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THE STATE OF THE MARINE CORPS:

A CONVERSATION WITH COMMANDANT JAMES AMOS

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Brookings. I'm Mike O'Hanlon from the Center on 21st Century Security and Intelligence.

On behalf of my colleague, Peter Singer, who runs our center and all of us at Brookings, we'd like to welcome you and especially welcome General James Amos, the commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, to be here today. We're delighted to have him.

The format today is that the general will speak for 10 or 15 minutes, summarizing some of his thoughts on some broad issues that I know are of interest to you, as well. Then he and I will have a conversation here and then we'll turn to the crowd.

We have C-SPAN here covering and some other TV. So, when and if I call on you in the course of that conversation, please be sure to identify yourselves, wait for a microphone before doing so, and then we'll proceed.

General Amos is a combat aviator. He's from the great State of Idaho, where he attended college. He's been in the Marine Corps for his entire 35-year-or-so career. He's the longest-serving service chief, so, the senior member of that illustrious body, top advisor to the president on all matters national security and of course the Marine Corps' top planner, budgeteer, combat conceptualizer, and so forth.

He's had many jobs in this vein in his career at different levels of development,

different levels of command, including, for example, in 2006 when he and General Dave Petraeus teamed up to write the Counterinsurgency Manual for the U.S. military. Prior to that, he had been instrumental in his combat aviator mode as a warfighter in the early stages of the invasion of Iraq, and prior to that, he had had a number of jobs deployed around the world, as all Marines do, and as we'll discuss further today because I know one of the important priorities for General Amos is keeping the Marine Corps expeditionary, global, and responsive, which, of course, is a big part of the service's ethos as the service is now well on its way towards withdrawing from Afghanistan, although still there with several thousand personnel as we speak.

So, without further ado, General, we're delighted to have you here. Everyone please join me in welcoming the commandant of the Marine Corps. (Applause)

GENERAL AMOS: Thanks, Mike. Thanks for the kind remarks and if I only had been in the Marine Corps for 35 years, I'd probably look a hell of a lot younger, but I've actually been in it for 42 years. It's been my entire life.

I just realized the other day my wife and I have been married 42 years and we got married right after I joined the Marine Corps, and this is all we've ever known. In some regards, it's kind of amazing. But thank you for the warm welcome.

I've got just a couple of bullets here. I'm not going to read any remarks, but I do have a couple of things I'd like to talk about here in opening. But I get asked often what's the main thing that's on your mind that keeps you awake at

night and that you spend time thinking about? And to be honest with you, it's how do you shepherd the Marine Corps through a period that we're in right now, this period of austerity? I mean, it is real, it is upon us.

You go back and all of you in this room have done it, gone back to look at the historical downturns after major combat. It sits around 32 to 33 percent. Sometimes it's 30, sometimes it's 29, but it lasts that period from the peak to the kind of the bottom of the trough and where the trough begins to turn back up. That's the period of about somewhere around 9 to 10 years and it's historical and I would hope that this time it's not the case, but you don't know.

So, as I look at and I try to prepare the Marine Corps for the future, I look at that historical downturn and I say okay, how can we as a senior leadership of the Marine Corps and then myself as the commandant, shepherd, and I think that's the right term, shepherd the Corps through that period of austerity. And I'll be happy to answer questions on that here in a little bit.

But I thought today, as I always do, I want to remind everybody that as we gather in here, there are 30,000 Marines give or take, probably 500 that are forward deployed around the world. They're on the Marine Expeditionary Units, some are sitting in the Kearsarge out in the Gulf of Aden doing combat operations, doing our nation's national mission tasking. We've got Marines in the Gulf, we've got Marines flying in the Gulf, and of course we've got a significant contribution on the ground in Afghanistan.

Switching around, turning the world on its axis, going out to the Asia Pacific area, we've got a large amount of Marines out there both on aircraft

carriers, on amphibious raid groups, training down in the Philippines, training in Singapore, training in Thailand. We have a Marine rifle company down in Australia as our nation's first installment for that renewed relationship or that reinvigorated relationship between the government of Australia, their army, and the United States Marine Corps. And, so, we're optimistic about that.

But focusing more specifically on Afghanistan because even though our nation has grown weary of war, I'm mindful and I'd ask you to be mindful of what's happening in Afghanistan. If you were to talk to John Allen when he was still the commander out there and Joe Dunford would say exactly the same thing, if given the opportunity to complete the mission, not if given the opportunity to just to pull the last force out and leave, but to complete the mission that both of those general officers -- and I think they know more than probably any of us -- will anticipate success.

Now, "success" is defined by all of us in different ways, but let me focus narrowly on the Helmand problem, which is where your Marines are today. About 7,200 of them, but it's just not us. There is about 8,000 U.K. forces there and we've got two battalions of our Georgian brothers. The Republic of Georgia, not the State of Georgia. We've got Jordanians on the ground with us, we've got Australians on the ground with us, and we have a host of special forces and other allies. Bahrainis just left. They've been with us now for a long time, providing a great service.

So, in that Helmand Province, which I would say arguably probably five years ago was certainly one of the more dangerous places in all of

Afghanistan, and I go there frequently. I'll be there next month. Sergeant Major Barrett and I came back just recently. We spent Christmas there before that and I've watched this progress to the point where I can tell you with some level of confidence that things are going particularly well. We have every reason to be confident that if given the opportunity, we'll be able to complete the mission and be successful in Afghanistan.

Now, is it going to be maybe in your mind what success is defined like? Probably not. But, in my mind, the way I've defined that is given the people, the Helmand Province, the provincial governor, the district governors, the chiefs of police, the Afghan National Security Forces writ large, the army, police, and the central government of Afghanistan, the greatest opportunity for success for the future. The conditions will have been set. It will be up to them to seize those conditions and proceed on.

I feel very good about what's happening. We're done with for the most part offensive combat operations in Helmand Province. We don't write operations orders now, we write supporting orders and those supporting plans are in support of the Afghan National Army that are there. So, we actually feel pretty good about how the Helmand Province is going along. They've got a new provincial governor and he's doing a terrific job and we have a courageous Corps commander down there that has built in his Corps from one brigade up to four now and they're doing well. So, I always want to represent those young men and women that are in Afghanistan.

