



Harry Kreisler: Welcome to a “Conversation With History.” I’m Harry Kreisler of the Institute of International Studies. Our guest today is John Abizaid who is a retired U.S. Army General and former Commander of the Central Command. He is the first Annenberg Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution and this year’s 2008 Admiral Chester Nimitz lecturer at UC Berkeley. General Abizaid, welcome to Berkeley.

John Abizaid: Thanks, Harry. Thanks for having me here.

HK: Where were you born and raised?

JA: Well, I was born in Redwood City, California, and I lived there for about twelve years of so, spent some time on and off in San Francisco, but for the most part it was Redwood City, and then when I got ready to go to high school we moved up into the Sierra Nevada mountains, in Mono County, Coleville, California, and I graduated from high school there, and after that was into the Army.

HK: Looking back, how do you think your parents shaped your thinking about the world?

JA: Well, my dad in particular really shaped my thinking about the world. He was a World War II Navy vet. He had served in the Solomons and in the Pacific. He had seen a lot of action on a small ship in the middle of the Pacific. He’d traveled all over the world as a result of that Navy service, and it was clear to me that that service, to him, was really one of the most important things in his life, and as we were growing up – my mother died when I was rather young and he continued to raise my sister and I, and I have great admiration for having grown up with this man who talked about service, loved service, and advocated it.

HK: And you said you joined your Army. Where did you get your education before going into the Army?

JA: Well, before going into the Army I graduated from Coleville High School, total school population of about 105 students, certainly one of the smaller schools in the State of California.

HK: Was there an ROTC?

JA: No, there wasn't an ROTC. There wasn't a lot of things going on at Coleville, but there were many things going on at Coleville, at the same time. For example, I wanted to study German and in order to study German I had to take a correspondence course and they allowed me to do that. So, it was good experience growing up in a rural county, in a small area, small school. We had excellent instructors and I think they prepared me about as well as could be expected to go on to West Point.

HK: And you did go to West Point. Talk about your education there. Did it prepare you for all the changes that the military was going to have to confront throughout your career?

JA: Well, West Point prepares you for life in a very interesting way. It gives you discipline, it gives you focus, it gives you a way of approaching problem solving. West Point's not the type of place to go if you're not committed to being an officer in the United States Army. I knew I wanted to be a soldier and I was committed to doing that, and I thought that West Point would give me a good opportunity to do that. I initially found the academic rigor there pretty tough, not to mention the military rigor but I was expecting that. The academic rigor was very tough, especially with regards to mathematics and engineering. But over time I learned how to work my way through the system and I enjoyed being there.

HK: And your career is really one of moving between the university and actually study – I mean, in the sense that you got a Master's, at some point, at Harvard, and you were an Olmsted fellow to Jordan. Talk a little about that. In what ways did that enhance your education and prepare you for the world you had to confront as a general?

JA: It's very interesting that the military invests very heavily in officer education. Sometimes it's within military schools, every now and then you can outside of military schools. West Point, for example, provides a record number of Rhodes and Truman Scholars, it's quite a good institution, but I graduated from West Point, I had been interested in the Olmsted Scholar program, and the Olmsted Scholar program provided an officer with the opportunity essentially to get away from the Army for two years, go to a foreign university, learn a foreign language, and then come back and go to an American university to finish up the Master's degree work. So, I selected the University of Jordan as a place that I'd like to go to. I learned how to speak Arabic. A lot of people think because of my last name I learned how to speak Arabic at home, but really, it was the Army that taught me how. And I went to the University of Jordan and had that opportunity, then on to Harvard, and I really regarded that training at both Harvard and Jordan as very, very important to being able to – to allow me to move through my career in a way that was understanding of different cultures, different problems, and certainly the last five years of my life, in the middle of the Middle East...

HK: It helped a lot.

JA: ...helped a lot.

HK: What led you to choose Jordan, and what year was that? Because that was very early in terms of – the '70s?

JA: Yeah, I started out in the program somewhere around 1978, or so, and I was in the Middle East from '78 to '80, and then Harvard '80 to '81. I think that's about right, during that time period.

HK: The reason I point this out is because the Middle East was going to change. So, you were there, in a way, at the beginning of the changes that would really affect this whole period of your service.

JA: Well, it's interesting you say that, Harry. The Middle East is always changing and the Middle East is never changing. [laughs] I mean, the Middle East is a very, very interesting place, but what was so interesting about going to Jordan during that time period – it was also the time period of the Iranian revolution, and it sent, really, what I would call a religious shock wave through the region in a way that was absolutely noticeable. And there was always a lot of turmoil at Middle Eastern universities, the University of Jordan no less so than other places, and when the University would close down because of the inevitable riot I'd end going out and train with the Jordanian special forces in the army because I was a military officer. So, it was a good opportunity to learn not only about the civil society in Jordan but also about the military society in Jordan, and of course, in the Arab world in particular militaries play very, very different roles in the societies than here in the States.

HK: And at Harvard, I think I read somewhere that you wrote a paper that the prof said was the outstanding paper that he had read. What was that paper on, for your Master's?

