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Shift to a Global Perspective

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General Richard B. Myers became the fifteenth chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 1 October 2001. In this capacity, he serves as the principal military adviser to the president, the secretary of defense, and the National Security Council. Prior to becoming chairman, he served as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for nineteen months.

General Myers was born in Kansas City, Missouri. He is a 1965 graduate of Kansas State University and holds a master's degree in business administration from Auburn University. The general has attended the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama; the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; and the Program for Senior Executives in National and International Security at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

General Myers entered the Air Force in 1965 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. His career includes operational command and leadership positions in a variety of Air Force and joint assignments. General Myers is a command pilot with more than 4,100 flying hours in the T-33, C-37, C-21, F-4, F-15, and F-16, including six hundred combat hours in the F-4.

As the vice chairman from March 2000 to September 2001, General Myers served as the chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, as vice chairman of the Defense Acquisition Board, and as a member of the National Security Council Deputies Committee and the Nuclear Weapons Council. In addition, he acted for the chairman in all aspects of the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System, including participation in the Defense Resources Board.

From August 1998 to February 2000, General Myers was Commander in Chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Space Command; Commander, Air Force Space Command; and Department of Defense manager for space transportation system contingency support at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. As commander, General Myers was responsible for defending America through space and intercontinental ballistic missile operations. Prior to assuming that position, he was Commander, Pacific Air Forces, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, from July 1997 to July 1998. From July 1996 to July 1997 General Myers served as assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Pentagon; and from November 1993 to June 1996 he was Commander of U.S. Forces Japan and Fifth Air Force at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

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SHIFT TO A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

General Richard B. Myers, U.S. Air Force

In ancient India, six blind men encountered an elephant for the first time and quickly began to squabble about the nature of elephants; The first blind man bumped into the elephant's side and declared that the beast was like a wall; The second, discovering the ear, concluded it was like a fan; The third blind man came across the tail and thought the elephant to be very much like a rope; The fourth, encountering the elephant's leg, was sure the animal resembled a tree; Finding the tusk, the fifth blind man proclaimed the elephant to be like a spear; And the sixth, grasping the elephant's trunk, concluded the giant pachyderm most resembled a snake.

We all know from the ancient Oriental story of the six blind men and the elephant that how we perceive something determines our understanding of it and, by implication, our response to it. With that in mind, the U.S. military must shift from a regional to a global view of our security environment in order to understand and respond better. In the past, America's security needs were served adequately by having its uniformed leaders in Washington maintain the global vision, while the majority of U.S. military organizations maintained a regional or functional focus. However, to provide effectively for the nation's defense in the twenty-first century, we must all come to understand and appreciate the global perspective.

Examining trends in the global security environment and the ways in which the U.S. military has organized to deal with past challenges provides the foundation for understanding the implications for America's armed forces today, as we transform our military into one that is ready to provide effective missile defense,

information operations (IO), space operations, and other capabilities that do not respect our traditional regional boundaries.

TRENDS IN THE GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

During the last decade of the twentieth century, we witnessed dramatic shifts in the global security environment. Revolutionary technological advances and monumental political changes rendered our world safer in some ways, though less predictable and arguably less stable. While students of international affairs have debated the broader meaning and impact of globalization, defense professionals have worked to understand the security implications of these global trends.

Technological changes since 1990 have occurred at an extraordinary pace. Consider for a moment where you were and what you were doing as the Berlin Wall came down. How many people at that time owned a cellular phone or a personal computer, had logged onto the Internet, or knew what a global positioning satellite system was? Whereas television news coverage of the Vietnam War took thirty-six to forty-eight hours to reach American viewers, stories of the Gulf War were broadcast around the world instantaneously. During the Gulf War, the Cable News Network was unique in providing continuous coverage of global news. Now, several major networks in the United States provide coverage of global events as they happen, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year—not to mention the variety of international news programs produced and broadcast by foreign broadcast corporations. Al-Jazeera provides programming that shapes perceptions of the United States in much of the Arabic-speaking world. Imagery satellites capable of better than one-meter resolution were the sole purview of superpowers but are now operated by companies in the United States and Europe for the benefit of whoever is willing to pay for the images. In August 2002, commercial satellite images of airfields in the Horn of Africa were broadcast around the world, allegedly showing potential staging areas for attacks against Iraq. For those who missed the news, the satellite photographs were available on the Internet.

