations against violent extremist networks. But today, and into the foreseeable future, we must pay greater attention to challenges posed by state actors. They increasingly have the capability to contest regional freedom of movement and threaten our homeland. Of particular concern are the proliferation of ballistic missiles, precision strike technologies, unmanned systems, space and cyber capabilities, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – technologies designed to counter U.S. military advantages and curtail access to the global commons.

Emerging technologies are impacting the calculus of deterrence and conflict management by increasing uncertainty and compressing decision space. For example, attacks on our communications and sensing systems could occur with little to no warning, impacting our ability to assess, coordinate, communicate, and respond. As a result, future conflicts between states may prove to be unpredictable, costly, and difficult to control.

VEOs are taking advantage of emergent technologies as well, using information tools to propagate destructive ideologies, recruit and incite violence, and amplify the perceived power of their movements. They advertise their actions to strike fear in opponents and generate support for their causes. They use improvised explosive devices (IED), suicide vests, and tailored cyber tools to spread terror while seeking ever more sophisticated capabilities, including WMD.

Today, the probability of U.S. involvement in interstate war with a major power is assessed to be low but growing. Should one occur, however, the consequences would be immense. VEOs, in contrast, pose an immediate threat to transregional security by coupling readily available technologies with extremist ideologies. Overlapping state and non-state violence, there exists an area of conflict where actors blend techniques, capabilities, and resources to achieve their objectives. Such "hybrid" conflicts may consist of military forces assuming a non-state identity, as Russia did in the Crimea, or involve a VEO fielding rudimentary combined arms capabilities, as ISIL has demonstrated in Iraq and Syria. Hybrid conflicts also may be comprised of state and non-state actors working together toward shared objectives, employing a wide range of weapons such as we have witnessed in eastern Ukraine. Hybrid conflicts serve to increase ambiguity, complicate decision-making, and slow the coordination of effective responses. Due to these advantages to the aggressor, it is likely that this form of conflict will persist well into the future.

