



**PB27 Posture Written Statement**  
Gen Dan Caine  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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## **INTRODUCTION**

I am deeply honored and profoundly grateful to represent the extraordinary 2.8 million uniformed and civilian members of our Joint Force and their families who serve our great nation, and to testify on the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget.

The enduring strength of our Joint Force lies in the unmatched skill, discipline, tenacity and grit of our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Guardians. Supported steadfastly by their families, they rise to every challenge, standing ready to deter and defeat our adversaries. As Chairman, I am humbled daily by the commitment, professionalism and courage of our warfighters, especially those deployed around the world right now. I would also like to express my profound gratitude for the 39 members of our Joint Force who we've lost in operations, combat, and training during my tenure as Chairman, including the 13 who passed during Operation EPIC FURY. Their sacrifice and that of their families directly contributed to the success of that operation and the security of our nation. We are deeply grateful for each of them, and we will continue to mourn their loss. Their names will never be forgotten.

I am honored to testify alongside the Honorable Pete Hegseth, and I thank him, the President, Congress, and the American people for the trust and confidence placed in me as the 22<sup>nd</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I would also like to thank Congress for your steadfast commitment and support to the incredible men and women who have made up our All-Volunteer Force for the last 53 years, and your continued partnership and collaboration in national security.

As we discussed in my testimony last year before I assumed this position, I recognize that I, and the other professionals in the Joint Force, ultimately serve the American people. I owe it to them, our warfighters, and Congress to always make sure the Secretary and the President have a full spectrum of options accompanied by a rigorous assessment of consequences, risks, and strategic impacts as they make difficult and complex national security decisions. Our bedrock principle remains civilian control of the military: once a decision is made, it is the absolute responsibility of the Joint Force to execute those orders with precision and resolve.

Over the last year, we have seen America's Joint Force quickly, efficiently, and professionally execute military actions around the world. Our incredibly well-trained, well-led, and well-armed warfighters have decades of combat experience, and our Joint Force Commanders at every echelon are skilled at operating, synchronizing, and integrating combat capabilities across all domains. I am confident our Joint Force will continue to rise to every challenge and defeat every foe, and I am incredibly proud to be a member of this team.

## **RECENT AND ONGOING MILITARY OPERATIONS**

During Operations ROUGH RIDER, MIDNIGHT HAMMER, SOUTHERN SPEAR, ABSOLUTE RESOLVE, and EPIC FURY, the Joint Force executed complex and globally integrated missions with the support of the interagency and international partners.

Each operation followed a defined process: after receiving guidance from the President and Secretary of War, the Joint Staff, with support of the Combatant Commands, produced a comprehensive range of appropriate military options and associated risks for our political civilian leaders. Once a decision was made, the Joint Force demonstrated our unrivaled ability to synchronize combat power across all domains—land, sea, air, space, cyberspace, and the information environment—to execute the directed mission.

## **GLOBAL RISK**

Global risk is scaling exponentially. The complexity of the modern battlefield demands constant adaptation, and we must continue to drive the pace of change to maintain our superiority—in this type of environment, inaction carries risk. The challenges detailed below necessitate urgent and deliberate action to secure, resource, and sustain our military advantage in the decades ahead.

Simultaneous, protracted conflicts across multiple domains are an increasing possibility as our adversaries cooperate, sharing technology, intelligence, and combat capabilities. While the global demand for the Joint Force remains high, we remain focused on addressing capacity and production challenges within our defense industrial base to accelerate essential modernization. The path forward requires predictable funding to reinvigorate our industrial capacity and leverage both public and private capital.

To remain the most capable military in the world, we must also ensure our procurement cycles keep pace with the accelerating technology curve. Delivering a Joint Force that is

properly armed, globally integrated, and ready depends on the urgency with which we move our acquisition system to a wartime footing.

Finally, we must continue to adapt to the digital age. Data is a strategic asset, and we are continually working to leverage it more effectively across the Joint Force. Our competitive advantage continues to grow as we integrate data, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies.

## **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

We live in dynamic times. China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are cooperating – learning from each other and adapting every day. Our adversaries are leveraging every tool at their disposal—economic, diplomatic, informational, and military—to circumvent and undermine U.S. power while simultaneously exchanging and fielding new technologies.

The world is changing with increasing velocity, and threats no longer remain neatly contained within geographic theaters or by state actors. The low barrier to entry created by affordable, ubiquitous unmanned systems means rogue actors and violent extremists now have access to disruptive and lethal technologies and capabilities. Our adversaries are operating across a modern battlespace that has expanded from the seabed to the cislunar. And every day, this proliferation of technology and access to information exponentially accelerates the speed of war, compressing critical decision-making time for our leaders against a more diffuse and unpredictable enemy.

