



Gulf Roundtable Series

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Middle East Program

- About Our Program
- Middle East Program Publications
- The Gulf

- Political Dynamics
- Governance and Economics
- Security Challenges

Gulf Roundtable Series

Gulf Analysis Papers

- The Maghreb
- Egypt, Israel, and the Levant
- Governance, Economics, and Development
- Security Challenges and U.S. Strategy
- Political and Social Trends
- Internships

Gulf Roundtable Series

*Part of the: Governance and Economics in the Gulf
Governance, Economics, and Development in the Middle East
Political and Social Trends in the Middle East
Political Dynamics in the Gulf
Security Challenges and U.S. Strategy
Security Challenges in the Gulf
The Gulf*



The Gulf Roundtable Series examines the strategic importance of social, political, and economic trends in the GCC states, Iraq, and Iran and identifies opportunities for constructive U.S. engagement.

The CSIS Middle East Program launched the **Gulf Roundtable Series** in April 2007 to examine the strategic importance of a broad range of social, political, and economic trends in the Gulf region and to identify opportunities for constructive U.S. engagement. The roundtable defines the Gulf as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran. The roundtable convenes monthly, assembling a diverse group of regional experts, policymakers, academics, and business leaders seeking to build a greater understanding of the complexities of the region. Topics for discussion include the strategic importance of Gulf energy, changing Gulf relations with Asia, human capital development, media trends, trade liberalization, and prospects for greater regional integration.

The Middle East Program also produces policy papers linked to the Gulf Roundtable topics. In particular, they highlight key trends and conclusions, indicate policy implications for the United States and Gulf states, and raise issues for further study.

The Gulf Roundtable series is made possible in part through the generous support of the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates.

Click [HERE](#) for audio and summaries of our Gulf Roundtable events.

MULTIMEDIA



Video: Gulf Roundtable with Ambassador William J.

EXPERT SPOTLIGHT



Jon B. Alterman
Senior Vice President, Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy, and Director, Middle East Program

GLOBAL TRENDS AND FORECASTING,

GLOBAL STRATEGY

EGYPT, GULF STATES, IRAN, IRAQ, ISRAEL/PALESTINE, MIDDLE EAST



Haim Malka
Deputy Director and Senior Fellow, Middle East Program

EGYPT, GULF STATES, ISRAEL/PALESTINE, MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA

[More Experts](#) →

EVENTS

Gulf Roundtable: Food, Finance, and Energy in the Gulf

MAY 6, 2014

Gulf Roundtable: Islamists Rising and Falling: A View from Saudi Arabia

APR 14, 2014

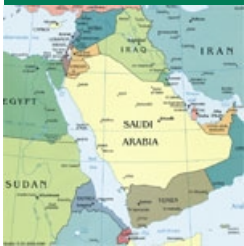
EGYPT, GULF STATES, MIDDLE EAST

[More Events](#) →

IN THE NEWS

Gulf Study Tours

Part of the: [Governance and Economics in the Gulf \(/program/governance-and-economics-gulf\)](#)
[Political Dynamics in the Gulf \(/program/political-dynamics-gulf\)](#)
[Security Challenges in the Gulf \(/program/security-challenges-gulf\)](#)



The CSIS Middle East Program leads delegations of experts to the Gulf to examine issues affecting the region and its relationship with the United States.

[\(/PROGRAM/GULF-STUDY-TOURS\)](#)

2012

The CSIS Middle East Program led a delegation of seven American security experts from June 3-12, 2012 to the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait to meet with officials from the United States and host governments. Topics for discussion included current political and economic trends in the UAE and Kuwait, Gulf leaders' economic, military, and security strategies and priorities, and bilateral cooperation with the United States on economic and security issues.

2011

The CSIS Middle East Program led a delegation of eight American experts from think tanks, the media, and government from April 2-9, 2011 to the United Arab Emirates. The group attended meetings with senior government and non-government officials from the United States and host governments to discuss the UAE's foreign policy and security, economic diversification initiatives, military capabilities and priorities, youth empowerment projects, and U.S.-UAE bilateral relations, among other topics.

2010

The CSIS Middle East Program led a delegation of nine American security experts from May 2-11, 2010 to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to meet with senior government officials and non-government figures to assess the threats and challenges confronting the Gulf and the future of bilateral relations with the United States. The discussions centered on strategies for dealing with a nuclear-ambitious Iran and a fledgling Israeli-Palestinian peace process, state-led counterterrorism efforts, and the fall-out from the global financial crisis.

2009

The CSIS Middle East Program led a delegation of nine American experts from March 13-19, 2009 to the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait to meet with a wide array of

EXPERT SPOTLIGHT



[Jon B. Alterman](#)

[\(/expert/jon-b-alterman\)](#)

[\(/expert/jon-b-alterman\)](#)
[Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy and Director, Middle East Program \(/expert/jon-b-alterman\)](#)

[GLOBAL TRENDS AND FORECASTING \(/CATEGORY/TOPICS/GLOBAL-TRENDS-AND-FORECASTING\)](#), [GLOBAL STRATEGY \(/CATEGORY/TOPICS/GLOBAL-TRENDS-AND-FORECASTING/GLOBAL-STRATEGY\)](#)

[EGYPT \(/REGION/EGYPT\)](#), [GULF STATES \(/REGION/GULF-STATES\)](#), [IRAN \(/REGION/IRAN\)](#), [IRAQ \(/REGION/IRAQ\)](#), [ISRAEL/PALESTINE \(/REGION/ISRAEL-PALESTINE\)](#), [MIDDLE EAST \(/REGION/MIDDLE-EAST\)](#)

MEDIA REQUESTS

Contact [H. Andrew Schwartz](#)
aschwartz@csis.org
[\(/email/10291/field_contact_email\)](#)
 (202) 775-3242

government officials, businesspeople, academics, and security experts. Topics for discussion included the future of bilateral relations with the United States, trends and developments in the energy sector, higher education, and regional security issues.

2007

The CSIS Middle East Program led a delegation of thirteen Americans from various think tanks, corporations, and universities from November 5-12, 2007 to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The goal of the trip was to facilitate an exchange of ideas between the American participants and their Gulf counterparts. The discussions centered on U.S.-Gulf relations, economic and investment strategies, journalism, and state-led efforts to counter terrorism and other security threats.

CSIS STATEMENT TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sept. 2 2014

CSIS is legally prohibited from lobbying and we don't lobby for foreign governments or anyone else. Every project we work on with funding from foreign governments or otherwise is for a project we maintain 100 per cent editorial control over. Every memo of understanding (what you have referred to as a "contract") contains this language:

CSIS is an independent and bipartisan research institution. As such, and as in the case of all project-related grants at CSIS, CSIS will retain total discretion regarding the use of funds, subject only to our commitment to use these funds for the specific use of supporting the project laid out in the enclosed proposal. There can be no conditions or limitations on its independence in research, findings, conclusions, or resulting publications. CSIS retains total discretion and final decision making authority regarding program and project research topics, speakers, and participants in activities, and on the contents of reports. Where appropriate, CSIS will accept suggestions from foreign entities regarding these issues. CSIS shall not appear before any U.S. government official specifically to make a case on behalf of a foreign entity's interests or position relating to policy matters, administration of law, or issues of public interest, nor shall CSIS function directly or indirectly as a foreign entity's representative or agent to the public at large. CSIS will not take, and XXX agrees not to request CSIS to take, any action which might jeopardize CSIS's status as a bona fide educational institution as defined in 22 U.S.C. §613 (e). Any travel or activities involving members of Congress or their staffs will be done in full compliance with relevant law and regulations, as determined by CSIS.

For Six Month Period Ending 7/31/09
(Insert date)

I - REGISTRANT

1. (a) Name of Registrant (b) Registration No.
U.S. - Emirates Alliance, LLC 5785

(c) Business Address(es) of Registrant
2300 N Street, NW
Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20037

2. Has there been a change in the information previously furnished in connection with the following:

- (a) If an individual:
 - (1) Residence address(es) Yes No
 - (2) Citizenship Yes No
 - (3) Occupation Yes No
- (b) If an organization:
 - (1) Name Yes No
 - (2) Ownership or control Yes No
 - (3) Branch offices Yes No
- (c) Explain fully all changes, if any, indicated in items (a) and (b) above.

CRM/ISS/REGISTRATION UNIT
2009 AUG 27 PM 12: 31

IF THE REGISTRANT IS AN INDIVIDUAL, OMIT RESPONSE TO ITEMS 3, 4 AND 5(a).

3. If you have previously filed Exhibit C¹, state whether any changes therein have occurred during this 6 month reporting period.

Yes No

If yes, have you filed an amendment to the Exhibit C? Yes No

If no, please attach the required amendment.

1 The Exhibit C, for which no printed form is provided, consists of a true copy of the charter, articles of incorporation, association, and by laws of a registrant that is an organization. (A waiver of the requirement to file an Exhibit C may be obtained for good cause upon written application to the Assistant Attorney General, National Security Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20530.)

