

A Word from the



U.S. Navy (Brook R. Kelsey)

Chairman

Marines approach Blue Beach during Exercise Destined Glory 2000.

In September 2000 the Joint Chiefs of Staff appeared before the Senate and House Armed Services Committees to assess the readiness of the Armed Forces. Readiness will be a key issue in preparing for a new national security strategy and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

Our short explanation to Congress was that the military is ready, but with important qualifiers. Being ready means having the capability to

execute national military strategy, including the mission of fighting and winning two nearly simultaneous major theater wars. Although the Armed Forces can execute current strategy, the dangers associated with the two theater scenario have increased over time. The risk factors for winning the first major war

are moderate, but the lower readiness rates of later deploying forces, combined with shortfalls in strategic lift and critical support forces, result

in a high risk for the second. This does not mean that our forces would not prevail in either of the contingencies, but this increased risk translates into longer timelines, loss of tactical advantage, and potential for higher casualties.

Our first-to-fight forces are the most professional, effective, and flexible in the world. Indeed, no other military could have simultaneously accomplished—with the same level of professionalism and competence—high-intensity combat over Serbia, force deterrence and maritime interdiction in the Persian Gulf, and peace operations in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Moreover, training operations in West Africa and fire fighting assistance throughout the Western United States have demonstrated our flexibility to respond across the full spectrum of national requirements.

But such operations have critically stretched the Armed Forces. The post-1997 QDR force, some 40 percent smaller than the one which won Desert Storm, is showing signs of strain. Higher

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The cover of this issue features MH-53J on training mission (U.S. Air Force/David Nolan). The front inside cover shows combat direction center aboard *USS Harry S. Truman* (U.S. Navy/Tina M. Ackerman); UH-60 crew chief in Kosovo (982^d Signal Company/Drew Lockwood); F-16 over South Carolina (U.S. Air Force/Thomas Meneguini); and marine during exercise in the Philippines (U.S. Navy/John F. Valentine). The table of contents depicts Indian soldiers on parade (AP Wide World Photo/Ajit Kumar) and French scout, Joint Resolve XI (1st Combat Camera Squadron/Lisa Zunanyika-Carpenter). The back inside cover captures *USS Normandy* replenishing *USS George Washington* (*USS George Washington*/Brian Fleske). The

back cover finds sailor scanning ocean (U.S. Navy/Corey Lewis); marines training at Camp Pendleton (13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Combat Camera/Branden P. O'Brien); F-16 at Lajes air base in Azores (U.S. Air Force/Michael R. Holzworth); and soldier checking safety zone, Kosovo (55th Signal Company/Tony Vitello).

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than anticipated operational and personnel requirements impose a heavy burden on troops and wear out equipment at a faster rate than anticipated. Moreover, the parts of the military that support the first-to-fight forces—the training base, logistics enablers, and combat multipliers—are not as ready and suffer the consequences as resources are redirected, reprioritized, and consumed to sustain near-term readiness.

The troops are paying the price. They spend more time working on aging equipment at the expense of honing their warfighting skills. Furthermore, support requirements cost much more in each succeeding year in repair costs, down time, and man hours for maintenance.

We arrested the decline in readiness among active units, although significant readiness concerns remain at individual unit level within the services. How was this decline stopped? The answer is largely through welcome additions to the topline of the defense budget over the last few years.

Budget plus-ups have made an important down payment on current readiness, but they can only address critical near-term needs. The last QDR, based on a strategy of shape, respond, and prepare, was designed to meet the projected threats of 2015 and stem the movement of resources from procurement to operations and maintenance. In addition, the review recognized that it was time to increase investment in procurement after a decision in the early 1990s to cut acquisition as a peace dividend. This assessment garnered a general bipartisan consensus. However, it did not anticipate the degree to which the Armed Forces would be engaged in contingency operations, with a deleterious impact on readiness. Indeed, within two years, in response to a downward trend in near-term readiness rates and continued reductions in modernization and infrastructure, the Joint Chiefs testified before Congress that an added \$148 billion was needed to help fix the problem.

What happened? Several factors accounted for the sharp and unexpected drop in readiness. Infrastructure was not reduced (base realignment and closure requests were denied). End-strength reductions had to be deferred because of operating tempo concerns. Operations and support costs grew because of higher fuel costs and sustaining older systems. Unanticipated commitments led to reprogramming scarce dollars. Finally, we had significant unplanned costs associated with new programs such as national missile defense and health programs.

The impact was significant. This was primarily reflected in both manpower and operations and maintenance accounts, which were funded at



Escape and evasion training exercises in San Diego.

Fleet Imaging Center, Pacific (Wayne E. Elliott)

to maintain unsurpassed warfighting capabilities, the Nation must provide the necessary resources

significantly higher levels (\$10–15 billion a year) than expected. That is the bad news. The good news is that the executive and legislative branches listened to the Joint

Chiefs and increased the topline in defense spending to help mitigate readiness problems and protect procurement accounts.

But there is another concern that must be addressed: the continued fast pace of operations. This high operating tempo has resulted in equipment aging faster than planned. To reverse this

trend, we must reduce the average age of equipment by procuring ships, airplanes, tanks, and other systems. Of budget plus-ups in operations and maintenance funds, 75 percent went to increased operations of forces and bases. Only 25 percent went to preserving combat readiness by purchasing spare and repair parts as well as depot level maintenance. Moreover, we invested in next generation systems by increased research and development efforts. But our commitments to these new systems—such as the *Zumwalt* class land attack destroyer, joint strike fighter, F-22 Raptor, and future carrier (CVNX)—will not be realized for several years.

The QDR process in 1997 took the first step toward increasing procurement by establishing the FY01 goal of \$60 billion. This target was intended as a waypoint for increased procurement spending. The simple reality is that having finally reached \$60 billion in procurement for FY01, it is increasingly apparent that it is not sufficient to sustain the force. This amount is not enough to buy the requisite number of ships, aircraft, armored vehicles, and helicopters to sustain the QDR 97 force structure. This is the message that I have conveyed in recent months. We must accelerate the replacement of rapidly deteriorating ships, aircraft, weapons, infrastructure, and essential military systems in order to sustain the force and preserve future readiness.

How much more is required to recapitalize and modernize? This will be a critical issue in the upcoming QDR. To sustain our quality force, maintain unsurpassed warfighting capabilities, and remain engaged in shaping world affairs to support national interests in the future, the Nation must provide the necessary resources. The alternative is a more constrained, higher risk strategy, which in my view is unacceptable for the sole world superpower. Most importantly, we cannot continue to ask the force that emerged after the last QDR to bear the burdens of 21st century commitments.

I am encouraged that we have begun to arrest the decline in readiness. With the support of the President, Congress, and American people, I am confident that the Armed Forces will remain ready for the challenges ahead. Without question, our men and women in uniform must continue to be the best equipped and best cared for military in the world. They deserve nothing less.

HENRY H. SHELTON
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff