

TRANSCRIPT

## Defense Writers Group

A Project of the Center for Media & Security  
New York and Washington, D.C.

---

**Admiral Mike Mullen**  
**Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

**June 2, 2011**

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT AND MAY CONTAIN ERRORS. USERS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAPES OR NOTES OF THE SESSION IF ABSOLUTE VERIFICATION OF WORDING IS NEEDED.

---

**Q:** Does Pakistan's government agree with the US assessment that despite the tension about the bin Laden raid, our militaries need more cooperation and collaboration, not less?

**A:** I was there three or four weeks before in what I would call—we were working our way through the post Raymond Davis timeframe, which was a very difficult timeframe as well. Obviously the bin Laden operation intensified the degree of difficulty, if you will, with respect to the relationship. Yet in both those visits, including the one last week, the military leadership which is my primary connection, voted to reaffirm the importance of the long-term relationship between the countries.

We all agree we're going through a pretty tough time right now. That's going to [inaudible]. A great deal of that is tied to the internal introspection that is ongoing; I saw it last week, inside Pakistan.

On the political side, certainly the defense side, if you will, looking at how he could be there so long and not know it, what does that [inaudible] both the U.S. and Pakistan believe that there was a support network, I'd just reemphasize what I said last week, the Secretary of State said as well, there's no evidence to date, right up through this morning, that would implicate certainly the senior leadership, the military leadership, government leadership in support. There are ongoing investigations. In fact I read this morning Prime Minister Gilani is [inaudible] to go look at this.

But there's also a great deal of introspection going on inside the military, particularly the Army right now. In terms of the impact of the raid itself: They're going to have to get through that, from my perspective. I think we need to give them a little time and space to do that. That makes all the sense in the world to me, someone who has led a military, led a service, when something this significant happens, you're going to ask a lot of questions and that's what they're doing right now.

I would reemphasize what I said, you all know I go there because I think the relationship in its good times and in its bad times is absolutely critical. I think the worst thing we could do would be cut them off. We are experiencing the results of having done that in the '90s. We're working our way back through it. All this is on that path.

I expect there will be -- There are adjustments. The Morrell and Grossman visit which preceded ours by a day or two was an important visit. I think the same is true of SecState [inaudible]. But I think it's not time to hammer each other. It is important to figure out how we can engage each other, particularly in these areas that mutually threaten us. At the top of that list is the terrorism threat. In that country, in that region, and which affects all of us.

**Q:** You said that the national [inaudible] number one national security threat [inaudible]. To what extent is that [inaudible] for the military [inaudible]?

**A:** Actually, to be honest with you Tony, I haven't had a lot of discussions about that with other senior military leaders. Certainly there hasn't been any pushback [inaudible]. I will tell you we're working very hard on the budget issues that face us in terms of how we move ahead. Obviously the '12 budget's on the Hill and its outcome will be its outcome. That's certainly something we're very cognizant of in terms of all the discussions to figure out what the top line number's going to be for the Department of Defense in FY12 which will be a significant indicator of what happens in '13. There is a significant degree of difficulty dealing with '13 because we're working our way through planning and programming and budgeting for '13 right now. We're halfway into the year that we normally take to do that.

But I believe the implications long term are continue, will be significant, and we're going to have to do this very carefully. I've said on more than one occasion, this isn't like coming out of the war in Vietnam. It's not like the '90s. The level of national security challenge is, from my perspective, at near an all-time high, if not an all-time high, that's consistently confirmed for me when I talk to other leaders, other people who have been in government a long time, never have they see it as such. And so that really, from my perspective, argues for very careful consideration of how we move ahead here with respect to the budget and the resources. I've said it all needs to be on the table. I believe that. I think we can't be a department that doesn't participate in it. I just think it has to be done very very carefully in a very uncertain and dangerous world.

**Q:** One quick follow-up. To what extent are cross-considerations dragging for primary [inaudible] of the Afghan drawdown [inaudible]? You're up to \$5.3 billion a month now versus \$4.2 billion the first few months of '11.

**A:** There is not a decision in government where cost is not front and center, including Afghanistan. So all of the discussions we are having, cost is right in the middle of the mix. I think it's going to be that way in every major decision that we have as a government for the foreseeable future.

