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(As Prepared)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen ... and thanks Lynn for the introduction and the opportunity to speak here today.

It's a pleasure to join you at RAND. This is the first time I've been here...I've always been impressed by what this institution has written about and publically stated...all to advance the defense of our nation.

I hope that during our discussion today we can accomplish three things:

First, I'd like to provide my perspective as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the future global security environment ...

Second, I'd like to discuss our national defense priorities as they relate to the strategic shift to the Pacific ...

And lastly, I'd like to spend a bit of time discussing how your Marine Corps – our Nation's expeditionary crisis response force – contributes to the overall defense strategy ... then I'll take a seat and Jack will open the floor for questions.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that our nation is at a strategic inflection point. By the end of this year, we will have concluded the longest war in our Nation's history.

We are confronted by economic challenges amidst a world that is characterized by competition for natural resources...increased prevalence and severity of natural disasters...social unrest throughout the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa ... cyber-attacks, violent extremism, regional conflicts, and the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Intelligence estimates indicate that more than half of the world's population live in fragile states, vulnerable to ruinous economic, ideological, and environmental stresses.

In many regions, ever-present local instability will inevitably erupt into crises, prompting calls for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations or perhaps more vigorous responses.

Many parts of the world remain dangerous places. The rapid increase of globalization and reliance on computer networks gives both rogue nation states and other malign actors increased ability to impact our daily lives.

In this challenging environment ... a "new normal" is beginning to emerge...and because of this, my sense is that there will be no peace dividend following our conclusion of combat operations in Afghanistan later this year.

The world will remain a dangerous place. And while we, as a nation, may be done with the thorny and nasty entanglements of the new normal...they are likely not done with us. There will be no shortage of work for America's Marines.

In a speech last November at Georgetown, Ambassador Susan Rice, the President's National Security Advisor, stated that, "Nowhere are the challenges and the opportunities we face so great as in the Asia-Pacific Region."

I agree.

When considering the rapid rise of China, the recalcitrance of North Korea, territorial disputes amongst many nations, and long-festered historic points of friction, US presence in the Western Pacific has been a much-needed stabilizing force for the past 60 years.

Two years ago, President Obama said, "Asia will largely define whether the century ahead will be marked by conflict or cooperation, needless suffering or human progress."

Clearly, rebalancing to the Pacific remains a cornerstone of our nation's foreign policy – especially in enhancing security, expanding prosperity, fostering democratic values and advancing human dignity.

That said...both here in the Beltway, and across the nation, we are starting to see a national dialog beginning to emerge about what the American people want their military to do in the future.

After 12 years of war, some believe that it's time for America to furl the flag and come home. I understand that sentiment, and the sense of fatigue behind it.

But while wariness of foreign entanglements is a healthy American instinct, I argue that we cannot afford to disengage from the world.

In many critical areas, only the United States has the ability and the will to lead the world through some of its thorniest challenges.

Given the fiscal realities of our budgetary challenges, the question of necessity then becomes ...where do we engage...and how much?

There's much discussion about national priorities around town and across our nation. I'm reminded of the story about two Fortune 500 CEOs going back and forth about their companies and their priorities ... until one CEO, frustrated, turns to the other and says, "Dammit Jack, stop telling me about your priorities! Show me your budget, and I'll tell you where your priorities lie."

It's true ... money talks, and our budgetary priorities show what we hold dear as a nation.

As a member of the Joint Chiefs, it's my responsibility to look beyond the parochialism of my own service and ask the question, "What's right for our nation?"

To me, this means we must consider how we spend our time and focus, where we position our people, and what we must invest in in terms of modernization and infrastructure, both at home and abroad.

Looking purely at resources and level of effort, by 2020 the US Navy will have 60% of its fleet in the Pacific.

While your Marine Corps never left the Pacific...we are currently in the process of reorganizing our forces and strategically relocating units to Australia and Guam.

By 2017, we'll have 22 thousand Marines west of the International Date Line...we're close to that number now...all in accordance with the President's Defense Strategic Guidance.

Lastly, the United States must retain a global presence...a presence that is vital to deterring aggression...one that underwrites a stable global economy...and one that builds trust amongst our allies and partners.

This forward presence allows us to build strategic relationships that truly matter when the chips are down...time is short...and lives are on the line – just like we saw recently in the Philippines and Sudan.