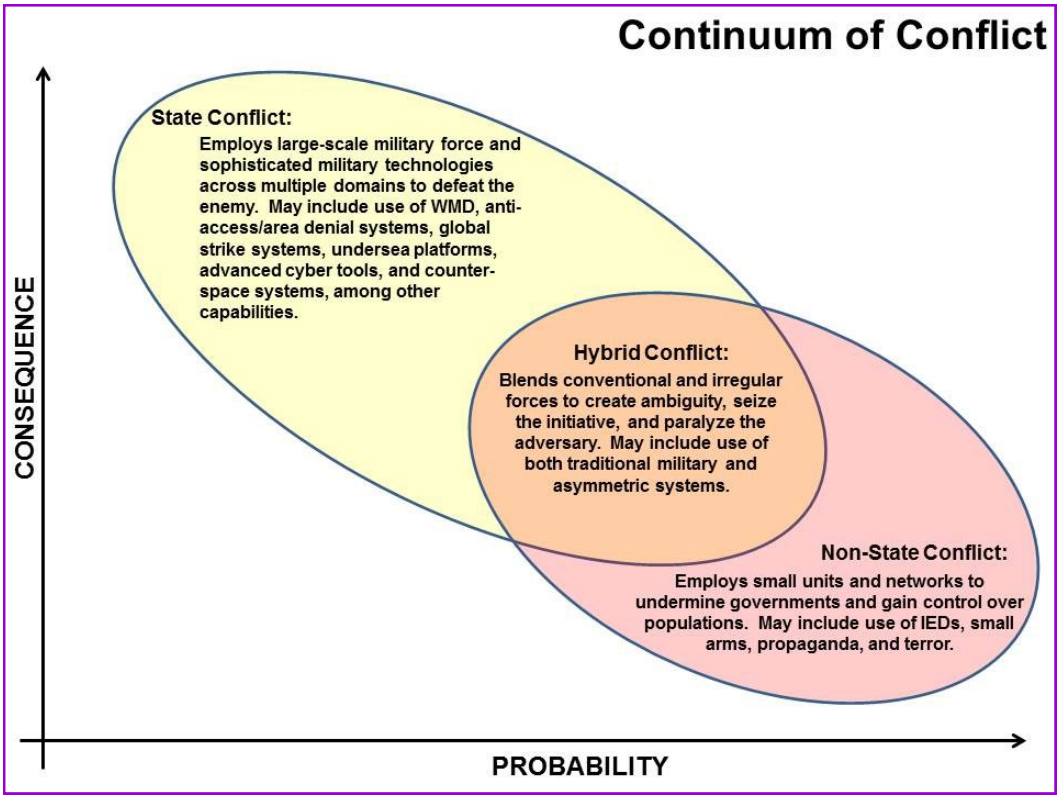

Figure 1. Continuum of Conflict

III. An Integrated Military Strategy

The U.S. military's purpose is to protect our Nation and win our wars. We do this through military operations to defend the homeland, build security globally, and project power and win decisively. Our military supports diplomatic, informational, and economic activities that promote our enduring national interests. As detailed in the 2015 National Security Strategy, our enduring national interests are: the security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and a rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.

U.S. ENDURING NATIONAL INTERESTS

- The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners.
- A strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity.
- Respect for universal values at home and around the world.
- A rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.

NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

- The survival of the Nation.
- The prevention of catastrophic attack against U.S. territory.
- The security of the global economic system.
- The security, confidence, and reliability of our allies.
- The protection of American citizens abroad.
- The preservation and extension of universal values.

NATIONAL MILITARY OBJECTIVES

- Deter, deny, and defeat state adversaries.
- Disrupt, degrade, and defeat violent extremist organizations.
- Strengthen our global network of allies and partners.

From the enduring national interests, the U.S. military has derived National Security Interests (NSIs) to prioritize its missions. The NSIs are: the survival of the Nation; the prevention of catastrophic attack against U.S. territory; the security of the global economic system; the security, confidence, and reliability of our allies; the protection of American citizens abroad; and the preservation and extension of universal values. NSIs guide military leaders in providing recommendations on when and where our Nation should use military force, the type and degree of force to employ, and at what cost.

To secure these interests, this National Military Strategy provides an integrated approach composed of three National Military Objectives: to deter, deny, and defeat state adversaries; to disrupt, degrade, and defeat VEOs; and to strengthen our global network of allies and partners. The U.S. military pursues these objectives by conducting globally integrated operations, implementing institutional reforms at home, and sustaining the capabilities, capacity, and readiness required to prevail in conflicts that may differ significantly in scope, scale, and duration.

These NMOs support the force planning guidance prescribed in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review. It states that our Nation requires a U.S. military with the capacity, capability, and readiness to simultaneously defend the homeland; conduct sustained, distributed counterterrorist operations; and, in multiple regions, deter aggression and assure allies through forward presence and engagement. If deterrence fails, at any given time, our military will be capable of defeating a regional adversary in a large-scale, multi-phased campaign while denying the objectives of — or imposing unacceptable costs on — another aggressor in a different region.

