THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

MAINTAINING QUALITY IN THE FORCE:

A BRIEFING BY GENERAL GEORGE W. CASEY, JR.

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Keynote Speaker:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Good morning, everybody.

I'm Strobe Talbott of the Brookings Institution. I want to welcome all of you here today for a discussion that's taking place under the auspices of our 21st Century Defense Initiative. This was launched a year ago under the leadership of Peter Singer, Senior Fellow in our Foreign Policy Studies Program. The goal of the initiative is to explore changes in warfare, the impact of those changes on U.S. security policy, and the ramifications over the long term for the defense of the United States.

Over the course of the past 12 months or so, the Initiative has hosted, in all, 20 events, and we've done so in partnership with the Strategic Studies Institute. A number of our partners in that venture are here today, and we want to welcome them in particular.

Today's event is part of that series, and when Peter told me about it some time ago and told me who our special guest was going to be, I raised my hand and volunteers and, indeed, pleaded with him to give me a chance to say a few words of introduction.

I'm quite confident that everybody in this room knows a great deal about General George Casey, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and of his 37 years of distinguished service to our nation, service that has taken him to Europe, Southeast Asia, the Balkans and, of course, Iraq.

Quite a few people in this room know General Casey personally, and I'm lucky enough to be in that category. In the late 1990s, George and I worked together on an interagency team -- I'd even call it an interagency flying squad since we seemed to spend a lot of time in the air -- working on the issue of the Balkans. That meant working with some extremely reluctant Russians and, in particular, Russian military officers. It was our assignment to try to keep the Russian federation on board an international effort to bring peace to Bosnia and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and, crucially, have the Russian military on the ground in Kosovo as part of a U.N.-NATO peacekeeping effort known as K-4.

George and I, just before coming in here, were reminiscing a little bit about some of the experiences of that. We could eat into your time, Peter, and we won't do that, telling war stories or peace stories that almost became war stories. But I'll just say that a couple of the more exciting days in my life were spent in this gentleman's company when such things happened as the Russians accidentally invaded Kosovo, occupied an air base outside the capital of Kosovo, Priština, had planes in the air heading towards Kosovo to reinforce their troops there. George played sort of the opposite of an air traffic controller, trying to make sure that those flights did not come through.

One of the particularly vivid memories I will have and always have

that goes to his qualities as a human being, as a military officer and, I might add, as a diplomat is working with him and his colleague from the Air Force, General Doc Foglesong, with a group of Russian military officers who truly looked as though they would rather be anywhere else on the planet Earth than negotiating with George and our team. They would have rather been in Siberia. They would have rather been in Afghanistan, I think, than working with an American team including uniformed officers on an arrangement that would only work if Russian forces ended up under the command of an American general.

It is hugely to the credit of our guest today that he was able to work out that arrangement and it actually served the nation and peace in the region very well for quite some time. My only regret is that we don't have time or the agenda topic today to talk a little bit about how that situation looks now, but there may be other occasions for that. Who knows?

In any event, the gentleman that I'm about to turn the program over to is a true soldier-diplomat and, I might add, a very, very good friend and traveling companion. He is a model of an officer who is able to combine a commitment to core enduring values and goals with an ability to innovate, and therefore he is just the right military leader for Peter to have invited to speak to us today.

So, George, the microphone is yours and thanks for being with us.

GEN. CASEY: Thank you, Strobe. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

GEN. CASEY: Thank you very much for that kind introduction. You would have made my mother very proud.

Good morning, great to be here with you here today. I'd like to set the strategic context for your discussions here that I think are going to take place later this afternoon, and I'd like to talk to you a little bit about the Army, about how I see the future security environment, about how I see future conflict and then close out with what I think we need to do over the next several years to bring the Army back to where it needs to be. So let me move through that here pretty briefly, and then I'll be happy to take your questions.

First of all, let me talk about how I see the Army. I've been in this job for about eight months. When I got to the position, I put together a transition team to help me frame my thoughts, and then I spent the first, oh, four or five months with my wife, traveling all around the Army, all over the world, talking to soldiers and leaders and families, trying to get my own sense of where we were.

Three things resonated with me as I finished up those travels. First, there's no question that the Army is stretched as a result of more than six years at war and, as a result of that stretch, the force and particularly the

families are stressed.

I wrestled very hard to find the right word to describe the condition of the Army that was stretched and stressed, and the term I came up with was out of balance, that the Army today is out of balance. We're consumed by the demands of the current operations and, as a result, we're not able to do the things to prepare for the future and to sustain the all-volunteer force.

As I said, I wrestled hard with it. Out of balance isn't hollow. It's not broken. Indeed, the American Army is a very resilient, competent, professional force that is widely seen by the other armies of the world as the best in the world at what it does, but we're not where we need to be. I'll talk a little bit about that in a minute.

The second thing I took away was that my predecessors, Rick Shinseki and Pete Schoomaker, have done a very good job of communicating the need for transformation across the Force. On September 11th, we had a Cold War Army. There's no question about that, and we had been working at transformation since before that. But, frankly, September 11th had an impact on the Force and caused them to crystallize and see the need for change, and Pete Schoomaker has really taken advantage of that.