JA: Well, the paper was on Saudi Arabian defense concepts, and my professor, really a very, very distinguished Middle Eastern historian and political scientist, Nadav Safran, just a remarkable man – he steered me towards trying to understand better what the Saudis based their decision making on with regard to how they spent their money for defense, what their priorities were, what their problems were, how much of it was related to internal versus external politics, etc. And so, having an opportunity to do that research, and also having been in Saudi Arabia when I was Jordan – one thing about being in Jordan, I had the chance to travel all over the Middle East and I literally traveled all over the Arab world and had a chance to see how things were done in many countries in different ways.

HK: Help us understand now what are the skills required for being an effective soldier these days. The criterion have changed in the course of your career, and it's very complicated now, isn't it?

JA: Well, it gets more complicated as you go up the rank ladder, but early on, the single most important thing, and throughout your career the single most important thing, is to be able to lead people. It's so vital that you understand people, that you're able to convince them to do tough and difficult things, and of course, in combat American soldiers don't take the hill because they're afraid of you. They take the hill because they respect their comrades and because they respect their leaders, and they know that they've got to take the hill in order to get the job done. So, throughout your career you're always having to deal with issues of leadership and that's critically important. But as you go higher through the ranks, we talk about the world as being tactical or operational or strategic, and you find yourself going through these various levels of

command. As a young officer it's tactical, how do you take the hill, then you get operational and you start using bigger units, and then ultimately, when you became, say, like I was, the Commander of the Central Command, it's strategic and you're having to advise the President of the United States, Secretary of Defense, to the best of your ability. And so, as you progress through this ladder of changing circumstances you've got to be more culturally aware, you've got to be able to understand the broader civilian society, you've got to understand how our broader government works, how non-governmental organizations work, how alliances work. No American officer who's ever served in combat since, really – I can hardly think when it was, maybe the Spanish-American War – without being part of an alliance. And it's pretty interesting when you think about it. We're always working in an international environment, we're always working with other countries, we work within the NATO alliance, we work within the United Nations. But throughout my career it's always been a broad exposure, in increasingly broad exposure, towards working with different cultures, different problems and different international organizations. And I think that allows you to grow, and of course, you also have increasingly complex organizations that you have to command, although the interesting thing is that one of the toughest things to command is your first platoon. You've only got somewhere between 30 and 40 people there but they're the first 30 or 40 people you've ever led, and learning how to lead there is absolutely essential to success.

HK: Explain to our audience what the Central Command is and what territory you covered, because it's a term that might not be familiar with the general public.

JA: The United States military is really given a broad geographic area to operate in. In other words, the entire globe is, in one way or another, covered by a military command. I think people are familiar with the European Command and the Pacific Command, but the Central Command was essentially created in the early days of tension that was developing between the United States and the Soviet Union over the strategic resources of the Middle East and gradually came to encompass 27 different countries that went from the former Soviet Central Asian Republic, starting with Kazakhstan on down through Afghanistan and Pakistan, over and across Iran, the center of the Levant, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan. Interestingly enough, it doesn't include Israel, does not include Israel, and it includes Saudi Arabia, Yemen, smaller Gulf states, and then it crosses the Suez Canal, goes to Egypt, Sudan, down into Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Kenya. It's a very, very dynamic area. It's an area where the richest nations on earth exist and the poorest nations exist. It's primarily an Islamic area but it's an area where there's constant turmoil, terrorism, insurgency, and of course, it's the area that the world depends upon for the global flow of oil. So, it's a very, very interesting area, and it doesn't mean, by the way, that when you're assigned 27 countries that you own them, you certainly don't, but any military operation that would take place there, whether it's people that work in an embassy, or people that work on training military forces in a particular country, or big military operations such as Iraq or Afghanistan, you have the responsibility to direct and coordinate and synchronize. And I would also finish by saying that these operational areas are not just Army areas, they're Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and you are responsible generally for synchronizing those four services as a joint commander and synchronizing the international forces that work with you. And I think people sometimes lose sight of the fact that there are many, many different countries that work with us. As a matter of fact, in my headquarters in the Central Command there were over 80

different nations represented there with military liaison officers, just to give you an idea about how broadly international the effort was.

HK: Explain to us how you interface with the other parts of the U.S. Government in that region.

JA: In the region you interface with the ambassadors almost on a daily basis, and because of your position as a high military leader of the United States and because you're regionally based, you become a person that frequently talks to the leaders of the region, President Musharraf, President Karzai, the prime minister of Iraq, you name it, you have access and opportunity to talk to them. Primarily you talk to the military officers, of course, but over time you also find yourself getting to know the kings and sheiks, and other key leaders of the region. You also interface with the U.S. Government in Washington. So, for example, you have to conduct meetings in your own area to organize the U.S. Government effort to the extent that you can, you also have to deal frequently with the Central Intelligence Agency, and the other intelligence agencies, to understand what's going on. But back in Washington there's an interagency process that's going on and you are frequently represented in the interagency. But most importantly, what you're trying to do is organize the military forces under your command, and for example, in my command, the Central Command had the multinational force in Iraq's commander who was a four-star commander that worked for me, the commander in Afghanistan who currently is a four-star commander – he also would work for me, although the command relationships have changed over time, and we had a small command in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa – worked under my command, and then there were Navy, Air Force, Special Operations commands that were regional commands that reported to me, as well. So, it's a complex organization, it's a big organization. At its height it was probably 350,000 Americans and another 500,000, or so, partner nations, partner forces that were participating, and currently it's probably closer to 250,000.

