

TRANSCRIPT

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Q: Admiral, we have recently heard a new term--"next-war-itis," which was coined by the Secretary of Defense. I'm wondering, do you believe that the armed forces suffer from next-war-itis?

A: I think the Secretary's point, which I agree with, focuses on the ability to get the bureaucracy to get this big institution to change its focus, to move in a direction to make sure we're focused correctly for to a significant degree, the wars we're in which is the counter-insurgency piece and the ISR requirements, for example, that clearly have a huge impact, and actually the services have significantly increased both the pace of fielding some of the ISR capabilities and the focus. And also to make sure that we have the right focus on irregular warfare, which I believe we're going to be doing for a long time.

That said, I also there continues to need to be a balance. That we've clearly got to focus on what we're doing now, but we cannot take our eye off the ball for the long term, either. There are long term requirements that we've got to meet to make sure that it's not just about these wars, but the conflicts that we could face in the future.

So as in many things, I think it's balance more than anything else. But clearly there needs to be a focus on the capability we need for these wars. We need to do it as rapidly as we can, and the Pentagon's not famous for speed.

Q: Do you think there was a lack of balance there?

A: I think there has been a lack of balance on the one hand. On the other hand, if I go back three or four years and I look at what our ground forces are now doing in terms of counter-insurgency versus what they were doing three or four years ago, you could argue, I might argue we've moved very rapidly through counter-insurgency and through fielding capability to do that. Both the tactics on the ground, the doctrine, all those things that quite frankly were we not in wars and someone said we should generate this kind of counter-insurgency capability, I don't believe we'd be close.

I don't think it's clean and you can just put it all in individual buckets. I think it's a combination of things. We move rapidly because we're at war in some areas, and in other areas to support we need to move more rapidly than we have.

Q: I have non-Iraq, non-Pakistan question, but it's on the defense budget on defense spending. You are trying to push a national debate to increase defense spending to a floor of four percent GDP. This is at a time when there is an interest in cost growth of major weapons programs. McCain last week in his statement for the record said the system is fundamentally broken. The question is this. How do you let the public know, how do you reassure the public and Congress that with this perception of weapons growth you can manage an increase in the defense budget and you're just not going to waste it down a rat hole.

A: I think the defense budget is made up of many things. Three bit pots. One is the personnel costs. Our personnel costs continue to rise and I don't think there's any more important investment we make than in our people. At the same time I believe over the next decade or so we're going to have to figure out how to keep that balance right, what's the right investment for our people.

Clearly we've got way too many major programs whose costs have gone sky high and we cannot continue to engender the confidence of the American people if we don't contain those costs.

That said, there have been studies that would fill this room on how to do this. There are a lot of smart people that have tried to do this in the past, that are working on it now. What that does for me is speaks to the complexity of it. The complexity of the systems. I am one, having done this for a little bit of my life as well, we have to continue to have leadership focus on this, and there are a couple of areas that I think are particularly important. One is just the requirements growth. I don't just mean the broad requirements, I mean the requirements from when an idea comes out to what gets signed in the contract. I don't think there's enough visibility for all of leadership for what's in those contracts, and I think we need to understand that better. And significant steps with respect to that. And we must contain the requirements. That would be a huge

step towards containing costs and we don't have much of an appetite for containing that.

So clearly, I take your point in the question. I fundamentally believe we've got to invest well in defense for the future. It's about four percent. What's more important is that the American people make a decision that this is the kind of military we're going to have, this is what we're going to invest, and this is what we need to do in the future with respect to our military. And generating that debate and having that debate I think is very important.

Q: One follow-up, do you agree with McCain that the acquisition system is fundamentally broken?

A: I'll let Senator McCain speak for himself on that. I think we have some huge challenges. They are systemic, and every responsible leader's got to take that on.

Q: Admiral, speaking of the personnel account I'd like to turn to accountability. Fran Harvey, Pete Pace, Fox Fallon, Buzz Moseley and Mike Wynne. You worked for Secretary Rumsfeld, now you're working for Secretary Gates. Is the buzz that the new guy is so much more demanding really true? What's going on here? What are we seeing? What's it look like from your chair?

A: I think the fundamental issue is, and you captured it in the question, it is one of accountability, and specifically and particularly with respect to the actions that the Secretary took with respect to General Moseley and Secretary Wynne.