Name of Foreign Principal
Executive Affairs Authority of the Government of Abu Dhabi

Registration # 5785
2-1-09 to 7-31-09
US-Emirates Alliance LLC

Short Form Registrant
Christopher Dorval

2009

Date	Type of Contact	Name	Position	Subject Matter
7/16,23	M,Ng	D.Sebright-Dir.	US-UAE Business Council	US-UAE relations/Possible trip by Building Museum group

2008

5/14,7/20	T,Ng	T.Schaefer-Director,	Southeast Asia- CSIS	US-UAE relations issues
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Key: T=Telephone M=meeting NG=NGO

2009 AUG 27 PM 12:33
CRM/ISS/REGISTRATION UNIT

U.S. Emirates Alliance, LLC

Transaction Report

February - July, 2009

Date	e	Name	Memo/Description	Account	Split	Amount
9 Client Reimbursable Expenses						
04/21/2009	Bill	CSIS	In support of the Gulf Study Tour	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	31,290.58
05/04/2009	Bill	Covington & Burling	Legal Services	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	7,663.00
03/23/2009	Bill	Grafton Strategies, LLC	Expenses - CSIS	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	215,059.50
03/23/2009	Bill	Grafton Strategies, LLC	Expenses Oct 2008	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	25,891.63
05/19/2009	Bill	Grafton Strategies, LLC	Expenses - CSIS	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	9,940.50
06/25/2009	Bill	Grafton Strategies, LLC	Out-of-Pocket Expenses	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	3,873.19
06/25/2009	Bill	Grafton Strategies, LLC	Expenses Feb 2009	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	16,479.07
03/24/2009	Bill	J&D Enterprises, LLC	Services	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	25,000.00
05/19/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Expenses	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	6,879.34
07/15/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Expenses	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	7,072.64
04/01/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Expenses - CSIS Trip	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	11,444.82
02/11/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Expenses - September	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	65,977.71
03/30/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	Reimbursement	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	47,465.57
06/22/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Services	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	115,275.00
06/22/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Services	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	161,287.50
05/18/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Services	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	160,625.00
03/23/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Services - December	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	152,012.50
03/23/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Services - November	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	148,231.25
03/23/2009	Bill	The Harbour Group, LLC	HG Services - October	9 Client Reimbursable Expenses	Accounts Payable	177,581.25
Total for 9 Client Reimbursable Expenses						1,389,060.06
TOTAL						
Monday, Aug 10, 2009 04:25:49 PM GMT-4 - Cash Basis						

Name of Foreign Principal
Executive Affairs Authority of the Government of Abu Dhabi

Registration # 5785
2-1-09 to 7-31-09
US-Emirates Alliance LLC

Short Form Registrant
Richard Mintz (13)

2009

Date	Type of Contact	Name	Position	Subject Matter
2/13	M,Me	R.Lardner-Reporter, Assoc.Press		US-UAE 123 Agreement
2/13	T,Ng	J.Alterman-Dir. Mid-East, CSIS		CSIS study group visit to UAE
2/15	E,Ng	M.Salberg-VP Anti-Defermentation League		Israeli tennis player visa issue
2/16	E,Ng	J.Colman-VP, AIPAC		Israeli tennis player visa issue
2/16	T,Gv	M.Epstein-Treas.Attache, US Embassy Abu Dhabi		Iran sancitions issue
3/13	M,Ng	M.Brilliant-VP Int'l, US Chamber of Commerce		US-UAE Business Council
3/10-12	T,E,Ng	M.Verveer-President Vital Voices		UAE Sponsorship of annual event
3/11	E,Ng	W.Chamberlain-Pres. Mid-East Institute		Support of UAE programs
3/10	T,E,	D.Sebright-Pres. US-UAE Business Council		Council organization & chamber relationship
3/15-17	M,Ng	J.Alterman, et al—Dir.Mid-East, CSIS		Study tour of UAE
3/18	M,Gv	R.Olson-Ambassador to UAE		Escorting CSIS delegation to UAE
3/23	M,Me	J.Solomon-Reporter & N.Deogun, Wall Street Journal-Mgr.Ed.		US-UAE relations
3/23,30	T,Ng	D.Sebright-Pres. US-UAE Business Council		123 Agreement
3/26	M,Ng	P. King Sams-Exec. VP, Children's National Medical Center		UAE gift
3/26	M,Ng	M.Salberg & J.Rodeman – VP's ADL		ADL Gulf trip
3/30	M,Ng	J.Alterman-Dir. Mid-East, CSIS		Study tour follow up
4/6	M,Ng	US-UAE Business Council, et al, with UAE foreign minister		US-UAE relations
4/8	M,Me	US reporters et al with UAE Foreign Min & Ambassador		US-UAE relations
4/20	E,Ng	W.Chambelain-Pres. MEI		MEI Gulf program
4/21	M,Me	J.Goldberg-Reporter, Atlantic Monthly		Gulf security issues
4/21	M,Ng	M.Salzberg-VP, ADL		ADL trip to UAE and Gulf
4/21	T,Ng	J.Alterman-Dir. Mid-East CSIS		CSIS Spring Gulf program
4/22	E,Gv	F.Baldassaro-Sr.Advisor, Office of Business & Public Liaison,		US Treas US-UAE relations
4/23	T,Me	R.Lardner-Reporter, Assoc. Press		Story on 123 Nuclear Agreement
4/23	T,Me	J.Solomon-Reporter WSJ		Follow up story on 123 Agreement
4/23,27	T,Ng	D.Sebright-Pres.US-UAE Business Council		Update on 123 Agreement
4/23	E,Ng	J.Alterman-Dir Mid-Easr CSIS		Visit of Mohammed bin Zayed
4/23	T,Ng	J.Rosenman-ADL		Visit to UAE
4/24	E,Ng	Pan King Sams-Exec VP, Childrens' Nat. Med Center		UAE partnership
4/24	T,A	J.Taylor-NYU Communications Mgr.		Sheik Issa issue
4/29	T,Gv	A.Steinfeld-Dir.Office of Arabian Peninsular Affairs,NEA		123 Nuclear Agreement

Name of Foreign Principal
Executive Affairs Authority of the Government of Abu Dhabi

Registration # 5785
2-1-09 to 7-31-09
US-Emirates Alliance LLC

Short Form Registrant
Richard Mintz (14)

2009 Date	Type of Contact	Name	Position	Subject Matter
4/29	T,Me	I.Lakhshanam-Reporter	Bloomberg News	123 Nuclear Agreement
5/1	T,E,Me	P.Semler-Bureau Chief,	Merger Market Magazine	Suggest follow up with Riley/ENEC, Sebright/Bus Council
5/18	M,Ng	G.Kemp-Exec.Dir.,	Nixon Center, et al	US-UAE relations
5/19	T,Cp	C.Cox-Mgr. Partner,	OC Global Partners	123 Nuclear Agreement
6/2	E,Gv	D.Nagy-Press Sect.,	Rep. Walter Minnick	123 Nuclear Agreement
6/9	M,Ng	J.Altlerman-Dir	Mid-East CSIS	Gulf Roundtable Series
6/9	T,Ng	K.Seelye-Communications Dir.	Mideast Inst.	UAE program support
6/9	T,Cp	I.Davis-VP	Occidental Petroleum	123 Nuclear Agreement & LA trip
6/10	T,Ng	D.Sebright-Dir.	US-UAE Business Council	123 Nuclear Agreement
6/24	L,Gv	R.Emanuel-COS	White House	POTUS invite to Global Foundries groundbreaking
6/24	T,Ng	D.Sebright-Dir.	US-UAE Business Council	Geithner visit to UAE
6/24	T,Gv	M.Epstein-Attache to	US Embassy Abu Dhabi	Geithner visit to UAE
6/24	T,Ng	J.Alterman-Dir.	Mideast CSIS	July Gulf Roundtable event
6/25	M,Ng	W.Chambelain-Pres.	Mideast Institute	UAE roll in annual conference
7/9	T,Gv	M.Epstein-Attache to	US Embassy Abu Dhabi	Treasury Sect visit to AD
7/13	M,Ng	A.Foxman-Pres.	of ADL	Mideast peace issues
7/13	T,E,Gv	R.Bloom-Special Advisor,	US Treasury	Arrange meeting with ATIC
7/13	T,Ng	W.Chamberlain-Preident	MEI	Arrangements for MEI annual meeting
7/13	T,Cp	I.Barba-Special Asst to	CEO Occidental Petroleum	Arrange meeting with UAE Ambassador
7/13	T,Ng	D.Sebright-Dir.	US-UAE Business Council	Arrange meeting with ATIC

Key: T=Phone, M=Meeting, E=E-Mail, L=Letter, Me=Media, Ng=NGO, Cp=Company, Gv=Govt

OMB NO. 1124-0002; Expires February 28, 2014

U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Supplemental Statement
Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended

For Six Month Period Ending 3/31/2013
(Insert date)

I - REGISTRANT

1. (a) Name of Registrant (b) Registration No.

The Harbour Group, LLC 5478

(c) Business Address(es) of Registrant

2300 N Street NW
Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20037

2. Has there been a change in the information previously furnished in connection with the following?

(a) If an individual:

- (1) Residence address(es) Yes No
- (2) Citizenship Yes No
- (3) Occupation Yes No

(b) If an organization:

- (1) Name Yes No
- (2) Ownership or control Yes No
- (3) Branch offices Yes No

(c) Explain fully all changes, if any, indicated in Items (a) and (b) above.

IF THE REGISTRANT IS AN INDIVIDUAL, OMIT RESPONSE TO ITEMS 3, 4, AND 5(a).

3. If you have previously filed Exhibit C¹, state whether any changes therein have occurred during this 6 month reporting period.

Yes No

If yes, have you filed an amendment to the Exhibit C? Yes No

If no, please attach the required amendment.

