# From the Chairman

## *Making Strategy Work*

Earlier this year, the President and Secretary of Defense released new strategic defense guidance, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*. Six months on, I would like to share some of my insights about making the strategy and about making the strategy work.

Strategy is essentially about choices—choices about how to achieve our aims with the resources available to us. A sound strategy reconciles ends, ways, and means. Strategic coherence, however, does not just happen. Rather, it results from dialogue and debate. Our new defense strategy emerged from just such a collaborative process. The Service chiefs, who are charged with developing the force for the strategy, were heard early and often. The combatant commanders, charged with executing the strategy, all weighed in. And we were all afforded extraordinary access to our civilian leaders. Since the strategy was released, the Vice Chairman and I have gathered with the Service chiefs and combatant commanders for three full-day strategy seminars in Quantico, Virginia. We used these unprecedented forums to stress-test the strategy against some of the most challenging security scenarios we may face as a nation. This is exactly how it is supposed to work.

Strategic choices are not made in isolation. Instead, they are informed by a context. Once made, choices have consequences that create new context. It is an iterative process—that never ends. In this respect, strategy is as much emergent as it is deliberate.

The context we confront today can best be described as a security paradox. True, geopolitical trends are ushering in greater levels of peace and stability worldwide. But destructive technologies are also available to a wider array of adversaries. Destructive—and disruptive—technologies are proliferating down and out. They are proliferating vertically, down to violent nonstate actors, and they are proliferating horizontally, across advanced militaries in the world. As a result, more people have the ability to harm us than at any point in many decades.

Another compelling feature of our time is a new fiscal reality. Cost has reemerged as an independent variable in the U.S. national security equation. We have often defined our desired endstates before fully considering the cost. The money was there for us. As we advance on the joint force that we will need in 2020, we must consider cost sooner in our decisionmaking. We need to be more affordable in every possible way.

Within this context, the strategy makes choices that are already being put to work. I will highlight three, but there are more. First, we are mainlining capabilities that have really come into their own over the last decade. Among these are cyber, special operations, and intelligence, surveillance, and recon-

DOD (Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo)

**Chairman receives update from commanding general, U.S. Forces–Afghanistan, at new Kabul compound**

DOD (Glenn Fawcett)

**Chairman speaking at the Law of the Sea Convention forum in Washington, DC**

naissance. We are not just sustaining our investments in them; we are exploring new ways to organize and employ them. Each is potent in its own right, but when integrated into a global networked joint force, they create options that simply did not exist before.

Second, we are rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region. Of course, we never left. But security and socioeconomic trends speak to the region's growing consequence. For now, this shift in focus is more about thinking than it is doing. That said, we are doing some important things. The reintroduction of our Marines to Australia is just one example. We are also looking at our overall presence with an eye toward diversifying our relationships and activities. At the same time, we are affirming the value of several longstanding alliances throughout the region.

Third, we are expanding the envelope of cooperation. When we network within and beyond government, we add capacity and capability, and we gain credibility. In the future, we need to complement standing institutions and alliances with startup, purpose-driven communities of interest. Innovative partnering means working with old allies in new ways, boosting regional security architectures, and building on public-private efforts. It also means getting out of our own way. Security assistance reform is past due. Our export control and intelligence-sharing policies hinder our ability to build trust and make new friends. Effective partnering can be achieved with a modest investment. For that investment, we can expect an exponential return in cooperation.

The real test of this strategy is not in the choices we made, but in putting the choices to work. I am confident that we will pass this test for one simple reason—leadership. The young men and women charged to carry out the lion's share of this strategy are among the best leaders in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces. They prove daily that they have the minds, mettle, and muscle necessary for its success. For that reason, above all others, I am absolutely convinced that this strategy will meet the Nation's needs for the future, sustaining the trust put in us by the American people to defend them and our country. JFQ

MARTIN E. DEMPSEY
General, U.S. Army
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff


NDU Press

**NEW from *NDU Press***

for the
**Center for Strategic Research**
**Institute for National Strategic Studies**

## Strategic Perspectives, No. 10

Leo Michel's *Cross-currents in French Defense and U.S. Interests* examines some of the new challenges faced by France in the evolving international security environment. Because the French believe strongly in their need to preserve "strategic independence," accepting defense cooperation with others is a cross-current that continues to make French strategists uncomfortable. Nevertheless, some worry that if America rebalances its security interests away from Europe, where will France find capable and willing partners to help protect its security interests? Michel documents how the recent Libyan conflict brought to light many of the cross-currents that are shaping French defense policy. France is proud of its military's performance in Libya, and it perhaps validated Nicolas Sarkozy's decision to reengage fully with NATO in 2009, but the conflict also exposed France's dependence on U.S. military capabilities, the country's lack of confidence in Germany and the European Union as serious military partners, and its determination to improve defense coordination with the United Kingdom.

INSS
INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES

**Visit the NDU Press Web site for more information on publications at ndupress.ndu.edu**