We are about halfway through the largest organizational change, a

little over halfway through the largest organization changes the Army has gone under since World War II as a result of that. But, the soldiers and leaders, they understand the need for transformation. They understand we didn't have the force we needed for the 21st Century, and they understand the need for change.

Third and lastly, what I saw across the Army was the accumulative effects of six years at war. I had spouses stand up at gatherings, larger than this, and say, you know, General, it's not the same running a family readiness group for the second deployment as it was for the first or for the third as it was for the second. Everything is additive, and this has put cumulative pressures on not only our soldiers and families but on our institutions.

Unfortunately, what I see more often than I'd like to see is something that happens in large organizations. When they're faced with incremental change, human nature leads you to try to do an increasing mission with the same resources and the same people. Unless you have folks that are on the balls of their feet, that recognize an inflection point, they don't fix something until it breaks. That's kinda what happened at Walter Reed. We've had the similar challenges with our contracting efforts.

So, those three things: We're stretched and stressed, not broken,

not hollow; folks understand the need for transformation; and we are, as an institution, suffering from the cumulative effects of six years at war. So we're out of balance.

Now what do I mean by out of balance? We're deploying at unsustainable rates. Several months ago, we increased our deployment -- our boots on the ground time, we call it -- to 15 months. We needed to do that to support the requirements of the commanders, to give our soldiers and families some predictability and, most importantly, to ensure that the soldiers that were deploying had at least 12 months so they could properly prepare to go.

We did that with a full understanding that it was temporary. We can't sustain that. We have to come off of that, and we're working that very hard. I think you can decide that when we decide to come off it, we're going to be darn sure that we're not going to have to go back. So I expect an announcement on that here in the next three or four months as we see what the situation there is on the ground.

The time between deployments is too short, one, for the soldiers to adequately recover and, two, so that they can conduct the full spectrum of training so they're ready to operate across the spectrum of conflict.

You'll hear me use this term, spectrum of conflict. What I'm talking about is from peacetime engagement to conventional war and everything

in between, and that's what we need to do. We believe we need forces that are versatile and capable enough to operate across the spectrum. Right now, the time at home is only sufficient for them to focus on their counterinsurgency mission because they're going right back to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Our equipment, we're using it at about five times the normal rate. That's not sustainable over time. We have great support from Congress to begin resetting that equipment, but we're using that at an unsustainable rate.

Now, you say we've been at war for six years and we're out of balance. I think, rightfully, you want to ask: Okay, how did you get there? Why are we in this state?

As part of my transition, I had some folks go out, and I said to one team: Go look toward 2020. Go out there and tell me what you think the world looks like at 2020 and what kind of Army we need for that world.

I had another group, and I said: Go back 13 years in the other direction. Go back to 1994. Tell me what we were doing in this country in 1994.

Well, guess what? Think back. We were basking in the glow of success in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. We'd won the Cold War. The wall had come down. We were scanning the horizon for a peer

competitor, not finding one, and we were cashing the peace dividend as quickly as we could.

Oh, by the way, we were drawing the Army down by 300,000 from 780,000 to 482,000, and not just the Army but the CIA and the United States Agency for International Development, two key agencies we need in what we're doing right now. So some decisions were made a while ago in a time when the future looked fairly peaceful that are impacting on us now.

If I could leave with you one thing, institutionally, things are hard to fix. You don't fix them overnight. Putting us back in balance is going to take three or four years and sustained support from the people, but it's as a result of decisions that were made previously.

So, the Army is out of balance, and we are entering a period of what I call persistent conflict. Now, it may not seem to you day to day, but we are at war against a global extremist network that is out to attack and destroy our way of life. Read their writings. This is not a foe that's going to quit and go home easily. They're going to have to be defeated, and it's a long-term ideological struggle.

Let me talk just a second about what I mean by persistent conflict. I define persistent conflict, and this is my political science background, I think, but it's a period of protracted confrontation among state, non-state

and individual actors who are increasingly willing to use violence to accomplish their political and ideological ends.

As I look to the future, that's what I see for us, and that's the future that I think we need to prepare for. The trends that I see in the international security environment are pushing us in the wrong direction. Let me just give you a couple of examples.

First of all, globalization: There's no question globalization is having a positive impact on prosperity around the globe. Unfortunately, most of that prosperity is in the northern part of the globe. If you look at the places in South America, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, those benefits aren't being shared equally.

Technology: Technology is another double-edged sword. The same technology that is empowering people with access to knowledge all over the world is being used by terrorist groups to export terror around the globe.

Demographics: By 2020, we're expecting the populations of some of these lesser developed countries to double. By 2030, estimates are that 60 percent of the world's population is going to live in cities, which bodes poorly for future conflict.

We expect that the middle classes of China and India are growing very rapidly, and they're going to increase the pressure for resource

competition. The middle class in India is larger than the population in the United States.

Competition for water, resources and food is going to increase the international friction. Estimates are that energy supply is not going to equal demand even if you count in what people are trying to do in the interim to increase it or look for alternative sources.