These are tough times we're in right now. That's not a trite

statement. You know I want to remind everybody that I also am a taxpayer. I also pay taxes like many of you in this room; hopefully all of you in this room are paying your taxes. But here we are in this unprecedented time where we've got the longest war our nation's been in, we have a fiscal crisis that's real and it's upon us, we are drawing down forces in Afghanistan after 12, 13 years of combat between Iraq and Afghanistan, and then we're downsizing the force so that we can pay our bill while we face sequestration, which is a $500 billion bill over the next 10 years.

I want to remind you that's on top of $487 billion which had been passed a year-and-a-half ago in the Budget Control Act. Don't lose sight of the fact that under Bob Gates, we found another $200 billion worth of bills that we had to pay and it was called efficiencies. I'll tell you I don't recall the Marine Corps getting any of those $200 billion worth of efficiencies. So, for the purposes of discussion, the bill is $1.2 trillion. Now, that's significant. I mean, it's real. It's real money and it's going to have a real impact. So, these are the times we're in right now.

And I'll give you my sense of what the world is likely going to look like over the next two decades. I see much of what we're going through right now -- I don't see any of it waning away. I think the world over the next two decades -- I don't see major theater war over the next two decades. I see the thorny -- what I call difficult, challenging, human-intensive -- not necessarily technology-intensive, but human-intensive kind of conflicts and challenges over the next two decades. I often call them the nasty little things that happen around

the world or quite frankly the international community, not just the United States of America, but the international community has responsibilities in around the world, global responsibilities.

To what degree, yet to be seen, but my sense is the world is not getting any nicer. I don't see any indication over the next two decades that things are going to settle down and things are going to become peaceful. Pick up the newspaper, any of your major newspapers on a Sunday, in fact, you don't even have to wait til Sunday now, you can see it on your daily paper everything from what's happening in Syria, you see it on the nightly news and on the morning news. Take a look -- we're not sure how that's going to play out, it's not clear yet precisely what's going to happen in Syria, and, yet, the whole world is focused on it.

Well, what about the Hezbollah? I mean, there was stuff in the paper just this morning. Threats from the Syrian fighters who are threatening the Hezbollah. Okay, you better quit supporting the regime. So, then you switch over to the Gulf, we're not quite sure. It's always challenging, our relationship with Iran. I look at Iraq quite honestly and having lost 851 Marines killed in action in Iraq and over 8,440 Marines seriously wounded in Iraq.

So, we've got an investment. In addition to the monetary investment and the years and the sweat and toil, there's also our most precious commodity, which is the currency that's our young men and women. So, I have an investment in Iraq, and I actually pay very close attention to it.

Yet to be seen how Iraq's going to play out. You've watched it last

night on the NBC -- excuse me, on the news last night and you saw it again this morning. So, there's no indication that that area is going to settle down.

Turn the globe again on its axis, how about just a month-and-a-half ago with the 30-year-old boy leader of North Korea? I mean, you think about the rhetoric that was going on daily. I mean, almost hourly.

And I reminded everybody because there's a couple of you that may be older than I am, but I'm close to the oldest person in this room and I distinctly remember Nikita Khrushchev in the '60s taking his shoe off and banging the heel at the United Nations, and the United Nations in New York City threatening thermonuclear war against the United States, we're going to wipe you out. And, yet, just a month-and-a-half ago, and he now calls himself the supreme leader, supreme leader of North Korea said that he will destroy the United States with thermonuclear war. I haven't heard rhetoric like that since the '60s.

So, and that's just the highlights. There are territorial tensions; there's lots of things going on around the world.

I was in the United Kingdom last week speaking to their command staff college, their advanced school, and talking with some of my French brothers about Mali and what's happening in Mali. Very courageous stance from my perspective on what the French have done because sooner or later, the international community is going to have to address some of these thorny, nasty, tacky little things that are going on around the world. We may think that we're done with them, but they are not necessarily done with us.

So, let me switch from that and talk a little bit about okay, what do we do in this environment then? Now, we've got this drawdown, this tension that's going on inside our nation, not just the Department of Defense, it's inside our nation. How are we going to pay our bills? How are we going to kind of reorient our focus back to the United States? But you can't ignore that world that I just described. You can't turn your back on it because actually it's very dangerous.

In some cases, depending on what the threat is and where it is and who it's involved in, if the international community doesn't address some of these threats, then we may find those threats in Washington, D.C., we may find them in New York City, we may find them in the major cities all around the world. So, somebody's got to do something. There has to be a sense of presence and a sense of engagement, and I'll be honest with you, very myopically and selfishly, and you're going to think it's self-serving, that's why you have the United States Marine Corps and that's why you have the United States Navy. That's what we do. It's paid for. Yes, there's still bills that are out there, yes, we're still billing new pieces of equipment, but the fact of the matter is our naval vessels and our Marines and sailors are paid for. And this is what we do. We don't need a port, we don't need an airfield, we don't need to step on one of our allies' sovereign territory.

Quite honestly, we sail around the world and we interact with nations and we build relationships, relationships that can't be surged in a time of conflict, actual relationships that are important to build trust right now. That's

what we do. And then when things become just a little bit questionable, we can pull off a coast and there's nothing that quite sends the same signal as three amphibious raid ships full of 2,500 Marines, not necessarily doing anything, but everybody understands the seriousness of what could take place. And in my experience, it has a calming effect.

So, there's an engagement responsibility our nation needs to acknowledge. So, while we're drawing down and we want to come back to the United States and we want to reinvest in ourselves inside the Department of Defense and inside our nation, the balance then is, the question for me is: Okay, what is that balance between the reality of the world and how you deal with it and how you live in that reality of a world and then how you pay your bills, how you rebalance, how you reset your service.

All the service chiefs are going through the challenges right now of resetting their forces, all of us, after 12, 13 years of combat. My service probably more than any others. We took our equipment to war in Iraq, and for the most part, we left it there. And we continue to refurbish it there; we bought four maintenance facilities so we could actually refurbish it instead of putting it on ships and sending it home then turning around and having to send it back again. So, most of the equipment that we had in Iraq actually found its way over to Afghanistan. And the equipment that's coming out of Afghanistan now has been in that part of the world for a long time.