¹ The Exhibit C, for which no printed form is provided, consists of a true copy of the charter, articles of incorporation, association, and by laws of a registrant that is an organization. (A waiver of the requirement to file an Exhibit C may be obtained for good cause upon written application to the Assistant Attorney General, National Security Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20530.)

Formerly CRM-154

FORM NSD-2
Revised 03/11

Item 11 – ACTIVITIES

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

Registrant conducted daily monitoring of the US media outlets for news related to the United Arab Emirates. Registrant produced daily compendium of relevant news clips for foreign principal. In addition registrant provided public affairs and communications counsel to help create a public diplomacy program. Registrant scheduled meetings and briefing for UAE Embassy staff with business people, academics, public policy groups and the media.

Embassy of Libya

Registrant activities included efforts to influence US policy with respect to trade, bilateral relations, geopolitical issues, business and investment issues. These efforts included meeting with government policy makers and opinion leaders outreach to media, think tanks, business leaders, experts, academia, etc. Aims were to be achieved through development and dissemination of informational materials, press releases, the internet, email, pamphlets, letters websites, meetings, student exchanges, visits, etc.

The Harbour Group**FARA Filing - ITEM 14A****Period 10/1/2012 - 3/31/2013**

Item 14A	From Whom	Purpose	Amount
10/5/2012	Libyan Embassy	Public Relations Services	15,000.00
10/15/2012	UAE Embassy	Public Relations Services	298,042.68
11/2/2012	Libyan Embassy	Public Relations Services	15,000.00
11/19/2012	Libyan Embassy	Public Relations Services	15,000.00
11/20/2012	UAE Embassy	Public Relations Services	307,166.77
12/13/2012	UAE Embassy	Public Relations Services	366,244.57
1/15/2013	Libyan Embassy	Public Relations Services	15,000.00
1/17/2013	UAE Embassy	Public Relations Services	659,270.00
2/11/2013	EAA	Public Relations Services	20,304.28
2/26/2013	UAE Embassy	Public Relations Services	84,121.25
3/14/2013	Libyan Embassy	Public Relations Services	15,000.00
3/14/2013	UAE Embassy	Public Relations Services	350,272.00
3/22/2013	Libyan Embassy	Public Relations Services	15,000.00
			<u>2,175,421.55</u>

THE HARBOUR GROUP LLC

Matthew Triaca – Registration #5478

UAE FARA contacts

1 Oct 2012 – 31 March 2012

Date	Organization	Contact	Topic	Type
10/15/12	Aspen Institute	Ana Navarro-Ovit, Director	Discuss programming options	call
10/30/12	World Affairs Council of DC	Heidi Shoup, President John Ward, Board Member	Discuss Global Education Gala	meeting
11/2/12	World Affairs Council of DC	Tony Foster, Board Member	Discuss Global Education Gala	meeting
11/13/12	Aspen Institute	Ana Navarro-Ovit, Director	Discuss possible Embassy support	call
11/14/12	US-UAE Business Council	Danny Sebright, President	Attend luncheon with Etihad Airways	meeting
11/28/2012	US-UAE Business Council	Danny Sebright, President	Discuss upcoming programs	call
11/28/2012	World Affairs Council of DC	Heidi Shoup, President	Discuss Global Education Gala	meeting
12/3/2012	Aspen Institute	Ana Navarro-Ovit, Director	Discuss programming options	call
12/6/2012	Center for Strategic and International Studies	Haim Malka, Deputy Director	Discuss Gulf Roundtable programming	call
1/4/2013	Washington Post	Rajiv Chandreskaran, Associate Editor	Discuss UAE philanthropy in US	call

1/10/2013	Washington Post	Rajiv Chandreskaran, Associate Editor	Discuss UAE philanthropy in US w/ Ambassador	meeting
1/11/2013	Pritzker Traubert Family Foundation	Kate McAdams, Executive Director	Discuss UAE Chicago soccer field	call
1/25/2013	Washington Post	Rajiv Chandreskaran, Associate Editor	Discuss UAE philanthropy in US	call
2/6/2013	Washington Institute for Near East Policy	Simon Henderson, Director Gulf Energy Program	Discuss UAE delegation study tour	call
2/7/2013	Meridian International Center	Greg Houston, Senior Vice President	Discuss possible programming support	meeting
2/11/2013; 2/15/2013	Washington Post	Rajiv Chandreskaran, Associate Editor	Discuss UAE philanthropy in US	Call, emails
2/15/2013	World Affairs Council of Washington DC	Tony Cully-Foster	Discuss Ambassador award at Global Education Gala	call
2/25/2013	Wilson Center	Rangita de Silva de Alwis, Director Global Women's Leadership Initiative	Discuss possible programming	meeting
3/11/2013	Fulbright Scholarship Board	Tom Healy, Chairman	Discuss program and UAE students	meeting
3/20/2013	Center for Strategic and International Studies	Jon Alterman, Director Middle East Program	Discuss UAE study tour	call

GULF ANALYSIS PAPER



SUMMARY

The Gulf has become a flashpoint for cyber conflict. Cyberspace has become an arena for covert struggle, with the United States, Israel and other nations on one side, and Iran and Russia on the other. Iran has far outpaced the GCC states in developing its cyber capabilities, both for monitoring internal dissent and deploying hackers to disrupt or attack foreign targets. Several such attacks over the past two years were likely either directed or permitted by Iranian state authorities. Even if Iran holds back from offensive actions as nuclear talks progress, the growth in Iranian capabilities remains a potential security threat for other Gulf states. The GCC countries have begun to develop their defensive capabilities, but they will need to expand their defenses and collaborate more effectively to deter future threats. ■

Cybersecurity and Stability in the Gulf

By James Andrew Lewis¹

.....
 “The Iranian attack on the Saudis was a real wake-up call in the region.”

Unnamed senior U.S. official, *New York Times*, June 9, 2013

Cyberattack is a new tool of national power. It provides a means of coercion, influence, and warfare. The use of cyber techniques as intelligence tools dates back to the 1980s; cyberattack by militaries dates back to the 1990s.² Using cyber tools and techniques as an instrument of national power is the norm in the Gulf. The Gulf has become a flashpoint for cyber conflict given the high level of activity and the chance for miscalculation and escalation into conventional conflict.

The Gulf is unique in that the use of cyber techniques by governments for covert action is much more prevalent than in any region other than the Korean peninsula. The primary source of tension among Gulf states is the development by Iran of cyberattack capabilities that it has used and appears willing to use again. There is also a growing concern about Israeli cyber capabilities. This is an outgrowth of the larger disputes between Iran and Gulf Arab nations. Given the Gulf’s strategic and economic significance, cyber attacks that damage oil production or escalate into physical conflict could have global consequences. The use of cyber tools and the expansion of cyber capabilities could change the balance of military power among regional states and undermine Gulf stability, particularly if the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states do not expand their defenses in response to this new threat and find ways to better cooperate.

Three key incidents have focused the attention of Gulf states on cybersecurity. The first was the effect of social media and the Internet in the Arab uprisings of 2011 and the 2009 Iranian “Green Revolution.” The Internet can amplify politi-

GULF ANALYSIS PAPERS

In conjunction with its Gulf Roundtable series, the CSIS Middle East Program issues periodic policy papers addressing key economic and security issues in the Gulf region. Launched in April 2007, the Gulf Roundtable series convenes monthly and assembles a diverse group of regional experts, policymakers, academics, and business leaders seeking to build a greater understanding of the complexities of the region and identify opportunities for constructive U.S. engagement. Topics for discussion include the role of Islamist movements in politics, the war on terror, democratization and the limits of civil society, the strategic importance of Gulf energy, media trends, trade liberalization, and prospects for regional integration. The roundtable defines the Gulf as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran and is made possible in part through the generous support of the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates. ■

cal forces in ways that are difficult to predict or control. The second was the Stuxnet attacks launched against Iranian nuclear facilities in 2010. Stuxnet led to significant changes in Iranian policy, but it was not unique. Researchers around the world discovered significant malware programs—Stars, Duqu, Flame, Shamoon—used for espionage or attack against Gulf targets.³ Finally, the 2012 attacks on Saudi Aramco and the Qatari firm RasGas, generally attributed to Iran, put most Gulf countries on notice of the new kind of risk they faced.

In response to increased Iranian capabilities, the United States has begun to work with partner nations in the Gulf to improve their cyber defense capabilities. But almost all current “cyber powers” play some role in the Gulf. Israel has a close and active interest in Iran, and Israeli sources report that Iran routinely probes Israel’s networks for vulnerabilities. Russia has worked with Iran in ways we do not fully understand and has sought to work with GCC states as well. There are reports that North Korea and Iran may be collaborating in developing cyberattack tools.

The use of cyber techniques by governments in the Gulf for covert action is much more prevalent than in any region other than the Korean peninsula.

Nations’ larger goals and interests determine how they use cyber techniques, guided by their strategies, experience, institutions, and tolerance for risk. It is not yet clear if, over time, the ability to acquire and employ cyber techniques will encourage states to be more assertive or confrontational. Access to the new cyber tools does not yet seem to have led countries to fundamentally change their policy objectives; intent better explains activity in cyberspace than does capability when it comes to conflict.

We can assess the relative strength of different Gulf states’ cyber capabilities by looking at factors that predict those capabilities. These include institutions, strategies, and in-

vestments for cyber activities; the integration of cyber activities into existing military, intelligence, and diplomatic strategies; and the level of political attention given to cyber capabilities by national leaders, military commanders, or the heads of other ministries. Commitments and partnerships with other nations for cyber activities also predict relative strength.