Climate change and natural disasters create friction, create tensions and population movements and pandemics, and the two that worry me the most are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their use by terrorist organizations. People ask what keeps me up late at night. That's what it is.

I know there are 1,100 or 1,200 known terrorist organizations in the world. Most of them are out seeking weapons of mass destruction. There's no question in my mind that when they get it, they'll use it against a developed country.

Lastly, safe havens: States or territory that is not controlled by states, either because they can't or they won't, they become breeding grounds for terrorist organizations much like Afghanistan was before the war.

So, all those things, you say, okay, Casey, they're out there, but why is that a concern to us? Go back to what I said about we're at war

with a global extremist network. Those trends help create the conditions that facilitate recruiting. If you're going to win this long-term struggle, those trends have to be reversed, and that's not something that we necessarily can do from a military perspective. As I'll say in a second, it takes all the elements of national power to move this country forward.

Now, let's talk a little bit about the nature of how I see the nature of conflict in the 21st Century. What does it look like?

I don't think there's any question that the complexity of future conflicts is going to be exponentially different than what we've had to deal with previously, and we're seeing the precursors of that now in Iraq and Afghanistan. While we can never exclude major state-on-state conflict nor can we exclude our ability to prepare for that because the consequences of a loss are so great, my personal view is, in the near term, the likelihood of major state-on-state conflict is fairly low. That's my personal view.

But let's talk a little bit about future conflict and think back to that definition of protracted conflict. We're going to be dealing, I think, more with non-state and individual actors than we are with state actors. That creates a degree of complexity all itself.

They're not deterrable. If you've figured out how to deter a non-state actor that doesn't have anything to hold hostage, I'm happy to listen to you. They don't operate the laws of war. They don't operate under

international conventions. It makes our job combating that much, much more difficult.

The second point that adds to complexity is these wars are going to be fought among rather than around the population. Rupert Smith, a while ago, wrote a book and talked about war among the people.

As we were thinking our way through this, we said, what's the major difference between conventional war and the irregular wars that we're going to be facing here in the 21st Century? The thing that stuck with me is how you deal with people.

In conventional war, think about it, what do you do? You bypass the big cities. If you have refugees, you move them out of your way.

That's not what we're doing in Iraq and Afghanistan. We're operating in the people, and the people are the prize. In conventional war, it's the defeat of the enemy formation. When you have to operate like that, it causes you to do some things fundamentally different with how you collect intelligence and how you apply effects. If you think about an artillery barrage that could decimate an enemy formation, it doesn't work in Sadr City, and so there are some things that we have to do fundamentally different.

The third element that adds to the degree of complexity is the need to rely on non-military aspects of power to achieve our success. You've

heard it said, I'm sure, time and again with Iraq and Afghanistan, we're not going to win this by military means alone. Secretary Gates said a great speech at the Landon Institute here a week or so ago, and he talked about the need to strengthen the other elements of power and to give the country the ability to integrate them. I believe that's exactly where we need to go.

Third is the asymmetry. Folks aren't going to attack our strength either in irregular war or conventional war. It's silly to. One of the fundamentals of war is you put your strength against the enemy's weakness. So, even conventional war is going to be asymmetric to a degree.

Third, we're going to have to operate with indigenous forces. As we studied this in Iraq, the history is that no major power has ever won a counterinsurgency without a capable indigenous partner, none. We have to put ourselves in a position where our soldiers and leaders are comfortable operating with these forces with enough cultural understanding to be able to leverage them to help us accomplish our objectives.

Lastly and probably most important for me as I develop the future leaders of the Army is all this complexity and the ability to deal with all this complexity is leader-intensive. The young men and women we have

operating as sergeants and lieutenants and captains and majors in Afghanistan, they understand how to deal with this environment, but it's something that we have to adapt our leader development processes and institutions to create these leaders to operate and be successful in this environment.

I would add that character and the character of our leaders has an awful lot to do with our success, and we've just opened up a Center for Professional Military Ethics up at the Military Academy. These environments are so hard that if you're not well morally and ethically grounded as a leader, your ability to make decisions in this complex environment is very, very difficult.

Now, when I talk about future conflict, it's easy to say, okay, Iraq, Afghanistan, got it.

Let's go to Lebanon, the summer of 2006, and let's talk about Hezbollah for a second. Here, you have a non-state actor, a terrorist organization, that took on the Israeli army of about 30,000 with a force of about 3,000 embedded in the population, purposely in a fixed defense that tied urban areas together, that leveraged asymmetric means, IEDs, for example, to channelize the conventional forces into ambushes where they were fired at with anti-tank guided missiles that were first-rate. So the blending of the asymmetric and the conventional was used to great effect

against the Israeli army.

This is a terrorist organization that started the war with over 13,000 rockets, and they fired over 4,000 rockets in 33 days at Israeli soldiers and at the Israeli population. They used unmanned aerial vehicles to collect intelligence and also to attack targets. They fired a sea-launched cruise missile, and it hit an Israeli corvette. Their command posts were computerized and with encrypted cell phones, and they used public television to get their message out. I think that's a good example of an extremely complex environment that we're likely to see in the 21st Century.