**Q:** [Inaudible]?

**A:** It has been for a significant period.

**Q:** [Inaudible] on the budget as well. Secretary Gates talks a lot about [Inaudible].

**A:** It's not easy to fix because it's grown so much over the course of the last decade. And everybody in those positions—whether they're staffs or contractors or, quite frankly, military billets, our staffs—feel they have an important job to carry out and they execute accordingly.

That said, from my perspective we have grown too much. We are going to need to cut back. At some point in this discussion it's going to be am I going to trade staff structure for the fourth estate, or am I going to trade force structure to keep the fourth estate? And my answer is no. I'm not going to do that.

I think getting at that is very difficult because people are very protective and I understand. I've never seen anybody pour the kind of time and effort into getting at this as I have seen on the part of Bob Gates, and it takes leadership focus, and yet there's still plenty of resistance. We are going to have to do that.

I would much prefer doing that from a strategic point of view. This is our overall strategy. These are the things we need. These are the things that [inaudible], and then make those decisions that way. The other way to do it, obviously, is to dry them up from a resource standpoint. They just go away. That's not, from my perspective, the prudent way to do it, but it is a way to execute and get at that issue specifically. And it's not going away.

I assure you, from my perspective, it's not going to go away because Bob Gates isn't here on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July.

**Q:** [Inaudible]?

**A:** I've watched, I've been around money a long time. I've said it before and I'll say it again. When you look at what he achieved in terms of the number of programs that he's been able to both propose, recommend, and ended up being eliminated, it's the best work I've ever seen. So from my perspective he's set a pretty high bar. That said, I think

it's one that the next team is going to certainly have to deal with and figure out how to equal, if we're going to get this right.

**Q:** Yes, sir. Let's shift from hardware to software in that you're often known as the champion of troops. If you don't know it, people tell you, so we know that. There have been a couple of disconcerting things that have come out recently. The Army recently released the [inaudible] military health advisory team report saying morale is at an all-time low among their fighting forces forward. And then you had the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, a three member panel a couple of weeks ago throw out, basically said the DA's mental health care for troops is so bad it's unconstitutional.

What's going on here? Can the country not afford to take care of these men and women when they come back to war? Is it simply a function of [inaudible] being at war and it can't be made better?

As you get ready to depart, what's your take on this issue?

**A:** I haven't seen the IMHAT so I can't really speak to that, although I value the IMHAT's function as it has updated where we are each year that it's been in place. So I haven't seen the specifics.

I've been out in the field a lot and from the morale standpoint I don't sign up to that, on the one hand. On the other hand, this is the tenth year of war. I think that all of us in leadership positions have to do the best we can to recognize the stress that we are under. When I say we, it includes all of us, but in the largest share of the troops and our families. If we don't continue to face that challenge front and center, it has a good chance in the future of consuming us. We can't afford to let that happen. So there's a lot of leadership that's very focused on this. From my perspective the evaluation of this helps us identify the problem.

I think to go specifically to the mental health piece that you talked about with the VA, I've worked along with others very hard, and [the VA] with Secretary Shinseki, to figure out a way to work together, get these two agencies, departments, to work together, to attack what I think is as difficult and as critical a part of the effects of these wars as we have. And unattended, they will become much more intense in terms of the effects that they have literally on our society as these veterans return. If attended to we can shunt the effects very rapidly.

It's a time-based formula. The sooner you get at this, whether it's PTS or TBI, the likelihood of resolution is much more positive based on that time concept.

So I've advocated strongly for literally in the field resolution, in the field evaluation from a medical standpoint. We've actually made great progress with respect to that, but I think we've got a long way to go. This is not a new phenomenon when you look at post-war syndromes, if you will, or affects of wars. It's something that we should be aware of, certainly at the end of a first decade, we need to be doing all we possibly can, and we

need to be doing it with the VA and the other piece that I've worked pretty hard to try to connect this, because I still believe the only way we can scale this is through communities throughout the country. DOD can't do it. It has a responsibility. VA can't do it, it has a responsibility. The only way we can get to the numbers, the tens of thousands, some estimate a couple hundred thousand is the scale throughout the country, and I find a willingness on the part of local leaders in many communities I've visited to do just this. So the conversation with the country that I've tried to have is more than anything else trying to focus leaders who recognize the value of the service, who want to work hard to repay the debt of that sacrifice to members and their families, to try to make that connection so that they who are an incredible group of young people will continue to be able to contribute to society in the future.