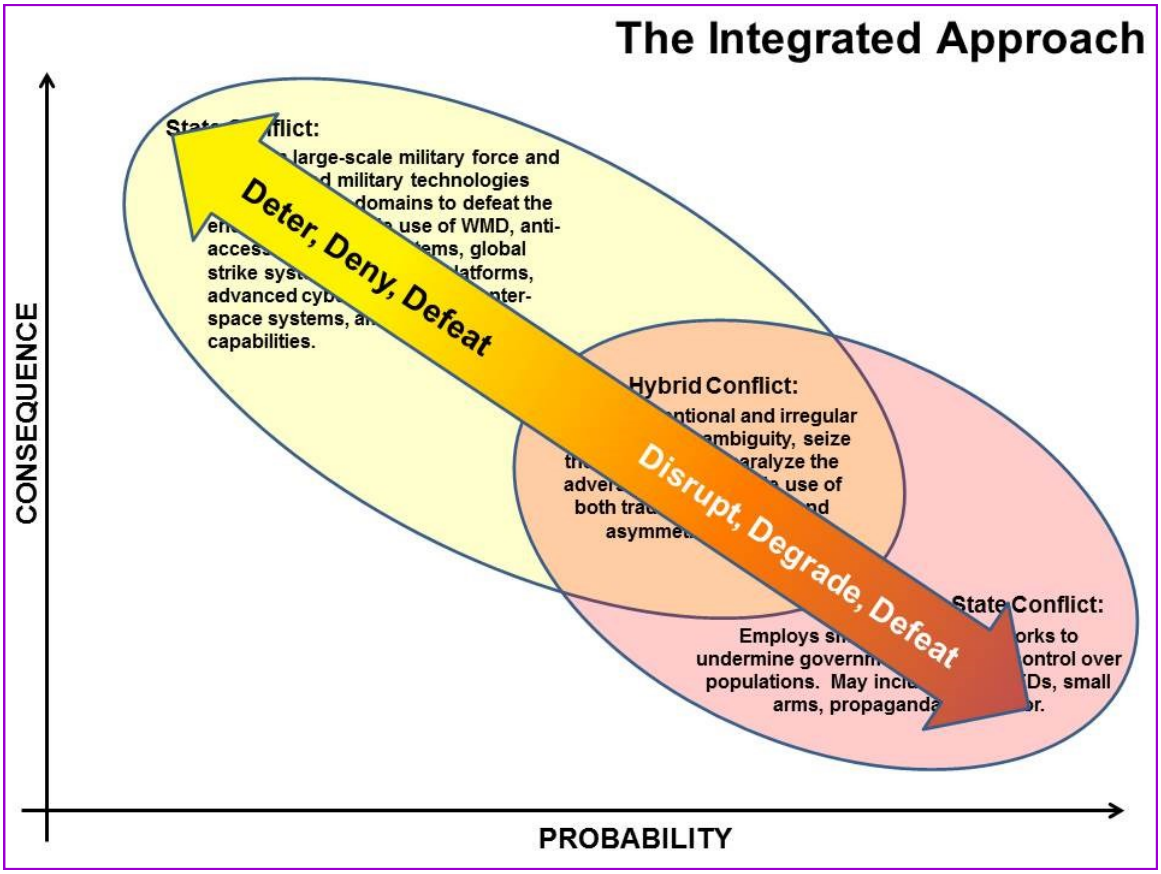

Figure 2. The Integrated Approach

A. Deter, Deny, and Defeat State Adversaries

The U.S. military is the world's preeminent Joint Force. It supports the Nation by providing a full range of options to protect the homeland and our interests while assuring the security of our allies. The U.S. military deters aggression by maintaining a credible nuclear capability that is safe, secure, and effective; conducting forward engagement and operations; and maintaining Active, National Guard, and Reserve forces prepared to deploy and conduct operations of sufficient scale and duration to accomplish their missions. Forward deployed, rotational, and globally responsive forces regularly demonstrate the capability and will to act. Should deterrence fail to prevent aggression, the U.S. military stands ready to project power to deny an adversary's objectives and decisively defeat any actor that threatens the U.S. homeland, our national interests, or our allies and partners.

Deterring a direct attack on the United States and our allies is a priority mission, requiring homeland and regional defenses tied to secure conventional and nuclear strike capabilities. Thus U.S. strategic forces remain always ready. U.S. military defenses are enhanced by our North American Aerospace Defense Command Agreement with Canada and close cooperation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. These homeland defense partnerships are complemented by growing investments in the cyber realm designed to protect vital networks and infrastructure.

In case of aggression, denying adversaries their goals will be an immediate objective. This places special emphasis on maintaining highly-ready forces forward, as well as well trained and equipped surge forces at home, resilient logistics and transportation infrastructures, networked intelligence, strong communications links, and interoperability with allies and partners. Timely interagency planning and coordination also will be leveraged to develop holistic options that serve to integrate all elements of national power.

Should any actor directly attack the United States or our interests, the U.S. military will take action to defend our Nation. We are prepared to project power across all domains to stop aggression and win our Nation's wars by decisively defeating adversaries. While we prefer to act in concert with others, we will act unilaterally if the situation demands. In the event of an attack, the U.S. military will respond by inflicting damage of such magnitude as to compel the adversary to cease hostilities or render it incapable of further aggression. War against a major adversary would require the full mobilization of all instruments of national power and, to do so, the United States sustains a full-spectrum military that includes strong Reserve and National Guard forces. They provide the force depth needed to achieve victory while simultaneously deterring other threats.

B. Disrupt, Degrade, and Defeat VEOs

Today, the United States is leading a broad coalition of nations to defeat VEOs in multiple regions by applying pressure across the full extent of their networks.

In concert with all elements of national power and international partnerships, these efforts aim to disrupt VEO planning and operations, degrade support structures, remove leadership, interdict finances, impede the flow of foreign fighters, counter malign influences, liberate captured territory, and ultimately defeat them. In support of these efforts, we are widely distributing U.S. military forces and leveraging globally integrated command and control processes to enable transregional operations.

Credible regional partners are vital to sustaining counter-VEO campaigns. The U.S. military contributes select combat forces, enabling technologies, and training in support of local partners that provide the majority of forces necessary to restore and secure their homelands. Timelines for these campaigns generally are long. Therefore, they must be conducted in a politically, financially, and militarily sustainable manner that optimizes the power of coalitions, as we are demonstrating in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In Afghanistan, the United States and our NATO partners are teaming with the National Unity Government to provide security by way of the Resolute Support mission, working toward establishing a long-term counterterrorism partnership. Similarly, in Iraq a broad coalition of over 60 nations is providing security assistance, training, airlift, and strike support in its struggle against ISIL.

Defeating VEOs also requires an appreciation of the nexus between such groups and transnational criminal organizations. A fuller understanding of that relationship will allow us to disrupt illicit funds, weapons, and fighters that are flowing into conflict-ridden regions. Such knowledge also will allow us to work with law enforcement officials to more effectively protect our homeland from terrorists.

Defeating VEOs ultimately requires providing security and economic opportunities to at-risk populations. Thus counter-VEO campaigns demand that our military, in close coordination with other U.S. agencies and international organizations, assist local governments in addressing the root causes of conflict. As part of that effort, the U.S. military regularly contributes to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief endeavors aimed at alleviating suffering and restoring hope.

C. Strengthen Our Global Network of Allies and Partners

America's global network of allies and partners is a unique strength that provides the foundation for international security and stability. These partnerships also facilitate the growth of prosperity around the world, from which all nations benefit.

As we look to the future, the U.S. military and its allies and partners will continue to protect and promote shared interests. We will preserve our alliances, expand partnerships, maintain a global stabilizing presence, and conduct training, exercises, security cooperation activities, and military-to-military engagement. Such activities increase the capabilities and capacity of partners, thereby enhancing our collective ability to deter aggression and defeat extremists.

The presence of U.S. military forces in key locations around the world underpins the international order and provides opportunities to engage with other countries while positioning forces to respond to crises. Therefore we will press forward with the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, placing our most advanced capabilities and greater capacity in that vital theater. We will strengthen our alliances with Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. We also will deepen our security relationship with India and build upon our partnerships with New Zealand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. Such efforts are essential to maintaining regional peace and building capabilities to provide for missile defense, cyber security, maritime security, and disaster relief.

In Europe, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our NATO allies. NATO provides vital collective security guarantees and is strategically important for deterring conflict, particularly in light of recent Russian aggression on its periphery. U.S. Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE, our European Reassurance Initiative, NATO's Readiness Action Plan, and the many activities, exercises, and investments contained in them serve to underline our dedication to alliance solidarity, unity, and security. We also will continue to support our NATO partners to increase their interoperability with U.S. forces and to provide for their own defense.

In the Middle East, we remain fully committed to Israel's security and Qualitative Military Edge. We also are helping other vital partners in that region increase their defenses, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Egypt, and Pakistan. Additionally, we are working to strengthen institutions across Africa, aimed at fostering stability, building peacekeeping capacity, and countering transregional extremism. And the U.S. military is supporting interagency efforts with Latin American and Caribbean states to promote regional stability and counter transnational criminal organizations.

Combined training and exercises increase the readiness of our allies and partners while enhancing the interoperability and responsiveness of U.S. forces. With advanced partners like NATO, Australia, Japan, and Korea, our exercises emphasize sophisticated capabilities such as assuring access to contested environments and deterring and responding to hybrid conflicts. With other partners, training often focuses on improving skills in counterterrorism, peacekeeping, disaster relief, support to law enforcement, and search and rescue.

Security cooperation activities are at the heart of our efforts to provide a stabilizing presence in forward theaters. These build relationships that serve mutual security interests. They also develop partner military capabilities for self-defense and support to multinational operations. Through such activities, we coordinate with other U.S. agencies and mission partners to build cultural awareness and affirm relationships that increase regional stability.

D. Advance Globally Integrated Operations

The execution of integrated operations requires a Joint Force capable of swift and decisive force projection around the world. As detailed in the "Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020," globally integrated operations emphasize eight key components: employing mission command; seizing, retaining, and exploiting the initiative; leveraging global agility; partnering; demonstrating flexibility in establishing joint forces; improving cross-domain synergy; using flexible, low-signature capabilities; and being increasingly discriminate to minimize unintended consequences. Such operations rely upon a global logistics and transportation network, secure communications, and integrated joint and partner intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.

