

FLETCHER CONFERENCE

1999

Strategic Responsiveness

*Early and Continuous Joint Effectiveness
Across the Spectrum of Military Operations*

General Editors

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UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF

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The 1999 Fletcher Conference was a landmark event that provided a lively forum for debate and candid discussion as to how our national leadership might best establish and achieve our national security goals in the 21st century. The purpose of this publication is to provide a historical record of what transpired and to set the stage for future policy discussions and conferences on national security.

This compendium is a gateway to better understand the full spectrum of national security challenges that lie ahead for our country. The journey toward a stronger defense will begin by taking account of the debates and discussions in the larger national security community--which now includes the media, corporate America, Congress and the American public; each of these groups was well represented this past year. This is the first in what will be an annual series of such comprehensive studies by the United States Army and selected co-sponsors.

This document offers a logical transition to our next conference. The Fletcher Conference 2000 will occur November 15-16, 2000, in Arlington, Virginia. The theme of the conference -- "**National Strategies and Capabilities for a Changing World**" - will set the tone for the event. From considering the impact of space and technology on defense planning to discussing the growing importance of coalitions and alliances to our national strategy, the exchanges will be both timely and critical in framing the issues of our national security posture. This next Fletcher Conference will undoubtedly prove another important forum for considering the future of our national defense.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eric K. Shinseki
General, United States Army

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Introduction

A conference entitled *Strategic Responsiveness: Early and Continuous Joint Effectiveness—Across the Spectrum* was held on November 2–3, 1999. The goal of the organizers and co-sponsors was to gain a more precise understanding of our national security priorities and to build a broader consensus as to our requirements across the broad security spectrum of military operations. In an effort to address the daunting challenges ahead for the Armed Services, the organizers and co-sponsors brought together a broad array of talent and expertise that included current and former policymakers, senior military leaders, members of Congress, internationally renowned security specialists, corporate executives, and the media. The diverse group of speakers and participants presented a wide range of perspectives, issues, and policy options.

Central to the conference were several basic premises: The United States will remain the driving force for peace, prosperity, and democracy. The United States faces an uncertain and increasingly complex international security environment characterized by new asymmetric threats such as weapons of mass destruction and information warfare. The Armed Forces must be prepared as a joint force to meet the new security challenges that will differ dramatically from those of the Cold War era. At the same time, the Services must be able to respond to threats and crises ranging from smaller-scale contingencies to major theater wars. The Services must also maintain power projection capabilities to support and enhance overseas presence, which will remain a critical component of U.S. strategy. The array of requirements and emerging challenges have compelled the Department of Defense to embark on a course intended to enhance the mobility and lethality of our Armed Forces.

“Strategic Responsiveness” must be an essential aspect of our future defense strategies. Strategic responsiveness is based on a joint military concept that would enable the Armed Forces to place an adversary at a decisive disadvantage through the rapid exploitation of the operational initiative before the opponent can act. The United States must be able to apply overwhelming military power based on the rapid convergence of forces from all the Services wherever they are needed. Forming force packages that contain the correct combination of mission tailored capabilities is a task essential to achieving victory in contingencies ranging from peacetime operations to full-scale conflict. For this purpose we must develop new strategies and capabilities.

In convening the conference, it was our intention to develop sound recommendations for the policy-making community and each of the Services through the candid exchange of views in an open, collegial forum. This compendium is a summary of conference findings and recommendations, introduction to and analysis of panel presentations and discussions, followed by the conference transcripts—panel by panel. In the pages that follow each session begins with an introduction of the topic for discussion, brief summary points of what transpired, followed by a presentation of views expressed and an analysis of what transpired. The compendium includes a concise conclusion highlighting the conference’s essential “take-away points.”