So, the challenges I have right now as a service chief is the reality of the budget, sequestration is real. Ladies and gentlemen, the bill was signed

on March 2. I take it as a reality. I'm not in denial on sequestration. It is real and we're working on a Marine Corps right now that will pay our bills, pay my portion of sequestration.

Now, if Congress down the road elects to change this, the American people decide that okay, we need a better way to do business than this sequestration, which by the way I think is a terrible way to do business, but it certainly has an effect. So, if they change, and that's great, but for right now, I've worked on a plan that we've been working on it now for about 90 days on how we'll pay our bills. And I know precisely how we'll do it. The key then is okay, for us as a nation now, then how much is enough and how much do we need to have for deployed because we've got global responsibilities.

My last point I'd like to make is that we do have responsibilities as a super power. Now, you could argue with me and say there are other super powers out there, but actually and this isn't a prideful statement, I think the United States is if not the sole super power, certainly the most significant super power around the world. We do more things right than we do things wrong. We actually work pretty hard to try to provide peace and stability. Some of you may take issue with that and argue with that, but I think we do. So, the issue is what is our responsibility as a global nation? If you just turn to the Asia Pacific area, we've got five major treaties in the Asia Pacific area. Five. And they go back decades, decades. They've got responsibilities. I'd argue that many of the nations in the Asia Pacific area rely on the presence of the United States, rely on us as a stabilizing factor. We've got those responsibilities in other areas around

the world and I don't think we can ignore them.

So, as I began with how do I shepherd the Marine Corps through these periods of austerity, as I put my joint chief's hat on, now I take my commandant of the Marine Corps hat off and I think about the nation and what's best for the nation. Now, what's best for the nation? The balance then is okay, how much -- how do we fulfill our role as a super power and then we as the Department of Defense, what is our responsibility in that? And then more specifically and more tightly focused, what's my responsibility to provide capabilities as the commandant of the Marine Corps for our 202,000 Marines we have on active-duty?

And with that, I think I'll stop, and Mike and I will jump up here and we'll take some questions. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Well, thank you, General. That was excellent, and I'd like to pick up with a couple of the themes that you usefully began with and really get right to the sequestration matter in a little bit more detail, and I'm going to begin sort of as a friendly skeptic might and raise the issue in terms of the debate we heard last year, not so much from anything that I remember you saying, but certainly Secretary Panetta and others were basically saying if sequestration is allowed to happen, the sky's going to fall. And now we're a couple of months into it and the sky doesn't seem to have fallen.

I'm not trying to defend sequestration, by the way just so you know, but I think a lot of people will wonder why such a hullabaloo is made of this, so much rhetoric was devoted to this to try to avoid it, it's happened, and

now we seem to be doing okay at least in the short term, and then the obvious follow-on question is: Does that mean we can just keep it in place and keep the $500 billion in cuts over 10 years as opposed to just suffering through sequestration for a few weeks or months? So, why didn't the sky fall?

GENERAL AMOS: Yes, it's because it hasn't taken root yet. I read this in the papers, just like all of you do, and if that was the extent of the depth of your look into it, then I would say that's probably a great question. The fact of the matter is is that the issues -- when I said that we're designing a Marine Corps to live within the constraints, my 10 percent, when that's unveiled -- and by the way, all the services are doing it. When that's unveiled and revealed, which will happen when the president decides that he's satisfied with the planning that we've done, when that happens, that's when the sense of what sequestration will do and is all about will begin.

That will be significant, and, so, the fact of the matter is we're in FY13, the Congress helped us out by giving us a budget in 2013, while everybody else was on continuing resolution and the real significant impacts of sequestration are being planned for 2014 and on out for the next really nine-and-a-half years. So, it hasn't taken root yet, but it will and it will here I would predict within the next six months.

MR. O'HANLON: Can you give us a sense just to make sequestration in fiscal 2013 a little more tangible for people? How are operations and how are training regimens changing starting I guess about now, if I remember the planning sequence that people anticipated under sequestration.

What are people not going to be doing this summer they normally would be doing and how worried about that are you just for this particular three months? In other words, can we sort of afford to do less for one summer as long as we don't continue that indefinitely at a lower state of readiness?

GENERAL AMOS: Yes, Mike, we as an institution and I specifically made a decision that we would take monies out of other accounts for this year and move it to what we call readiness. And by that what I mean is we've taken money out of facilities, sustainment, so, all the buildings and the barracks that our marines live in, our training ranges, the offices, the places we work in and out of, that's one area where I reached in and touched. I also reached in and touched those units that are not necessarily in the queue to deploy next. I've pulled money out of those units for training and I've gone through and pulled money out of just about every account I can to maintain the readiness this year for those units that are obviously forward deployed, they're the highest priority.

Those that are next to deploy, in other words, as we approach the end of this summer in August and September, we'll begin to turn the force over in Afghanistan. We'll have units that are deploying into the Western Pacific. And those units will be at the highest state of readiness.

So, I've effectively mortgaged near-term readiness – excuse me, near-term sustainment, and other monies, to pay for that readiness and I've told everybody I can do that for this year, but here's what the impact's going to be if nothing changes and we all ride into sequestration and we roll, by the way, into a

continuing resolution for next year. I mean, I don't think we should turn our back on that. I think that's the reality of what we're probably going to face for 2014 is a continuing resolution.

So, when that happens, my readiness will drop. Right now, as I predict, as we go into the January timeframe, a little bit less than half of my combat units, my aviation squadron and my ground combat units, both my infantry and those units, logistics battalions that support them will be a little bit less than 50 percent combat ready. So, half my forces will be less than ready to deploy to combat.

I want to be clear if something happens, we're going to go. I mean, if something bad happens around the world, we're going to go. We've always done that. But that's not the way we train and that's not the way we like to deploy forces that are prepared.

