THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

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AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, AND BEYOND:

THE U.S. ARMY'S WORLDWIDE CHALLENGES IN 2010

A DISCUSSION WITH GENERAL GEORGE CASEY,
U.S. ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, January 28, 2010

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Brookings. I'm Michael O'Hanlon with the 21st Century Defense Initiative, and on behalf of Peter Singer, who runs the Initiative, and colleagues Heather Missari and Evan Ahia Livingston, and Martin Indyk and Strobe Talbott, I'd like to welcome you all, and especially General George Casey.

We're going to hear some remarks from General Casey as we get into a very momentous period, a very busy time in his Washington life in particular. He's just back from an overseas trip, including parts of the Middle East. But I think we all know for the next month or so he'll be largely anchored in Washington as the chiefs often are this time of year, dealing with the budget process, the congressional process, the unveiling of the Quadrennial Defense Review. I promise you that we probably won't hear a full unveiling of that review today or all the budget surprises that may lurk and await us. But we'll look forward very much to hearing from General Casey about the state of the U.S. Army, the challenges for the U.S. Armed Forces in this year, and looking into the future and then have an opportunity for some discussion and question and answer.

I'm going to give just a very brief introduction of General George Casey, who, as you know, is Army Chief of Staff. I think the greatest thing I can say on behalf of him in his long career of service, the most important thing is just how he has helped hold the Army together as an institution in an incredibly difficult time, as we're all aware. And yet, so few of us have any kind of personal feel for what our soldiers are doing and the rest of men and women in uniform today in the U.S. Armed Forces. But the way in which the U.S. military, under the leadership of people like General Casey, has managed to find one last measure of resolve and commitment time and time again is extraordinary.

I think it was one of General Casey's fellow four-stars, now retired, who

said, “Never as a nation have we asked so few to do so much for so long.” And yet somehow, through his leadership, through good policy decisions, and through increasingly impressive successes on the battlefields, we’ve seen the Army maintain morale through thick and thin, through some great difficulties and great tragedies; and yet as an institution, the place is holding together quite impressively and continues to perform admirably. So I can think of no greater praise to give an Army chief of staff than the state of his Army in this difficult time.

And with that, I hope you’ll join me in welcoming General George Casey. (Applause)

GENERAL CASEY: Thank you, Michael. Thanks very much.

It’s very great to be back here, and as Michael said, it is that time of year in Washington, and I can start maybe not be the first one you’ve heard, but one of the first to say this is going to be an interesting year. And we seem to say that every year here in Washington.

Great to be back at Brookings. Everything seems to go so fast that if it wasn’t last week, I’d seem to think it was last month. And when I realized it’s been over two years since I’ve spoken here. It was striking to me, and, actually, as I went back and I read what I said then, it was also very interesting because it allowed me to kind of juxtapose where I saw us as an Army, and how we saw the future environment at that time compared to where we see it now two years later.

And so I’d like to talk about that a bit here, and I’m going to start just by saying was December 2007, and I had about eight months in the job. For about four of that my wife and I had gone around all over the world visiting Army units and talking to soldiers and leaders and families to try to get a sense of where we were. And I came back that summer, and I used the term that the Army was out of balance. And I wrestled hard finding

the right words to describe the Army because, if you think back to that time, you were hearing the Army was hollow, the Army wasn't ready. And that clearly was not the case.

But just as clearly, we were stretched. I mean we were on 15-month deployments. We were on staff walks. We were involuntarily holding soldiers over to complete their tours with their organizations. There was a lot of stresses and strains on the force, and we'd been at war for six years. So I came up with the term that "we're out of balance"; that we were at that time so weighed down by our current commitment that we couldn't do the things that we knew we needed to do to sustain the force for the long haul and to prepare to do other things. And everybody was either in Iraq or Afghanistan recovering or getting ready to go back and there was no time to train for things other than the missions that they were going into.

We put ourselves on a plan back in 2007 to restore balance. And I said then it was going to take us three or four years to do that. And that plan was centered on four imperatives, the four things that I felt we had to do as an army if we were going to hold this force together and bring us to a position of balance by 2011.

Sustained soldiers and families. Sustained soldiers and families are the heart and soul of this force, and as I go around and I listen to the commitment of both the soldiers and the families after eight and a half years of war, it is striking. And we ought to all feel very, very good about that. But we have to sustain those soldiers and families. And we were particularly focused on our mid-level officers and noncommissioned officers because they are the ones that carry the brunt of this war. And they are the ones that take a decade to train.

And when I consulted with one of my predecessors, "Shy" Meyer, who was chief of staff of the Army in 1980, who went to Congress and said, "The Army's hollow." And about eight or nine years after the last combat battalion left Vietnam, I said, Shy, what is it?

What happened?

He says, George, it's all about the people. And when those mid-level officers, not to mention officers, start leaving, they're the ones that takes you a decade to grow; it takes a decade to replace them. I lived through that decade in the '70s.

The other thing, element of this sustaining soldiers and families, is it was clear to us as we went around that the families were the most brittle part of the force, and that while we had come light years since I entered the Army -- and I'm an army brat, so I've been a member of an army family for 61 years. And my mother's motto was make the best of it. And that's what we did, and it wasn't always pretty. But we needed to do much better than that, and so we've had a big increase in that effort. So sustain soldiers and families are number one, imperative.

Second, we had to continue to prepare soldiers for success in the current conflict. We couldn't flinch on getting our soldiers the equipment and the training that they needed to succeed. And I will tell you, after a close start in the early years here, we've made great progress. I mean I watched how long it took us to get up-armored Humvees into Iraq, and we've -- it took us about nine months to start getting MRAPs vehicles -- Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles -- into Afghanistan once we decided that's what we were going to do. So we're getting better at that.

And as I went around and talked to the soldiers -- I went right before Christmas to Iraq and Afghanistan -- they're generally very comfortable with the equipment and things that were given us.

Third. We had to reset these soldiers in units effectively as they returned from 12 months in combat, and it's the people and the equipment that had to be reset. And when you're only home for 12 months, you don't have time to recover fully, either the soldiers or the equipment. And after 6 years at war, we just completed our sixth Mental

Health Assessment Team study for Iraq and Afghanistan this past year, and for the first time we have scientific data that showed that after a 12-month combat deployment, it takes 24 to 36 months to actually recover stress levels to what they called normal garrison stress levels.

