

# **Office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps**

## **Analytic Services Distinguished Speaker Series**

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It's good to see everybody here. Thanks for showing up. I'm aware that ANSER does a lot of Homeland Security and a lot of focus on that. We don't do directly a whole lot of Homeland Security in the Marine Corps. We participate, and I'll talk about a couple of things we've done and maybe give you a sense for where we're headed in the future in the current environment. But what I'd like to do is take the next little bit is talk to you about where the Marine Corps is. What are we doing? What's happening? Where are we headed? I'll talk a little bit about the future security environment, which I think is important, especially in the light of the fact that our nation is working very hard, thankfully, trying to figure out how we are going to pay our debts. All that somewhere along the line--you read about it every day in the paper--will find its way into the Department of Defense. So it already has, a big chunk of it already has, and we're working through that right now, all the service chiefs and the Secretary of Defense.

As you start making choices, I think it's important that you make informed choices and that you make choices based on what the world might look like. So that's what I want to talk about here to begin with. I'll transition to what the Marine Corps does for our nation in that world, from my perspective and some of the things we've done just in the last 24 months. It's always easy to go back [and say] "Oh...let me tell you about the last 20 years, all the great things about the Marine Corps." The truth of the matter is America has a very short memory. We don't care happened 18 years ago or 20 years ago. We just care what happened yesterday or last week or two weeks ago. I'll give you some stuff that's just recent; it's fresh off the press. It will be in your memory. Then, I'll transition a little bit to some of the things that I'm concerned about, particularly, the budget and where we're headed, what's going on.

I had a little bit of a leg up on this thing because several years ago when I was commanding general down in Quantico, the head of Combat Development Command. General Conway was the Commandant, his first year. He and I talked and I said, "Look. We haven't had a vision or a strategy in the Marine Corps since pre 9/11." I said, "Let me work on one for you. Let me pull together some smart folks and work on one." He said, "You got it." Eventually, after almost two years, it turned into the Marine Corps Strategic Vision 2025. That's how it was published; but a big part of that, almost the first -- I think I say year's worth of effort -- I don't whether it was that much, but let me just tell you it was a lot of effort to figure out what the world might look like. We didn't stop in our backyard. We went to obviously -- all the other services. We went to a lot of banks around Washington. We went to major universities around the country. We went to our fellow allies and went to their country and spoke with them. We even went to industry because we figured industry probably would like have to some idea of what the future would hold over the next two decades. In fact, they already do because there is a bottom line for them. So, we pulled all of this together and it's in a document that's about that thick, and we labeled it "The Future Security Environment."

So, last year, last summer, when I was asked to be nominated, to be the Commandant; I began to pull together my thoughts over about 90-day period of time, "Where are we going to take the Corps?" No Commandant comes in and just grabs the rudder--the tiller--and goes, "We're going to go 40 degrees this direction. I don't care what all those guys said, all the other 34 Commandants." It doesn't work that way. There are small, cardinal heading directions. So, I was looking at how-- where should we go? This is the first place I went back to--the Future Security Environment. Hit the "Refresh" button, talked to folks I had a lot of confidence in. To

be honest with you, not much had changed. We knew we weren't going to get it exactly right, but here's the patent statement... We couldn't afford to get it exactly wrong.

I mean, when you start thinking – and I think today, in today's security environment is we look at the budget. I tell you there it's probably never more true today than ever before. So, in essence, in real simple terms, this is how we see the world. We've labeled this area, this yellow line that goes around here, affectionately known as the Arc of Instability. You'll recognize places around here. You'll recognize Venezuela. You'll recognize Columbia up here, but let me talk to you a little about the legend. First of all, the oil barrels are the top 10 oil reserves in the world; the little missiles are the nuclear-armed countries in the world. So it's kind of nice to know where they are. These areas that are in orange, outlined here, are areas it's typically, annually undernourished. Undernourished is a nice way to say famine-stricken parts of the world. The stuff that's in the red outline are areas where clean water is a premium; where people in some cases will pay as much for a liter of clean, drinkable water as they would for a liter of petrol to put in their Land Rover or their truck or whatever it is they got – or clean water is a higher priced commodity.

