



**A CONVERSATION WITH
GENERAL MARTIN DEMPSEY**

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WELCOME/MODERATOR:

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SPEAKER:

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JESSICA MATHEWS: Good afternoon to all of you and to all of those in the overflow rooms downstairs. I'm Jessica Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. And I want to thank you for joining us for this very special event with America's top military officer, General Martin Dempsey.

General Dempsey took up his position as chairman of the Joint Chiefs in October, succeeding Admiral Mike Mullen, whom we were very fortunate to host as a speaker in his last week of his tenure. So it gives me special pleasure to welcome General Dempsey near the beginning of his term of office and to offer him a chance to sum up when he's finished here in this same chair.

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Every chairman faces a daunting array of challenges. But General Dempsey I think has inherited a tougher (entrée ?) than most. There are the crises – Iran, Syria, Sudan – but there are always crises. I'm thinking more of systemic challenges. Under his watch, a decade of war in Iran – in Iraq and Afghanistan are drawing to an uncertain close. And there is the challenge of constructing an outcome there, not that looks like conventional victory but that looks as acceptable and positive as we can make it.

Second, the Asia-Pacific region – region, with its growing wealth and military power, is taking on a new significance and has recently prompted a major shift in American strategy, the so-called Asia pivot. There are no prior examples in history of a world order that has been able to peacefully accommodate a new great power. It was this uncomfortable fact that lay behind China's now-abandoned slogan of "peaceful rise." So this challenge has to rate at the very top.

And third is the coming wave of budget cuts and the challenge of matching those cuts to creating and sustaining a force that will be flexible and effective and able to safeguard national interests in a rapidly changing security environment for which the crystal ball is still pretty cloudy. As the president's principal military adviser and the leader of 2.2 million men and women in uniform, there are no easy decisions that reach the chairman's desk. And that is certainly true for this chairman.

Given his enormous responsibilities, the country is very fortunate to have in General Dempsey a man of great experience and quiet wisdom. He has served in uniform for 38 years, moving 22 times and living in all corners of the world. As he rose through the ranks, he taught English at West Point. He served as an adviser to one of his predecessors as chairman. And he assumed an impressive array of increasingly weighty commands.

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During his – during the early days of the war in Iraq, he distinguished himself commanding the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad. He later commanded CENTCOM and the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, becoming Army chief of staff last April. Less

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than eight weeks into that job, President Obama tapped him as chairman and the pinnacle of a long and distinguished military career.

Since taking office, he has passionately dedicated himself to rebuilding the joint force, preparing it to meet future threats and keeping faith with our troops and with their families. Secretary Gates has praised him for his intellectual heft, moral courage and strategic vision. Not a bad recommendation. President Obama has called him one of the nation's most respected and combat-tested generals. We at Carnegie are deeply honored to have him here with us today. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming General Martin Dempsey. (Applause.)

[00:04:30]

GENERAL MARTIN DEMPSEY: Thank you, Jessica. Any time.

Well, thank you, Jessica, for that very kind introduction. And thanks, all of you, for your presence here today. I didn't know there was an overflow room. I haven't had this kind of crowd since the last time I sang karaoke at a local – (laughter) – no, actually that's not true. (Laughter.) But I am encouraged actually to see such a large crowd to – because it tells me that you've got the right things on your mind in terms of what's important for our nation as we go forward with a certain number of challenges that you actually laid out quite articulately.

I will say that on occasion some of my peers – the chiefs of defense in other countries will kind of almost express a certain amount of sympathy for my plight as the chairman of the joint chief of staff of the United States of America, and I say, are you kidding me? I'm the chief of defense, senior military officer for the finest military force that the – that the world has ever seen. And I also came in the service 38 years ago with the idea that I might actually try to make a difference. And those two things have converged for me in a rather incredible way. And I consider it a blessing every day I put on the uniform to serve this great country and the men and women who choose to serve as well.

I was out in Colorado Springs just yesterday, where we are conducting the Wounded Warrior Games – kind of a Paralympics, actually. Each service field has a team of about 50. Wounds, illnesses, things that have changed their lives. And their motto is “ability over disability.” It's a fantastic thing to see. I mention it just to keep it all in context. You know, right now in Afghanistan it's nearing that time of the day when we do most of our military operations. And so I think that the challenges you outlined for us will – we will figure it out. And we'll figure it out because that's what we do. And we'll figure it out because we got a – we got a nation and its sons and daughters counting on us to do that.

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So let me – I want to say a few words, and I think then we'll have the chance to have that conversation that's advertised up there. The subtext I think that I would like to suggest is making strategy work. You know that over the past months we've formulated what I guess is now being called the new defense strategy. It's a – built on a foundation of the

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QDR, of course, but it is a – it is new in several important ways. And I'll mention three of them.