Now, what does that lead us to do in terms of what type of Army are we trying to build for the future? We have been on this track for a period of time, and my predecessor, Pete Schoomaker has moved the Army well down this path, but we're trying to build a campaign quality expeditionary Army that can support our combatant commanders in the challenges of the 21st Century across the spectrum of conflict, full spectrum, and that's a major takeaway that I'd ask to leave with you. I can take more questions on the specifics related to that in a second.

Let me wrap up here. So, we're out of balance. We're in a near persistent conflict. We think we have a view of what conflict in the future is going to look like. But, oh, by the way, the only known, the only thing

we really know about predicting the future is that we usually get it wrong, and so the forces that we prepare have to be versatile enough, as I said, to work the full spectrum of conflict.

But to put us back in balance as an Army over the next three or four years, I say it's going to take four things: We have to sustain our soldiers and families. We have to continue to prepare our soldiers for success in the current conflict. We have to reset them when they come back from war, their equipment, their people and their training. Then we have to continue our transformation so that we become a force that the nation can depend on to fight the challenges of the 21st Century. Let me just say a quick word about each one of those.

I called my predecessor Shy Meyer a while back. Shy Meyer if you remember was the Chief of Staff of the Army who went to Congress in 1980 and said the Army is hollow. I said Shy, tell me about it. How did you get there? What happened?

He said, it's all about the people. He said, when you start losing your midgrade officers and non-commissioned officers, it takes a decade to bring them back. You think about it. Growing a senior sergeant or a major takes about eight to ten years. It takes you a decade to bring that back. He said, you have to keep the good people with you.

Now, it's interesting to me as we've done some research on this,

there are folks that believe that in 1972 when the last combat battalion left Vietnam that the Army was broken, but it took eight years for the Chief of Staff to come out and say it's hollow.

One of the other things he left with me is there's a thin red line out there that you don't know when you cross it until after you've crossed it. We are now in a position of having to sustain an all-volunteer force in a protracted confrontation for the first time since the Revolutionary War, and so we are in uncharted territory. We're measuring all of these things very carefully, but I gotta tell you, it's a dicey game.

The other piece of the sustaining is we have a very extensive action plan here to correct the discrepancies that we found with Walter Reed with respect to the long-term care of our soldiers. We're well on our way to implementing that, and I can talk about that in the questions and answers if you'd like.

Secondly, prepare: We made great strides in equipping and training our soldiers to succeed in Iraq and Afghanistan. We started off with a few hundred uparmored humvees. There's over 18,000 there now. We're on the third generation of side protection against the explosively formed penetrators, and we're moving in vehicles now that are even better protected against the IED threat.

The individual equipment that the soldier has is first-rate. When I go

around to Iraq and Afghanistan, I grab the soldiers and say, how do you like your stuff? What else do you need? Except for some people that want to have an extra gun, they normally say they're okay. So we've made great strides on this.

Our training at the training centers, I frankly went there right after I got back, to each of our combat training centers to see how we were preparing our folks. I must admit I was a little suspect in it, but I was very pleased with what I saw. Our ability to replicate the environments that they're going to face is great, but our soldiers and leaders need to know that there's not going to be any scrimping on giving them the tools they need to succeed.

Third, we have to reset them when they come back, and this really is about money. Last year, in 2007, Congress gave us $17 billion to reset the force. That was the first major tranche of money since the war started, and it reversed the downwards spiral, and we were able to commit that and to spend it and we reset 23 brigades over 200,000 pieces of equipment. When you get the funding on time, we can do an awful lot with it. Getting the resources to properly reset the force that has, again, been at war for six years and it looks like it's going to be some time more is the difference between a hollow force and a force that's flexible and adaptable and ready to do other things.

Lastly, transformation: Now, transformation is a journey for us. It's not a destination. As I said, we're about 60 percent through the largest organizational change since World War II. Those organizational changes with our modular units are exactly the type of units and organizations that we need in the 21st Century environment. I saw the power of those formations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We gotta finish it.

I think you know that we're going to grow, that we're going to increase the size of the Army. One of the main reasons we're out of balance is we're too small to do what we're doing and to sustain it over a long period of time. The President has directed us to grow by 74,000, and we intend to do that by about 2010. The long pole in the tent is our ability to recruit -- and we can talk about that afterwards -- but we think we can recruit about 80,000 folks a year in the active force, and that's enough to do what we need to do.

There's a lot we need to do with transformation. I'll just leave one other one with you here, and that's reserve components. We are working very closely with our reserve components because we have changed the paradigm for our use of the reserve components. If you think back before September 11th, they were our strategic reserve. They were organized, resourced and equipped to be mobilized in a grand mobilization to primarily go to Europe to sustain efforts against assault by the Warsaw

Pact.

That clearly is not how we're using them today. We need to figure out how we change the paradigm and how we provide the resources that the Guard and Reserve need to be an operational enhancement to the active force which is how we're using them today. The policies that govern the reserve components in the early fifties after the Korean War, and it's time for change on that.