Now, we've intuitively known that because we've been working to get the one year out/two years back for the Active Force since 2007. But we've got the supporting scientific evidence now that says that's where we need to go. And so I've come to realize that one of the most important things we can do to restore balance is to increase the time the soldiers spend at home, and I'll talk about that a little bit more in a second.

And, lastly, we had to continue to transform. And if you think about it, the intellectual work that is driving the current transformation that we're undergoing was done in late 2002 or early 2003. All good stuff, but we've been at war since that time. And you don't stay at war for as long as we've been at war without figuring out better and smarter ways to do things. And so we're at a point right now, we're with the submission of the 11th budget. I can actually see the completion of the objectives we set for ourselves to get ourselves back in balance. And we are starting to shift our thinking now to this decade, the second decade of the 21st century, and ask ourselves hard questions about, okay, how should we assess where we are in terms of our transformation, and what do we need to change? And I'll talk a little bit about that at the end.

So out of balance, on a plan, sustain and prepare, reset and transform to get ourselves back in balance, and the last thing I'd say about the transformation is we recognize we had to do this while we're fighting two wars. And there has added a dimension of complexity and stress to what we're doing, but it's absolutely essential. And I'll tell you in a second what we've done and why that was so essential.

Now, let me shift gears then to how we saw the environment back in 2007. And I don't know how man of you are here, but I'll just kind of go over it quickly. First of all

back then and now, we're at war. We're at war with the global extremists terrorists network that attacked us on our soil. We believe that we're involved -- this is a long-term ideological struggle, and it's not one that we can walk away from. -- and as we -- against that background, as we look at the trends that we see in the international environment, it seems to us that those trends are more likely to exacerbate what's going on now rather than ameliorate it. What am I talking about?

Globalization. Globalization has positive and negative impacts. I mean the same globalization that is bringing prosperity to different countries around the world is also creating have-and-have-not societies, and the have-not societies are -- or people in those societies are much more susceptible to recruiting by these terrorist organizations.

Technology, another double-edge sword. The same technology that's used to bring knowledge to anyone with a computer is being used by terrorist exporters around the world.

Demographics also going in the wrong direction. I have seen studies that way some of the populations of some of the developing countries will double in the next decade. Can you imagine the problems that presents to governments that are already strapped and stressed?

The populations of the world is increasingly moving towards cities. I've seen studies that say by 2030, 60 percent of the population in the world are going to live in cities. And those of us that have been in the sprawling slums of Sadr City, 2,000,000 people in about a 3-by-5 square kilometer area. It says an awful lot about what we have to prepare ourselves for the ground forces to do.

And then the impact of demographics on resources. The middle classes in China and India are both already larger than the population of the United States. That's a lot of two-car families, and that's a lot of demand that are already scarce regionally.

And the two things that worry me the most as we look to the future, weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists and safe havens. Countries or parts of countries where the local government can't or won't deny their countries to terrorists. That's like happening in parts of Yemen, much like happened in Afghanistan prior to September 11th.

So as we look at those trends against the fact we're already at war and have been for eight and a half years, it seems to us that we are in for a decade or so of what I call persistent conflict, 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 objective. That's what I said back in 2007, and that's what I still believe today. And that is what we are preparing and have been preparing in the Army to do.

One last element I talked about in 2007, and it still rings true today, is we took a hard look and continue to take a hard look at what we think the character of conflict is going to be like in the second decade of the 21st century. And clearly what we're doing in Iraq and Afghanistan are harbingers, but you also need to look outside of Iraq and Afghanistan. And we have studied hard the conflict in Southern Lebanon of 2006. And here you have a non-state actor Hezbollah that has the instruments of state power because they're supported by Iran and Syria. They're fighting Israel and they're inside Lebanon. I mean, that's a much more complex struggle even than we're doing in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And in that struggle, they said they had the instruments of state power. The started the war with over 13,000 rockets and not just small rockets like they shoot at our bases in Iraq and Afghanistan, but large rockets they shot at Israeli shot at Israeli populations there. They had our man-to-air vehicles. They had cruise missiles that they hit an Israeli ship in the Mediterranean Sea. They had state-of-the art surface-to-air missiles that they shot down an Israeli helicopter. They had state-of-the-art anti-tank missiles. Forty

percent of the Israeli casualties came from those state-of-the-art anti-tank missiles.

They had secure cell phones and used secure computers for command and control. And they got their message out on local television. And about 3,000 or so Hezbollah operatives basically held off 30,000 well-armed, well-equipped Israeli soldiers. That's a different type of operation, and so we've been thinking hard about how we do that. And we have spent the last work last year of continuing to refine our thoughts on that and continuing to work to bring ourselves back about.

Now let me just say a couple of words about where we are in terms of getting ourselves back in balance. First, we have completed the growth that President Bush directed that we undertake in 2007, and we completed that in 2009. Originally, it was supposed to be done in 2012. With Secretary Gates' help in 2007, we moved it forward to 2010, this year, and we actually completed it last summer. It has a huge impact on our ability to deal with increased demand. We're 40,000 soldiers larger today than we were in 2007, and that's a significant accomplishment.

The other thing I think you know is that we have even with that, we recognized that we still weren't large enough to deal with increasing challenges, so Secretary Gates last year allowed us to grow another 22,000, temporarily. So almost 100,000 in growth since 2004 for the Army. That's significant.

Secondly, we continue to make progress improving the ratio between the time the soldiers were deployed and the time the soldiers are at home, even with the increased projective for Afghanistan And you say, you know, how ca you do that? As I said, we're already 40,000 soldiers larger than we were in 2007. With the draw-down in Iraq, we have 100,000 soldiers there today. By the end of August, we'll be at 50,000.

So there's 50,000 soldiers that won't have to deploy. Our portion of the deployment into Afghanistan is a little over 20,000, and because of the length of time it takes

to get the forces into Afghanistan, they'll close about the same time the forces are out of Iraq. So what you see is, because of that we never really have appreciably more forces deployed than we do today, and that allows us to complete this plus up in Afghanistan without going to 15 months deployment without having to reduce the time that soldiers spend at home and to continue to build a dwell the time they spend at home.