Then, you take the areas where we've just seen conflict. All along this part of the Northern part of Africa. We've seen conflict all along in here; Liberia sits right over here. Liberia is coming out of their civil war. We've got Venezuela; we've got Colombia here. Peru is fighting in a counter insurgency down here with Sendero Luminoso. A lot of counter narcotics operations going on here. We've got our own southern border. We all read the same newspapers. Let's see. What else have I got on here? Youth bulge. These areas right here, these green areas are overpopulated—and I'll talk quite honestly—is principally males, young males. The population is growing, exponentially it's probably overstated, but the population here of males is growing significantly as opposed to the population in Central Europe, which is declining, and you know that. So, what we have are areas where we have conflict. We have areas where the youth population is growing significantly. We have areas where we've got competition for resources. We've got some of our main resources in fuel and we've got nuclear-armed states in many of these areas that all snuggle up all alongside the littoral area in the Arc of Instability. The recipe there is for significant conflict, I think, over the next several decades.

So, as we take a look at our national strategy, where we're going and what are we going to do, these are littorals areas. So, as the Commandant of the Marine Corps, I pay very close attention. These are in our backyard. I think the world that we see ahead is going to be full of increasing instability. I see no reason to believe that the world is going to be getting any nicer over the next two decades. I just don't think it's going to. I can't predict where it's going to happen, but certainly all that we've seen along the Arab Spring, what we're seeing lately in other countries that are tied to the Arab Spring, would indicate to me that there is conflict and it's probably going to last for a while. [We] talked about competition for resources, urbanization. By the way, the urbanization I'm talking about here is not urbanization into Arlington or Alexandria. It's urbanization into some nasty areas, but they're urban nonetheless. They're areas that you wouldn't want to live in; they're areas that people come that live out and they want to come in and they can hide. They want to hide in the urban areas of this part of the world that you see right here. So you get youth bulge, you get poverty, you get people moving into the urban areas and then all of a sudden, you got a recipe for persistent extremism. It doesn't have to

be just religious, it could be others. You've got a recipe for terrorist, insurgent, criminal groups. I mean we have not only narcotics up here obviously, but there are criminal groups that are in here.

So this is kind of how I see [it]. I'm not a dooms-day guy. This is reality for me. We operate here—the United States Marine Corps. I'm going to show you a slide here in just a second. But we operate all throughout the Pacific. This is kind of our backyard. We're operating all throughout the Gulf of Aden and up through the Central Command Area of Operation. We've got people training down here in Peru. We got people up here in Colombia. [Since] 1999, we've had Marines training the Colombian Military. Think about what's happened in Colombia since 1999. Talk about a success story for counter insurgency...Columbia is it.

A couple of thoughts. First of all, 95% of the world's commerce travels by sea...95%. You don't believe that? How about – my wife and I built a log cabin in the mountains of Western North Carolina, in a little town called Boone. Right down there in Blowing Rock, they've got a big Broyhill store. Of course, as we would drive up the mountains to get in there, we drive by the big Broyhill factory in the sky. I'm thinking, I can see people in there with little guys with leather bibs on, turning stuff and making drawer pulls and drawers and dovetailing stuff. So, we went down to the Broyhill place, and we bought a bunch of furniture for our cabin. I'm thinking, "This is great." We get home; they had it all delivered to our cabin. Every drawer I opened up, every single piece of furniture we bought—and we bought a lot—said, "Made in China." Do you think I came over on a FedEx airplane? It doesn't. It gets on a ship and tugs across the Pacific, and it comes to the ports of United States of America and finds its way into western North Carolina. 95% of the world travels by this, moves by sea.

On any given day, 23,000 ships are underway. If you've never seen a schematic of this, it will take your breath away. You look at CNN in the early morning, they give you the airline, "The Airport Dallas is blocked 30 minutes," and they show the map of America and they got little airplanes flying along. Those are jet routes. I'm a pilot, so I live with jet routes. So, I understand how it all works. So, you see all these little planes moving at any given time. You take a look at this, and it'll take your breath away. You see how many ships are moving through the Straits of Malacca. How many ships are moving up in the area into the Suez across the Panama, it'll take your breath away. Our world's commerce travels by sea.

