Summary of the

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National Defense Strategy

of

The United States of America

Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Strategic Environment 2

Department of Defense Objectives 4

Strategic Approach 4

- Build a More Lethal Force 5
- Strengthen Alliances and Attract New Partners 8
- Reform the Department for Greater Performance and Affordability 10

Conclusion 11

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Defense's enduring mission is to provide combat-credible military forces needed to deter war and protect the security of our nation. Should deterrence fail, the Joint Force is prepared to win. Reinforcing America's traditional tools of diplomacy, the Department provides military options to ensure the President and our diplomats negotiate from a position of strength.

Today, we are emerging from a period of strategic atrophy, aware that our competitive military advantage has been eroding. We are facing increased global disorder, characterized by decline in the long-standing rules-based international order—creating a security environment more complex and volatile than any we have experienced in recent memory. Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.

China is a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea. Russia has violated the borders of nearby nations and pursues veto power over the economic, diplomatic, and security decisions of its neighbors. As well, North Korea's outlaw actions and reckless rhetoric continue despite United Nation's censure and sanctions. Iran continues to sow violence and remains the most significant challenge to Middle East stability. Despite the defeat of ISIS's physical caliphate, threats to stability remain as terrorist groups with long reach continue to murder the innocent and threaten peace more broadly.

This increasingly complex security environment is defined by rapid technological change, challenges from adversaries in every operating domain, and the impact on current readiness from the longest continuous stretch of armed conflict in our Nation's history. In this environment, there can be no complacency—we must make difficult choices and prioritize what is most important to field a lethal, resilient, and rapidly adapting Joint Force. America's military has no preordained right to victory on the battlefield.

This unclassified synopsis of the classified *2018 National Defense Strategy* articulates our strategy to compete, deter, and win in this environment. The reemergence of long-term strategic competition, rapid dispersion of technologies, and new concepts of warfare and competition that span the entire spectrum of conflict require a Joint Force structured to match this reality.

A more lethal, resilient, and rapidly innovating Joint Force, combined with a robust constellation of allies and partners, will sustain American influence and ensure favorable balances of power that safeguard the free and open international order. Collectively, our force posture, alliance and partnership architecture, and Department modernization will provide the capabilities and agility required to prevail in conflict and preserve peace through strength.

The costs of not implementing this strategy are clear. Failure to meet our defense objectives will result in decreasing U.S. global influence, eroding cohesion among allies and partners, and reduced access to markets that will contribute to a decline in our prosperity and standard of living. Without sustained and predictable investment to restore readiness and modernize our military to make it fit for our time, we will rapidly lose our military advantage, resulting in a Joint Force that has legacy systems irrelevant to the defense of our people.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The *National Defense Strategy* acknowledges an increasingly complex global security environment, characterized by overt challenges to the free and open international order and the re-emergence of long-term, strategic competition between nations. These changes require a clear-eyed appraisal of the threats we face, acknowledgement of the changing character of warfare, and a transformation of how the Department conducts business.

The central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security is the *reemergence of long-term, strategic competition* by what the National Security Strategy classifies as revisionist powers. It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model—gaining veto authority over other nations' economic, diplomatic, and security decisions.

China is leveraging military modernization, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. As China continues its economic and military ascendance, asserting power through an all-of-nation long-term strategy, it will continue to pursue a military modernization program that seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future. The most far-reaching objective of this defense strategy is to set the military relationship between our two countries on a path of transparency and non-aggression.

Concurrently, Russia seeks veto authority over nations on its periphery in terms of their governmental, economic, and diplomatic decisions, to shatter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and change European and Middle East security and economic structures to its favor. The use of emerging technologies to discredit and subvert democratic processes in Georgia, Crimea, and eastern Ukraine is concern enough, but when coupled with its expanding and modernizing nuclear arsenal the challenge is clear.