One of the ways in which it's new is this rebalancing, if you will, to the Pacific – not that we've ever left the Pacific, but rather a rebalancing to the Pacific. And I would suggest to you – because I'm asked – I was in NATO last week, and they were asking me with great interest, you know, what does it mean that you're rebalancing into the Pacific? And I suggested – I suggested to them that it's a process, not, you know, a light switch; that we'll work our way into it.

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It starts with intellectual bandwidth more than anything else, which is why I'm happy to be here with you today – one of the centers of gravity of thinking of – about national security matters in our country. And we have to shift some of our intellectual bandwidth and start to understand how to – how to rebalance ourselves. So it's not just about resources or equipment or basing; it's about thinking. And we are beginning that process now.

The second thing is building partners. One of the cornerstones of our new strategy is building partners. And this is not of necessity because we'll be doing less. It's because the world that we have seen evolve around us over the last, let's say, 20 years in general but 10 years in particular is a world in which – I've described it as a security paradox, where although evolutionary – we're at an evolutionary low in violence in the world right now. But it doesn't feel like that really, does it? And it doesn't feel like that because the – there's a proliferation of capabilities, technologies to middle-weight actors, nonstate actors that actually makes the world feel and potentially be more dangerous than any time I remember in uniform. And now recall that I came in the Army in 1974.

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And this isn't by way – I'm not saying this, by way of establishing my credentials so that when budget reductions come our way we can throw up the shield of the security paradox. It's because it generally is a paradox. And it's not a paradox that necessarily has to be met with bigger military forces. I think it's a paradox that has to be met with different military forces. And among the things that will make that work are our ability to build on existing partnerships around the globe, notably the North Atlantic Alliance – others as well, but – and then emerging partners around the globe.

Because what we've seen our adversaries do is kind of decentralize. They rarely mass against us any longer. They decentralize, they network and they syndicate. They network using 21st-century information technologies, and then they syndicate together groups of state actors, nonstate actors, criminal actors. And they come together and they pull apart based on moments in time when they want to find common purpose against us.

So in that world we, the probably quintessential hierarchical institution on the face of the planet – I – and I would – if anybody wants to lay claim to that title during the Q and A, I'd be happy to find out who you are, because I think that we do have the market cornered

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on hierarchy. But we, the quintessential hierarchical organization, have to find ways to be a network ourselves. And that means a network of interagency partners internal to our government. We have to be a lot more joint. We keep saying that, but we actually – at this point in time, we better pull it off.

And we have to partner with and network with other countries who are like-minded with us, because it makes that network stronger. It's not just about outsourcing particular responsibilities or capabilities. It's about building a stronger network to defeat the networks that confront us. And I've recently – if you're interested, I was in NATO. I was in Colombia. I was in Jordan. And I think that narrative that I just described to you on the importance of partners was reinforced for me in the – in those travels. And I'd be – I'd be happy to talk with you.

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Now look, building partnerships is not an easy endeavor. In fact, in NATO the 28 of us – me and my 27 closest North Atlantic partners – were sitting around a room for what seemed to be nearly interminable briefings and so forth. But – and so somebody said to me, how would you – you know, how would you describe, you know, the – our relationship as chiefs of defense – all of us, the – I said, you know, it kind of reminds me of a letter that my wife wrote me when I was in Operation Desert Storm. And this is when we still wrote letters, mind you. Today we text, you know. In fact some of you are probably texting each other right here in this room. (Scattered laughter.) And certainly if you have children, you know that the last time they answered their phone is quite a while ago, but they'll answer your texts almost immediately.

But in any case I said, it reminds me of a letter that my wife wrote me back in Desert Storm. And she said, you know, I'm just so miserable without you; it's almost as though you were right here with me. (Laughter.) Now I think I confronted her afterwards on whether that was some kind of, you know, Freudian slip or something. And she assured me it was – it was a slip. She didn't intentionally put that particular phraseology in the letter. But it did remind me of how it is, being a member of big alliances where, you know, you're miserable without them, but it's pretty miserable being with them too to try to, you know, gain the consensus and the common interest that you need.

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OK, but – so there's a couple of things in that – in that area of building partners, though, that I think we need to take on if we consider it to be among the three pillars of our new strategy. And some of those are issues of intelligence sharing, technology transfer, foreign military sales. You know, the – we have to reform some of our processes that actually tend in some cases, maybe even in many cases, to somewhat hinder our ability to build partners.

So building partners is the second. The first was rebalancing to the Pacific; the second one is building partners. The third – the third aspect of this new strategy is the integration of capabilities that we didn't have 10 years ago. And of course most of them are probably fairly obvious to you. If we were having this conversation 10 years ago, we – the

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acronym ISR would have been somewhat elusive to all but the – but the lifelong practitioner of the military art.