The political changes in the 1990s were no less staggering. As a fighter pilot, I spent the first twenty-five years of my Air Force career studying Soviet fighter aircraft that NATO would have had to confront in deadly combat if the Cold War ever heated up. Now Soviet fighters that could be seen in the West only in classified photos are performing at air shows over America's heartland. Today, officers from the former Soviet Union pursue professional military education at our staff colleges and war colleges, and three former Warsaw Pact states have joined NATO. The end of the Cold War lowered the threat of nuclear Armageddon and brought an end to many of the proxy wars through which the two sides struggled to exert their influence. But the Cold War imposed on international affairs a

certain element of stability and predictability that no longer exists. There is an alarming number of customers—including states and nonstate actors—seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them, including long-range ballistic missiles. In short, the technological and political changes that have improved our quality of life and brought us all closer together can also be perverted to empower those who would do us harm.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As we chart our way ahead, we do not begin with a clean sheet of paper. We must first understand how we arrived at our current way of organizing for national security if we are to understand why we are better off organizing functionally or globally for some mission areas rather than relying entirely on regional combatant commands. At the same time, we should appreciate, not abandon, the value of regional expertise in implementing our national security strategy and national military strategy.

The experiences of the Second World War and early Cold War helped to dispel lingering illusions about America's security and its proclivity for isolationism; those experiences drew America's new international responsibilities into tighter focus. Responding to America's changed role in the world, Congress passed the National Security Act of 1947, creating the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Defense. While Congress legislated the overarching security structure, President Harry S. Truman established the first Unified Command Plan (UCP), creating our regional and functional combatant commands. Among these newly created commands were U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), U.S. Atlantic Command (USLANTCOM), and the Strategic Air Command (SAC). The containment policy our armed forces helped to support was a global one, but there was arguably little need for our regional commanders to focus globally. In any case, the regional commanders lacked the technological means to gain and maintain a global perspective.

The first Unified Command Plans merely codified the command structures that existed at the end of the Second World War. What had once been General Dwight D. Eisenhower's command became USEUCOM; General Douglas MacArthur's command became Far East Command; and Admiral Chester Nimitz's command became USPACOM. There were other regional commands with responsibilities for Alaska, for the Caribbean, and for guarding the northeastern air approaches to the United States, but there were also vast areas of the world not assigned to any combatant command.¹ When our first combatant commands were established, the service chiefs played an active role in the commands and served as the Joint Chiefs of Staff's executive agents in overseeing the commands.

From the outset of the Cold War, regional commands focused on their regions while the Joint Chiefs of Staff kept a global perspective. Although this arrangement served the nation well enough to see us through the Cold War, there were signs of trouble as early as 1951, when President Truman dismissed General MacArthur in the midst of the Korean War. After serving as Chief of Staff of the Army in the 1930s, MacArthur had lived in Asia until his dismissal by President Truman in 1951. He first served as military adviser to the Philippine government. Then, during the Second World War, he was made commander of U.S. troops in the southwest Pacific area. After the war, MacArthur became military governor of Japan, overseeing its occupation and reconstruction. With the outbreak of the Korean War, General MacArthur's Far East Command provided the U.S. underpinning to the United Nations war effort. In response to MacArthur's protest against limited objectives in the Korean War—"no substitute for victory"—the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley, informed Congress that he and the Joint Chiefs unanimously agreed that in the global struggle against communism, a wider war in Asia represented "the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy."² Though partly a clash over the utility of limited objectives in war, the disagreement largely reflected the two sides' differing perspectives—MacArthur's Asia-centric regional perspective and the Joint Chiefs' global perspective, which had to account for Europe as well as Asia.

In the fifty-six years since the first Unified Command Plan, our combatant command structure has been expanded geographically and empowered legally. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act strengthened the role of our combatant commands, and with UCP '02, the last remaining unassigned regions of the world—Russia, the Caspian Sea, Antarctica, and the countries of North America—were finally placed within our combatant commanders' areas of responsibility (AORs). Now the entire globe is encompassed within the AORs of our five regional combatant commands—U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), and U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM).

In addition to regional combatant commands, the United States has had functional combatant commands since the inception of the UCP. In fact, Strategic Air Command was technically the first, formally becoming a combatant command just two weeks before USPACOM, USEUCOM, and USLANTCOM. Still, today's functional unified combatant commands are relatively recent creations that began with the establishment of U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) in 1985.³ In the decade and a half that followed, successive administrations established U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM),

U.S. Transportation Command (USSTRANSCOM), U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), and U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM). The rise of these functional commands highlights the reality that some military missions or responsibilities can be better fulfilled by carving out functions from our regional commands' responsibilities than by having the functions dispersed among our regional commands.