To both their credit, both Secretary Wynne and General Moseley recognized the seriousness of the issue and both of them proffered their resignations, tied to being the individuals in charge and holding themselves accountable for their institution. I think that's a great message and it's one that we all should recognize and certainly one that I greatly appreciate the fact that they recognized that.

In the case of Admiral Fallon, he did the same thing. I can assure you that Bill Fallon was not pushed, as some have said. Because I was there. I watched it. It is as he's spoken to it. He recognized that it was significant distraction for a commander to carry out his mission and he stepped aside.

Actually, in one of my first meetings with Secretary Gates after he came over, when he assumed this job, he spoke to all of us, all the senior leaders about accountability and an expectation that he would essentially certainly give us guidance. He's a leader who decentralizes control, but then he would hold leaders accountable. I can remember that conversation as if it were yesterday and he's done that and I admire him for it.

Q: Some people apparently didn't get the message. Do you have any idea for us who's next? [Laughter].

A: [no response]

Q: Okay, just figured I'd ask.

Q: Pakistan. You're obviously just back. We've heard in recent weeks, particularly from General MacNeil, his concern that some of this outreach peace deal, however you want to describe it, to folks in the FATA has led to a lot of Taliban and al-Qaida guys refocusing back in Afghanistan and pulling back over the border. You've expressed real concern about what's going on in FATA. I'm wondering in your trip, if your meeting with General [Kiani] has assuaged your concerns at all, has raised your concerns, specifically about this issue of peace deals and whether you feel General MacNeil has got it right here, and whether General [Kiani] was able to turn your mind on this at all.

A: Extremely complex challenge. I still am where I was before, that I believe fundamentally if the United States is going to get hit, it's going to come out of the planning that the leadership in the FATA is--planning and direction. And al-Qaida specifically. So that is a threat to us that must be dealt with.

New government. Quite frankly still struggling. Got an economy that's deteriorating rapidly there. Food prices, fuel prices, power outages, and a government that has significant challenges as it gets underway, and at the same time is looking to the best way, my understanding, the best way that they can deal with this challenge. They certainly recognize the challenge. I was there I think a day after the Danish embassy bombing. They recognize that. I've been there three times since February and the leadership recognize that. It's what to do about it.

I am learning as I go that these tribal areas are extraordinarily complex. There's no simple answer. Clearly we want [pacts enforced] so that no insurgents cross that border. That gets acknowledge when I have conversations, but in fact it's in the execution piece that we need to focus very heavily on to make sure that they don't, and to the degree that they do that really hurts us in Afghanistan. So from that standpoint, I think General MacNeil has it right. It's got to be dealt with. But I don't think, there's no easy solution here. I believe that there is the knowledge of how to solve this extent in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, and yet turning that knowledge and understanding into execution and solution is something that we're just not there yet. It is something I think the leaders in Pakistan understand. Certainly General [Kiani] understands that. Again, I think it's going to take some time to get it. There is a thirst to solve this overnight. It's not going to--we're just not going to solve it overnight.

Q: Can I just press you a bit on that? In Singapore both you and the Secretary discussed this issue of having patience with the new government. And yet, again you opened your statement here about if the U.S. gets struck it's going to be from that region. It seems to be sort of two mutually exclusive conclusions. One, that you have to have patience, and the other that we're going to get struck from the FATA. How much does it concern you? When does the patience run out? This is the most dangerous place that--

A: If we get struck I think the planning will originate from that, so I'm not saying that it is guaranteed it's going to happen or that it's imminent, but clearly we know the planning is taking place. I think that, I'm not prepared to describe them as mutually exclusive at this point. It would worry me greatly if they became mutually exclusive. We've got to continue to address both. This is a sovereign country. We have to I think continue to recognize its sovereignty in that regard. And keep this issue front and center so that leaders in both countries, actually in many countries, in recognizing this continue to look for ways to solve it.

Q: Admiral, I'd like a question on Iraq. As things have stabilized somewhat in Iraq in recent months, I would say in this country there are sort of two basic schools of thought on how to proceed. One would be a so-called conditions-based approach where you go and see how things are evolving in Iraq and make decisions on reductions accordingly. Then there's another school of thought that believes there's virtue in setting a firm, fixed timeline for the reduction of American forces, and that this is viewed as a mechanism for concentrating mines in Baghdad and kind of forcing political accommodations there. Do you think it's advisable to set a goal to remove all American combat forces within 18 months of the next administration? And what generally is your view on the firm schedule for removing forces?