Lastly and I'll close with this, lots of questions on quality, on the quality of the force. In 2007, almost 300,000 men and women enlisted or reenlisted in the Army, the Army Guard or the Reserve. There are still a lot of very dedicated, committed Americans out there, who are willing to serve their country in a difficult period.

I had the opportunity to pin a Silver Star on one of those Americans when I was in Baghdad in August, Staff Sergeant Kenneth Thomas from Utopia, Texas. He was out with his squad on a patrol on the Tigris River with a group of Iraqi police. They came under attack from one of the banks of the river by about 70 to 100 terrorists. The Iraqi policeman who was manning the machine gun, the major weapon system on the boat, abandoned the weapon. He jumped on the weapon and began returning fire as his rounds bounced off the steel plates that protected the machine gun.

They tried to push down the river, push through them; they couldn't get through. They diverted to the other bank of the river. They got out. They got into a depression. Good news: not taking fire. Bad news: can't get out. The squad leaders turned around, looked at Sergeant Thomas and said, get us out of here.

He charges up the bank of the river. For those of you who have been, the Tigris River at that point is only about 100 yards wide. He charges up the bank of the river only to find that his escape is blocked by a fence.

He stops and takes out his wire cutters under fire and begins cutting the fence. The fence is electric. It knocks him down. He gets back up. He continues cutting the fence while the gloves are melting in his hand.

He gets it open wide enough for the squad to get through, pulls the squad through, and the last guy gets hung up. He goes back, knowing he's going to get shocked again, gets knocked down, gets up, and drags the guy through.

Then he organized the squad, leads an assault on a house so they secure the area and so they can get evacuated, about two hours of combat. That's the type of men and women that you have in your Armed Forces today.

As I was walking up to assume responsibility on the, I think, 10th of

April, it struck me that I was getting ready to assume responsibility for an organization that was already seen as the best in the world at what it does, and then I had the temerity to try to make it better. We are that way because of our values, because of our ethos and because of great people like Sergeant Kenneth Thomas.

So, thank you very much for your attention, and I'd be happy to take your questions or your comments.

(Applause)

MR. SINGER: General, thank you very much. You, in the span of 20 minutes, covered pretty much everything that 21 CDI is wrestling with from the new role of the reserves to the rise of unmanned systems. It was really masterful.

Before I turn it over to the audience, I'd like to ask you to do something that you asked of your staff, which is to project forward to 2020 and imagine young captains in the Army. How do you see them being recruited, professionally trained, the type of education they receive and also retained in the year 2020? How will it be different and how will it be the same than today?

Then, as a parallel to that, what about a young captain in the National Guard or Reserves as opposed to active duty?

GEN. CASEY: Great question. One of my great responsibilities as

the Chief of Staff of the Army is to grow the next generation of leaders, and I pass that down to every flag officer that I talk to. It is a shared responsibility. We are where we are because of people who showed us the way, and so it's a responsibility for all of our senior leaders to ensure that we bring the young generation of leaders along.

Now, as we're looking to answer exactly the question that Peter just asked me, the question that I'm asking is: How do you no-kidding train leaders to be competent from peacetime engagement to conventional war and everything in between?

I mean that's a tall order. We're just frenetic enough to try to be good at every peg in the spectrum, but I don't think that's the way that we need to go. And so, what we're looking at and we're actively formulating the policy right now that is going to derive leader development in 2020.

But, as I look at it, I want leaders who are very good at their core competency, whatever it is, ordinance, artillery, but very good at their core competence. Then I think they need to be broad enough to operate from conventional war to peacetime engagement, and they can't be cowed by new and strange circumstances. Then the challenge becomes, okay, how do you train an agile mind, and that's what we're actively working.

Our previous development processes have said, okay, stay with the operational force. Get as much operational experience as you can. If you

do that, you get very good at things operational, but you're not very broad.

What we're working on is an officer development timeline that would identify windows for what I call broadening experiences: Come to Brookings to do a fellowship or something like that, working with another agency of the government, being a defense coordination officer for Homeland Security, living in another country for six months to a year, those kinds of experiences.

Not directing leaders that you will do one, two, three, four, five and six things to make major, but here's a window. You pick something that suits you, but broaden yourself.

I look back. The Brits are pretty good about this. I mean you read the stories about sending a lieutenant to Afghanistan and saying, figure out the route to China, and the guy comes back three years later with a map, or Winston Churchill to Cuba, wandering around the jungles in Cuba, meanwhile writing articles for the *London Times* while he's there. Those are the kinds of experiences that I think will be broadening for our leaders.

The other element to that is it will help expand our cultural awareness. We come from a society that is not very good at dealing with other cultures, and so we have a long way to go to build up that level of experience. You need to understand the cultures so that you can use that understanding to help you accomplish your objectives, and that's a little bit

different.

The last piece is we need to train our folks to be able to influence others. As I mentioned in the speech earlier, you're dependent in these irregular operations on other elements of power for your success. So you need to understand how to basically influence people and how to leverage those things for effect.

So, it's a combination of institutional education, training and then personal development, I think, that will evolve through here to train the leaders we need for 2020.

MR. SINGER: Thank you.

GEN. CASEY: Probably too long an answer, sorry.