Another change to the strategic environment is a *resilient, but weakening, post-WWII international order*. In the decades after fascism's defeat in World War II, the United States and its allies and partners constructed a free and open international order to better safeguard their liberty and people from aggression and coercion. Although this system has evolved since the end of the Cold War, our network of alliances and partnerships remain the backbone of global security. China and Russia are now undermining the international order from within the system by exploiting its benefits while simultaneously undercutting its principles and "rules of the road."

Rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran are destabilizing regions through their pursuit of nuclear weapons or sponsorship of terrorism. North Korea seeks to guarantee regime survival and increased leverage by seeking a mixture of nuclear, biological, chemical, conventional, and unconventional weapons and a growing ballistic missile capability to gain coercive influence over South Korea, Japan, and the United States. In the Middle East, Iran is competing with its neighbors, asserting an arc of influence and instability while vying for regional hegemony, using state-sponsored terrorist activities, a growing network of proxies, and its missile program to achieve its objectives.

Both revisionist powers and rogue regimes are competing across all dimensions of power. They have increased efforts short of armed conflict by expanding coercion to new fronts, violating principles of sovereignty, exploiting ambiguity, and deliberately blurring the lines between civil and military goals.

Challenges to the U.S. military advantage represent another shift in the global security environment. For decades the United States has enjoyed uncontested or dominant superiority in every operating domain. We could generally deploy our forces when we wanted, assemble them where we wanted, and operate how we wanted. Today, every domain is contested—air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace.

We face an ever more lethal and disruptive battlefield, combined across domains, and conducted at increasing speed and reach—from close combat, throughout overseas theaters, and reaching to our homeland. Some competitors and adversaries seek to optimize their targeting of our battle networks and operational concepts, while also using other areas of competition short of open warfare to achieve their ends (e.g., information warfare, ambiguous or denied proxy operations, and subversion). These trends, if unaddressed, will challenge our ability to deter aggression.

The security environment is also affected by *rapid technological advancements and the changing character of war.* The drive to develop new technologies is relentless, expanding to more actors with lower barriers of entry, and moving at accelerating speed. New technologies include advanced computing, "big data" analytics, artificial intelligence, autonomy, robotics, directed energy, hypersonics, and biotechnology—the very technologies that ensure we will be able to fight and win the wars of the future.

New commercial technology will change society and, ultimately, the character of war. The fact that many technological developments will come from the commercial sector means that state competitors and non-state actors will also have access to them, a fact that risks eroding the conventional overmatch to which our Nation has grown accustomed. Maintaining the Department's technological advantage will require changes to industry culture, investment sources, and protection across the National Security Innovation Base.

States are the principal actors on the global stage, but *non-state actors* also threaten the security environment with increasingly sophisticated capabilities. Terrorists, trans-national criminal organizations, cyber hackers and other malicious non-state actors have transformed global affairs with increased capabilities of mass disruption. There is a positive side to this as well, as our partners in sustaining security are also more than just nation-states: multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations, corporations, and strategic influencers provide opportunities for collaboration and partnership. Terrorism remains a persistent condition driven by ideology and unstable political and economic structures, despite the defeat of ISIS's physical caliphate.

It is now undeniable that the *homeland is no longer a sanctuary*. America is a target, whether from terrorists seeking to attack our citizens; malicious cyber activity against personal, commercial, or government infrastructure; or political and information subversion. New threats to commercial and military uses of space are emerging, while increasing digital connectivity of all aspects of life, business, government, and military creates significant vulnerabilities. During conflict, attacks against our critical defense, government, and economic infrastructure must be anticipated.

Rogue regimes, such as North Korea, continue to seek out or develop *weapons of mass destruction* (WMD) – nuclear, chemical, and biological – as well as long range missile capabilities and, in some cases, proliferate these capabilities to malign actors as demonstrated by Iranian ballistic missile exports. Terrorists likewise continue to pursue WMD, while the spread of nuclear weapon technology and advanced manufacturing technology remains a persistent problem. Recent advances in bioengineering raise another concern, increasing the potential, variety, and ease of access to biological weapons.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OBJECTIVES

In support of the *National Security Strategy*, the Department of Defense will be prepared to defend the homeland, remain the preeminent military power in the world, ensure the balances of power remain in our favor, and advance an international order that is most conducive to our security and prosperity.