A: I haven't been one that thought a firm schedule was the way to go. Said another way, I believe in the conditions-based approach. We're into that right now. It appears as though obviously with the drawdown and we're headed for the fall and an assessment there. Although I'm one who believes there is a continuous assessment requirement. I know General Petraeus is constantly assessing where he is, as is General Austin in terms of moving forces around in Iraq.

The other thing about it is in this conditions-based approach we find ourselves at times where the Prime Minister has taken steps, I would say a significant demarcation point was Basra, from the leadership standpoint he has generated a lot of political support from the various different factions and different entities in Iraq. And that has translated to Sadr City where things are much better there than we had anticipated a few weeks ago, much less a few months ago. And clearly the other place that we're very focused right now is Mosul, and things are going well.

So from the standpoint of the approach that we're on which is conditions based, and generating the political reconciliation or capital to move forward from a leadership standpoint, it seems to me that one is tied to the other. I would not, however, say that the conditions-based approach generated this. I'm just very comfortable now with the track that we're on because of the conditions-based approach and the fact that we're making some progress politically.

Q: Just one follow-up. What would be the downside of committing ourself now to removing all combat forces in 18 months--

A: I just don't know, I don't believe we need--I'm not a policy guy. I know you know that. The direction is this conditions-based approach right now and I'd say more than anything else, I think it's the right approach with where we are.

Q: Back to the budget issue. You're concerned, and the Secretary is trying to get the supplemental out for Iraq and Afghanistan, but there's also the concern that they may never get around to even doing the defense appropriations bill. Maybe you've got to [inaudible] and get the authorization. What problem do you see for the department if you end up with a CR for defense spending [inaudible] the new year?

A: As you indicated, Otto, my first concern is the supplemental. In fact I saw a note yesterday coming from Afghanistan where young soldiers there are out of SERP money, so where they've made progress there, they need funds to kind of back it up once they establish security, and they're out of money. That's the impact of not having--That's one of the impacts of not having a supplemental. In addition to the steps that we are now taking to both reprogram money, take money from the Air Force and the Navy pay accounts, pay money, to essentially even out the pay timeline for all the services so we can get through, I think the payday is the 15th of July. We sort of get through the 15 July payday. It may be the 31 July payday. But clearly we won't have money to operate or pay people after that.

In addition, if we get to a point where we, continuing resolutions are very restrictive in terms of anything that's obviously in the '09 budget that would be new. The question of funds. Tied to that is what about the bridge funds for execution with respect to the war. So a continuing resolution would bring a significant amount of unsettling across the whole budget world as we transition through a time that is going to be an extraordinary challenge for us as a country. We'll have a new administration. That new administration will have the challenge of getting up, getting running, figuring out what it wants to do as well. So I would certainly hope that we could get an authorization and appropriations bill for '09. It would make certainly running DoD and executing the missions that we have as a military a whole lot easier.

Q: Admiral, the Missile Defense Agency and Congress even seem to be emphasizing short and theater-range missile defenses like they are at least going to develop budget plans. Is this something that you think should be carried out even further? More THAAD missiles, more standard missile [inaudible]? Or should we concentrate on the ground-based interceptor?

A: Part of the challenge I have in my current assignment is I'm pretty far removed from programs which was a big part of my previous life. So rather than say it should be more of one or the other, I think all those capabilities are very important capabilities. Certainly the SM3, the successful tests. We've had many successful tests with that. The mobility of it. The THAAD system seems to be coming back on line. I won't be able to go too deep here. I think we've had one or two successful tests recently, as well as clearly the need, the longer term need in terms of the capability requirement that you have tied to the ground-based interceptor. I think it speaks to the requirement for the system. The threat continues to grow, there's no question about that, that ballistic missiles will seemingly look like they will continue to proliferate, and I think we're going to have to address that not just as a country, but also internationally. That threat's going to be out there for a significant period of time.

Q: Admiral, the Air Force leadership team [inaudible] had a lot of major equities at stake, whether it's F-22 air dominance, new bombers, cyberspace, sorting out ISR, [inaudible] operations, roles and missions. What sort of collegial advice would you give to the incoming team about how to take the Air Force forward?