HK: If you were asked to brief the next president, not the top secret part, but just kind of give him the lay of the land, what do you see as the problems emerging in this area? And a lot of our problems, or things that we're going to have to address or find solutions for, will be coming from that area.

JA: I would tell the President, "Look, Mr. President, you need not to only worry about Iraq, and you need to not only worry about Afghanistan. Certainly they are immediate problems that we've got to be concerned with but you need to look at the broader regional problems and the broader ideological movements that are in the area." And the first thing I'd say is that there is a very serious ideological movement that is a Sunni extremist, Sunni Islamic extremist movement led by Osama bin Laden and exemplified by al-Qaeda that is a movement that certainly isn't mainstream yet in the Middle East, but it's just not a group of terrorists, it's a movement, it's an idea, and we need to understand that that idea is implacably opposed to American presence and indeed seeks to dominate the region with a form of religious extremism that most people in the region don't want to be ascendant. Then I'd say the next big problem is the rise of Iranian Shia revolutionary ideology, and again, it's an ideological religious movement that is, again, implacably opposed to American involvement in the region, yet at the same time one that may not be at the beginning of its ideological life, such as al-Qaeda, but one that the people of Iran are probably getting tired of, and that you will have to watch Iranian attempts to dominate the

region and counter them in a way that makes sense over time. The third point I would tell him is that while we're not using our own military forces daily in the Arab/Israeli – better said, Israeli/Palestinian theater, that you have to understand that the continued corrosive effect of this problem is creating a dynamic where people move to the extremes and it makes the region very, very unstable. And then the final fourth big problem that I would make sure he understands is that one of the reasons we're so heavily engaged in the Middle East that none of us can deny is our continued dependence on Middle Eastern oil, and in order to gain diplomatic, and political, and military maneuver room we need to figure out how to reduce our dependence over time, knowing that there's no easy solution to this, on the flow of Middle Eastern oil. And clearly, American military power has to confront Sunni Islamic extremism, it has to contain Iranian ambitions. Diplomatic power, political power has to do what it can to move the Arab/Israeli process forward, but ultimately it's the American military shield that keeps the flow of oil moving, and it should come as no surprise to us that our enemies are trying to disrupt that movement. And when I say "our enemies" I don't want it to sound as if this is American domination because it's not. American military power keeps the flow of oil going not just for the United States of America but for our friends, and our allies, and the producing nations.

HK: So, what you just described raises a question about distinguishing between non-state actors and states like Iran that are adversaries, or potential adversaries. Talk a little about what we have to do to deal with two different kinds of problems, although they both may pose threats.

JA: That's a very interesting question, especially with regard to al-Qaeda, because as you've clearly said, it is a non-state phenomenon and unfortunately it may be the beginning of the way things are going to be in the 21st century where we deal a lot more with super-empowered non-state actors, and al-Qaeda – you have to give them credit for what they've achieved. I have no admiration for them but on the other hand, they've managed to attack us at home, they've managed to attack, really, in a broad range of countries around the world in a way that's brought their cause to the attention of many, they recruit, they train, they proselytize, they organize on the virtual space in the internet in a way that's very, very sophisticated, very dangerous, and yet they purvey an ideology that really isn't very popular with the people in the region. It's a very extreme form of Islam. As a matter of fact, most of my Islamic friends said, don't even use the word "Islam" in the same sentence with "al-Qaeda," but the problem is that al-Qaeda views itself as a religious organization in its extreme, but it bases itself religiously. And so, you know, you have to mobilize not just military power against this problem but a lot of other soft power, economic, diplomatic, political, informational, to deal with it. Now a nation state like Iran, on the other hand, because it is a nation state, is more easily deterrable. It's more easily deterrable by the classic elements of diplomacy, military power, political action, etc. And so, on the other hand, it's interesting to look at Iran and see how they sponsored non-state actors in places such as southern Lebanon, eastern Saudi Arabia, southern Iraq, eastern Afghanistan, and I think these challenges will continue to bedevil the next president, and probably the next president after that, for quite a while.

HK: And when you say that Iran is deterrable, help us understand it, because I'm a student of Ken **Woltz** [?], and Ken Woltz didn't worry that much about possession of a nuclear weapon by a country if they could be deterred.

