

UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY

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2024 BRAIN, BEHAVIOR, AND MIND LECTURE:
A CONVERSATION ON WHERE BRAIN, BEHAVIOR, AND
MIND MEET NATIONAL SECURITY

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PRESENTED BY GENERAL PAUL M. NAKASONE, U.S. ARMY
(RETIRED)
FORMER DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

DR. NAIFEH: Hello, and welcome to the 2024 Brain, Behavior, and Mind Lecture, sponsored by the Uniformed Services University's Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, Department of Psychiatry, Center for Deployment Psychology, and Brain and Behavior Hub.

Today, we are using a different format than we have in the past. As those of you who have attended previous events know, our typical speakers are accomplished scientists who present their research. Today, however, we are very fortunate to welcome a distinguished guest with a different background. Retired U.S. Army General Paul Nakasone, who has tremendous operational and leadership experience in national security.

To take advantage of that experience, we will ask General Nakasone for his thoughts on a range of topics relevant to brain, behavior, and mind. We will start with a discussion between General Nakasone and two mental health experts. Then General Nakasone will join us live

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1 to continue the conversation with questions from
2 the audience.

3 Before we get started with the
4 discussion, a little background on the
5 participants. General Paul Nakasone is a native
6 of White Bear Lake, Minnesota. He graduated from
7 St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota,
8 where he received his commission through the
9 Reserve Officer's Training Corps. During his
10 military career, General Nakasone held command
11 and staff positions across all levels of the
12 Army, with assignments in the United States, the
13 Republic of Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

14 In addition to graduating from the
15 Army's Command and General Staff College, General
16 Nakasone holds graduate degrees from the U.S.
17 Army War College, the National Defense
18 Intelligence College, and the University of
19 Southern California. From May 2018 to February
20 2024, General Nakasone served as Commander of
21 U.S. Cyber Command, Director of the National
22 Security Agency, and Chief of the Central

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1 Security Service. General Nakasone retired from
2 the U.S. Army earlier this year. He's currently
3 the founding director of Vanderbilt University's
4 Institute of National Security, distinguished
5 Research Professor of Engineering Science and
6 Management, and Special Advisor to the
7 Chancellor. He also serves on OpenAI's board of
8 directors as a member of its Safety and Security
9 Committee.

10 Joining General Nakasone for the first
11 part of the discussion are Dr. Robert Ursano and
12 Dr. David Benedek, both of whom are
13 psychiatrists, former Chairs of the Department of
14 Psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University,
15 and retired U.S. military officers. Dr. Ursano
16 is the founding Director of the Center for the
17 Study of Traumatic Stress, or CSTS. And Dr.
18 Benedek is an Associate Director of CSTS.

19 Due to some technical problems, Dr.
20 Ursano was not able to participate in the
21 discussion on video, so you will only see General
22 Nakasone and Dr. Benedek. Dr. Ursano will be

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1 participating via audio and you'll hear his voice
2 at the beginning to kick things off.

3 Please note that you may submit
4 questions at any time using the Q&A function at
5 the bottom of the Zoom window. We will ask as
6 many of the submitted questions as possible
7 during the Question and Answer portion of the
8 event. Now I will turn it over to Dr. Ursano,
9 Dr. Benedek, and General Nakasone to begin the
10 discussion.

11 DR. URSANO: Welcome all, to the
12 Brain, Behavior, and Mind Lecture. This is an
13 opportunity, as many of you recall, for us to
14 bring together those interested in brain,
15 behavior, and mind and how it impacts our world,
16 and in particular, our world as related to
17 national security. As we think across the
18 domains of brain, behavior, and mind, we also
19 expand from our clinical care at the bedside to,
20 in fact, the bench, to the community, to our
21 operational settings and, of course, in a global
22 world, so dramatically illustrated to us most

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1 recently by the pandemic.

2 If one were to create a 3X4 grid of
3 brain, behavior, mind, bench, bedside, community,
4 operations, one would have in each one of those
5 squares important and critical questions to us.

6 For the question of care of our
7 community, representing the Department of
8 Defense, soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and
9 their families. Expanding across their
10 developmental life, from early adulthood to later
11 age, as well as spanning across a range of
12 environments, in which the environmental
13 stressors they face can be dramatic and
14 terrifying.

15 It is the hope in looking through the
16 lens of brain, behavior, and mind that we can
17 address both science and look over the horizon to
18 understand what is to come. In order to do so,
19 we invite distinguished leaders in science and
20 operations to help us think ahead about where
21 these areas of behavioral science, in biology,
22 and in mind affect our operational abilities and

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1 our ability to maintain health.

2 Most recently, as you all know, we are
3 moving rapidly with the questions of artificial
4 intelligence, with the issues of global changes
5 occurring, including, at present, a war in
6 Ukraine, with changes in basic science. Even
7 yesterday, publications coming out, which in a
8 marvelous experiment done in rodents, but
9 certainly to be replicated at some point in
10 humans, using microscopic gold particles, showing
11 that if you put those particles into the CSF, the
12 fluid that surrounds the brain, they in fact
13 reach through our neurons all the way out to our
14 periphery of our body.

