

**Remarks by Secretary Eric K. Shinseki
Lockheed Martin
Council for Asian-American Leaders (CAAL) National Conference
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I am honored to join you and Lockheed Martin in today's leadership dialogue. Congratulations to CAAL for your incredibly important mission of helping develop Asian-Americans, who have the skills, knowledge, and attributes, to help lead Lockheed Martin into its future.

Inspired and inspiring leaders have uniformly defined competent organizations, something we in the military tend to spend considerable effort on—strong leadership, not just at the senior level, but throughout the breadth and depth of the entire organization. No single-point failures are permitted in competent organizations. The organization must be able to absorb the periodic absence or loss of key leaders and still perform its missions. If you want to grow competent organizations, you have to be willing to spend the resources—time, people, money—growing competence throughout the leadership ranks.

In a week, this nation will honor its war dead on Memorial Day and recommit itself to never forgetting the sacrifices made by those who have worn our nation's uniforms, and their families. Their gifts to us are freedom and liberty—two words that we sometimes take for granted. The one constant in our 234-year history has been Americans who serve with great courage, determination, and distinction—as both servants of the people and saviors of the nation.

Your conference theme, "Excelling in the New Reality," is appropriate to the times we live in: two wartime theaters of operation; two more attempts by terrorists to strike the American homeland; an economy that, just now, is beginning its recovery after nearly a year at the brink of collapse; and a nation in search of energy, education, healthcare, and immigration policies that are needed to shape its move to the future. The trust and confidence of the American people, as has been true for every major national undertaking in our history, is paramount. Trust and confidence of the American people—it is what fuels our economic engine. People getting up to go to work each morning, putting their children in school, riding public conveyances and driving on our roadways, to produce goods – services – ideas that keep us the great nation that we are. Trust and confidence...

There is something called the "Soldier's Creed." And while it originated in the Army, all in uniform who hear it nod in affirmation of the truth it resonates—no matter the service, no matter the uniform, no matter the country. There are four key lines of the longer creed that have become signatures of the military profession. It goes like this:

- I will always place the mission first.
- I will never accept defeat.
- I will never quit.

- I will never leave a fallen comrade.

Four simple declaratory statements. To some, these may appear as no more than nice sounding words that roll easily off the tongue. But to Soldiers, they mean much more. These are promises really, from each Soldier to others on the team, about what can be expected in performance and behavior on the worst of days. They are foundational to the trust that must exist: Soldier-to-Soldier, leader to led, unit to unit, and the military to the American people.

Trust is what keeps high performing organizations operating effectively in the midst of crisis. Without inspired and inspiring leadership—leadership that listens well, communicates even better, and evinces a high order of integrity and honor—trust is often sought, but not always granted. Developing leadership is about growing that kind of trust.

As a Sansei, a 3rd generation American of Japanese ancestry, I applaud Lockheed Martin's emphasis on developing the leadership of men and women, whose cultures are rooted in more than 40 countries—from the Pacific Ocean to the Pacific rim; from the two most populous nations on earth, India and China—one, the largest democracy and second largest Muslim nation in the world, the other, the largest communist state—to the 600 islands of Micronesia, where just 110,000 people are scattered across an ocean expanse five times the size of France—and to Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation and fourth most populous country, which, if we were to overlay its archipelago of 17,000 islands across the United States, would stretch from New York to California.

Today, some 16 million Americans claim Asian-Pacific American heritage. Their personal histories are linked to one of the most diverse regions of the world—a unique meld of nationalities, cultures, languages, dialects, religions, and ethnicities. America is the most diverse nation on earth, and Asian-Americans are a microcosm of that national mix.

But despite these differences, we do share some things in common. For one, we are the offspring of those, maybe even some here, who left distant homelands for essentially the same reason that millions of others continue to arrive on these shores today.

America is a nation of immigrants, not entirely, but largely, a nation of immigrants who journeyed here from every corner of the globe in search of a better life. Their quests sought justice, equality, peace, and freedom—in many cases, principles not available to them at home. But above all, it was the promise of opportunity that was compelling.

Asian-Americans have enriched our country beyond measure—in science and technology, in medicine, education, the arts, sports, fashion, in business, and in government—but nowhere, more so, than in the profession of arms. Today, almost 90,000 Asian-Americans are serving at home and abroad in our active and reserve forces.

The first recorded history of Asian-Americans fighting for this country came in 1815, when Andrew Jackson wrote of “Manila-men” fighting to defend New Orleans. Since then, Asian-

Americans in uniform have written boldly across the pages of our military history and advanced our social well-being at the same time.

When America was plunged into the crucible of World War II, nowhere was the attack on Pearl Harbor more keenly felt than by the Japanese community. Despite suffering discrimination, second-generation Japanese-Americans formed all “Nisei” units, which today have attained near- legendary status—the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service.

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team—the famed “*Go for Broke!*”—remains, today, one of the most decorated combat units in the nearly 234-year history of our nation. A unit that averaged little more than 4,500 Soldiers at any one time, earned seven presidential unit citations—five of them in one month—and an incredible 18,143 individual awards, including 9,486 Purple Hearts and 21 Medals of Honor. All this from a unit that existed, then, for a little over three years, unlike other storied regiments which trace their lineage back to the American Revolution. Starting with a member of the 442nd, I’ll share with you a few stories to illustrate the heroism and leadership provided by Asian-Americans during the Second World War.