JA: Well, Harry, this whole issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons is one that we all need to have a frank discussion about, and while we discredited the argument to a certain extent because we didn't find a nuclear program active in Iraq like we thought we would, the truth of the matter is small groups of terrorists are not necessarily a problem for a great nation unless they have access of the capability of achieving a breakthrough on the weapon of mass destruction front. And in the Middle East today, in a period of great instability, in a country like Pakistan, for example, you do have to worry about the possibility that a weapon could be either advertently or inadvertently transferred to the hands of extremists, and if they get their hands on it I'm convinced that they'll do everything in their power to use it against us or our interests in the region, and it's actually our worst nightmare to think of a nuclear weapon being used in the 21st century, or a sophisticated chemical or biological weapon. So, this issue about doing everything possible to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in that part of the world, I think, is essential. And so, to think of Iran holding a nuclear weapon is to just add another bit of instability into a region that's inherently unstable, and the Iranian government may very well go through another revolutionary phase and were they to be armed with a nuclear weapon, and in a period of great instability, are they then still deterrable? I'm not so sure, and so, I think when things hold together like they did between the United States and the Soviet Union where you had a balance of nuclear terror essentially that deterred people from using the weapons, it's one thing, but when you proliferate the weapons to unstable states it creates a whole different dynamic that, I think, all of us need to have – when I say all of us I mean the international community – needs to have a frank and clear understanding about where we're heading into the future. And clearly, technologies are such today that it is not out of the realm of possible that you can make a breakthrough.

HK: One of the challenges that the next president is going to be confronted with, and future CENTCOM chairs such as yourself, is this question of, okay, you have a deteriorating state, a failing state, a failed state, whatever, and the choice has to be made between a military – you know, actually taking action, taking military action, possibly invading, but then also worrying about what happens afterward. And this seems like a really big problem for the military to think about, namely to handle the bad guys in a military operation, winning that operation, using the best technology, relying on the revolution in military affairs, but then what happens after that. Talk about the challenges there for the next president and for the future leaders of CENTCOM.

JA: Well, we talked about the four broad challenges in the region but the two immediate problems that the next president will face will be the requirement to stabilize Iraq, stabilize Afghanistan, or should they decide otherwise to begin the process of moving forces out of the region regardless of those two countries stabilizing. Now I think the biggest challenge that everybody has to really understand is that taking a state that is either failing, has failed, or needs to stabilize in a revolutionary direction, in a completely different direction like Iraq, requires an awful lot of time, and it requires building institutions. And you think of our own republic, how long it took us to go from the first shots of the revolution to when we finally ratified the Constitution, and then nearly a hundred years later we still had to fight a civil war to sort all that out in a way that was bad for our own country. So, I mean, these things take time, they're evolutionary, they're slow, they're tedious. You can imagine trying to build a new army in Iraq is a tough, tough thing to do, but you just can't build a new army by handing out weapons, you have to build a new way of thinking. The old Iraqi army terrorized its people, it filled up the

mass graves with innocent people, and the new Iraqi army has to learn how to be a servant of the state. Will they be able to do that? Well, they won't be able to if we don't help them, if we don't try to educate them. And so, you know, there's a certain requirement that the new president will show some patience, will show some courage, and will look out there and say, to what extent is the military overextended, in particular the United States Army, and how can we, over time, relieve the pressure on that military commitment, and also understand that nation building isn't primarily a military responsibility, it's a governmental responsibility that requires the State Department, other agencies of the U.S. Government, international agencies, international partners, non-governmental organizations, to all come together in a way that pull together to allow the place to stabilize. So, clearly we have to internationalize the effort more and we have to put more soft power to play in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Now we put more forces in Iraq in order to gain time and it appears as if it is having an effect and all of us soldiers are very gratified to see that happening, but on the other hand, military forces just gain time for you. You have to be able to move governance forward, economics forward, diplomacy forward, and I think the next president's got to say, are we organized to do that properly. And if not, how do we need to reform ourselves so that we're going to be more effective in the 21st century? Is our State Department big enough? Do our intelligence agencies have enough authority to be able to get the job done? Can we figure out a way to enlist the people in the region to work primarily against the terrorists in a way that we're more behind the scenes as opposed to out front? And so, I can see the new president, whoever it may be, having to fashion a strategy that continues to confront al-Qaeda, that continues to contain Iran, that continues to do its best to stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan but also moves more towards helping the people in the region help themselves, and also still has to protect the flow of oil, and I think that can be done over time with less military force and more other elements of international and national power.

HK: So, in addition – because we hear a lot about how the military is going to need more funds to rebuild, which is undoubtedly true, but you're suggesting that it's really important to build up the other institutions of the U.S. Government that have to be part of the team that solves the stabilization and nation building processes.