15 It's a new transport system that again
16 says, and highlights, the brain is connected to
17 the rest of our body and what happens in the
18 brain can affect our body and what happens in our
19 body can affect the brain. Similarly, we have
20 recent findings on biological subtypes from
21 Leanne Williams' laboratory. We have findings
22 showing that altered networks of the brain can in

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1 fact relate to depression and potentially its
2 personalized treatment.

3 So, with that global and broad
4 perspective, we're pleased to have General
5 Nakasone join us today to help us think through
6 the lens of operations, aware to the questions of
7 behavioral science, and what's coming up ahead in
8 the world that he has known.

9 Welcome, General Nakasone.

10 GEN. NAKASONE: Thank you very much,
11 Bob. And thank you, Dave. And really pleased to
12 be here to talk about brain, behavior, and mind
13 as we think about the future.

14 DR. URSANO: General Nakasone, if you
15 could explain to our audience a bit of your most
16 recent career and your new career to help people
17 understand. I don't think many know what being
18 Commander of CYBERCOM and being Director of the
19 National Security Agency actually means. And
20 certainly, I hope to hear about your new position
21 where you're continuing your interest in national
22 security.

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1 GEN. NAKASONE: Bob, I spent 37 years
2 in the United States Army. The last six years of
3 my career were spent as the Director of the
4 National Security Agency and Commander of U.S.
5 Cyber Command. So, what does that mean? Two
6 organizations. I'll begin with the National
7 Security Agency, the largest element of our 18-
8 member U.S. Intelligence community. They're
9 responsible, really, for two things when you
10 think about what the NSA does. We break code and
11 we make code.

12 I mean, that means that we are
13 ensuring that we can break the encryption of our
14 adversaries to understand their most significant
15 thoughts and intentions with regard to what
16 they're going to do. But we also make code; it's
17 the other side of the coin. It's this idea of,
18 think of our most sensitive communications, think
19 of our most lethal weapon systems, like the
20 nuclear triad. The National Security Agency is
21 the element that provides the keys, codes, and
22 cryptography to ensure the sensitivity of those

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1 communications and those transmissions. So
2 that's the intelligence side of what I did as the
3 Director of the National Security Agency.

4 I was also a combatant commander. A
5 combatant commander is one of 11 different
6 commands that are responsible for the war-
7 fighting of our nation. So, I commanded U.S.
8 Cyber Command, the organization responsible for
9 defending our department networks, for ensuring
10 the security of our nation in cyberspace, and
11 also for providing support to our joint force
12 commanders.

13 So, you'd say, wow, there's two
14 different organizations. Why would you do that?
15 Why would one person be in charge of it?

16 Well, the central reason is because,
17 while you have two different organizations, they
18 operate in one domain. And that's cyberspace.
19 And so, if you're going to be really good on the
20 intelligence side or really good on the
21 operations side, you have to be able to operate
22 within that domain. And that's what NSA and

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1 CYBERCOM do.

2 So, leaving the Army on the 1st of
3 April, I'm getting a lot more sleep, I've grown
4 my hair a little longer, I'm enjoying the life as
5 a private citizen and veteran. And the one thing
6 that I wanted to do was to give back. I felt
7 like I needed to pay forward for three plus
8 decades of, really, opportunity that was afforded
9 my way. And I accepted a position as the
10 founding director of the Institute of National
11 Security at Vanderbilt University. And if I can
12 just explain, Vanderbilt University, you're very
13 -- probably very familiar with it. World-class
14 medical school, a world-class law school, great
15 institution that has been in Nashville for many
16 years.

17 The Institute of National Security is
18 based upon this idea that I saw that our
19 traditional way of looking at national security
20 when we thought about it as being, well, we're
21 going to have an ability to defend ourselves
22 because we have two friendly neighbors and two

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1 large oceans.

2 Well, those days I think have passed.

3 And what I saw during my six years at NSA and
4 Cyber Command was the fact that we face a
5 tremendous number of borderless threats. What do
6 I mean by that? I mean, the fact that we have
7 terrorism, cybersecurity, global pandemics,
8 climate change, and fentanyl poisoning that are
9 threatening the security of our nation. And
10 given that, I think that it's time that we look
11 and we approach national security in a different
12 way.

13 DR. URSANO: I very much appreciate
14 your comment on borderless security.
15 Historically, our oceans have protected us. The
16 fact of our internet and the cyber world changes,
17 all of that, where we are more connected for good
18 and ill.

19 GEN. NAKASONE: You know, Bob, I would
20 offer and this perhaps resonates with those that
21 are listening today. It's the 17th of March,
22 2020, and I stand before the U.S. Cyber Command

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1 and the National Security agency workforces, and
2 I tell them that we're going to go to minimum
3 manning. I don't ever remember any time in my 30
4 plus year career in the Army when someone said,
5 hey, this is what you do when you have a global
6 pandemic.

7 But yet that's what we faced. And I
8 think that this is representative of the
9 challenges that we're going to have going into
10 the future.

11 DR. URSANO: As you mentioned, the
12 global pandemic. And it certainly highlights how
13 we are all connected. It also highlights the
14 many losses that we've all experienced. Over a
15 million people actually died in the United States
16 and, of course, I believe 60 million throughout
17 the globe. The experience of loss is one that
18 all leaders have for various reasons in their
19 units and is a common spot in which the issues of
20 grief and recovery become a part of a leader's
21 trying to maintain the readiness of their units.