So, it's impacting now. If things don't change, and my sense is I'm not optimistic that they will, then the readiness that we have mortgaged or the sustainment that we've mortgaged this year will roll into next year and will become compound interest.

MR. O'HANLON: Let me now focus a little bit if you don't mind on your major equipment modernization efforts and how they're fairing these days, and I know that's got to be a big concern, too.

But just to remind those who aren't always studying the Marine Corps in detail, but of course you've got the F-35B aircraft, you've got your amphibious vehicle that you like to replace and you yourself made a decision I

think a couple of years ago to cancel the previous version; you didn't think it was doing well and you were a good custodian of the taxpayers' dollar in making sure that you dealt with that program, as you felt it had to be, but you still have an unmet need for a replacement there. You've got the Osprey, which continues to be purchased, the tiltrotor transport aircraft, you've got a few other major programs and a lot of smaller ones.

GENERAL AMOS: Right.

MR. O'HANLON: How are all those programs fairing and how would you explain their fate under sequestration both now and into next year?

GENERAL AMOS: Well, as you look at -- in this effort that I was telling you about that we looked at over the previous 60 to 90 days, we've taken the Osprey, which is now in its second multiyear contract and you know, I probably as well as anybody in this room except for maybe Otto or some of the folks probably remember well the Osprey struggling in the beginning of 2000. We're well beyond that right now. Now the airplane is the squadron's for the most part probably about three-quarters fielded. The airplane is doing incredible and I'd be happy to talk about that if somebody's interested in just exactly what it's doing. So, that's going well and we anticipate that we've got money in that contract for the multiyear. So, it's doing well.

The amphibious combat vehicle, which is a replacement for the tractors that we currently have, we call them "tractors." It's not a Farmall, it's not a John Deere, it's actually an amphibious vehicle. It comes out of the well deck of a ship and swims ashore loaded with

combat Marines inside of it.

Our vehicles right now are a little over 40-years-old. We've got about 1,250 of them. And we've refurbished those and done what we call a service life extension on them at least twice. So, we have a program to replace those and that's the amphibious combat vehicle. And by the time that vehicle is fielded, the ones we have are fully operational and capable, so to speak. The ones we have will be over 50-years-old. So, we need it. You come off an amphibious ship only one of two ways; you fly off of it or you swim off of it in one of these vehicles. That's it. And we've got some transport connectors like the LCAC, the air cushion vehicle. Well, that doesn't haul the Marines. So, we need it.

I'm working right now. I mean, we have been at it for two-and-a-half years since we cancelled the FE to get that right. I'm only going to get one more shot at getting this right, so, I take it very, very seriously. Industry has helped us out with this thing. We'll be making a decision this coming fall on what we're going to do on the amphibious combat vehicle with regards to speed and capabilities, but what I'm looking for right now is what I'd call just a good Ford F-150 kind of a vehicle that's reliable, beefy, and can move our Marines around.

The last comment I'd like to make on that is please don't just think that this is a vision of a vehicle that is an amphibious assault. When we had seven amphibious ships and 5,000 Marines on Haiti about four years ago helping them, it was our amphibious tractors that were going back and forth. We had 450, 500 miles inside of Iraq and you know that. So, they are a utility fighting

vehicle for us.

The F-35B is our replacement. It's doing well. We've stood up our first squadron out in the west coast in Yuma. We'll have 16 airplanes in that squadron by the end of the year. It is the only short takeoff and vertical landing airplane being built in the world. It's the only one. The Harriers that we have right now run out of service life in about the mid-20s. Some run out of service life before then. And you got to ask yourself well, why do we need something like that? Well, we've got 11 large deck amphibious ships. And, so, envision these as kind of carriers. So, anywhere around the world when you got a large deck amphibious ship like the Kearsarge, which is in the Gulf of Aden today, performing national missions with Harriers, you now have a fixed-wing capability that can fly off that ship and go out and do the bidding of the nation.

If you didn't have that, if we just let the Harrier die, then we'd have 11 large deck carriers that actually would just be helicopter platforms and I just think we're cutting ourselves short. Plus, it doesn't fit with our expeditionary model.

So, those programs are funded as we built a budget to pay my share of the bills. I've accounted for that and I'd like to keep those programs alive.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, and you said something very interesting, a number of things very interesting, but one in particular that caught my ear in your opening remarks, you said that you don't see major theater wars being all that likely in the next 20 years and I know that I would probably agree

with you in terms of the relative likelihood of big wars versus small wars. I know you were making the point that we needed expeditionary capability for a lot of smaller things.

But if you don't mind, I'd like to examine that first part of your sentence and ask: Of the big wars that you don't think are very likely, which do you think we still have to be ready for? And I realize some may be too sensitive or too hypothetical to talk about in a public forum, but could you give an example or two of the kind of larger campaigns, if any, that you think the country and the Marines need to be ready for?

GENERAL AMOS: I think, yes, I'm glad you ask that because I want to make sure everybody understands that when I said that I don't anticipate that, the one thing I'd remind everybody, we've actually guessed wrong more often than we guessed right in the past. So, it's certainly not prophetic by any stretch of the imagination, but just looking at I guess the proclivity of our nation now, I've been drawing out of 13 years of combat to reengage itself is probably pretty slim. But I don't think for a second as a member of the joint chiefs that we should ever think that it will not happen.

We've been fooled before; we came out of World War II thinking boy, that was actually the war to end all wars, World War I, and we're right back into it again in World War II, and we really thought we were done with it, and right back into it again, we were in 1950, 1951.

So, we have to be prepared for what we used to call major theater war. We have to be. Our nation has to be. There has to be enough capacity

where when something happens that we can actually -- and the American people expect that. They may be struggling with okay, how much and what's it cost right now, but I guarantee you when it happens, the people of America and Congress are going to expect and the president's going to rightfully expect that its military, all of the services, are going to be prepared to go do that.

So, I don't think this becomes just an expeditionary force that handles these small, nasty, little crises. We have to be prepared to be able to do major theater war and I got to tell you none of us in this room knew precisely what was going to happen with North Korea here a month-and-a-half ago. And that probably wasn't on anyone's radar in here. And all of a sudden, it just blossomed and none of us knew exactly how it was going to turn out. So, I mean, here's an example of should our nation ever need to, there's an example where our nation would have to have the capacity, the capability and the capacity to be able to respond.

