

Middle East and North Africa Democratization Seminar Fall 2015

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Marine Corps University

SPEAKER: COLONEL KEIL GENTRY, MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY

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COL GENTRY: Sir, that was your job, but...

(LAUGHTER)

Well, according to Thucydides, "The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools." The United States doesn't need to worry about that as long as patriots, such as Ambassador Eikenberry, continue to choose to serve their nation.

He is an accomplished scholar, soldier and diplomat. He graduated from West Point, later earned two master's degrees, one from Harvard and another one from Stanford. He was later a fellow, a National Security Fellow, at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

He also earned, which may have been his toughest academic achievement, an interpreter's certificate in Mandarin Chinese from the British Foreign Commonwealth Office and has an advanced degree in Chinese history from the Nanjing University from the People's Republic of China.

His distinguished career in the Army spans 35 years. His operational-force time included command and staff positions with mechanized, light, airborne and ranger units in the continental United States, Hawaii, Korea and Italy. And of course, as everybody here, I'm sure, knows, he served as the commander of the American-led coalition forces in Afghanistan from 2005 to 2007.

His last tour in the Army was as the deputy chairman to the NATO military committee, and while he was in that position, which is somewhat unique, he was nominated to become the ambassador to Afghanistan.

Once confirmed, he retired from the United States Army and assumed his duties as the ambassador, where he served from May of 2009 until July of 2011. During that period, he led the civilian surge that was directed by the president, President Obama, which set the conditions for full transition to Afghan autonomy.

He is currently the Oskenberg-Rohlen Distinguished Fellow and director of the U.S.-Asia Security Initiative at the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University. Had to read my notes on that one.

(LAUGHTER)

Mr. Ambassador, on behalf of the students and faculty, welcome to the Marine Corps University.