22 I wonder if you have thoughts on the

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1 pandemic and how you -- and potential losses that
2 may have occurred in your units or their
3 families, and how you maintained the morale and
4 ability to sustain operations during that time?

5 GEN. NAKASONE: I think the --
6 probably the story begins here where we're
7 associated, right? We first became known, Dave
8 and Bob, first came to my attention from a common
9 friend, General Eric Schoomaker. We had lost a -
10 - we had lost a military member at the National
11 Security Agency Georgia, to a suicide. And one
12 of the things when I talked to General Schoomaker
13 was, I really need to better understand kind of
14 the thought process in terms of how we approach
15 both the victim's family and the broader command
16 that I was obviously overseeing.

17 And so, as you'll recall, we went down
18 to NSA Georgia, flew down there, and spent the
19 day. And I think, you know, the lesson that I
20 learned from all of this is the complexity of,
21 you know, what people that successfully,
22 obviously, do here really go through in their

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1 thought process, but also the tremendous loss and
2 sense of grieving that both, obviously, the
3 victim's family and the command go through. And
4 so, it was my sense that what I knew best was
5 being in the center of what was going on to
6 really understand it.

7 You can't read about this. You need
8 to be able to talk to those that are there. And
9 I thought that that provided a really good
10 feeling for me to shape the policies and
11 understandings of what our leaders had to do
12 going forward.

13 DR. URSANO: As you mentioned that,
14 General Nakasone, we were all -- I know, both
15 Dave and I were extremely impressed at the
16 initial all-hands meeting and how you spoke to
17 your people. Your voice and how you spoke to
18 them as individuals was impressive. How do you
19 do that?

20 GEN. NAKASONE: But I think that --

21 DR. URSANO: Do you do that --

22 GEN. NAKASONE: -- but I think that's

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1 what leaders do, right? I mean, I think this is
2 what we're charged to do, particularly when you
3 feel like it's a situation where you're
4 unprepared to really address. And I can't
5 imagine anything more painful perhaps, than, you
6 know, addressing the loss of a soldier, sailor,
7 airman, marine, or family member to a group of
8 folks that have served with them. But I think
9 that there is a transparency and a genuineness
10 that you have to be able to communicate.

11 DR. BENEDEK: Sir?

12 DR. URSANO: David? Perhaps you want
13 to join in?

14 DR. BENEDEK: Yes, I do. Thank you.
15 Sir, I appreciate your sort of reaching back to
16 our first meeting and, you know, lessons learned
17 from that. And I was just thinking about, you
18 know, the military embraces the concept of
19 lessons learned moving forward. And you're
20 moving forward -- I was wondering about sort of
21 senior leadership, lessons learned.

22 As you transition, what are you taking

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1 from your 37 years and, in particular, your years
2 as a leader, into your new position? Because
3 we're concerned about transitions too, and you're
4 in the throes of one, so please tell us.

5 GEN. NAKASONE: One of the things that
6 I found just truly rewarding during my time in
7 the Army was not only serving with a number of
8 the different officers and NCOs that I had the
9 privilege of doing so, but really serving with
10 the special staff that I became fortunate to
11 serve with. So that's -- those are the doctors.

12 Those are the lawyers. Those are the chaplains.

13 You know, I would tell you those that think a
14 bit differently than perhaps, you know, the mere
15 mortals like us that are commissioned from our
16 ROTC or West Point classes and move forward. The
17 reason I say that, because a chaplain approached
18 me about a month before I left service, said,
19 "Hey, Sir, I think you really need to consider
20 that you're getting ready to leave what has been
21 your life for over three decades, and it's going
22 to come to a fairly quick stop." And he was

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1 right.

2 And I think that, you know, when you
3 think about transitions, I think one of the
4 things that I've learned now in retrospect is
5 being able to have both a stop and a start to,
6 you know, how the transition goes. I felt very,
7 very fortunate that I was able to, I think, have,
8 you know, a stop and, you know, a conclusion to
9 my Army career and then an opportunity to start,
10 you know, a new career. I -- I'm a software guy,
11 so I called it Paul Nakasone 2.0, just because I
12 like that idea of just, you know, a new version.

13 And maybe it was based upon the foundations or
14 the -- you know, the fundamentals in the code
15 that was before, but it was something new. And I
16 think that that helped me a lot as I transitioned
17 to private citizen and veteran.

18 DR. BENEDEK: Yeah. I appreciate
19 that, the notion of a -- sort of where you're
20 going, having that figured out a little bit as
21 you approach the stop and not going in blindly.
22 Where you're going, the challenges, some of them

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1 are the same. It sounds like we're still
2 concerned with electronic misinformation, we're
3 still concerned with the types of new and
4 emerging cyber threats.

5 What are you going to do? What's the
6 plan here and what are we looking at as you go
7 forward in this new position?

8 GEN. NAKASONE: One of the things that
9 I do want to do is to really bring together three
10 different elements that I think are very
11 important. One is this idea of you have to have
12 partnerships to serve the -- to solve the most,
13 you know, challenging problems that we have out
14 there. Whether or not it's ransomware, whether
15 or not it's misinformation, whether or not it's
16 disinformation, it can't be done by one entity.
17 I saw this when I was doing election security at
18 NSA and Cyber Command. We needed the FBI. We
19 needed the DHS. We needed the private sector.
20 That's the same thing as we approach our
21 borderless challenges that -- as we go forward.

