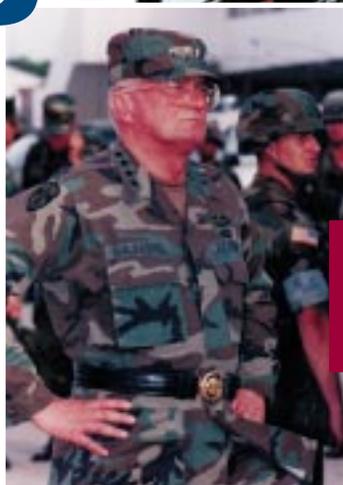


Farewell Message



**our margin of superiority
is arguably greater than
it has ever been**

While packing for the final PCS of my 39-year career, I came across some early issues of *JFQ*. The Autumn 1993 issue caught my eye because it appeared on the eve of my tenure as Chairman. The issue opened with a farewell by my predecessor, General Powell, who made what was a striking but perhaps unnoticed observation at the time. He challenged us to safely manage force reductions “without losing the high quality that has become the hallmark of America’s military.” In retrospect, his comment has characterized the last four years.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of every soldier, sailor, marine, and airman, our margin of superiority over potential foes is arguably greater than it has ever been in the past. With a tempo that included more than forty major operations and JTF deployments, leaders on every level, from

NCOs to our most senior flag officers, ensured that we remained focused on the mission and on combat readiness.

But there is a risk in focusing so intensely on the present that we do not give enough thought

(continued on page 4)

GEN Henry H. Shelton, USA
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(continued from page 1)

and energy to preparing for dangers looming over the horizon. Concentrating all our precious resources on handling near-term challenges results in the assumption of significant risk in the long term—risk that could place our men and women of the Armed Forces in greater danger during conflict.

The new challenge is to remain fully capable of overmatching any potential adversary while channeling our enthusiasm, innovation, and resources into preparations for the future and ensuring that America retains the finest fighting force in the world.

Positioning ourselves for continued greatness in the 21st century is a complex proposition that involves far more than purchasing new weapon systems. There are various dimensions to this situation which require the thoughtful participation of military professionals on all levels. The revolution in military affairs is not just about husbanding information age technologies, precision strike, and stealth. It is every bit as dependent on new organizational structures, new operational concepts, imaginative approaches to old tactical problems, and furthering joint teamwork.

The foundation for ensuring the ability to protect our vital interests into the next century is under construction. You see it being built day to day, brick by brick, in every joint exercise, with each joint publication, and even in contentious but productive interservice debates over operational concepts. You are the architects and builders of our future military. As you carry out this project, remember that you have been charged with protecting this great Nation, providing for the welfare of its sons and daughters, and preserving a legacy of millions of veterans who have gone before.

I am eternally grateful for your exceptional efforts and selfless dedication in these past four years. Good luck in your careers and God bless you all.

JOHN M. SHALIKASHVILI
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
(1993–1997)

General John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Ret.), who served two terms as Chairman, prepared this contribution in September 1997 for publication after his retirement.



The President with the Chairman, Chiefs, and CINCs in May 1996.