Long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities for the Department, and require both increased and sustained investment, because of the magnitude of the threats they pose to U.S. security and prosperity today, and the potential for those threats to increase in the future. Concurrently, the Department will sustain its efforts to deter and counter rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran, defeat terrorist threats to the United States, and consolidate our gains in Iraq and Afghanistan while moving to a more resource-sustainable approach.

Defense objectives include:

- Defending the homeland from attack;
- Sustaining Joint Force military advantages, both globally and in key regions;
- Deterring adversaries from aggression against our vital interests;
- Enabling U.S. interagency counterparts to advance U.S. influence and interests;
- Maintaining favorable regional balances of power in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere;
- Defending allies from military aggression and bolstering partners against coercion, and fairly sharing responsibilities for common defense;
- Dissuading, preventing, or deterring state adversaries and non-state actors from acquiring, proliferating, or using weapons of mass destruction;
- Preventing terrorists from directing or supporting external operations against the United States homeland and our citizens, allies, and partners overseas;
- Ensuring common domains remain open and free;
- Continuously delivering performance with affordability and speed as we change Departmental mindset, culture, and management systems; and
- Establishing an unmatched twenty-first century National Security Innovation Base that effectively supports Department operations and sustains security and solvency.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

A long-term strategic competition requires the seamless integration of multiple elements of national power—diplomacy, information, economics, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and military. More than any other nation, America can expand the competitive space, seizing the initiative to challenge our competitors where we possess advantages and they lack strength. A more lethal force, strong alliances and partnerships, American technological innovation, and a culture of performance will generate decisive and sustained U.S. military advantages.

As we expand the competitive space, we continue to offer competitors and adversaries an outstretched hand, open to opportunities for cooperation but from a position of strength and based on our national interests. Should cooperation fail, we will be ready to defend the American people, our values, and interests. The willingness of rivals to abandon aggression will depend on their perception of U.S. strength and the vitality of our alliances and partnerships.

Be strategically predictable, but operationally unpredictable. Deterring or defeating long-term strategic competitors is a fundamentally different challenge than the regional adversaries that were the focus of previous strategies. Our strength and integrated actions with allies will demonstrate our commitment to deterring aggression, but our dynamic force employment, military posture, and operations must introduce unpredictability to adversary decision-makers. With our allies and partners, we will challenge competitors by maneuvering them into unfavorable positions, frustrating their efforts, precluding their options while expanding our own, and forcing them to confront conflict under adverse conditions.

Integrate with U.S. interagency. Effectively expanding the competitive space requires combined actions with the U.S. interagency to employ all dimensions of national power. We will assist the efforts of the Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, Energy, Homeland Security, Commerce, USAID, as well as the Intelligence Community, law enforcement, and others to identify and build partnerships to address areas of economic, technological, and informational vulnerabilities.

Counter coercion and subversion. In competition short of armed conflict, revisionist powers and rogue regimes are using corruption, predatory economic practices, propaganda, political subversion, proxies, and the threat or use of military force to change facts on the ground. Some are particularly adept at exploiting their economic relationships with many of our security partners. We will support U.S. interagency approaches and work by, with, and through our allies and partners to secure our interests and counteract this coercion.

Foster a competitive mindset. To succeed in the emerging security environment, our Department and Joint Force will have to out-think, out-maneuver, out-partner, and out-innovate revisionist powers, rogue regimes, terrorists, and other threat actors.

We will expand the competitive space while pursuing three distinct lines of effort:

- First, rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal Joint Force;
- Second, strengthening alliances as we attract new partners; and
- Third, reforming the Department's business practices for greater performance and affordability.

