

**REMARKS BY  
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Well, good morning, ladies and gentleman. Let me just say at the offset, it's great to be here with you and these magnificent organizations that we try to support whenever and wherever we can. It's always great to be out of Washington, D.C. Let's face it: Any duty outside Washington is good duty.

Folks, John (*LTG John Dubia, USA retired*) asked me to talk about four or five subjects, some of which relate to why you are here and that is where we are going and what is the way ahead.

The first thing he asked me to talk about is perspectives. I like to tell you about the Marine Corps perspective on this Long War and where it's going to go. I personally believe that what we're experiencing right now in Iraq and Afghanistan are the first battles of this Long War. Some people say, "Well, when the war is over, our troops will come home, and all will be well." I'm afraid I don't subscribe to that. I think that we are up against now a group of extremists — people who very decisively hate us and what we represent. And I think that when we are finished in Iraq and Afghanistan, that they will have gone someplace else. We already see indications of that in the intelligence. And so, I think that we're going to be at this really for some time to come.

It is not a war that we can win, that is as U.S. or as coalition forces. It's a war that the moderates in the religion must win over time for us all to be totally successful. This is not the first time we have had this kind of jihad, historians will tell you that there have been four, arguably five, in the history of the world. In each and every occasion, it had to be handled from within. The good news is I believe is that those countries also understand that. Some nations who have had populations that were of that extremist mindset are starting now to do something about it. You know just probably as well as I, Saudi Arabia comes immediately to mind, Pakistan most recently, before that Egypt, Yemen, and some others. But in my mind, we can facilitate; we can enable. But in the end, it must be they who decide that they've had enough, that they take charge of the schools and the youngsters and those that who would preach this kind of extremism and the violent reactions that it brings.

I do have a concern that in our own country, we don't fully appreciate the threat. I hear people say, "Well, let's end the war, and let's come home. Let's get the troops out from where ever they are." Ladies and gentlemen, it will not end there in my estimate. We took a prisoner when I was still in Iraq, in Ramadi. During the question-and-answer

session, somebody posed to him, “What happens when U.S. troops leave Iraq?” Well, in very good English he said, “We will follow you to America because you won’t be over here.”

I truly think that that’s their mindset. I believe that they hate us with such a passion that they will continue to attack us whenever and wherever they can, unless again, they get brought under control. Now, there’s no doubt in my mind that they would kill every man, woman, and child, every household in this country, given the chance to do so, because they hate us with such a seething passion. I just don’t think that our countrymen fully appreciate that and realize that the motivation that can create over time as these people continue to oppose us. I hope that changes. But right now, I think we’re somewhat susceptible.

If you would have asked me to tell you where I think we are today in terms of those first battles, I think one is going pretty well and the other one is not going so well; I’m describing Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively. Certainly, in the west, what we’re seeing in the al Anbar Province, where the Marines are currently located, is much better than where we thought it would be at this point in time. When I left there in the fall of 2004, al Anbar was projected to be the last of the provinces to turn because of the depth of the Sunni insurgency, because of the presence of the AQ. It was just seen as a place that was going to continue to fester for some time. Well, of course, that’s all changed.

The reason it changed was because the people, once again, realized what the al Qaeda had to offer. They saw this murder and intimidation campaign, which was the only way that al Qaeda could go about controlling the region. They saw where these outsiders wanted to inter-marry with the women. And finally, they said to us, “We’ve had it up to here with these guys. Would you help us?” And that was a west to east movement, and it wasn’t due to any one rotation. It wasn’t all soldiers or all Marines or all sailors. It was a composite effort over time that has brought that kind of success. But today, they have indeed turned on these people. The surge reinforced the success we were seeing in the west and made it only more powerful — and now, today, Anbar is almost unbelievably the model for the rest of the country. You have a great deal of movement elsewhere that, again, as I said, is very positive.

What the future will bring remains to be seen. Of course, we’re in the process now of downsizing the surge. I’ll talk a little bit more about that in just a moment. If you shift to Afghanistan, those sort of southeast trend-lines, casualties, attacks, numbers of troops are all pretty good in Iraq. I fear they’re headed in the opposite direction in Afghanistan. If you chart the numbers of attacks, presence of the Taliban, and numbers of deaths over the last, say, four years since 2004, unfortunately, they’re headed in the wrong direction. We have treated Afghanistan as an economy of force mission up to this point.