**Q:** Is it your sense that what to some people is a growing chasm between the professional military and the rest of the country is neutral in dealing with this problem, contributes to it, or what?

**A:** It's not neutral. I think it does contribute to it. I have been struck in my travels at the lack of what I would call in-depth understanding of what we've been through. The country knows, people know we're at war, they know we're sacrificing, they are incredibly supportive of us, but they don't know the details of numbers of deployments, they don't know the details of what our spouses and children are going through. Whether it's education or health or employment. They don't understand the complete impact. Some of it's medical. But the complete impact of this. It's underpinned by the fact that we come from fewer and fewer places, we've BRAC'd our way out of significant portions of the country. I'm saying those are facts and we have to recognize that.

Given that, what do we do about it? I think it's a two-way street. It's the military leadership that needs to speak to this to the country wherever we can, and not just speak to ourselves, but get out there where we normally aren't, to work through National Guard and Reserve in particular who are throughout the country, as well as the responsibility of community leaders, the American people, to connect with us as well. And it's that two-way street that I have advocated, a two-way communication if you will.

Do I think long term? If the military drifts away from its people in this country that is a catastrophic outcome we as a country can't tolerate, can't afford, in no way. It's a different lash-up which would I think be very bad for us as a nation.

**Q:** First of all, how do you use that [inaudible]? How do you see it playing out?

**A:** This is what I talked to Tony about. We're obviously engaged with the Hill on the FY12 budget. We're looking to put together a budget for FY13. So there's a '12 piece, there's a '13 piece, and then there's sort of a '14 and beyond piece.

What can we do in the near term? In our operating forces right now. What do we do in the mid-term, over the next two or three years? Then what can we do in the far term, out beyond '14? So we're reviewing it in what I would call those three particular bands.

FY12 through FY23, generating the \$400 billion, and we have to put, from my perspective, we have to put initiatives in place in the mid-term which will then start to generate paths in the out-years. The money, part of it's understanding where the money is. The money is in health care, and it's in pay and benefits. So when I say all things are on the table, all things are on the table with respect to that.

I think, back to the very dangerous and uncertain world we're in, from my perspective we need to avoid just making the relatively easy decision, let's just cash in the force structure. We have to go through every -- from my perspective -- everything else in force structure, platforms and people. We have to go through everything else before we get to that point, because that's why we're here. We're not here to have staff. We're not here to have infrastructure. We're here because we are focused on the warfighting missions that we're tasked with. I'm not satisfied with the idea of okay, let's just be the best counterinsurgency force we can be in the future and that's it. We still have high end warfighting requirements that we're going to have to resource, and those are important programs and they're going to have to come in on cost and schedule, which many of them have not heretofore.

So the strategic approach here is to sort of look at those three bins. The overarching view is what do you want to do with your military in this very challenging world? So we're in the throes of putting together that strategy which is the front end piece that then will allow the President and others to make decisions given the agreement on the strategy. These are the areas that we want to look at with respect to [inaudible].

**Q:** [Inaudible]?

**A:** Sure. But part of it's just timing. We still have another six months to put '13 together. It can be done. There's a lot of programming and budgeting late in the cycle, but that's a huge part of it.

**Q:** [Inaudible]. How has that changed over the last three years?

**A:** I wouldn't speak for him. I certainly have a very strong personal and professional relationship with him. I saw him on this most recent trip. And I think having that kind of relationship is critical. Even more critical in difficult times than in times where things are going well. So one of the ways I look at this is that the investment over the last three and a half years, it would be almost impossible to be picking up the phone for the first time and calling him in terms of, or going to see him the first time in the middle of this crisis and expect anything to happen.

I think that investment, it was certainly not intentional, but part of it is to be able to work our way through our crisis. I've talked about the importance of a relationship, and it is not, from my perspective, not time to condemn each other. It's time to recognize the situation that we're in and to try to figure out a way to continue to work with each other. He's committed to that. He did that with me again last week.

And it's recognition that this is a critical country in a critical region, a sovereign country, and it's a country whose sovereignty is precious to them as ours is to us. We sometimes, we have to remember that as we deal with them. And other countries, for that matter. They're tied directly to our success against al-Qaida. They're tied directly to our potential success in Afghanistan. It's the region that we walked away from many years ago and here we are.