Build a More Lethal Force

The surest way to prevent war is to be prepared to win one. Doing so requires a competitive approach to force development and a consistent, multiyear investment to restore warfighting readiness and field a lethal force. The size of our force matters. The Nation must field sufficient, capable forces to defeat enemies and achieve sustainable outcomes that protect the American people and our vital interests. Our aim is a Joint Force that possesses decisive advantages for any likely conflict, while remaining proficient across the entire spectrum of conflict.

Prioritize preparedness for war. Achieving peace through strength requires the Joint Force to deter conflict through preparedness for war. During normal day-to-day operations, the Joint Force will sustainably compete to: deter aggression in three key regions—the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and Middle East; degrade terrorist and WMD threats; and defend U.S. interests from challenges below the level of armed conflict. In wartime, the fully mobilized Joint Force will be capable of: defeating aggression by a major power; deterring opportunistic aggression elsewhere; and disrupting imminent terrorist and WMD threats. During peace or in war, the Joint Force will deter nuclear and non-nuclear strategic attacks and defend the homeland. To support these missions, the Joint Force must gain and maintain information superiority; and develop, strengthen, and sustain U.S. security relationships.

Modernize key capabilities. We cannot expect success fighting tomorrow's conflicts with yesterday's weapons or equipment. To address the scope and pace of our competitors' and adversaries' ambitions and capabilities, we must invest in modernization of key capabilities through sustained, predictable budgets. Our backlog of deferred readiness, procurement, and modernization requirements has grown in the last decade and a half and can no longer be ignored. We will make targeted, disciplined increases in personnel and platforms to meet key capability and capacity needs. The *2018 National Defense Strategy* underpins our planned fiscal year 2019-2023 budgets, accelerating our modernization programs and devoting additional resources in a sustained effort to solidify our competitive advantage.

- *Nuclear forces*. The Department will modernize the nuclear triad—including nuclear command, control, and communications, and supporting infrastructure. Modernization of the nuclear force includes developing options to counter competitors' coercive strategies, predicated on the threatened use of nuclear or strategic non-nuclear attacks.

- *Space and cyberspace as warfighting domains*. The Department will prioritize investments in resilience, reconstitution, and operations to assure our space capabilities. We will also invest in cyber defense, resilience, and the continued integration of cyber capabilities into the full spectrum of military operations.

- *Command, control, communications, computers and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR).* Investments will prioritize developing resilient, survivable, federated networks and information ecosystems from the tactical level up to strategic planning. Investments will also prioritize capabilities to gain and exploit information, deny competitors those same advantages, and enable us to provide attribution while defending against and holding accountable state or non-state actors during cyberattacks.

- *Missile defense*. Investments will focus on layered missile defenses and disruptive capabilities for both theater missile threats and North Korean ballistic missile threats.

- *Joint lethality in contested environments*. The Joint Force must be able to strike diverse targets inside adversary air and missile defense networks to destroy mobile power-projection platforms. This will include capabilities to enhance close combat lethality in complex terrain.

- *Forward force maneuver and posture resilience*. Investments will prioritize ground, air, sea, and space forces that can deploy, survive, operate, maneuver, and regenerate in all domains while under attack. Transitioning from large, centralized, unhardened infrastructure to smaller, dispersed, resilient, adaptive basing that include active and passive defenses will also be prioritized.

- *Advanced autonomous systems*. The Department will invest broadly in military application of autonomy, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, including rapid application of commercial breakthroughs, to gain competitive military advantages.

- *Resilient and agile logistics*. Investments will prioritize prepositioned forward stocks and munitions, strategic mobility assets, partner and allied support, as well as non-commercially dependent distributed logistics and maintenance to ensure logistics sustainment while under persistent multi-domain attack.

