



EDS PRESS STATEMENT

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GENERAL MARTIN E. DEMPSEY

As Chairman, it is my responsibility to work with the Joint Chiefs to ensure that the armed forces of the United States keep America immune from coercion. The Strategy just described by the President and the Secretary of Defense enables us to fulfill that responsibility. It sustains the sacred trust put in us by the American people—to defend them and our country.

This strategy stems from a deeply collaborative process. We sought out and took on insights both within and beyond the Department of Defense to include the intelligence community and other government departments. We weighed facts and assessments. We challenged every assumption. We considered a wide range of recommendations and counter-arguments. I can assure you that the steps we have taken to arrive at this Strategy involved all this and more.

This strategy has also benefitted from an exceptional amount of attention by our senior uniformed and civilian leadership. On multiple occasions, we held all-day and multi-day discussions with the Service Chiefs and every Combatant Commander. The Service Chiefs—charged with developing the force for the strategy—were heard early and often. The Combatant Commanders—charged with executing the strategy—all weighed in time and time again. And, we were all afforded extraordinary access to both the President and the Secretary of Defense. Frankly, the breadth and depth of dialogue to arrive at today's strategic choices was both necessary and noteworthy.

Today, we are here to discuss the broad contours and central choices of this strategy. But, this is not the end. Rather, it is a waypoint in a continuous and deliberate process to develop the Joint Force we will need in 2020. There are four budget cycles between now and then. Each of these cycles presents an opportunity to adjust how and what we do to achieve this strategy in the face of new threats...and in the context of a changing security environment.

It is a sound strategy. It ensures we remain the preeminent military in the world. It preserves the talent of the All-Volunteer Force. It takes into account the lessons of the last ten years of war. It acknowledges the imperative of a global, networked, and full-spectrum Joint Force.

And, it responds to the new fiscal environment—though as a learning organization, it is important to note that even if we didn't have fewer resources, we would expect to change. As a consequence, it calls for innovation—new ways of operating and partnering. It rebalances our focus by region and mission. It makes important investments in emerging and proven capabilities like cyber and special operations.

There has been much made about whether this strategy moves away from a force structure explicitly designed to fight and win two wars simultaneously. Fundamentally,

our strategy has always been about our ability to respond to global contingencies wherever and whenever they happen. This does not change. We will always provide a range of options for our nation. We can and will always be able to do more than one thing at a time. More importantly, wherever we are confronted and in whatever sequence, we will win.

We do accept some risk, as all strategies must. Because we will be somewhat smaller, these risks will be measured in time and capacity. However, we have to be honest—we could face even greater risks if we did not change from our current approach.

I'm pleased with the outcome. It's not perfect. There will be people who will think it goes too far. Others will say it doesn't go far enough. That probably makes it about right. It gives us what we need—in this world and within this budget—to provide the best possible defense for our nation at a time of great transitions. It prepares us for what we anticipate needing in 2020.

This is a real strategy. It represents real choices. And, I am here today to assure you it has real buy-in among our senior military and civilian leadership. This is not the strategy of a military in decline. This is a Strategy—and a Joint Force—on which the nation can depend.

I want to wrap up by saying just a couple of words about leadership. It is always important, but absolutely essential during tough times. Make no mistake—these are tough economic times, and this strategy required some tough decisions. I want to thank President Obama and Secretary Panetta for their leadership throughout this process.

The real test, though, is in execution. Fortunately, the young men and women who will be charged to carry out the lion's share of this strategy know something about leadership too. It is the very cornerstone of our profession—the profession of arms. And for the past ten years, they have done nothing but lead in some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable. For that reason, above all others, I am absolutely convinced and fully satisfied that this strategy will meet our Nation's needs for the future.

Thank you.