The newly established USSTRATCOM—formed by joining the capabilities and resources of USSPACECOM and the original USSTRATCOM—is taking on some missions that had been unassigned previously and that overlap the responsibilities of our regional combatant commands. USSTRATCOM's nuclear focus broadened considerably with the latest Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), signed by the secretary of defense in December 2001. In addition to specifying the road ahead for America's nuclear arsenal, the 2001 NPR also introduced a new strategic triad. The old triad of intercontinental ballistic missiles, long-range bombers, and submarine-launched ballistic missiles has given way to a triad of strategic offensive capabilities, strategic defenses, and the infrastructure and research and development needed to sustain America's strategic capabilities. Strategic offensive capabilities include nonnuclear, even nonkinetic, strikes as well as traditional nuclear force employment. As described in the NPR, the new triad is enabled by command and control (C2), intelligence, and planning capabilities. The president's decision to combine USSPACECOM and USSTRATCOM to form a new U.S. Strategic Command was a major step in fulfilling the vision for a new strategic triad. Despite its familiar name, the new command is as different from the former USSTRATCOM as it is from the former USSPACECOM. It is an entirely new command—and greater than the sum of its two predecessors. Obviously, the new USSTRATCOM will have global responsibilities, and its commander and staff must have a global perspective for dealing with threats to U.S. security.

USSOCOM has also been given new responsibilities and a greater role in the global war on terrorism. The very expression “global war on terrorism” highlights the global approach needed for dealing with the problem of terrorism. At the first Defense Department press conference of 2003, the secretary of defense announced the change of focus at USSOCOM, pointing out that “Special Operations Command will function as both a supported and a supporting command.”⁴ In the past, USSOCOM has, with very few exceptions, been the supporting command to our regional combatant commands. Obviously, terrorist networks today have a global presence, with members and cells around the world, and we can no longer adequately counter the scourge of terrorism by relying solely on regional strategies. We also need a global approach to the problem.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. MILITARY

The establishment of a new USSTRATCOM and an expanded role for USSOCOM does not come at the expense of our regional combatant commands. This is not a zero-sum equation. Our regional combatant commands provide essential regional expertise; they provide an enduring basis for U.S. presence around the globe; they are the keys to successful theater security cooperation with our allies and friends; and they provide the basis for pursuing multinational interoperability and military coalitions. In peace and in war, our regional combatant commands provide direction to, and C2 over, U.S. military activities around the world. The challenge for our armed forces today is to balance these regional responsibilities with the need to address missions that are global in nature.

Whether we divide our combatant commanders' responsibilities and authorities along functional lines and address them on a global basis or instead choose to deal with them along regional lines, we create "seams." Seams—that is, the discontinuities where one command's responsibilities end and another's begin—are unavoidable, unless we take the impractical step of making one commander responsible for everything, everywhere, all the time. However, seams can become vulnerabilities that our adversaries might exploit. Therefore, when organizing our combatant commands, we strive to place seams where it makes the most sense to place them—where they provide us the greatest effectiveness and efficiencies and present our adversaries with the least opportunity to do us harm.

Missions that cross all regional boundaries require a global approach. One of those is computer network defense. Electrons do not respect geographic boundaries, and requiring each of our geographic commands to plan independently for protecting computer networks would create unacceptable seams. Recognizing this, we assigned the lead for computer network defense to USSPACECOM in 1999. This assignment of a global mission to a commander with a global perspective was a precursor of the new missions assigned to the new USSTRATCOM.

Many inherently global military mission areas are of increasing importance to our security and cannot be addressed well from a regional perspective. Military mission areas that are inherently global include the following: integrating missile defense across areas of responsibility; certain elements of information operations; space operations; global strike operations; certain intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities associated with global strike, missile defense, IO, and space operations; and countering terrorism.

Missile defense is a responsibility of all of our regional combatant commands. However, no regional combatant command, even the newly established USNORTHCOM, is better suited than any other to integrate missile defense

operations across AORs in support of the president's stated goal of providing protection for the U.S. deployed forces, allies, and friends. When missiles in a distant theater can be used against targets anywhere on the globe, the United States needs global ISR and global command and control to integrate its missile defense capabilities—which, by the way, include offensive capabilities to preempt or prevent missile attacks. We cannot afford to think of missile defense merely in terms of actively intercepting missiles after they have been launched.

Certain elements of information operations similarly require a global perspective and better integration of our nation's capabilities. While information operations should become a core warfighting capability of all of our combatant commands, certain IO activities could create effects of such a magnitude that focusing on regional consequences would be unnecessarily restrictive and ultimately unhelpful. Even when the effects of information operations are limited to a single area of operations, a global perspective will be needed to ensure that theater IO is compatible with IO in other AORs. A global perspective will often provide the essential starting point for success, whether we are attempting to get a message across to an adversarial audience that spans more than one theater, conducting electronic warfare activities to inhibit long-distance communications, performing computer network operations, or carrying out military deception programs. Even within a single theater, USSTRATCOM will provide "value added" to the regional combatant commands by integrating efforts that have previously tended to be "stovepiped" in different organizations (e.g., C2 warfare, psychological operations, electronic warfare, computer network attack).