Evolve innovative operational concepts. Modernization is not defined solely by hardware; it requires change in the ways we organize and employ forces. We must anticipate the implications of new technologies on the battlefield, rigorously define the military problems anticipated in future conflict, and foster a culture of experimentation and calculated risk-taking. We must anticipate how competitors and adversaries will employ new operational concepts and technologies to attempt to defeat us, while developing operational concepts to sharpen our competitive advantages and enhance our lethality.

Develop a lethal, agile, and resilient force posture and employment. Force posture and employment must be adaptable to account for the uncertainty that exists in the changing global strategic environment. Much of our force employment models and posture date to the immediate post-Cold War era, when our military advantage was unchallenged and the primary threats were rogue regimes.

- *Dynamic Force Employment*. Dynamic Force Employment will prioritize maintaining the capacity and capabilities for major combat, while providing options for proactive and scalable employment of the Joint Force. A modernized Global Operating Model of combat-credible, flexible theater postures will enhance our ability to compete and provide freedom of maneuver during conflict, providing national decision-makers with better military options.

  The global strategic environment demands increased strategic flexibility and freedom of action. The Dynamic Force Employment concept will change the way the Department uses the Joint Force to provide proactive and scalable options for priority missions. Dynamic Force Employment will more flexibly use ready forces to shape proactively the strategic environment while maintaining readiness to respond to contingencies and ensure long-term warfighting readiness.

- *Global Operating Model*. The Global Operating Model describes how the Joint Force will be postured and employed to achieve its competition and wartime missions. Foundational capabilities include: nuclear; cyber; space; C4ISR; strategic mobility, and counter WMD proliferation. It comprises four layers: contact, blunt, surge, and homeland. These are, respectively, designed to help us compete more effectively below the level of armed conflict; delay, degrade, or deny adversary aggression; surge war-winning forces and manage conflict escalation; and defend the U.S. homeland.

Cultivate workforce talent. Recruiting, developing, and retaining a high-quality military and civilian workforce is essential for warfighting success. Cultivating a lethal, agile force requires more than just new technologies and posture changes; it depends on the ability of our warfighters and the Department workforce to integrate new capabilities, adapt warfighting approaches, and change

business practices to achieve mission success. The creativity and talent of the American warfighter is our greatest enduring strength, and one we do not take for granted.

- *Professional Military Education (PME).* PME has stagnated, focused more on the accomplishment of mandatory credit at the expense of lethality and ingenuity. We will emphasize intellectual leadership and military professionalism in the art and science of warfighting, deepening our knowledge of history while embracing new technology and techniques to counter competitors. PME will emphasize independence of action in warfighting concepts to lessen the impact of degraded/lost communications in combat. PME is to be used as a strategic asset to build trust and interoperability across the Joint Forces and with allied and partner forces.

- *Talent management.* Developing leaders who are competent in national-level decision-making requires broad revision of talent management among the Armed Services, including fellowships, civilian education, and assignments that increase understanding of interagency decision-making processes, as well as alliances and coalitions.

- *Civilian workforce expertise.* A modern, agile, information-advantaged Department requires a motivated, diverse, and highly skilled civilian workforce. We will emphasize new skills and complement our current workforce with information experts, data scientists, computer programmers, and basic science researchers and engineers—to use information, not simply manage it. The Department will also continue to explore streamlined, non-traditional pathways to bring critical skills into service, expanding access to outside expertise, and devising new public-private partnerships to work with small companies, start-ups, and universities.

Strengthen Alliances and Attract New Partners

Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to our strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric strategic advantage that no competitor or rival can match. This approach has served the United States well, in peace and war, for the past 75 years. Our allies and partners came to our aid after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and have contributed to every major U.S.-led military engagement since. Every day, our allies and partners join us in defending freedom, deterring war, and maintaining the rules which underwrite a free and open international order.

