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# National Military Strategy of the United States of America:

## A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement

by

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

[The following has been extracted from pages 6-9 of the 1995 JCS publication entitled as above. This new national military strategy was derived from the President's *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*; the overall JCS publication describes "the objectives, concepts, tasks, and capabilities necessary in the near term to adapt the Armed Forces proven capabilities" to advance "national interests in peacetime while maintaining readiness to fight and win when called upon."]

### STRATEGY

The end of the of the Cold War has further tightened the close, complementary relationship that must exist between military activities and other elements of U.S. national power. The President's national security strategy describes this relationship and prescribes a set of integrated regional approaches to meet U.S. interests in different parts of the globe. The strategic military objectives described above will thus be achieved in concert with other elements of power and by military activities which may vary from region to region depending on U.S. interests and particular conditions.

This strategy of flexible and selective engagement comprises three sets of tasks: remaining constructively engaged in peacetime; acting to deter aggression and prevent conflict; and fighting and winning our Nation's wars when called upon. To facilitate performing these tasks, we continue to refine the two fundamental and complementary strategic concepts of overseas presence and power projection. Our strategy for accomplishing our national military objectives is best understood by examining these two strategic concepts and the three components of the strategy: peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention, and warfighting.

### STRATEGIC CONCEPTS

#### OVERSEAS PRESENCE

Overseas presence forces, including some tailored for specific missions, perform a variety of activities that promote stability and prevent conflict. Additionally, through overseas presence we maintain mobile, combat-ready forces capable of responding to a wide range of threats throughout the world. U.S. forces overseas provide visible proof of our commitment to defend American interests with our allies and friends worldwide. Overseas presence is not a crutch for friends who refuse to bear their share of the burden, rather it is an essential mechanism to support our fundamental interests in forward regions where the support of these interests can best be developed.

Overseas presence takes the form of permanently stationed forces and forces temporarily deployed, some on a regular, rotational basis. In addition, we maintain an overseas presence

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through a broad program of routine air, ground, and naval deployments, as well as various contingency operations.

In accordance with our security needs, the bulk of our overseas presence forces are deployed in Western Europe, Japan, and South Korea, with smaller capabilities elsewhere in the Pacific, the Middle East and Southwest Asia, and Latin America. Approximately 100,000 U.S. military members serve in Europe in ground forces consisting of substantial elements of two Army divisions along with a corps headquarters, associated corps troops, and other supporting elements; in air forces consisting of about two and one-third fighter wings; and in a Mediterranean naval ashore presence sufficient to support a carrier battle group and an amphibious ready group.

In Northeast Asia we also retain close to 100,000 troops. In South Korea they serve in one Army division and one wing of combat aircraft. In Japan we maintain a Marine Expeditionary Force, an Army special forces battalion, one and one-half wings of combat aircraft, and forward deploy an aircraft carrier, amphibious assault ship, and their support ships.

In the Middle East we maintain only a small presence. The bulk of our overseas presence commitment in this area, as well as in Southwest Asia, is reflected in the significant periodic deployments of forces, to include participation in contingency operations. Our forces deploy to Africa to participate in humanitarian or peace operations as national interests dictate. In Latin America small numbers of our Armed Forces help to promote democratic growth in many countries and work to halt the import of drugs into our country.

Our overseas presence helps to keep important infrastructure available and ready. Permanently stationed forces maintain support and basing that are vital for receiving reinforcement and for throughput and onward movement in time of crisis and conflict.

Although the size of our forces permanently stationed overseas and the size of some deployments have decreased in recent years, and in Europe dramatically, their importance has not diminished. They signal our commitment to the region in which they are deployed and are a visible reminder to those who would threaten our interests.

## **POWER PROJECTION**

With fewer U.S. forces permanently stationed overseas, we must increase our capability to project forces abroad. Credible power projection capability complements our overseas presence in acting as a deterrent to potential adversaries. Effective power projection capabilities also provide greater flexibility in employing military force. Coupled with overseas forces, the ability to project tailored forces through rapid, strategic mobility gives national leaders additional time for consultation and increased options in response to potential crises and conflicts.