I think we’re about to reach the realization that if we’re going to have a similar amount of success there, it’s going to require more effort. Is that “more effort” coming from the NATO bases, is it coming from the U.S.? People more senior than me will

decide that. But I do believe that we should recognize that what we have there presently is simply not sufficient to secure the people, to make them feel comfortable they can give us the intelligence, and us in turn remove or capture those people that are causing the problems these days.

Used to be, come winter, the Taliban went across the border, and they would recoup and repopulate their numbers and then come back in the spring. Today, they are holding ground in Afghanistan. That cannot be helpful to the healthy situation either for the people of Afghanistan or for our forces there when it comes time to try to remove them.

How that is managed will be decided at least in part here in the spring. I would offer to you, as Americans, you should be proud of that process. I've seen that happen once now as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It will happen again in a very similar fashion in March. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will come back with a recommendation as to what the force structure needs to look like in Iraq. I don't know what that's going to be. I do know that, rightly so, they will focus in a very intently on things that are happening inside the border of Iraq, the conditions there.

Admiral Fallon, who is the commander of Central Command, he will inject a little bit of a different perspective. He will say, "I've got two fights taking place." I believe his estimate is the same as mine: One is going pretty well; one is in question at this point. So how we want to manage the forces there and maybe reallocate forces will be very much a welcome part of that discussion.

The Joint Chiefs will then have two different views. One will have to do with the health of the force, especially with regard to the Army and the Marine Corps, and what this continual deployment of virtually one-to-one — one period of dwell at home equaling one period of deployment overseas — is doing to our forces. And we also will register concerns about global risk that we are experiencing elsewhere — in the Pacific, in Europe, in AFRICOM, in SOUTHCOM. I'll tell you, those commands are appealing to us far more on a regular basis because they also have in their areas — not that kinetic type of activity — but things that they see that they don't like, and they think that just a little bit of presence could start to do something about.

The Secretary of Defense is an old Cold Warrior, he would say. His perspective will be even a little more different. It will be that, as a Nation, we succeeded during the Cold War because we had a philosophy — we had strategy that was the same, administration after administration. A new administration accepted it — they changed it some, but not a lot, in the end; it was pervasive. In the end, it was successful. He will want us to craft best military advice that takes into consideration that we have an election coming here very shortly and that a new administration should have something handed to them that perhaps they can live with without a great deal of change. He thinks there's strength as a Nation in all of that.

All of that now will be the parts and pieces that go into the stew. There will be, I think, a very worthy discussion. Hopefully, in the end, we can be uniform in terms of our advice to the President. But if we're not, that's okay, too. That there are dissenting views sometimes makes for a very good conversation around the table. In any event, as Americans, I think we should be comfortable that that is taking place inside the building and the President will have the best that we can give him, again, coming from all kinds of different perspectives.

General Dubia also asked me to talk about the strain that we're seeing as a result of this global war on terrorism and what it means with regard to our Corps. I would categorize it in three ways. The first is the stress on the families. Our families are the most brittle part of the equation and they actually are feeling the stress, I believe, even more intensely than our Marines. The seven-month deployment is a good thing. At the same time, in seven months, when your Marine or Sailor is home for only seven months, it's pretty hard to do certain things. You cannot have a child in seven months. You can be in on the front end or the back end of the process, but you can't do both in seven months, okay. (*Laughter.*) I had a spouse tell me that.

We also are feeling the aggregate time that the Marine is gone. We talk about PTSD and our concerns over that. I also had a spouse tell me on the East Coast, "Sergeant Sasquatch gets evaluated four times on every deployment for PTSD, but pretty soon, somebody is going to have to counsel my young two sons because of the absence of their father, and sooner or later, I need help too." So, it is real, and they live with it. They try to manage it as best they can, but it's just tough.

The other thing that happens almost indirectly as a result of that is that our family service programs suffer. We have always ridden the backs of our volunteers to manage our family service programs while the deployment is underway. Well, ladies and gentlemen, those volunteers are getting tired. It's okay to do it once every twenty-four months such as we do in peacetime, but to be doing it back-to-front gets real hard. The level of participation is dissipating, because they have heard the pre-deployment brief and post-deployment brief and those types of things. So, we've had to look necessarily at new ways to do that and we are. We've got to put more money against it. We've got to hire some professionals who will sustain it for us, as opposed to depending on those great volunteers that have carried us now for really over four years in this conflict.

