

# **General Amos' Remarks at the Passage of Command of the United States Marine Corps**

Wow. If I said that I was about to jump out of my skin it would probably be an understatement.

Secretary Gates and Secretary Mabus, thank you for being with us today. We've got many distinguished visitors. Mr. Ambassador thank you for being here today. Senior Executives from the Department of Defense, my fellow General Officers and Flag officers.

This row of Commandants, that are right over here, men thank you for being a part of this today and for your wise counsel over the last ninety days. And I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my fellow assistant commandants. There is a warm spot in my heart for the assistant commandants of the Marine Corps. We've got a whole host of them over here on the left side. Men, thank you for being here today.

We've got good friends and family. We've got the Carmel High School class that I graduated with, where are you? They're down there. They come to everything. Good to have you here today.

Family, friends, Marines, friends of Marines and last but not least my wife of forty years and my two children our two, our daughter-in-law, our son-in-law, and our four grandchildren, my sister, and my dad. Thank you for being part of this historic event in the two hundred and thirty five years of rich history of our beloved Corps.

Robert Burns made a pretty poignant comment one day when he said "the mark of a good speech is to have a very good beginning and a very good ending, and not much in between." I am acutely aware of what my role is here today and I will live up to Robert Burns' expectations.

On this date twelve months ago on October 22, 2009 we had 28,000 Marines forward deployed. We had 6,800 in Iraq executing the draw down of a very successful campaign that Secretary Gates and that our Commandant has talked about. Led by Major General Rick Tryon they finished their mission in March and April of this year proving to the world and to the people of Iraq that Al Qaeda and their extremist insurgency could be beaten.

At the same time on the ground was Brigadier General Larry Nicholson in Afghanistan with 12,000 Marines and Sailors. Today as we meet here, there are 20,000 Marines and Sailors in

what is arguably the most dangerous part of all of Afghanistan, the Helmand Province. Led by Major General Rich Mills, they are, at 8:30 at night as the Commandant referred to, they are coming in off patrols and they are going out. They are a happy lot. We have reason for optimism as a Nation with what those Marines and our Soldiers and our Airmen and our Sailors are doing every day and every night in Afghanistan.

Yet this past spring, 5,000 Marines boarded five amphibious ships and sailed to the aide of our Southern neighbor in Haiti. That earthquake stricken country that was so devastated and for 45 days those Marines and Sailors transited back and forth from those seven amphibious ships providing care and sustenance for the people of Haiti.

Less than 90 days ago the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit pulled off the coast of Pakistan to aide and assist our Pakistani brothers and sisters flying over 400 miles deep into Pakistan providing medical care, transportation, evacuation and just general care for the Pakistani people who were devastated by their floods.

The 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit sailed 30 days early so that they could go join them over off the coast of Pakistan and all the while our Harriers were flying off our big deck amphibs and they were flying combat patrols into Afghanistan in support of the Joint Force Commander.

And last but not least, less than 40 days ago, one of those ships sailed West and recaptured the pirated ship Magellan Star from the Somali pirates giving it back to its rightful owner and releasing the captive crew.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in 1952 Congress wrote into their law, they defined the Marine Corps and one of the things they said we would always be was “the most ready when the Nation is the least ready.” Some people think “that’s trite and it’s not applicable.” I will tell you what’s happened in the last twelve months of those 202,000 Marines and those great Sailors and Airmen and Soldiers across our Nation has proven that our Nation still needs a force that is “the most ready when the Nation is the least ready.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, that will be my focus during my Commandancy for the next four years. God Bless you, and thank you for being here today ladies and gentlemen.