

GENERAL J. F. DUNFORD JR'S WRITTEN STATEMENT IN ADVANCE OF  
THE SENATE ARMED SERVICE COMMITTEE'S HEARING ON U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND  
ON-GOING MILITARY OPERATIONS, 22 SEPTEMBER 2016

CHAIRMAN MCCAIN, RANKING MEMBER REED, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN SECRETARY CARTER IN APPEARING BEFORE YOU.

OUR THOUGHTS ARE WITH THOSE AFFECTED BY THIS WEEKEND'S TERRORIST INCIDENTS IN NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY AND MINNESOTA. WE ALSO REMEMBER THE SACRIFICE OF LTCOL STEVEN EADIE, WHO WAS KILLED IN A U-2 MISHAP ON TUESDAY. OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH THE EADIE FAMILY AND WE WISH HIS FELLOW AIRMAN A SPEEDY RECOVERY.

BEFORE OFFERING A BRIEF ASSESSMENT OF ON-GOING OPERATIONS, I WOULD LIKE TO ASSOCIATE MYSELF WITH THE COMMENTS MADE BY THE SERVICE CHIEFS WHO TESTIFIED BEFORE YOU LAST WEEK. AS YOU WOULD EXPECT, THEY OFFERED THEIR CANDID ASSESSMENTS ABOUT THE READINESS AND MODERNIZATION CHALLENGES CONFRONTING EACH SERVICE. I CONTINUE TO APPRECIATE THE OPERATIONAL TEMPO AND BUDGETARY CHALLENGES FACED BY EACH SERVICE AND ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT.

DUE IN LARGE PART TO THIS COMMITTEE'S SUPPORT, THE JOINT FORCE REMAINS THE MOST CAPABLE AND PROFESSIONAL MILITARY IN THE WORLD. WE CAN DEFEND THE NATION, WE CAN MEET OUR ALLIANCE RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TODAY WE HAVE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OVER ANY POTENTIAL ADVERSARY. THAT'S AN IMPORTANT POINT THAT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY OUR ALLIES, OUR ENEMIES AND BY THOSE MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, OUR SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN, MARINES AND COAST GUARDSMEN.

I SAY ALL OF THAT MINDFUL THAT WE REMAIN CONFRONTED WITH CHALLENGES FROM TRADITIONAL STATE ACTORS AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS. RUSSIA, CHINA, IRAN AND NORTH KOREA CONTINUE TO INVEST IN MILITARY CAPABILITIES THAT REDUCE OUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE. THEY ARE ALSO ADVANCING THEIR INTERESTS THROUGH COMPETITION WITH A MILITARY DIMENSION THAT FALLS SHORT OF TRADITIONAL ARMED CONFLICT AND THE THRESHOLD FOR TRADITIONAL MILITARY RESPONSE. EXAMPLES INCLUDE RUSSIAN ACTIONS IN UKRAINE, NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR SABER RATTLING, CHINESE ACTIVITIES IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND IRAN'S MALIGN ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST.

IN DIFFERENT WAYS, EACH OF THESE NATIONS LEVERAGE ECONOMIC COERCION, INFORMATION OPERATIONS, CYBER CAPABILITIES,

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UNCONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS AND FORCE POSTURE WHILE DELIBERATELY  
SEEKING TO AVOID A DIRECT U.S. MILITARY RESPONSE.

MEANWHILE, NON-STATE ACTORS SUCH AS ISIL AND AL QAEDA REMAIN A  
THREAT TO THE HOMELAND, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, OUR PARTNERS AND OUR  
ALLIES. AS EVIDENCED BY THIS PAST WEEKEND'S ATTACKS, SUCH EXTREMIST  
GROUPS SEEK TO INSPIRE AND RADICALIZE OTHERS, AND IN DOING SO, THEY  
ARE ATTEMPTING TO FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE OUR WAY OF LIFE.

THE JOINT FORCE IS ENGAGED IN RESPONDING TO EACH OF THESE STRATEGIC  
CHALLENGES. WE ARE FOCUSED ON DETERRING POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES AND  
ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND SHOULD DETERRENCE FAIL. WE ALSO REMAIN  
FIRMLY COMMITTED TO DEFEATING ISIL AND ITS AFFILIATES WHEREVER THEY  
MAY EMERGE. SINCE MY LAST APPEARANCE BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE, I HAVE  
MADE ADDITIONAL TRIPS TO THE MIDDLE EAST. I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE  
COALITION'S PROGRESS IN IRAQ AND SYRIA. WE HAVE ALSO DEGRADED THE  
ISLAMIC STATE'S CAPABILITIES IN LIBYA, WEST AFRICA AND AFGHANISTAN.

COALITION OPERATIONS SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS GROUND FORCES HAVE  
DISRUPTED CORE ISIL'S ABILITY TO MOUNT EXTERNAL ATTACKS, REDUCED ITS  
TERRITORIAL CONTROL, LIMITED ITS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, ELIMINATED  
MANY OF ITS KEY LEADERS, AND REDUCED ITS SOURCES OF REVENUE. MOST  
IMPORTANTLY, THE COALITION HAS BEGUN TO DISCREDIT ISIL'S NARRATIVE  
AND ITS AURORA OF INVINCIBILITY. WHILE MORE WORK REMAINS TO BE  
DONE, AND WE ARE BY NO MEANS COMPLACENT, IT IS CLEAR THAT WE HAVE  
THE MOMENTUM.

AS THE JOINT FORCE ADDRESSES EACH OF THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGES I JUST  
DESCRIBED, WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO INVEST FOR THE FUTURE. AS  
THE SECRETARY SAID, WE DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF CHOOSING BETWEEN  
THE CHALLENGES WE FACE TODAY OR THE CHALLENGES WE WILL FACE IN THE  
FUTURE. TO MEET TOMORROW'S REQUIREMENTS, WE MUST TAKE ACTION  
TODAY. OUR NUCLEAR DETERRENT REMAINS EFFECTIVE, BUT IT IS AGING AND  
REQUIRES MODERNIZATION. AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST DEVELOP AND  
ENHANCE OUR CAPABILITIES IN THE INCREASINGLY CONTESTED DOMAINS OF  
CYBER AND SPACE ... AND WE MUST DO SO WHILE PRESERVING OUR EDGE IN  
CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES.

IN THE END, WE MUST MAINTAIN A BALANCED INVENTORY OF JOINT  
CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITIES TO MEET THE FULL ARRAY OF CHALLENGES  
THAT WE WILL CONFRONT IN THE FUTURE. IN CLOSING, WHILE I AM

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CONCERNED ABOUT READINESS TODAY, WE HAVE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OVER ANY ADVERSARY. HOWEVER, IF WE FAIL TO MODERNIZE THE JOINT FORCE, WE WILL BE AT A DISADVANTAGE IN THE FUTURE. I KNOW THAT THE COMMITTEE SHARES MY BELIEF THAT WE SHOULD NEVER SEND OUR SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN, MARINES AND COAST GUARDSMEN INTO A FAIR FIGHT.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU THIS MORNING AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR QUESTIONS.