In executing globally integrated operations, U.S. military forces work closely with international and interagency partners to generate strategic options for our Nation. In doing so, military commanders use the following prioritization of military missions to advise our national leaders:

Maintain a Secure and Effective Nuclear Deterrent. U.S. strategic forces are kept at the highest state of readiness, always prepared to respond to threats to the homeland and our vital interests. Accordingly, we are investing to sustain and modernize our nuclear enterprise. We continue to implement the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and 2011 New START Treaty while ensuring our national defense needs are met. Concurrently, we are enhancing our command and control capabilities for strategic and regional nuclear forces.

Provide for Military Defense of the Homeland. Emerging state and non-state capabilities pose varied and direct threats to our homeland. Thus we are striving to interdict attack preparations abroad, defend against limited ballistic missile attacks, and protect cyber systems and physical infrastructure. Key homeland defense capabilities include resilient space-based and terrestrial indications and warning systems; an integrated intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination architecture; a Ground-Based Interceptor force; a Cyber Mission Force; and, ready ground, air and naval forces. We also are leveraging domestic and regional partnerships to improve information sharing and unity of effort. These capabilities will better defend us against both high technology threats and terrorist dangers.

Defeat an Adversary. In the event of an attack against the United States or one of its allies, the U.S. military along with allies and partners will project power across multiple domains to decisively defeat the adversary by compelling it to cease hostilities or render its military incapable of further aggression.

Provide a Global, Stabilizing Presence. The presence of U.S. military forces in key locations around the world underpins the security of our allies and partners, provides stability to enhance economic growth and regional integration, and positions the Joint Force to execute emergency actions in response to a crisis.

Combat Terrorism. Terrorism is a tactic VEOs use to advance their interests. The best way to counter VEOs is by way of sustained pressure using local forces augmented by specialized U.S. and coalition military strengths such as ISR, precision strike, training, and logistical support. Counterterrorism operations also involve coordinated efforts with other U.S. agencies, working together to interdict and disrupt threats targeting the U.S. homeland.

JOINT FORCE PRIORITIZED MISSIONS

- Maintain a secure and effective nuclear deterrent
- Provide for military defense of the homeland
- Defeat an adversary
- Provide a global, stabilizing presence
- Combat terrorism
- Counter weapons of mass destruction
- Deny an adversary's objectives
- Respond to crisis and conduct limited contingency operations
- Conduct military engagement and security cooperation
- Conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations
- Provide support to civil authorities
- Conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster response

Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction. Nuclear, chemical, and biological agents pose uniquely destructive threats. They can empower a small group of actors with terrible destructive potential. Thus combatting WMD as far from our homeland as possible is a key mission for the

U.S. military. Toward that end, we team with multinational and U.S. interagency partners to locate, track, interdict, and secure or destroy WMD, its components, and the means and facilities needed to make it, wherever possible.

Deny an Adversary's Objectives. Denying an adversary's goals or imposing unacceptable costs is central to achieving our objectives. This puts emphasis on maintaining highly-ready, forward-deployed forces, well trained and equipped surge forces at home, robust transportation infrastructure and assets, and reliable and resilient communications links with allies and partners. These capabilities provide the means to curtail crises before they can escalate.

Respond to Crisis and Conduct Limited Contingency Operations. Another form of power projection is teaming with partners to conduct limited contingency operations. Such operations may involve flowing additional U.S. forces and capabilities to a given region to strengthen deterrence, prevent escalation, and reassure allies. Additionally, the U.S. military sustains ready forces around the world to defend our citizens and protect diplomatic facilities.

Conduct Military Engagement and Security Cooperation. The U.S. military strengthens regional stability by conducting security cooperation activities with foreign defense establishments. Such activities support mutual security interests, develop partner capabilities for self-defense, and prepare for multinational operations. Strengthening partners is fundamental to our security, building strategic depth for our national defense.

Conduct Stability and Counterinsurgency Operations. The U.S. military also remains ready to conduct limited stability operations when required, working with interagency, coalition, and host-nation forces. Such efforts emphasize unique elements of our forces: civil-military affairs teams, building partner capacity, information support teams, and cultural outreach programs.

Provide Support to Civil Authorities. When man-made or natural disasters impact the United States, our military community offers support to civil authorities in concert with other U.S. agencies. As part of that effort, we integrate military and civil capabilities through FEMA's National Planning System and National Exercise Program. During domestic events, U.S. military forces — including National Guard and Reserve units — provide trained personnel, communications capabilities, lift, and logistical and planning support. They work alongside civilian first-responders to mitigate the impact of such incidents and keep our citizens safe.