And now we set a goal for ourselves back in 2007 of getting the one year out/two years back for the active force, one year out/four years back for the Garden Reserve. And we get there for about 70 percent of the active force and 80 percent of the Garden Reserve by 11 and the rest get there in 12. And those that don't quite get to 1 to 2/1 to 4 are in the 18- to 24-month range. They're not stuck back on one year out/two years back -- oh, I'm sorry -- one year out/one year back. That was not sustainable, and everyone recognized that we have to continue to get to one to two/one to four, and then we have to continue to make strides to make to what I believe is our long-term sustainable objective, one year out/three years back for the active; one year out/five years back for the Garden Reserve.

Third element. You may recall that back in 2004, we started converting the Army to modular organization, tailor of little packages that could be mixed and matched to suit the requirements of the mission that they were given, not to the design that they were designed for.

My predecessor, Pete Schoomaker used to talk about it in terms he had too many $100 bills and not enough 20s. And as we looked to the future back then, it was so uncertain that you couldn't just spend 100s all the time, you had to break them up and spend some 20s.

Well, we began, in 2004, the conversion of all 300 brigades in the Army to modular organizations. We're just about 90 percent done with that, and that's a fundamental

organizational change for our Army. When you add to that the rebalancing that we had been doing, and this is rebalancing away from cold war skills more relevant in the 21st century, it's the largest organizational change in the Army since World War II, and we've done it while we've been deploying 150,000 soldiers over and back every year.

The other element, as if that isn't enough -- I'm sorry, let me just give you a bit of example about what I meant by "rebalancing." We have stood down about 200 armor air defense and artillery companies and batteries, and we've stood up a corresponding number of special forces, civil affairs, psychological operations, military police companies that are much more relevant in the 21st century. That's t he rebalancing aspect to this. So when we've finished this, we'll be a fundamentally different Army by 2011 than we were, really, in 2004.

If that wasn't enough, we're also completing the requirements of the Base Realignment Enclosure Commission of 2005. I mean that is a double-edged sword, lots of turbulence, about 380,000 soldiers and families and civilians affected by this all across the Army. The positive side: The improvement in the facilities on army bases is substantial.

Two other -- three other quick things. We've also made huge strides in moving our Reserve component forces away from being a strategic Reserve where they were under resourced because they were only expected to be called for national emergencies into an operational where they a not-serve and have-served as an operational augmentation of the Active Force. And I will tell you; almost half of the Garden Reserve now are combat veterans. That's a fundamentally different army than we had just a few years ago. And they will tell you that they are quite comfortable being this operational augmentation and do not want to go back to being a strategic Reserve. And they are readier today than they ever have been in the 40 years that I've been in the Army.

We also have made great strides in improving what we're doing for our

wounded soldiers. We've come just light years from where we were in 2007. That's in the aftermath of Walter Reed, and we've ratcheted up significantly what we're doing for our families. And we've also started a program about 18 months ago where we are doing more for the surviving family members. And as we looked at it after five years at war, frankly, we were still doing survivor systems and not much more. And these families more increasingly see themselves as part of an army family, and they want to continue to remain part of that family, and we're creating the opportunities for them to do that.

So lots of good progress over the course of the last two years, but, as you know, not without stresses and strains. And you can imagine, we watch daily the impacts of stress on the force, and we look at it from all different aspects. And I will tell you, candidly, it's a mixed bag, but recruiting and retention are strong. In 2009, we met our recruiting retention objective and our quality march for the first time in awhile. The officer retrusion -- officer retention has been quite steady even for the captains. And there's a perception out there that all the captains are leaving is just not true. We remain right at or just below historic retention levels.

Disciplinary problems, AWOLs, desertion, court martials, all trending down. On the negative side, probably the thing that worries me the most is our inability to stem the tide, the rising tide of suicides across the Army. And this year -- in 2009 -- we had 160 suicides in the Active Duty Army. And that was after a very concerted effort over the course of 2009 to increase the awareness and to help people avoid that. And since 2004, we have increased by an average of about 18 suicides a year, and this year maintained about that level. And this is something that we're working on.

Now, I think we need to be careful not to attribute all of that to stress on the force, because if you look at the suicides, about a third of them have never deployed. A third of them committed suicide while deployed and a third after they came back. So it's

clearly part of it, but we need to be careful not to attribute everything to that.

We're continuing to work very hard. We've got a study ongoing with the National Institute of Mental Health, about a $10 million study that I think will give not only us, but, I think, society some great insights into suicide that will be helpful down the road.

Drug and alcohol enrollments are up. Good news/bad news. The good news is they're getting help; bad news is the number is increasing and drug positives on urinalysis testings are up slightly. We're in the 2 percent range. They're very small numbers, but still increasing, and we watched that very carefully.

A little bit on myotramatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. We've had about 80-89-90,000 soldiers identified with mild traumatic brain injury, 90 percent of that moderate to light since 2001. We've had about 30,000 soldiers identified for post-traumatic stress since 2003, and they continued at a rate of about, oh,
10- to 15,000 increasing soldiers a year. We're working very hard on that and have been since 2007.

But I'll tell you, there are some misperceptions out there, and they are misperceptions that everybody that goes to combat gets posttraumatic stress, and that's just not true, and we have scientific studies that demonstrate that the vast majority of people that deploy to combat have a growth experience, have a positive experience.

Everybody gets stressed, yes, there's no doubt about that. But you should not think that everybody returning has posttraumatic stress disorder. They just don't, and to help our soldiers after eight and a half years at war and looking at what we see ahead of us, we instituted a program in August after about two years' worth of study with the University of Pennsylvania called Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. And it's a program that is designed to give every soldier the skills they need to be more resilient and to enhance their performance. And because we look to the future, they're going to be doing more of this, and they need to

have these strength things skills.

Now, it's got four key elements. The first element is survey. It's a personal assessment. Any soldier and now any family member can go on line, take this assessment and they will receive a strength rating in the five key areas of fitness: physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and family. Now, they can look at that, and they can connect themselves to an online module in each of those areas that give them tips to help them get better and improve themselves.