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I'd venture to say that most of you in the audience there probably have heard that term ISR. The acronym itself means intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. It's been blended into that acronym, and it – fundamentally it means our ability to collect intelligence and information, full-motion videos, signals intelligence, remotely in ways that frankly 10 years ago would – 15 years ago certainly would have been the stuff of a science fiction novel. But we can do it today.

The second one is cyber and the domain that we call cyberspace – domain in the sense that it has its own unique requirements. It has its own unique capabilities. It has its own vulnerabilities. And it has its own opportunities. And we've learned a lot about it over the past 10 years. We must continue to learn, and we have to integrate it – we have to integrate these somewhat heretofore niche capabilities into our normal way of operating because it makes us much better but also because it makes us much smarter.

And the third one, of course, is special operating forces, which, over the past 10 years or so, have increased about four-fold in number, but I would venture to say 25-fold in capability. And so these three in particular – but not uniquely those, there are others – capabilities that have, as I said, in former times been kind of additive or niche capabilities, are now increasingly becoming integrated into the traditional, conventional way of operating, and again, provide us some pretty significant opportunities for the future.

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So in the – in the interest of completing my remarks and then getting to your questions, I would simply say to you that we've moved now from writing our new strategy to beginning to challenge ourselves on what it will take to really deliver it. And the three things I mentioned here today to you – rebalancing to the Pacific, building our partners and adapting our policies to allow us to build our partners, and then integrating these new capabilities really are the key to that – to that endeavor.

So with that, I know that you're eager to ask a few questions. I'm looking forward to – I asked Jessica to please be sure to identify those of you who have the greatest possibility of asking me easy questions and – (laughter) – there we go. That's – watch out for that guy. (Laughter.) OK, go ahead.

MS. MATHEWS: All right. Let me ask you a couple of things, to introduce yourselves, to be brief and to – if you would, this is not meant to be a press conference but a conversation, so please dive behind the headlines a bit and ask some provocative questions.

I'm going to start today in the back, right there on the aisle.

Q: Stanley Roth, the Boeing Company. I want to go back to the beginning of your remarks where you talked about the rebalancing in Asia, and ask if you could talk a little bit more about two things associated with that. One is, how does that relate to the Air Sea

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Battle, the emerging doctrine, the ability to execute on this rebalancing? And second, what would sequestration do to our ability to carry that out?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Didn't you hear what Jessica just said? (Laughter.)

OK, a couple of things about our rebalancing to the – to the Pacific. Air Sea Battle. Air Sea Battle is a multi-service, not joint. It's a two-service approach to overcoming anti-access, so not unique to the Pacific incidentally. It's unique to, if anything, increasing capability – this goes back to the proliferation of technology to a wide audience of potential adversaries who can take our particular advantages and cause us to have to stand off because of anti-access technologies, whether it's jammers, whether it's long-range precision munitions. It's a whole suite of technological capabilities.

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Air-Sea Battle is obviously the Air Force's and the – and the Navy's approach to overcoming anti-access. But it sits nested under something that I actually own, if you will, which is the Joint Operational Access Concept. So the chairman, in collaboration with combatant commanders, has a concept to ensure we can overcome anti-access in all domains – anti-access in the land domain.

What might prevent access in the land domain? IEDS, for example, which have become an adversary's asymmetric way of denying us access even when they're – we are far superior to them in terms of numbers and technology ability. So joint operational access is intended to ensure our freedom of movement as a military. Air-Sea Battle is the particular multi-service approach to overcoming the specific anti-access strategies in the air and maritime domain.

OK. How would sequestration – and by the way, as I said, importantly, it's not just Asia-Pacific. I mean, Iran has an anti-access strategy that we might potentially have to overcome. What will the effect of sequestration be? Let me not talk about – let me not talk about sequestration in particular. Let me talk about budgetary issues in general, because one of the – one of the things that I've tried to articulate, somewhat successfully, somewhat unsuccessfully. And you know, you may decide I've moved it a bit here in one direction or the other today. Even if we didn't have any budget limitations, reductions, constraints, whatever adjective you choose, we would really need to change based on what we've learned over the last 10 years of war and where we see security – the security environment going in the future.

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So we've tried to jump out – I say we, the joint chiefs and the combatant commanders in collaboration – we've tried to jump out to 2020 and decide what that threat environment would look like, then to determine what capabilities we would need to address it and then look backwards at ourselves sitting in 2012, getting ready to submit a budget that goes from '13 to '17, knowing we would have four opportunities over the next four years to build this force for 2020 against a strategy that we conceived back in the fall. And (20)13-(20)17 submission was just really the first step in what will be four steps, because we'll

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submit the POMs, the program operating memorandums, for (20)13-(20)17, (20)14-(20)18, (20)15-(20)19, (20)16-(20)20. So if we – if we don't do it the way I just described, we will be doing this on an annual basis with no framework or really no idea of where we want to be in 2020 and we'll just back ourselves into 2020.