IRAN’S CYBER CAPABILITIES

Iran is far in the lead over the GCC states. Iran’s trajectory in developing cyber capabilities is a good example of how a medium-sized government willing to commit a relatively small amount of resources can build cyber power. Iran sees cyberattack as another tool of its broader asymmetric warfare strategy for use against more powerful opponents.⁴

Iran’s own experiences have given it a keen appreciation for the utility of cyber techniques as instruments of national power and tools for coercion and force. Iran’s concern over cyber threats originated with its need to repress dissent, and its development of cyber power is a reaction to the vulnerabilities created by the Internet. During the 2009 “Green Revolution,” Iranian security forces expanded their ability to monitor and disrupt online dissent as part of a broader crackdown on opposition activities. Iran’s leaders fear the power of networks to unleash a more widespread popular uprising in Iran like those which toppled regimes in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011. Since then, Iranian security forces have expanded their ability to monitor and disrupt online dissent into an ability to use cyber techniques against other states, the most notorious example being the 2011 hack of the Netherlands Internet company DigiNotar, which allowed Iran to surreptitiously read Iranian dissidents’ emails.⁵

Repeated foreign intrusions led to high-level attention to cybersecurity and the creation of a sophisticated organizational structure to manage cyber conflict. In 2011 Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei authorized the establishment of a new “Supreme Council of Cyberspace” to coordinate efforts for both offense and defense. Council members include senior officials from the security and intelligence services and the ministers of culture and communications. Iran has a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy that includes the creation of what it calls a “national information network” that could disconnect most of Iran from the global Internet. Several prominent Iranian securi-

Iran's concern over cyber threats originated with its need to repress dissent, and its development of cyber power is a reaction to the vulnerabilities created by the Internet.

ty officials have commented publicly on Iran's capabilities and the importance of cyberwarfare more broadly. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Deputy Commander Abdollah Araghi said, "We have equipped ourselves with new tools since cyberwar in the cyberspace is more dangerous than physical war, and Iranian officials, especially the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution have all cited this point, therefore we are prepared for soft and physical wars."⁶ Interior Minister Mostafa Najjar has also said that "satellites and Facebook are the electronic means of a 'soft war' by the West to cause the Iranian family's collapse."⁷

Three Iranian military organizations have operational cyber roles: the IRGC, the Basij, and Iran's Passive Defense Organization. Iran held its first national cyber defense exercise in late October 2012. The Basij, a civilian paramilitary organization controlled by the IRGC, manages the Iranian "Cyber Army," which Basij leaders say has 120,000 volunteer hackers. The number is certainly an exaggeration, but the Basij uses its already close connections with universities and religious schools to recruit a proxy hacker force.

The Cyber Army is the likely source of a recent series of incidents aimed at Gulf energy companies, American banks, and Israel. The most important involved a major disruption involving the destruction of data on computers used by Saudi Aramco and RasGas. U.S. intelligence sources indicate that Iran was responsible for the attacks. The trigger for these incidents was most likely a cyberattack on Iran's major oil terminal at Kharg Island. Iran appears to have cleverly modified cybercrime malware for the attack. All the data on 30,000 Aramco computers was erased, and the malware may have infected (though it did not damage) refinery control systems. The Aramco incident, while not as sophisticated as Stuxnet, was second only to Stuxnet as a disruptive

cyberattack and showed the progress of Iranian capabilities.

At the same time that the Aramco incident took place, there were massive "denial of service" attacks against U.S. banks. The likely trigger for the attacks on U.S. banks, which continue to this day, was the imposition of new sanctions by the U.S. Congress on Iran.⁸ Denial of service is more like an online demonstration or protest than an attack; the target network is flooded with spurious traffic that causes it to fail, but the perpetrator does not gain access to the target network. The Iranian efforts follow the Russian pattern of using proxy hackers for political coercion, as when Russian hackers used denial of service attacks against Estonia in 2007. The harassment of American banks, however, was many times larger than the attacks on Estonia and at first overwhelmed the banks' ability to respond. Attacks of this size require computing resources that, in a country where the Internet is tightly controlled, indicate government approval, if not direction, was involved. There are some reports that Iran has turned to outside help in developing malware, either to Russian cyber criminals (who are among the best in the world) or, paralleling its proliferation activities, to North Korea.

It is too early to tell if progress in negotiations between Iran and Western countries on its nuclear program decreases the risk of a cyber incident. Iran is likely to be on its best behavior during the negotiations to avoid damaging any progress toward sanctions relief (although it is possible that Iranian opponents to the negotiations could use a cyber incident in an effort to derail the talks). Even if there is progress, the growth in Iranian capabilities remains a potential security threat for GCC states.

CYBER CAPABILITIES AMONG THE GCC STATES

The combination of the attacks on Aramco and the banks is best seen as a test by Iran of its new capabilities and of the U.S. and GCC reactions to them. In response to Iran's growing capabilities and cyber activism, Gulf nations have begun to increase their defensive capabilities. A series of politically motivated incidents targeting Gulf media outlets, attributed to the Syrian Electronic Army and to the hacker group Anonymous (although this could be anyone), have increased Gulf states' concerns. The United

The combination of the attacks on Aramco and the banks is best seen as a test by Iran of its new capabilities and of the U.S. and GCC reactions to them.

Arab Emirates (UAE) has had a cyber capability for some time, largely provided by outside contractors, but in 2012 it introduced cybercrime legislation and established a new national authority for cybersecurity, the National Electronic Security Authority (NESA). NESA is an independent agency linked to the UAE Supreme National Security Council, and it was created through a special federal decree issued by the UAE's president. NESA's mandate is to defend against attacks on military and critical infrastructure and oversee cybersecurity across all government agencies.

The cybersecurity concerns of GCC states mirror their broader strategic objectives: preserving domestic political control, containing Iranian ambitions (with the United States as a counterbalance), and maintaining an uneasy balance between cooperation and competition with their neighbors. The United States has encouraged and assisted GCC states in improving their cyber defenses. This includes some direct assistance (in the form of advice and technology) and through the services of U.S. contractors. Qatar began its own cybersecurity initiative in February 2013, with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.⁹ Kuwait reportedly entered into a \$1 billion program on physical security and cybersecurity with the United Kingdom.¹⁰ Bahrain, after experiencing annoyance attacks attributed to Anonymous, is paying greater attention to cybersecurity, working with Western contractors; whether this will translate into tangible improvements remains to be seen. Bahrain also arrested hackers from the "February 14 Revolution Youth Coalition" and accused them of having ties to Iran, reflecting the expanded use of cybersecurity to control political dissent across the region.¹¹

There are also efforts to strengthen the GCC's cooperation in cybersecurity. These have not yet produced tangible results, but if the GCC were to become a hub for sharing threat and mitigation information among its mem-

bers, it would significantly improve cyber defenses. Gulf countries have something of an advantage in developing cyber defenses given the high degree of control already exercised by governments over national telecommunications companies. Cooperating with the United States and others in the face of Iranian belligerence and committing the resources to invest in cybersecurity efforts would enable Gulf countries to build on the advantage of being well-resourced and exercising a high degree of control over their national telecommunications networks.

EXTERNAL ACTORS

The Internet eliminates distance and provides a new way for outside nations to intervene in the Gulf region. The primary focus has been intelligence collection, but nations have also used cyber techniques for political influence and for covert action. Iran is a hard target for intelligence collection. Western nations, with the United States foremost among them, have been quick to add cyber capabilities to the intelligence collection assets they already deploy to monitor Iran. U.S. interests are aimed at slowing Iran's nuclear program and improving the cyber defenses of friendly nations in order to reduce risks to regional stability.

Media accounts ascribe various covert actions against Iranian targets to the United States (the most famous being Stuxnet, identified in the press as part of a larger covert cyber operation named "Olympic Games"). Israel has been the target of sustained efforts by Iran to hack into and disrupt Israeli networks, and while Iran has had only limited success, Israel has itself not been shy about using its advanced cyber capabilities for purposes of espionage and, perhaps, attack. China does not seem to have played a major role in the Gulf (there is no public evidence of support for Iran from China for malicious cyber activity), although given the pattern of China's activities in the rest of the world, it is reasonable to speculate that it has engaged in espionage against Gulf energy companies to gather commercially valuable information.

Russia's calculations may be somewhat different, as the activity in the Gulf appears to have served as a vehicle for demonstrating larger Russian concerns about the Internet. Russia, for example, supported the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) when it hired a Russian firm with links to the Federal Security Service (FSB) to in-

investigate cybersecurity problems in the Gulf. This ITU activity was unprecedented. It could simply be coincidence that these efforts act to reinforce other Russian efforts to place the ITU at the center of cybersecurity—putting the Internet, like global telephone communications, under its purview. Revelations about Flame and Stuxnet served, perhaps fortuitously, the larger Russian political agenda on Internet governance, which seeks to establish tighter political control over uses of the Internet and to undercut U.S. “hegemony.” Gulf states are sympathetic to Russian views on controlling content and supported Russian Internet governance ideas at the World Conference on International Telecommunications held in Dubai in December 2012. Cybersecurity provides a low-cost means for Russia to play a role in the Gulf.

THE FUTURE OF CYBERSECURITY IN THE GULF

Cyberspace has become an arena for covert struggle, with the United States, Israel and the GCC on one side, and Iran and Russia on the other. Iran’s nuclear program is a magnet for cyber espionage, and Iran itself has discovered the value of cyberattack. This covert struggle spills over into Iran’s regional neighbors. Iran and external actors like the United States, Israel, and Russia will continue to use cyber techniques for covert activities to achieve national goals. In the Gulf as in the rest of the world, cyberattack provides a new tool for nations to use in existing disputes.