MR. O'HANLON: So, I'm going to begin to wrap up here in a second, but I want to try to tie together some of these different pieces. We've talked about sequestration, we talked about modernization, we talked about major theater war and smaller operations.

Can you help us understand at what point the budget cuts really make you in a whole new way fundamentally uncomfortable? I mean, obviously, you're coping with sequestration in the short term, you've already explained to us why it's probably worse than it looks and you found some ways to compensate in the short term. But in terms of longer-term force planning, at what point do

budget cuts really become crippling to our ability to handle the major theater wars plus the smaller stuff?

How do you explain this to a skeptical audience because even if sequestration occurs, we're still going to have a defense budget that's $500 billion a year. That's going to be above the Cold War average in real dollars and some people are going to say well, why can't you get by with that? What's the real risk? Sure, you're doing a little less here and a little less there, but it still looks like a pretty good military. Is there any way that you can link a certain size budget cut to a real fundamental threshold that below which we just don't want to go?

GENERAL AMOS: Yes, I don't have a monetary figure for the Department of Defense. I know that within my own service as we look through okay, how do we pay the sequestration bill and then what does that force structure look like? And you and I had an opportunity to talk about this a couple of weeks ago, but so, we know what that would look like roughly in people and in equipment capabilities and capacity. So, we have a sense for that.

So, there is a dollar figure in my service, but I'll tell you that where I worry is that this force that I'm looking at building to accommodate sequestration, my 10 percent, here's some attributes to that for us, which I think are significant. Back to the major theater war, which we talked about, which I have an obligation to do my part and be prepared for the American people and the president, if that happens, the force that we're building will go to war and it will come home when the war's over.

Now, that's not something that we're used to. My father was used to that, my wife's father was used to that. They went off to the war in the Pacific, and four years later, the bus pulled up in front of the red dirt road in Alabama, and my father-in-law got off. Same thing with my dad. We're used to rotating forces every seven months in the Marine Corps. So, we'll rotate a battalion and we'll rotate a squadron and we'll rotate a combat logistics battalion, we'll rotate major headquarters every 13 months. That's not what's going to happen. So, that's the first thing that's a threshold.

The second thing is the force that we're building under sequestration is what we call a one to two dwell. That's significant. So, that's different and what I mean by "one to two dwell" is that the force goes away for six months, it deploys. It goes on a ship, it goes, it does theater security cooperation, it goes on an aircraft carrier, it goes into the Asia Pacific area, it's gone for six months. It's home for 12 months. And then it goes again.

Just to kind of give you a sense of well, what does that mean, during the height of Iraq, most of the ground forces were on at least a one to one, was probably about as best as it gets. So, you're gone seven months, then you were home seven months. You were gone seven months and home seven months. That begins to wear on the force because when you're home that seven months, you're really not home that much. You're 30 days out in the desert training and preparation; you've got schools you've got to go to. So, you're really home at your home for five months.

We talked five, six years ago when I was out at Quantico and

testifying in front of the House and the Senate, we were coming out of the war, we would build a force that was on a one to three or a one to four deployment to dwell ratio. So, if it was a one to three deployment, you would go for six months and you'd be home for 18 months and then you'd go for six months and home for 18 months.

So, the force that we're building in the United States Marine Corps to pay our bills is going to be a one to two and now the fact is the Marines will probably like that just because Marines, we're a young force and we like to deploy. But our families probably aren't going to be too thrilled about it. And, I mean, there's a little bit of danger in that because the issues that begin to kind of come back on the home front. So, it will be a "go to war and stay and when the war's over, come home" force and it will be a force that will be rapidly turning around force. So, that's what we're building under sequestration.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, that's very helpful. I've got a few more questions I could ask, but I'm going to hold myself in check and turn to you and maybe throw one in later.

So, please, we'll start with Peter Singer. Microphone here in the front row. Please identify yourselves and ask the general a question.

MR. SINGER: Peter Singer with Brookings. Thank you again for joining us.

We've had a talk that's been interesting. Mike's been asking you in many ways about the future and you answered both about the future, but then gave certain historic echoes, the experience of dwell time and the like.

I'm interested in employing that a little bit further. In the Marine Corps' history, is there a parallel that you think about in terms of organizational challenges, organizational identity that you keep in mind as you're dealing with these questions for the future? What are some of the lessons that you learn? Is it from patterns from the 1990s, is it the 1920s, is it the 1890s? What are the lessons that you think about in terms of the Marine Corps history?

GENERAL AMOS: Yes, Peter, I've read the writings of a lot of the previous commandants. We've got seven of them besides myself that are still alive today and I've read most of what they've written. A couple of them went through some very challenging times.

General Carl Mundy went through some pretty challenging times trying to sort out, okay, what was the force structure going to look like? There was a period of time when as I recall the trend was to take the Marine Corps down to 160,000 and General Mundy ended up with a force with about 172, 173,000. So, some have been faced with the real challenging budgetary issues, but I don't think anything like we're going through today. I really do think that these are unprecedented. Maybe the 36th and 37th commandant will say the same thing.

But if you go back to 1946 and it still astounds me that we as a nation just completely emasculated the entire Department of Defense. I mean, after that war, I realize we were tired of it, but we fought war on two continents and with our allies, we were successful. Had that not turned out that way, we probably wouldn't be sitting in this room. And things would have turned out

dramatically different. But we as a nation took the services and went completely into the basement.

So, I look at that and I think about how quickly that turned around. The debate in 1948, 1949 within Congress, within President Truman's Secretary of War. Even some of the great general officers at that time. The debate that took place and all of a sudden 1950, we were ill prepared and I would argue that when we went to war in Korea, our lack of preparedness and readiness probably cost us dearly in the early phases of the war. I think any of us that are historians read that and it's inescapable. We finally caught up and figured it out. But it was costly to get there.

The Marine Corps, just for anecdotal purposes, hasn't been below 171,000 since 1951. The Marine Corps has not. So, no administration, no leadership in Congress has taken the Marine Corps below 171,000. There's probably a reason for that.

