

Welcoming Remarks
Major General Harold A. Cross
Adjutant General of Mississippi
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Good morning ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of Governor Haley Barbour and the almost three million Mississippians, welcome to the Hospitality State and this great educational institution, Mississippi State University.

I command the thirteen thousand members of the Mississippi National Guard, over ninety percent of whom have been deployed since September 11, 2001, in the fight to win the global war on terrorism. It is very refreshing to be a part of this conference. The discussions and analysis of our most vulnerable and probable terrorist's targets are an integral part of developing effective strategy for victory in this conflict.

We must be very aggressive in this fight, committing our best minds, our fiscal resources and our top strategists to an effort which by definition is nebulous. The enemy is not a nation state but pockets of organized terrorists who seek sanctuary in almost every part of the world.

In this conflict, we must also ponder hard lessons learned from our past. We may have forgotten that the nightmare of World War I could have been prevented by stern resistance to Prussian militarism in 1913. We should remember that the Holocaust of the Nazis could have been stopped by a firm stand against Hitler in the late 1930's; that millions were saved from the carnage of the Gulag and the firing squads of the Russians and Chinese because of the sacrifices of the cold war and the threat of nuclear weapons.

If the international community uses the correct synergy in this effort, we might spare our future generations from growing up only to be murdered by terrorists. It is too painful to re-learn these same lessons from war, as Lincoln referred to as "that terrible arithmetic" and Thucydides called "the harsh schoolmaster". We must chart, together, the uncharted waters of the global war on terrorism.

So let's study in refined detail the vulnerabilities of the Malacca Strait and the best ways to make it safer. Let's consider all other "choke points" which, if attacked, could render us pale and anemic in response. Let's make every effort to protect the free world and the great freedoms that history has bequeathed to our care.

Thank you again for your visit to our beautiful State.