What I worry about is should we get to the point where we walk away in the future, then ten years from now, twenty years from now, we go back and it's much more intense and it's much more dangerous. We're just not in a world where we can afford to be unengaged in a place like this.

**Q:** You mentioned [inaudible] an effort to resume that, to bring back [inaudible].

**A:** I think it's absolutely vital. I think it's probably too soon to pay off, if you will, because we haven't been reengaged with them for that long. It's been three or four years of serious reengagement. I don't know what the right amount of time is, but I know that sticking with it I think is absolutely vital.

**Q:** [Inaudible], on North Waziristan, for example?

**A:** We had very good, very frank meetings about the requirements on both sides. So while we spoke, we also listened. Not just to the military leadership but to the entire government. The meetings Secretary Clinton and I were in. And I was encouraged by the commitment on both sides to work in particular the terrorist issues jointly, and to in fact look to a future that said hey, we said we're going to do this and this is what we're doing. I won't go into details of that except to say there was a commitment with respect to that.

Without going into any kind of significant detail about North Waziristan, we recognize that North Waziristan and Haqqani are central, the Haqqani network, are central to a long term solution with respect to instability and terrorism in that area. It's something we routinely discuss.

Also being on top of, very frank meetings [inaudible]. So it was very much aligned with what they, in terms of the diplomatic side, the intelligence side, had done and then to look at it from the standpoint of the leadership of our country at the Secretary of State level and my level. It was a very solid connection with respect to that.

**Q:** [Inaudible] for North Waziristan?

**A:** You know I don't [inaudible]. Not any more than we've had in the past in terms of recognizing the importance of it.

**Q:** Just to take you back on Pakistan again, if you have a Pakistan counter-insurgency [inaudible] a fair amount of money to train the forces along the outskirts there. But immediately after the bin Laden killings, many of those trainers were sent home. I want to know what kind of impact this raid has had on your efforts to bulk up their counterinsurgency capabilities.

And then on Capitol Hill, there's more and more concern being expressed about how do you define success in Afghanistan, and further, at that point, how do you measure success if you haven't yet defined what success would be say in 2014, the minimal level of success. So those two questions.

**A:** The issue of training support for the Pakistani military is one that we are still very focused on. There clearly is an ongoing contraction of that support, if you will, and it is tied to the difficult time we are going through with respect to how we move forward together. And it is also tied to the time it's going to take for them to do this introspective review, if you will, which is ongoing as we speak. I can't tell you how long that's going to take, so I currently have an expectation that training support will be reduced.

I think it's too soon to say what the impact of that will be on their counterinsurgency capabilities. They have some continuing, ongoing counter fights in [inaudible] and Bajaur, and that's not going to go away here in the very near future.

The second question was how do you measure success in Afghanistan?

**Q:** Uh huh. And also getting a sense of once you've done that, defining what is success.

**A:** Let me extend the answer a little bit on the border area, because one of the things we have seen, as recently as last week and two or three weeks before that when I was there in both Afghanistan and Pakistan is an increased level of cooperation, a much more sophisticated level of cooperation across the border between our force in 11<sup>th</sup> Corps in particular, and our forces in RC East. That continues to be ongoing literally thought this crisis. I consider that to be pretty positive.

So there has been an awful lot of progress made in terms of not just support for them as they've evolved in their counterinsurgency capability, but also overall support with respect to the challenges that exist on the border.

There has never been any question in my mind that success is not success in one country or another, but it's success in the region which certainly focuses on the two countries and that most difficult border between them.

I think this has the attention on an awful lot of people. Not just those two countries, but regional countries and internationally as well.

I'm constantly taken by, I think it's 49 or 50 countries now that have military forces in Afghanistan. That's a significant global commitment, if you will. Then to get into the

specifics of success, it's certainly a measure of security. This is not a surprise. It's going to be a very difficult fighting season. We're in the peak of it right now and that's going to continue. We're seeing the Taliban come back, not unexpectedly, to try to retake territory that they lost last year.