JA: Absolutely. A good State Department officer in the field, leading a team of soldiers, people from the Department of Agriculture, people from the Department of Homeland Security, people from all sorts of other agencies of the U.S. Government, is probably worth more than a battalion of infantry, or a brigade of infantry, in many particular circumstances, especially when the country is trying to move towards stabilization like they are in Afghanistan. So, they can't only be about fighting. Fighting has to be part of it, don't get me wrong. I'm saying we're not to the point yet where it's stable enough to move forward without military forces, but there's this belief in some segments of our society that you have to achieve perfect stability in the security situation first before you move the other elements of national power forward, and actually that's not true. You've got to move them all forward together in the right mix, at the right time, and I think we've got to reevaluate how we do that. We should not have an argument about whether there's enough people in the State Department. Now we should have an argument about whether there're enough people in the United States Army. You know, you keep hearing people say, well, there're not enough troops in Iraq. Actually that's not the issue. There are as many troops in Iraq as we can almost possibly have. You are either in Iraq, coming home from Iraq, or getting ready to go to Iraq. And so, the problem that the new president will have is looking at his

land power, the Army and the Marine Corps in particular, and asking himself the question, or herself the question, whatever it may be, “Look, I’ve got this force that’s deployed here, it’s very heavily engaged. I’ve got a force that’s recovering or preparing. Do I have a force that’s ready to deal with the problem that shows up in Iraq, or North Korea, or some other unknown place? Can I deal with the problem in Sudan, a genocide? Can I deal with some other major problem with land power, given the state of stretch of the armed forces of the United States?” And the military leaders of the country need to tell the new president, “Mr. President, we are having some problems here with being able to maintain the force.” And the biggest problem we need to talk about is whether or not these young, professional, non-commissioned officers, and young officers, the majors and the captains, will stay with the team. You can only stay away from home so long, and already this war has lasted a long, long time. So, we’ve got to figure out how to use our forces wisely and either make the army big enough to meet the commitments or learn how to bring the army in the field down and compensate by international and other means of national power. I believe that those are things that we can do, but continuing to stretch the land power of the United States to the breaking point would be a very, very unwise move, but there are options and it can be done.

HK: One of the consequences of our recent experience in the last six years is the burden it seems that it’s placed on the American soldier and the American soldier’s family, and this seems to operate at various levels. For example, our soldier really needs to know a lot. In other words, it’s as if he’s got to work with a handheld computer to direct targets – I’m doing an ideal type here – on the one hand, but on the other hand, he’s suddenly got to put down his computer, go into a community and meet with the city council and help organize. It’s really a heavy burden that may be too much, and that may be why you’re suggesting that we need other parts of the government there.

JA: Well, I don’t think the operational and tactical style is too much. As a matter of fact, when I’ve been, like I say, in the Middle East for nearly five years, up until the point where I retired, and I watched our troops very carefully in very, very difficult and demanding circumstances, and it’s just like you said, Harry. One minute you’re out there fighting the enemy, and you’re fighting ferociously, and you’re fighting to win, and you’re delivering all the means of violence you can to destroy that enemy, and then maybe within an hour or two you’re doing what you need to do to repair a school, or to talk to a local leader, or to deal with some other community problem that’s developed in the area that you’re responsible for. I think our troops have actually done a magnificent job in dealing with those complexities, and that people don’t often understand how tough it is for them, but they’re done very, very well. The problem for them is constant deployments in very, very difficult and demanding circumstances, over time, away from their families, in a way that there’s no opportunity for them to take a decent rest at home and organize their families, etc. It’s clear to me that this problem is going to last for a while, it’s a long-term problem. It’s also clear to me that we’re probably using too much military force to deal with the problems in the region, and while it’s essential that we stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan, in my viewpoint, we also have to understand that it’s essential that we start moving more towards international and other sources of soft power to help out in that respect. In today’s world, which is increasingly interconnected, we’re able to do more, and I think you’ll see whatever president shows up coming to a pretty clear realization that there are other ways to deal with the problem of the Middle East than just military means alone.

HK: In the Iraq war – and you talked a little about this yesterday – there was a refusal by the governing group to essentially mobilize the country, to do all sorts of things to generate a sense of the importance of what the military was doing. Is that a fair assessment, and what can we do about that? I mean, we don't want to mobilize the country so we think the military is the only solution, which you just said we've got to get away from, basically, but on the other hand, we want to be able to support the military in what they do. And here one thinks of all of these horror stories that have emerged about the way our soldiers are being treated, those that have been injured, and so on, the provision of adequate armor for the vehicles. Talk a little about that, because it's a fine line. We don't want to become a military state that sees all of our problems in military terms, but on the other hand, we want the military to have the support they need. It's a political problem.

JA: Well, mobilization of the society to deal with the problem is a political problem, and how we talk about it is a political problem, how we talk to our people about what we need to do and how we organize our bureaucracy. These are all problems associated with political leadership, and I don't think it's fair to say that our political leadership has failed and I didn't mean to imply that yesterday. As a matter of fact, I don't think we're anywhere close to failure. Our belief that our bureaucracy in particular is not up to the task of dealing with 21st century problems, and I think it needs to be reformed, and I think there are many insights that can be provided as a result of our experience over the past seven years since 2001 that would tell us that the State Department needs to be bigger, that the authorities of the Central Intelligence Agency need to be greater, that organizational capability within the rest of the United States Government needs to be brought to bear, and that people such as the young people here at the University of California at Berkeley can be part of this, not just through military means alone. They don't have to join the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine Corps, but they could join the State Department, they could be a member of some other element of the government or they could join a non-governmental organization, people that are building schools, people that are building roads, etc. And as I think of the military community and how deeply engaged in this battle we are, and as I go around Palo Alto, California, or Berkeley, California, it's clear that we're not completely engaged the same way the military community is. How do we collectively share the burden more, if we think it's a worthy burden to share? I personally think that we've got a great, wonderful group of young people who are looking for opportunities to serve the country and we should figure out – and it's just not young people, by the way. It's amazing how many older have asked, "Look, I'm a retired engineer. I'd like to go to Iraq and help out. How can I do that?" Those mechanisms are not easy and we should have that conversation with our people. Okay, how do we get more people to be involved in this problem in the Middle East, if we believe that this is a problem worthy of spending the time and sacrifice necessary to solve?