Space operations present another military mission area where a regional focus is inadequate and a global perspective is needed. Given the vital role space operations play in global communications, one cannot always determine precisely where space operations end and information operations begin. In the past, the supported-supporting relationships between regional combatant commands and U.S. Space Command were predominantly one-way, with USSPACECOM supporting the regional commands. In the future, we are much more likely to see regional commands supporting the new USSTRATCOM to ensure the success of military operations in space. This change in roles will require our regional combatant commands to develop a deeper appreciation for the global perspective of America's security needs.

Given the nature of threats facing America in the twenty-first century, including fleeting targets, such as mobile ballistic missiles or leaders of terrorist networks, we must develop the ability to undertake appropriate military action rapidly anywhere on the globe. Such action could be taken by today's long-range bombers, shipborne weapon systems, or special forces, but new global capabilities will be needed in the future. Regional combatant commands could play

supported or supporting roles in global strike operations, depending on the scenario and weapon systems involved. However, one need look no farther than our current global war on terrorism to appreciate the need for a global perspective in planning for and prosecuting global military operations.

Global intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities will be needed for gathering indications-and-warning data and otherwise to enable global strike, space operations, certain elements of IO, and integrated missile defense. Moreover, global C2 capabilities are needed to enable integrated global missile defense, facilitate global strike, integrate regional operations with global operations, and integrate regional operations in one area of operations with those of another. Knitting together various regionally focused ISR activities is unlikely to yield a coherent global perspective. Simply put, a relevant global perspective cannot be obtained without ISR activities that are, to some degree, globally coordinated and directed—a function the Defense Intelligence Agency performs. What is new is that given the low-density/high-demand nature of many of our ISR resources, regional combatant commands are more likely than before to be required to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities in support of global operations tasked to USSOCOM or USSTRATCOM.

Often discussions about the need to shift from a regional focus to a global perspective lead to debates about supported-supporting relationships, and inevitably someone will make the claim that functional combatant commands should always support regional combatant commands. Implied, if not stated, is the belief that conducting operations or executing missions is the sole purview of regional combatant commands and that no functional combatant command should conduct operations in a regional combatant commander's AOR. Such hard-and-fast rules have never existed, and supported-supporting relationships continue to depend on the situation and mission objectives. That is why supported-supporting relationships are spelled out in planning orders, deployment orders, execution orders, in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, and in operations plans and concept plans. Moreover, the term "supported" does not imply sole responsibility for execution. A supporting combatant commander can execute or conduct operations in support of the supported commander—something USTRANSCOM does every day. Our combatant commanders ultimately support the president and the secretary of defense in the pursuit of American security, and the array of possible command relations between combatant commanders should not be constrained unnecessarily. To the extent we can harness the ability to observe and operate globally, without self-imposed artificial limitations, we will generate new military capabilities to add to the ones that we have

today, thereby yielding a greater number of military options from which the president can choose.

The president and secretary of defense must maintain a global perspective, and so must the military officials charged with supporting them. While communications from the president and the secretary of defense to the combatant commanders normally pass through the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Chiefs and the chairman are not in the chain of command. If there was ever a time when our nation's security could be adequately provided by having uniformed leaders in Washington maintain a global perspective while commands around the globe kept exclusive focus on their regions, that time has long since passed into history. To fulfill faithfully the "commander's intent" from the president on down, combatant command staffs, service staffs, the Joint Staff, and U.S. officials serving on allied staffs must appreciate our commander in chief's perspective—a global perspective. If we attempt to do otherwise, we will surely end up like the six blind men of the ancient Eastern parable in their first encounter with an elephant, endlessly disputing the nature of something we fail to perceive fully. By shifting our view from a regional perspective to a global perspective, we will better comprehend and respond to America's security needs in the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. Joint History Office, *The History of the Unified Command Plan 1946–1993* (Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, 1995), pp. 11–15.
2. General Douglas MacArthur, speech before Congress, 19 April 1951, reproduced in Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 459; General Omar Bradley, testimony to Congress, 15 May 1951, cited in Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 640.
3. Prior to the formation of USSPACECOM in 1985, purely functional combatant commands tended to be "specified commands," meaning that all of their forces came from a single service. Strategic Air Command was an example of a specified command. The last specified command, USFORSCOM, became the Army component to U.S. Atlantic Command in 1993. (U.S. Atlantic Command became USJFCOM in 1999.)
4. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, transcript of a Defense Department press conference, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C., 7 January 2003.