A third element of this is that at every level of school from Army School from Basic Training to the Army War College our soldiers will now get resilience training modules of increasing complexity.

And, lastly, and I think the one that will have the most long-term impact force is we have instituted a program called Master Resilience Trainers. And I see some military folks in here; you'll remember master fitness trainers that we put in about 20 years ago that taught you how to do good pushups. These are soldiers to help soldiers understand what it takes to be more resilient. We about almost 500 of them that have been trained already at University of Pennsylvania, and it is our goal to have one in every battalion-size unit, about 800 to 1,000 people by the end of this year.

I will tell you that already almost 140,000 soldiers have taken that survey, and we've given them to the spring to have everybody in the Army do it. I believe -- now this is not something that's going to impact quickly on a suicide rate, but it's something that I believe is going to strengthen the force over time.

Bottom line, good progress over the last two years, not out of the woods yet. And even if we are successful in expanding the time that the soldiers spend at home, we are conscious that the more time that soldiers are at home the more time that they have to deal with the problems that they've been putting off over the last years. And we don't

think -- we're not being Pollyannaish about this, but having soldiers home for a longer time will bring with it additional challenges.

All right, now -- I'm going too long here. Let me just wrap up here, and then tell you how our thinking on the environment and how the environment has impacted our thinking of what type of army we need for the second decade of the 21st century.

Suffice it to say that our view of the environment has not significantly changed. And it's persisting conflict in the character of conflict about as I described. But as we look at what the Army needs to do in that period, we've come up with four roles, and these roles I think you will see will be quite similar to what you see the defense roles are herein when the PDR comes out.

First of all, we have to prevail in protracted counterinsurgency campaigns, "Win the wars you're in," as Secretary Gates says. And we have to organize, train, and equip ourselves to be able to do that, and to do that for as long as it takes.

Second, we have to be able to engage to help others build capacity. We cannot win these wars ourselves; we can only win them when the local security forces can maintain domestic order and deny their country is a safe haven for terrorists.

Third, we need to continue our efforts to support civil authorities at home and abroad: at home in support of disasters much like you've seen going on in Haiti -- no, that's not quite home -- and abroad, much like we're doing in Iraq and Afghanistan in helping to organize and integrate all -- the application of all the other elements of national power to achieve our effects.

Now, and so against those roles we are working to build an Army that is a versatile mix of tailorable and networked organizations that is operating on a rotational cycle. And putting the Army on a rotational cycle like the Marines and the Navy have been on for years is a huge institutional change for us, but we have to do it because it is the only way

that we can continue to provide trained and ready forces for the missions we have today and to hedge against counter -- hedge against contingencies and to do this in a way that's predictable and sustainable for the all-volunteer force. And protracted confrontation with an all-volunteer force brings with it a different set of challenges. And we're very cognizant of that, and we're organizing ourselves to deal with it.

And I realize that's an abrupt stop, but I think I've probably said enough to generate some questions here, so I'm going to stop there, and I'd be happy to take some questions.

Michael?

MR. O'HANLON: Excellent. Please join me in a quick hand for the General. (Applause)

And you're welcome to grab a seat here, if you like. And as you're doing so, I think I'll abuse the advantage of the moderator to begin with some questions for myself. and then we'll look forward to the -- all of you of getting involved.

Policymakers --

GENERAL CASEY: Excuse me.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, are sensitive looking to technology.

(Pause due to audio distortion)

GENERAL CASEY: Dressing myself is my biggest challenge for the day.

MR. O'HANLON: Policymakers don't like hypothetical questions as a rule, but--

GENERAL CASEY: Glad I'm not a policymaker. Mr. Carter --

MR. O'HANLON: Exactly. You have to prepare for all the different things the policymakers cut out for you to do which means you do have to think about hypotheticals. And you mentioned that by 2012 you'd like to see this one year deployed to

two years well time for virtually the entire force. Obviously, you're building assumptions into that about how many forces we'll have abroad, to be able to make that statement. I'm not going to ask you exactly what your assumptions are, but here's where I'd like to pause here. The question is going to actually ask if we're flexible enough and big enough to do something that might come up that's unexpected right now. Because if we look at Iraq, we're supposed to be all the way out by the end of 2011, but, of course, that could, hypothetically, change somewhat.

In Afghanistan -- and if I could be forgiven a very quick plug for my new book, Toughing It Out In Afghanistan, with Hessina Sherjan, who's an amazing woman I got to write this book with. We tried to estimate how long it would take to do General McChrystal's plan. And President Obama said we want to start the drawdown in mid-2011, but it could take several years to really meaningfully get those numbers down. So for my own planning purposes, I'm assuming we could still have 80- to 90,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan even in 2012. And then there are Yemen, Somalia, Congo, Darfur are all the places that you're probably not itching, but volunteering to go, but may bet asked to go.

So if you got asked to do another mission, do you have an army that can handle that by 2011, 2012, or are we maxed out as far as the eye can see?

GENERAL CASEY: If you asked today to execute a significant different -- another significant mission, I mean we just sent a brigade from the 82nd to Haiti. Their mission was the Global Reaction Force, exactly to respond to this. So we have that. We have a small capability to do that. But if we had to do something like Korea, for example, we would have to free the forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and start training forces that -- we're preparing to go to Afghanistan to do something different. It wouldn't take us a long time, but we don't have the flexibility that we need. And that's part of this whole effort to get back in balance.

And what happens when you get to one year out and two years back, you actually have a portion of the fourth that has time to train to do other things. And so if there was another contingency, we would have the capability to hedge. And that's where I say we're putting the Army on a rotational model so that we can sustain these commitments and have the capability to hedge. And you can't do that until you get to at least one year out, two years back.

And like I said, we will -- this year we'll have more forces that are back longer. Next year we'll have more than that; the year after that we'll have more than that. So we will gradually restore the ground capability to react quickly to unexpected contingencies. We still have the air and naval capability which is not insignificant at all. It's the best navy and air force in the world. So it's roughly a two-year additional prospect looking out of a recovering to this capacity to hedge or to deploy to yet another contingency. Obviously, if there was a big emergency, you would have to do it right now, but within a couple of years we're in a more proper position to be able to contemplate that kind of thing.