I think we'll have a much better fix in terms of clarity towards the end of this year, in terms of longer term, what are the potential outcomes, and when those might occur than we do right now. Just because of sort of last year's campaign plus this year's campaign. From our perspective we're in a much better position this year. We've taken enormously positive steps in the east over the course of the last year—General Petraeus has, with respect to coherency in that very difficult area. Helmand is almost turned, if you will, and certainly Kandahar is a different place than it was a year ago. So that's the security piece. That doesn't mean the challenges aren't substantial, they still are. But I think the trend is in the right direction.

I remain concerned about the governance piece, both out of Kabul as well as local. Literally substantive governance, can you provide for your people at the provincial, district, sub-district level? And certainly corruption, continuing to attack the corruption issue is embedded in that as well.

I am encouraged by the political strategy that was articulated by Secretary Clinton in February and that Ambassador Grossman, who has now been in place almost a month, is well into working the political aspects of this and potentially a political solution which I think as I all wars is the, that will drive the ultimate outcome here. We need a political solution.

**Q:** [Inaudible].

**A:** The President has not made a recommendation. It's still really in his hands, if you will, his recommendation will kick off the process. We're all aware that the President has committed to a decision to start in July, so I think the process will move forward here pretty rapidly, certainly in the next few weeks. But he has not made that recommendation yet. That will be key to obviously everything else that we do.

And I guess we've had more discussions about process than we have here's the answer. We don't know what the answer is. I can honestly say nobody knows what the answer is at this point in time. And again, it's a decision of the President and nobody else, and he will, I'm sure he will make that. We recognize the calendar and the commitment, so it will happen here pretty quickly.

**Q:** [Inaudible]?

**A:** I think it's way too early to assess, to accurately assess the impact of bin Laden's death. In Afghanistan, in Pakistan, in the overall campaign. I think we have to be very careful about that. I think in time we'll be able to do that, but it's just way too early and I can tie that to just what we're learning with respect to the evaluation of all the

information that we took from bin Laden's compound. It's going to take us a while, months, to really get through that and to understand it comprehensively.

So I think we need to be very careful about leaping to a conclusion that his death has changed everything. Certainly a critical, big impact on al-Qaida, we understand that. But I can tell you they're still out there. And his was a decentralized organization. They're still out there plotting and planning and looking to respond, quite frankly, to his death among other things.

**Q:** [Inaudible]?

**A:** We literally -- Whether that is a conclusion as a result of this review will come out of the review itself, and I wouldn't want to leave that. I just think it's early to jump to any conclusion about the impact of his death without a thorough evaluation and understanding. That's going to take some time.

**Q:** Last month Senators Levin, McCain and Webb came out with a joint statement in which they said that they think that the current DOD plan to realign the U.S. forces in East Asia and the Western Pacific is unrealistic, unworkable, and unsupportable. They made several suggestions. I'm wondering if you're familiar with what they said, and if you could give your reaction to it. If not, I can tell you a couple of suggestions [inaudible].

**A:** I've read the letter. [Laughter].

I actually do appreciate their focus on this. It's a vital region. Stability in that part of the world is something that we all I think need to focus on sustaining. We're going through changing times out there and I'm assuming just based on your interest you know the history here. It's a very difficult issue to resolve in terms of what forces are where and what does that mean.

Bob Willard at PACOM has a view of this. Obviously the Japanese have a view of this. The Koreans have a view of this. The Chinese have a view of this. And our other regional partners out there, countries in ASEAN.

I think from the financial side that it gets back to the question that came up earlier. It was Tony that asked it. There's no decision where cost isn't front and center. And more so than it has been in the past. So I think that is a more, in the whole FRF, if you will, the Futenma piece, how do you move Futenma, Guam, -- The affordability aspect of this is much more intense in the discussion than it's been in the past.

That said, it's something that our two governments are looking hard to work their way through, and I don't have the solution set yet. The cost aspect of it I think will play more significantly in the future.

**Q:** [Inaudible] that you vehemently disagree with? They recommended moving some Air Force assets from Kadena to Guam. Things like that.

**A:** I just think we need to be -- I know where we are on this, but I think we need to be as open as we possibly can to solutions. Now this thing's been discussed for 15 years. There have been 20 different kinds of solutions that I've seen. All of them are difficult. I think we have to be realistic here.