Our ability to rapidly project power worldwide depends on four strategic mobility enhancements: increased airlift capability, additional pre-positioning of heavy equipment afloat and ashore, increased surge capacity of our sealift, and improved readiness and responsiveness of the Ready Reserve Force.

Power projection is essential for performing the required tasks of all components of the strategy; however, it is most critical in the deterrence and conflict prevention and warfighting portions of our military strategy.

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## COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY

### PEACETIME ENGAGEMENT

[This strategic component was previously classified as "Operations Other Than War."]

Overseas presence and power projection provide the basis for executing the tasks required by our strategy. The first group of these tasks, peacetime engagement, describes a broad range of non-combat activities undertaken by our Armed Forces that demonstrate commitment, improve collective military capabilities, promote democratic ideals, relieve suffering, and in many other ways enhance regional stability. On any given day, tens of thousands of the men and women of our Armed Forces are engaged worldwide across the range of peacetime engagement activities.

#### *Military - to - Military Contacts*

Military-to-military contact programs are one of the most effective instruments in our efforts to create a more stable security order. Today there are opportunities to forge new and more cooperative security relationships both with former adversaries and with formerly nonaligned nations. Moreover, there has been a vast increase in our participation in multinational operations whose members include many nontraditional allies, as we saw in the Gulf War, and in recent humanitarian and peace operations such as in Haiti. The success of these operations hinges on mutual trust, effective communications and interoperability, and doctrinal familiarity, precisely the results we seek from ongoing military-to-military contacts.

These programs are also a platform for imparting influence and democratic values to militaries in reforming or newly democratic nations. The militaries of Central and Eastern Europe are a particular priority. U.S. military-to-military Joint Contact Teams are at work in twelve of these countries today and we are expanding this program to other regions this year.

Combined training exercises provide particularly useful military-to-military contacts. Their benefits are many: combined training, joint readiness and interoperability, and military professionalism. Our sponsorship of such exercises also helps to shape our basing, pre-positioning, logistics support, and security agreements.

We also maintain an active exchange program between military units and regularly assign individual personnel to work for limited periods with other armed forces. Exchanges of personnel, both as students and teachers, at military academies and professional military schools, foster understanding between our respective military establishments.

#### *Nation Assistance*

Our forces participate selectively in a variety of activities to assist friendly nations as they combat lawlessness, subversion, and insurgency. These efforts are carefully orchestrated to reinforce the host nation's developmental programs. Specific activities that involve our Armed Forces include bilateral and multilateral exercises, civil-military operations, intelligence and communications sharing, and logistics support.

#### *Security Assistance*

Security assistance involves the selective use of cooperative programs with allied and friendly armed forces that furnish these countries with the means to defend themselves from aggression and to fight alongside U.S. forces in a coalition effort. Providing vital training and U.S.-manufactured weapons systems increases the access and influence of the U.S. military and

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improves the interoperability of potential coalition members. In addition, these contacts help to build and solidify relationships with emerging democracies and security partners. Security assistance also deters aggression in unstable regions and provides a cost-effective alternative to maintaining larger U.S. forces in the region.

A very important avenue for interaction between U.S. military personnel and their foreign counterparts is the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. Last year, students from more than 100 foreign countries studied at U.S. military schools, learning not only technical skills but also gaining a broader appreciation for American values and perspectives.

Our regional commanders-in-chief are unanimous in stating that security assistance programs, along with military-to-military contacts, produce gains that far exceed their costs and we seek to reenergize and expand these important programs.

### *Humanitarian Operations*

Our Armed Forces stand ready to participate in humanitarian and disaster relief operations at home and abroad. The U.S. military can offer unique capabilities in terms of logistics (transport, supply, and distribution), communications, and security. Often, our greatest contribution to these operations resides in our ability to rapidly respond when more traditional relief agencies are overwhelmed. After these organizations are "up and running," military forces can be withdrawn. A prime example of this concept is the recent U.S. assistance operation in Rwanda.

### *Counterdrug and Counterterrorism*

The Armed Forces, working in close cooperation with law enforcement agencies, will use all means authorized by the President and the Congress to halt the flow of illegal drugs into this country. We will also act both unilaterally and in concert with security partners to fight international terrorism.

