

Office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps

Thomas Lord Charitable Trust Lecture Series

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Commandant
United States Marine Corps**

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GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Fred, most of these people don't know you. They don't have any idea that you're a crazy man and that you're a midget and that you're a fighter pilot and everything else. I don't know who the hell's stuff this is up here. They don't have any idea who you are and they're wondering all these guys -- I know a bunch of these majors down here. I've served with them and they're thinking, "Who the hell was that?" Everybody in the Lord Corporation down there and all your know you and all us old guys do and Fred, thank you very much. It's good to see you.

Kathy is out here, his bride. She's known as Saint. Katherine to everybody that knows them. Anyone that could put up with Fred for all those years -- In fact, I could tell this. Maybe I just not do this speech, I'll just tell stories about you and Fred.

Well folks thanks for being here. I am acutely aware. Let's see, okay, it's 1905 and it's Tuesday night I think. My life is a series of lengthy recoveries on any day I'm not sure what day it is I just go where my aid tells me to show up and I actually have, by the way, for Mickey, Mick where are you Mick, oh there he is. See this speech? I want you to look at this. I mean there is a hell of a speech inside of here that will take three and a half hours to work my way through. I just want you to know I put the effort into this thing and we can do this thing the hard way or we can do this thing the easy way. How about a vote in the audience out here for the easy way? There you go. I'm in big trouble. My aid now and my staff that's here are thinking, "Holy mackerel. Where the hell's he going to go now?"

But thanks for being here everybody and for Bill Mullen, thank you, the President of the Marine Corps University and his wife, Vickie. Thank you for what you do. You really put your fingerprints on the Marine Corps University. Tom, you took it from a great man. Razor, thanks for not only having been the President of the Marine Corps University and many of the instructors here and staff know you and you gave Mickey a trial run a couple of years ago when Corporal Paulson said, you know, I want to come talk a little bit about leadership and let's have him go down to the Motor T section and we'll have him do it down there with a bunch of lance corporals and we'll try a test balloon and you didn't do that. You put him in front of our students and Mickey you've been a great success and thanks for leaving your work and coming down and being a part of this. This is a great institution.

You know I used to give Al Gray credit because I heard it from him and so I thought he said it. But in times of fiscal constraint and when you don't have any money, it's time to stop and think. And I came to find out about a month ago, I was doing my professional military reading, and that was really spoken by a Brit in the 1940s and Al Gray never gave him credit so the next time you see the former Commandant of the Marine Corps I want you to give him some lip but that really is the truth.

When you think about where we are today there's probably no greater institution that will posture the Marine Corps and really all of our services because we've got Army, Navy, Air Force in here. We've got Coast Guards. We've got our inter agency partners. We've got our allies in here I'm sure and probably no greater thing we can do right now as we face whether it's the fiscal cliff, whether it's sequestration, whether it's the end of the Bush era tax cuts or whatever... to stop to pause and actually think about the future and actually involve ourselves in education.

So I'm particularly pleased that we've got the students here. For Marjorie. Where are you Marjorie? Marjorie, thank you. Marjorie Lord Westfall the daughter of Thomas Lord, thank you for being here tonight and for the Lord Corporation all these men and women behind you are students. They're either faculty members on the staff who are teaching or they're students and we had everything from our staffed noncommissioned officers right on up to our lieutenant colonels who are going to War

College. We've got commanders that have commanded at lieutenant colonel level and we've got staff NCOs that have been senior enlisted all the way down in the junior ranks so that's who you have in the audience here tonight so I'm particularly pleased that we've got the Marine Corps University in here. For the Lord Corporation, thank you for being a sponsor. The Board of Trustees are here and it's an exciting night.

I'm honored to be able to kick this off. I mean this is the inaugural event and I'm acutely aware that I don't really want to mess this up Mickey. I don't want you to walk out of here and Lord go, "What the hell have you done tonight?" So I'm going to try my best to not allow that to happen. What I want to do here tonight my goal is I'm going to put on two hats tonight. One is going to be my service chief hat. And you're at the Marine Corps University, you're here tonight so you're going to hear some serious Marine Corps juju. But I'm going to put my member of the joint chiefs hat on and this is where I'm going to talk about what I think is best for our nation. I'm going to talk in terms of things like the budget, sequestration, where we're headed. What we need to do as a nation. The pivot to the Pacific. I can talk about all of that stuff tonight and I'll stay here as late as you want. I'm aware that we want to be done by 8 but for those of you that want to stay later, I'll be happy to stand down front and I'll answer questions until the last person walks out of here.

But I'd like to give you a sense for what the world -- what I think the world is going to look like over the next two decades and I think that's important, because if you're going to try to make determinations on what to cut as we kind of go through these fiscal challenges all our nations are. It doesn't matter what country you're from. As we look and we say, "what is it that we can do without?" It would be a good idea to have a sense for well, what's the world going to look like? What's the world we're going to operate in? In this room in here, and again, I know a lot of the officers down here in front and I probably know 20% of the staff noncommissioned officers in the back because I've served with them.

But on your chest are ribbons from Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of you just got back. I mean just got back within the last 4 or 5 months. Some of you I spent time, you know, in Musa Qaleh. Some of you I was on the ground with you in Marjah. You understand what that part of the world is all about. But as we focus on coming out of Afghanistan as a nation over the next really next two years, what are we going to be involved in? How much should we be involved in? And we've got to stop and think about what the world is going to look like.

Before we do that though, I'd like to just reach back in history just a little bit and kind of remind you that all throughout history of our country, all 237 years, there's been certainly no shortages of challenges. If you kind of think back to the security environment and how it was when Thomas Lord over 50 years ago joined a company. Took it from his father and began leading the Lord Corporation. You kind of go back in that part of the world and you get a sense for just how timeless the world situation really is and the challenges in the security environment. In some ways they never change.

