

# Dempsey vows to maintain, strengthen U.S. Military

*Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service*

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*Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, left, and Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, right, observe the playing of the national anthem during the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff change of responsibility ceremony on Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va., Sept. 30, 2011. Navy Adm. Mike Mullen was succeeded by Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, who became the 18th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff., during the ceremony. DOD photo by*

*U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey.*

JOINT BASE MYER-HENDERSON HALL, Va., Sept. 30, 2011 – Navy Adm. Mike Mullen transferred responsibility as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey during ceremonies here today.

Dempsey vowed to maintain and strengthen the military during his term.

Dempsey is the 18th chairman, and he thanked his predecessor and his wife, Deborah, for their patriotism and friendship.

“Although you’re a sailor and I’m a soldier, in the tradition of the horse cavalry, I want you to know that I will be proud to tell people that I rode with Mike Mullen during some of the most challenging times in our nation’s history,” Dempsey said.

The oath of office Dempsey swore as he became the new chairman is the same all commissioned officers take upon getting promoted or assuming a new position. He spoke of that oath in his remarks.

“You’ve all heard me ... swear an oath to our nation and to the ideals that define it as those ideals are

embodied in our Constitution,” the general said. “The oath reflects the sacred trust that exists between the military forces of the United States and the people of the United States. I will live up to that oath and I will maintain that trust.”

Today, Dempsey said, the U.S. armed forces “are powerful, responsive, resilient, versatile and admired.”

Those soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen provide leaders with a wide range of options to counter threats and crises. “And when sent to do the nation's bidding, we are an unambiguous signal of our nation’s resolve,” the new chairman said.

“Our people -- America’s sons and daughters -- are our decisive edge,” the general continued. “We’ll change and we’ll be challenged, but when I complete my tenure as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I intend to be able to say exactly the same thing: We will be the joint force the nation needs us to be, so help me, God.”

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