I mentioned the seven-month deployments. It's hard, but it's also a net plus. If you're survey soldier versus Marine, the guys and gals who put the boots on the ground, we are much happier with seven months than they are with fifteen months. Now, in the end, there are times that just about balances out. In a twenty-eight month period, the soldier will be gone for fifteen months, home for twelve. In a twenty-eight month period, a Marine will be gone for fourteen months and home for fourteen. So, it runs pretty well balanced in that regard, but that fifteen months gone is just hard. We've been able to avoid that. We've been able to stick with seven months, and our families are appreciative of that. They've made it very clear to me — "Don't change that seven months. This is tough enough as it is. Don't monkey with the seven months."

I'm happy to say to you this morning that our Marines are showing an absolutely amazing resilience to what's taking place. You would think that they would grow tired, and you would think that they would be looking at an outside employment. We track about a dozen indicators of how the force is doing. In every case – virtually every case – the indicators are positive. They're either better than or equal to what they were in 2001. And that is absolutely amazing.

Now, there are a couple things we're watching. The suicide rate kind of runs sideways, and it is on a little bit of a rise now. It's still well below the national average for that age group; that's a positive thing, but we're watching it to make sure that it doesn't continue that sideways beyond where it has been. The other is divorces in the Service, we are less than 3.5 percent. Now, you compare that once again against the national average, it's a pittance I think to what is being seen across the country. Yet, in the last three years now, we've also seen an increase.

I heard something pretty discouraging from the commander of the Special Operations Command at a recent conference. Admiral Wilson said that some of these guys are telling him that they're too busy to get divorced; they're living apart from their spouse, and their spouse is able to take advantage of the services and benefits and the base while he or she is gone — as is often the case in the Special Forces community. But they'll get divorced when they have time to do so. Well, I hope that's not a hidden factor out there of what we're seeing. But now, we're aware of it and giving it some thought, I do intend to ask the question; I do intend to pursue that.

There is strain secondly on the equipment. I think it's not a secret to you folks in the industry that our equipment undergoes somewhere between probably three to seven times the wear and tear in a year in Iraq that it would otherwise see stateside or in a non-kinetic kind of environment. That's damaging to the gear that we have, and it's something that we've got to keep a close eye on to make sure that we keep it at an operational level. Actually, it's holding up pretty well in Iraq. But the fact is that it's combat ready; we could not possibly bring a lot of this stuff home and put it on the streets at [Camp] Lejeune or [Camp] Pendleton; you'd get a ticket. But is it combat-ready at the end of the day? Yeah, it is, and it is serving a purpose out there to take those Marines where they have to go.

We have had to raid our MPS, our maritime prepositioning ships, for gear. We did it early on with MPS-2 to bring some heavy equipment and rolling stock into Iraq. We have since, because of our 202,000 growth factors, we had to do the same thing with another one of our fleets. And MPS-1 now is down to about 60 percent. We've had to pull equipment off to be able to grow and provide something to those new Marines that we're bringing into the force. We'll get healthy again, I believe, but right now, we're not at full capacity. That should give us all some level of concern with regard to our immediate reaction kind of capacity.

Another thing that we're seeing has got to do with this wear and tear on the equipment because a lot of our lines are closed. We're not making of AAVs anymore; we're not making LAVs anymore. We're not making Harriers anymore. So, every one that is destroyed, crashes or burns — that is simply another asset that is no longer in the Fleet. And so, we're looking at going from our twenty squadrons of Harriers down to fifteen, down to twelve. We'll eventually get to ten; I don't know; I hope not. But the fact is that we could, based upon again what it is sustained loss of an x number of aircraft just over time. So, that's also a factor that we're having to watch.

Congress has been really good to us in terms of reset monies. We don't have all that we need, but we do have a major portion of all our needs that have already been allocated to us. But I do have some concerns with the out years. If there is a decrease in the budget, will we get back all that we have put into this loss of equipment? We are both replacing old stuff and buying new stuff. Will the monies be there to completely reset the force on the far side of Iraq and Afghanistan in this long war? That is still sometimes the question unfortunately in our mind.