Through the National Security and Defense Strategies, the President and Secretary have provided the Joint Force with guidance, intent, and priorities for addressing this problem, beginning with defending the U.S. Homeland, deterring China, increasing burden-sharing with our Allies and Partners, and reinvigorating our defense industrial base.

**U.S. Homeland & Western Hemisphere.** Violent cartels, foreign terrorists, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and adversarial influence remain persistent challenges to our homeland and near abroad. Operation SOUTHERN SPEAR and Operation ABSOLUTE RESOLVE have reduced threats in the region, but we must remain vigilant and engaged in our own hemisphere to continue to reduce these threats.

**China.** China is an enduring concern and we should remain attentive to their aspirations and their military activities. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is learning from the conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, developing and integrating new technology, while their industrial base produces ships, fighters, and munitions. We should continue to be prepared to deter aggression alongside our Allies and partners.

**Iran.** As a result of Operations ROUGH RIDER, MIDNIGHT HAMMER, and EPIC FURY, the Iranian regime, their military and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and their network of regional proxies, are weaker and less capable than they have been in decades. As always, the Joint Force remains postured to conduct further military operations if required.

**Russia.** Russia remains a persistent but manageable threat, dwarfed economically by our European Allies and militarily by our Joint Force and NATO. Despite four years of grueling conflict in Ukraine, they remain committed to using military force to expand their territory and their influence, possess the world's largest nuclear arsenal, and retain significant industrial capacity. They have used the war in Ukraine to restructure and modernize their combat forces while providing a combat laboratory for our adversaries to learn and test new weapons and technology.

**North Korea.** North Korea continues to pose a threat to the U.S. homeland as well as our interests and Allies and partners in the region. They are integrating advanced technology from our other adversaries with lessons learned from combat experience in Ukraine into their large conventional force. And they remain committed to their nuclear program while simultaneously extending their operational reach through aggressive ballistic missile research and testing.

## **THE JOINT FORCE**

Last year, I testified on my four pillars for the Joint Force: being properly armed, globally integrated, ready, and our people. After the lessons of this year, I no longer see them as pillars. They are imperatives. Every operation has reinforced the absolute necessity of these principles for securing our national interests in the present time, and for those who will wear the cloth of our nation in the future.

The President's proposed \$1.5T budget for FY27 will modernize the Joint Force, increase military readiness, invest in our warfighters, reinvigorate our industrial base, and continue to

transform the Joint Force to meet the nation's military needs. It advances our ability to meet and win the challenges of the global security environment while rapidly continuing the transformation at the pace of emerging technology so that we are ready today, forty years from now, and every single day in between.

## **PROPERLY ARMED**

Our Joint Force possesses unparalleled capability and incredible professionalism – something we demonstrate to our adversaries daily. To remain the best, our warfighters must remain properly armed. They must have the right mix of capabilities, from hardware to software, at scale, in their hands long before our leaders are contemplating military operations and activities.

Foundational to that is a defense industrial base and a national industrial base that can create capabilities at the scale and pace our Joint Force needs. We rely on the American entrepreneurial spirit and a supply chain that stretches from the mines that provide the critical minerals for our weapons and munitions, to the scientists that design and test them, to the workers on the factory floors that put them all together. I want to thank the United States Congress for your efforts last year to enact significant acquisition reform and I look forward to working together to build on those reforms.

The FY27 budget generates Joint Force capacity and capability by doubling investment in shipbuilding and aircraft production. It funds over \$26 billion for multiyear procurement contracts for critical munitions, stabilizing demand signals for industry so they can expand their own lines with confidence. It finances critical investments in nuclear triad modernization, cyber defense, and space capabilities. It funds emerging capabilities like artificial intelligence, the F-47, the B-21, UAS and counter-UAS. It provides over \$17 billion for Golden Dome, continuing to build on prior year investments. And it includes the largest investment in research, development, testing, and evaluation in American history.

America's innovation economy and entrepreneurial spirit are one of our nation's greatest strengths, but historically our acquisition system has been too sluggish to fully realize our advantage. When I was entrusted with this position last year, I came in with the observation that we have been outstanding at buying 10 to 15 years behind the technology development curve. But over the last year, we have made significant reforms across our acquisition enterprise to close the gap. Together, we still have much work to do.

With Congress's guidance and support, we've continued to assess and implement Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution reforms to better align resource allocation to strategy, foster innovation, ensure acquisition transformation, and maintain our competitive edge amidst a rapidly evolving strategic landscape.