Now I said I'm not going to talk about sequestration, but I have to mention sequestration in the context of the question. So as I stand here today before you, we submitted our budget in February. It's in markup right now in the Congress of the United States. I don't know what it's going to come back looking like. It's a pretty delicately balanced instrument. That is to say, we tried to balance the reductions and build the best possible force we could against a strategy that we'd articulated. It'll come back. It won't be exactly as we submitted. It never is. And then we'll make some adjustments.

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But to that complexity – that's pretty complex work that we're not finished yet with FY '13's budget. Sequestration comes potentially on the heels of that. And I don't know if you're familiar with the first rule of wing-walking. I'm not this – as old as I'm about to sound. I look it, but I'm not as old as I'm about to sound. (Laughter.) Wing-walking back in the early part of the 20th century, you may recall, was sport or carnival stuff. But the first rule of wing-walking – this is walking on the wings of biplanes – the first rule of wing-walking was never let go with both hands at the same time – (laughter) – for pretty obvious reasons.

So when people ask me, are you working on sequestration? The answer is no, not yet. I don't have a – I have a grip on what I think '13 is going to look like, but it's not done yet. And were I to now do this and come up short, I'm – I'll get thrown off the wings. So in the spirit of my Air Force brothers, I'm following the first rule of wing-walking, and we haven't done anything with it at this point.

MS. MATHEWS: OK. Right here. We'll take two right here, OK? Oh, my. Everybody's got to be very brief, because there are a hundred questions in the room.

[00:23:13]

Q: Hi. My name is Anne Rutherford (sp), and I'm just a mom from Severna Park. I was wondering – we have a lot of people who say that the Pakistani ISI was well-aware of Osama bin Laden's –

GEN. DEMPSEY: Mmm hmm.

Q: -- presence there. And how do you address working with them as a partner and also how that would lead into the green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan and all the undercurrent of that – (inaudible) –

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah. There's a – there's a lot of threads in – that come together to form that question. The question of our relationship with Pakistan in general is one of complexity, I mean, deep complexity, also some pretty significant commitment

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military-to-military, a lot of misunderstanding and a lot of mistrust fundamentally that has – and this is not a new phenomena. It goes back, truthfully, decades.

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For example, officers of my generation have a pretty close relationship with each other because we went to each other's schools, we've gotten to know each other over time. But there's a generation behind that, for reasons that are – that are pretty well-known, didn't come to our schools; we didn't engage with them. And so we've got these kind of generational gaps in our relationship that frankly create a lot of mistrust and misunderstanding. There – we are concerned, have been concerned, have been pretty upfront with them. I try not to – not to have the relationship play out in public but rather work it as closely as I can privately. But I do remain concerned about the safe havens that run along the eastern Afghan border, the western Pakistan border.

The green-on-blue that you're describing, for those of you that aren't exactly familiar with that phraseology, is the insider threat or the act of Afghan soldiers or policemen turning on their U.S. or coalition partners. It's related but it's not – that's not one that I can see particularly a cause and effect. The green-on-blue is if we take a hundred instances – even that issue's complex – if we took a hundred of them, probably 25 of them would be based on ideological and religious differences, maybe even affiliation with the Taliban, maybe even affiliated with the Pakistan Taliban. I mean, everyone has its own challenge. The other 75 of that hundred would be for other reasons, whether it's tribal or having been insulted or felt like they weren't respected or internal problems to that particular Afghan soldier's family, much like we sometimes see with the pressures of war on our own families.

So it's a huge challenge. And I – and I think you know that what we're – what we're working on is we're working on it from several different directions, one is counterintelligence operations inside of those formations ourselves, biometrics, education, tactics, techniques and procedures when we're with and around them that I wouldn't state publicly, but that allow us to always be protected. So it's extraordinarily complex. But the relationship with Pakistan is my most – my most complex relationship, but one to which I'm committed to trying to find increasingly common interests, certainly along the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

MS. MATHEWS: Marvin Kalb here, and then we'll take right here. And then we'll move to the back.

[00:26:57]

Q: Marvin Kalb with Brookings. General, is there today a doctrine that governs the use of American military power? I have in mind the Powell doctrine being so central to our operation during the Persian Gulf War. Is there something similar? Is there a piece of the Powell doctrine that exists today in your mind as a functioning part?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah, that's a great question actually. Let me – let me describe where we are today and maybe even a glimpse of where we might need to be. So if you think about the Powell doctrine as guiding us in the early days of the '90s, you know, the –

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roughly from Desert Storm out through the middle, which of course was, you know, clear and – clear objectives, clear end state, overwhelming force – we found that that model didn't – you know, this was about finding models that fit in each sort of phase of a – of the evolution of security challenges. And we found that model didn't fit real well toward the end of the '90s, as you recall, because the challenges that faced us – first and foremost, they weren't existential necessarily. So you couldn't galvanize the entire nation behind a particular challenge. Secondly, the definition of overwhelming force in, for example, a peacekeeping or peace enforcement mission in Bosnia was pretty hard to define. And so, you know, we – but we – we adapted into a peacekeeping – we've – after fighting against peacekeeping for some time, we conceded that the military had a role in peacekeeping and we then began to embrace it.

