

Remarks prepared for delivery by MG Gregg Martin
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The Power of Ideas...Shared

Good morning and thank you for including me and the U.S. National Defense University as part of this discussion. Fellow presidents and commandants, distinguished guests and visitors, ASEAN partner nation representatives, ambassadors and attachés...

It truly is a privilege to be here and engage with you on such an important topic and focus area—coming together to share ideas on how we can learn from each other in order to provide a better quality and rigor of education to our students, both individually and collectively.

What I would like to do with my remarks is talk just a bit about what distinguishes NDU as an institution of excellence. In three words, it is: BREADTH...DIVERSITY...LOCATION.

We were founded, ultimately, to help build the leaders of tomorrow through enhancing their strategic and analytical thinking skills. Thus, to most of the outside world, we are measured by our output: our graduates. It is they who make NDU known when they return to their parent Services, Combatant Commands, agencies, companies, and even service to their respective nations—many of whom are represented here today—showing by example...the quality advanced education, professional leader development and scholarship they engaged in and received while attending NDU.

But they do not achieve this on their own...rather, they benefit from an integrated and complementary network of campus support that includes the NDU Foundation—an organization designed to interact with industry leaders and support NDU with financial assistance...our Board of Visitors—a group of senior US Government officials and private sector leaders who oversee the governance and policy leadership, and ensure the academic integrity and quality of the University is maintained at the highest possible levels...and of course our true strength—our incredibly diverse and talented faculty and staff.

They are the ones who do greatness behind the scenes, out of the limelight—a team...a joint, interagency, international, public and private sector, partner and ally combined TEAM...a creative and innovative team that defines “synergy”, the combination of experience, professionalism and knowledge being greater than the sum of its individual parts.

I firmly believe that the power of creativity...the power of ideas...comes not from maintaining pre-established “cylinders of excellence”—some call them stovepipes—but rather by open and honest communication and collaboration; in other words, sharing those ideas and joining with other institutions of the US Government and our partner nations abroad as we are doing here today, to ensure we are flexible, agile and able to adapt to the ever-changing and dynamic

security environment. Being receptive to change is what makes this team work so wonderfully, particularly given the current regional and global strategic and fiscal environment.

But what must and will never change is our enduring commitment to excellence...to the values, ethics, and moral bedrock...which we cherish and build upon at this vital moment in history. I firmly believe in underscoring the importance of education in what our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Marty Dempsey, refers to as the continuing profession of arms.

I wholeheartedly believe in the sacred element of trust, jointness bringing strength from diversity, values, mission command and leadership. Perhaps of most unique application for NDU, is the concept that as “learning institutions”, it is imperative that we learn from history so we can better see ourselves...this, in turn, will enable us to promote the knowledge, skills, attributes and behaviors that define the profession and develop our future leaders.

We educate, develop, and inspire strategic leaders through a comprehensive and collaborative academic experience to anticipate and confront national and global security challenges.

- Education is our business
- National Security is the focus of our business
- Leaders are the essence of our business

Leaders—men and women of wisdom, strength and character...innovative, imaginative and disruptive thinkers who will personally lead the charge in the United States and their respective countries to find new ways to integrate military and civilian, foreign and domestic, public and private sectors...new ways to leverage and synchronize the wisdom, knowledge and experience present in the disparate parts of our national and international security structure, forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones...all coming together to overcome shared and transnational threats and challenges to our collective national security.

BREADTH and DIVERSITY...I’ve told you about our faculty, staff and support organizations, but we are also extremely fortunate to possess these two qualities in our student body...Just recently, I got to participate in two ceremonies that highlighted this incredible strength of our University: one an event welcoming our International Fellows at the beginning of their academic year...and the other honoring three distinguished graduates who have risen to senior leadership positions in their country and who contribute to national, regional, and international peace and stability...by inducting them into our International Hall of Fame.

The International Fellows Program is a vital cornerstone and adds a special dimension to the National Defense University and its purpose... It enriches our educational environment by learning how others see us, thereby sharpening our focus on how we can see ourselves...It extends and deepens the professional qualifications of military leaders of allied and friendly nations... It educates our American students and our own institutions about the countries, military forces, and regional affairs of our International Fellows...

And, most importantly, it establishes enduring friendships, mutual trust, and strong confidence between the U.S. and all participating nations—at the person-to-person and family-to-family level...enabling NDU graduates, for the rest of their lives, to pick up the phone to call a friend...thus cutting through complex layers of red tape and bureaucracy, and to operate at the speed of trust. Since the initiation of the program in 1984, over 840 Fellows from 100 different countries have graduated from this University...all coming together to contribute to the sum of strategic knowledge.