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah.

GENERAL CASEY: And that is what we are actually planning to do.

Now, your other suggestion here about -- and this is a question I always get: Well, how big does the Army need to be to do what it needs to do? And I'm increasingly thinking that we have to move ourselves away from a demand-base model to a supply base model. And if you lay the entire army out on a one year out and two years back model, with the Guard and Reserves flowing through with a different pace, at 1.1 million we can generate an operational headquarters, a corps, five division-level headquarters, tactical headquarters, 20 brigade combat teams -- about 4 or 5 of those are Guard -- and about 90,000 enabling forces -- helicopters, engineers, military police -- now that is not insignificant capability. But it doesn't quite meet the demand in Afghanistan and Iraq today. It's about an

80 percent solution today.

Next year when the demand in Iraq comes down, it'll be over a 90 percent solution. And so that's one of the significant points about putting this on this model is that we will have forces that can meet the current requirements and hedge against the unexpected and to do that at a sustainable rate for the all-volunteer force. And this is the longest war we have fought as a country with a volunteer force.

MR. O'HANLON: Just one last question and then I'll go to the audience. I'm not going to try to get you into trouble, but I am going to ask for a little bit of a sneak preview on the QDR, and instead of asking you exactly what it says, which would be unfair of me and get no response from you, I will ask you if you don't mind saying what subjects within defense policy you find the QDR to be especially interesting on. I've heard some people speculate that discussion of the defense industrial base, for example, is particularly detailed in this QDR compared with previous ones.

Is there anything you would just, though, suggest we keep our ears and eyes attentive to as we read next week?

GENERAL CASEY: Yeah, let me -- I mean, I think you got to go back to the '10 budget discussion in that April of last year's --

MR. O'HANLON: Mm-hmm.

GENERAL CASEY: -- press release.

MR. O'HANLON: Right.

GENERAL CASEY: And what you'll see in the QDR is a continuation of the thought processes in the theme that that came out of that -- the '10 budget. And you'll see them in the '11 budget, and you'll see them in the QDR.

And, as I mentioned, I mean you've heard Secretary Gates talk about prevailing in the wars that we're in and institutionalizing the capabilities that it takes to do

that. I mean you should expect to see that team in there.

We've talked about increasing our ability to engage with others, and I think you should expect to see that kind of thing in there.

MR. O'HANLON: Mm-hmm.

GENERAL CASEY: We still need the capability to deter and defeat state actors. None of think we can completely walk away from that however likely you may think it is. And so I think those capabilities and that discussion will also be in it. So again, if you -- if you have to go back to where we came out of the 2010 discussions, I think you're just going to see the QDR is a continuation of those things.

MR. O'HANLON: Right. Well, please, so let's have some questions from the crowd. If you wouldn't mind identifying yourself before you ask your question, I'd be grateful. Here in the middle, yes, ma'am?

DR. HARPALOW: Hi, I'm Margolese Harpalow with the American Plan and Services Committee. As we have -- this is the state of the morgues, specific hypothetical question, so I'm sorry. As we have seen, Al-Qaeda is a growing global power, and it is very easy for them to get recruits. And we're starting to lose the strength of the strategy: Cut off the head and the body will die.

Is, as we have seen in Yemen, is it -- do you think it would be wise for the Army to continue working there and attempt to capture more Al-Qaeda operatives? Or would it just best for us to kind of back off on that?

GENERAL CASEY: The Army meaning U.S. Army?

DR. HARPALOW: Yeah, mostly U.S. forces.

GENERAL CASEY: Yeah. First of all, I'm not necessarily sure I agree with your statement that we see

Al-Qaeda as an expanding global threat, and clearly, it is still a challenge. But I wouldn't

necessarily characterize it as growing in a pronounced way.

This question that you asked about Yemen is interesting. I was just in Saudi Arabia and Egypt last week. And I was told that it would be not a good thing -- this is views of the Saudi leadership that I spoke with -- it would not be a good thing to put U.S. boots on the ground in Yemen because it would attract more jihadists than it could possibly turn their tribes against us. That was the insights of a neighbor, the very profound insights of the neighbor.

And so what we increasingly have to do is figure out how to help countries that need our assistance, but can't necessarily be seen as accepting that assistance in a very visible way. And I think that the successes that we've had recently in Yemen demonstrate a way to do that. But again, I think we have to be careful thinking that we can go in and take over everybody's problem and solve it for them. We just will never get there.

MR. O'HANLON: Gary?

MR. MITCHELL: General Casey, thank you. Gary Mitchell from The Mitchell Report. The question that I initially was tempted to ask and I realized this a waste of time which is what keeps you awake at night, and the list you've listed is long enough.

One of the things that keeps some people awake at night is concern about the fact that because of a volunteer army the gap between those who are bearing the brunt and those who aren't makes the claim that we are a nation at war not quite the same claim that it was in previous conflicts. And I wonder what your thinking about that issue of the gap and related issues is.

GENERAL CASEY: Yet, I mean as you point out, the American military is less than one percent of the population. They're all representative of society, maybe not necessarily in some percentage.

But as I go around the country, even though people aren't in the military,

what I see is huge public support for the men and women and the families of the armed forces. And though people aren't serving, they're very appreciative and vocal about the contribution of the men and women that are. And I think that's a little different twist, certainly. What I grew up with in this area of the '70s, It's a lot different than I grew up with in the '70s.

And again, so while it's not serving in the military, there is huge public support that I see all over the country.

I think a lot of us would like to see public service in general be accepted by more and more of the society because of the challenges that we are dealing with across the government are huge and only getting more complex, and we need the best to do it. Fortunately, we're still able to attract the best in the role of military.

MR. O'HANLON: Stay up here for a minute in the front row.

MR. CLARK: Good morning, sir. Colon Clark, DoD Buzz. The QDR focuses a great deal on building partnership, training. That requires Sauds and lots of them.

Are you concerned that the Army is generating enough Sauds who are not going to the fight and can do that kind of partnership training? And do you have to rejigger the balance?