Back then I remind you that there was a counterinsurgency effort going on in Algeria. We all read about that as we study how to deal with counterinsurgencies. The French were working their way out of Algeria trying to deal with Algeria. Halfway around the world we began to put advisors in a country that most of us couldn't even find on a map called Vietnam. Colonial nations in Africa were just beginning to gain their independence and China and India were clashing over border disputes. It kind of sounds little bit familiar. Some of the nations remained the same but the border disputes and certainly, areas of economic zones remain the same today, those conflicts are there. Let's take conflict

threatened as cooperation between and Cuba and the Soviet Union really began to ratchet up. America was on the cusp of World War III with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The fact is all throughout our 237 years even going back to 1775 there was a lot happening, it always has been. There's always been challenges and there will continue to be challenges for us over the next several decades to include all our allies. In 1775 the British Empire struggled with a messy counterinsurgency of its own. It's called us. We were the Americans. We were the Yanks and we were the insurgency going on here in the Continental United States, although we didn't call it that. The French, Spanish and Dutch sought to chip away at the British hegemony and defenders all around the world thought the Brits were overstretched and began to try to peck at their spirits.

Well you know what the world likes today because we're in it. You see what's happening in Syria. We saw what we just lived through all last week while every eye in our homes, every newspaper was read. I read the same paper that you do and maybe in some cases maybe a couple more. And we took a look and the whole world paused as we wondered where are we going to go? What's going to happen between the Israelis and the Palestinians in Gaza? How is this going to turn out? I mean we were watching it and I was reminded of my days over in Serbia when you'd watch the TV all the night and you'd see the missiles flying in the air and you'd see the reporters, standing in the hotel in downtown Belgrade up on the very top floor where the radio station is and she's hanging out and she's looking at the missiles flying out to try to intercept the allied airplanes flying over Serbia during that period of time.

That's what it looked like last week. We didn't know what was going to happen. We're not even sure what's going to happen in Egypt right now. We all thought that Egypt would settle down and maybe it has. But the last couple of days of issues and things that are going on internal to that country not external to us but leave me with a question mark. We've gone through Syria. We've gone through Tunisia. We've gone through Libya. Bahrain, our allies have had issues. There's no shortage of things happening around the world and they've always been that way and they're always going to continue to be that way.

Let me give you a sense for what I think the next two decades will look like, because again it bears on decisions that we're going to make as a Marine Corps and I'd say it's decisions that each one of our countries are going to make, our allies and our fellow services are going to be making over the next year to two years.

As we look ahead over the next two decades and when I took this job I'd actually had the benefit of spending a year in preparation thinking about what the future of the security environment was going to look like. I did that for the former Commandant and as we began to write his *Vision Strategy 2025*. So we actually spent a year traveling around the world. We went to most of our major allies. We went to corporate America. We went to the think tanks. We went to major universities. If you don't think corporate America is concerned about what the future holds because it's the bottom line for them. It's the profit margin. It's where the work force is going to be able to be employed and how they're going to be able to market their products.

And so we pulled it all together in what we think is reasonably accurate and today I've had no reason to change that after two years of publishing it two years ago. Now that I've been in this job for the 25 months I've got no reason to believe it's going to be any different than what it is. In much of the world, certainly not in all of the world but in some of the world, in the developing nations of the world,

in the littoral areas of the world, there's going to be increasing instability -- failed or failing states. There's going to be conflict and all of this is going to be characterized by several adjectives, descriptions, verbs: poverty, unemployment, urbanization, overpopulation and extremism. There will be strong competition for scarce natural resources.

If you take a look at a map, you take a look at an overhead imagery over the continent of Africa and if you're looking at the right information you'll see areas of significant drought. You'll see areas where potable water is more valuable than a single liter of petrol. People don't care about petrol, they care about drinking. Where food shortages and famine are going to drive migrations of populations, mostly young, into areas and urban areas where you're going to see vast amounts of unemployment and you're going to see what we call a youth bulge. In central Europe it's not there. In fact in central Europe, the population is declining. But you take a look at the developing nation along the Mediterranean and in some parts of those worlds and the population is increasing not exponentially but significantly. It's the youth bulge.

And to put it more in a line with us, these are probably going to be young males. Unemployed or underemployed that are going to be motivated much like the gangs in east L.A. for recognition, for affirmation and in some cases just for survival. New technologies will rapidly proliferate among nations and nation states and give them unimaginable power to include capabilities to disrupt cyber networks, advance precision weaponry. And what worries the hell out of all of us are weapons of mass destruction.

These troubling socioeconomic and geopolitical trends converge in an area that we in the Marine Corps and the Navy call the littorals. The areas within 50 to 100 miles of the coastline. Close to the seas, the oceans, the waterways of the world. These are regions along the world's coastline where the sea joins with the lands and it's in these littorals that over 60% of the world's population lives. Over 60%. Over 21 of the world's 28 megacities are within 62 miles of a coastline. Think about that. The trend towards accelerated birth rates in the developing world coupled with ongoing migration from rural to urban landscapes results in hyper-populated coastal regions burdened by the accumulative stressors of criminality, extremism and violence.

Littoral cities increasingly may assume what is now kind of being known as feral qualities. Those of us that have been in Iraq and Afghanistan, which again it's just about you, understand. You probably didn't even know what feral was until we deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and you saw the animals that hung around your CP, your tents, your camps. But some of these nations are going to be adopter, have qualities almost like a feral animal raising the potential for conflict providing a measure of sanctuary for our adversaries. Opposing challenges to governmental sovereignty and regional security. It's in this environment that the United States Marine Corps will operate in the next two decades.