### *Peacekeeping*

We remain prepared to support traditional peacekeeping operations on a case-by-case basis. When warranted by circumstances and national interests, this support may include participation of U.S. combat units. When appropriate, we prefer to share the burden of peacekeeping with allies and friends.

When the United States does participate, we will follow the guidelines of Presidential Decision Directive 25, to include seeking a clear delineation of the objectives of each operation, ensuring an unbroken chain of command to the President, and ensuring rules of engagement to protect our forces and permit the proper execution of assigned tasks. The capabilities we provide will be carefully tailored, usually to reinforce and supplement the resources of our international partners. We recognize that peace operations are often different from traditional military operations in the tasks and capabilities they require of our Armed Forces. We are continuing to develop appropriate doctrine and training for these operations.

Reserve component elements will take on increased responsibility for participating in and supporting peacekeeping missions.

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## DETERRENCE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Deterrence and conflict prevention, the second component of the strategy, is a combination of efforts to deter threats to our security and interests as well as a series of other actions we can take to restore stability, security, and adherence to international law. Our military strategy envisions vigorous efforts in each of the following tasks in order to secure our interests and reduce the potential for conflict.

### *Nuclear Deterrence*

The highest priority of our military strategy is to deter a nuclear attack against our Nation and allies. Our survival and the freedom of action that we need to protect extended national interests depend upon strategic and nonstrategic nuclear forces and their associated command, control, and communications.

We have recently concluded a comprehensive Nuclear Posture Review that looked into the next century and validated those systems we will need for the foreseeable future. Though we are continuing to pursue reductions under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) I and II, we still need to maintain a survivable triad of strategic delivery systems. This serves both to deter still very powerful strategic arsenals and to convince possible adversaries that any attempt to seek a nuclear advantage would be futile. We still need to maintain a mix of forward deployed and deployable nonstrategic nuclear weapons, both to provide deterrent coverage over our allies, and because extended deterrence, in many cases, is a decisive factor in our nonproliferation efforts.

### *Regional Alliances*

Our regional strategies, and the global strategy of which they are a part, are built on the foundation of strong and effective alliances. Our goal of a stable, multipolar world hinges on both the ability to preserve and adapt our existing alliances to challenges we confront today and anticipate tomorrow, and on the capacity to develop new relationships as necessary.

American forces in Europe continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to this area of significant national interests. In addition, we provide NATO with key leadership, critical intelligence and communications support, and much of the nuclear force that guarantees European security. Our capability to conduct military operations is sustained through frequent exercises and interoperability training that ensures the effectiveness of coalitions both in and beyond the treaty area.

The end of the Cold War has seen NATO's military focus evolve from deterring aggression by the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact to dealing with today's diverse security challenges. The Alliance has embraced a new strategic concept that recognizes the changes in the geostrategic environment and is adjusting its missions, command arrangements, and forces accordingly. Implementing the Combined Joint Task Force concept will facilitate NATO's participation in non-traditional, out-of-area operations such as peace operations, sanctions enforcement, and humanitarian assistance. It will also enable NATO to provide timely operational support to other bodies such as the United Nations and the Western European Union.

Today, many of our former adversaries have expressed a desire to join NATO—an indicator of NATO's success in adapting to meet new security challenges. More than 20 nations, including Russia and other former Soviet republics, have already joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program. These countries seek to align their defense programs and policies more closely with NATO's—and to forge stronger ties to the West. The United States fully supports and

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participates in the Partnership for Peace initiative which both fosters regional stability and is essential to the eventual enlargement of the NATO alliance.

Five of the seven U.S. mutual defense treaties are with partners in the Asia-Pacific region, helping to underpin the relative stability of an area that is home to the world's fastest growing economies. We will remain engaged with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the sponsor of the largest security forum (involving 18 countries) in that region.

In Northeast Asia our bilateral security relationship with Japan remains fundamental to U.S. security. Our forces in Japan are a visible demonstration of our commitment to the peace and stability of the entire region and are available for short-notice deployment throughout the theater. Frequent combined U.S. and Japanese military exercises continue to enhance professional interaction between our militaries.