GENERAL CASEY: Well, the Sauds, like the convention forces, ad deploying at a rate that doesn't allow it to do some of the partnership capacity-building that we know the other combatant commanders need. We're already adding five special forces battalions, and we've been doing that for several years.

But here's something that we've worked our way though, and, you know, probably just a couple of years ago now, the marines, Jim Conway and I, we're beavering away saying, okay, well, how can we create organizations, conventional organizations to do this? But the more we got into it, the more we were asking ourselves, well, what are these

guys going to do? Are they going to sit on their Rucksacks and wait to get called? And so we got Eric Olson from Special Operations Command and Jim Mattis from Joint Forces Command together, and we all said what's the reality here? And this from Eric Olson.

Because of the numbers of exercises and Special Operations commitments that get cancelled for a variety of reasons, he basically, once demand come down in Iraq and Afghanistan, he basically has almost enough special forces to meet that. And he certainly has enough if those special forces are augmented to supply conventional multipurpose forces. And, believe me, we have learned so much in the last five years on the conventional side about how to deal with indigenous troops.

In 2005 when we started transition teams in Iraq, I had to get special forces to train conventional forces how to deal with their Iraqis. And now we've been doing it for five years. And so what we plan to do to augment the special forces is as ENS (inaudible) as the man comes down, we plan on allocating a brigade combat team to a regional combat and commander for a period. And those forces, they are available to that commander for exercises, to augment special forces and training and so forth. So the combination of those two, and it's not all going tourist on the backs of the special force.

MR. CLARK: Correct.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, here, a Marine Corps colonel.

COLONEL McLEAN: Sir, Chip McLean, a Marine Corps Fellow here at Brookings. My question kind of goes to the industrial base acquisitions and four-structure balance as it applies to your future combat systems and ground combat system acquisitions. How are you balancing weight versus utility -- you know. Because we talked -- you talked briefly about how we could dwell, the troops can come back and we can retool them to handle high-intensity missions, major conventional war. How can you retool equipment, though, and how do you plan to balance the force acquisition of heavy ground combat

equipment such as M1 tanks and their replacements of which the risk evolved in future conflicts.

GENERAL CASEY: Yeah, and this kind of gets right at the heart of our modernization effort, and let me just talk for a second of how the Secretary's decision to cancel the Mahan, Brown vehicle portion of the Future Combat Systems Program, which was our major modernization effort, how we handle that and how we've moving forward with it with a ground combat vehicle.

First of all, it was just the van, ground vehicle, portion that was cancelled to include the non-LITA site canon. And so those systems are now off the table. And what Secretary Gates asked me to do was take a blank sheet of paper and look at the lessons that we've learned from the last -- or from what we've done for the last five years, take the investment in technology that we've already made, and then ground vehicles technology and come up with a new vehicle.

And we have done that over the course of from April to the end of last year. And we have initial capabilities document for a new ground combat vehicle that will be the first fighting vehicle designed from the ground up to operate in an IED environment. We believe that's the reality of the environment that we're going to have to deal with. And so that process is moving forward, and you'll see the beginnings of it next week when the budget comes out here.

The rest of the systems, the what we call the spinouts, the different capabilities like the small unmanned aerial vehicle, the small unmanned ground vehicle, a non-LITA site missile. Those systems are all going forward, and they were going to go not only to 15 brigades, but to all the brigades in the Army. That continued.

And then the third key element of the program was the networks, and this is probably the most important element for us, because if you think of what the network gives

you, when you're out in not necessarily in combat, but anywhere in the military operations, you have to know where you are. You have to know where your buddy is. You have to know where the enemy is, and when you shoot at the enemy, you have to hit him. That's what the network brings to you. And so we are continuing that investment in the networks. So all of that stayed with it.

And now we have to -- we have gone to a program where instead of just the spinout packages from the Future Combat Systems Program getting broad into the force, we're including them in what we call "capabilities packages." And we're adding to those capabilities packages things that we know work in Iraq and Afghanistan now. And we'll define those packages every two years based on what technology is available to put into the force. And we'll put those into the force so they can train with them and deploy with them. And that's about a 35-slide briefing without slides, and I'm sure I'm starting to lose some people here. By and large, we have adapted from the cancellation of the Manned Ground Vehicle program and are able to sustain brigade combat de-modernization strategy for our entire Army.

COLONEL McLEAN: I like it without the briefing slides. Thank you. You don't now yet.

MR. O'HANLON: Ken?

MR. LIEBERTHAL: Ken Lieberthal of the Brookings Institution. Sir, when you stress the network, and you had commented earlier that technology trends, on balance, are a mixed bag for the future. How do you evaluate the likely security of the network in giving the increasing challenges in cyber warfare over the (inaudible)?

GENERAL CASEY: A big part of our effort is it's the bill protection into the network. And as you know, you can't do it all technologically. They get people trained and everything, but if we're going to rely on the network which we believe we need to do, we

have got to be able to protect it, and so a large part of our effort is going into the protection side.

MR. O'HANLON: Can I start at the back now and work forward a little bit? Yes, sir?

MR. HARRIS: General Casey, hi. John Harris, Retired, Army Colonel a few years ago. I served with you at Fort Carson. You probably don't remember that, but that's okay.

GENERAL CASEY: You didn't have a beard at Fort Carson, though.

MR. HARRIS: You're right, sir. You're right. Good comeback. Fred Debello, though, encouraged me to grow a beard at some point anyway.

Context, and this is linked, perhaps indirectly, to the QDR, but it's really an extract from H.R. McMaster in an article that he wrote several months ago in World Affairs. And it's -- the intent is not to read verbatim his quote, but it's really looking at the prism or the lens that the Army does a great job at, I believe, but does not necessarily universally apply and transfer to, let's say, the State Department.

For example, State has been hindered, chronic, understaffing, under-resourcing, and so forth to the point that the Chairman even offered, when he was the C&O, validate funding to the State Department. But they never took him up on it.

The point that I'm trying to get across is whole of government which you hear today, often in terms of counterinsurgency operations, from your perspective as the Chief, and your previous tenure in Iraq and the Director of the Joint Staff, do you think the interagency effort applies the same weight for lessons identified, lessons learned? and do you see the whole of government effort wholly resourced towards Afghanistan?