So when I say as the Commandant of the Marine Corps that we are going through, in fact, we're just beginning to try to determine how we can afford the Marine Corps of the future. As we do that. As we look at capabilities. As we look at things like forward deployment, the importance of engagement, the importance of forward presence. As I look at that and I try to either shape the Marine Corps, we do as a leadership, as we try to shape the equipment, the training, the focus, the focus of the Marine Corps University, our professional military education, our residents training. The amount of ships, the kind of equipment, the amount of training, where we're going to put our money, it's with this background in mind.

As I sit and I try to determine where should we apply those small amount of resources we have in 8% of the DOD budget which is what the Marine Corps has. Eight percent. So it's that background, that world, that the Marine Corps will operate in as well as our allies. As well as our service brothers and sisters. As well as our interagency partners. That's the world we're going to operate it.

Now I'd ask you to stop and think just the last 25 months since I've been in this job. Have you had any reason to believe that that's not going to be the case? I mean is there anything that indicates that the world's getting any nicer? There's nothing. We've got strong leadership by some nations. I thank God we've got it. We've got leadership both economically, militarily, diplomatically around the world and we need that. We need stable nations.

I get asked often, well what do you think about China, Commandant? And I tell everybody that it's in our best interest and it's in the best interest of the world and the Asia-Pacific region to have an open, warm relationship with China. It's in the world's best interest to have that kind of relationship.

So let me transition for just a second and armed with the background of the world, the backdrop of what I think the world's going to look like in the two decades, I'll give you a snapshot of kind of where we are today and then transition to those things that I think are important for the future.

Today we have 6,800 Marines and sailors in Afghanistan. For the Marine Corps that's pretty much concentrated right down in the southern part of the Helmand Province. And we've got our brothers and sisters from our other services, our allies; they're down there with us. Some of them are in other areas and other Provinces of Afghanistan. There's 68,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan tonight. We're going to be there for two more years. I wouldn't worry about the drawdown rate. I wouldn't worry about the ramp but I would put my thoughts to are the Afghan people going to be ready.

When I was there in July with the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and I was getting on a V-22 at the end of the a long day visiting all our combat outposts in our fogs and trying to see as many Marines as we possibly could. Some of you in here, many of you in here have been at those destinations when Sergeant Major Barrett and I went and Sergeant Major Kent and I have landed and spent Christmases with you, spent time with you at your forward deployed sites. But as I was getting on the last V-22 at the end of a very long day, a regimental commander came up to me and pulled me aside and with the V-22 turning in the background he said, "Commandant, we're going to be okay. I want you to know that." He said, "the Afghan National Army in the Helmand Province are stepping up."

Now each one of us in here has different experiences. I do understand that. But as you sit as a service chief, a member of the Joint Chiefs and you look at this, you have to look at the whole. And as I look as a Commandant at what's happening in Helmand, I look and I tell people actually I have reason for optimism. I have reason because of things just exactly like the regimental commander said. He said they're going to be okay. They're stepping up. They'll be ready when it's time.

Now what does that mean? That means from my perspective I can't guarantee how the future is going to unfold. I can't guarantee how the future is going to unfold in Iraq and yet we invested six to seven years of our lives there and 851 of our most precious young Marines their lives -- killed in action - - in Iraq. And when we left almost three years ago now, it's hard to imagine that we drove out three years ago. But when we drove out it's not an overstatement to say we drove under a victory pennant. That's not bravado. That's just not Marine Corps bravado. We drove out under a victory pennant. We felt good about it.

You can't tell me the last time that you saw Ramadi or Fallujah in the headlines of a newspaper. You can't. Not one of you. I can't. And yet it consumed us. It took the lives and the limbs of all of us. All of our services. And yet today I can't tell you how Iraq is going to finally turn out. We don't know. But I can tell you that when we left we had set the conditions for the greatest opportunity for success in Iraq. I think everybody here would agree with that. Each one of us has things that we'd have like to have seen done and they weren't accomplished. But the conditions were set for the greatest opportunity for the Iraqi people to control their own lives and their own destiny.

That's how I look at Afghanistan. That's how I look and when I talk to the regimental commanders and the battalion commanders and the executive officers of battalions, Marines that I know, my Marine special operators and I talk to them and I come away with the same feeling. When we leave there in two years, 2014, we'll have set the conditions for the greatest opportunity for success in Afghanistan. So I feel good about what we've done.

It's not done without cost. Yesterday we lost another young lance corporal. We're at 1,224 as of today. Over 14,000 wounded. So I do understand the cost of this but I do feel good about what we do and I look at my mothers, my gold star mothers and families as I put my arms around them and I do it weekly and I've cried at every single one of them and I still think we've done this honorably. I feel good about what we're doing.

We've done it alongside our allies. We've done it alongside the UK, the Bahrainians, the Jordanians. The Georgians, not Atlanta Georgians, but the Georgian Georgians. We've done it with Australia. We've done it with our Army, Navy, Air Force partners and I think we've done it well. We've effectively pushed the Taliban out of the ribbon of civilization that runs through the Helmand river valley. In Helmand Province, we've established a fledgling economy and some modicum of governance that is growing every single day. Most importantly we'll be leaving an accomplished and well-trained Afghan Army as our relief force when we finally get the relief in place in 2014. These men are tough. They're disciplined. They're well-trained and they are absolutely dedicated to freedom and just rule in their nation.

These soldiers regardless of what you read in the paper will not willingly allow the return of the Taliban state. They have come too far. I don't have to tell you they're accomplishments that come at great expense. We just covered the numbers but most if not every Marine here tonight has been part of those huge successes and I thank you for that.

And while Marines have been fighting hard in Afghanistan, we've been forward deployed around the world. I get often asked, "Well General Amos, when are you going to return back to sea" and the truth is we never left it. We've got seven Marine Expeditionary Units, which for our friends in the audience that are unfamiliar, each one of those are made up of three amphibious ships full of 2,500 Marines logistics and aviation and they're all around the world.