MR. SINGER: There are never too long answers. We're a think tank.

We're going to turn it over to the audience. Please wait for the mic to reach you and then let the General know your name and what institution you're with.

So, Larry.

QUESTIONER: General, Larry Korb from the Center for American Progress, I think you quite rightly talked about the fact that the people we need in the service are going to have to be of even higher character than previously, but yet when we look at the data it shows you're giving an

increasing number of moral waivers, that your West Point graduates are leaving in numbers we haven't seen in 30 years. How do you reconcile those two?

GEN. CASEY: Well, first, under West Point, there's a bunch of stuff ricocheting around the internet that says that West Point officers are leaving at a greater rate. If you look at the numbers at the five-year point over the last decade, about 30 percent of the West Point class has left. This year, 30.9 percent left. Over the last three or four years, it's been between 30 and 35 percent. So, yes, they're leaving. They're leaving at an increased rate, but it's pretty small.

The second part is the waivers. There's no question; the number of waivers has almost doubled over the last five or six years. That said, 80 percent of those waivers are for misdemeanors and anything above a misdemeanor is scrutinized and approved by a general officer.

There's a notion out there that we're enlisted felons. That's just not the case. You can have a kid out playing with matches, lights something on fire, there's an arson thing on his record, and he doesn't get it off. You have to deal with that.

To put this in perspective, where we are today with great men and women like Kenneth Thomas and where we were in other times, my stepdad was a West Point football player, a big Montana boy. After he

graduated, they sent him down to New Orleans. They said, your job, Ray, is to form a machine gun battalion to go to Burma and you can use all the guys in the New Orleans prison here to go with you. The inmates were given a choice: You can stay here or you can go with Ray.

Now, we are so far removed from something like that, it's not funny. Yes, we have increased the waivers, but we screen it very carefully and everybody coming in is qualified. The other thing is it's something that we're watching very carefully.

MR. SINGER: The gentleman here in the striped tie.

GEN. CASEY: You'd get about eight people to answer that question.

MR. SINGER: Yes.

QUESTIONER: General Casey, thanks for your great comments. My name is Steve Tronosky. I'm a former RA officer and very concerned about where we're going with the Army.

I think and I think a lot of people in the room will agree that a strong 360-degree relationship between the Army and civilian society is absolutely essential to growing and maintaining a quality force in the future. But I and a number of folks that I talk with are very concerned that some of the efforts initiated by your immediate predecessor have maybe damaged some of that linkage where we are almost transforming from

America's Army to our Army's Army.

I see and I sense there are certain senior leaders almost who are so self-satisfied in the current warrior posture that they're failing see the increasing disconnect between the Army and the people it serves. It's almost as if we've equated someone saying thanks for serving or buying a cup of coffee in the airport equates to them encouraging their own children or their own neighbors to become an officer or to enlist.

I see this happening in two ways. One is internally. I see, tremendously with your predecessor, this over-focus on the term, warrior, and similar type of rhetoric. I think that's very damaging for the Army. I think it's completely ahistorical. If we look at our founding fathers, the thing they were most afraid of was the development of a warrior caste separate and distinct from the society it served. I think it's very damaging for a new cohort of privates or lieutenants who don't know our history and only see this new development.

Secondly is our external relations with the American people. I'm very, very concerned about that, and I think if you contrast the way the Army has handled the long war and the Marines have, I think it's pretty glaring. Our AUSA convention, recruiting on Georgetown University, giving out Silver Stars in CONUS are all done in a field uniform. I think maybe we need to relook that and realize that certain situations need to

be elevated so the Americans see us as a true full spectrum professional force.

In closing, I was just wondering if you had any thoughts on that, if you've maybe thought of relooking some of the changes of your predecessor and maybe trying to reconnect the Army because we really need to get the best and America's brightest.

GEN. CASEY: Interesting; I don't necessarily equate the warrior ethos as driving a wedge between us and society. I have a little different view.

In fact, as I look at what has happened -- and I was the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army as we came out with the warrior ethos and I was in on the discussions for that -- I will tell you I personally believe that is the primary element that is holding the force together right now is their commitment to that warrior ethos.

You may not like the term, warrior, but that's what we do. We are the guys with the guns, and we have to be very good at employing that. Now, we also, in the environment that I talked about, have to be good at doing other things and leveraging other elements of power, but we're still the guys with the guns. As I said, there is great deterrent value in having other countries around the world knowing that and, as I said, I didn't really see that as something that was driving a wedge between us and the

population.

Now, your second point, I agree with you. It's very important that the Army stay connected with the population. If you look at where we're recruiting from, there are some disturbing trends in different parts of the country. We're not attracting men and women from that part of the country into the active force. We are attracting them into the Guard and into the Reserve.

If you look about where the casualties have come from, they have come from across the country. Every, not every community but most of the communities in the country are touched by this. We send a general officer to every funeral for every soldier that has been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the stories that you get back about the outpouring of support for that soldier's family are unbelievable. Whole towns shut down, the route to the cemetery lined with flagbearing people and things, it's eye-watering.

So, I believe we are connected to the population, but I'm concerned about long-term trends and, as you suggest, we need to pay attention to that.