Along came 9/11. And as you know, famously we went from sort of the traditional template, back to the Powell doctrine, and then realized that what – that the – what confronted us in those two theaters was really a counterinsurgency. And so we dusted off counterinsurgency doctrine. It was – it was updated by the Army and the Marine Corps. And we embraced the counterinsurgency doctrine.

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So what you've heard me talk about today now, I think, is kind of a nascent – it's – inchoate might be the right word. We've got – we are just beginning to adapt from counterinsurgency as kind of our central organizing principle. And I – if I had to put a tagline on it today – it would be very premature for me to do it, but I'm going to do it – I would say that where we're headed is something that I might describe as a global networked approach to warfare – a global networked approach. And it gets back to my point about taking these capabilities we haven't had before, integrating them – really integrating them into our conventional capabilities, partnering differently – in a very – with a very different goal and with very different processes to support it and allowing ourselves to confront these networked, decentralized foes with something other than huge formations of soldiers, sailors, airmen or Marines.

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So there's – I'm trying to – I have – I'm not there yet. I admitted it up front, this is kind of a inchoate idea. But I do think that we – what we're looking for in the future is to take that counterinsurgency strategy, which is very static, very manpower-intensive, and see what we can do with smaller organizations but that are networked globally and with partners in order to confront these challenges that might range from terrorism, because it's still out there, to piracy, to transnational organized crime. But again, this is a – this is a work in progress. But I've thought about it a lot.

MS. MATHEWS: That's great. Let – General, are you comfortable if I do two or three at once and then you can kind of pick or would you rather – would rather –

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah, then I'll pick whichever one I really want to answer. That'd be great. (Laughter.) (Inaudible.)

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MS. MATHEWS: There's so many questions. We'll start right here and then I'll go to the back.

[00:31:06]

Q: OK. My name is Mark Botsford from Botsford Global. I wanted to pick up on what you just talked about, about partners and networking and how you – if you could explain to us your feeling about working with partners that – in networks that have a problem with rule of law and institutions, you know, having – you know, making institutions stronger and the – and the traditional relationships between the military and local law enforcement –

GEN. DEMPSEY: Mmm hmm.

Q: -- and how that – how – (inaudible) – at all interplays, you know, within the partnership strategy.

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah. For – among the lessons of the last 10 years of war, prominent among those lessons is that when we engage in counterinsurgency in particular – not uniquely, but in particular – it's not enough just to address the military instrument of power. I mean, we talked about this whole of government, which, by the way, over time actually began to take some shape. You know, in the beginning of, let's say, 2003, '04, '05 in Iraq, I'd say whole of government was kind of a line on a PowerPoint slide. But over time, it actually began to deliver.

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I'll give you one vignette to – personal vignette to highlight this. In 2003, I became the first commander of Multinational Division-Baghdad, and there was no security force for reasons that we all know. And we won't talk about whether that was a good idea or not, but there was no security force. And so we were the security. It became very clear to us – that is to say, those who wear this – the uniform of soldiers and Marines, notably – that we had to find a way to get some local security forces on the street. So I began with my subordinate commanders to build a – almost a paramilitary army, but armies-like force. I cannot remember the acronym we called it. It became sort of the father of the Afghan army. But it was local. It was – you know, we trained them for a very minimal amount of time. And the idea was to get a face, if you will – that was the phrase – get a face on security that was an Iraqi face.

Concurrently, the Department of State began to try to build back up the police forces in Baghdad. And the – just to show you the depth of the disconnects, so I was – I was training this group of let's call them national guardsmen really is what they were – I mean, that's what we called them now that I remember, the Iraqi national guard. I was training them to actually operate in a counterinsurgency environment against an enemy that was very well-armed, by the way, even by then.

By October of '03, the enemy began to manifest itself, the insurgency. And they were good. I mean, they were armed and equipped and organized. But the police that we

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were building were being in trained in – you know, in investigations and in traffic tickets, you know, traffic circles. I'm not making that up. And I'm not denigrating it. It was an instinct. We were mirror-imaging our own experience. And the police were getting clobbered. I mean, their police stations were being run over. They were being killed by the dozens.