The variables that affect the likelihood of future cyberattack are the state of relations between Iran, its neighbors, and important external actors; the perceived likelihood of attribution; and the quality of Gulf nations’ cyber defenses. With the global spotlight on the Gulf and Iran, the risk of a major cyberattack in the Gulf may actually be reduced (although by how much we cannot say—certainly not enough that GCC states can afford not to take their defenses seriously). Part of Iran’s calculation in using cyber tools is the probability of detection, attribution and retribution (political or military, covert or overt). Since the likelihood of attribution has increased—and it would be beneficial to ensure Iranian awareness of this—Iran may be less interested in using cyberattacks. This assumes, of course, that the Iranians believe they will be detected, that they care about the foreign reaction, and that they will conclude that the risks of cyberattacks outweigh the benefits.

Collective defense among Gulf states remains problematic, as it does in other security areas. The United States can play a brokering role. States reluctant to cooperate directly with each other can use bilateral cooperation with the United States in cybersecurity as an indirect mechanism for coordination. This is not an ideal situation, but it is better than uncoordinated individual efforts.

If the Gulf did not face larger security problems, cybersecurity would be a much smaller issue, perhaps limited to financial crime and commercial espionage against oil companies. As it is, with the increased attention to cybersecurity and the increased awareness of Iranian activities (and Israeli capabilities), all sides in the cyber contest are now wary and increasingly prepared. At the moment, Iran leads the Gulf region when it comes to cyber capabilities, although it faces powerful external antagonists. To raise the costs for Iran of using cyber weapons, the GCC states will need to dramatically strengthen their own cyber capabilities and expand their existing security partnerships to address cybersecurity. A failure to do so will raise the risk of cyberattacks that could trigger wider regional conflict. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Andrew Lewis is a senior fellow and director of the Strategic Technologies Program at CSIS, where he writes on technology, security, and the international economy. Before joining CSIS, he worked at the Departments of State and Commerce as a Foreign Service officer and as a member of the Senior Executive Service. His government experience includes work on a range of politico-military and intelligence issues. He was the rapporteur for both the 2010 and 2013 UN Group of Government Experts on Information Security. Lewis has authored numerous publications since coming to CSIS, publishing a series of reports and essays exploring the relationship between technology and national power. He is an internationally recognized expert on technology and strategy whose work includes the report Securing Cyberspace for the 44th Presidency (CSIS, 2008). Lewis led a long-running track II dialogue on cybersecurity with China. His remarks appear frequently in the media, and he has testified numerous times before Congress. His current research examines international security and governance in cyberspace and the effect of the Internet on politics. Lewis received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Eneken Tikk-Ringas for her very helpful comments.

2. Clifford Stoll's *The Cuckoo's Egg: Tracking a Spy through the Maze of Computer Espionage* (New York: Doubleday, 1989) details Soviet cyber espionage in the 1980s. U.S. officials have described the use of primitive cyber attacks against Serbia in the 1990s.

3. Stars is a virus Iran claims to have discovered attacking its networks in 2011. Duqu is an espionage program that collects information from infected computers. Mahdi, designed for remote listening and control, affected networks in Iran and four other Middle Eastern countries in 2012. Shamoos wiped data from 30,000 computers belonging to Saudi Aramco in 2012. Flame can capture a broad array of information and has affected computers in Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Sudan, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.

4. The motives and actors in the murder of a senior IRGC official remain unclear; the IRGC itself has said it was not an "assassination" and the investigation of the incident continues. "Iran Denies Cyber War Commander Mojtaba Ahmadi was Assassinated," *IB Times UK*, October 3, 2013, <http://iranian.com/posts/view/post/21922>.

5. "Fake DigiNotar web certificate risk to Iranians," BBC, September 5, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-14789763>.

6. Ahmad Rezaie, "General Araghi: Iran is Ready For Any Hard and Soft Wars," *Kabir News*, September 25, 2012, <http://kabirnews.com/general-araghi-irgc-is-ready-for-any-hard-and-soft-wars/3287/>.

7. "Iran government develops 'National Internet' to combat international Internet's impact," Reporters Without Borders, August 3, 2011, <http://en.rsf.org/iran-government-develops-national-03-08-2011,40738.html>.

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9. Joseph Varghese, "Ministry planning cyber security system for Qatar," *Gulf Times*, February 12, 2013, <http://www.gulf-times.com/qatar/178/details/341898/ministry-planning-cyber-security-system-for-qatar>.

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11. "Bahrain arrests 'Iran-linked' cyber group," *Al Jazeera*, June 13, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/06/201361393933204365.html>.

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Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Gulf Roundtable with CJCS General Martin Dempsey

**Introduction by:
John Hamre,
President and CEO,
CSIS**

**Moderator:
Jon Alterman,
Director, Middle East Program,
CSIS**

**Speaker:
General Martin Dempsey,
Chairman,
Joint Chiefs of Staff**

**Monday, March 18, 2013
12:00 p.m. EDT
Washington, D.C.**

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

(Applause.)

GENERAL MARTIN DEMPSEY: Thank you. Thanks. (Applause.)

Well, thank you, Dr. Hamre. If I could return some of the kind words, Dr. Hamre has been one of those individuals in my life who, whenever I had a particularly vexing challenge, which is darn near every day in the last 10 years, whether I was an OPM-SANG or acting commander at CENTCOM or chief of staff of the Army, I could call him up and he would gather a group together and let me bang around some of our most complex problems. So, I appreciate – it's good to see you again, sir.

And ambassadors, especially the future diplomats of our world, we're – those of my generation are hoping to wrap this all into a nice little bow and hand it to you. (Laughter.) Don't count on that. (Laughter.) But we're – I'm always encouraged when I travel around and visit those who are – who have agreed to dedicate their lives into the diplomatic corps in all of our countries, and I think – I think there's reason for optimism there.

Sheikhs, Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon, and thank you for having me here today. And especially Ambassador Al Otaiba – Ambassador Yousef, as I like to call you – it's good to see you again so soon, because many of you might know that just the other night the ambassador received the distinguished Diplomat(ic) Service Award from the World Affairs Council. He earned it, and he earned it by bringing the United Arab Emirates and the United States closer together. His acceptance speech that night, by the way, was absolutely terrific. I'd actually probably be smart to cede the floor to him right now, but I don't know that Dr. Hamre would let me do that, so instead I'll give the speech and he'll answer the questions – (laughter) – during the Q&A. So, I'd ask you to prepare for that, Yousef.

This Roundtable Series today, something I – we might consider to be a sort of modulus for the mindful, is a valuable forum for thinking through the challenges – and opportunities, by the way – that we face in the Gulf region, and for that matter, throughout the world. Much of my own life, as Dr. Hamre mentioned – but also, I would add, much of my family's life – has been spent in and shaped by the region.

Before commanding Central Command, as Dr. Hamre noted, I lived and worked in Iraq and Saudi Arabia for many years. I've been to the region three times since I became the chairman. That's about three times in 15 or 16 months or so. And all of these experiences and the many friendships and relationships that go with them are actually part of who I am. With that in mind, I came here today with a message of assurance, a little piece of mind in the context of uncertainty. Or, as put by an American humorist by the name of Finley Peter Dunne, who wrote in Chicago at the end of the 19th century: I'm here to afflict the comfortable and to comfort the afflicted.

We face real danger at a time when resources are in decline. And this should worry most of us. At the same time, we're not a nation nor a military in decline. We have it with us to stay strong, to remain a global leader, and more important, a reliable partner, and this should comfort you. Or, you might be skeptical a bit and question how these opposing ideas can coexist. I

concede that there is room for debate here. So, allow me to share some of what's on my mind before hearing what's on your mind. And I'll start with why we might all need a little bit of assurance. And that is, in a word, "risk."

Some of you may have seen on American television here, these commercials for that insurance company, and they describe mayhem. In them, an actor is mayhem in all of its forms. It might be a driver's blind spot or a loosely tied – tied Christmas tree on the hood of a car, an emotional teenager – and, by the way, I think – is there any other kind of teenager? – or texting from behind the wheel of a car. (Audio interference). In any case, in these commercials, of course, mayhem prevails and the message is you need to have insurance against mayhem because mayhem is all around you. In some ways, actually, that feels a bit like the world we confront today, both uncertain and dangerous. Now, again, I'll concede that not everyone agrees with that way to categorize the world.

By some accounts, we're actually experiencing an evolutionary low point in human violence. Now, that's good news and we'd certainly like that train – trend to continue. In fact, I would suggest that our military, the United States military, deserves some of the credit for that evolutionary low level of violence. We help prevent conflict by deterring aggression and by assuring our partners. Our presence is a source of stability that fuels economic growth. This is true in the Middle East as it is in the Far East.

Now, for the bad news: Less violence does not necessarily mean less danger. Risk is on the rise. That is to say, I think that the probability and consequences of aggression are going up as a result of two trends. For one, power is shifting below and beyond the state. In his new book called "The End of Power," Moisés Naim goes so far as to say that power is actually decaying. By the way, I know that he's in a – he's in a separate and different think tank but I just wanted to quote him because – (laughter) – I actually find the argument rather persuasive.