A couple of other things I think are pretty important are 49% of the world's oil travels through seven major choke points. I've got them by these little orange bow ties, those are the choke points. A big chunk of China's oil travels by sea up through the Straits of Malacca from around the corner, heads north up into China. So, the choke points are important. 21 of the world's 28 mega-cities are living are within 62 kilometers of the water. From my perspective, ladies and gentlemen, I pay very close attention to the littorals because that's the naval backyard and we operate in there.

When I took this job, I already told you about the strategic environment. Think about that. Then I wanted to make sure I was able to articulate it to every single Marine what we do for our nation. Now, Ralph's a retired colonel, he and I used to work together and I could ask Ralph five years ago and say, "Ralph, what does the Marine Corps do for our nation?" He'd get

it probably about 85-87% correct. He'd say, "General, we're forward deployed. We do all those hard things other services don't want to do. We live hard. We don't have to have fancy, schmancy Brown and Root trailers and little trailer bathrooms and stuff. We can eat MREs, we can sleep on the ground, we can do that. We're on ships, we got our equipment on ships and we respond today." He'd have it about 90% correct, but I wanted it to be 100%.

My sense last summer as I looked at the budget, where we're going with the nation, and this is long before everything kind of began to unravel. I looked at that and said, "Okay. It will be important as we come out of Afghanistan and we start to think about the future of the Marine Corps" and by the way, Secretary Gates asked me to do this. "We better make sure that we know precisely what we do for our nation." I didn't want anybody to walk away and go, "I'm not sure but it sounds good." So, we spent about 60 days working on this one. Now, I've written mission statements for real. The kind where people's lives are on the line. Those, I give myself usually about an "A." I'd give myself a letter grade of probably about a "C" on this one because there's too much there. I kept trying to pack it down and condense it, put it on weight control. I tried to do everything to get this as tight as I possibly could. This is it. So, you can give me a grade of "C" for the mission statement, but let me talk to you about the things that are in it that I think are critically important.

We are a balanced Air Ground Logistics team. We go, we're on ships right now; we're forward deployed right now in the Gulf of Aden, doing counter piracy. We're flying operations into Afghanistan. We're doing other national taskings. We've got ships out in the Western Pacific. We've got ships forward deployed. On those ships, there's ground, aviation, and logistics. We spent 236 years trying to figure out how to package that and make sure that we had it right. The right balance between what we need to be able to do whatever the task is. We are that Air-Ground-Logistics team and we've talked about forward deployed and forward engaged. We are. We are not anywhere to the extent that I want to be and I don't think we're anywhere to the extent that perhaps my seniors want [us] to be. That's quite honestly, ladies and gentlemen, because we're tied up. We've been tied up now for almost 10 years. But we're coming out.

When Secretary Gates said, "Hey Jim, I want you to design a Marine Corps post Afghanistan." So, he said, "Start thinking about what we ought to do for our nation, and when you come back to me, tell me how big and what your capabilities are." So in that case, I think we will be forward deployed. Our United States Navy is pretty tied up right now. We are an integral team. So, as you look to the future, my sense is this is where our future lies for our nation. We create options and decisions space for our nation's leaders. When our nation and NATO were working their way through the problem of Libya. What are we going to do as a nation? NATO...What are we going to do as a collective body of countries? That took time. That is not a criticism on my part because when things happen in the world, this isn't like a war college course where they give you a problem and there's a solution. The fact is the world's issues don't always have clearly defined solutions.

So, while our nation—the United States of America—was trying to decide precisely how they were going to deal with this issue of Libya, they sent two ships, the *Kearsarge* and the *Ponce*, up from the Gulf of Aden, up through the Red Sea, up through the Suez Canal and they turned left. They sent one of the ships to Crete to pick up almost all of a Marine infantry

battalion we had put on airplanes in less than 24-hour's notice and flew them to Souda Bay. They picked the Marines up there—the infantry guys— and they sailed off the coast of Libya and they parked. The world knew the United States of America had two warships off the coast of Libya. They knew that we had fixed wing jets on there with our Harriers. They knew we had MV-22 Ospreys on there in and attack airplanes. They knew we had infantry. They knew we had most of the infantry battalion was on that ship. Then sometime later, our nation made the decision that we're going to support and join NATO and become part of the No Fly Zone. That's what we do. If you are forward deployed and engaged forward, then our national leaders have an opportunity to pause and go, "Okay. It may not be clear what the next decision is, but let's get some folks there and let's at least have a presence there to see if we can diffuse the situation." That's what we do. That's why the nation buys a United States Marine Corps. We respond to today's crisis, with today's force, today.