We have to I think work our way through, in terms of preserving the kind of both influence and stability that our presence in that part of the world has done for 60-plus years, and at the same time recognize the limitations, and that there are needs on both sides of this, if you will. There are needs that the Japanese have and there are needs the U.S. has, and that's got to be worked through. I haven't picked a solution set. You don't say okay, here's the answer. I just don't know that.

**Q:** Admiral, [inaudible]. And if I may, are you concerned at all about people being [inaudible]?

**A:** Let me take the second part first. Certainly the commitment to draw down is very clear. We're going to do that. And from my perspective certainly what I want to do is make a recommendation that doesn't put us in a position to regret, if you will, [inaudible]. It's not the exclusive domain but certainly dominated by Haqqani, I think you know that. The way to resolve Haqqani doesn't necessarily, isn't necessarily -- the single way to do that is [inaudible]. Certainly that's one option. [Inaudible] there is a political solution here. Another solution is to have Haqqani [inaudible].

I say that, generally their organization will be irreconcilable as well as reconcilable, like all [inaudible]. So I don't count out the fact that that's a possible path as well.

I think it's going to have to be resolved one way or another at some point. I just don't know what the solution specifically is. What is most bothersome, obviously, about the Haqqani network, the leadership in the network, is they continue to foster a campaign pushing right up against Kabul through Khowst and Paktia and Paktika that is very dangerous to that region, but I think long term very dangerous to Afghanistan. Certainly in the near term, resulting in our soldiers and coalition soldiers getting killed. That needs to be resolved. So I think [inaudible] a mix of both a campaign requirement, if you will, get them off the battlefield, as well as a political solution, a long term solution that will be a part of how this is resolved.

**Q:** Doesn't that speak to [inaudible] Kabul and Islamabad?

**A:** I think you're right with respect to that. But I think they are behaving a certain way because they want to protect against certain outcomes. They're not going to change their behavior until they [inaudible], more positive outcomes. The current scheme, if you will, includes [inaudible]. We've got to get to a point where they're [inaudible].

**Q:** [Inaudible] expiration of the War Powers Act.

**A:** I'm doing what the President has told me to do. Carrying out my orders is what we do, and in that regard [inaudible].

**Q:** In the decade ahead or so are you going to need more force structure, people and platforms to counter-balance China? And do you think that they really understand that?

**A:** I don't know. I think we are working our way through trying to understand each other, and I'll limit myself to the military challenge. General [Chun] was just here. We had a very good visit. I will visit China next month, at least that's the plan. He invited me right away. We talked about the issues we agree on -- humanitarian assistance, [inaudible], piracy, terrorism, stability if you will. And we talked about issues we don't agree on including Taiwan arms sales, the NDA 2000 and the reconnaissance off the coast. But it was done in a way that was I think in a positive environment. And in a way that I hope over time we would be able to sustain the discussion as opposed to turn them on and off, turn the relationship on and off, as we have in the past. I think that's absolutely critical.

And continue to address the very difficult issues that we have. They are investing in high end stuff. A lot of it's focused on United States military capability. We both seek peace and stability in the region. I say that, he said that. So I think if we can stay on that, we'll be okay. I've said for a long time, a peaceful rising constructive China is treat not just for the region but for the globe. I'm just hopeful this is the beginning of being able to stay connected as opposed to breaking things off routinely, which has been done in the past.

**Q:** [Inaudible] on contractor performance.

**A:** I think they certainly have heeded the warning. I think the performance, I'll take the last part of your question first, needs to be a lot better than it's been. We've got to figure out a way to stay on cost and schedule. But we're all in this, it's not just contractors. We have to be much more judicious about our requirements than we've been in the past. Basically, if we don't get this right we're not going to have capabilities. In one way it's very simple. We need to generate this capability. If we don't get it right, we're not going to have it. We're not going to be able to afford it. We're going to have a lot less of it.

I've been concerned about the industrial base for a long time. I think it has to be addressed from the standpoint of the administration, if you will, the Pentagon. It has to be addressed -- It's the Pentagon, the Hill, and the defense contractors themselves. We have to strategically agree this is how we're going to proceed to preserve a pretty fragile industrial base. It's been a while since I've been directly involved in this, but the ship-building base is fragile, the satellite base is fragile, there are other pieces of our industrial base which are fragile, and I think we have to actively invest in a way for those vital pieces that there's a [inaudible] over time. One thing I'm convinced of is once you

do away with a capability you're not going to buy it back. You're not going to get it back in the world that we're living in right now. Everybody's moving on to something else.