In any case, the shift, the shift of power is spawning more actors that are more connected. And many of them are more capable and more willing to do us harm. The shift is also changing the relationship in many parts of the world between government and the governed. New social contracts are being negotiated in the street. We're witnessing the birth of citizenship in many parts of the Middle East. At the same time, advanced technologies are proliferating down and out. Middle-weight militaries now have intercontinental ballistic missiles. Cyber has reached a point where bits and bytes can be as destructive as bullets and bombs. Our homeland is not the sanctuary it once was.

Now, unlike that famous story of the fisherman in the tale of "The Arabian Nights," we will not be putting that genie back in the bottle. Mayhem is here to stay. But money is not. In a sense, the deductible on our national insurance policy has gone up. It's gone way up. And we can all understand why. Our nation is going through an historic fiscal correction. We're working to restore the economic foundation of our power, and we need to do this. Deficit reduction is in fact a national security imperative. But we need to be a little – no, actually we need to be a lot smarter about how we go about it.

It's worth noting that we haven't had a budget since I became the chairman of the joint chiefs, and for some time before that. And sequestration is quite simply the most irresponsible way possible to manage the nation's defense. It's actually the antithesis of what we need. We need budget certainty, time and flexibility. Sequestration compromises our readiness and it compounds risk. Left unaddressed, it could lead to a security gap; a lapse in coverage against the threats to our national security interests. It's also the law. I'm hopeful but not all that optimistic that both its magnitude and its mechanism will be diffused in some future budget deal. But in the meantime, we have no choice but to prepare for its full effect, which is of course our worst-case scenario.

So, are you feeling afflicted? Well, if you are, you're in good company. Now, let me tell you this, though. The coverage – to continue my insurance metaphor here, the coverage may be a little less than what you were used to. But it's still the best available and it's going to get better in time. And here's where I hope my confidence brings some comfort.

Last week, I called our joint chiefs and our combatant commanders together to discuss how we will lead through this latest contraction – and it is the latest contraction. It's – as I said, it's a bit of a historical pattern. Now, in that room were over 600 years of military experience around the table. Frankly, I thought we looked pretty good for our age. You may have noticed some of the same if you watched us testify before Congress up on the Hill.

Let me tell you what you did not see in that group, or would not have seen. You would not have seen weakness and you would not have heard a chorus of decline. This is a resolute bunch, just as those young men and women who we serve out on point for our nation, our resolute bunch. They have the courage to make the difficult choices about our investments, about our people and about our way of work. They're ready, along with every man and woman who served – I'm talking about the combatant commanders and chiefs now – they're ready, as is every single soldier, sailor, airman and Marine in uniform, to give their last breath to defend America and her allies.

They've also been down this road before. We all served during previous drawdowns, and we've all seen that there is the possibility of making mistakes in drawdown, big ones.

Eventually, we come through these periods stronger as a military and a nation. But make no mistake: Those were and these are tough times for our military family. This one's going to be maybe the toughest yet.

At least it's going to be different, we know that. This will be the first with an all-volunteer force. There's no mass demobilization. We didn't modernize much over the past 10 years, so our equipment is a little older, and there's no peace dividend on the horizon for reasons I described previously.

We're going to have to find opportunity, though, in the midst of this fiscal crisis. We need to seize the moment, and we need to do so to think differently and to be different. We can't do it alone – back to partners. We need the help of our elected officials to give us the certainty, the flexibility and the time to make change. If we can get the reforms to pay and compensation

we need – and we need them – and if we can get rid of weapons and infrastructure that we don't need, then we can begin to restore the versatility of the – of the Joint Force at a(n) affordable and sustainable cost.

As I stand here today, I don't yet know whether or if or how much our defense strategy will change, but I predict it will. We'll need to relook at our assumptions, and we'll need to adjust our ambitions to match our abilities. And that means doing less, but not doing less well.

It also means relying more on our other instruments of power to help underwrite global security. Of course, we won't do this well if we don't back diplomacy and development with sufficient dollars. And our partners will have to work with us and collaborate with us on accepting a greater share of the risk. Some are more ready and willing to do that than others. I have to say that the United Arab Emirates, for example, is our most credible and capable allies, especially in the Gulf region.

Our consistent first line of defense has been and always will be our people. They really are our greatest strength. We will rely on these combat-proven leaders to think and innovate as we navigate our challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

I should probably close while I'm ahead in this – in this – in this equilibrium of optimism and pessimism. I hope I – I hope I sense a bit of – that you might feel a little bit better about things as a result of this conversation. You are starting to reconcile these competing realities of staying strong in the face of danger with fewer dollars. If so, you should also feel pretty good about yourself. It was F. Scott Fitzgerald who said the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two competing and opposing ideas in your mind at the same time. If that, in fact, is the definition of intelligence, I can certainly tell you that I'm there, and I suspect you are as well. Ambassador, I will tell you, but I'm sure there is someone with that kind of genius and intelligence in this crowd who is armed for your first question. (Laughter.)

Look, let me – that's my prepared remarks. Let me also tell you, I really did come here today with the intent of assuring you that we will lead our way through this. It's – you know, the conditions are not making it easy to do that, but none of us that serve in uniform, none of you who serve your country is in – and civilian life and the diplomatic corps and economics – I don't think any of you ever signed up for anything easy. Easy wasn't part of the job description. And we'll get through this, but we'll get through it mostly because of the application of leadership, thinking, creativity and a commitment to each other.

And that's the message I want to leave you with before I take your questions, that we have had a shared future – we have shared the future. We have an interest in sharing the outcomes as we move ahead. And that will always be the case and always factor into the decisions we make about distribution of forces, partnering, engaging – all the things we've done through the past – really for the past 25 or 30 years to make sure that the Middle East in particular is on a path for greater security and stability on the basis of our common interests and values.

And with that, I'll start – I'll take questions. (Applause.)

Ah. There went the podium.

JON ALTERMAN: It's magic. Have a seat if you'd like, sir. (Inaudible.)

GEN. DEMPSEY: You know, I think I'll stand up, because if the – if I get a really tough one, I have this little tap dance that I've worked out over time. (Laughter.)

MR. ALTERMAN: And it's – and it's quicker to run out of the door if you want too. (Laughter.)

GEN. DEMPSEY: No, I'll stay standing. I –

MR. ALTERMAN: OK. Thank you, sir. I'm Jon Alterman. I'm the Brzezinski chair here at CSIS and the director of the Middle East program. I'm grateful to you for coming and giving those comments.

I would ask all of you that you wait until you're recognized – I think we have microphones – that you identify yourself, that you only ask one question until everybody's had a chance, and also that you ask your question in the form of a question – (laughter) – which is not to make a long statement and say, what do you think of my statement? (Laughter.)

GEN. DEMPSEY: I've never seen that happen. (Laughter.)

MR. ALTERMAN: Never – not in Washington, certainly.

GEN. DEMPSEY: No. (Chuckles.)

MR. ALTERMAN: So I wonder if I might start. I'm Jon Alterman. I run the Middle East program here. And you talked about cooperation. Most of what we are protecting in the Gulf is the trade of energy between the Gulf and Asia. As we talk about burden sharing, what is the role for partnerships both with countries that are already close allies and countries which are not allies but which are relying on energy from the Gulf? Should we be thinking about that differently in the budget context you've described?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah, that's the argument we hear sometimes. It goes something like this: If by 2017 the United States can achieve some level of energy independence, why in the world would we continue to be concerned about the energy that flows out of – out of the Gulf?

Well, look, my answer to that is I didn't go to the Gulf in 1991 and stay there for about the next 20 years because of oil. That's not why I went. It's not why my children went. It's – and we went there because we thought that a region of the world where we had – where we had not, except for a few bilateral relationships – where we hadn't invested much of our, let's call it, bandwidth, intellectual energy, commitment – now, we went there in '91 because of the – of the aggression of Saddam Hussein, but we stayed there because I think we came to the realization that the future of the region was tied to our future, and not through this thing called oil but rather

through the – as I said earlier, the shared interest in a common future where people would be able to build a better life and where threats could be managed collaboratively, not by the United States uniquely but by the relationships we would build on the basis of common interests.

So when I hear about in 2017, you know, oil won't be as big a factor for us – and that's great. I hope we do achieve energy independence. But I can assure you that at least from a military perspective – and I can only speak, as I dress, from the military perspective – that the continued development of capabilities – military capabilities, notably, in my world, but also partnerships and trust that we build by working together, by exchanging officers and noncommissioned officers in our professional military schools, that on that basis, you will find – you will find that the future will be a period of greater commitment.

Now, you know, if you measure our commitment in terms of numbers of boots on the ground and numbers of aircraft and number of aircraft carriers, I think you'll probably – you know, there'll always be this debate about inclining or declining commitment. But that's not what the commitment's all about, really, in my view. As I said, I went to – I went to the Gulf in '91, spent almost the next 20 years there on and off and didn't do it for oil.

MR. ALTERMAN: Thank you. (Inaudible) – we have a microphone.

Q: Hi, I'm Yousef. I'm the UAE ambassador. Thank you very much, General, for those lovely comments. My question dovetails right along Jon's question, which is one of the questions I hear as I travel home more and more frequently is, based on your withdrawal from Iraq, your impending withdrawal from Afghanistan, pivot to Asia, are the U.S. – is the U.S. committed to the Gulf region and the Middle East in general? And if you can just elaborate a little more on the general commitment to the region – and if the answer is yes, how can we find more ways to demonstrate that commitment?