22 The second piece is I want to bring

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1 together a new generation of folks that are
2 interested in working in national security. What
3 I didn't talk about in terms of the challenges we
4 face right now, it's a huge demographic
5 challenge. It's the fact that the largest, you
6 know, employment surge during our government
7 employment history took place during the late
8 Reagan, early Bush eras. That's over 30 years
9 ago. And so, as those folks begin to move on to
10 the next phases of their life, we need a new
11 generation; but Dave, we also need a new
12 generation of people that understand things like
13 artificial intelligence, that understand the
14 challenges of cybersecurity, and the importance
15 of intelligence for decision-making.

16 So, what I would normally say is
17 something along this line: we need, in the
18 future, policymakers that can code and coders
19 that understand policy. That's the type of both
20 quantity and quality change that we're going to
21 need in our national security force in the
22 future.

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1 DR. BENEDEK: Yeah. That's -- I mean,
2 looking for new types of people is exciting,
3 people with new skills. And, of course, they're
4 going to be few and far between and have other
5 opportunities.

6 What do you -- once we train them or
7 you find them and hire them, or we as a country
8 do, how do you manage or how do you think about
9 sustaining such a workforce? Finding them and
10 starting them is one thing, but keeping them in
11 an organization -- in our organization, what's
12 the key there?

13 GEN. NAKASONE: Let me talk about, I
14 think, the tactical challenge, which is really
15 all about leadership and building the environment
16 that people want to work in. Everyone wants to
17 join really, really good teams, whether or not
18 they're sports teams, whether or not they're
19 medical teams, whether or not they're, you know,
20 cybersecurity teams. And leaders are responsible
21 for creating that environment that, hey, I want
22 to come and work with the best people. I want to

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1 track the best people because we're going to take
2 on the wicked problems that we need to solve. We
3 did that at Cyber Command. We did that at NSA.
4 We're doing that now at Vanderbilt. That's the
5 early portion of, I think, being able to do that
6 work.

7 Here's the broader piece: We have to
8 change -- we have to change our framework. In
9 the U.S. government, we look at our workforce and
10 say, hey, everyone is going to come in for 30-
11 plus years and then retire. Maybe that's not the
12 case anymore. And maybe we need to think about
13 it in a sense of people are going to come for
14 five to seven years, going to make huge
15 contributions, going to go back to the private
16 sector, and then come back in. We're not really
17 necessarily built for that yet, and we have to
18 be.

19 DR. BENEDEK: I -- yeah. That's a
20 paradigm shift of sorts. We're not looking for
21 career civil or contributors, but folks who come
22 and go and give their all when they're there.

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1 And I think that's a -- an interesting goal to
2 strive for, and I look forward to seeing how you
3 are able to do that and maybe role model that.

4 Can you tell us a little bit more
5 about where you think we're going to go as a
6 country? You know, your new job sort of touches
7 on the protecting. What do you see as the big
8 challenge facing -- big challenges facing us in
9 the -- let's say in the next decade?

10 GEN. NAKASONE: So next decade, I
11 think we begin with the pacing challenge of our
12 nation, which is China. There is no nation that
13 I've seen in my lifetime that has the capability
14 to challenge the United States like China,
15 whether or not it's diplomatically,
16 informational, military, or economically. This
17 is a -- this is a nation that is very very
18 focused not only on being able to match us but
19 also surpass us.

20 Here's the second piece that I think
21 that we're going to have to be able to do: We're
22 going to have to be able to manage an

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1 increasingly complex world. Let me give you an
2 example. When I was the Director of the National
3 Security Agency, when I established a -- you
4 know, my -- or took command on the 4th of May,
5 2018, one of the things I established was a
6 series of wake-up calls. And it was the idea
7 that, hey, if I'm any place in the world of --
8 these 10 things happen, just call me because I
9 want to know before the President knows, I want
10 to know before the SecDef knows. I've got a --
11 you know, a degree of self-preservation within my
12 genes that are important.

13 In the first year, Dave, they called
14 me three times. In the last month that I was the
15 Director of NSA, they called me 11 times, 11
16 times in 30 days. It got to the point where my
17 wife would answer the call and she would say
18 really three things: It's for you, it's them,
19 good luck. And that was really, you know, kind
20 of my introduction to this, is a world that's
21 moving much quicker than we could ever imagine.
22 And so, I -- you know, I come back to this idea

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1 of, if China is our pacing challenge, if the
2 world is speeding up, if we're having greater
3 complexity, how do we deal with that? Well, I
4 think we deal with it through -- we deal with it
5 through increased technology. We deal with it
6 through increased partnerships. We deal with it
7 through really, really good strategic leaders who
8 can think critically.

9 DR. BENEDEK: Thank you.

10 And I see that Bob has his hand up, so
11 Bob, I guess the General's comments sparked some
12 more thoughts from you.

13 DR. URSANO: Sure. Glad to jump in.

14 I like your picture about how does one
15 recruit people. It's by building an
16 exceptionally good team that people want to join.
17 Wonderful perspective.