By working together with allies and partners we amass the greatest possible strength for the long-term advancement of our interests, maintaining favorable balances of power that deter aggression and support the stability that generates economic growth. When we pool resources and share responsibility for our common defense, our security burden becomes lighter. Our allies and partners provide complementary capabilities and forces along with unique perspectives, regional relationships, and information that improve our understanding of the environment and expand our options. Allies and partners also provide access to critical regions, supporting a widespread basing and logistics system that underpins the Department's global reach.

We will strengthen and evolve our alliances and partnerships into an extended network capable of deterring or decisively acting to meet the shared challenges of our time. We will focus on three elements for achieving a capable alliance and partnership network:

- *Uphold a foundation of mutual respect, responsibility, priorities, and accountability.* Our alliances and coalitions are built on free will and shared responsibilities. While we will unapologetically represent America's values and belief in democracy, we will not seek to impose our way of life by force. We will uphold our commitments and we expect allies and partners to contribute an equitable share to our mutually beneficial collective security, including effective investment in modernizing their defense capabilities. We have shared responsibilities for resisting authoritarian trends, contesting radical ideologies, and serving as bulwarks against instability.

- *Expand regional consultative mechanisms and collaborative planning.* We will develop new partnerships around shared interests to reinforce regional coalitions and security cooperation. We will provide allies and partners with a clear and consistent message to encourage alliance and coalition commitment, greater defense cooperation, and military investment.

- *Deepen interoperability.* Each ally and partner is unique. Combined forces able to act together coherently and effectively to achieve military objectives requires interoperability. Interoperability is a priority for operational concepts, modular force elements, communications, information sharing, and equipment. In consultation with Congress and the Department of State, the Department of Defense will prioritize requests for U.S. military equipment sales, accelerating foreign partner modernization and ability to integrate with U.S. forces. We will train to high-end combat missions in our alliance, bilateral, and multinational exercises.

Enduring coalitions and long-term security partnerships, underpinned by our bedrock alliances and reinforced by our allies' own webs of security relationships, remain a priority:

- *Expand Indo-Pacific alliances and partnerships.* A free and open Indo-Pacific region provides prosperity and security for all. We will strengthen our alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific to a networked security architecture capable of deterring aggression, maintaining stability, and ensuring free access to common domains. With key countries in the region, we will bring together bilateral and multilateral security relationships to preserve the free and open international system.

- *Fortify the Trans-Atlantic NATO Alliance.* A strong and free Europe, bound by shared principles of democracy, national sovereignty, and commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is vital to our security. The alliance will deter Russian adventurism, defeat terrorists who seek to murder innocents, and address the arc of instability building on NATO's periphery. At the same time, NATO must adapt to remain relevant and fit for our time—in purpose, capability, and responsive decision-making. We expect European allies to fulfill their commitments to increase defense and modernization spending to bolster the alliance in the face of our shared security concerns.

- *Form enduring coalitions in the Middle East.* We will foster a stable and secure Middle East that denies safe havens for terrorists, is not dominated by any power hostile to the United States, and that contributes to stable global energy markets and secure trade routes. We will develop enduring coalitions to consolidate gains we have made in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, to support the lasting defeat of terrorists as we sever their sources of strength and counterbalance Iran.

- *Sustain advantages in the Western Hemisphere.* The U.S. derives immense benefit from a stable, peaceful hemisphere that reduces security threats to the homeland. Supporting the U.S. interagency lead,

the Department will deepen its relations with regional countries that contribute military capabilities to shared regional and global security challenges.

- *Support relationships to address significant terrorist threats in Africa.* We will bolster existing bilateral and multilateral partnerships and develop new relationships to address significant terrorist threats that threaten U.S. interests and contribute to challenges in Europe and the Middle East. We will focus on working by, with, and through local partners and the European Union to degrade terrorists; build the capability required to counter violent extremism, human trafficking, trans-national criminal activity, and illegal arms trade with limited outside assistance; and limit the malign influence of non-African powers.