MR. SINGER: The young woman over here.

QUESTIONER: Thanks. Hi, General. Ashley Roque with Congress Now.

Lawmakers right now are grappling with how to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan over the coming months and into 2008. One option on the table right now is to separate funding from Iraq and Afghanistan and pass the Afghanistan money first. What problems do you see with this and also what problems are there with not passing the bulk of the supplemental right now and waiting until later, spring or summer, to do that?

GEN. CASEY: In general, as Chief of Staff of the Army, not having predictable, timely funding makes it harder for me to do my job: to organize, train and equip the Army. Every time you put something off or delay it or take some measures to get another week's worth of funding for the operations and maintenance account, it has second and third order effects that ricochet all through the organization, that you don't find the results for two or three months, and it just makes it harder.

The second thing is I think what's going on right now sends a terrible signal to soldiers and families. We have nine brigades that are redeploying from Iraq and Afghanistan right now after being gone for 15 months. They started in September. They'll come in through January. The notion that people are even discussing closing down or warm-basing their installations just minimum essential tasks at a time when they're coming home from being gone for 15 months is very difficult for them.

I wouldn't want to comment on the machinations of splitting things out or whatever. That's something that will be decided by folks well above me. But, from my perspective, it makes it just more difficult.

MR. SINGER: Someone from this side in the pink shirt there.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, General. Paul Corson from CNN.

You've mentioned three or four months from now you'll be able to give an assessment of whether you can scale back from the 15-month deployment timetable, and we've got fresh reports that the security environment in Afghanistan might be deteriorating. What's the latest from that perspective and how might it affect your timetable to give these troops and their families a break?

GEN. CASEY: We stay updated on what's going on in Afghanistan and Iraq and, obviously, it's the global commitment of the forces that we look at, not necessarily just Iraq although Iraq is obviously the most significant. The current plan calls for the force levels in Iraq to be at 15 brigade combat teams by July, by this summer. That's 13 Army brigades. There are two active Army brigades and a Reserve brigade in Afghanistan, a total of sixteen.

What we're looking at is how long can we sustain that level while we are, at the same time, increasing the number of brigade combat teams that are available, so that we get back to what I say is a sustainable level.

That's about one year out, two years back. We think we can sustain that for a period. It's not indefinite. We think sustaining over the long haul is about one year out, three years back, and that's what we've historically used.

But, right now, we're working on a scheme that looks at how fast we can build these other units to increase us to our full complement of 48 brigades and, at the same time, planning to hold steady at 15 or drop off. What we see is it's going to take three or four years to get to that sustainable level if we stay at 15. If it goes below that, we can get there faster, but all of this is driven by the needs of the commanders.

QUESTIONER: What I missed, though, is if there's any status update on the security environment in Afghanistan that could be affecting things.

GEN. CASEY: There are some standing requests for some forces in Afghanistan, but there is not anything that I have seen in the last week or so where there is a pressing request for additional forces for Afghanistan.

MR. SINGER: The gentleman in the back there.

QUESTIONER: General, I'm Judd Harriet. I'm a documentary filmmaker. I'm very interested --

GEN. CASEY: Didn't I meet you at a party some place?

QUESTIONER: No, sir, you haven't.

GEN. CASEY: It must have been one of your friends.

QUESTIONER: I would remember.

I'm very interested in the comment that you made where you say that you feel that the possibility, the future possibility of state-on-state conflict is very low. But, yet, once Russia revives and we see the emergence of India and China on the world stage, we see the possibility of perhaps five or six first-class world powers engaged in what I may call a new great game.

My question to you is: What kind of forces would we need in the future to play that game if you agree with what I said?

GEN. CASEY: I believe what I said was that I see the prospect for state-on-state conflict in the near term as remote, near term being the next three to five years. Clearly, the countries you mentioned are developing and maintaining a conventional power that could cause difficulties in the long haul, and that's why I say that the forces that we build, not just the Army but the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, for the future have to be capable across the spectrum of conflict from conventional war to peacetime engagement.

Some folks would say, well, all you're going to do for the next century is counterinsurgency, so you don't need anything else but to be

able to do that.

I don't believe that. I think predominantly that's what we'll be doing but, as you suggest, I don't think we can wish away the capabilities of these very large and capable nation-states.

The last point I'd make is were we to abandon that conventional capability or have people perceive that we were no longer the best at employing that capability, I think the deterrent value of our forces would go down hugely. So, I'm not trying to wish away state-on-state conflict in the future. It is something that we can never turn on our back on because the consequences of loss are so catastrophic. What we have to do is get the right balance between how we prepare our forces and how we organize them and how we train them and how we equip them.

MR. SINGER: All the way in the back there.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Gina Cavallero with the *Army Times*.

On that same topic, can you talk about the training that you're doing, that the different brigades that are getting ready to go to Iraq? Are there any brigades that are doing training for only conventional warfare or is it counterinsurgency training for everybody across the board?

Could you maybe go into that a little bit? Thanks.