Conduct Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response. Over the years, U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen have quickly and effectively delivered life-sustaining aid to desperate people all around the world. Such efforts sometimes last only a few weeks. At other times, they last much longer. In all cases, taking action to relieve suffering reflects our professional ethos and the values in which we believe.

E. Resourcing the Strategy

We will not realize the goals of this 2015 National Military Strategy without sufficient resources. Like those that came before it, this strategy assumes a commitment to projecting global influence, supporting allies and partners, and maintaining the All-Volunteer Force. To execute this strategy, the U.S. military requires a sufficient level of investment in capacity, capabilities, and readiness so that when our Nation calls, our military remains ready to deliver success.

IV. Joint Force Initiatives

The U.S. Joint Force combines people, processes, and programs to execute globally integrated operations and achieve our National Military Objectives. This requires innovative leaders, optimized decision-making, and advanced military capabilities.

A. People and the Profession of Arms: Improving Upon Our Greatest Advantage

Our military and civilian professionals are our decisive advantage. They are the foundation of our operational excellence and our ability to successfully innovate. Therefore, we are dedicated to building creative, adaptive professionals skilled at leading organizational change while operating in complexity. To accomplish this, we are evolving our organizational culture and strengthening our leadership.

FOSTERING INNOVATION

- Producing creative, adaptive leaders
- Adopting efficient, dynamic processes
- Developing flexible, interoperable capabilities

As we look to future challenges, the U.S. military will remain ready to meet unanticipated demands. We must prepare our Service members to fight under conditions of complexity and persistent danger, conditions that demand courage, toughness, adaptability, and endurance as well as an abiding commitment to our Nation's values and professional military ethic.

We are prioritizing leader development. To retain our warfighting edge, we are stressing innovative leader development across the All-Volunteer Force — officer, enlisted,

and civilian — through a combination of training, education, broad experience, and opportunity. These elements build the expertise that is the wellspring of innovation. Toward that end, our training increasingly blends physical and virtual experiences to simulate contested environments and operations in denied or degraded conditions. Our military education system also is updating how it selects and incentivizes faculty, rewards critical thought, and promotes our most innovative minds. Continuous, demanding education inspires new ideas and identifies better ways to accomplish our missions.

In developing the Joint leaders of tomorrow, we emphasize six attributes. Our leaders will:

- Strive to understand the environment in which they operate and the effect of applying all instruments of national power
- Anticipate and adapt to surprise, uncertainty, and chaos
- Work to recognize change and lead transitions
- Operate on intent through trust, empowerment, and understanding
- Make ethical decisions based on the shared values of the Profession of Arms
- Think critically and strategically in applying joint warfighting principles and concepts to joint operations

We are adapting our organizational culture. To enhance our warfighting capability, we must attract, develop, and retain the right people at every echelon. Central to this effort is understanding how society is changing. Today's youth grow up in a thoroughly connected environment. They are comfortable using technology and interactive social structures to solve problems. These young men and women are tomorrow's leaders and we need their service. Therefore, the U.S. military must be willing to embrace social and cultural change to better identify, cultivate, and reward such talent.

To do so, we are exploring how our personnel policies and promotion practices must evolve to leverage 21st century skills. We are seeking new ways to attract people with valuable civilian sector experience. We also are experimenting with giving military personnel greater access to civilian innovation practices through flexible career options. In this effort, the Reserve Components provide a critical bridge to the civilian population, infusing the Joint Force with unique skills and diverse perspectives. Also critical to building the best military possible are our efforts to further integrate women across the force by providing them greater opportunities for service.

We are promoting ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is central to protecting and strengthening our military family. This requires cultivating a professional climate that

reinforces our respect for core values, promotes accountability, and appreciates the contributions of every member of our professional community. To help us meet these goals, we are moving forward with a campaign of trust that stresses mutual respect and emphasizes the importance of a positive culture enhanced by quality programs for sexual assault prevention and response, suicide prevention, and high-risk behavior avoidance.

B. Processes: Capturing Innovation and Efficiencies

Agile, efficient, and focused processes are means to accomplish our strategic objectives. Such processes include promoting greater interoperability with joint, interagency, and international partners while encouraging action through decentralized execution.