Reform the Department for Greater Performance and Affordability

The current bureaucratic approach, centered on exacting thoroughness and minimizing risk above all else, is proving to be increasingly unresponsive. We must transition to a culture of performance where results and accountability matter. We will put in place a management system where leadership can harness opportunities and ensure effective stewardship of taxpayer resources. We have a responsibility to gain full value from every taxpayer dollar spent on defense, thereby earning the trust of Congress and the American people.

Deliver performance at the speed of relevance. Success no longer goes to the country that develops a new technology first, but rather to the one that better integrates it and adapts its way of fighting. Current processes are not responsive to need; the Department is over-optimized for exceptional performance at the expense of providing timely decisions, policies, and capabilities to the warfighter. Our response will be to prioritize speed of delivery, continuous adaptation, and frequent modular upgrades. We must not accept cumbersome approval chains, wasteful applications of resources in uncompetitive space, or overly risk-averse thinking that impedes change. Delivering performance means we will shed outdated management practices and structures while integrating insights from business innovation.

Organize for innovation. The Department's management structure and processes are not written in stone, they are a means to an end–empowering the warfighter with the knowledge, equipment and support systems to fight and win. Department leaders will adapt their organizational structures to best support the Joint Force. If current structures hinder substantial increases in lethality or performance, it is expected that Service Secretaries and Agency heads will consolidate, eliminate, or restructure as needed. The Department's leadership is committed to changes in authorities, granting of waivers, and securing external support for streamlining processes and organizations.

Drive budget discipline and affordability to achieve solvency. Better management begins with effective financial stewardship. The Department will continue its plan to achieve full auditability of all its operations, improving its financial processes, systems, and tools to understand, manage, and improve cost. We will continue to leverage the scale of our operations to drive greater efficiency in procurement of materiel and services while pursuing opportunities to consolidate and streamline contracts in areas such as logistics, information technology, and support services. We will also continue efforts to reduce management overhead and the size of headquarters staff. We will reduce or eliminate duplicative organizations and systems for managing human resources, finance, health services, travel, and supplies. The Department will also work to reduce excess property and infrastructure, providing Congress with options for a Base Realignment and Closure.

Streamline rapid, iterative approaches from development to fielding. A rapid, iterative approach to capability development will reduce costs, technological obsolescence, and acquisition risk. The Department will realign incentive and reporting structures to increase speed of delivery, enable design tradeoffs in the requirements process, expand the role of warfighters and intelligence analysis throughout the acquisitions process, and utilize non-traditional suppliers. Prototyping and experimentation should be used prior to defining requirements and commercial-off-the-shelf systems. Platform electronics and software must be designed for routine replacement instead of static configurations that last more than a decade. This approach, a major departure from previous practices and culture, will allow the Department to more quickly respond to changes in the security environment and make it harder for competitors to offset our systems.

Harness and protect the National Security Innovation Base. The Department's technological advantage depends on a healthy and secure national security innovation base that includes both traditional and non-traditional defense partners. The Department, with the support of Congress, will provide the defense industry with sufficient predictability to inform their long-term investments in critical skills, infrastructure, and research and development. We will continue to streamline processes so that new entrants and small-scale vendors can provide cutting-edge technologies. We will also cultivate international partnerships to leverage and protect partner investments in military capabilities.