I would also like to specifically thank Secretary Feinberg, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Chris Mahoney for their leadership, and Congress for your partnership, in helping the Joint Force improve the way we allocate capital and address joint operational problems. Through provisions in the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act, we have worked together to reorient the Joint Requirements Oversight Council to address joint operational problems through: (1) joint force design; (2) joint capability integration; (3) capability portfolio management; and (4) improved consideration of Combatant Command requirements.

These reform efforts are mutually interdependent and reinforcing. The warfighter's ability to field the right capabilities at the right time depends on our collective efforts to reform our processes and systems for acquisition, resourcing, and requirements. Failure at any one of these points equates to a failure of critical support to the warfighter. The Joint Force looks forward to leveraging these reform efforts to improve trust with Congress and the stewardship of our funds, and to better establish and resource joint requirements in a way that is both technologically and analytically informed, so we can truly build one Joint Force instead of five separate Services.

I appreciate this committee's continued support for all of these initiatives and for your continued focus on reinvigorating our national and defense industrial base, including reauthorization and consideration of critical reforms to the Defense Production Act to: (1) strengthen DPA governance across the interagency; (2) expand the range and extent of tools to address defense industrial base shortfalls; and (3) promote research, development, and procurement of critical technologies and critical minerals mining and processing. Without your support and partnership on these issues, we would lack critical tools for addressing the material needs of the Joint Force.

## **GLOBALLY INTEGRATED**

To maintain our edge, we will remain a globally integrated force. Today's conflicts are multi-domain, unfolding simultaneously on land, at sea, in the air, in space, and in cyberspace. Modern threats are no longer confined by borders; they move quickly and span the globe.

This demands that the Joint Force and the interagency always operate as a single, cohesive entity. A globally integrated Joint Force is one that can leverage the best of our Title 10 active duty force, plus Title 50 capabilities and our intelligence community, plus the best of our Title 32 National Guard, plus the best of Title 14 and the Coast Guard, plus Title 22 and the Department of State, plus Title 18 and our law enforcement partners, plus our Allies and partners, and the best of our private sector to achieve the mission.

In a globally integrated Joint Force, our commanders have the ability to see, sense, and understand their environment, and then direct operations and activities in their theaters to achieve the military objectives directed by the President. The FY27 budget recognizes that imperative and funds the capabilities and force multipliers that give our commanders the tools they need to integrate at echelon. This includes growing the Space Force, and critical investments in artificial intelligence; Combined Joint All-Domain Command and Control; space-based command and control, communication, computers, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting equipment; Precision, Navigation, and Timing capabilities; and aerial refueling.

When I was confirmed by the Congress a year ago, I made it a priority to do an analysis of our authorities, structures, and processes so that we can become a truly globally integrated force. Because when the Joint Force fields integrated capabilities, rehearses at every echelon, and aligns the right authorities and resources to support commanders, we are successful. Our unique accomplishments this year demonstrated the importance of integration, and that our Joint Force is on the right track.

During Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER we integrated space and cyber capabilities with cruise missiles to enable a strike package to penetrate deep into Iranian airspace and conduct a deliberate and precise strike against three Iranian nuclear facilities. Similarly, during Operation ABSOLUTE RESOLVE we disrupted, degraded, and blinded enemy communication networks through a range of space and cyber capabilities. We synchronized and integrated those effects with over 150 aircraft launched from bases across the western

hemisphere to protect our force as they supported a Department of Justice apprehension operation. And again, during Operation EPIC FURY, we used our space and cyber capabilities to disrupt and degrade Iran's communication and air defense networks, enabling our Joint Force to strike over 1,000 targets in the first 24 hours using cruise missiles and over 100 aircraft from across the Services.

We must continue to invest in our nation's capabilities. This includes investing in hardware and software architectures to enhance and balance global contingencies. Over the coming year, we look forward to working across the Department of War, the interagency, with Congress, and the private sector to ensure our national command systems remain at the leading edge of emerging and innovative capabilities and our joint elements and enablers across the globe remain synchronized across theaters so we can achieve true unity of effort and command.

The Joint Staff is the single point of intersection between all the competing demands of Combatant Commanders and our Services. It is where global analysis and integration occurs to ensure that our civilian leaders understand second-order considerations and risks associated with every military option brought for decision. To maintain our advantage, we must double down and continue to become more joint, from joint force design and development to joint force generation and employment. I look forward to continued partnership with Congress on these issues so that our Joint Staff can more effectively and efficiently conduct global analysis and integration. I look forward to continued engagement to strengthen joint force design and development including implementing requirements reform and better aligning resourcing and requirements processes.