HK: Let's talk about some of the problems that came up for the institution of the military in the course of the conduct of these two wars, and I want to ask you first about the Geneva Conventions and the question of torture, and how the military can fix things so we don't get isolated incidents like happened at Abu Ghraib again. I know that there was a lot of concern among the JAGs in the conduct of this war about directions that were being taken from Washington that could have possibly sent the wrong signal.

JA: Well, we should be aware of introducing any ambiguity to soldiers in the field, and to the extent that they would read a newspaper article and think that there was somehow or other some change in whether or not we're applying the Geneva Conventions was something that we really couldn't afford to have happen. Look, the United States military does not condone torture. What happened in Abu Ghraib was a huge stain on our honor, and it happened while I was in command, and all of us really rolled up our sleeves after that and said, "Look, we have got to insure that our younger people understand that we've got to treat people – even people that are trying to kill us, that our in our custody – with dignity and respect to the extent that we can, and really, there is no place for torture." I believe that we've got to conduct ourselves in a way that allows us to be able to win this war within our value system, and I believe a vast majority of soldiers believe that, as well. On the other hand, Harry, when bullets start flying, when people start dying, when combat is engaged, it's not easy to turn your mental machinery off and immediately walk away from the brutality of what you just were doing and become a person that can act rationally. So, it's a tough thing. There's no more disciplined force that has ever been fielded than the United States military. We do a tremendously good job in preventing collateral damage. We do take care of people that our in our custody to the best extent that we can, and we absolutely cannot condone walking away from the Geneva Conventions. On the other side – look, whatever orders that we have from our national command authorities are the – these are the orders that we'll follow. But we never received any orders that said to torture people.

HK: Second question – what about the problem of intelligence. And here we have to make a distinction between military intelligence versus the intelligence you're getting from the CIA, and so on. Do we see, or can you suggest to us, any improvements that we should look to in the future, or is this just part of what you've already said, namely putting resources into other agencies of the government?

JA: Well, intelligence is – I believe that intelligence reform is absolutely essential. What we have is an intelligence system that still is more designed to deal with the problems of the Soviet Union than it's designed to deal with the problems of the 21st century, and by the way, our intelligence professionals are incredibly talented and capable people. But if you look at our intelligence bureaucracy you've got to ask yourself the question, even though we've just reformed it recently, whether the reforms have gone far enough, whether we are organized properly for the 21st century. I'm not sure that I have the answers off the top of my head but I do know that this battle against terrorists in particular is more a battle of winning the intelligence war than it is one of massive amounts of firepower. I think we all understand clearly that tromping around anywhere in today's world with too much military power creates the opportunity for people to move towards the terrorist side, or move towards the opposition's side, of an insurgency, for example. And this doesn't mean we shouldn't use military force, it means that we need to use it wisely, and the easiest way to use it wisely is to have an intelligence capability that allows you to precisely target the people that you're trying to go after so that there isn't a lot of collateral difficulties that come up on the battlefield.

HK: Military contracting – it's become an issue, and I guess the question is – there are certain tasks that clearly should be done by entities other than the professional military. How do we walk that path to make sure that excesses are not committed by private military power?

JA: I think in today's 21st century we'll have a problem that is not just going to be one that the U.S. military faces but everybody faces, in that there will more and more people turning to more and more contractors, especially in failed states, especially in areas where difficult situations arise. Now the United States military, by the way, has used contractors ever since the Revolutionary War, and most of our logistics capability for many, many years has been contracted through various private firms, etc. What's relatively unique is the coexistence of armed entities that are contracted by, say, the Iraqi government, the State Department, etc., within the same battle space as American soldiers, and it needs to be carefully synchronized and coordinated. You just can't have so many armed groups moving around the battlefield that are unsynchronized and uncoordinated, and ultimately it creates a dynamic for you that creates a problem that some young soldier will have to solve. So, coordinating contracts, coordinating contractors, is going to be essential but we should not kid ourselves. If we want to have only our military do security related things, we'll need to return to the draft. If we're ready to return to the draft politically, fine, but I doubt very seriously that we are. So, it would pretty much tell me that we're going to have to come up with rules, regulations and ways to hold contracting entities accountable for actions that happen outside the military chain of command.

