Initial Thoughts – Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

I am honored and humbled to be your 38th Chief of Staff. Over the last 10 years our Army has proven itself in arguably the most difficult environment we have ever faced. Our leaders at every level have displayed unparalleled ingenuity, flexibility and adaptability. Our Soldiers have displayed mental and physical toughness and courage under fire. They have transformed the Army into the most versatile, agile, rapidly deployable and sustainable strategic land force in the world. Our Army is the Nation's force of decisive action, extremely relevant and highly effective for a wide range of missions. Trust is the bedrock of our honored Profession – trust between each other, trust between Soldiers and Leaders, trust between Soldiers and their Families and the Army, and trust with the American people.

Today is like no other time in our history. We remain at war, and our top priority is to win the current fight. It is also a time of uncertainty and historic change. We face a multitude of security challenges, such as transnational and regional terrorism in places like Yemen, Somalia, North Africa and Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. We have the uncertainty of the Arab Spring, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and challenges of rising powers. All of this is underpinned by fiscal constraint.

Despite the challenges, we confront the future from a position of great strength. Our Army will continue to be the best equipped, best trained, and best led force in the world. The strength of our Nation is our Army; the strength of our Army is our Soldiers; the strength of our Soldiers is our Families. This is what makes us ***Army Strong***.

Along with the Secretary of the Army, in the coming weeks I will share thoughts on our way forward. This includes sustaining our All-Volunteer Army, providing depth and versatility to the Joint Force, and ensuring flexibility for defense of our interests at home and abroad.

I am proud to serve in your ranks, filled by great men and women that willingly serve our country. You are courageous, confident, competent, and compassionate. You live our Army Values 24/7 in all you do. Discipline, high standards, and fitness are your watch words. You are the best our country has to offer. I look forward to seeing you as I visit your camps, posts, stations, and operating bases. Thank you for your steadfast dedication and loyal service to our Nation.

Raymond T. Odierno
Chief of Staff, U.S. Army