A: I think first of all, I think the message that has been sent in particular with respect to this action is how important it is to ensure that the nuclear mission is well tended to, and that we have been slipping for a significant period of time and we need to arrest that, and I agree with that.

All of us, all the services, are going to continue to be pressed in terms of available resources and where you put them, so I have, and I've spoken publicly to this. I was very alarmed about the F-15 that came out of the sky and the age of that fleet and I think recapitalizing that part of our business is very important. So how do you get to the Joint Strike Fighter which is the system for the future, and how do you do it in a way where you're not just generating fifth generation capability, but you're generating the numbers that you have when you have an aging fleet that's been flying for a long time.

Part of the discussion that's been taking place in the last, I think very visibly in the last few days, has been how long the Air Force has been flying these airplanes. Literally since 1991, since Desert Storm, so it's a service that's been pressed very hard in terms of aviation requirements. I think we've got to recapitalize the Air Force. We need the tanker. We're going to need a modern jet aircraft. We've got a C-130 line that's a good

line. We've got a C-17 line that's a good line. So it isn't as though we don't have any new airplanes for the Air Force. I think as in many things, balance is really important.

I haven't really worked my way through sitting down with the new team. First of all, I've got to get in here and get confirmed, that's sort of step one. I wouldn't want to presume that. I'm certain I'll have plenty of opportunities to do that once they're on.

Q: To quickly follow up, do you expect [inaudible] or [inaudible] STRATCOM or [inaudible]?

A: I wouldn't lead with any expectations with respect to that. There is an understanding that the new team will assess that when they get in and take whatever they think is appropriate action, so I just don't know.

Q: Back on Pakistan for a second. I couldn't tell from your remarks whether you thought that the peace agreements that are currently being pursued by the government with the tribal leaders in the FATA, whether you thought those were hopeful and ought to be pursued, or whether you see these as things that are now leading to increased cross-border violence and should be abandoned.

A: I wouldn't go to either pole on that. [Laughter]. This will divert a little bit, and Peter asked me about being out in Singapore.

I went to the Philippines just after, spent a day in the PI and I went down to see [Jasota Fuar] which is a supporting task force to the Philippine Army, ground forces. They've got some pretty significant counter-insurgency problems, had had them there for many many years.

What struck me when I sit down and talk to the head of, he's a brand new, my counterpart, General Yano. I speak with him and he talks to the complexity of the MILF, the MNLF, Abu Sayyef and J'Hai. There is a tendency to, again, bend these things. When you start to talk with him about the complexity of these different organizations and what makes them up and what drives them, and there is no simple answer. In that conversation I was literally thinking about having the same kind of conversations in the tribal areas, or about the tribal areas and the FATA. It's an enormously complex problem.

What also comes to mind there is are there parts of these organizations that you can peel off by engaging so that you isolate the extreme leadership, the extremists. That's a strategy that, I would argue there's a version of that which has worked in Anbar. There's a version of that--a year ago we were spending a lot of time talking about these are people who were shooting at us not many weeks or months ago, and now they're on our

team. That was the question that was out there. That has now been sustained for a while. So there's a tribal aspect of this that I see leadership in many countries approach similarly. Does that mean that [Batula Mahsud's] a good guy? Absolutely not. He would certainly be one that from my perspective would never see coming in. But these are the kinds of conversations I've had in several countries about how--I'll go to Colombia. You look at how the Colombian government has dealt with the FARC in dismantling the FARC. It includes those who've given up the cause and come in and the government is now working with them to employ them.

So there's a consistency here and it just doesn't lend itself to a black or a white solution. And at the same time, we cannot have pacts which support wide open insurgents coming across that border routinely. That's not going to be acceptable in the long run.

One of the questions I've gotten is, why have you gone so much? Because of the complexity. Because of the importance of the country. And because it helps me in great part to learn what locals who live in their country think about and how they think and how they're addressing this.

That's a long answer to the question, but I've just seen such a consistency in various parts of so many countries that it just doesn't lend itself to an easy answer.

Q: That seems [inaudible] for the United States a huge amount of strategic [fate].

A: It certainly does. And yet in the FATA it's that patience that runs you right up against that threat and that really defines the problem.

