
United States Must Take Long View, and Forge Security Partnerships, Mullen Says

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_____ Navy Admiral Michael G. Mullen's top priority as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is to widen the scope of United States (U.S.) military strategy to look beyond the borders of Iraq and Afghanistan and strengthen security partnerships, the Admiral told an audience [in Washington on 25 October 2007]. The *DISAM Journal* would like to thank the American Forces Press Service for allowing us to reprint the following article.]

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Admiral Mike Mullen gives his first public speech since becoming Chairman at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, October 25, 2007. The event was hosted by the Center for a New American Security which develops strong national security and defense policies promoting and safeguarding American interests and values.

"We are in a generational war, and we need to take a long view and think strategically about how we manage our risks globally," Mullen said at the Center for a New American Security in his first public address since assuming office as Chairman [1 October 2007].

The Chairman said military leaders responsible for strategic thinking and planning should look "through a long lens."

I am concerned that we focus too much on the here and now, he said. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan weigh heavily on the minds of the American people as they do on mine, but we must not be myopic in our view. There is more to the Middle East than those two countries, he added.

Achieving a stable and prosperous Middle East requires more than just a military effort, Mullen said. He noted that participation from non-military elements is vital to gaining the widest breadth of ideas and the broadest range of possible outcomes and alternative futures.

Security is necessary, but it is not sufficient, he said. We must integrate our capabilities with all instruments of national power, and that starts with a better and stronger interagency and the relationships therein.

Mullen said current security challenges present the U.S. with an opportunity "to go beyond the interagency" and forge ties with international partners, nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations, and private sector entities. Regional instability in the Middle East or elsewhere has an impact worldwide, Mullen said, which is why the Chairman's top priority is to develop a comprehensive global military strategy. "It is tied to a larger global view and one that is sustainable over time," he said.

In the current conflict against radical jihadists, and in the long war in general, Mullen said he encourages "debate and persistent intellectual rigor" as military planners formulate sound strategy for the 21st century.

We are part of a new world order; and, as the recently departed Adm. William J. Crowe once said, It is long on new, and it is short on order, the Chairman said. Crowe, who served as Chairman in the late 1980s and early 1990s, died [in October 2007]. This new era demands we ask hard questions, seek new answers, engage in new debates, explore new military strategic thinking, develop alternative options, come up with new solutions to longstanding problems, and dream up innovative ideas to address these challenges.

To address emerging challenges to the interdependent global system, the U.S. must cast a wider net, Mullen said, increasing cooperation with international partners.

That system has many stakeholders; and we need to work with them as we think about things like global order, stability, and economic prosperity, he said. But we will be hard pressed to help a global community safeguard that global system, and by extension our own well being, without the people and the tools to do the job.

Chairman Identifies “Tough Questions” Facing United States

The Admiral identified pressing questions the U.S. faces as it attempts to counter emerging threats while maintaining a position of leadership. Speaking to an audience at the Center for a New American Security [in Washington], Mullen said the U.S. today is confronted by threats from transnational terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The country also must preserve the “freedom of action” to contend with regional instability, deter aggressive action by potentially hostile state actors, help manage the growing competition for natural resources, and mitigate the effects of natural disasters and pandemics, he said.

The nation will need to maintain a posture that takes advantage of all the opportunities for international cooperation and progress the globalized world has to offer, he added.

So tonight, I invite you to consider some tough questions and help your military help me rigorously analyze the major strategic challenges we face as we develop a dynamic military strategy of cooperation for the 21st century, Mullen said.

The questions the Chairman posed are:

- How can a violent extremist movement that increasingly targets the integrated nature of the largely globalized world be effectively eliminated in both the short and the long term?
- How can the development of weapons of mass destruction by or the transfer of associated technologies to aggressive regimes and radical extremists like al Qaeda be prevented?
- How can regional instability stemming from accelerating global integration, intense nationalist and religious movements, and the spread of technology throughout the world be mitigated and localized?
- How can the United States military remain sufficiently capable to deter aggressive actions by nations like Iran, North Korea, and others who seek to expand their military capability?
- How can countries like China and Russia be effectively engaged to ensure that their growing regional influence translates to cooperative participation in the global economic system?

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- How will global industrialization, world population expansion, and migration affect the consumption rates, the distribution, and the long term availability of vital resources such as water and energy?
 - How will competition for those resources affect global stability, and what role will the military play in managing these risks?
 - How can the local, regional, and potentially global effects of another tsunami like the one that hit in the Indian Ocean Basin [several] years ago or another earthquake like the one that devastated parts of Pakistan in 2005 or another Hurricane Katrina or even the California wildfires that [dominated the news] be mitigated?
 - What impact will a massive natural disaster or a global pandemic have throughout the world, and how can militaries work together to alleviate the shock to the global system?
 - How can we do all that is required of us and still remain good stewards of our nation's resources?

Mullen described such queries as “tough questions with no easy answers.” He encouraged Americans to consider the questions and use them to stimulate debate.

I am eager to engage your diverse intellectual resources and thoughtful debate, he said, and welcome your contributions in identifying potential answers to these and other critical questions.