Near Seravezza, Italy, his unit pinned down by grazing fire from the enemy’s mountain defense, Private Sadao Munemori launched 1-man, frontal assaults, knocking out two machine guns with grenades. Withdrawing under murderous fire, and showers of grenades from other enemy emplacements, he had nearly reached a shell crater where two of his buddies sought cover, when a grenade bounced off his helmet and rolled toward his comrades. Pfc Munemori rose in the midst of withering fire, dived for the grenade, and smothered its blast with his body. For his actions, he was posthumously awarded our nation’s highest military award for valor, the Medal of Honor.

In Bataan Province, a young Philippine scout named, Jose Calugas, observed a friendly artillery battery being bombed and shelled by the enemy and one gun being put out of commission, when all its cannoneers were killed or wounded. Sgt. Calugas, in another battery, voluntarily sprinted across 1,000 yards of fire-swept terrain to the disabled gun. Under heavy enemy artillery fire, he quickly organized a volunteer squad and put the gun back into commission, effectively returning fire against the enemy—forcing a cessation of their activity. For his bravery, Sgt. Calugas was also awarded the Medal of Honor.

Viewed as “indistinguishable” from the Japanese, Korean-Americans were also classified as enemy aliens at the beginning of World War II. During that tumultuous time, the Army assigned one Korean-American officer to the all-Nisei 100th infantry battalion. But, because Korea was then under Japanese occupation, Lieutenant Young Oak Kim was offered a reassignment—his superiors were afraid he wouldn’t mix well in an outfit made up almost entirely of Japanese-Americans.

Kim’s response cuts to the heart of our national identity—of who we are, how we define ourselves, and how we measure our worth. Refusing the transfer, Lieutenant Kim asserted that, “there are no Japanese or Koreans here. We’re all Americans and we’re fighting for the

same cause.” Kim stood on principle. He argued for what was right and challenged the assumptions. We are all the better for it.

Kim went on to serve well at the Battle of Anzio, where the U.S. Fifth Army was pounded for two months with an intensely heavy volume of fire as it tried to hold onto a 10-mile strip of beach. The pinned-down Allied forces desperately needed intelligence about the enemy to enable planning for a breakout of this beachhead. Then-Captain Kim volunteered to go behind enemy lines, alone. Creeping along drainage ditches, crawling through heavy briar and across 250-yards of wheat fields, he captured and disarmed two enemy soldiers in broad daylight, all the while hearing the talk and laughter of other enemy soldiers just yards away.

Fifth Army obtained the intelligence it needed to move forward in their drive to liberate Rome. Fifth Army commander, General Mark Clark, personally awarded Captain Kim the Distinguished Service Cross—our nation’s second-highest award for military valor. Over the course of his career, Colonel Kim would be awarded 18 additional medals, to include two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, and three Purple Hearts.

This is the stuff of legend, and these are but a few of examples of Asian-Pacific American contributions in a war of epic proportions. Within their formations, “uncommon valor was an all too common virtue.” If there is regret, it is that our history books have not yet captured their exploits fully. Their courageous performance in battle would have added so much to the blockbuster stories in “Saving Private Ryan,” and “Band of Brothers,” or more recently, “The Pacific.”

The leadership and heroism displayed by these Asian-Pacific American men—their ability to internalize their missions, their care and concern for their comrades, their willingness to stare danger and fear in the face and not blink, and their ability to inspire and rally others in the midst of devastating crisis, when outcomes hung in the balance—that’s what competent organizations are about—to succeed in spite of the odds, no matter the difficulty. Trust and teamwork are priceless commodities here.

Today, we are gathered in Washington—the seat of government and perhaps the most political city in the world. Here, character assault can be blood sport on some days. Washington thrives on political engagement, sometimes elegantly called, “the art of the possible”—but it is battle nonetheless. Its drumbeats are negotiate and compromise, negotiate and compromise. It’s important to understand those drumbeats. For the most part, they serve a useful purpose. On the other hand, a leader’s professional ethic is about the unwavering demand of duty—the professional responsibility for knowing what needs to be done, knowing how to do it, knowing the difference between right and wrong, and then for cleaving consistently to the right—ethically, morally, professionally.

There was a time when I would counsel young general officers, who were being assigned to Washington for the first time, to try to determine their red lines early. It went something like this: there is a point beyond which the drumbeats of negotiate and compromise no longer

serve a useful purpose, and on that day, you will have to decide to stand on principle. If you fail to do your duty, Soldiers' lives will be even more greatly jeopardized.

Find time during the quiet moments that you control—in the privacy of your office or the sanctuary of your own home—to see your missions and your responsibilities to those, whom you serve, clearly. This is about looking down, rather than looking up. It is far easier to set those redlines early, rather than trying to find them in the midst of the buffeting that's sure to come from those who want to influence your decisions

Right and wrong, honor and integrity were important to the giants in our lives, who sacrificed so much to give us a chance to lead in our time. Most were simple people, who had little education, but they were courageous and understood honor and integrity, even if they couldn't spell them. They came here because this was the great land of opportunity, and in time, they came to understand that it was also the land of the free and the home of the brave. Keep the flame of their dreams alive. Preserve your cultures and traditions in this "land-without-equal" any place else in the world.

God bless the men and women, who serve and have served, in uniform. May god continue to bless this wonderful country of ours. Thank you