And so it took us a bit of time to come together – Department of State, Department of Defense – and decide how we would work collaboratively on building up both the army and the police. And it – and we conceded that for a time these police are going to have to have a capability that you wouldn't have to have were you sitting here in Washington, D.C. Over time this whole-of-government collaboration began to – began to bear fruit.

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But to your other point about the complexity of this, you know, issues of rule of law – and I'll add corruption – are extraordinarily difficult to overcome, because it's very difficult for us to even see it, and then let alone having seen it, address it. And as you know, just two years ago we had to stand up an anti-corruption task force in Afghanistan because we realized that the very mission was being placed at risk because of corruption.

So I wouldn't suggest to you that we have turned the corner on fully understanding, first of all, how to address that as a whole of government, secondly what the military's role is. But I will say we've come a long way since '03. And I think that as we go forward as a learning organization, we have to keep plugging away at it.

But we've – by the way, though, the end of this story is that we've – we're closer as a(n) interagency – as various agencies – we are a network. We are a network. But what I – what we're all challenging ourselves now is how much better do we need to be to confront the challenges that are coming? We know how to confront the ones we just passed by; but there's new ones ahead.

MS. MATHEWS: All right. Let's go to the back. All right, go ahead, Amber (sp).

[00:36:00]

Q: Hi there. Good afternoon. My name is John Glenn. I'm with U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. And thank you so much for your thoughtfulness. My question follows directly on there. I'd love to talk to you a little bit more about the experiences we've had over the past 10 years in working in the interagency; but ask you about development.

In particular, many military voices for the past bunch of years have said there won't be a military solution. It would ultimately have to be one that'll be built on the ground with economic development; but that not be a military mission. Can you talk to us more about these experiences that we've gained about how to work across the three Ds of diplomacy, development and defense?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah, I'll try. But I mean, this is one where – you know – you know, I actually – I'm going to digress, but I'll circle back on you. When I go speak to

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groups of young colonels who are about to become general officers, and often I'm invited – or admirals – I'm often invited also to speak to rising groups of senior executive civilians. And I always get the question, you know, what's most important?

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And my answer might surprise you; it's – it often surprises them. I tell them: It's relationships. I say that because to this gentleman's question about how did we make progress on these issues in Iraq and Afghanistan; we – fundamentally, we made progress as we started to build relationships with each other. And that took a couple of years, by the way.

And now – but if it was a captain standing up here – I mean, I probably – I think the first person I ever met in the State Department; I was probably a lieutenant-colonel with 22 years in the service. I'm not making that up. I mean, we had no reason – (laughter) – we had no reason to interact with each other in – back in those days, really – at least at the lieutenant-colonel level. I mean, as you got more senior, probably so.

Today, you can't find a lieutenant that hasn't been partnered with somebody from USAID or the Department of State or Justice of any number of other agencies of government. So that – you know, that – the question I actually ask myself now is now in the world will we maintain that relationship and those personal connections as the conflicts dissipate and we all go back to our cubicles, because that's going to happen.

You know, all of my soldiers are going to go back to Fort Hood and Fort Bragg and Fort Lewis, and all the State Department folks are going to go back to Foggy Bottom and never the twain shall meet, unless we do something about it. And I think – as a leader development issue, I think we owe it ourselves and our nation to do something about that.

[00:38:29]

MS. MATHEWS: We have a question over here – (inaudible) –

GEN. DEMPSEY: Oh, I – OK. I didn't answer the second part, but I think that's probably the start of it. Yes, sir?

MS. MATHEWS: You've been a very eager questioner.

Q: Yes, sir. I'm Liliana Rodriguez (sp), a former NDU student, sir. When you speak about building partnership(s) and networks, are you including international intelligence sharing? Because sometimes it's very difficult to match transparency and secrecy.

GEN. DEMPSEY: I'm actually speaking specifically about how do we share intelligence – (laughter) – no, I am. I mean, we do decent at that – not perfect, but we do it pretty well. Actually – we actually do it very well. Much better than we did, again, back – when I remember intelligence sharing, even internal to our own government in the '90s, compared to what we do today, it's just phenomenal.

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So I was actually speaking specifically about the requirement to take a look at our intel-sharing parameters with our partners, technology transfer, foreign military sales processes – all of those right now are – I mean, I – look, I’m not saying anything I haven’t said to those who own the processes. They’re really Cold War processes that have not yet adapted themselves to what we really need to be doing today. And in order to deliver the strategy that we’ve all agreed is the right strategy for the country, we’ve got to get after those processes.

MS. MATHEWS: Right here. Right behind – wait for the – yeah.

Q: Oh, the mic. Jacques Roumani, Middle East specialist. I think you mentioned Iran in passing. And last week your Israeli counterpart, Benny Gantz, the chief of staff, mentioned that there has been increased preparedness by Israel as well as the United States and other countries. Assuming you can confirm that, is this a coordinating – coordinated effort in case of a confrontation with Iran? And at what level is this coordination taking place now? Thank you.