You're going to think this is an aggrandizement, I don't care...I'm going to tell you anyway. I think it was December 1st, two years ago when the president stood at West Point. He announced the surge in Afghanistan. Remember that? That night, I was watching it. He said, "I've approved the surge of 30,000 forces into Afghanistan...20,000 soldiers, 10,000 United States Marines." That was on a Monday night. The next morning, the lead elements of First battalion, Sixth Marines were on C-130s flying to Afghanistan. The next morning!

I arrived on the 22nd of December. So, about three weeks later, all of the 900 Marines and their equipment were on the ground at Camp Leatherneck, in Afghanistan. Half of the second battalion was on the ground and the rest of that battalion closed over the holiday period while I was there. I watched them – I greeted them. The third battalion arrived by the middle part of January. So, by the end of January, all the equipment and everything had closed for those 10,000 Marines. So, when I put up there that we respond to today's crisis, with today's force, today; this is not bravado. I'm not trying to coin a new phrase so we can recruit. That's not it. That's what we do. America wants to be able to respond today. When that Libya thing cooked off, the only reason why we had to put Marines on that ship was because we had taken that infantry battalion off that Marine Expeditionary Unit and put it ashore to reinforce success during the wintertime. It was ashore. So within twelve hours notification, we notified First Battalion Second Marines at Camp Lejeune and said get yourself together, get on there, get up to the airport at Cherry Point. Got them on airplanes and flew to Souda Bay, the ship pulled up and loaded it. That's what we do. That's what we do for our nation.

I'm a big fan of joint and combined operations. I tell all my generals and all my commanders and say, "I don't want to hear any of this stuff about, Hey, we're going to be the first ones in. We're going to be the first one of this." If we can support any organization in the Interagency, if we can support the United States Army, if we can support Norty Schwartz in the Air Force, I am happy to do that. So I'm a big fan of joint and combined operations. I put us down as a middleweight force. I couldn't think of a better way to describe us. When Secretary Gates and I talked, he said, "Jim, I see you somewhere between Army heavy and Special Operations Forces. That's kind of where I see the Marine Corps." I thought, "Yes. Okay." So I thought about that some more. I needed a description, and I said, "Okay. I don't want to be heavy because that's not what we are, and I don't want to be light." I don't want the president to say, "Send in the lightweights!" That just doesn't fit our image." So, I said, "How about

middleweights, kind of [like] a boxer. You can fight up, you can fight down.” So, that’s how we describe ourselves.

A couple operational highlights. How about the last 24 months. Haiti. Seven amphibious ships. 5,000 Marines. Remember [at] the airport, they had what you call “two MOG”...maximum on the ground. That means you can’t have more than two big airplanes on the ground; two big airplanes on the ground at a time. There was no room. Remember the beaches and the streets and the place was absolutely chaos. We pulled off [the coast] with seven amphibious ships, 5,000 Marines, started shuttling food, water, medical supplies. Marines went ashore. They didn’t look for a hotel. They didn’t say, “Bring me that nice fancy, schmancy trailer.” We went and lived on the ground. We lived in and went with the people, we brought Corpsmen with us, medical supplies, food, fresh water, communications. We shuttled back and forth to the ship. We brought people back out to the ships who were wounded. The docs worked on them on those seven amphibious ships. It’s a great story. I mean it’s a huge tragedy. But, I’ll tell you for 45 days... now we joined everybody else. This was the world’s ultimate joint, combined global operation. That was our piece of it. Seven amphibious ships is a pretty heavy commitment.