The defense of the Republic of Korea (ROK) will remain a key element of U.S. strategy in this region. Our forward stationed forces there represent an unambiguous demonstration of that commitment. We will continue to conduct a vigorous exercise program with ROK forces to ensure that we are ready and able to work together and to reinforce the theater, if necessary.

In Southwest Asia, we must remain alert to the dangers posed by a still aggressive Iraq and a revolutionary Iran that continues to fan the flames of social, political, and economic dissent among neighboring states. The U.S. commitment to peace and security in the critical Persian Gulf region is demonstrated through bilateral defense cooperation agreements, security assistance, pre-positioning, forward presence, and combined exercises. These activities in a region vital to U.S. and global security and prosperity assist our friends in improving their self-defense while deterring aggression.

We will continue to support the deepening of democracy throughout the Western Hemisphere. We are strengthening our relationships with Latin America and Mexico and are working with the Organization of American States to promote stability and mutual security.

### *Crisis Response*

Should our resolve to protect vital national interests be challenged, we must be able to respond rapidly through a wide spectrum of deterrent options and preventative measures. We intend to respond initially to crises using our forces stationed and deployed overseas but will be prepared to deploy all necessary forces to threatened areas as we demonstrated in October 1994 when Saddam Hussein once again moved forces South and threatened Kuwait. Critical to such reinforcement requirements are sea- and land-based pre-positioned equipment sets, enhanced airlift and sealift capabilities, and air refueling forces. Rapid power projection, from the United States to overseas areas and between regions, remains key to crisis response.

### *Arms Control*

Arms control efforts contribute significantly to our security by limiting and reducing the number and types of weapons that can threaten us and by reducing regional arms buildups that can raise tensions and risks. Among the fundamental arms control agreements are the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, START I and II, the Treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF), and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is a landmark agreement that has significantly reduced conventional forces for the first time in our generation and has greatly enhanced security in this area vital to U.S. interests.

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Recognizing the contributions that arms control agreements can make to national security, we seek to broaden the range of arms control efforts to address chemical and biological weapons. When implemented, the Chemical Weapons Convention will mandate the destruction of all chemical weapons and their production facilities.

### *Confidence-Building Measures*

Our military forces will continue to be directly involved in confidence-building efforts to foster openness and transparency in military affairs. Implementation of Vienna Document 1994 is a concrete example of such efforts which include information exchanges, exercise limits and observations, and demonstrations of military capability. Agreements governing Dangerous Military Activities and regional initiatives, such as the Open Skies regime that permits aerial overflight of participating nations' territories, directly support our goal of preventing conflict.

### *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*

The U.S. Government is responsible for protecting the lives and safety of its citizens abroad. Often, that task falls to our Armed Forces. When conditions of violence or disorder in foreign countries threaten American lives, U.S. forces, in support of the Department of State, will use all appropriate means to extract American citizens promptly and safely.

### *Sanctions Enforcement*

Military forces are increasingly used to enforce economic sanctions resulting from national policy decisions and U.N. Security Council resolutions. U.S. forces will participate in operations to search, divert, delay, or disrupt transport vessels and to assist in the compliance of guidelines set by either U.S. or U.N. authorities. Effective enforcement requires efficient coordination of military operations at sea, on land, and in the air and space.

### *Peace Enforcement*

On occasion, U.S. forces may be directed to participate in peace enforcement operations or other operations which stand in the gray zone between peace and war. These operations are characterized by the use of force or the threat of the use of force, and are interwoven with diplomatic and economic efforts, often involving both governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Such actions may be undertaken to maintain or restore international peace and security, or to respond to acts of aggression.

We continue to incorporate the lessons learned from our recent experiences in Iraq, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia. For example, when significant U.S. forces are directed to participate in a major peace enforcement operation likely to involve combat, our guidelines will continue to be to:

- Commit sufficient forces to achieve clearly defined objectives;
- Plan to achieve those objectives decisively, and
- Reassess and adjust, as necessary, the size, composition, and disposition of our forces to achieve our objectives.