[00:40:31]

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah. Well, I’m not sure – I’m not sure I’ve ever been accused of talking about Iran in passing. (Laughter.) But I can – let me confirm for you that the United States and Israel have – I can’t speak to other nations who I would certainly prefer to have them speak for themselves, and I know they would rather speak for themselves. But Israel and I – Benny Gantz and I and Israel and the United States have been closely collaborating on any number of fronts, especially – especially in the area of intel sharing, so that we can come to a common understanding of the threat and of the likely timelines that we might have to confront.

And, you know, I probably met with Benny more than any other of my counterparts – nearly every other month since I’ve been the chairman. And that’ll continue because, of course, we have common interests in the defense of Israel as well as ensuring that – well, as you know, we’ve said we’re determined to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapon state. So I can assure you that we are collaborating with the Israeli military on intel sharing and on our posture. I wouldn’t say it rises – I will say it does not rise to the level of joint military planning, but we’re closely collaborating.

[00:41:54]

MS. MATHEWS: Oh my. I’m – right to back there – right there, yeah.

Q: Good afternoon, General. Larry Shaughnessy, from CNN. In the past few weeks you’ve seen North Korea attempt to launch a rocket, we’ve seen the new leader give a long speech – longer than any of his – any speech his father gave, and we’ve seen a rather large military parade. I was wondering, with that sudden rush of information coming out of North Korea, if you have a better understanding of where this new leadership may go? And if you could share anything with us about what you understand.

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GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah, I would describe – I would say that what’s been interesting is that he is clearly a different person than his father. And that’s just not – I don’t – that’s not just the function of his age. I think he has a different view of his role in the – in the public. Not only is it the speech he gave, but he’s been – he’s more – much more traveled than his father was. He’s traveled I think to 55 or 56 different places around the country. Now, I will say a lot of those visits have been to military installations. And you heard in his speech where he said that, you know, priorities one, two and three for him are his military. That’s distressing; I mean, given he’s leading a country that is starving to death.

[00:43:14]

But the fact that he’s a different leader with a – with a different persona I think is worth exploring. And my role in all this, of course, is military preparedness. And we’re – back to who am I in close contact with – the other – the other chief of defense with whom I spend a great deal of time in person and on the phone is my – is my South Korean counterpart, as well as other interested chiefs of defense in the region.

So you know, I think it’s probably still premature to make any determination about what leader Kim Jong-un will be, though we were all disturbed by the – by the ballistic missile launch, which came on the heels of what we thought was a positive engagement. But we maintain our military preparedness, and I know that there are others working the diplomatic side of it.

MS. MATHEWS: There’s a question right there.

Q: Thank you very much. My name is Naigi Ching (sp), with Voice of America Chinese Branch; VOA. Thanks so much for your remarks, very informational. So with that appreciation in mind, I’m going to throw a softball – (laughs). My question is regarding the fourth U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue which will be held in Beijing later this week. And with that framework, a bilateral security dialogue between U.S. and China on the military front has been established. So could you please share with us the issues and specific agendas that will be discussed?

And last question is, you mentioned – second question is – you just mentioned about building the partnership. I would like to get your take on the South China Sea issue, especially on the stand of – between China and Philippines, especially after the U.S. just announced the partnership with the Philippines. Thank you so much.

[00:45:15]

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah. Well, first of all, I think it’s probably worth mentioning where I see our future with China. I mean, we’re bouncing – we’re bouncing ourselves back into the Pacific. That’s not a containment strategy for China. In fact, I don’t know how many of you study history, but Thucydides, the Greek historian, described what he called the “Thucydides Trap,” and it goes something like this: It was Athenian fear of a rising Sparta that made war inevitable.

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Well, I think that one of my jobs as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and as an adviser to our senior leaders is to help avoid a “Thucydides Trap.” We don’t want the fear of that emerging China to make war inevitable. So Thucydides – we’re going to avoid “Thucydides Trap.” And I think there’s more opportunities than liabilities for us in the Pacific.

[00:46:06]

Of course, you’ve heard all of our senior leaders say we embrace a rising China. And I – I’ll tell you that in terms of partnerships, we have – when I was chief of staff of the Army, I was able to meet with my PLA counterpart. And those relationships are – you know, they’re slow and they’re – you know, they’re youthful, but they’re positive. And each service has a different kind of relationship with its particular service, but that’s because we’re trying to work it out.

Next week – or two weeks from now, I go to Singapore, to the Shangri-La Dialogue. I’m hopeful that my Chinese counterpart will be there. And we’ll talk, you know, very openly and transparently about what we’re trying to do in the – in the Pacific to both build these partners and what those partnerships are intended to do. And simply stated, they’re intended to ensure stability and they’re also intended to assure – A-S-S-U-R-E – and they’re intended to make it clear that we have some interest in navigation and commerce and access, to which we intend to live; meaning we live – we need to live up to those responsibilities that we have as an Asia-Pacific partner.