In fact just this last week, just this last week while our eyes were glued to the TV on the Israeli and the Palestinian Gaza strip, three amphibious ships from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit had already entered the Atlantic Ocean underway, and turned east and headed to the eastern Mediterranean and they sit there today. They are there for one thing: presence. Presence to buy time for our President and our national leaders because when things happen around the world it's not always clear what the next right step is. It's unlike school where often there's solutions at the end of a problem. Real world is you sit and you wonder. You wonder, "what nations are going to step forward with what capabilities?"

You wonder, “what should we do today and tomorrow and the next day?”

Marines aboard ship forward deployed around the world provide that decision space for our national leaders. They allow them the time to stop and pause and think about it, before they act. That’s what happened in Libya almost a year and a half ago now. We weren’t sure what the next step was. There was a lot of debate in Congress. Members of Congress were accusing the Department of Defense of dragging their feet. The fact of the matter is it wasn’t clear as a nation as the United States of America. While NATO was working their way through this and our allies, what should be do about Libya? We sailed a Marine Expeditionary Unit off the coast. We flew 1800 Marines in from Camp LeJeune, notified overnight. They got on a bunch of airplanes and flew to Souda Bay, Greece and we loaded them aboard the ships and they positioned themselves off the coast of Libya.

The first air strikes and first air commanded control were from Marine aviation assets. I’m not bragging it’s just the way it was because they were there. It’s the value of forward deployed forces. They were there. And when the Air Force F-15 pilot, and I’ll never forget it because I was having dinner with the general of the joint chiefs, all the service chiefs. We were sitting having a wonderful dinner, 8 o’clock at night, and my aid came in and he whispered in my ear, “We just lost an F-15 over Libya.” Sitting right across the table from me was the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. His aid whispered in his ear at the same time. Then he and I got up and walked out. Nine minutes later the pilot was picked up and back aboard the USS Kearsarge in an MV-22 Osprey. Had we not been, had we not had the MV-22 Osprey? Had we had some other helicopter that flew at half the speed, at that point we’d had been negotiating with Muammar Gaddafi for the release of that F-15 pilot.

When the terrible earthquake happened followed by the tsunami followed by the nuclear disaster in northern Japan a year and a half ago, a cold winter. You remember it. I mean when you talk about how the whole world just focuses that even Marines off of Okinawa, off of Okinawa, without any provocation other than the disaster, without a single set of orders, without anybody more senior than a three star telling them, my general on Okinawa to do it. They manned up their airplanes and they flew to mainland Japan and sure enough they spent the next 45 days operating up in Sendai flying in and out of the nuclear plume trying to rescue, provide health and comfort items for the Japanese.

That single selfless act. Dangerous, time-consuming, yet to be seen what the long-term health effects will be for our Marines that did that. It took over five days just to scrub the nuclear material off each helicopter. Five days. I mean it wasn’t caked on there, you can’t see it. But that single act of selflessness did more for the international relationships between Japan and the United States of America than probably anything has in the last 20 or 30 years. They began to understand that we really are teammates in the Pacific. We were forward deployed. We were forward engaged. We were there.

When those devastating floods in northern Pakistan -- we don’t even remember it anymore. All the way up -- all the way up in the bad part of Pakistan where it gets thin up there where really bad stuff happens, 700 miles deep, epic floods. Two Marine Expeditionary Units, six ships pulled off the coast of Karachi and we flew 700 miles inland to rescue people during those epic floods.

So on this document that we passed out tonight, we talk about several things in here and I call them articles. I tried to capture what we do for our nation. What we do as a Marine Corps for our nation. And in here I talk about responding to today’s crisis, with today’s force... today. All the Marines in here need to listen up, because as we make decisions over the next six months, 12 months, 18 months on where we’re going to apply our resources in a fiscally challenged environment which is

where we are and where we are headed. Just don't think for a second that's not going to be the case.

You need to know that the leadership of the Marine Corps, the four stars, the three stars, the two stars, the one stars, the senior leadership of the Marine Corps understands that this issues of responding to today's crisis, today is our *raison d'être*. That's why we exist.

A couple of years ago people started in the press, in public statements, saying you guys are nothing but a second land Army and it caught on. You heard it, every one of you. Some of you have repeated it. You're just a second land Army. America doesn't need a second land Army. Well first of all I make no apologies as a Marine Corps for what we've done either in the Al Anbar Province or for what we've done in Helmand. I've already talked about that. I make no apologies for what we did in Korea or in Vietnam or in France just outside of Paris. I make no apologies for being a land Army. But that's not why America has a Marine Corps.

We do land business well. We do what the President tells us to do well. But Marines this matter of responding today with ready forces today is our business. We're going to apply our resources to that. It's going to imply training and resident education. It's going to imply operations and maintenance funds so that you can go to Twentynine Palms and you can train. We're going to have ready forces. Which means I'm going to have to pinch pennies in other areas, but we will always be ready because the first time the President of the United States says, "Jim, can you send the Marines in?" And I look at him or I look at the Secretary of Defense and I say, "Mr. Secretary or Mr. President, just give me about 20 or 30 days. I'll cobble together the force and then I'm going to get them trained and then I'll get them deployed. I'll be ready to go in 20 to 30 days." The first time that happens there's no reason to ever have a Marine Corps. We're done. We know that.

But on this paper, on this single sheet, we talked about the value forward presence. I talk in here about the fact that trust can't be surged. When you're dealing with allies and you're dealing with crisis around the world, relationships count. You build relationships by engagement, by being forward deployed. That's what we do. We don't have to live with a chow hall. I don't have to have eggs to order in the morning. I don't have to have my omelet. I don't even have to have an air-conditioned tin can to sleep in at night and neither do you. We can actually go out and live reasonably hard. We know how to do that. That's who we are and that's what we do for the nation.