GEN. DEMPSEY: The answer is yes. And the – and the expanded answer to that would indeed be, how can we find ways to demonstrate our commitment differently?

You know, this notion of withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan as somehow indicative of a – of a – of less commitment to the region, I really would like to react to that.

And, you know, it was – I spent three years in Iraq. And, you know, what you have to say – and I – and I – we're all aware that tomorrow is the 10-year anniversary, and the debate goes on about whether we should have, whether it was worth it. And that debate will go on. There's – you know, even if we – if we – if in this room we all decide that we have a common answer to that question, it will go on and should go on. I mean, we should always be introspective about the things we do.

But look, you know, I – my personal belief is that having given Iraq an – first of all, we – there is no longer the strong man, the dictator and the threat to the region by the name of Saddam Hussein that there was. Secondly and I think importantly, we've given the Iraqi people an incredible opportunity. And say what you will about whether we – it was a – you know, kind of a clean path to that opportunity or it was one fraught with missteps, opportunities gained,

opportunities lost. Of course it was. But the point is we really did give them an opportunity. And today we have in Iraq – we have a partner, not an adversary. And it remains to be seen still about how strong a partner they are willing and can become, but we have a partner.

So to your point, Yousef, I – you know, I think that it was – it was – it was inevitable that at some point our presence in Iraq would reduce, as they were asking for and given the opportunity to take control of their own destinies, and you're going to see that similarly play out in Afghanistan over the next few years. But that's separate and distinct from our commitment to engage with, partner with, collaborate with our important partners in the region, and again, not measured in terms of air wings or carrier battle groups but rather in terms of the kind of collaborations we actually have with the United Arab Emirates, where you are seeking to build your own capabilities, where we are eager to help you do that, where we do things like exercises. The mine – countermine exercise a few months ago was where 23, I think, or 24 nations participated.

That's the future, not necessarily the United States of America sitting there with half of the United States Navy positioned in the Gulf but rather a strategy, a long-term strategy that's feasible given the resources available that will allow us to achieve some common objectives. And I – and I can tell you that with the United Arab Emirates in particular.

But the other – the other strong allies we have, Saudi Arabia, Jordan – and if I go – if I start ticking them down, somebody's going to say, why didn't you mention me? But the point is we do have some incredible allies in the region and – who will remain allies. We just have to figure out how to – how to help you do more so that we can do less, but that doesn't mean less well.

MR. ALTERMAN: I see a question over here. Wait for a microphone.

Q: Hello, General Dempsey. Thank you for your service.

GEN. DEMPSEY: Good to see you.

Q: Mary Beth Long –

GEN. DEMPSEY: Of course you are. Still.

Q: Still. Most of our allies in the region are very concerned about Iran, not only her nuclear program but her increasing involvement in local politics, in the economy, support for proxies. If you had the opportunity to sit quietly with the supreme leader of Iran and talk him out of whatever he appears to be intending to do in the region, what would you say to him about U.S. intentions and U.S. cooperation with our partners in the region?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Well, first thing I'd do is I'd send Dennis Rodman over there, I think. (Laughter.)

No, the truth is the first thing I would do is I'd ask them why they're doing what they're doing. You know, I'd really like to hear it from him personally, you know, because we know, of course, what his surrogates and proxies are doing.

I'd like to know from him whether, you know, this – if he is – if they – by the way, though, you know that in that region, the three countries that have always been countries, Iran, Turkey and Egypt, you know, they are kind of the cornerstone of that region. Doesn't mean we want to be like any of them or that anyone else should want to be like them, but they – we have to account for the fact that those three countries are the – are the historic cornerstones or endpoints of that region.

So the first thing I'd like to know is, you know, what is it that they believe the future holds for the region, and why are they apparently, it seems to me – on a path to try to dredge up old animosities among Sunni and Shia, you know, things that frankly in this time in world history, they should be able to find a more peaceful way to pursue? What are their economic – the Persian people, you know, what are the aspirations of the Persian people; and again, why they think that their current behavior will achieve that result as they fundamentally not only discount anything that we believe is our national interest but what the nations in the region believe is in their national interest.

So I – you know, if I had a chance to sit with the ayatollah, I would ask him just exactly, you know, what are you hoping to achieve here? And you know, frankly, because we think we know what he's seeking to achieve and we think it will be unacceptable. In fact we've said so – unacceptable to not only the United States but the region. But I'd sure like to have – you know, again, this is extremely – and I'm not going over any more than I think Dennis Rodman is – but the point is I think that question about how they see what they're doing in their national interests – unless it is to, in fact, create that Sunni-Shia divide and have Iran, in the name of Shia Islam, become dominant – if that's their aspiration, then they're on a path that we will all find unacceptable.

Sir.

Q: General Dempsey, sir.

GEN. DEMPSEY: How are you? Happy St. Patrick's Day, by the way.

Q: Thanks very much, and to you, sir. Buster Howes, British defense attaché.

I just wanted to touch on Syria, recognizing what a difficult problem it is, perhaps the definitively wicked problem. The British prime minister is going to strike a parallel between the West's failure to act in Bosnia in a timely fashion, and particularly intervention in Srebrenica as a potential trigger to radicalization of Muslims in Europe. The heady days of the Arab Spring and democratization seem a long time ago. How do you think the West's failure to act in Syria will affect the American people's relationship with the people of the Middle East in the future?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Well, first of all, I'm not ready to put my rucksack in and pick up the rock of guilt and failure and put it in my rucksack. You know, but you did say the West's failure

to act, how will that play out in the region. And I'm suggesting to you that I'm not – I'm not quite in the camp that suggests that we are sitting here today having failed in the region.

Look, you – let me start with your characterization: the heady days of the Arab Spring. The heady days of the Arab Spring are actually playing out about like anyone's who's studied history should expect them to play out, that, you know, when strong men are overthrown historically, the first generation that takes their place struggles, and then oftentimes the next generation that takes their place will overcompensate, and it's the third generation, generally, that gets it right, right in the sense of balancing the needs of the center with the needs of the people.

So I think, you know, what, are we two years into the Arab Spring and we're ready to declare it a failure? I think that's a little premature, frankly. I do think that the guy coming over here with this big stick scares me a little bit but – oh, OK. All right.

Yeah, you're friendly, OK? That's good. So, you know, the heady days of the Arab Spring are creating the complex days in between the Arab Spring and whatever it becomes, and I think that's something we need to monitor, watch, help shape in the sense of through our partners in the region.

But now let me segue to Syria because you mentioned Syria in particular. You know, if – as a student of that part of the world now for about the last 20 years, I think Syria poses the most complex set of issues that anyone could ever conceive, literally, in every facet. And what – you know, when we talk about what is it that we hope to achieve in Syria, that's a tough – that's a tough question to answer. I mean, we have some – we have some national interests that run from issues related to the chemical and biological weapons, the heavy weaponry, our partners in the region and their security – so Turkey, notably Israel and Jordan, but also Iraq. We have some humanitarian concerns. So, you know, this is one of those cross-cutting issues. But in the – in the middle of all that is the fact that about six months ago, we had a very, let's call it opaque understanding of the opposition. And now I would say it's even more opaque.

So six months ago, the situation was – seemed to me to be very unclear. The number of groups seemed to me to be very unclear. And today that number and that issue seems to be even less clear in some ways. And so I think that the path which is a path to build consensus among partners – a path to do collaborative estimates of the situation, to plan not only for what's happening today, but the potential for the day after, as it's commonly called, you know, we're doing – we're doing all that.

But I don't have a – I wouldn't compare – first of all, because historical comparisons generally fall apart pretty quick. I'm not sure that the – that the comparison of this situation to Bosnia stands that test. And I think we should be doing everything we're doing to – on – with all of the instruments of power. But the military application of power should be the very last instrument we employ. And we're doing planning so that I can provide options, but again, I don't think – you know, I don't think, at this point, I can – I can see a military option that would create an understandable outcome. And until I do, it will be my advice to proceed cautiously.

(Off-mic exchange.)

Q: Nice to see you, General Dempsey. My name is Lu Xiang, and I'm a visiting fellow here at CSIS from Beijing, China.

My question is about – to the air-sea battle concept which has been proposed and developed by the U.S. Navy and the Air Force. With your background and your experience in the U.S. Army for over 30 years, how would you like to evaluate the viability and effectiveness of the ASB concept? And also, you will take a trip to China next month, right?

GEN. DEMPSEY: I am.

Q: And I wonder, how would you like to reply to your PLA counterparts if they raised a question about the ASB? And finally, I wonder, do you think that ASB which have an overwhelming capabilities against the threat you perceived as A2AD? Thank you very much.

GEN. DEMPSEY: OK. That's – there's a couple of threads there I need to pull apart in order to do justice to the question.

One is, air-sea battle is a tactic. It's not a strategy. And as you said yourself at the end, air-sea battle is a multiservice – not a joint. It's two services, generally. It's a multiservice answer to the A2AD challenge. A2AD: anti-access, access-denial – not unique, by the way, in the Pacific. I mean, we have an anti-access, access-denial challenge in the Gulf, for example, that we have to be alert to.

So you've got an operating concept – a joint operating concept, which is to say, operational access. The United States military, with partners, wants to know that it can maintain freedom of movement in a variety of complex environments around the globe. So that's the joint operational access concept. A subset of that is how the Navy and the Air Force are collaborating to achieve it, but the Army and the Marine Corps also have a role in that regard.