18 Do you have thoughts on how you'll
19 build your team at Vanderbilt?

20 GEN. NAKASONE: Well, I begin with the
21 idea that -- you know, that folks have to
22 understand what the vision and the mission of

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1 what we're going to do. You know, our vision is
2 to become the premier national security institute
3 that serves and continues to support those that
4 are solving our nation's most challenging
5 national security problems. But our mission
6 really is threefold: It's, first of all, to
7 ensure that we, you know, bring together a world-
8 class education; it's ensured that we're able to
9 really innovate in terms of what we need to do;
10 and the final thing is, we have to be able to
11 advise. We have to be able to advise, whether or
12 not that's, you know, the students within
13 Vanderbilt that are thinking about a career in
14 national security or whether or not it's broadly
15 being able to provide advice to, you know, our
16 national security elements here in the nation's
17 capital.

18 You know, Bob, it's 665 miles from
19 Nashville to Washington, D.C. And I don't think
20 many people in Washington, D.C. begin their day
21 and say, hey, I wonder what's going on at
22 Vanderbilt today with regard to national

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1 security, yet, yet, but that's what we've got to
2 be able to do. And our vision is to be able to
3 obviously approach that.

4 DR. URSANO: That's a wonderful
5 perspective, this picture of individuals who are
6 interested in software programming and also
7 national consultation, people that are articulate
8 but also extremely organized and can develop a
9 targeted picture of where one needs to go, a
10 unique population to recruit.

11 GEN. NAKASONE: You know, within the
12 medical community -- and I think, you know, all
13 of us face this as leaders. I -- I'm often
14 asked, "Hey, what's -- what is it that a leader
15 particularly at a senior level needs to be able
16 to convey or needs to be able to possess?" I
17 think there are really three different arcs here.
18 One is, you know, they have to have a vision.
19 And they've got to be able to not only have a
20 vision, but the second point is they have to have
21 the communication skills to be able to -- you
22 know, to convey the vision to a wide grouping of

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1 audiences that understand what they're talking
2 about. And then the third piece is I think it
3 really comes down to this idea of emotional
4 intelligence. Do you have self-awareness? Do
5 you have self-management? Do you have this idea
6 to -- you know, to have empathy? And then the
7 final piece is, you know, can you manage
8 relationships?

9 I would offer to you as a story, the
10 four-stars in the U.S. Army meet four times a
11 year. And there are roughly 10 of us, and 90
12 percent of our time during a day-and-a-half
13 period is spent on succession planning. And we
14 talk about, who are the Colonels that need to be
15 one-stars, the one-stars that need to be two-
16 stars, the two stars that need to be three-stars,
17 and the three-stars that need to be four-stars?
18 And after about my second meeting, I could take
19 an envelope. On the back of the envelope, I
20 could write the names of those that I've thought
21 were going to be multi-star officers, really
22 based on this idea of not only vision and

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1 communication skills, but really this idea of
2 emotional intelligence. There is something
3 there, you know, in terms of what we see and, I
4 think, what we recognize in very, very high-
5 performing organizations.

6 DR. URSANO: How do you recognize
7 emotional intelligence? What do you see in
8 people?

9 GEN. NAKASONE: Well, so I think the
10 first thing I see is, you know -- and maybe this
11 is just my desire to see this, it's a degree of
12 humility. People that have -- you know, are
13 humble people a lot of times have a pretty good
14 self-awareness of what their strengths and what
15 their weaknesses are. The other thing that I
16 also see is this idea of, you know, being able to
17 manage your emotions. How many times have we
18 been in a meeting where, you know, it just is a
19 bit uncomfortable if someone just can't manage
20 their emotions and says something that is so --
21 you know, so detrimental that it really is
22 problematic?

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1 But the last thing that I see is I see
2 this idea of relationship management. And Bob,
3 the way that I see it is really exceptional folks
4 with emotional intelligence can do two things
5 that are really hard to do -- one, they can
6 manage friction. These are the people in a
7 meeting that can get two sides of a different
8 issue together to actually see commonality. That
9 is a huge, huge skill. And then the second piece
10 is -- I see it in terms of the really, really
11 good mentors. Again, my -- perhaps my sample
12 size is fairly small, but really, really good
13 mentors, I think, have really, really strong
14 emotional intelligence.

15 DR. URSANO: So emotional intelligence
16 is something that rings true for us. It
17 certainly is one of the domains in which we
18 operate as we think about emotion regulation,
19 conflict resolution, the ability to be with
20 people and to lead people, these interpersonal
21 skills, as well as internal skills that you're
22 describing. Perhaps some of the -- our audience

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1 will take on as a challenge how to better
2 identify those people so we could capture more of
3 them.

4 GEN. NAKASONE: Well, I think it's not
5 only identifying. You know, the very, very
6 unique thing about EI is the fact that, you know,
7 it can be improved. You know, it can be -- you
8 know, you can work at this idea of being a
9 better, you know, manager of relationships. You
10 can work at this idea of social awareness. These
11 are skills that, you know, are things that can be
12 improved. And that's the piece that I find so
13 very, very, very enlightening.

14 DR. BENEDEK: And these are the things
15 that a mentor can help point out. So, I think
16 you're on target with the idea that skilled
17 mentorship is a sign of emotional intelligence
18 and part of the -- and part of the equation. You
19 know, I appreciate your description of the skills
20 necessary for leadership at the highest level.

21 What about, you know, stress
22 management for the leader at the highest level?

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1 I -- I'm just curious. You know, you've
2 obviously been super successful. You've got the
3 triad, but what do you do to make sure that other
4 things don't get in the way of your -- maximizing
5 your use of those skills?