Finally, allow me to be a bit more parochial about the Marine Corps' role in support of our national strategy.

Simply put...the Marine Corps is America's insurance policy. We all buy insurance for our cars, our homes...and even our lives, as a hedge against uncertainty...a hedge against the unknown.

The same logic applies to our nation. None of us can predict when or where the next crisis might arise...but when it does, our nation needs to be able to address the matter quickly and efficiently in line with our national interests.

Go back with me in time to a few recent missions that highlight the role your Marine Corps plays as our nation's crisis response force.

As you recall, in early November of last year, we conducted a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission in the Philippines, in the wake of Super Typhoon Haiyan.

It was the deadliest typhoon on record in the Philippines ... I'm told the fourth strongest ever recorded world-wide in terms of wind speed...over 195 MPH!

On November the 8th, Haiyan killed almost six thousand people ... injured twenty six thousand ... and damaged or destroyed 1.2 million homes.

Even before this storm hit land, Marines and Sailors on Okinawa and mainland Japan were preparing to respond – because they were already there... forward deployed.

On November ninth, Marines from the Third Marine Expeditionary Brigade received PACOM's order and deployed within six hours.

The very next day, your Marines began delivering relief supplies in support of USAID, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The personal relationships ... built over time with the senior leadership of the Philippine military ... facilitated rapid agreement on what our Marines could do, and how we could help. This gives credence to the saying: *you can't surge trust.*

Between November eleventh and the twentieth, Marines served as the nucleus of a robust joint interagency relief effort.

By the twenty-third of November, we had completed USAID's military taskings and began to coordinate turnover of operations with international and governmental relief organizations more suited to long-term recovery efforts.

In total, this joint-interagency team flew more than one thousand missions ... delivered more than two thousand tons of supplies ... and transported more than twenty thousand displaced persons.

Fast forward to late December/early January of this year as we all watched the news reports about the security situation in the world's youngest country - South Sudan...it seemed to be coming apart at the seams.

You'll recall that South Sudan had been rocked by weeks of violence...many in the media were speculating that a civil war was in the making.

According to the United Nations, more than 500 people had been killed and 200,000 had been driven from their homes¹.

By December 23, one hundred and fifty Marines from the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response, based in Moron, Spain flew aboard MV-22 Ospreys over 3,400 miles to stage for future operations at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti.

The next day, 50 Marines flew to Entebbe, Uganda to prepare for a potential non-combatant evacuation operation and to bolster US AFRICOM's East Africa Response Force.²

On January 3, Marines and two KC-130 aircraft from the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force evacuated twenty embassy personnel.

I'm particularly proud of this Crisis Response Force which we stood up earlier in 2013. For the unfamiliar, this Special Purpose-MAGTF Crisis Response is a rotational force of Marines

¹ The Washington Post, "Record number of U.N. peacekeepers fail to stop African wars", http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/record-number-of-un-peacekeepers-fails-to-stop-african-wars/2014/01/03/17ed0574-7487-11e3-9389-09ef9944065e_story.html

² <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2013/12/26/south-sudan-crisis-tests-us-marine-response.html>

temporarily positioned on Moron Air Base, Spain, capable of decisive action across a range of military operations.

This unit gives Gen Rodriguez a broad range of military capabilities to respond to crises in his area-of-responsibility, to include conducting non-combatant evacuation, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, support to U.S. embassies, and other operations as might be needed.

That's what we do....we are the United States of America's Crisis Response Force. We provide our nation's strategic decision-makers the time and space to "figure out what to do next."

We did it in Libya in 2011 during the opening stages of the Operation Odyssey Dawn. The World watched it happen again in Sendai, Japan after the horrific earthquake and tsunami...and now, of late, in the Philippines and South Sudan.

For < 8 % of the entire DOD budget, America gets a 24-7 crisis response capability.

Today...we are busy reshaping and resetting your Marine Corps after 12 years of hard combat. Fully appreciating the likely future security environment, while acknowledging the fiscal challenges facing our nation...we are building the force that we will employ in 2020. We are completely overhauling our organizational structure to support the national strategy. We have embraced the realities of the environment that we will live in and are getting on with it! We remain fully committed to building the most ready Marine Corps that our nation is willing to pay for.

Jack, I think this is a good time for us to open the floor to questions.