

Foundation for Defense of Democracies
Conference | Rising to the Threat: Revitalizing America's Military and Political Power
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Remarks by LTG (Ret.) Edward C. Cardon

Speakers:

Bill Roggio, Senior Fellow, FDD; Senior Editor, FDD's Long War Journal

LTG (Ret.) Edward C. Cardon, Member, Board of Advisors, FDD's Center on Military and Political Power

ROGGIO: Thank you, General McKenzie. And good afternoon. And thank you all for joining us today. My name is Bill Roggio and I am the -- a Senior Fellow with Foundation for Defense of Democracies and its Center on Military and Political Power.

I also have served for more than a decade as the editor of FDD's Long War Journal. The Long War -- FDD's Long War Journal is dedicated to providing original and accurate reporting and analysis on the Long War, or what many people used to call the War on Terror. Our reporting and analysis has withstood the test of time.

We have an interesting mix of readers; military officers and enlisted, State and Treasury Department officials, individuals from a wide range of three-letter agencies, national security professionals, journalists, and just your average citizen who is concerned about the state of the war.

We host an average of two -- 20,000 unique visitors a day. In addition to our reporting and analysis on the war against our jihadist enemies and the states that sponsor them, Iran and Pakistan in particular, we gather information on topics such as air strikes in Pakistan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen, or Taliban-contested and controlled areas in Afghanistan, and al-Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan.

We take that information and we plot it on maps and we provide analysis. This information is occasionally used by U.S. military to conduct unclassified briefings. That makes things easy for them. They don't have to get everyone in a -- in a room together with a classification.

Additionally, journalists frequently use our maps and analysis in their reports. For instance, our map on Afghanistan has been recreated in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, CBS News, CNN, and other outlets. This -- this job is actually going to get a little bit more difficult now that the U.S. military has decided that it's not concerned with the security situation in Afghanistan and they're shutting off the -- the district information.

I believe there's no greater measure of the impact in your work than how your enemies react to you. In 2012, the Pakistani government banned the Long War Journal

due to our ceaseless reporting on the Pakistani military and intelligence service's ties to the Taliban and a host of regional jihadist groups.

FDD's Long War Journal remains banned in Pakistan to this day. I don't think I could have a greater professional accomplishment than that.

We hope that our work will continue to be beneficial to the work that you all do to defend against and deter our enemies, who have proven to be committed in this fight. We must match their commitment with our own.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce our next speaker. Lieutenant General Edward Cardon. A retired three-star general, General Cardon's service to our nation spans nearly four decades, where he honed his profession both domestically and internationally, including work in Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and the Republic of Korea.

I'm personally familiar with General Cardon's dedicated work in Iraq from 2005 and 2006, in the so-called "Triangle of Death," a region just south of Baghdad where some of the fiercest fighting against al-Qaeda in Iraq and other insurgents took place. I embedded in that area right after he left, and it was truly interesting, to put it -- to say the least.

Most recently, he led a task force that helped create Army Futures Command, which is responsible for modernizing the -- the -- the Army. The foundation of this work enabled the reorganization of the Army's command structure and created the Army's first new major command since 1973.

We are pleased and honored that General Cardon also serves on the Board of Advisors of FDD's Center on Military and Political Power.

General Cardon, it is our pleasure to have you with us today. Without further delay, please join me in welcoming -- welcoming Lieutenant General Cardon. Thank you, sir.

(APPLAUSE)

CARDON: Thank you very much. Those -- those lights are bright. Brighter than I thought.

It's been a fantastic day. I've been here all day, and it's really an honor to be here and to be part of the Center on Military and Political Power. And the speakers today have been truly fascinating. I'll do my best not to -- I wrote this speech before I came here, but the speakers today have done a fantastic job of laying some of this out.

But I'd just like to start off with the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy highlighted the rise of peer competitors with different ideologies, the

changing character of war, and the global proliferation of technology. And all of this is going to challenge military and political power.

These aren't neat stovepipes or buckets. They're interconnected and they have wide-ranging and diverse scales of potential competition, but they can be shaped or nudged. In short, we have strategic options. I want to focus today on military power, which to start with is made possible by the tremendous economic strength of the United States. But that military challenge is going -- the military is going to be challenged.

For while many tenets of war remain the same, how and what we execute is going to change. For example, events in the South China Sea, Crimea, Ukraine, and Iraq have all demonstrated different concepts for the integration of both political and military power. There's a lot of different phrases in use. Grey-zone, hybrid war, unconventional war and others trying to describe this changing environment. In addition, the political struggle for influence is continuous and global with the actions of the Russians have showed a glimpse of what's possible using today's global telecommunications and social media structures.