Pakistan. The epic floods of Pakistan last year hit all the way up north. By the way, that’s the bad area of Pakistan. That’s not the area you want to go on vacation. Really bad stuff happens up there. Yet, those epic floods up there began. People were losing their homes, their lives. We took off. We flew and we put a Marine Expeditionary Unit, three ships, off the coast of Pakistan. We took our heavy lift helicopters and flew 400 to 600 miles inland in CH-53s. Marines were on there... food, water, all the stuff that we just kind of talked about in Haiti. We were up there for almost 60 days. We brought in another Marine Expeditionary Unit. So, we had six ships in there with more helicopters. By the way, we were flying combat operations into Afghanistan in support of the Coalition Force the whole time that was going on. A huge effort. I’ve got lots of pictures of folks that we were lifting off little pieces of high ground, whole families and taking them to some place and then feeding them and taken care of.

Afghanistan, we’ve already talked about that. That’s counter insurgency and combat operations. We’ve been doing that now. We’ve got today about 19,500 Marines and Sailors on the ground. We’ve had that number for about the last two years, and it grew to that number with the Surge and then of course, we’re going to begin to dial it down as we begin to come out of Afghanistan.

To recapture the *Magellan Star*, a great story, you’ve forgotten about it. The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, one of those two units that were off the coast flying operations up into Northern Pakistan, dispatched the *USS Dubuque* and it turned left and headed west. The *Magellan Star* had been captured by Somali pirates. The *Dubuque* pulled up--a great story--put Marines on there and recaptured the *Magellan Star*. By the way, while its mother ship was flying combat operations in Afghanistan and the 53Es were flying north of Pakistan, that was all happening all at the same time. Imagine if that hadn’t happened, we’d be negotiating with the pirates right now for the release of that crew.

When that terrible earthquake hit in Japan this year, nobody knew that the nuclear piece of this thing was going to happen there. We just knew it was a horrible earthquake. We got immediate film footage of the tsunami that came in across the airport of Sendai. Remember the jet ways being washed around. Our commander on the ground down at Okinawa, LtGen Ken Glueck, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force. He's got about 20,000 Marines in the Pacific out there. He anticipated what would happen and he took and put his Marines on alert. The next morning—within 20 hours of that terrible earthquake—he flew eight helicopters and eight C-130s up to Mainland Japan, full of Marines, full of medical supplies, blankets and clothing, water, food. He didn't have a mission. Nobody told him to do it. He didn't get a call from Admiral Willard at PACOM to say, "Go, do this." He just anticipated that they're going to need some help. Sure enough, it was the day after that they said, "Can you help us?" They flew up there and operated just outside of Tokyo and flew into that whole area at Sendai, really for the next probably almost 35-40 days. They were flying in and out of the radioactive plume. They were doing their best to avoid it. There was so much radioactivity in their helicopters—these were 44-year-old CH-46 helicopters by the way—that it would take almost five days to clean them when they finally got back over. I sat with the crews that actually cleaned them. We got to scrub them down. It's not like you just take a garden hose. You got to get in there with a bunch of little Scotchbrites and water; you've got to do this and do that. The stories they tell, the crews, of picking people up, Japanese families, giving them blankets, giving them what they needed; I mean it's horrible. It just brought tears to your eyes. So they operated up there. They did that as well. The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, three ships, pulled up from Okinawa as well, off the coast of Japan and helped with that.

We talked a little bit about Libya already. What you don't know is for the first two days, the principal sorties that were being flown into Libya in support of the No Fly Zone were the AV-8 Harriers off the *Kearsarge*. That's because we needed to get tankers down. NATO needed to get AWACS airplanes down. And, it just took a while. It just took a while. So, the Harriers were flying off *Kearsarge* into Libya. But, what was really neat, is this story. You're looking at TRAP and you're going, "What the hell is that?" That's tactical recovery of aircrew and personnel. I get choked up just thinking about it. I was having dinner at Admiral Mullen's house; all the service chiefs were there. We got the call that an F15-E went down over Libya. So, a little hubbub...kind of went off to the side. We were told there was an effort underway to recover the crew. Nobody knew what happened. About an hour and a half later, the Aide came in, whispered, "They got him."

