

A Conversation with General JACK KEANE

A retired four-star general, John M. (Jack) Keane completed thirty-seven years of public service in December 2003, culminating as acting chief of staff and vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army. As the chief operating officer of the army for four and half years, he directed one million, five hundred thousand soldiers and civilians in 120 countries, with an annual operating budget of \$110 billion. General Keane was in the Pentagon on 9/11 and provided oversight and support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. General Keane played a key role in recommending the surge strategy in Iraq. Currently he is the chairman of the [Institute for the Study of War](#).

In this conversation, General Keane discusses the strategy for the troop surge in Iraq in 2007. Gen. Keane played a key role in designing and operationalizing the surge. What was it? How did it come about? How did Gen. Keane and his colleagues persuade the White House to change course in Iraq? The conversation offers a remarkable account of this momentous event in recent American history.

Keane also offers a vivid, moving account of 9/11 at the Pentagon. In a concluding segment, Kristol and Keane discuss the threats America faces today.

On the Surge, Keane says: “So this is classic urban counterinsurgency doctrine. You don’t run after the enemy as job one, you protect the population as job one. And then in time as the population sees that you’re willing to risk your life to protect them, they actually give you the enemy.”

On America at war, Keane says: “Anybody that knows American military history knows that the American military, actually, in most wars, gets off on the wrong foot, and we sort of figure it out because, intellectually, we’re very adaptable and then we become operationally very flexible as a result.”

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