Application of these guidelines is clearly exemplified by our Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti commencing in September 1994.

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During peace enforcement operations, command and control arrangements are critical. Ordinarily in such instances, a U.S. command will be established or the mission will be conducted through a competent, established regional organization such as NATO or an ad hoc coalition. The greater the U.S. military contribution and the greater the likelihood of combat, the more inclined we will be to lead the operation. The President, however, will never relinquish command authority over U.S. forces.

## **FIGHT AND WIN**

The ability of U.S. Armed Forces to fight and win, the third component of our strategy, serves as the ultimate guarantor of our vital interests. This ability is crucial to deter aggression and prevent conflict, and if challenged, it assures that we will in fact prevail. Being ready to fight and win remains our foremost responsibility and the prime consideration governing all our military activities. It is for this reason, fundamentally, that our Nation has raised and sustained its Armed Forces.

In war, our use of military force will follow the principles outlined below.

### ***Clear Objectives—Decisive Force***

In any application of force, military objectives will be clearly defined to support our national political aims in the conflict. We intend to commit sufficient force to achieve these objectives in a prompt and decisive manner.

### ***Wartime Power Projection***

If we have forces deployed to the threatened area when crisis turns to conflict, these forces will assist our regional allies in creating a viable defense to halt the invasion rapidly and will form the basis for the subsequent buildup of combat power needed to defeat the aggressor decisively. But we anticipate that, for the most part, we will project air, land, and sea forces from the United States and, in some cases, from overseas areas, to augment forward-deployed forces or to establish U.S. presence in the theater of operations. This power projection could ultimately entail the transport of large numbers of personnel and their equipment. Such an effort requires detailed plans to provide the necessary intelligence, logistics, and communications supports, as well as capabilities to protect our forces during deployment.

We continue to build on the lessons learned in Operation Desert Storm to strengthen our power projection capabilities. During the September 1994 deployment of forces to Haiti, roll-on/roll-off shipping was proved exceptionally ready and significantly more reliable as a result of post-Gulf War implements. Early access to combat, combat support, and the combat service support capabilities in the Reserve component is also vital to meet our power projection requirements for any major regional contingency. We have demonstrated in recent operations in both Haiti and Kuwait that we have the ability to gain this prompt access to the Reserves, clearly indicating improved wartime capabilities.

### ***Fight Combined and Fight Joint***

While we maintain the unilateral capability to wage decisive campaigns to protect U.S. and multinational security interests, our Armed Forces will most often fight in concert with regional allies and friends, as coalitions can decisively increase combat power and lead to a more rapid and favorable outcome to the conflict. Combined operations capitalize on our peacetime training, help generate and sustain international support, and enable our forces to provide the high-leverage capabilities required to achieve decisive outcomes against any adversary.

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Modern warfare requires U.S. forces to fight as a joint team whether operating unilaterally or as part of an international coalition. Accordingly, each of the services provides trained and ready forces to support the combatant commanders' warfighting plans and operations. Success in joint and combined military operations requires bringing to bear, at the right times and places, the unique and complementary capabilities of each of the Services.

Each Service has both a role and primary and collateral functions to execute, for which it must train, organize, and equip its forces. Land forces are mainly involved with prompt and sustained combat operations on land; naval and marine forces with operations at or from the sea, air forces with military operations in the air. Each of our Services leverages the benefits of unhindered access to space.

Land forces must be capable of deploying rapidly, and if necessary, executing forcible entry to seize the initiative and close with and destroy enemy forces through synchronized maneuver and precision fires throughout the breadth and depth of the battle area. They must be capable of achieving operational and tactical freedom of maneuver and be sufficiently agile to achieve their objectives before opponents can effect counter-measures. Land forces must possess the capabilities necessary to dominate the land battle. In addition, they must provide the combat support and combat service support necessary to sustain the land battle as well as provide critical elements of support to joint forces deployed in theater. Ultimately, land forces can occupy territory, control populations, and provide on-the-scene assurance that political objectives will be met.