GEN. CASEY: Yes. As I said, one of the main reasons that we're out of balance is we're focused on counterinsurgency training. Until we

get to about 18 months at home, it's not really realistic to expect that our forces can do conventional training and then prepare for counterinsurgency and then go to Iraq or Afghanistan. So, that's one of the reasons we're working so hard and it's so important to extend the time that they spend at home.

Now, there are units that are not committed to this. In Korea, they are still doing conventional training. They just finished Ulchi Focus Lens which is another major operation. We will have one of our corps going over to Korea for another exercise. So, we're continuing in the Korean theater to work high level operations.

But, as you suggest, that is not something that we can sustain over time, and that's one of the key elements of putting ourselves back in balance, to get to 18 months or so dwell. Then what you see is over time we gradually increase the number of brigades that are available to do other things, and that's what we want to do.

QUESTIONER: Hi, I'm Malcolm Lovell, George Washington University.

General, I've been very impressed with your analysis, but I do recall you saying that these problems in the Middle East can't be resolved by military means alone. I do know the unemployment rate throughout that area is very high, and the economics for the average person are such that

they could more easily be persuaded to join a terrorist group.

Would you support steps like the Marshall Plan if it was a United Nations effort to raise the standard of living and do you think that would be helpful in bringing about a better climate toward the United States?

GEN. CASEY: Do I think that economic development is absolutely essential to solving our long-term struggle against these global extremist ideologies? Absolutely. Now, whether there's a Marshall Plan or something else, I don't know.

These are not poor countries. Some of them are, but I mean they're not necessarily poor countries, and they do have the capability to help others. I know that the State Department has worked diligently with Saudi Arabia to try to get them to bring some of this money in to help rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan, but clearly economic development is essential to the long-term stabilization for that entire region, just as you suggest.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Diana Wueger, Brookings Institution.

I had a question about in Mr. Singer's recent op-ed article, he mentioned that less than 1 percent of Ivy League graduates are joining the military compared to about 50 percent in the 1950s, and there was some mention that the Army is still connected to the people. How do you sort of resolve that gap and how do you begin to recruit these I don't want to say elite but the Ivy League grads from the top institutions, the people who will

in larger numbers be future political leaders?

If they don't have military experience, what is that going to mean for their relations with the military in the future? Thank you.

GEN. CASEY: What do you think?

QUESTIONER: Having graduated from Oberlin College and having had the experiences of a very liberal college, I thought it was personally the advertising slogans of an Army of One were not particularly convincing to me. I'd rather have an Army behind me rather than be an Army of One myself.

I'm a little divided on the issue, but my father did serve in the Navy. So, for me, there is a history of personal vision.

GEN. CASEY: This is not directed at you at all, but is it about advertising or is it about commitment?

QUESTIONER: I think in some circumstances it's about that people have so many opportunities after graduation that the military is not attractive enough, that either financially or in terms of career future. People are thinking about different careers and different ways of moving forward and, in the military, there's this focus rightly on maintaining people within as leaders for the future.

GEN. CASEY: I think it's bigger than just the military. I think it's about national service and about having a society that understands the

need to pay back and to do something, whatever it is -- it doesn't have to be military -- to serve the country and ask ourselves the question, are we getting the right people into public service?

To me, some of that is commitment, to give up, to commit yourself to something larger than yourself but still be able to go back and do what you need to do.

I think that we're in for a long haul here, and I don't think this is going to be easy. You may not feel it every day, but our country is going to be threatened for a long time, and we need the best folks out there, be it in the military or on the government side, working to support the country.

MR. SINGER: I'll inject a little. Since we quoted some statistics there, another one that is telling to the challenge but also opportunity coming is that in Generation Y, it actually has the highest levels of volunteerism of any generation that we've polled. Sixty-six percent say that it's important to serve others.

At the same time, however, we have low levels in terms of people willing to see the military as a long-term career choice. Only 13 percent see it as a viable option.

What's interesting is that only 7 percent see it, and this might be where the recruiting edge comes in. Only 7 percent see it as something, a job their parents would approve of which is ironic because 14 percent of

parents say they would approve of it. So, there's a message that's not being communicated there.

Okay, so we have time for one last question right there in the red shirt, right beside the mic.

QUESTIONER: Thank you for the last question. I appreciate it. I'm Colonel Tom Russell.

GEN. CASEY: I was going to say, this looks like a plant.

MR. SINGER: It might be another service.

QUESTIONER: I am with the Center for Strategic International Studies, but I'm a Military Fellow over there.

While watching the news two nights ago, I saw a scroll across the bottom: Possible course of action had the United States Marine Corps leaving Iraq and assuming responsibility for military operations in Afghanistan.

Has this crossed your radar scope, General, and is this given any consideration at all at your level?

GEN. CASEY: Sure. It's been discussed in the tank. I've discussed it personally with General Conway. I would say and tell you that it's probably put off for a year or so and any further discussion of it.

MR. SINGER: Okay, well, I have triple thanks to make here. First is to thank all of you for joining us. Secondly is to thank the organizers

and particularly our partners at the Army War College. Then third is, General, to thank you both for a wonderful presentation and also your service to our nation.

Please join us.

GEN. CASEY: Thank you all very much.

(Applause)

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