

John P. Abizaid retired from the United States Army after thirty-four years, during which he rose from infantry platoon leader to four-star general in the United States Army and became the longest-serving commander of United States Central Command. Equally respected by troops in the field and international leaders, during a distinguished and storied career he commanded at every level, with unique and challenging assignments ranging from infantry combat to delicate international negotiations. He studied and often served in the Middle East, and is widely considered to be an expert in the field of Middle Eastern affairs. During a period of unprecedented challenges to the security of the United States and its allies, he was one of the first to recognize the protracted nature of the conflict against religious-inspired extremists, and in response he reorganized the theatre to fight what he termed "The Long War", a regional struggle unmatched for its complexity and the durability of its problems.

As the Combatant Commander of United States Central Command, he was responsible for military strategy and joint operations in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and Central Asia. Serving fifty-four months in combat zones both as Deputy Commander (Forward), and as the Combatant Commander, he led simultaneous international coalitions that operated in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and the Persian Gulf. He worked to advance enhancement of regional military, counter-terrorist and counter-insurgency capabilities in order to help the nations of the region help themselves against the many threats to stability they face.

At the same time, he was responsible for all military operations and activities in twenty-seven nations in the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and Central Asia, which included protection of the sea lanes in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, operations against piracy in the Arabian Sea, and support of countries throughout the region such as Yemen, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, for example, as they confront local and regional extremism. Concurrently, he oversaw humanitarian operations such as relief for earthquake victims in Iran and Pakistan, and evacuation of American citizens from Lebanon prior to and during the Israeli-Hezbollah border conflict in 2006.

Before his assignments at Central Command, General Abizaid served as the ranking three-star officer on the Joint Staff as the Director of the Joint Staff. In this position he was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Staff, developing military advice for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense on personnel, intelligence, current operations, plans and policy, communications, budget and future requirements issues. During his tenure as Director, the Joint Staff advised the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense on the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, homeland security issues, and all military operations worldwide.

Prior to his appointment as the Director, General Abizaid served on the Joint Staff as the Director of Plans and Policy, J-5, responsible for US military strategic planning and interagency policy coordination. After the attacks of September 11, he was responsible

for initiating and coordinating the rapid interagency and international response for the Joint Staff.

Prior to his tours on the Joint Staff, General Abizaid served as Commanding General of the First Infantry Division, "The Big Red One", headquartered in Wurzburg, Germany, which deployed the first ground forces into Kosovo with NATO's Task Force Falcon and patrolled the streets and countryside of Kosovo until June 2000.

From July 1997 to August 1999 General Abizaid served as the 66<sup>th</sup> Commandant of Cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point. During his tenure, he revamped the military curriculum, reduced hazing rituals, and emphasized realistic military training and leadership principles. The leaders he trained serve today on battlefields around the world.

Prior to his assignment at West Point, General Abizaid served as Assistant Division Commander, First Armored Division, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the first military formation to arrive there to enforce the provisions of the Dayton Peace Accord.

In his earlier career, General Abizaid commanded Ranger Companies in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Ranger Battalions, commanding the latter during the parachute assault on Grenada in 1983, during which a small unit attack he led provided the inspiration for an incident shown in the Clint Eastwood film Heartbreak Ridge. He also commanded the 325<sup>th</sup> Airborne Battalion Combat Team in Vicenza, Italy, which deployed under his command to Northern Iraq in 1991, tasked with providing a safe haven for the Kurdish population, and the 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, which was designated the lead attack element in the aborted invasion of Haiti in 1995. He served as the Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, as a special assistant to General Max Thurman, Vice Chief of Staff, US Army, and in the United Nations as both an observer and Operations Officer for Observer Group Lebanon in 1985-86.

General Abizaid graduated from the United States Military Academy with a BS in 1973. His military education, in addition to infantry basic and advanced courses, includes the Armed Forces Staff College and an Army War College Senior Fellowship at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. His civilian studies include an Olmsted Scholarship at the University of Jordan, Amman, and a Master of Arts degree in Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University.

General Abizaid is a highly decorated officer who has been awarded the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Army Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star. He holds military honors from numerous nations including: Germany, France, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Australia, Afghanistan and Egypt.

General Abizaid was named the first Annenberg Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University in May, 2007. He holds the Distinguished Chair of the Combating Terrorism Center at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

He works with the Preventative Defense Project at Stanford University and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He regularly speaks on leadership and international security through the Washington Speakers Bureau. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and serves as a Director of the George and Carol Olmsted Foundation. He is a member of the Board of Directors for USAA and RPM, Inc. Through JPA Partners, LLC, General Abizaid provides strategic and analytic consulting services to corporate, non-profit, international and government clients.