Naval and marine forces must be capable of conducting naval and amphibious warfighting operations. Forward-deployed naval expeditionary forces can respond immediately to a crisis, execute forcible entry or reinforce other forward-deployed elements, and through prompt action help halt an enemy offensive and enable the flow of follow-on ground and land-based air contingents. These forces assist in providing protective cover from air, land, sea, or missile intrusion. By ensuring freedom of the seas and controlling strategic choke points, naval and marine forces provide strategic freedom of maneuver and thus enhance deployment and sustainment of joint forces in theater.

Air forces must be capable of conducting military operations to gain and maintain control of the skies, holding vital enemy capabilities at risk throughout the theater, and helping to destroy the enemy's ability to wage war. Air superiority is essential so we can quickly move forces into a theater and attack the enemy at will. Air control provides the joint force [with] numerous operational and tactical advantages while facilitating land and naval maneuver. Air forces provide sustained, precise firepower, reconnaissance and surveillance, critical refueling, and global lift to rapidly deploy and sustain joint forces in theater.

Space forces play an increasingly important role in prosecuting modern warfare. They provide global and battlefield surveillance, ballistic missile warning, precise navigation, secure communications, weather, and intelligence information. Space assets facilitate effective command and control and enhance the joint utilization of our land, sea, and air forces.

Special operations forces from all three military departments provide combatant commanders and deployed forces with unique capabilities to conduct direct action, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, counterterrorism, psychological operations, and civil affairs activities. Properly employed, special operations forces provide commanders capabilities that extend their vision of the battlefield, increase their flexibility, and enhance their initiative. These forces will be fully integrated into military operations by the combatant commanders.

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### *Win the Information War*

The remarkable leverage attainable from reconnaissance, intelligence collection and analysis, and high-speed data processing and transmission warrants special emphasis. The services and combatant commands require such fused information systems. These systems enhance our ability to dominate warfare. We must assure that this leverage works for us and against our adversaries. New doctrine is being developed, and training and control programs are underway, to ensure that advantages, built on the early success in Operation Desert Storm, are being exploited.

### *Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction*

Potential adversaries should recognize our capability to dominate any escalation of conflict should weapons of mass destruction be employed against us. In addition, we will maintain and strengthen our defensive capabilities against such weapons. We continue efforts to prevent the use of mass destruction weapons and make preparations to operate effectively in environments marked by biological, chemical, or radioactive contamination.

### *Two Major Regional Contingency Focus*

When entering any regional conflict, we will fully apply all the principles addressed above to ensure decisive victory; however, we will at the same time, remain aware that risks and dangers remain in other regions. While projecting forces to one contingency, we will be enhancing the readiness of other assets to handle a challenge elsewhere. Some high-leverage capabilities could be used in one major regional contingency and then reallocated and redeployed to another as conditions permit. Other capabilities essential to fighting and winning the first conflict will remain in the theater where they are committed.

### *Force Generation*

We will quickly generate combat power in wartime. Active forces engaged overseas in lower priority mission may be recalled, reorganized, retrained, and redeployed. Normally our Armed Forces will withdraw from operations other than war when the security situation is stabilized and other organizations are prepared to assume responsibility for relief or security. In times of crisis, we will need to accelerate this process. As our first forces react to a major regional crisis, we will begin actions to ensure forces are ready to meet a second contingency should it arise. Activities not involving critical U.S. interests will be turned over to the United Nations or other responsible regional security organizations while we attend to higher priority taskings.

Substantial reserve forces will be committed to combat and combat support missions early in any major regional contingency. To backfill active forces elsewhere and to prepare for unforeseen contingencies, some reserve component forces can expect to be mobilized immediately and to remain on active duty throughout the conflict, even though they are not directly involved in operations.

### *Win the Peace*

In the wake of any major theater conflict, our forces will likely encounter numerous demands to attend to the needs of the indigenous population. This may well include activities such as providing humanitarian relief and nation assistance that are included in the peacetime engagement component of our military strategy. Planning for post-conflict operations will begin prior to and continue throughout any conflict. Close coordination and cooperation between

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military and other governmental and nongovernmental agencies will be particularly critical during the transition period following war as some functions are transferred to non-military organizations and while our forces are being redeployed and reconstituted.