Q: Sir, we've been in Afghanistan and Iraq for some time. I wonder what [inaudible] out of the current conflicts there.

A: What requirements?

Q: What kind of requirements you see growing out of those.

A: The one that, and you've known me for a while Jeff. I've said this for several years. The one that jumps off the page is the requirement for all services to be much more SOF like. To be netted, to be much more flexible, adaptive, faster, lethal, precise. Bring whatever you're going to, whether it's soft power or hard power, whether it's projects or kinetics, to bring that into play very very rapidly. I watched, Stan [McCussell] was just confirmed the other day. He has taught me, and I believe many others about this kind of warfare as he has been over there for a number of years, and his network, his response time, organizations which are flat and fast, and it's very easy in Task Force 714 to focus on the kinetic side of this. But as I've attached myself to some of what he's done or seen

it, it's had an impact on how they do admin. Everything is flatter and faster and I believe all of us have to adapt in that way.

Probably the single biggest--well, two aspects of it. One is the whole ISR piece. The enabling pieces of SOF forces, and I think that will extend, quite frankly, to other forces. And again, I admire Secretary Gates and his focus on this. We're all focused on it. Five or six years ago, I can talk about ISR and what did it mean and how are we going to get at it. We knew we were short. We are now much more focused on that and delivering enabling capabilities for our forces, and all services are going to have to do that. All warfighting will do that.

The other piece which has been so powerful, I think, has been the whole human intelligence world which continues to deliver and also I think we need to continue to grow. Those are two things that very immediately come to mind based on what's going on. The counter-insurgency, the small unit tactics, the kind of immediate situational awareness, the idea that we'll be fighting in the future in close combat and having to make decisions that involve collateral damage, no collateral damage. The collateral damage has hurt us very badly typically whenever it occurs. And it almost sets us back. So one of the messages I take away from that, we're just not going to be able to do that. We can't afford to do that. We have to absolutely minimize it in the future.

Those are some of the things that jump to mind.

Q: Admiral, from what I've heard in the media it sounds like the Pakistani military is not going to do counter-insurgency, it's going to leave that function to the frontier corps. Can you confirm that?

A: General [Kiani] recognizes he's got a counter-insurgency requirement. From my understanding he has an expectation that his ground forces will have to do that and he has got to support that. He's got a significant number of ground forces in the west. In addition, he's got a force that he's got to move from what I would call a conventional force which has been on the line of control and greatly focused on the challenge between Pakistan and India, which has been detensioned significantly in recent times. But clearly he recognizes he's got a counter-insurgency requirement and he's got to have his forces trained and equipped to do that.

Q: Admiral, [inaudible] conditions-based approach in Iraq. Obviously a key condition is security. Violence has been cracking down recently. It's not going to be eliminated all together. How do you define and what sort of steps do you take to define an acceptable level of violence in Iraq that will allow more [inaudible] increases in U.S. troop levels?

A: I believe it will be very obvious to the commanders on the ground. It will also be tied,

clearly, to the robustness of the Iraqi security forces, both for the military and the police. And they continue to grow and they continue to I think show fairly significant improvements.

The Iraq Security Forces are leading an awful lot of efforts going on right now actually in all three places--Basra, Sadr City, and Mosul. I think it is that combination which would then get to a point where one might conclude that our forces can be dramatically reduced.

Q: Is there a way to quantify that point, either with number of attacks or--Do you have a measurement?

A: I think there is, although I don't have a number in mind. I'm very leery about predicting here. People want to predict by September you'll be there. What's going on now, which is improvement, security is better, and we need to get to a point where it is sustainable, irreversible, those terms. Yet to say precisely that with these characteristics we'll be there. I need those who are there to tell me it's sustainable, it's irreversible, and now's the time.

Q: Admiral, can the U.S. live with an Iran with nuclear weapons?

A: I think Iran is still on a path to nuclear weapons. I'm extremely concerned about the fact that I think the leadership wants them. I am extremely concerned about them achieving them because in addition to obviously the umbrella that it captures in having that, I think it's potentially a very destabilizing capability that, the question then gets asked who else? The more countries that have it, the more likely it is, and I just think that could be a real disaster for the region and actually for the world. My view is you can't bring enough pressure on Iran, diplomatically, financially, sort of the full aspect, full, complete set of tools available to get them to give up this capability which they're seeking. I'd rather not prognosticate about life after they get them in terms of whether or not we could live with them. I just hope we'd get to a point where we don't have them.

