

CHAPTER VIII

CLOSING REMARKS

Closing remarks were made by General Tommy R. Franks, United States Army, Commander, United States Central Command; Ambassador Maureen E. Quinn, United States Ambassador to Qatar; and Major General Hamad bin Ali Al-Attia, Chief of Staff, Qatar Armed Forces. The remarks follow in the order of their presentation.

Closing Remarks of Commander, United States Central Command

General Tommy R. Franks, United States Army
Commander, United States Central Command

Thank you very much. General Al-Attia, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to be here for our second environmental conference. A lot of work has been done, and I think much work remains. I feel as though we are all in the debt of Miss Alina Romanowski for the work that she and her team have done to bring this about. We say thanks to you and your team for your efforts. You have been quite professional. For our own Secretary of Defense, we are honored to have you here, thank you very much for being with us as well. For the delegates of the GCC and Jordan, we are honored that you have seen fit, and that your governments have seen fit to have you participate in this conference. It is important to all of us.

When we think about the things that can happen to us, man-made or natural, it seems to me that one of the purposes of our governments is to provide for the well-being of the citizens from each of the states represented here, in this region. What better way to do that, than to have all of us come together. It seems to me that we need to do this frequently, once a year or every two years, to think about the sorts of problems we might have with the environment in the future, and to think about how we can share information in order to be able to address those disasters. We also need to

discuss at some point how we can share capacity, and how the nations in this region can share their capability to assist the citizens of perhaps other states in the region to be able to overcome environmental issues.

Going back several years, I remember a discussion I had with General Tony Zinni, my predecessor in this job. I asked him what he saw as the principal threats in the region, and what he saw as the things United States Central Command should be working with states of the GCC to think about and at some point hopefully to help resolve. It would surprise no one in this room that General Zinni looked at me and he said, "Well, one of the things that we are going to have to continue to worry about is terrorism." And I think it would come as no surprise to anyone in this audience that a second point General Zinni made was: "We are going to have to continue to watch Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the proliferation of those weapons." I will not go through the rest of the things that were on that list. But I will say that prominent on that list was environmental considerations.

It seems to me that some good progress has been made because we have gotten to know one another in this room. We have some appreciation of the capacity to handle environmental disasters, in this room. We have agreed to meet to try to determine a way ahead to make us more competent and better at handling environmental problems. All of that seems to me to be big progress. I have been very impressed with what I have seen here this afternoon. It has marked and laid out a potential way ahead for us to move toward in making our capability to both understand, and perhaps predict how to certainly respond to environmental issues as they come up. The list of potential environmental issues as it has been described this afternoon, is a long list. It seems to me that we are off on the right foot, to be able to move forward.

Now how we move forward and how we use the Executive Committee two to three times over the next year-to-eighteen-months, needs to be figured out. We need to determine if we want to establish a Regional Coordination Center, where we can have full-time people, perhaps with a rotating chair, to be able to manage and think about environmental issues in the years ahead. That is work that we are going to have to finalize and work that we are going to have to do. The commitment that I will make is that the United States Central Command, our Department

of Defense and my own country will continue to work with you, to move at a pace and in a direction that seems appropriate to this group.

I am honored to be here. I am especially honored that His Highness Sheikh Hamad would permit us to be here and that General Al-Attia would facilitate this environmental conference in such a lovely venue. Sir, it is an honor to be here with you. We are in your debt. We thank you very much. Much has been gained, and we look forward to continuing this process.

Closing Remarks of the Ambassador of the United States to Qatar

Ambassador Maureen E. Quinn
United States Ambassador to Qatar

Good Afternoon. Your Excellency General Al-Attia, General Franks, friends from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Jordan and the United States.

I want to start by saying congratulations. General Al-Hinzab, General Ali, Alina Romanowski, Heads of Delegation, I really am impressed with the work that you have done in the past few days. I realize that I probably should not be too surprised, because certainly the experts who have come together over the past few days, the experts in this room, are a treasure for all of us in the Arabian Gulf and in the Arabian Gulf's partnership with the United States.

In some ways it is simple. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the land we live on are the precious resources of this generation and the generation to come. As mentioned in the closing presentations today, people too are key to Environmental Security.

Assistant Deputy Under Secretary Bowling challenged you at the opening of the conference to allow these workshops and sessions to lead to cooperative action. I want to underline action.

Under Secretary Bowling called for:

- Shared regional objectives
- Indicators and warnings

- **Regional command and control**
- **Training and exercises**
- **Multilateral ways to address and fight disease, and finally**
- **Building a framework for a regional approach**

Listening to your summaries, that is what I have heard. Congratulations on your success in meeting his challenge.

Still regional cooperation is more easily said than done. Your efforts to work together on a framework for action will take time. You have committed yourselves. As you go forward, there will probably be a lot of process. Process is not always fun. Yet we recognize that there is a value in the substance of your discussion and in the process of your getting together regularly.

What makes the process work and the substance so valuable is Omanis, Saudis, Emirates, Kuwaitis, Jordanians, Qataris, and Americans planning joint activities, future contacts and cooperative efforts.

Congratulations on your accomplishments, and we look forward to much, much more.

Closing Remarks of the Chief of Staff of the Qatar Armed Forces

Major General Hamad bin Ali Al-Attia
Chief of Staff, Qatar Armed Forces

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficent.

General Franks, I would like to welcome you here and thank you for your presence, which is an indication that you and United States Central Command are very interested in this conference.

Your Excellencies, the leaders, ladies and gentlemen, dear guests, we are now close to the end of our conference, which has lasted three days, during which we have explored several points of view, and exchanged information, facts, and expertise among the participants and experts.

Six working groups were formed during this conference. Each one of these groups discussed a specific topic. Some of these topics relate to the future in the 21st century and the way to manage the environment and protect it; others dealt with training and joint exercises, and another group discussed establishing a command and control center and the exchange of information. I would like to thank you for your serious contribution to this conference, which indicates your sincere interest in the best methods for environmental protection. We listened to the results of these working groups, and we noted the recommendations that are evidence of your interest.

Brothers and sisters, the responsibility for protecting the environment is not limited to one group or one authority, but is the responsibility of all individuals in every society. We are all required to make the extra effort, to find the most suitable method, to adopt the rules and regulations that help make this task easier. Finding these methods will come only through working, holding seminars and conferences, and exchanging expertise. This expertise should then be developed practically by establishing joint centers that take care of the environment. Your opinions, as expressed by the recommendations of this conference, deserve the greatest attention from us. We need to take them seriously and seek to implement them.

Dear guests, we were happy to have you in your second country, and we hope we were able to facilitate your task during this conference. We look forward to seeing you on other occasions in your second country, Qatar. I would like to sincerely thank you for accepting our invitation and attending this conference. Thank you as well for your active contribution to the success of this conference.

I would like to give a special thanks to our friends at the United States Central Command, the National Defense University, represented by the Near East-South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, and the United States Army War College for their active participation in the preparation, planning, and management of this conference, in cooperation with the officers and individuals from the Qatari Armed Forces. Also, I would like to thank our brothers from the GCC countries for their presence and support of this conference. I will not forget thanking all the participating brothers from all the ministries, establishments, and governmental and non-governmental

administrations in the state of Qatar. I would like to make a special mention of the active and distinguished female participation in this conference.

Your Excellencies, the leaders, and our dear guests, finally I have but to pray to God to bless you all for the good and benefit of your countries and make you successful.

“Say ‘Toil, that God may witness your toil, and his Prophet, and the believers’.” [Qur’an]