6 GEN. NAKASONE: Dave, we live in a
7 world that you could fill every single minute of
8 your waking hours with something to do, and we
9 tend to do that now with, you know, our personal
10 devices and our social media and all of that.
11 One of the things that I found that is just
12 critical for, I think, senior leaders to have is
13 this idea of solitude. I read this book by Erwin
14 and Kethledge called *Lead Yourself First*, and it
15 was a historical examination of folks like Martin
16 Luther King or Dwight David Eisenhower or others
17 that found that they needed some moment of the
18 day to think. And that moment of the day to
19 think, that solitude is so critical for you to be
20 able to put perspective in what you do.

21 My own experience was, you know, it
22 was early in the morning for me when I would look

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1 for an hour and it was like, no phone calls, no
2 email. If it was just reading the paper or it
3 was doing a crossword puzzle, or it was something
4 else. It was just a time when I could rely on
5 the fact that I had a bit of control and ability
6 to just think about what was coming at me.
7 That's important. And I think that the other
8 thing is, you know, there is tremendous amount of
9 power to good sleep, good eat -- good eating,
10 good social interaction. Those are things that
11 just can't be replaced, and I found that even
12 more so, the longer that I stayed in the Army.

13 DR. BENEDEK: Yeah. It's, you know,
14 you're really echoing some of the principles of
15 combat operational stress control, and of
16 psychological first aid, the importance of
17 nutrition, rest, simple things, really, but
18 things that can be easily overlooked. And as you
19 say, we have such a 24/7 lifestyle now, that
20 finding that hour seems to be a good reminder.

21 What about the solitude? What is it
22 like at the top and, you know, I worry about that

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1 time being lonely in some ways. Thoughts about
2 managing the isolation of senior leadership.

3 GEN. NAKASONE: Yeah. I think that --
4 that's one of the things that, you know, I
5 particularly found is that I became a Lieutenant
6 Colonel and was commanding a battalion that there
7 weren't a lot of folks that I was able to talk
8 to. And so, I came back to this idea that
9 mentors are hugely important, but also really
10 good friends that, you know, I've had for a long
11 time that I could just talk to that knew who I
12 was outside of the Army, that understood where I
13 came from. Understood what was important to me.

14 Even understood the simple things of what I like
15 to follow. Those are really important relations
16 -- relationships to have, as you find yourself,
17 you know, within organizations that you may not
18 have an ability to talk freely and openly with
19 those that you work with.

20 DR. BENEDEK: Thank you for that. I
21 see -- Bob, your hand is back up, and I don't
22 know if it's --

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1 DR. URSANO: Yeah. Yeah. Glad to
2 join in. I --

3 DR. BENEDEK: Sure.

4 DR. URSANO: I was thinking about the
5 general population, separate from leaders,
6 including soldiers, but actually the general
7 population of the United States. How do they
8 best prepare for what you see coming down the
9 road in terms of the changes, in terms of our
10 information systems, in terms of changes in our
11 seamless borders, where we can experience
12 threats, but presumably, also, senses of joining
13 that you've indicated are important?

14 GEN. NAKASONE: One of the questions I
15 get asked quite often, Bob is, hey, I don't know
16 much about artificial intelligence. I feel like
17 I need to -- I need to learn more. Is there a
18 good book or a primer that I can, you know,
19 approach this with? And in full transparency,
20 I'm a member of the OpenAI Board, and so I'm on
21 the board of directors for OpenAI, and one of the
22 things that I tell people that ask me that

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1 question is, hey, log on and download, you know,
2 if you want to download OpenAI's ChatGPT, please
3 do, but try it. Try and see what it's like, and
4 just have an experience. Much in the same way
5 that, you know, many of us as we first looked at
6 the smartphone and said, hmm, I wonder what this
7 could do? I think it's the same way that instead
8 of from a side kind of looking in, why don't you
9 be part of it and just see what it's like, just
10 to be able to try it. That's the tactical advice
11 I would give.

12 In terms of the broader piece, I do
13 think that we have to think as a society, how
14 these different, you know, innovations are going
15 to fit within our society, and where is it that
16 they are going to fit, and where is it that
17 they're not going to fit? And I think that we
18 need to continue to kind of have that discussion.

19 That we need to have an assurance of safety and
20 security for things like artificial intelligence
21 and machine learning. That we have an
22 understanding of what humans are going to do and

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1 what humans maybe can, you know, seed to
2 machines.

3 And then finally, I think that we have
4 to have, again, coming back to this idea of an
5 understanding that what makes us human is really
6 important. I like to read, and I think that --
7 that's among the most important skills that, you
8 know, that my parents conveyed to me that
9 provided some, you know, some foundation of
10 success for my later life. I think that's a
11 really important piece of just understanding our
12 own, you know, our own humanness.

13 DR. URSANO: It's a fascinating
14 picture working from the inside out as well as
15 the outside in. What would you tell children and
16 grandchildren? I recently saw, actually, Doris
17 Kearns Goodwin, who -- the historian has written
18 a book for children now thinking to reach to that
19 generation as well as here's how these people
20 were when they were children who later became
21 leaders. Well, what do we tell our children both
22 about this changing world and they say, gee, I'd

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1 like to be a General Nakasone.