I don't know that I would just say that that's the reason; I think there's plenty of others, but I look at the challenging times and I'd go probably to post-World War II was the one I look at, Peter, and I go okay, we got to get this right.

Again, for all of us in here, we have different opinions about how much is enough and what's right and how much in this service and how much in that -- and I do understand that. We're not going to get it exactly right. But what we can't afford to do as a nation is get it exactly wrong. And, so, I look at coming out of World War II and I would just ask everybody just okay, everybody take a

deep breath, we'll work our way through the budget, we'll work our way through the for sizing efforts over the next probably six months to a year, but let's not lose, forget about the lessons from that period of time.

MR. O'HANLON: Next question. Over here in the third row, please.

MS. KATT: Thank you, General, for your comments. Megan Katt with CNA.

My question is more along the training and education line. Over the last decade, cultural language and regional skills have really been emphasized in training and education. Now that the force is looking forward and especially with sequestration cuts and other budget cuts, how important do you see those skill sets for potential missions moving forward, especially as you're trying to rebalance training and education efforts?

GENERAL AMOS: Thank you for the question. I think it's every bit as important in the next two decades based on that environment that I described where it is people-intensive kinds of engagement. Sometimes it's training engagement and sometimes it's actual conflict of various sizes. But I think the lessons that we've learned over the last 10, 12 years of war are critical to the future. I mean, it's language, it's culture. You know, we started using a term about a year-and-a-half ago, human terrain. Before that, we used to talk about war among the people. Well, it's not all war, it's a lot of relationship-building, it's a lot of confidence-building. But it's among the people is the most important part.

We can't afford to lose that and we will not lose that in the Marine Corps. In fact, our schools, our resident schools for our officers and non-commission officers, and I made it very clear that as we go forward, we're not going to lose the lessons of kind of the counterinsurgency mindset. We did after Vietnam and we forgot all about it and it took a while to relearn them.

I'd argue right now that we probably -- all of us probably the principle ground force is in special operations forces, are probably doing that better than we've ever done it before, but we don't want to lose that because there are plenty of places around the world where it might be a small insurgency.

I'd argue that's what happening in Mali is an insurgency. It could be a very lethal one. And so how do you deal with that? So, that's a classic case of trying to deal with something among the people of Mali. There are folks that want to eke out a living. So, if we're going to be, as an international community, touching those kinds of communities, then we've got to be mindful of their culture, their languages, their nuances, the things that are important in those -- that's what quite honestly relationship-building is critically important to me.

I mean, just I think as I talk to my officers and every year we select a new team of brigadier generals and I spend a lot of time with them and I talk to them about the importance of relationships because as you go ashore, and you pick some country, maybe we have the benefit of having been there before, perhaps we've never even been able to pronounce the name of it, the relationships that are built there will be the thing that will cause us to either be successful, helpful or not, but we are not going to turn our back on that, okay?

And, by the way, just so you know, we doubled the amount of foreign area officers and we doubled the amount of regional area officers to include our staff NCOs. We never used to include our staff non-commission officers in that. So, we're sending them to the Monterey right now to get a post graduate education and then go to the Advanced Language Institute. So, these are gunnery sergeants and staff sergeants and master sergeants. Because they can do it.

MR. O'HANLON: Otto here in the fourth row, and then we'll come up to the second row after that.

GENERAL KREISHER: Thank you. General Otto Kreisher, *Seapower* and *Semper Fi* Magazines.

You're downsizing and at the same time Congress and the administration wants you to beef up your embassy security detachments. You sent one unit to Europe already and you're trading a couple others.

How are you going to manage that, one, the manpower and the budget crunch of downsizing to 182 if they'll let you stop there while still trying to add another 1,000-plus to the embassy security job and what all are you doing in that vein?

GENERAL AMOS: Thanks, Otto. When the questions first began, which was probably eight or nine months ago, about how many embassies are the Marines at, and we're at about half of them around the world and we're somewhere around 160 embassies and consulates around the world. And there are about twice as many. So, there's another half that there's no

Marines resident at, and, so, when we're asked what could you do, the answer was well, we can't do any more with what we have, so, we'll need to put more Marines in this if that's the will of Congress. And well, how many more do you think you'd need? And we did some work fairly quickly and the number roughly was about 1,000 Marines. And, so, Congress faithfully went after that and that was included in the NDA language, as you're well aware. It's 1,001 Marines to add.

In the discussions, while we were talking about that, we talked about missions of those units. A Marine security guard detachment at an American embassy is roughly about one senior staff NCO and five or six young Marines that are corporals and lance corporals. And they're highly trained, they have skill sets that other Marines don't necessarily have, and they have security clearances that are critical to their jobs. Their job is to not only protect the chancery and protect the immediate consul or embassy, but to secure the classified material that's in there. Their job is not really to get in a vehicle and provide a protective service, as the ambassador or somebody else travels around whatever nation they're in; that's not their mission. So, if we're going to plus this up, how will we do this thing? And, so, we developed some training standards and a plan.

I was asked in the discussions with Congress, can you do this, General Amos, and the answer is yes. Would you like to do this, the answer is yes. I think we do it, we do it, it's part of who we are.

But how do you pay for them? The original intent in the

discussions was that they would be above my force structure line. In other words, whatever 182,100 Marines, these would be on top of that and they would be paid for by a line out of Congress and that was the original discussion. I don't know that it's going to turn out that way.

I just want to be clear that this is a mission that I think is important to our nation and I think the Marine Corps ought to do it. So, in dealing with my service, I've looked at everybody and I said you know, regardless of how this turns out with regards to money, we're going to do this mission. So, Otto, it'll either be on top of 182.1 or it'll be 180.1. Okay, so, yet to be seen, but it's a mission that's important, we're going to do it, we're working with the State Department right now, we've got as I recall there's six embassies that will receive a Marine security guard detachment in the next little bit and probably another half a dozen or so before the end of this year and we'll slowly build that capacity up, but it's a deal between us and the State Department and because when you put Marines there, you got to have a place for them to live and there's got to be security around the area.