So I'd ask you to take a look at this. Take it home with you. For the Marines in here, as you start thinking about, okay, what do we do for the nation? What is it that are absolute articles of faith? I started calling this a manifesto and I had visions of Martin Luther hammering on the wooden door and I went, well that's probably not a good idea. Then I thought about a couple of other things that were manifestos of history over the last century and I thought, well that's probably not a good idea either so I changed the name from manifesto. But this really is these are articles of faith. These are tenets. This is who we are and this is what we do for our nation.

Ladies and gentlemen we're going to be okay. There are seven living Commandants and I meet with probably four or five of them almost all the time and they're mentors of mine. They've been very patient. They've been cheerleaders. When I say they've been critics, I mean that in the very best sense of receiving criticism. Not bad but good. The kind we all need. And interesting as I talk to them about just the condition America is in and as we face this in the Department of Defense and we take whatever course that becomes ours, we've already paid a pretty healthy price. But whatever is yet to come as we do that they said, "Jim, don't worry about it. You'll be okay. You're actually going to come out the

other end of it a better Marine Corps.” And I said, “How can you say that.” And they said, “Because the truth of the matter is, is that when you start running out of money not only do you educate, you spend time thinking but you actually begin to innovate and you begin to make hard choices.”

We’re making hard choices right now in the Marines. We’re making choices right now in what we can afford and what’s good enough. There are some things that we absolutely have to replace and fix in the Marine Corps and modernize. I’m going to turn in my Commodore 64 computer and I’m going to try to get an iPad. I’m going to try to fleet up. The truth of the matter is there are some things like our 44-year-old CH-46 helicopters, our 40+-year-old amphibious assault vehicles, they’ve got to be replaced. They do. And we’re going to modernize them and replace them.

But there’s a whole bunch of other things that I’ve looked at the leadership and we’ve sat down all of us, I mean all of us, three stars, the board of directors of the Marine Corps, and we’ve said what is good enough to get us through the next five to six years. What is it that will allow us to be able to respond to today’s crisis with today’s force today and do it again next year and the year after that and let’s hang on to what’s good enough because we already own it. And we’ll take the rest of the money and we’ll put it into readiness and we’ll put it into our ability to be able to operate in the world that I described that we’re going to operate in for the next two decades.

So much like a knife or a piece of steel that becomes annealed, that’s what the Commandants have told me. They said, “Jim, you’ll go through the fire but you’ll come out the other side and we’ll be just fine.”

I’d like to close with a comment that just, you know, as I put my JCS hat on, and I worked with the fellow service chiefs and it’s particularly a pleasure for me to say this because I’ve got Navy brothers and sisters in here, Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, our (unintelligible) partners. As I sit in a tank, we meet twice a week. Spent two and a half hours there late yesterday afternoon early evening dealing with issues.

I’ve never seen and I can’t imagine a more collegial setting of four star leaders under the direction of General Marty Dempsey U.S. Army, General of the Joint Chiefs, I can’t imagine a better bunch of folks that will guide us through the next little bit. And I want our partners here. I want the Lord Corporation, I want our civilian friends, because you don’t know who Marty Dempsey is. You don’t know who Ray Odierno is. You don’t know who John Greenert is, the Chief of Naval Operations. Or General Mark Welch or Admiral Bob Papp of the Coast Guard. You don’t know them. But I live with them every single day.

So as we get anxious about the future, the world that I described is happening around us, remember to some degree it’s always happened around us. It happened when your father started this corporation or took charge of this corporation and it will continue to happen around us but the leadership in that tank and the leadership of our nation in the military has never been safer in my mind and never been more pulling together and constantly asking ourselves what’s best for the nation? What’s best for the United States of America? Well we’ll figure it out.

Well ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here. Let’s see how I’ve done. Not too bad. How about we do this? I’m going to come down and I’ll be happy to answer any questions anybody has but thank you for your attention and let me pop on down here in the front, okay? Thank you.

Okay, how’re we doing? Vickie are we going to get invited back again for another Lord

Corporation night or -- are we going to be okay?

SPEAKER: As long as you want.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Okay. How about questions for me, comments from anybody out there, anybody. I've got the coolest coin. (Laughter) Where's my trusty aid? Hang on a minute. I've got to give you since these weenies out here in the audience that wouldn't ask a question I'm going to let you do it for me. What do you got for me?

SPEAKER: Sir, as a nation are we where we should be in terms of being prepared for cyber warfare?

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: No. Next question. You know I'll tell you, we got any cyber warriors in here? Raise your hand. I guarantee you we've got folks in here that actually know what the hell they're doing.

SPEAKER: Sir we have a question here in the back.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Well wait a minute. I'm not done yet. Unless you're going to talk about cyber warfare.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: No sir, logistics sir.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Alright, alright. Hang on a minute. Save that question. You'll get a coin too, okay? I think we are just beginning to discover the absolute vulnerability and sheer -- I guess capabilities of cyber warfare and this is not a criticism by the way to the United States and it's certainly not a criticism to the Department of Defense, the National Security Agency, CYBERCOM or any of that stuff.

I mean the fact of the matter is some of this is just discovered learning as you go along. But can you imagine being in a full blown war somewhere and then having your information that you count on in your computer, the information that you see coming in from your leadership, the information that you're passing down and you're not sure whether it's true or accurate. Can you imagine the dilemma that that would cause for actions on the battlefield. I mean and that's just something very, very small. I haven't talked about stealing your money out of the bank accounts, shutting down the power grid up in the northeast part of the United States. I haven't talked about any of that. Or taking your retirement away from you.

I'm just talking about in combat, you know. The misinformation potential that cyber warfare has and cyberspace has is monumental. We are working really, really hard. I'll tell you the Department of Defense has put more effort into this and we are on the cusp of putting even more effort on this thing. I mean it's more than money. It's manpower talent.