Q: That begs the question. If the presumption is you cannot live with them, then there's got to be a red line that at some point they cross, there's military action [inaudible], or a combination. From your perspective, from a military perspective, where is that red line?

A: I actually wouldn't, I personally wouldn't draw the red line. I think it would be a huge, huge problem if they had them, and certainly it's not for me to decide what to do about it.

Q: Admiral Mullen, could you [inaudible] FATA, [inaudible].

A: A small number of trainers, and my expectation is that we will start training the frontier force sometimes this summer with a relatively small, 20 to 30 trainers. It's really train their trainers as has been the case in many countries. The training we will offer will be to those who actually train the Pakistani both military and the frontier force. Again, this is going to take some time, but part of what I take away from this most recent trip, and I was up at Peshawar and actually flew, I essentially took a helicopter and flew in proximity to the training site, that there is a curriculum, there's a plan to move a significant number of frontier corps through this once we get the trainers trained. So I'm encouraged by that.

Obviously there's an equipment piece of this. It's really a combination. It's equipment and training which we will assist them with. So that's kind of where it stands right now.

Q: [inaudible] on Afghanistan. [Inaudible] continue [inaudible] and I just wonder [inaudible] how much do you think [inaudible] spreading to Iraq and Iran [inaudible]?

A: Correctly characterizing the violence there can sometimes be challenging. I went through a detailed briefing while I was there that looked at violence in the south right on the border. Violence in the south and up north. In fact at the same time from I think the first of January to the end of May last year versus this year, and actually the overall number of incidents was down.

Now that's very specifically on the border.

What is of concern is those incidents are getting more complex, so you have a multitude of, you've got rockets, you've got snipers, you've got additional sort of more complex attacks. Certainly that is of concern.

The Marines in the south have had an enormously positive effect, very rapidly, in particular the 2/4 battalion. And because of their engagements and because they're there, there's a significant number of increased troops in contact. That generates more numbers. Clearly General MacNeil has expressed a concern as he left about violence continuing to grow. I think there is going to be, particularly with additional forces, there's going to be additional contact and additional violence. And Afghanistan still is, and this goes back to the discussion about available troops, sorry, troops in Iraq. We need more forces in Afghanistan. For us to generate more forces we're going to have to reduce over the next 24 months or so, we're going to have to reduce the number of forces in Iraq. That's really where they're available. And meeting that requirement of additional brigades in Afghanistan is going to come from that resource pool, although the first brigade I would put into Afghanistan is a training brigade. That's my biggest shortfall there right now.

Q: Admiral, going back to Pakistan again, I was struck by the conversation this morning and also some of your remarks in Singapore about [inaudible] the United States seven years after the 9/11 attacks is still kind of groping its way in the FATA and dealing with that problem. How can it be so long after the attacks, after that region came to prominence that really we still haven't worked out what we should be doing there and what approach [inaudible]. Is it something to do with being distracted by Iraq?

A: I'm not going to critique the last seven years. I've had this job since the fall and I've tried to really get at the challenges as I have come into this job. At sort of a high level, clearly the safe havens before were not in Pakistan, they were in Afghanistan. They were driven--

Q: There were madrasas--

A: Understood.

Q: And you were a member of the Joint Chiefs before you were the Chairman.

A: Yes. The safe havens having moved from Afghanistan into a sovereign country makes it a whole lot more challenging. You were in Singapore so you know, I was struck by the conversation in Singapore about Myanmar and why can't we just go in? The sovereignty, that was the answer. Fundamentally, that became the answer. That is in great part the huge challenge with respect to Pakistan. We've got a new government in place, as I indicated earlier, with huge challenges in addition to the extremism, and I think they're learning how to both get underway as a government. They know they have this problem, and how to get at it. It's an imperative that we do that, but I think it's going to take longer than most people realize.

Q: Admiral, I had a follow-up question with you about the Air Force. The new nominees seem like they maybe have a bit of a different background than [inaudible]. General Schwartz coming out of Transportation Command and Michael Donley from within the Pentagon bureaucracy, and not necessarily a Michael Wynne, somebody who [inaudible] industry. I was wondering, is that a sort of signal with the Pentagon leadership a desire to sort of get away from the fighter jet mentality, the focus on air warfare, and sort of look at this UAV issue closer, the ISR issue closer, the air mobility issues [inaudible] and things like that? Do you see that as sort of a signal that the Pentagon leadership [inaudible] new direction?