Lastly, there is strain on the institution. We today as a Corps do not offer the Nation what we have historically been able to do. Today, when you're home for seven months, that unit is almost exclusively training to go back to Iraq to conduct a counterinsurgency fight. We are not doing combined arms, live-fire maneuver at Twenty-nine Palms. We used to do ten a year; now we don't do any. We're not doing mountain or jungle or cold weather training. Perhaps most of you know that we are not doing amphibious warfare training except at the MEU-level, at the smallest level. And our forte of amphibious operations is something that, frankly, might be in question today because of the fact that we just have not been exercising. We have not been operating with those kinds of capabilities now for well over five years.

If you look at a generation of Marines as being every four years, because that's what an officer or an enlisted man signs on for, we now have a generation of officers and Marines who are combat-hardened, but in most instances, have never stepped aboard ship. And so that's the capability that we've got to cover. That's the strain on the institution that we're experiencing today, vis-à-vis what we historically are able to contribute to the Nation.

We are losing that expertise in these areas of sophistication. It takes experienced people to be able to maneuver under live fire. It takes experience to be able to put a force ashore. The amphibious operation is the most complicated of all military operations. And so, we're losing some of that expertise. I don't think we'll get it back when we are at one to one; I think it will take a decade now to recover that type of knowledge base in order to be able to move on.

I guess the last thing I would offer as Marines is that we are out of whack right now with regard to our expeditionary nature. We are very much performing the role of a second land army in Iraq; that is not expeditionary either — in its application or in what we take away from it. We've gotten very heavy. We've gotten used to three squares and

a cot each day. And that's not expeditionary. That's not typical of some of the places where I expect we will go in the future. So we've got to get back, I think, to a lighter, faster, hard hitting Marine Corps that is not so relied on the armor for force protection but more reliant on moving across ground and speed and outmaneuvering the enemy really as opposed to the static environment that we find ourselves in today.

John asked me talk about the industry and Service relationship. I'll give you the bottom line up front. I think it's pretty good. I'm a neophyte I have to admit, but I do know that we don't want for much in terms of our relationship with the industry. And by and large, it seems to me that there's a pretty good response when we come up with something that we identify as an immediate need. There is a whole process out there called the urgent needs process — starting from the statement coming from our commanders in the theater. It moves quickly from there — in some cases not as quickly as we'd like, frankly, but nevertheless much faster than the old procurement cycle that I think that we all are familiar with.

I think the shining example for both military and government with support of the people in industry was the MRAP and the ability of the industry to respond to something that is so valuable to us in terms of its capacity to save lives. But it's so complicated in terms of its ability to build them and get them into the hands of the troops that needed them. I think that it was done in record time, at record expense probably, but the fact is that those vehicles continue to save lives, and they are invaluable in certain types of environment. That we as a Corps saw the opportunity to trim our buy I think was a good thing. I'm a Scotsman — any time you save \$1.7 billion for our Nation, I think that's a good thing.

But we also found that they weren't as maneuverable off road, that they couldn't cross some of the bridges, and quite frankly, you can't get the big ones onto the amphibians. So we asked ourselves, "Are 2,300 enough?" We tend to think so — we did a check, I think, as good stewards to make sure that we weren't somehow sucker punching industry. They hadn't laid the steel and the tires and the axles and so forth for those additional vehicles. So clearly, with that clear conscience, we asked for an adjustment to buy, and that's the way it evolved to be.

I do have a couple other requests, I guess, and a couple of concerns. I never speak to people like you or in your business without asking for a couple of things. One is a way to defeat IEDs, a pretty simple, but very effective weapon that is causing still seventy-five percent of our casualties in the theater. I still think I hold out to the day this guy, I can see him: he's got red, curly hair, he's got tennis shoes, he's got a pocket protector, he wears thick glasses and he's going to come out and say, "I got it! You know, you flip the switch and it detects and destroys IEDs." That guy still hasn't come out of his garage yet. I still pray they will and he will have that device, but in the meantime, we will continue to work.