If you go up and you visit General Keith Alexander who's our brainiac head of U.S cyber command and the National Security Agency, and you walk in and see who he's got hired. He's got thousands in there. You see some of the weirdest looking people. They've got ears pierced and they've got tattoos and they've got different colored hair and they've got, you know, stuck in every part of their body but they are smart and they're dedicated and you talk to them and you go, I don't think I want to talk to you. And you talk to them and you realize this is a dedicated American who loves his country and it's just who they are and they're applying their 150 IQ to help us figure out how we can protect

America and defeat the enemy. So I think we're on to it. So when I said no it doesn't mean we're kind of just not trying. We're working but I think this is such a growth industry I don't think we'll ever get there. I mean I just think it's always going to be staying out in front of us but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try.

Flash, give me one more coin so I can go back there. I think that's my Sergeant Major. Well wait a minute. Okay, who? The rest of you are bastards you were a coward and didn't ask the question sooner. Oh, it's a staff sergeant. I'm promoting you to sergeant major. How many sergeants major we got in here, they're not happy with that.

SPEAKER: Thanks sir.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: You bet. What do you got?

SPEAKER: I just saw you out in Fort Leonard Wood sir and I didn't get an opportunity to ask you then, we've already replaced the 5 ton and we're going into the 7 ton MTVR. We've also got into the LVSR, Logistics Vehicle Systems Replacement; we're talking about the HMMWV and the flat bottom. I know we're going to the joint light tactical vehicles, sorry sir, are we still going to put that on hold and carry out the HMMWV a little bit longer so we can get out of the crisis some?

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Thanks staff sergeant. That's the poster child of my statement when I say what's good enough. We're asking ourselves what's good enough. Here's what I'm talking about. Four and a half years ago we started the effort to get into the joint light tactical vehicle. In other words, to replace all our utility vehicles. And for our folks down front when I talk about a HMMWV, that's the classic thing you see on TV. You've watched them in Iraq. You saw them. It's like Hummers. In fact, they're not like Hummers; they are Hummers only they're military Hummers. We've got 23,000 of them. The Army's got 6 trillion of them. Because the Army's got more money than we do. I'm just kidding. But the Army's got a bunch of them and we've got 23,000.

So as we looked into the future four years ago we said well, these things are wearing out. I mean they're getting blown up. They're on rough roads and they don't provide the level of protection that Americans and Congress and families expect of to put our young men and women in today. So we need to replace them. We started this program the joint light tactical vehicle. We thought it was going to be the Manhattan Project. So we were going to go to Sandia Labs and hire all our experts and help us figure this thing out but we didn't so we ended up four years later we're going, what the hell have we done? We spent a fortune but we didn't get the vehicle we wanted. And so about a year ago the Marine Corps said we're out of the program.

This was before the fiscal crunch happened. The Army and Marine Corps came together and said look, okay, let's cooperate here. Let's get the vehicle to both services so we agreed to this. We're buying 5,500. We wanted to buy about 20,000 but I can't afford 20,000. I can't. But I'm going to buy 5,500 of these things. I'm going to take those MRAPs; those Mine Resistant Ambush Protective vehicles, those great big heavy things that save untold numbers of lives which are not very mobile. They're not really off-road vehicles. But we're going to keep those. We're going to refurbish that and we're going to refurbish probably up by 13 to 14,000 of our newest HMMWVs because there are parts of the world we can use HMMWVs and so when we ask ourselves what is good enough, how can we save money so that we can buy readiness and so in this fiscal climate we can actually be that crisis response force that I just brought up there, it's in that handout.

So that the JLTV, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, is a classic case. We are not going to replace all the HMMWVs like we had planned on. Down the road we're going to buy 5,500. The Army's going to come in behind us. I think they're going to buy 30 or 40,000 and then maybe towards the end of that buy we'll get back on in being able to buy some more and replace some more HMMWVs but that's a great example. So there's a bunch of this equipment that quite honestly three years ago we thought then we'll be able to ease up, ease out of the fleet. That's not one of them. We're going to end up only buying part of it. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good evening General. Sir, please talk about maybe one of the elephants in the room here and for that reason I'm wearing my sappy face both front and back. In regards to ethics sir, this is a leadership challenge working for the Marine Corps University we talk about it every day. As military service members we hold the standard of the United States when it comes to ethics and reputation that the military has. I think it's never been higher in regards to the public opinion. However, I'm concerned that we're starting to lose our way and I've seen documents from some of our senior leaders that would concur with that. What can we do as future commanders as scholars of your Marine Corps University not only if you're talking more on how we get back on track.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: I think -- Thanks for the question and it is the elephant in the room. And it's interesting I had talked to someone, I can't think of who it was it was late last week, and is there a relationship to all the stuff that's been going on. The newspaper articles and everything you've seen in the press and you know the names so I don't need to bring them out. But the question came from a young Marine, not an old timer major, a youngster. What I call one of my baby Marines and I mean that with great affection. I don't mean that as a disparaging comment. Concerned about it. You know, where are we going? Have we lost our way?

And the question was not to you the question was to the general officer of the Corps. And we've only got 81 general officers in the Marine Corps total. You know I'm the oldest. Not only am I the oldest active duty Marine in the history of probably the entire Marine Corps except maybe Archibald Henderson and he died on the sofa in my house. Which is a true story by the way. But I've been a general officer longer than anybody in this room on active duty. Those 81 general officers we've got right not, the question by the way from the lance corporal didn't come to me it came eventually to me. If he was here in front of me I'd say, "We're going to be okay." I know these generals. I mean, I live with them. I work with them. In some cases I've selected them.