Thus, in a seven-day period, I was honored to host the International Fellows Welcome Reception, in essence celebrating the start of this relationship...and then participate in a ceremony designed to further cement this relationship of friendship, camaraderie, partnership and TRUST...a reminder of the excellence of our students and epitome of two of our primary themes:

- 1) Our graduates are our credentials.
- 2) Once NDU, always NDU.

BREADTH...and DIVERSITY—two concepts which are intrinsic and underpin the true strategic value of the scholarship and sum of academic experience that takes place at NDU...and as I look around the room right now, I see such amazing potential to tap into and continue such an approach as we cooperate and collaborate on our common purpose: Building a bridge to the future, emphasizing the uniqueness of each of our countries' existence, but then sharing, collaborating and integrating our unique capabilities and capacities to become a stronger team...together. Each of us sitting here are key, vital elements and support pillars of that bridge!

NDU is the premier U.S. national security institution, focusing on bringing these elements together to complement and synergize the delivery of advanced joint education, leader development and scholarship...all taking place with a proximity to national and international power centers that is unmatched...thus, the third leg in the triangle: LOCATION.

In the United States, as we commemorate the 200 year anniversary of the War of 1812, we are reminded of the role Fort McNair—which is the military installation in Washington, DC, where National Defense University is located—played in our nation's history. Fort McNair was built over 200 years ago to protect a fledgling capital and nation from invasion. Its defenses were traditional—training for soldiers, stockpiles of arms, and fortifications to hold the enemy at bay. It was responsible for the physical defense of our nation.

Today, Fort McNair is still responsible for contributing to the defense and security of our nation...we continue to rely heavily on the soldiers—and sailors, airmen, marines, coast guardsmen and civilians who populate the base. But the battlefields have changed: the spread of weapons of mass destruction...an entirely new domain for warfare to be waged—cyber...globalization...poverty...a 24/7 news cycle where information flows at the speed of light...multi-polar and non-state actors, etc.

So as today will serve witness, we now focus on the mental aspect of defense and security...thus, the main battery of weapons in our arsenal is now...ideas.

So it falls to institutions like the 5 colleges, multiple research centers and special components that comprise NDU to help us understand the world as it is...to develop the capacities that we need to confront the emerging danger...and to forge the relationships today that we will nurture and rely upon tomorrow.

Situated in the heart of our nation's capital and a literal and figurative crossroads of international diplomacy, development and defense strategic thought, we must draw upon this interplay and conversation...we must understand different languages...we must understand different cultures...we must study determined adversaries...we must seek new ways to develop cooperation and collaboration.

Thus, three words: BREADTH...DIVERSITY...LOCATION.

The totality of the experience at NDU—lifelong learning, cultivating personal and professional relationships to imagine, create and secure a stronger peace...to improve knowledge-sharing, facilitate whole-of-government and whole-of-society interdependence, enhance the capabilities of the international community, and expand the confederation of educational institutions supporting critical thinking and strategic decision-making.

That is the education that takes place within the walls and halls of our University where civilians sit shoulder to shoulder alongside soldiers in the classroom.

Each person who passes through our University will play a different role in our collective security—some will wear a uniform, whether in the U.S. or abroad in our partner nations' armed forces...some will be diplomats...some will work in the private sector.

Much as the individual components of a string quartet are wonderful instruments that can make beautiful music as solos...when they come together and play in harmony, literally and figuratively playing from the same sheet of music, they are infinitely better.

Now increase the size of that group to the 117 International Fellows from 66 countries across the colleges and campuses at NDU—can you imagine the strength and power of that orchestra! What if we multiply that by all the international centers of educational excellence we have represented here—what a symphony!

Coming together to complement each other and leverage each others' strengths to best achieve the greatest synergistic effect through the sharing of ideas—military and civilian, foreign and domestic, public and private sectors.

At this point, I am reminded of a quote by the former Prime Minister of England, Tony Blair, when he addressed the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington a while back:

“It is as much by the force of ideas as the force of arms that we will secure our future. And the principle idea is this—that people of different faiths, cultures and creeds can live together peacefully.”

Thank you all for including me in this extremely important conference and allowing me to participate in the greater dialogue. I personally extend an invitation to each of you to come to Washington, D.C., and see for yourselves...but be prepared to be engaged...because we want to learn as much from you as you hopefully can from us!

Thank you once again!