

# Plan Outlines Strategy for War on Terror

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- A document being released today by the Pentagon defines the national strategy for the war on terrorism for the U.S. armed forces.

The National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism, developed by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, supports the national U.S. government strategy by outlining strategic guidance for military activities and operations, a senior defense official said.

The document designates a global-supported combatant commander for the war on terror, the official said. This commander will write a national campaign plan and each combatant commander will be required to write a regional campaign plan, he said.

This is the authoritative document to describe the nature of the war, the nature of the enemy and the military strategy to face the enemy, he said. This plan was needed because conflicting views within DOD were hurting cooperation and efficiency, he said.

"By having the authoritative description, we brought the entire efforts of the DOD in line in an integrated and synchronized manner to achieve strategic effectiveness," he said.

The plan emphasizes that violent extremism is the primary threat to the United States, its allies and interests. The global war on terror is a war to preserve ordinary people's ability to live as they choose.

The United States is at war against extremists who advocate and use violence to gain control over others and threaten the way of life for free and open societies, the plan states. The document uses the word "murder" when describing the extremists' actions to deter any connotations of freedom fighters when thinking of jihadists, the defense official said.

This is not a religious or cultural war, the document stresses, but a struggle of ideas within Islam.

"It's a war of ideas between moderates and extremists," the official said. "We ally ourselves with those who are moderate in their belief to achieve our aims."

The U.S. government strategy for the war on terror, as outlined in the military plan, is to continue to lead an international effort to deny violent extremist networks the components they need to operate and survive. To execute this strategy, the military will focus on three areas, the official said.

The first area of emphasis is expanding international partnerships to combat violent extremists, he said. The second area is to "keep the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the world's most dangerous people" -- to deny terrorists the use of weapons of mass destruction, he said. The third area is institutionalizing the strategy against violent extremism, both domestically and internationally.

The military also has a crucial role in establishing conditions that

counter terrorist ideologies, the official said. This includes providing security, giving humanitarian assistance, maintaining contact with foreign military leaders and considering how operations can affect ideological support for terrorists, he said.