What we have to do is go back to something, I mean this is going to sound really simple, but you remember the Heritage Brief that we worked on pretty hard this past spring. Sergeant Major Barrett and I traveled throughout the entire Marine Corps and the message was simple. I mean although I made you sit there for an hour and a half you probably didn't think it was simple but the message is simple. It's this. Remember who we are and who we're not. And so when you start thinking about ethics, do we need more rules? The answer is no. Do I need somebody else to oversee me and say, you know, you shouldn't do that. You shouldn't take that plane and go here. No, because there are actually rules governing that. There are ethical standards that are out there. There's expectations. There's the moral stuff.

There's not only my personal moral beliefs as a husband, as a daddy and a grandfather and an American, as a Marine and now a general but there are other beliefs out there that standards have been set not only within the Marine Corps but through to the Department and by the American people. There's a hell of an expectation as you said by the American people that quite frankly our generation,

and I'll just say generals, okay, and admirals. So I'll just talk about us and not the majors or the captains -- that we're going to do the right thing.

There's lots of discussion about well, you see this well with more power you become more vulnerable. I think there's a lot of truth to that. I don't think there's any question about that. You also become very busy. You become consumed with the day. My day began early and after I leave here and I go home tonight I'll be in my office. My day's going to be long. But I'm okay with that. So I get a lot of help with my day if you understand what I'm saying. But where's the balance? Where do I become -- what do I step into to ensure proper behavior?

I think in the simplest terms for all the majors and all the staff NCOs and the captains that are here, the kind of colonels in the War College. You remember who you are. So when you talk and when you leave here and when you go back out and you're talking to your young Marines and you're talking to that platoon sergeant, that staff sergeant or the squad leaders or you're talking to these young corporals or your lieutenants, you should never back off on reminding them -- don't forget who you are and who you're not.

All we've got to do is go back to the headlines last January, February and March of this year in my service that you saw on TV that brought shame to the Marine Corps. And the message for the Lord Corporation and family and friends here for the leadership was as we traveled around, don't forget who you are. That's not us. We don't do those kinds of things. That's not what Marines do.

You know there's a great quote and you know where I'm headed with this thing. Chuck Krulak's, daddy Vic Krulak, retired three star general, wrote a book First to Fight and published it in 1984. How am I doing? Eighty-four. And in there he said several things about Marines and its there in the back of the book. And he said, the Marines have some form of unfailing alchemy where they take disoriented young adults, young men and women, boys, girls, and he called it this unfailing alchemy this ability to take and change their lives and to turn them into responsible citizens and adults into who's hands the nation's affairs may be trusted. That's what we do. And here's the kicker. And if we should ever fail to uphold those high almost spiritual standards, we will have failed the nation and the Marine Corps will surely cease to exist. No, I don't think we need another ethics book. I don't think we need -- I think we need more class, maybe we need discussion but we know. And I'll tell you what, the general officers know.

Now the question you didn't ask is what are you doing about it? You just need to understand that the Heritage 2 part, version 2, is about to hit the road, okay?

SPEAKER: Sir.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Because I'm going to talk to all my generals. Me. We're going on the road. I'm just going to remind them all I love them dearest. I'm looking at several of them right down there. There as honest and forthright but I want everybody looked in the eye. I want them to hear it from me and remind everybody who we are and what the expectations are, okay?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you sir.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Thanks, thank you. Just tell me when you want me to pull the plug.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Good evening, sir. My worry is that with the EFV failing now, getting cut

out, what is the Marine Corps do about building that. We were able to talk to Sergeant Major Barrett about the new -- what the Marine Corps is thinking about doing, you know, with the AAV and also the amphibious vehicle thinking about doing but just as General Mattis said as you put us in Iraq -- see what the Amtraks was doing in Iraq and we did great things until the IEDs were brought out, obviously sir, so what is our plan now, now that the fact that EFV has already failed, what are we going to do as a truly amphibious military service, sir?

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Yeah, well here's the -- I'm glad you asked the question. Here's a promise to everybody in this room. You know you sit and you take a look and take a look at core missions and what are the things that define the Marine Corps? There are several things and hopefully we have courage in all the stuff that we do that we feel good about.

But one of the things that we do, we are -- and I said it in that paper I gave you -- is I talk about that we are a maritime force operating for a maritime nation. That's who we are and one of our core competencies is the ability to come from the sea. We do that two ways. We come from the air. We've updated our fleet of airplanes. We're in the process of continuing to do that with the MV-22 and the heavy lift helicopter, you know, our other assault support airplanes and we do it from the surface.

I'm not going to give that up. Everybody in here two years ago with a lot of help and a lot of thought canceled the expeditionary fighting vehicle and for what that means for everybody in here it was a brand new assault craft that was going to go about 30 knots on the water and weigh close to 70 tons. So you're going to push 70 tons through the water, with steel brick going 30 knots which is kind of pushing physics. And it was doable. But that wasn't the reason it was canceled. It was canceled because the program was almost two decades old. It had grown in cost by about 400% and it was behind in just about everything and so I said we're canceling it.

We have a program right now, we have the working requirements, we've actually the finalized the final requirements on the replacement of that vehicle. It's called the Amphibious Combat Vehicle. Maybe somewhere down the road it will have a sexy name like, Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, but for right now we're just calling it the Amphibious Combat Vehicle. You have my word that we're going to bring that vehicle in. So for all the Amtrakers in here who are thinking well the last time we ever had our reigning glory was when General Mattis and Blue Diamond, said, "follow me boys into Iraq," your glory days were ahead of you.

So we are going to do this. In fact we have looked through the entire 'can' of something that can swim at 13 to 14 knots and carry 13 Marines. The truth is it does become a problem with physics. You get a slow water speed vehicle with 13 Marines in it and a driver and a crew chief and you're probably not going to get more than about 8 knots out of it. I don't know how much you squeeze and grunt, you're only going to get 8 knots until you do something significant like make it a planing vehicle. So we're working on that.

