

A Word from the Chairman

I would like to share my thoughts with the readers of *Joint Force Quarterly* on the enduring priorities of the Armed Forces. After many years in uniform I have learned three basic lessons that focus my activities as Chairman. The first is that in our lethal profession there is no substitute for being ready when called. The next is that our people and their families are our most precious asset and that if we take care of them they will never let the Nation down. Finally, we must think about tomorrow even while fighting today. These are my priorities. Are we ready? Do we take proper care of our people? Are we preparing adequately for the future? Answers to these questions will define our success as a joint force well into the next century.

Readiness

Maintaining a high state of readiness to execute national security strategy is our first priority. Our Armed Forces are the best trained, finest equipped, and most capable in the world. Military power, in conjunction with a strong, dynamic economy and skilled diplomacy, guarantees that our citizens and territory are protected and that our democratic ideals and way of life will be sustained. Maintaining strong, proficient

forces around the world, backed by flexible, strategically deployable forces from the continental United States—and the ability to selectively apply them anywhere—is a major stabilizing factor internationally and a key component in the U.S. role as a global leader.

Since the Cold War we have often used our forces in support of national interests. There is no doubt that the resulting operational tempo affects

(continued on page 4)

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(continued from page 1)

readiness, and I am particularly concerned by signs of decreasing readiness on the tactical level. On the operational and strategic levels, we are fundamentally sound and able to conduct operations across the conflict spectrum, but we assume greater risks if called on to fight a second, overlapping major theater war. Such risks are measured in terms of longer deployment timelines and thus potentially greater losses in combat.

We have implemented various initiatives to reduce risks and better manage readiness. They include better control of selected low density/high demand assets through the global military force policy, a 15 percent man-day reduction in the joint exercise program during FY98, and greater use of contractors and allied capabilities. In addition, we are refining tools such as the joint monthly readiness review to ensure better visibility on readiness across the force.

The Reserve components are helping more than ever to meet global commitments. In Haiti, Bosnia, and elsewhere National Guard and Reserve forces have deployed capabilities for regional contingencies and peacetime support activities, many of which are not readily available

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in the active force. As Secretary of Defense Cohen has said, we cannot achieve flexibility and interoperability for the full range of military operations without a seamless total force. This year senior assistants from the Reserve components have been added to the Joint Staff in order to improve support and employment of Reserve forces—our trump card in maintaining readiness and global leadership.

Although such initiatives help manage the pace of operations, we are approaching the point where demand for our forces exceeds supply and where we cannot execute U.S. strategy with an acceptable level of risk. While we have a unique role as a force for peace and stability throughout the world, fighting and winning the Nation's wars can never take second place. With increasingly stretched forces, we must carefully examine each proposed requirement and ask hard questions. Is the military the right tool for the job? Are there clearly defined attainable objectives? What are their costs, particularly in terms of



The Joint Chiefs of Staff (from left): General Joseph W. Ralston, Vice Chairman; General Henry H. Shelton, Chairman; General Dennis J. Reimer, Chief of Staff of the Army; General Charles C. Krulak, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Admiral Jay L. Johnson, Chief of Naval Operations; and General Michael E. Ryan, Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

DOD (R.D. Ward)

readiness, quality of life, and modernization? In an unstable world we must prudently choose where and when to employ forces to preserve our warfighting edge.

Force protection is central to readiness and a continuing focus of every commander. Terrorist attacks are a major threat. Consequently both the

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CINCs and individual services are redoubling the effort to provide servicemembers with the best possible force protection doctrine, education, procedures, and technology. The Secretary designated the Chairman as his principal advisor and the DOD focal point for all matters related to force protection. Recent enhancements provide

an improved organizational focus, better policy, more intelligence emphasis, increased state-of-the-art technology, and added physical security funding. These steps are making a major difference in our ability to protect the force. As I travel around the world it is heartening to see that force protection is a concern of commanders on all levels and an integral part of their mission analysis and assessments.

People

The quality of life of servicemembers and their families is the basis of readiness. We put people in demanding situations under challenging professional conditions. Our standards are high and often require personal sacrifice. Given the current pace of military operations, we must enable our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen to focus on the mission without undue concern for their families and quality of life.

The fundamentals of sustaining a quality force—competitive pay, accessible medical care, an attractive retirement system, and decent affordable housing—are key to training and readiness. The Joint Chiefs and I are committed to supporting and maintaining quality of life programs, which remain at the top of our list of priorities.

Recruiting and retention are good measures of our performance in this area because finding and keeping the right people is linked to it. In an era when the Armed Forces must compete against a healthy economy and dynamic job market, we must offer a quality of life to servicemembers that reflects the uniqueness of military service and allows us to retain quality people.

A safe, professional working environment based on trust and teamwork is also essential. All members of the military must have confidence in their ability to both serve and progress in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. Like society, the Armed Forces are composed of men and women from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and religious back-

grounds. This diversity is a source of strength that must be nurtured and supported. It is based on our bedrock commitment to the dignity of the individual. Support for equal opportunity is essential to

everything that we do and remains a core value of military service. When American families send us their most treasured asset—their sons and daughters—we owe them no less.

Modernizing

Readiness and quality of life are inextricably linked to the future because the foundations of the joint force for the next century are being laid right now. Developing and fielding modern, next-generation systems—together with the requisite doctrine, operational concepts, and training—will be decisive for victory. Modernization efforts revolve around *Joint Vision 2010*, the operational template for future operations. As I discussed in the last issue of the journal, *JV 2010* continues to mature as we refine and test operational concepts and transition to the implementation or operationalization phase.

Modernizing the force is an imperative that emerged from the Quadrennial Defense Review. I support its decisions on force structure as a blueprint for recapitalization and modernization. But we also need legislative relief from laws which inhibit innovation and doing things smarter, better, and cheaper. Our ability to maintain the best military in the world will depend upon harnessing the efficiencies and cost savings of reengineering the infrastructure.

Rapid advances in technology and operational concepts portend a true revolution in military affairs which offers a decisive military advantage over potential enemies. It embraces

technological innovations as well as corresponding advances in organization, training, tactics, and command and control. Exploiting the full potential of RMA requires linking emerging technologies in a coherent framework of joint and service doctrine and organization—all based on an accurate appraisal of the threats and challenges which may arise in the new century.

With current funding levels, however, the modernization programs needed for RMA cannot be executed without compromising readiness. As the QDR report concluded, our military is fully committed to executing national security strategy, so further cuts are not feasible. Instead we must streamline DOD business practices and realign infrastructure. That means additional base closures to eliminate unneeded facilities and installations. Although not easy to achieve politically, we must match infrastructure with force structure in order to prepare for the future.

As the premier military power in the world we enjoy a unique opportunity to learn from the past and apply its lessons to ensure our continued freedom and prosperity. The 20th century has seen high achievement and stark tragedy, but America has emerged with the strength and vision to play a leading role in international peace and stability. We must move forward with determination to shape the future for our children and their children. With the continued support of Congress and the American people, I am confident that the Armed Forces will help build a new century, perhaps the best we have yet known.

HENRY H. SHELTON
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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