A: My view is you go into this kind of search and decision trying to get the best people. It's my belief, and I endorse the decision wholly, certainly from a military standpoint, that that decision has been both wrung out well and made, and that General Schwartz has the background he does, certainly it's different than anybody else that's ever been

Chief of the Air Force. I don't know Secretary Donley that well. I've know him in this job that he's in recently, but he has great credentials, he served in the Air Force as a senior executive before so he's going back to familiar territory, and he also has a background, and this needs to be double checked on this, but I think he served in the Army I think what the 82nd, so he's got a pretty rich history of serving both on the military side and the civilian side, so I have great confidence with respect to that.

I think that when you look at the combination of Schwartz and Frasier, there's not a fighter guy there. You can read that a lot of different ways, but I can assure you what drove that more than anything else was the talent search for the best combination and also the need to have somebody go in behind General Schwartz as he left. So it was much broader than just these are the signals we want to send, let's pick the individuals to send them. But the end result of that is there's not a fighter guy in the top two slots. That's certainly an important message. That doesn't mean fighter guys go away from the Air Force. And I think it's also very important that we have somebody like Frasier who's got the bomber background, given the reason all this happened. So that his expertise will be applied to fixing this problem. In addition, he's also served as the Vice down at Langley, so he's been around both the bomber and the fighter side as well. So I think it's a great team and it comes at a great time.

Q: I think you may have just addressed this kind of indirectly, but I want to ask the direct question. With the shakeup in Air Force leadership coming at the time that DoD is embarking on this roles and missions review, I'm wondering if you feel that that puts the Air Force in any way in a weakened position.

A: I don't think so. One of the first discussions I had with the Chiefs when I took over was the importance of us--this is before roles and missions. The importance of for us as Chiefs to engage the likely or the possibility that the budget's not going to continue to go up. I think it's very important for us to both recognize that possibility, plan for it, and then make decisions that are sound decisions with respect to our future warfighting capability and do so in a way that represents the military capability we need for the future. And that we do this and it not be handed to us, here's the answer, go figure it out. I don't mean the number, but this is what we think the future capability should be. This is our principal responsibility in terms of the military is concerned.

Since then, roles and missions has come along and we're now, we're actually in the middle of that. Pretty robust process, pretty short timeline, but with that same idea that we need to do this jointly, we need to recognize that, and this roles and missions I believe is a lot different from the one in the mid '90s because we are much more joint than we used to be and we are all committed to making that turn out right.

From the standpoint of does this leadership change I think put the Air Force in a more

difficult position. I'm not overly concerned about that. I think we're all in this together and we'll figure out the best way ahead with respect to what the roles and missions are.

Q: Admiral, are you satisfied with the number of Air Force representatives [inaudible] Joint Staff and combatant command [inaudible]? Do you think there's a healthy balance there or would you like to see more?

A: Actually I would like to, over time would like to see more. And you can't do that, it's my experience you can't do that overnight, and you've got, there needs to be a good balance with respect to that. That's why the Air Force doesn't necessarily have a lock on TRANSCOM, but that's one of the reasons I think it was very important that General MacNab be nominated behind General Schwartz as he left that. I think it's not just for balance with respect to the Air Force. We need to have that balance sort of across the board in everything that we're doing.

Q: [Inaudible] National Defense Magazine. I have a question for you on climate change. Some studies suggest that climate change could be a catalyst for conflict. Do you agree with this? If so, what would be the ramifications on the Department of Defense and how would you deal with this issue?

A: A very good friend of mine over the recent years has been Thad Allen who, as you know, has been the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and I worked with Thad very closely in this development, in my previous life in development of maritime strategy. One of the points Thad made routinely was this whole issue of the polar ice cap. There's more water available to sail on up north, and there are other indications of things which are changing in that part of the world and I think we've got to pay attention to it.

There's money going in, there's investment. It's a shorter way from one side of the world to the other if the sea ways are there. Commercially people are starting to recognize that and with that I certainly think there are security implications, although I can't give you a list of those. But certainly a concern that Admiral Allen has brought to the table, the other service chiefs, and he is routinely with us in the Tank. We appreciate his view. This is also a view quite frankly which has been brought to me by General Renuart at NORTHCOM who has responsibilities from a homeland defense standpoint and recognizes it.