CONCLUSION

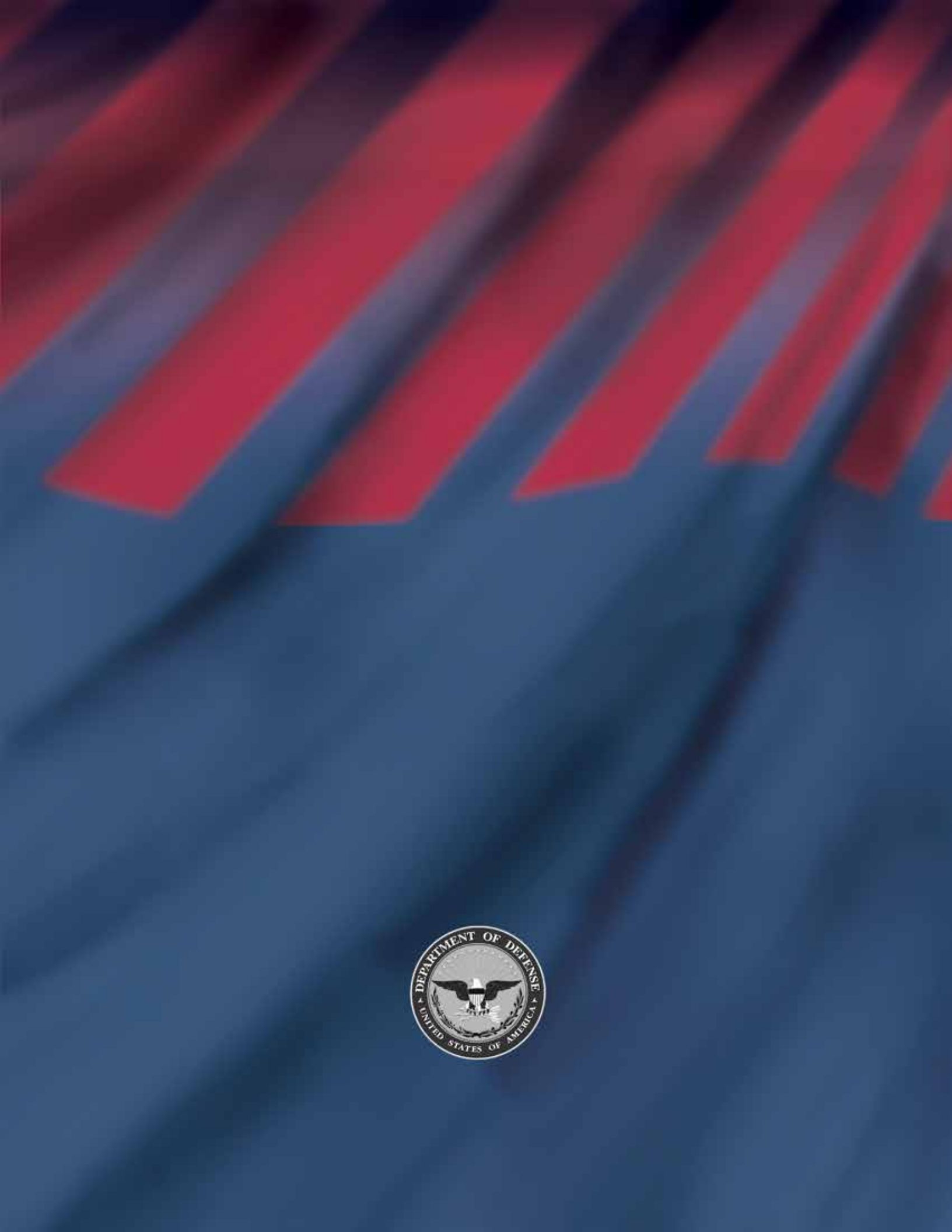
This strategy establishes my intent to pursue urgent change at significant scale.

We must use creative approaches, make sustained investment, and be disciplined in execution to field a Joint Force fit for our time, one that can compete, deter, and win in this increasingly complex security environment. A dominant Joint Force will protect the security of our nation, increase U.S. influence, preserve access to markets that will improve our standard of living, and strengthen cohesion among allies and partners.

While any strategy must be adaptive in execution, this summary outlines what we must do to pass intact to the younger generation the freedoms we currently enjoy. But there is nothing new under the sun: while this strategy will require sustained investment by the American people, we recall past generations who made harsher sacrifices so that we might enjoy our way of life today.

As it has for generations, free men and women in America's military will fight with skill and valor to protect us. To carry out any strategy, history teaches us that wisdom and resources must be sufficient. I am confident this defense strategy is appropriate and worthy of the support of the American people.

Jim Mattis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