So, a couple of us went off to the side, shook hands, hugged one another, high-fived and went back to dinner. That MV-22 that was on deck on the *Kearsarge*...it was 90 miles off the coast of Libya out in the Mediterranean. When they got the word that the pilot was alive and [when]they had radio contact, the crews did a quick brief because they already knew what they were going to do. They just needed a location. We've rehearsed this over and over and over again. We had to have a location. Where's the enemy? What's happening? That MV-22 launched, found him, picked him up and was back on deck in 90 minutes. So, when people say, "Well I don't know if we can afford the MV-22...the fact that it flies two and a half times faster..." If that had been a helicopter, we would have been negotiating with Khadafi for the release of that pilot because Khadafi's forces were so close that we had to drop two 500-pound



bombs off the Harriers between Khadafi's forces and that pilot to keep them at bay while the MV-22 went in and picked him up. That's what we do.

Hurricane Katrina and Rita. Here's my homeland defense piece of this thing. I was down at Camp Lejeune at the time. I was the MEF commander of all Marines forces on the East Coast. I saw this thing roaring across, a Category 5. I don't think I had ever seen a Category 5. I didn't know what it was, but it came across Key West, and around it came in and now everything was targeting New Orleans. The Navy sailed their amphibious ships out of the port in Norfolk...came down to swung into Camp Lejeune, pulled pier side down in Morehead City, pulled off the beach at Onslow Beach, and we started sending amphibious tractors. We started sending water. We didn't bring any guns. We didn't bring any ammunition. We brought food, water, blankets, generators, all that stuff and the Marines. So, while this thing was roaring up the Gulf, the Navy and Marines were sailing around the southern end of Florida and came up behind it. Put the *USS Iwo Jima*. It's huge. It's like a small aircraft carrier – went up the Mississippi [River]. To this day, it amazes me. It went up the Mississippi and came pier side in downtown New Orleans. I talked to a tugboat captain in January this year. During Katrina, he told me that he had no place to eat, no place to shower. You know what New Orleans looked like. He's a pretty senior tugboat captain. They got a little fraternity of these guys down there. He spent his time eating and getting cleaned up and operating and helping out while he was on the *USS Iwo Jima*.

Took the *USS Bataan*, another one, a ship just like it, came off the coast of Mississippi and sent their air cushion vehicles ashore with their seven-ton trucks and their front-end loaders and came across the beach because Highway 10 was completely blocked. So that's what we did. We did it. We came in behind Hurricane Rita in Texas. You remember that? It wasn't enough we had Katrina and [then] Rita roared across Texas. We did that as well. That's what we do. Next slide please.

I want to leave time for the questions. I'm going to blow through this pretty quickly. I tried to visualize: how do we describe the fact that we're not trying to poach on the Army or the Navy or the Air Force? I'm not in their domain. I'm in it, but I'm not trying to poach on it.

As I sat and thought when I was thinking about this mission statement or how do I get Ralph to know precisely what the Marine Corps does for our nation, I thought about how we fit in. I looked at the environment and I said, "Well, okay the Air Force and all the other services seem to me have a domain." The Air Force has space and air, and the Navy has sea, above it and below it, and the Army has the ground domain. When you think of the Army, you think of them on the ground, winning our nation's wars. We don't have that; we kind of fit in all of those. What we really have is a lane. This is my crude attempt to try to describe how we operate and what we do for our nation. We have a lane when something happens. That lane that we operate in transits all three of the services' domains. Then, when that need is done, that lane disappears and the Marines are out of that. That's the way it works. So, when I sat with Marty Dempsey when he was being nominated to be the Chief of Staff of the Army, I sat with him, and I have known him for a while. I said, "Marty, look, let me show you this. I am not in competition with the United States Army. I love you guys. I love you. You're the greatest Army in the world. We just have this lane, we'll come in, we'll do our thing and we get out of there, depending on

what the nation wants us to do.” He said, “Jim, I got it.” I got with Norty Schwartz of the Air Force – I said, “Norty, We got strike fighter airplanes. We got that. We got command and control. That’s your domain. When something happens, you need it. We’ll come in that lane, we’ll bring that capability.” That’s the way I visualize it.