So I see it as a growing concern that we are going to need to continue to address.

Q: Admiral, can I revisit Afghanistan for a minute? You talked about what a good job the Marines are doing there now. Will you replace them? Will you extend them? How can you afford not to at least fill that void when they do come out later this year and not jeopardize losing what gains you want to see made there.

A: Good question. No intent to relieve them. Still a seven month deployment for the 2/4 and 2/7, those two battalions. I think it's October and November sort of respectively when those seven months are up.

That said, the conversation from a commander's standpoint has taken place about obviously taking advantage of any gains that they generate. That's going to be up to General Dave McKiernan who's taken over command of ISAF. How he does that or how he approaches that is obviously going to be something he's going to have to tackle here in the first few months of his command.

I am working very hard, back to my top priority, is for trainers right now, and I'm working very hard and I'm pressing the system very hard to see if we can generate any additional trainers for that requirement. Then after that, it would be combat forces. But we also have the French have committed to come in with a battalion in the east here over this summer timeframe, that's post Bucharest. That will free up a battalion that we have in the east and with a possibility that they could work in the south. That's not my decision, that's really the local commander's decision.

But there is no plan to specifically relieve the Marines with Marines.

Q: Is there a plan to extend them?

A: No.

Q: Admiral, back to the Air Force. To what extent do the differences between the Secretary of Defense and the Air Force leadership over acquisition programs, to what extent did that difference lead to the lack of confidence [inaudible] in the Air Force leadership?

A: The Secretary was very clear about this. He took this action because of the nuclear mission issue. For those things that are significant, and very specifically I mean, talk about the decline in this area over at least a decade, which the Donald report lays out; the lack of enough sufficient response after Minot; and then obviously this one. That really became, that came to be understood in the Donald Investigation in terms of post Minot, and that was the single reason that he did what he did.

Q: Will the Donald Report be released?

A: I don't know. It's classified, and I just don't know.

Q: It's hard to judge the specifics of the charges against the Air Force leadership unless

that report is released.

Q: Will it be released to the Air Force?

A: I don't want to get hung up on technicalities. The Air Force leadership has certainly seen it.

Q: At this point, it has not been released beyond OSD.

A: I just don't know. My objective would be to learn as much from this as we possibly can, and at some point in time it seems to me that we have to do that. We have to learn as much as we can and move forward. How we do that, I'm just not sure.

Q: You got a lot of questions today about Pakistan. You did a good job of kind of dancing around. [Laughter]. On the one hand, if the United States is hit, you said the planning would come from the FATA areas. On the other hand you're saying it's going to take longer than people realize for the Pakistanis to have the insurgency capability to deal with that threat. I think the American public's going to want to know, did you give any kind of message to the Pakistanis that if you can't take care of this, if there's an imminent threat, we've got a strategy of preemption to unilaterally go in there.

A: I think, I wouldn't want to say any more about the seriousness of the threat, and that in recognition of the seriousness of that threat--leaders are responsible for taking appropriate measures to deal with that threat. Now that's not an affirmation that we're going to do X, Y or Z. It is a description of the difficulty and the complexity of the problem, and that leaders, military/civilian leaders recognizing that have to take appropriate action.

Q: Pakistani military--

A: Both sides. Everybody's got to recognize this, I think. And if there's a solution set, in my mind if there's a solution set it is embedded in responsible leadership.

Q: What would a successful peace deal look like? Some people say [Mahsud], the deal he's trying to create would just, he would stop attacking the Pakistani government but that still leaves space for al-Qaida to grown.

A: I spent a long time talking about that. I think we need to have a strategy that generates an effect which is one, eliminates al-Qaida; two, stops insurgents from going across the border; three, this is from obviously the Pakistani point that dramatically reduces to eliminate terrorist kinds or extremist kinds of incidents inside Pakistan itself. With those kinds of objectives. And obviously what underpins that, the strategy that

eliminates that is I think what we need to see. The each's of it, I wouldn't get into the specifics of here's what a deal ought to look like. That again, gets back to I think responsible leaders.

Q: I think we're out of time. Thanks very much.

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