The other thing is that we need a helmet. A helmet that is the same weight of the helmet that we wear today, that will stop a 7.62. During first Fallujah, we taught the

enemy a very deadly lesson: the value of well-trained snipers. Well, ladies and gentlemen, we have had that lesson brought back to us now. We have lost a lot of Marines to sniper shots that have gone right through the helmet.

I've talked too many more Marines who are still waiting to have portions of their skull replaced, who have taken that shot and lived somehow. So that we could develop a helmet that will defeat a 7.62 at a 90-degree angle is something that we continue to beg for. Now, people have said, "I can do it for you perhaps, but it may still break the man's neck." I'll accept it; I think most Marines would accept that risk to think that that helmet would protect them from the traditional weapons that we're going to see in this Long War.

The other thing that strikes me is that there are new dimensions out there that industry is going to have to help us stay abreast of. I think you know what they are, cyber space the new sort of frontier out there that we're all experiencing. Our strength as a Nation has always been that we have been on the leading edge of technology. We've been able to do more with less because of that technology, and a fair fight is not something we should strive for. So I can only hope and encourage that the R&D is there to keep us a head of folks who are working hard – not getting as much money as us but perhaps in some ways more efficiently to gain those weapons to achieve parity on the battlefield.

I would also hope that we're taking a look at that some of the enemy philosophy. The enemy has looked at us and said, "There are asymmetric ways to defeat an American force." I would hope that we're looking at his asymmetric ways and developing our own asymmetric ways that would counter that kind of a capability. And, again, that requires legwork and some R&D I think to simply stay ahead.

The event organizers asked me to talk about our NCOs; and I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it. I'm simply going to say that our NCOs are absolutely tremendous. They are the key to our successes. Our NCOs today are making decisions that lieutenants used to make, and they're making them every bit as well. Their motivation is beyond question; their capability is enhanced well beyond, I think, what it was when I first joined the Corps. General Krulak, one of my predecessors, coined a couple of phrases that we see precisely in operations today, and that is the strategic corporal and the three-block war. The strategic corporal is fighting that three-block war for us twenty-four hours a day in Iraq and Afghanistan, and they're simply doing it superbly. And they are the people that will eventually win this fight where U.S. forces are concerned, I'm absolutely convinced.

The last thing I'd like to touch on, and this is sort of the theme of the conference, is where after Iraq, where after Afghanistan. Well, it's a tough battle; I do think that we're in for a longer struggle but there's going to be some whack-a-mole involved here in terms of what we're doing. So I think we're going to be in this for some time. I also think that our Nation has a fork in the road coming up that we're going to have to face. If indeed, if you subscribe to the idea that there will be a reduction in the budget for the

Department with the new administration or some time in the out years, our Nation's going to have to make a conscious decision as to whether or not we want to remain a superpower. If we do, it's going to cost; if we don't, we need to determine where do we cut funding. Other nations have faced that decision – the British faced it some decades ago. Read the book called "East of Suez," and you'll understand just what dilemma comes to a nation that has superpower status and what a failure to finance that kind of number really means. I think our Nation has to understand that.

We as a Corps have signed on now with the Coast Guard and with the Navy in what we call a new maritime strategy. That strategy does involve more coalition navies, but also centers on vital national interests to the United States. So long as we can afford to do so, so long as there is shipping available, we intend to be forward-deployed doing theater engagement and helping those young nations, those third world nations, who would ask for our help. That's how we intend to employ those wonderful young Marines after this Long War on terrorism.

Will we need 202,000 Marines to do that? Maybe not. I believe we certainly need them now because I think there's a lot of uncertainty out there in the years to come. So that we have 202,000 hard chargers able to respond to whatever our Nation needs, I think is a good thing. Does the Marine Corps need to be that large for perpetuity? Probably not. Somewhere every five months, every nine months we will have to justify that force. But I think we will know when the time comes when we can afford to do a gradual drawdown on lots of those folks in the Service.

In the mean time, we intend to be a multi-capable force. Forward deployed – readily and speedily able to respond to expeditionary environments with a sustainment that will allow us to do the job. That's what the Marine Corps has always offered to this great Nation. We're a little bit impaired in that task right now, but we're busy elsewhere. But our promise to you is that we'll be back to being the Nation's Corps as soon as we can, ready to respond wherever the Nation might need us.