GENERAL CASEY: And I think you could probably answer your own questions here. I don't think that means it is cultural. I don't think anybody ideas with

lessons learned like we do. I mean, we -- something happens we go into it. We ask ourselves the hard questions about it. We come out, we change things. And we're very punctilious about doing this.

I have watched all of the government learn since 2003-2004. I mean, candidly, we got into Iraq and Afghanistan, we got into some things that the country hadn't been involved in for decades. And as we went through that, we all learned, and not only us, but our agencies grew. And, you know, they might have grown at different paces, but we all continued to grow and learn.

And, there's -- you know, there is frustration in here, you know, among the younger officers about why can't the State Department do this; why can't the government of Iraq do that? And what I tell them is: You got to be careful about the "if onlys." And you can't be, if only so-and-so would do this; if only so-an-so would do that I'd be successful. You have to play the hand that you're dealt.

And so, you know, we've all grown together. I think there is more growth in terms of bringing all of the elements of national power to play in an effective way. I think it's going to take more institutional change in the other agencies of the government just like we're going through in the Army. I mean I believe -- what I tell my leaders is that we're in a period of fundamental and continuous change. And so we're going to be continually adapting and changing as we go ahead. And I think everybody's got to get themselves into that mode.

MR. O'HANLON: If I could follow up on that, are you encouraged to see the State Department doing their Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review? They seem to have taken a page out of the Pentagon's longstanding policy and institutionalized and formalized their planning process. Do you think that's likely to help them make a better case for the resources they need?

GENERAL CASEY: Sure. And I think, as you suggest, and Secretary Gates has also suggested that we need to give more resources to the State Department. So, I mean, that's -- all that intellectual work is what underpins institutional change and it's all healthy.

MR. O'HANLON: Is there more integration -- and one quick follow-up on that, too. Is there more integration between agencies? Has State had more of a chance to get involved in your QDR? Have you folks been consulted by State about their QDDR? Who's making sure that these different reviews are at some level serving a common broad agenda?

GENERAL CASEY: Yeah, as Chief of Staff of the Army. my level of interaction with the interagency is way down. But it's interesting you talk about integration because I've been thinking about this a lot, and especially I'd see Ron Newman sitting out here, and we were together in Iraq. And, I mean, we actually worked this.

And, you know, the military pliants, we organized, and we integrate that those, almost or corps companies, that's what we do. And it seems to me that as the other agencies of the government grown, they ought to be able to lean on us to do those things. We don't have to be in charge, but you ought to be able to leverage those skills because I mean just integration -- you mentioned integration of the interagency here. But integrating economic, political, military affects in Iraq or Afghanistan to produce a result is a huge effort. And that's been part of our challenges. We haven't been able to bring all that together on a time line.

So I mean of you think about those three things that the military does, leverage that. Again, we don't have to be in charge, but let us help organize and integrate the whole effort, and that'll get us through the period here until we have a better total interagency capacity.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, ma'am? Here about six rows back.

MS. BRANNON: Kate Brannon, Inside the Army. Do you think the Army requires a strategic Reserve in addition to an operationally Reserve? And if you could talk a little bit about what kind of work the Army will do in the coming year looking at Reserve questions and other force structures as well, that would be great. Thanks.

GENERAL CASEY: Yes. First of all, if you think about the model I talked about, whole Army organized on a one year out/two years back model that means there's one group that's all -- that's deployed, right? That means there's another group home that's training in a variety of things. And there's another group that is recovering. We call it resetting.

And in my view, you have the committed force, the second group is the Operational Reserve to react to contingencies. And the last group, Active Guard Reserves, the ones that are recovering, that's the Strategic Reserve. That's how we're thinking about this. And they are the Strategic Reserve because we are progressively building readiness so that they deploy man-trained and equipped for the mission that they get. And when they come back, they're at their lowest level of readiness, and this will gradually build over a period of two years till they're ready to go back again.

So I don't see the Guard and Reserve as "the Strategic Reserve." It's any force that's recovered. And it would just take us longer to get those in there.

The second part of your question was?

MS. BRANNON: (inaudible)

GENERAL CASEY: Oh, yeah. Yes, and so the -- it's (inaudible) in 2010, but, I mean, the $64,000 question that we're wrestling with right now for the Reserves is what do you do with Reserves when demand comes down? And as we look to the future, as demand comes down, I mean, the first thing I want to try to do is to get to 9-months

deployment because, you know, we know 15-month deployments are way too long. Twelve months are too long with sustain for a decade or so. We'd like to get to nine months. And then we also know six months is too short on the ground.

The next thing we'd like to do is get to one year out/three years back because -- and that's sustainable over the long haul. And then the last thing we'd like to do is to begin reducing our reliance on the Guard and Reserve.

And so we're actively working our way through that question, and I don't have all the answers right now. But, you know, we're trying to keep the Guard and Reserve proportionately represented in our operations, and I think that's important because it ties us back to the population in a way that we wouldn't do if it was just the active force.

So that's a great question, and it's one we're actively working on.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, ma'am, here on the aisle.

MS. CHAMER: Ashley Chamer , CFIS. As you work towards having the troops home for long period of time, what steps are you taking to make sure that the institutional memory while in the field is maintained? And this question is particularly geared toward reconstruction efforts and economic operations.

GENERAL CASEY: Yes, I mentioned the lessons learned, effort. We have a center for lessons learned that continually pulls those lessons together, publishes documents, and then works to incorporate these new changes into doctrine.

We published our first doctrine, major doctrine since September 11th, in February of 2008. And it's called Field Manual 3, and it lays out an operational concept that Army forces will simultaneously apply offense, defense, and stability operations to accomplish their objective.

We are already beginning to write a change to that based on the lessons that we are gleaning from across the Army. And so that process will just continue.

The other thing I'd tell you is one of the things we strongly encourage our folks to do when they come home is to write something, is to sit down and write it down, and spread it around and share it. But I'll tell you, as I've watched General McChrystal and these folks go into Afghanistan, as I've gone other there and poked around in some things. I'm a little disappointed in what did not transfer from Iraq to Afghanistan. And I'm working on figuring out how we can get that better. The things that they're having to do now we were doing in Iraq years ago, and part of that is because maybe the general concepts have been passed, but if it wasn't ingrained sufficiently in the minds of the executors for them to do it, so.