And I said Asia-Pacific, by the way, because there is the other country called India over here that is also modestly-sized and probably will be somewhat influential in the future. (Laughter.) So yeah, I don’t know exactly what the – what the agenda will be at that particular conference. I can tell you what my agenda is, though.

MS. MATHEWS: All right. I think we have time for two more. So I think right – Amber (sp), right next to you.

Q: Yes. Yeah.

MS. MATHEWS: Then we’ll go up here.

Q: Thank you for the discussion. And my name is Tawfik Hamid from the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. I would like just to know your definition for the word “victory” in Afghanistan. What are the parameters of this victory and why the war has been protracted? Why the most superior power on earth is taking that long to defeat the Taliban, and what are the reasons for this and how can we deal with that?

[00:48:08]

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah. No, thanks for asking. I mean, I – you know, I am a student – I am a student of vocabulary; and you know, they are synonyms out there – you know; victory, win; success, you know, defeat. So let me – let me zero in on the one question you asked, though, about why is it taking so long, because that’s a fair question.

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I would suggest to you it's taking so long because we're trying to do it right. And I really mean that. Look, could we have started at one end of Afghanistan and fundamentally overrun it, destroyed it, created a situation where we would make it a near certainty that the Taliban couldn't come back, because there wouldn't be anything to come back to? Of course we could. But that's not who we are.

And I certainly don't think that's what Afghanistan was – would expect of us. And I happen to believe it's not what any of Afghanistan's neighbors would expect of us. So because we've tried to do it right, we've had some starts and stops. And some cases we've made more progress than others. But I'll tell you, when I say "do it right," it's about building a nation that has institutions to support it over time and that can provide for its own security. If you're asking me for my definition of victory in Afghanistan, that's the definition.

[00:49:30]

And I think that in terms of my responsibility to do that, it's about building the Afghan national – it's two things. It's of course creating some space by lowering violence while we build up the Afghan national security forces. And I just came back from there last week and spent a day with the Afghan commandos. And it was one of the more inspirational days in my life, because for the first time, frankly, I saw not only a formation that was capable of shooting and had the right equipment; it was – you know, the – they knew which squad they were in and which platoon and which company.

But it was more than that. They actually felt a sense of obligation to their country, not to us. We don't need them feeling an obligation to us. They need to feel an obligation to their own country. And this was, by the way, a very ethnically diverse group of young men. Now that's the special forces. And I – you know, they're a little bit ahead of everybody else because we've placed more emphasis on them. But I'll tell you that for the first time, I felt as though there was some sense of nationhood there that frankly I hadn't felt for maybe the previous eight years. But it's taken time, because the business of creating institutions where some have never existed is pretty hard slog.

[00:50:41]

MS. MATHEWS: OK, right here.

Q: Yes, sir. My question is about Syria. Recently the prime minister of Turkey mentioned something about the possibility of protecting the borders of Turkey, which is a NATO country, from incursions from – by the Syrians. Do you see any role for the United States forces to be engaged in Syria, either at protecting-a-NATO-border level or in protecting the civilians in Syria?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Well, as you know, my principal responsibility is to provide options to those political leaders, both in this country but also in NATO – we talked about this last week in NATO – who may ask what we can do. And we can do a great many things, but we can't do everything. And among the things we can't do is guarantee a political

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outcome that would be better than the one that's there now, to tell you the truth. And so – but that's not for me to decide.

[00:51:37]

I will tell you that in my travels in the region, there is great concern about rushing – not rushing, because it's a – it's a tragic situation that the international community really should be far more galvanized about, it seems to me. But in that context of the great tragedy is also the reality that we – the nations in that region – I'm not speaking for myself now, but I am speaking from having just come back from the region – want to know what's next before they take that final step of military action. That's the message that I came back from that part of the world recalling.

And so again, my option is to provide our leaders – and as part of an alliance, alliance leaders – I'm talking about NATO, should they choose to do something – and by the way, there's no planning going on in NATO. But were there to be, we would be – we would be part of it. And we would provide our political leaders options – military options. But my – back to the – what's our – what's the – what's our doctrine: The military instrument alone – the military instrument should never be wielded alone.

[00:52:49]

MS. MATHEWS: It's clear that we could keep this conversation going easily until 10 p.m. But we are obliged to release General Dempsey at 3 p.m. To all of those I couldn't call on, my apologies. There are so many of you. Please join me in thanking General Dempsey for a fascinating – (inaudible). (Applause.)

GEN. DEMPSEY: Thank you. Thanks, Jessica.

(END)