We are conducting resource-informed planning. For nearly a generation, we have consumed readiness as quickly as we have generated it. As a result, our long-term readiness has declined. Therefore, we are taking action to better balance achieving our operational goals with sustaining ready surge forces at home. We are revising operational plans to be more flexible, creative, and integrated across Combatant Commands. We also are providing the Services with time to reset, modernize, and replace vital equipment. Our goal is to strengthen deterrence while ensuring the long-term viability of our full-spectrum power projection capacity. Additionally, we are more fully coordinating requirements, plans, and operational execution at home and abroad to maximize collective capabilities against common concerns. And we are using tailored forces that deploy for limited timeframes to execute specific missions, recognizing that "campaign persistence" is necessary against determined adversaries.

We are improving our global agility. The ability to quickly aggregate and disaggregate forces anywhere in the world is the essence of global agility. We are striving to increase our agility by improving campaign planning, sustaining a resilient global posture, and implementing dynamic force management processes that adjust presence in anticipation of events, to better seize opportunities, deter adversaries, and assure allies and partners. We also are more fully sharing forces among Combatant Commands to address transregional threats. We are positioning forces where they are most needed, exemplified by our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region as well as our evolving presence in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. We also are updating international agreements to assure access and provide legal protection for our people. Such agreements allow us to strengthen the relationships that are the foundation of trust.

We are demanding greater effectiveness and efficiencies. In a resource-constrained environment, we are striving to be careful stewards of our resources. Programmatic discipline by the Services has never been more important, as it is vital to generating economic

efficiencies. We are working to sustain our industrial base while seeking savings through the Department of Defense's Better Buying Power 3.0 initiative. We are selectively using contractor support when it best serves the mission. We also are reducing staffs, streamlining functions, eliminating redundancies, and producing more integrated and effective organizations.

C. Programs: Sustaining Our Quality Edge

Effective programs enable our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen to fight and win. Delivering next-generation programs on schedule and within cost is vital, as our current systems increasingly are being challenged by adversary capabilities. To win against the diverse range of state and non-state threats confronting us, we must think innovatively, challenge assumptions, and embrace change.

We are improving joint interoperability. We are in the process of defining the next set of interoperability standards for future capabilities. In view of the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) challenges we increasingly face, our future force will have to operate in contested environments. Key to assuring such access will be deploying secure, interoperable systems between Services, allies, interagency, and commercial partners. Priority efforts in that regard are establishing a Joint Information Environment (JIE), advancing globally integrated logistics, and building an integrated Joint ISR Enterprise. The results of these initiatives — particularly the enhanced connectivity and cybersecurity provided by the JIE — will provide the foundation for future interoperability.

We are investing to enhance decisive advantages. Future capabilities must sustain our ability to defend the homeland and project military power globally. Important investments to counter A2/AD, space, cyber, and hybrid threats include: space and terrestrial-based indications and warning systems, integrated and resilient ISR platforms, strategic lift, long-range precision strike weapons, missile defense technologies, undersea systems, remotely operated vehicles and technologies, special operations forces, and the Cyber Mission Force, among others. We also are improving our global sustainment capabilities and upgrading our command and control infrastructure to better support widely dispersed operations. We are modernizing our nuclear enterprise and working to protect our Nation against asymmetric threats.

To improve institutional agility, we are expanding relations with American businesses, including many of the most innovative companies in the world, to learn their best practices. Further, we are aligning our programmatic efforts to take advantage of insights gleaned from the Defense Innovation Initiative, which is aimed at identifying potential strategic and operational advantages through wargaming, concept development, and a wide array of technology investments.

As we develop new capabilities to counter threats along the continuum of conflict, we also must procure sufficient capacity and readiness to sustain our global responsibilities. This may include evolving traditional platforms. Or it may require developing entirely new systems that are affordable and flexible. In all cases, our programs must allow us to quickly adapt, to counter adversaries employing unexpected techniques or weapons.

V. Conclusion

This 2015 National Military Strategy provides an overview of our strategic challenges and details how we will employ the Joint Force to keep our Nation, allies, and partners safe.

It is a strategy that recognizes the increasing complexity of the global environment, driven by rapid and profound change. It also acknowledges our significant advantages, our commitment to international norms, the importance of our allies and partners, and the powerful allure of freedom and human dignity.

When placed in balance against the challenges before us, these strengths will serve us well and help us achieve a more secure future.

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