MR. O'HANLON: In the pink coat all the way back. And then I'll work back up.

MS. NEWMAN: Hi, (inaudible) Newman from FOX News Channel. Last night President Obama announced his plan to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell. I just wanted to see if you have any comments on that this morning, if the Army is ready for that, any suggestions that you would make to the President, and if it's feasible given that we're in the middle of not one, but two wars.

GENERAL CASEY: Right. Well, I think a couple of things: 1, President Obama has been very clear with Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen that he's committed to changing the law. And he's also been very clear that he's committing to doing it in a way that has the least impact on a force that been, as you say, at war for eight and a half years. And language you heard last night was the beginning of a process. And I will participate in that process, and I will provide my military advice to the Secretary of Defense and to the President. And you will be the second to know when I do.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Sir, yes. And then I will work up.

CAPTAIN TOMLIN: Good morning, sir. Captain Greg Tomlin, currently

assigned to George Washington University.

Returning to the whole of government discussion, as a field artillery officer I've spent more time working with the State Department in Iraq, UN, and Kosovo than I have calling for close air support. How would you like the Army Education System to change so that we're not just comfortable with an halo, but we're capable of working from the tactical level to the strategic level in that interagency environment?

GENERAL CASEY: Yeah, that's a great question, and it's something that we have been working very hard on for a couple of years. And the essence is that, you know, we say that we want our leaders to be very confident in their core proficiencies and then broad enough to do a range of things. And you get confident in your core proficiency by staying in the operational force. You don't broad by staying in the operational force.

And so what we've been developing, and Marty Dempsey down in Pradock is putting this strategy together here, is to designate in the course of an officer's, and warrant officers', and not to mention officers' careers, broad -- we call broadening windows. The time late major league captain where there would be a menu of things offered you to do, graduate school or civilian institutions, training working with another agency of the government, working with industry, working in a military assistance group, something outside of your core competency, internships here and in the Capitol. And not necessarily 3- or 4-year tours, but 6- to 12-month opportunities where you go out and plug in.

Now, Bill Caldwell out at Leavenworth -- now he's over in Afghanistan, but as part of this effort he worked in agreement with the State Department where we bring foreign service officers to Fort Leavenworth to go to our command at Joe Staff COGs, and we send Army officers to the State Department to work for that period to replace the foreign service officers, because they just afford to send them otherwise. Those are the types of things that we're actively encouraging young leaders to do and, you know, we're up against

culture. Stay in the operational force or you won't get the Italian Command. That's the mindset that's out there.

But the fact that if you stay in the operational force today, you keep going back to Iraq and Afghanistan, you got to get a break. So what we're trying to do is give the young officer an opportunity to say, I'm taking a break here. I'm only going to be gone for a year. Don't do anything stupid without me, and I'm going to get broadened a little bit.

But we have to do that, so what you're doing I think is exactly right. Now we just have to figure out how to get you back in so you can leverage those skills.

MR. O'HANLON: We have time for two more questions, if they're brief. Now let's move up this way. Yes, ma'am? And then we'll finish over here.

MS. PAYNE: Tiffany Payne. I'm a student at Kent State University. My question is a strategical one on the ground. You mentioned safe havens as being of a large problem. What are you doing in order to curb the civilian population of being either frightened of or sympathizing with the insurgents in Afghanistan, particularly?

GENERAL CASEY: I mean that protecting the population is one of the core elements of any counterinsurgency strategy. And if you're going to be successful in the counterinsurgency operation, you have to have intelligence. And to get the intelligence, the people have to feel secure enough to give it to you. And for them to feel secure enough to give it to you, the police have to be able to protect it. And if the police can't do it, then the local military has to do it. And if they can't do it, then we have to do it. But that's kind of a hierarchy. But all it comes down to, you have to be able to give the people the protection they need to feel enough to deal with you, and so that's ongoing now. It's an integral part of the whole strategy.

MR. O'HANLON: And the last question over here.

MR. COUGHLIN: Thank you, General. Harbusher Coughlin from the

National War College and the AVA. First off, I don't think people thank you enough for what you do, and lot of people not diving for your seat, as you know, given the list of problem that you have.

When you went through the --

GENERAL CASEY: I do sleep at night.

MR. COUGHLIN: When you went through the list of issues, one of the other major aspects that's happened over the last the last seven to eight years is the privatization of traditional military function. And that's created a huge problem for targeting issues in the international legal community that's trying to figure out, to distinguish combatants from civilians. And, as you know, part of the reason you can be the force you are is because of that privatization factor, and the number of people in Iraq and Afghanistan.

So I'm kind of curious, where do you stand on that issue now? Have we gone too far? Do you see yourself wanting to take back some of those functions? What's going to be the long-term perspective from the where you sit?

GENERAL CASEY: Yeah, I mean this is something, as you suggest, that we're actively wrestling with. But, you know, to get, you know, you always ask the question, okay, well, how did we wind up here? And if you go back to what we were doing in the mid-'90s, where we took the Army down from 780,000 to 480,000, well, out of those 300,000 folks were logisticians, and so that was what got us going in this direction.

And then I first was exposed to contractors on the battlefield in Bosnia with Bill Nash, sitting back there. And, you know, at that time it was fine. It was relatively small operation, and that's kind of what we thought we'd be doing. I don't think anybody every thought we'd be doing this for eight and a half years at the scope we're doing.

And so again, back to how big does the Army need to be, well, what do you want it to do? What's my reliance on the Garden Reserve and what's my reliance on

contracts? I am personally fairly comfortable with logistical contractors and the base support contractors. I'm a little less comfortable, I need to do more work on the security contractor, and that's the hard part. And so we're actively working our way through and thinking our way through things.

MR. O'HANLON: In closing, speaking of education, General, I want to thank you for sending us Colonel Pat Warren and for all the military fellows that we benefit from greatly here at Brookings. I know that's true for a number of the think-tanks and universities around town and the country. Thank you so much for what you do for the country.

GENERAL CASEY: Thanks a lot. Thank you all.

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