## **READY**

The Joint Force is continually called upon to provide our civilian leaders with military options to respond to crises around the globe. In a rapidly changing environment, we need to be ready—organized, trained, and equipped—to deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries anywhere at any time.

The FY27 budget increases both regular component and National Guard end strength, so we have the people we need, and it achieves 95% funding of our readiness requirements, so our warfighters are proficient in their military skills, and our organizations are prepared for future operations. Investments in readiness give our Joint Force the strategic agility to support and



execute a range of military options in response to guidance from our senior civilian leadership.

Joint Force readiness starts here at home; by ensuring we take care of the families of our service members. And it extends to our national and defense industrial base. If we are faced with simultaneous, protracted global conflict, we will need the entire strength of our nation to respond.

Our troops are deployed to the border and the Southern Hemisphere to protect our homeland and our near abroad. They are standing watch at the edge of freedom in the Pacific, the Middle East, and in Europe, deterring aggression and protecting our interests. Every day, our warfighters get asked to do incredibly hard things. And we owe it to them, and their families, to give them the tools, the capacity, the combat capability, the training, the tactics that they must have to fight and win our nation's wars and to survive and come home to their families.

Over the last year, their extraordinary performance around the globe demonstrated our Joint Force stands ready to support and execute the full range of military options to defend the homeland and our interests at the direction of the President. Their ability to rapidly deploy, fight, and win, is a direct result of your past investments in our readiness.

Part of caring for people is having enough data to make good decisions. I am grateful for your continued support in improving our Department-wide data management and information and analytical architecture through establishment of the Ontology Governance Working Group. With Congress's guidance and support, the Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Officers of the Office of the Secretary of War and Joint Staff continue to develop and implement Department-wide data policy and governance including improved data management and sharing.

This partnership is critical for delivering a strong digital backbone for the Joint Force; ensuring decision advantage against adversaries amidst the breakneck speed of modern warfare; joint force development and sustainment; and global force management. This effort has been critical for both my ability to provide best military advice to the Secretary and President and for our civilian leaders to make risk informed decisions. And we have much more work to do in digitizing the Joint Force.

I'd also like to thank Congress for their continued support for transfer and reprogramming authorities to address readiness shortfalls as they occur, regardless of current operations or the strategic environment. Your support for strategic flexibility and agility in our resourcing processes is critical as we adapt to evolving mission requirements.

## **PEOPLE**

The foundation of our military strength is our people, the 2.8 million service members and civilians that make up our Joint Force. They do not have to serve – they do so out of choice. Each one of them is infinitely more important than any of the hardware we will procure with the FY27 budget. Beside each one of them is a family that loves and supports them and makes sacrifices for this nation right alongside their service member.

In my year as Chairman, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman (SEAC) David Isom and I have visited the Joint Force across the country and around the world so that we can get a feel for the readiness and morale of not just the Joint Force but their families as well. It is clear to us that our enlisted force is the envy of the world, which is why SEAC Isom and I are committed to maintaining trust and faith with our warfighters, and to advocating on their behalf. SEAC Isom and I are incredibly grateful for your sustained interest in taking care of our people, and we look forward to our continued partnership on the matter.

We must honor their service by providing them and their families with the best possible housing, healthcare, and support we can provide. The FY27 budget makes important investments in quality-of-life initiatives, including pay increases, enlisted housing, healthcare, childcare, and career support for military spouses because readiness at home translates to readiness in the field.

## **CONCLUSION**

We're living in dynamic times. But I continue to have trust and confidence in the men and women of the Joint Force to translate the strategic direction of our civilian leadership into the military operations required to defend the United States in this new era.

I believe in the American entrepreneurial spirit to innovate, rise, and overcome these challenges. And to meet this challenge we must move faster, be disruptive, and relentlessly innovative. The conflict with Iran is a reminder we live in a dangerous world and the stakes

for our warfighters are high. To secure peace, we must move with a sense of urgency in both the private sector and across the Joint Force.

I'm incredibly grateful for all 2.8 million members of our Joint Force. They could do anything else as a profession, but they have chosen the profession of arms - to be part of something bigger than themselves. The skill and bravery of our troops during operations over the past year are a testament to the strength of our nation.

It is the honor of a lifetime to continue to serve our warfighters in this position. Every day, I wake up profoundly humbled by the trust this nation has put in me. I ask that we always remember our deployed and their families, who nobly carry the burden of our security and our future every day. And I ask that we never forget our fallen heroes, and their families, as their profound sacrifice, exceptional courage, and tenacity are the most perfect example of selfless service to our great Nation.