HK: When I look at your career in preparing for this interview, I see somebody who really, in addition to all of his military successes evidenced by the positions that you've held in the military, is somebody who, through training, and education, and curiosity, basically, had a sense of the big picture. And by big picture I mean not just strategically but also understanding other peoples, understanding their cultures, understanding their language. I'm curious, as a military leader how you – when the tire hits the road, how you adjust to, on the one hand the realities, on the other hand your understanding of the realities, but also your understanding of what the chain of command understands, the people above you. I mean, it would seem to me to be a kind of intellectual and emotional challenge. Talk about that a little, because it's...

JA: Well, it's a very interesting question. You know, as a soldier in particular, you always wonder what the next higher level of command is doing to screw up your life. [laughs] You know, what in the world are they doing to make my life difficult? And you're always convinced that your next higher headquarters is your mortal enemy. But the truth of the matter is that you've got to be able to recognize what the problems are above you, to the right and to the left of you, and below you. You have to be able to have a 360-degree vision of what's going on, in order to make sure that you're successful. But being a soldier is not about making up your mind about what you do. It's also about following orders. Our oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, is also accompanied with the clear reminder that we will follow the orders of the President of the United States and the officers appointed over us, and we do that. And so, you need to study the Constitution, you need to know your legal framework, and then you need to say, when this order is given I will do it within the best of my ability to achieve success within the military means that I have, and I think soldiers at every level have to be comfortable with that, and we are. And if we're not, then the republic has a huge problem. But we believe that the orders that come from our elected representatives are clearly lawful orders that need to be followed. If we didn't think that, then we would have a moral obligation to do something different. But this is a great republic made great by this constitutional framework in which we operate, where people have various responsibilities, ours is to fight and defend the country – fight for and defend the country, and I

think we have done that admirably well. I understand that whenever you commit military forces it creates a dynamic within our body politic about whether it's the right thing to do or not, and it is hard for us to look over our shoulders and look back, like it was during the Vietnam – to look over our shoulders and see how there's so much turmoil and lack of support, but I think we have to know that in the broadest terms the American people support what we're doing for the reasons that we're doing it.

HK: Should we be worried as a country that the means that we deploy in the world might come back and change us, ourselves, and our commitment to the values that we have? Is that something we should worry about, and if so, what should we do about it?

JA: Look, we always need to be thinking about our values whenever we're engaged in anything, either at home or abroad. We know what we stand for, we know what we believe in, we know what our values are, and we need to stay as true to them as possible. On the other hand, we also need to recognize that when we get involved in these great things, that there will be times when terrible things happen, and then we need to have courage enough to be able to say, look, we've got to correct this problem, we can't let this thing happen again. And so, it's difficult, but on the other hand, we can't just be a nation of critics. We need to understand that we're trying to do something to better the world, to make it a better place for our children and ultimately, I think, everybody else's children, and in this globalizing planet people's expectations around the world have raised quite a bit. I can't imagine any other country on earth better suited to help deal with the problems of globalization and steer people in the right direction, knowing we'll make mistakes, than our own. If not us, who?

HK: Joining us in the studio is Professor Tom Barnes, Professor Emeritus of History and Law, and co-director of the Canadian Studies Program at Berkeley. Tom?

TB: Thank you very much, Harry. General, delighted to have you with us here in Berkeley, always delighted to have a Nimitz lecturer but especially an eloquent one and one who is able to field the kinds of questions that I know most people, most Americans, are asking these days. The first question I'd like to put to you would be to follow up on a statement you made twice yesterday, in fact, once at lunch and later on at dinner, about the nature of success in the present conflicts in which we're involved in Iraq and Afghanistan particularly. And as you open up more broadly today, this is a whole region that needs such attention. The question I would have is how do you measure success? They'll be no treaty, I'm sure, at the end, no U.S.S. Missouri, nothing of the way in which we normally would like to finish a war, even if it's at Appomattox courthouse. How will we know, in other words, when we have succeeded?

JA: We'll certainly know when we've succeeded when there's a minimum number of American forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan, where the armed forces of their countries are dealing with the internal and external problems that they're being confronted with, and when the governments of both regimes tend to be much more accountable than they've ever been previously. It is difficult to figure out where you're going to be and how things are going to be appreciably better. You would hope that the economies would be more responsive, you would hope that people would have more of an opportunity to participate in political activity, you would hope that the rights of people are expanded over what they were in the past, but we need to also be careful

about our expectations. We'll have evolutionary change, maybe within a revolutionary context, but we'll have evolutionary change, and one thing that we won't change is the culture. And sometimes we often want these places to become like the United States and it's exceedingly unlikely that Iraq will become an American style democracy, or Afghanistan, but that they can become more accountable, more stable, more representative of their people – I think it's doable, it's possible.

TB: Will we be able to get any kind of acknowledgement from our enemies, who I think are pretty clearly identified, though they are various and varied? Will we be able to get any acknowledgement, any shout of “uncle,” or at least even a whimper of “uncle?”