We've decided about three weeks that we needed a high water speed vehicle so that decision is made and what we'll introduce after the Christmas holidays. We're going to sit down and brief the Secretary of the Navy, brief the Secretary of Defense and after the Christmas holidays we will release what we call our request for proposal out to industry. Industry will come back and tell us. We will give them the requirements; they'll come back and tell us what the art of the possible is. So we're going to do it. We're going to have this thing headed down the road.

Last week we stood up the very first fleet joint strike fighter squadron in the world. Not just in the Marine Corps but in the world. We stood it up last week in Yuma, Arizona, on Tuesday, a week ago today. VMFA-121, the Green Knights. That program is doing really well. My focus now for my last two years in the Marine Corps besides doing the other stuff, the budgets, I'm trying to shepherd the Marine Corps through these fiscal challenges is to bring that vehicle up. That's my promise to all the in-fighters, okay? So you hold me to it because it's going to happen, alright? I told everybody that I'm going to drive into the Potomac before I give up command of the Marine Corps. It looks a little bit challenging but it may be a cardboard box but I'm going to drive something into the Potomac before I give up command of the Marine Corps, okay? Thanks.

Major, how's the Air Force today?

SPEAKER: Very well, sir. Air power. Command and Staff College, CG-1.

AUDIENCE: Hoorah.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: That's pretty weak. Do that again. Command Staff College what 81 did you say?

SPEAKER: CG-1, sir.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Oh, okay. How about one more?

AUDIENCE: Hoorah.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Pretty weak.

SPEAKER Sir, my question is you mentioned that you and the other service chiefs have a very good working relationship and that makes me feel very good about where we're going with the current budget environment that we're entering into. My question concerns this is an opportunity for the services to become more joint interoperable, more interdependent where it makes sense, how do you see the services beginning to go that way not only to save money for the nation but also to make us a more effective joint force?

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: First of all I think, thanks for the question. I actually think we're a pretty effective joint force right now and I think we've grown exponentially as a joint force and recognizing the value and the comfort of working together probably more in the last I say, more so even in the last five years than we ever have certainly before, so I feel good about where we are. Is there room to do more? I think there is. What you don't want to do is you don't joint for the sake of doing joint. In other words, we're not trying to get a check in the box where you can report to the Secretary of Defense and say look how much joint I am. What you want to do is you want to do it for the right reasons. I'll give you an example.

You asked about as we look ahead and we go through these challenging times, what are the things that we can do that would kind of facilitate that? When we sat down about two months ago, three months ago now, and convened what we call in the Marine Corps the Force Optimization Review Group, what we call -- you know everything we have is an acronym so we call it the FORG -- and the purpose of that group of about 50 or 60 really smart lieutenant colonels and colonels is to help us, internal in the Marine Corps, figure out how we can afford to do those things that I talked about earlier

to keep the Marine Corps at 182,000 and still be able to perform the mission of the Marine Corps, to be able to modernize in some areas where we absolutely have to and be able to pay our bills. How do you do that?

Some of the guidance I gave the group and actually General Mullen is a critical part of that, is look at things that the joint community has that we have that maybe they could do for us. Maybe I don't need this anymore. Maybe we're past the point I have to have this capability in the Marine Corps. Maybe there are things that I can count on the Air Force or we go in the battlefield somewhere where I can count on the Air Force to provide this or the Army to provide this. So I think this fiscal climate -- again, I think we've just stuck our toes in it. We're going to be up to our neck in it in the next probably year. It's going to drive us to mutual dependence on one another for capabilities and capacities.

So I think it's going to drive us there. I think we're actually pretty good right now. I actually feel like we're past the point of where we sit in a tank and there's a mission out there, something happens in the world and all four of the service chiefs are climbing over the table going, elbowing one another, throwing forearm shivers, trying to get it. It's me, me, me. We're past that. We actually look at one another and go, okay, you've got the capacity out there, you've got the capability. What can I do to help you? I think we're getting there. I actually feel really good about that. Probably of all the things I'm worried about being joint and becoming more joint is probably not one of them. Was that okay? Does that answer your question?

SPEAKER: Yes sir thanks.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Okay. Okay, we've probably got time for one more I think, does that sound about right? One more, okay.

SPEAKER: Good evening, sir. We've met numerous times sir. I did a commanders course, support and everything and never got a chance to get a coin from you so, I was just hoping, sir, if I ask a pretty decent question I might be lucky. Sir, my question, it has to do with Iran

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: I'm out of coins. They only brought two tonight.

SPEAKER: Alright, sir. My question is sir, on Israel.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: We need another coin.

SPEAKER: Thank you, sir. My question is about Israel, Iran and Hamas, sir. I'm going on with what's out there, that we have Iran supplying Hamas and the Palestinians with weaponry to attack Israel and, of course, we support Israel and we're probably supporting Israel as well. To what escalation does this have to go until we actually like put our foot in there and get involved?

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: You know you asked probably the hardest question on the face of the earth and regretfully I don't have time to answer it so thank you very much.

SPEAKER: Thank you sir.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: You got your coin so that's all you're going to have. Can you imagine -- You got your coin, sir, you're good.

Can you imagine being a leader of a nation, I mean being leaders of our country. I'm not only talking

about the joint chiefs now, I'm talking about our civilian leadership, the leaders of our allies and can you imagine trying to struggle with the answer to that question because there's no good answer to it. I mean there's none. First of all there's no easy answer to it. It's the real deal. I mean it's real world, it's hard, it's thorny. I can't -- I don't have an answer for you on that thing but I'd ask you to think about when the President and the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense and the National Command Authority and I'm just talking about the United States. What about our allies? What about the other countries, our friends? They're sitting there thinking the same thing. They're trying to come up with an answer so there's no easy answer to that question Sergeant and I'm absolutely not making light of that baby.

Thanks again everyone.

(END)