2 GEN. NAKASONE: Well, I guess I would
3 begin with just this foundational piece, as I
4 said in my previous statement about reading. You
5 want to be a better writer, be a better reader.
6 You want to be a better speaker, be a better
7 reader. You want to be a better thinker, be a
8 better reader. It opens so many vistas to your
9 mind in terms of what has gone on, what could
10 happen, what is going to happen? I think that,
11 you know, the first skillset that I think we
12 should all impart upon those that, you know, our
13 children, our grandchildren is just this love of
14 books.

15 The second is, I've come to realize
16 how important critical thinking is to me. Let me
17 give you an example. I remember, as an
18 undergraduate, I spent an inordinate amount of
19 time on thinking about what my major was going to
20 be in college. What do I major in here? What do
21 I minor in here? And then I found once I
22 graduated, and I had the letters after my name,

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1 BA or BS, or whatever, that no one ever asked me
2 about my major. But boy, everyone wanted to know
3 if I could think critically. Could I define a
4 problem? Could I look and see what are the facts
5 and assumptions? Could I bring together a series
6 of ideas, test those ideas, and then come up with
7 an innovative solution? That's you know, that's
8 really the piece of education that, you know, I
9 convey to everyone is can you think critically?
10 Because you're going to be asked to do that.
11 That's what we want, you know, that's what we
12 want our young leaders to do. That's what we
13 want our senior leaders to do. That's what we
14 expect of them.

15 DR. URSANO: A wonderful picture. How
16 do we teach critical thinking to children?

17 GEN. NAKASONE: Well, I think that,
18 you know, the whole -- it -- the whole -- it
19 begins with this whole baseline of, you know, of
20 curiosity, right? Why is it, you know, the who,
21 what, where, why, when, and how are really
22 important questions that we should always ask of

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1 our kids. And then from that, being able to, you
2 know, allow them to look at things and then
3 provide ideas that, you know, that perhaps we
4 don't think about, and encourage that. There's
5 nothing, you know, perhaps more important, I
6 think, for all of us that have been parents than
7 this idea of encouraging this idea of thought.

8 And I think the second piece is, you
9 know, I'm a big believer in fundamentals. I --
10 I'm speaking to a profession here that certainly
11 understands the importance of fundamentals. My
12 fundamentals happen to be with communication.
13 So, I'm a big fan of subject-verb-direct object.

14 I don't normally begin my -- or begin -- end my
15 sentences with a preposition. Those
16 fundamentals, you know, have, I think serve many
17 of us very well.

18 DR. URSANO: I like subject-verb-
19 direct object. Noam Chomsky would be very happy.

20 Very well said. David --

21 GEN. NAKASONE: I'm writing an op-ed
22 right now, Bob. So, I'm struggling with a couple

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1 sentences. That's why.

2 DR. URSANO: ChatGPT can help or at
3 least claims to. David. Did you have any
4 comments --

5 DR. BENEDEK: Sure. No, I --

6 DR. URSANO: -- and then we'll let
7 GEN. Nakasone pull it together.

8 DR. BENEDEK: Yeah. I appreciate that
9 very much. And I, you know, I -- the notion of
10 reminding people to be curious, certainly
11 resonates with me and as a parent and as a
12 teacher, as a -- as a scientist, the -- and that
13 can't go away, just because we have Google and
14 ChatGPT, and we have to remember to stretch our
15 boundaries, despite all the crutches that may be
16 being put in front of us. And I think that's a -
17 - going to be a -- personally, I think that's
18 going to be a challenge going forward.

19 But I wanted to ask you a little bit
20 about your concerns about these tools. They're
21 great things, but do you worry about them?

22 GEN. NAKASONE: Well, certainly. That

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1 -- that's one of the reasons that was very
2 appealing to me as I was asked to be part of the
3 board of OpenAI is, you know, I wanted to bring
4 my experience in the security realm and
5 cybersecurity to ensure that the tools that, you
6 know, our nation is developing right now, remain
7 safe and free from being exploited by our
8 adversaries. But I also have a very strong
9 concern of being able to bring this idea of
10 safety to it as well. You know, what are the
11 things that we've got to assure that these tools
12 have been tested to a degree that we've got
13 confidence that there are going to be a harm to,
14 you know, to our -- to our people and to our way
15 of life.

16 DR. BENEDEK: Yeah. I think -- yeah.
17 Those are challenges. And I'm glad that you are
18 thinking about them --

19 GEN. NAKASONE: But you know, I would
20 say, Dave, that they are challenges, but I would
21 tell you right now, so our nation leads and being
22 able to develop this type of technology. As long

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1 as we're the leader in doing that, we can solve
2 these challenges. We will ensure that we solve
3 these challenges. When we become second place,
4 if there is a China or Russia that, you know,
5 suddenly becomes a leader in that, then those
6 challenges become very, very difficult to solve
7 and probably won't be solved because they'll be
8 utilized by authoritarian nations for things that
9 are really, you know, to the detriment of -- to
10 our nation and to our allies as well.

11 DR. BENEDEK: Yeah. I think staying
12 number one makes good sense to me. So, I
13 appreciate that -- responsible leadership is
14 important as we go forward as well. You know,
15 we're -- we've covered a lot of sort of your
16 philosophy and your way of making things happen,
17 what have we missed? If, you know, what
18 questions have we failed to ask you? What points
19 would you like to make with our time together
20 here?