JA: To be honest with you, I think we'll not hear “uncle” from the ideology of al-Qaeda, not for a long, long time. Al-Qaeda will shout “uncle” like they did in al-Anbar province when the local people started to turn against them. But it ebbs and flows, they're strong in some areas and weak in others, but we should understand that it's an ideological enemy that we face. They have ideas – as terrible as they may seem to us, they're ideas that are attractive to some people in the region. We operate within a system of rules, they operate within no system of rules. And so, I think the struggle will be long, I think it will be hard, I think it will be difficult, but contemplating a world dominated, or even a country dominated, by the ideology of al-Qaeda is to contemplate moving towards this clash of civilization that all of us want to avoid. And so – I mean, we need to understand that this enemy is fighting for domination of their own culture, of their own world, and they're clearly understanding that they need to move American power out of the region in order to achieve that. So, I think it's a long fight, I think it's a tough fight, but I think it's also one that doesn't necessarily need to be primarily military. It absolutely needs to be one that the people in the region take the lead in and I'm convinced that over time that'll happen.

TB: When you mention the war of civilizations, of course you're referring to a book by the first Nimitz lecturer, Sam Huntington at Harvard. You don't believe in the war of civilization, I assume. In other words, you believe the possibility or the potential of – you don't see us in a war of civilization now.

JA: I think we are at the far edge of it where it could become that way if everything goes just wrong, and I think our object should be to avoid it at all costs. Now I think we can. I believe that these extremist groups are exactly that, they're extremist. They're not mainstream. But we need to look at history and we need to think of other ideological movements that were extreme and extraordinarily violent that somehow managed to mutate into the mainstream. It happened with the Bolsheviks in Russia, it happened certainly with Nazis in Germany and the fascists in Italy. It's important that we keep our eye on this ideology and if it starts to become mainstream I think we've got to redouble our efforts to insure that it does not become ascendant. The good news is, Tom, that the vast majority...

TB: Yeah, I want the good news. [laughs]

JA: And there is good news, and the good news is the vast majority of people in the region, when they have a chance to examine al-Qaeda's ideology, when they have an opportunity to live under al-Qaeda's banner, they come to the conclusion that that's not what they want. And in the

long term it's up to the people of the region, of course, but I think they won't turn towards this dark ideology.

TB: Good.

JA: But it's not a done deal.

TB: It's not a done deal. What can we expect of our allies? NATO began when I began, as a sense of being, in other words in the late '40s and early '50s when I was 20 years old. This seemed to me to be a great hope. Of course, it was directed at the Soviet Union. We don't know where we stand entirely with the Russian federation yet, but it has seemed to me that NATO has made no real attempt to step up to the plate to be of any assistance to us in Afghanistan, which conceivably, of course, was very broadly based, we were encouraged to cross the board by allies, so called, and the United Nations. Forget Iraq for a moment, although that's another issue. Why? What use – what do we do about this? Can we enlist NATO? Can we be sure that the European countries, which are beset, in fact, by these extremists, are even prepared to risk throwing their lot in with us in this?

JA: Well, it's a great question. As you look at al-Qaeda globally you do worry about their ability to operate within what I would call an intellectual safe haven in Europe. So, it's not as if the European allies, or NATO European allies, are not, as you mentioned, internally bedeviled by this problem because they are. But when you look at Afghanistan it's inelegant to see NATO operating, and what makes it so inelegant is that you have a NATO command led by an American general with all sorts of different nations being able to operate within their own areas, within the rules set by the nation and not the rules set by the alliance. Ultimately in a deadly and dangerous environment such as Afghanistan you've got to say to nations, come to the battlefield and take the orders of the military commander, share the risks, do what needs to be done, or don't come.

TB: Complete the mission, or don't bother.

JA: And so, there's what I would call too many national red cards. It doesn't just happen in NATO, by the way. It happens, even worse, in the United Nations. But I fear if the NATO alliance does not walk away from this red card problem in Afghanistan, it could be their last mission. It's very, very important that all of us stick together, fight together, operate together, and there's no reason on earth why we can't stabilize Afghanistan within the confines of the NATO alliance, and I believe that our Secretary of Defense, Secretary Gates, is working very hard to convince our NATO allies that they need to be part of the team, complete part of the team, and not just sit on the periphery. And by the way, we need to thank our British cousins, our Canadian neighbors, for the terrific way in which they've fought out there, and they've done a great job.

TB: One last question. What are you going to do now?

JA: What I'm going to do now...

TB: You said you don't have any horses out there in Nevada.

JA: No horses in Nevada.

TB: Okay. Right. So, what's next?

JA: Well, I love the great State of Nevada, and that's where my wife and I have chosen to settle and we want to be good citizens in the great State of Nevada. I have all the opportunity to travel around the country and talk to people about the problems that we're facing and how we're doing. We're doing some important work, we're making progress, but we need to have some frank discussions with our own people about how to do better, and I hope to engage in those kinds of discussions, just like we have here at Berkeley.

TB: Thank you, sir.

JA: And in the Nimitz lectureship. I'm honored to be part of that. Thanks.

TB: We're honored to have you.

HK: General Abizaid, I want to thank you very much for coming to Berkeley, being the Nimitz lecturer and appearing on our program.

JA: Thanks, Harry.

HK: It was a great honor. Thank you.

JA: Thank you.

HK: And thank you very much for joining us for this "Conversation With History."

[End of Interview]