More recently, China's integrating technologies to create what some would say is a surveillance state, and furthermore exporting these capabilities around the world. Similar to the destructive way that advanced concepts and technologies have reshaped parts of our society and economic power, our military power is also going to have to change.

And these actions will challenge our military dominance, especially with respect to asymmetric approaches. We can no longer measure plane against plane; it's now plane against missile, or drone, or cyber, or something else, including strategic artificial intelligence capabilities and human imagination.

The resource struggles over the last decade are well documented, but the ecosystem itself has changed. The speed of change, the rapid proliferation of technology, the theft of intellectual property, the lack of protection of our supply chains, and the state non-state and proxy wars ability to innovate and implement these technologies are here now.

Even if we have a true monopoly on advanced technologies, and we don't, the continued theft of our intellectual property in both the breadth and the scale of both concepts and technology areas continues to weaken our competitive advantage.

It's especially true of our defense industrial base, including through the depths of our supply chains, and the growth of cyber capabilities has enabled theft in ways we only dreamed of 20 years ago.

It's also important not just to view this as a cyber or theft problem, states are using or trying to use instruments within our own economic system to acquire advanced technologies for investments, acquisitions, and mergers.

Furthermore, some states are trying to replicate our innovation ecosystems through education and the leveraging the global search for talent.

And these concepts in supporting technologies all proliferate at internet speed. For we're seeing the integration of concepts and capabilities across the different domains that General McKenzie just highlighted in new ways, both commercially and for the military, but they're all contested. There's tremendous power in the integration in what's being called multi-domain operations. But this integration's going to challenge existing structures, processes and our financial models.

For technology, the use of drone swarms is bringing back the idea of mass with a twist. It's the idea of fast acquisition, maybe even commercial acquisition -- cheap with precision and mass all leading to greater legality. Even with all its problems, artificial intelligence, narrow artificial intelligence, can bring a speed and level to decision-making that's fundamentally different. We already see this in the commercial space now. Military applications are also here and more are emerging. The use of sensors is making it harder and harder to hide, aided by the ability to finally analyze the enormous amounts of data collected by sensors often in some form of machine learning or deep learning.

The sensor counter-sensor competition is going to accelerate when there are single rockets -- talked about today with the Congressional panel -- that can launch a global satellite constellation with a high degree of resolution and then sell that data on commercial markets.

Finally, in the last few decades, we've seen more and more hardware moved into software and then connected together in ways not even envisioned a few years ago. And that includes both the information technologies and operational technologies that underpin our society, and by extension, the military.

And that brings me to cyber. Less than 10 years ago, there was no cyber domain recognized by the Department of Defense, and yet today, it's recognized as one of the major threats facing the United States.

When I was the Army Cyber Commander, I quickly realized that cyber power is not proportionate to the traditional measures of military and political power. It evolves at the pace of technology, and there's any number of sources describing that threat and risk, which is only growing as the attack surface will grow with the Internet of Things and 5G networks.

There's this competition between attackers and defenders, and the attackers still have the advantage. Therefore, as a matter of policy, security can no longer be an add-on but has to be integral to the design, operation, and sustainment of software and hardware. And while cyber is a real and growing threat to national security, what concerns me most are the challenges to the ecosystem that created our military dominance.

I spent a year leading the task force that stood up Army Futures Command. One of the conclusions was that the current organizations, current processes, and current financial models cannot deliver the future force. Our organizations were designed, to build and sustain the systems we have, not the systems that we will need in the future.

The best recent examples of tremendous work done by the Defense Innovation Board on software, basically saying that our current organization and talent models simply will not work for the future based on what we already know.

Five to 10-year software acquisition models with associated contracting will not work in an environment that demands constant updating, either from competitors' actions or from actions to maintain advantage. Predicting what the force will need in 5 years from now, based on the fast-moving pace of technology -- if we knew that information technology, we'd all be rich -- requires a level of future understanding that is almost impossible.

So what to do? And this is what I like about FDD. First, there are hundreds of studies and reports within the Department of Defense and more are generated every year. The first step is to focus on the implementation of what we already know. Implementing the recommendations from the Defense Innovation Board's study on software acquisition and practices, as general -- or, as Representative Thornberry talked about -- would be a great step forward.

We need strong steps to protect our intellectual property. This includes academia, commercial companies, government, et cetera.

Associated with the effort would be all the work done on supply chains, highlighted in MITRE's Undelivered -- Deliver Uncompromised report for delivering these frameworks to secure our supply chains as essential for military power.

In short, we need to take steps that are focused around gaining and sustaining competitive advantage. We need not to just sustain but reinforce the most agile technological development system in the world, and that is the United States. We should not be afraid of competition. We should out-adopt, out-innovate our competitors at scale, for that is the critical element for both political and military power.

Thank you all for coming, and I appreciate your time today. Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)