**Q:** [Inaudible]?

**A:** There was a lot of speculation early in this, that June would be it and we'd be out of ammo by June, and we're not. In fact I take NATO's reaffirmation as a strong commitment to that. I think from my perspective, and I've engaged the commanders on this, is that we're going to be okay until September. Longer than expected, probably depends on who you talk to, quite frankly. There are, from my perspective, some signs certainly in the last few days, that Gadhafi is becoming more and more isolated. There was a report this morning of the oil minister who just left. I received a report yesterday of a handful of young generals who have left. There's an increasing amount of pressure, but I recognize that it's a coalition of alliances, if you will, in terms of the AU, the Arab League, and NATO. But I have been impressed with how NATO stood up to this, how quickly, how cohesive NATO has been. I've seen that for the last couple of years in Afghanistan, just to speak to the alliance. I've been impressed with the out of area deployments from UAE and Jordan and Qatar, for example. The performance of some countries that heretofore were not as active in terms of a commitment to this kind of mission. This is a different mission, a tough mission to execute. So I'm actually encouraged by what I see in terms of NATO. It's almost in terms of -- Nothing like this is routine. But this extension moved through NATO fairly rapidly. And so I have confidence that from a time standpoint we're fine. From a commitment to the mission we're fine as well. But at the same time I wouldn't say by some date certain we'll be done. I just don't think that's out there.

**Q:** [Inaudible] a little clarification about some things you said about [inaudible]. You talked about the commitment to [inaudible] from the Pakistanis. But [inaudible] commitment for? Is it a commitment for [inaudible]? What kind of commitment are you talking about? And with the U.S. trainers that were there, there has been a resumption, are you saying there are going to be additional reductions? Are we going down to zero? Is training still going on now or has it been stopped?

**A:** We're not going to zero. This reduction comes on top of a considerable expansion over the course of the last two years. And I think it is, from my perspective, it is this focus on where we, from the PakMil side, where are we going in the future? How are we going to do that? [Inaudible] back to a point where we do any kind of significant [inaudible] with them?

When I talk about a commitment, I'll talk about two aspects of it. One is the long-term senior military leadership saying that this relationship is important. And the near term, and not just the senior military because there's a senior intelligence relationship. I've seen that there. I've seen it diplomatically. I've seen it politically as well. So all three legs of the stool, if you will. Then some near term actions to demonstrate that commitment. On the part of everybody, whether it's diplomatic economic development or it's military or it's the intelligence side.

We're not pacing each other, but there are commitments along the lines of all three of those. That's what I'm talking about in terms of commitment, and I really speak to it in terms of that versus termination.

**Q:** -- commitment from the trainers -- How significant is the cutback [inaudible]?

**A:** It's a very significant cutback for the trainers.

**Q:** Back on the budget issue, [inaudible].

**A:** I'm very comfortable saying certainly that's where the leadership broadly is in the country. The military leadership and civilian leadership. We're at the point where obviously we've been given broad guidance by the President, and now we've got to come back with over the course of the next many months, okay, here's how we're going to -- Here are options to execute this. And those are then decisions that the President has to make. So we haven't gotten to the specifics of does the White House support X, Y, or Z. We're just not there yet. But it's very easy for me to say that this President is very focused on supporting the need that we have for the national security requirement. You only have to look back at the challenges that he has faced, and we've all faced, over the course of the last two and a half years.

**Q:** Admiral, [inaudible]?

**A:** Overall the process of training is going exceptionally well. I think we put this in the timeframe of "this summer". I have sat with the service chiefs on several occasions and in those I listened to what they tell me about how it's going since they're the ones that are executing this. And all four of them, five of them if you will, because we certainly include Bob [Pack] who is the head of the Coast Guard, Commandant of the Coast Guard, is in the same spot.

I think the training's going very well. Are there any glitches? We're going to have some challenges. This is not an insignificant change. That said, the training is going exceptionally well and I think we'll get through it [inaudible].

**Q:** [inaudible]?

**A:** I think there has to be a change in North Waziristan to succeed in this campaign overall.

**Q:** Thank you.

# # # #