21 GEN. NAKASONE: Yeah. You know, so I
22 think one of the points that I would like to just

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1 cover very briefly, is this idea of, you know,
2 the next generation. So, as we all sit and as we
3 have an audience here, that probably has
4 tremendous opportunities to shape the next
5 generation. This whole idea of mentorship is
6 something that resonates very, very strongly with
7 me. I look at my own career and I think about,
8 you know, what allowed me to be successful? One
9 of the things was having experiences and
10 opportunities to see people and to receive that
11 feedback from people that truly were very gifted
12 leaders. That's the same thing that we need to
13 convey to the next generation. And how do you do
14 that? I think you do it in a way that it allows
15 them to, first of all, see themselves. I have a
16 belief that we can see about 120 degrees of
17 ourself and 240 degrees of us we don't see. And
18 so being able -- to be able to, as I would say,
19 provide insight on that 240 degrees is really
20 important.

21 The second piece is the idea of, what
22 are the areas where we all need to grow? Where

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1 do we need to, you know, consider ourselves to be
2 able to take a bigger step forward? And I think
3 mentors can do that. You know, it's, hey, it's
4 not only the fact that you're doing this well,
5 but really where I think you have an opportunity
6 to have an impact is doing X, Y, or Z. This is
7 what I think we, as mentors, really need to think
8 about and be able to cultivate.

9 And then the last piece of it is that,
10 really good mentors, they're really good
11 listeners. Really good listeners. Who hasn't
12 had a mentor or someone that wanted to be a
13 mentor, that all they did was talk? Part of
14 that, you know, part of the gift of being a
15 mentor, it -- is being able to be a really good
16 listener, and to hear people as they kind of put
17 through forward their experiences and their
18 challenges, and also their opportunities.

19 DR. BENEDEK: Thank you and spoken
20 like a true psychiatrist, I might add.

21 DR. URSANO: We officially appoint you
22 to the group, General Nakasone. General

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1 Nakasone, thank you so much for joining us in
2 this brief but important discussion. And I hope
3 the audience has enjoyed thinking about our
4 seamless boundaries, our global world, the
5 importance of emotional intelligence, the
6 importance of mentorship, the idea that there's
7 240 degrees of each of us that we don't know or
8 understand, how solitude can bring us recovery
9 and resilience, and how the opportunities to be
10 working with others can both build mentorship
11 opportunities and build new careers for people
12 who will be on the frontiers up ahead. Thank you
13 all for joining us. And thank you again, General
14 Nakasone.

15 GEN. NAKASONE: Thanks, Bob. Thanks,
16 Dave.

17

18 XXXXXXXX

19

20 DR. NAIFEH: Now I'm going to turn it
21 over to Dr. Ursano for some closing remarks. Dr.
22 Ursano.

1 DR. URSANO: I think someone has to
2 turn on my video, Jamie, but wonderful to again
3 be here and to see General Nakasone and Dr. West
4 engaging in another discussion with the audience.

5 Marvelous discussion, marvelous set of
6 thoughtful comments on who we are, who we want to
7 be, what our nation is, where it should go.

8 I also listened with the ear, General
9 Nakasone, to each of the concepts you raised as
10 targets for us in the world of brain, behavior,
11 and mind. What is emotional intelligence? What
12 is emotion regulation? Whether or not one's
13 studying that in a rat, a person, or a community,
14 there are different elements of neurons,
15 different elements of our psychology, and
16 different ways in which we build community that
17 can foster or encourage or change those elements.

18 Solitude, what a wonderful comment. The issue
19 of being with oneself, what goes on in that
20 state, what happens with one's mind. What about
21 when solitude leads to loneliness or when
22 solitude leads to innovation and curiosity? And,

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1 of course, what the heck is curiosity? I don't
2 know any paper I've read that looks at rats and
3 curiosity. Somebody ought to do it. It's a
4 pleasure to have heard you speak again, General
5 Nakasone.

6 For the audience, I want to remind you
7 that we have a spring conference coming up. And
8 as you may recall, it was called our Amygdala
9 Conference. And this will be the 18th year of
10 the Amygdala Conference. But given that it's now
11 almost two decades, we thought it might be time
12 to change the name. So, thanks to Dr. Naifeh,
13 Dr. Mash, and all of their efforts, which have
14 really been substantial over this past year. The
15 development of the Brain, Behavior, and Mind
16 Lecture and that theme will continue with the
17 Spring Brain, Behavior, and Mind Conference.
18 We'll continue that theme and look forward to
19 hearing more about it. And you'll hear more
20 about the conference later in the year.

21 Thank you, General Nakasone. Back to
22 you, Jamie.

1 DR. NAIFEH: Thank you, Dr. Ursano.
2 And a quick thank you to our sponsors and all the
3 people involved in putting this event on. Please
4 watch for upcoming announcements about our Brain,
5 Behavior, and Mind Spring Conference, formerly
6 called the Amygdala, Stress, and PTSD Conference.
7 The Conference's focus, goals, outstanding
8 speakers, and great content will stay the same,
9 just under a new broader, more inclusive name.
10 We have some great speakers already lined up for
11 next April, so we hope you'll all join us.

12 Thanks again to General Nakasone, and
13 stay tuned for more details about upcoming
14 events. Thank you.

15 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
16 went off the record.)