But what we did, which is really important, we built a small force that could be rapidly flown in to reinforce the Marine security guard detachment and that's called the Security Augmentation Unit and those forces, we can put them on a C-130, we can put them on MV-22s, and we can fly them anywhere in the world if there's indications and warnings that this is probably an area that's going to have issues. We can put the Marines in there ahead of time, so, we have that, okay?

MR. O'HANLON: Let's go up here. The second row, please.

MR. CLARK: Colin Clark, Breaking Defense. Good morning, sir.

I'm betting that your IOC date for the F-35 is going to be 2014. You don't have to tell us unless you want to. Given that, you've got to start developing some CONOPs. I'm wondering as you look at the Kearsarge and some of the other lessons you've learned over the past two years how you see the 35 working with the 22 and how it's going to change how you work in the Pacific in particular.

GENERAL AMOS: Yes. This may be the first time we say this publicly, but our IOC is likely going to be in 2015, not 2014. And the definition of initial operational capability are 10 airplanes, 10 crews, full maintenance suite that's all trained, the maintainers are all trained up on it. They've been trained, both the pilots and the aircrews, to do the missions to the airplane and their shipboard-qualified. So, that's the definition of IOC. The squadron itself will be a full 16 airplanes. So, it'll have more than the 10, but that right now we're planning on that happening towards the latter part of 2015.

But back to the lessons learned, the concept of operations and employment, I think if you take a look at how the amphibious ships of late have been used and then I'm going to take you back to 2003 because I actually have a little bit of experience in this. So, but let's just talk about of late how they've been used, the Bristol aircraft.

When we were under -- this is under the Secretary Gates era, when our carriers were pressed into the Gulf and doing the business of our

nation in that part of the world, we still had other issues down in the Gulf of Aden. And we needed fixed-wing aircraft with precision weapons that where you could do precise targeting and the fact of the matter is the Harrier came into -- and it had already been into its being, but boy, that flying off those amphibious ships really became almost surgical capability for the president and the secretary of defense. So, since that time, it has been used an awful lot in that regard.

We've also had the squadrons on the ground and we have a squadron on the ground right now, the Harrier, in Helmand, at Bastion airfield. And you remember the terrible attack we had last September and we lost six airplanes out of that. But they've been flying close air support and support of the coalition forces for some time. So, there's that.

If you turn the clock back just a little bit, when we weren't sure what was going to happen with Muammar Gaddafi and the whole world, NATO and the United States were trying -- okay, what is it we should do? You might find it interesting to note that they sailed the Kearsarge 26 Marine expeditionary unit and the Ponce up from the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, Suez Canal, and they turned left and went off the coast of Libya and they sat there. So, while we were all trying to figure out what the president was trying to -- okay, what are we going to do, no fly zone, NATO, how are we going to do this, they actually were off the coast during the first two days of the air war or the no fly zone reinforcement. They were the only airplanes that were actually flying because we needed to get the tankers down from Europe and so we could tank the NATO aircraft.

So, there's a great example of the flexibility those airplanes did, but if you go back to OIF1, the Iraq War, and I was the wing commander and we had 72 Harriers, as I recall, and we were flying them off to large-deck amphibious ships and then we moved them ashore. I've got pictures of them on Highway 1 just south of Karbala, landing out there right after I had just met up with then Colonel Joe Dunford, who was the commanding officer of Fifth Marine Regiment, and I landed in a helicopter out along the highway. It looked like I-95. And I said what do you need, and he says I need air support. So, we started bringing in field-landed C-130s on the highway, landed our regular rotary one, which is easy, and then we started landing Harriers there on the highway. I got pictures of it. And we armed them and refueled them and flew support for the eventual attack on Baghdad.

So, those are expeditionary methods that we will use our STOVL aircraft on and I expect we'll do exactly the same thing for the F-35B.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to throw in one question there before we back to you and I want to pick up on this very point you've made, General, and I don't want to get you in trouble with your fellow chiefs, but you made a pretty powerful argument for the value of short takeoff, vertical landing aircraft, but you're the only service buying such things.

Is that a mistake? Should the Air Force be buying some STOVL aircraft, especially in an era when air fields are becoming potentially so much more vulnerable to precision strike?

GENERAL AMOS: Well, you know I'm not going to answer that

question. (Laughter) That way I don't -- but if you take a look at first of all it's interesting, the U.K. about a year-and-a-half ago, the first sea lord, Sir David Richards approached me and said okay, if we decided we'd come back in to STOVL, are you going to be okay with that? And, of course, the answer was yes and we are to this day. We're training with them. In fact, we're putting U.K. pilots back into our Harrier squadrons. I got eight Harrier squadrons right now. We're going to put a U.K. pilot in both the REF or Navy pilot in each one of those squadrons. And they're going to continue. We got them training right now down at Eglin Air Force Base with the F35-B. So, they're in it, Italy's in it.

If you take a look at a picture of the world as the satellite flies over the world and you take a look at the image where all the 8,000 foot runways are versus the 3,000 foot and less, and that's just runways, that's not highways or it's not parking lots or something like that, there are about 10,000 times as many 3,000 foot runways as there are 8,000 foot. For us, the places that we'll probably be operating, that's actually pretty important.

So, whether the Air Force should buy them or not, Michael, I won't touch that, but it's important for us because we're an expeditionary force. We're designed to go places where quite honestly other people either can't or they don't have the sustainment, the logistics. That's what we do. We're more than willing to live hard.

We don't need fancy air-conditioned tin cans like you and I stayed in in Afghanistan -- we don't need a chow hall where you can get eggs to order every morning. That's bad for your health. (Laughter) And, so, we actually can

live off our MREs. We also need to be able to operate our equipment off there and I've got hundreds and hundreds of pictures of refueling airplanes and vehicles and arming them off of highways on the way to Baghdad.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Next question. We'll start in the back. Gentlemen in the blue, striped tie. Yes.

MR. WORTMAN: General, I also don't want to try to get you in trouble. I'm John Wortman with the Association of American Geographers.