To your point about – if I'm asked about – you know, when I'm in China about air-sea battle and is it aimed at China, the answer is no. It's not aimed at China. The United States has interests in the global commons. It has interests in maintaining freedom of movement, freedom of action, and the things that we do in the development of technologies and tactics are fundamentally to guarantee that that freedom will continue to exist, regardless of who threatens it.

Q: Thank you.

GEN. DEMPSEY: Right behind you.

Q: General, may I ask you about what you consider is the impact of the nonresolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the security of the Gulf, and what specific challenge that Iran presents now can be enhanced or ignored by the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli –

MR. ALTERMAN: Sir, can you identify yourself?

Q: Oh, I'm sorry. Ziad Asali, American Task Force on Palestine.

MR. ALTERMAN: Thank you.

GEN. DEMPSEY: Well, the Mideast peace process, and those attempting to – or intending to continue to seek progress in that regard or to jumpstart it, depending on who you believe, is clearly outside of the realm of a military man.

But I will tell you that in most every place I travel and have a conversation with a counterpart, the very first topic is the Mideast peace process, as a way to set conditions for greater stability. And I accept that, having lived in that part of the world for many years. I mean, I am a strong advocate of continuing that – the progress of the Mideast peace process.

How it relates to the – to Iran is yet another one of these problem sets it's – this is – this is the issue of what are Iran's intentions of – in Syria? What are Iran's intentions in the Gulf? What are Iran's intentions in Bahrain? What are Iran's intentions in the Mideast? And you know, they are a declared enemy of the state of Israel.

And so I think all of these things – my approach, militarily, is not to look at issues through a soda straw. You know, you'll say, well, what about Syria? And you'll look through this narrow prism of Syria. And if you do that and miss the opportunity to understand Syria in the context of the region – the Levant, notably – but also in the context of Iran, I think – I think it illuminates both vulnerabilities and opportunities.

And so my answer to your question would be first and foremost that this is a diplomatic issue, which I very much encourage. But secondly, I try not to look at issues in isolation because I think you miss opportunities when you do that.

MR. ALTERMAN: Sir, do you have a question? Did you have a question? I saw your hand up before. No? OK, could you then – I'll call on you. You have to wait for a microphone.

Q: (Off mic.)

MR. ALTERMAN: I have my list. Trita and Mohammad (sp) – (inaudible) – list.

Q: Thank you. Karen DeYoung with The Washington Post. I wanted to follow-up on the Syria question and pose a comparison to Libya rather than Bosnia. That was a place where the kind of partnership you spoke of, certainly with partners in the Gulf and in Europe, came into play with the United States, an active participant.

In Syria, you see all of those partners virtually – the British and the French, UAE, Qatar, Saudis – advocating more robust support for the opposition. And you heard Prime Minister Cameron, in fact, last week give really a sort of opposite assessment of opposition organization and definition from what you just gave.

I wondered if there's any thought – short of the kind of direct military intervention that you spoke of – any thought given to going the way that some of our other partners now feel the need to go to, and more support for the opposition not through direct operations but more robust training, more weaponry, providing more intelligence and just basically following them or participating with them in a more robust way?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah, I mean, I think that there are opportunities there. And that's exactly the right – I think the right characterization. But to the Libyan comparison, you know, as you recall, the Libyan opposition was geographically kind of separated from the regime forces, and it was a much cleaner – a much cleaner effort to support them – from east then west toward the middle.

I mean, this – as I said before, the challenge with the opposition in Syria is that it is – it's multilayered, multifaceted, and it's kind of ubiquitous and it's – meaning, spread throughout the country, pockets in some cases, intermingled in others. And so we very much do believe that the answer to Syria is through partners, because I think they will – there's a greater likelihood that they'll understand the complexities than that we would.

MR. ALTERMAN: On my list I have Trita, Chris (sp), Mohammad (sp), Todd and Steve.

MR. : (Off mic.)

MR. ALTERMAN: Two? OK. Then Trita, first question.

Q: General, thank you so much. Trita Parsi from the National Iranian American Council.

Your predecessor mentioned on numerous occasions before he left that he was very concerned about a potential conflict with Iran in the Persian Gulf as a result of an accident, pointing out that the absence of communication creates a situation in which there is – much easier to miscalculate, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of escalation.

I would like to get your assessment as to whether you think over the course of the last two years if there has been an improvement in communication, if there is improvement in the diplomacy in order to at least shut off that potential path towards a military confrontation.

GEN. DEMPSEY: Well, I can't speak for the improvement in diplomatic outreach; again, that's out of – out of my area of expertise, although I – you know, I am quite confident there have been several attempts. And, of course, there's the ongoing P-5 plus one, which is narrowly focused, but is at least a venue for contact.

Militarily, you know, we do exchange – in terms of the risk of miscalculation and misperception, there are the – sort of the international rules of navigation, which both sides do follow. So guard channel, which is a common radio communication among aviators; the rules of the road, if you will, as well, in the maritime domain, which are exercised anytime anyone is transiting the Straits of Hormuz. So there are the routine contacts, bridge-to-bridge

communications, aircraft-to-aircraft communications that go on. And, you know, to this point, I think they have played a role in avoiding misperception and miscalculation.

But there is also on occasion the Iranian effort to expand its influence, to – as you know, they assert a certain freedom of navigation out beyond the traditional and accepted global standard of 12 nautical miles. They assert a straight baseline that does – so in between that traditional 12 mile – nautical mile limit and what they assert, which can reach out to about 22 miles, there is a – there is risk in that band right there of miscalculation. So we're not – I share Admiral Mullen's lingering concern, but we do have the routine contacts that you would expect notably mariners and aviators to have in the Gulf.

MR. ALTERMAN: Chris, you get the last question. Just don't ask about Asia.

Q: I have to. Chris Nilson, I do the Nilson Report. It's mainly for Asians watching us and for us watching the Asians.

GEN. DEMPSEY: You named your report after yourself?

Q: When you get gray hair, you can get away with all kinds of stuff, sir. (Laughter.) Plus who else would do it? (Laughs.)

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah. Write that down. I'm going to do the Dempsey thing – (off mic) – (laughter).

Q: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely, there's room.

In view of your upcoming trip, but also, in a sense, to follow up on the last question, crisis management escalation risk, are you optimistic that you're going to be able to make some progress with your Chinese counterparts on the need for serious U.S.-China mil-mil at the senior levels on how to manage the risk, especially with our – their and our North Korean friends, in view of the potential for problems?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Yeah, I really am, as well as with my Russian counterpart. Both my Russian counterpart and my Chinese counterpart just changed within the last few months. And I've had contact with both of them, one with a video teleconference, one with a telephone conversation.

But to your point about my Chinese counterpart, I am. And I think he is, as well, in our first contact. And, you know, the way we work that is we acknowledge the points of disagreement – or let's call them friction – between us, and then we find the places where we can work together on common interests absent those frictions, and then we try to move toward each other, mostly from the bottom up. I mean, we already have a very robust engagement at the service level with our Chinese counterparts, and so what you'll see me try to do is connect that with a sort of a strategic-level engagement.

But sure. Look, I've said – we already had a conversation about, you know, what does this rebalancing – I don't use "pivot," I use "rebalancing" – to the Pacific really mean? And I was able to explain to him that it's my military belief that it would be – it would be our absence, not our presence, in the Pacific that would lead to miscalculation and misperception; that our presence there, even though from time to time we'll have – you know, we will misunderstand each other, but we'll work through those misunderstandings because we're there. If we weren't there, I don't know on what basis we would have that kind of engagement.

So – and he seemed to accept that, and I intend to pull that string as we get – as we go and meet each other, with our families, by the way, because I do believe that most of what we accomplish we accomplish on the basis of relationships and the effort to try to achieve some level of trust. And so I'm going to give that my best shot when I'm over there next month.

MR. ALTERMAN: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, the chairman has to go. I'd be grateful if you could just stay in your seats until he and his party can leave. But please, before he does, join me in thanking him for – (inaudible). (Applause.)

GEN. DEMPSEY: Well, let me just – let me end where I began, by thanking you for the chance to come over here and discuss and have a(n) exchange about the extraordinarily challenging issues that confront us, everything from the practical issues of threats to our national interest, all the way back to how do we match ends, ways and means as we build the strategy in the face of reduced resources.

But what I – but I promise you we will figure this out. We're one budget deal away from, you know, forgetting about all these issues, really. And I'm counting on our elected officials to deliver that deal. And in the middle – in the meantime, we'll manage – you know, we'll manage – actually, I should – let me use the better phrase – we'll lead our way through this. And if you're listening to this or if you're a partner from the region who's going to go back home and report on what the chairman of the Joint Chiefs said, you can take it to the bank that we will remain the partners that you've enjoyed, and you will be the partners that we've enjoyed, for the last 20 years. And I can only see a future where we become stronger together.

Thanks very much. (Applause.)

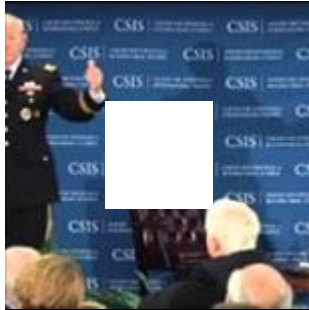
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UAE Embassy in Washington, DC

March 19, 2013 ·

During a [CSIS | Center for Strategic & International Studies](#) event yesterday, [General Martin E. Dempsey](#) lauded America's partnership with the UAE, declaring the UAE among America's "most credible and capable allies, especially in the Gulf region." <http://ow.ly/jdiOh>



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