But I'm reading former Secretary Harold Brown's book right now that's actually a Brookings book, really interesting book. He talks about from the time he served as secretary to the president, 35-year period. We now have something like four additional undersecretaries, 12 additional assistant secretaries in the Defense Department, and he made a strong argument for getting rid of the service secretaries.

So, without really trying to get you into trouble, in this era of sequestration, can you talk about sort of the bloat in the Pentagon leadership?

GENERAL AMOS: You guys really are trying to get me in trouble here today. (Laughter)

It's recognized that there's been growth within the Pentagon, both of the joint staff, the combatant commanders, and kind of what we call the fourth of state, those folks that support the actual services. And that's one of the things that's going to have to be addressed under sequestration. In other words, the actual growth.

What it turns out to be with regards to service secretaries, I kind of like my service secretary and I kind of like what he does for the United States Marine Corps. He's one of our greatest advocates, formal naval officer himself. He understands us. So, I'm actually very, very happy with where we are.

But if you expand, which is really I think what your question really begs an answer to is how much is enough with everything else because what happens is staffs grow, then the questions and the activities grow. And then the services have to respond because we have to. And, so, we grow. Our service headquarters grow in response to the growth of the headquarters that are above us. It's a natural tendency.

So, I'll tell you, the question we're facing right now is okay, how much is enough and we get into this thing called "tooth and tail;" "tooth" being whatever that war-fighting capacity, it could be cyber, it could be airplanes, it could be ships, it could be Marines, whatever that "tooth" is, then how much "tail" should be affiliated? There has to be some kind of what we call "tail" and that's headquarters and that's staff and that's people to kind of help out.

But as we look at the Department of Defense and we look at the combatant commanders and we actually even look inside of my own headquarters, there's "tail" there that under sequestration is going to have to go under the magnifying glass and it's going to have to be scrutinized because what we can't have, we can't just continue to allow growth to happen at the expense of the war-fighting capability in the United States of America. We have a Department of Defense for one reason and one reason only and it's not to do

paperwork and answer questions, it's actually we have it to defend the United States of America and defend its interest. That's why we have it. We don't have it for a whole lot of other things. So, we just have to go back to that and I'll tell you as we work our way through sequestration and the impacts, that fourth estate and headquarters inside of my institution without telling you what we've looked at. As I said, we've already built a plan to pay our bill. I'm whittling headquarters inside my own organization, but I haven't just looked outside, I've looked inside, as well.

MR. O'HANLON: Let's stay in that same row. The next.

MR. LIN: Thank you very much, General. I'm Jeffrey Lin from Senator Angus King's staff, and I hope my question will be less controversial or at least less potential for so.

I'm wondering that given you mentioned how the post-World War II drawdown in 1946 and subsequently we had to subsequently build everything back up for Korea, does the DoD, especially the Marine Corps, have a plan for sort of being able to suddenly draw up again if we get another strategic surprise, as Dr. O'Hanlon raised the possibility of earlier, and how will such plans be affected by sequestration, for example? Thank you.

GENERAL AMOS: Thank you. When Secretary Panetta, probably about six months, a year before he gave up his job, and we started looking -- this was when the Budget Control Act was signed and then, of course, sequestration now a matter of -- it was out there. It was out there a year later. And he said look, as we do this, as we begin to reshape the force, he said there

are several things we got to keep in mind. He says we have to build an agile force; we have to build a flexible force. We have to build a force that actually takes care of the business that we typically find ourselves involved in today, which I think is that kind of nasty, thorny stuff that I talked about at the beginning. And then he says as you reshape the force, and this is to all the services, you have to build in reversibility. And then he also said I don't want you to build a hollow force, which is probably worthy of talking of, and I could take you to 1990, and we don't have to go back too far and talk about hollowness. But he said reversibility is a key factor.

So, what does that mean? Well, if you're Admiral Greenert, my shipmate, John Greenert is worried about the industrial base. I mean, we're down to -- and if he was in here, he'd tell you precisely how many shipyards we have, but we don't have a lot of them anymore and the ones we have are pretty important to the nation. We don't have a lot of aircraft manufacturers anymore. So, those are pretty important to our nation.

But, regardless, as you draw the force down and you reshape the force, this matter of reversibility as it relates to industrial base, the reversibility to be able to, what I call blow the balloon back up, there are some things if you decide.

And I'll just say this: This F35-B matter, if something were to happen and we said okay, that's it, we're not going to do that, that's an irreversible decision because nobody in the world is building short takeoff and vertical landing fighter. Nobody is. Not another nation. You know, we built

them, the U.K. did, we built them with Boeing and consorted with them. The Soviets built them. I think it was called the Yak-28.

When I was Captain Amos, but nobody else -- there was a decision that becomes irreversible. There are some units that we could blow the balloon back up in a reversing motion or effort. Maybe an infantry battalion might be one. You could probably rebuild an infantry battalion. It would take you a couple of years. But we actually have experience in doing that.

So, reversibility for me is, and I think it's in line with what Secretary Panetta and I think it's exactly in line with what Secretary Hagel is thinking, is actually a critical and important part as we approach sequestration. So, sequestration is going to affect that. And, so, as we make decisions, and as I go inside my force and we take a look at how I pay my bills, one of the bumper stickers or one of the things on the wall is the term "reversibility." So, while we're making decisions on programs and people and equipment and capabilities and capacity, we need to always remember we may guess this wrong, we may have to turn this back around. And, so, if I'm going to take a capability away, it needs to be a purposeful decision and I need to say to myself okay, I'll never have to get that capability back again. Okay?

MR. O'HANLON: Next question. Stay in the back for a minute. The woman about three in, second to last row. Thanks.

MS. COOPER: Hi, thank you. Mackenzie Cooper from the Government Accountability Office.

Could you address the status of the AOA for the ACB particularly

given my understanding that water speed requirements have not yet been addressed and won't be until the fall?

MR. O'HANLON: And could I ask you to re-ask your question one more time, taking out the acronyms, too, just for the general benefit --

MS. COOPER: Sure. Government Accountability Office, I don't know if I said GAO, sorry. And if you could address the analysis of alternatives and the status of it for the amphibious combat vehicle, given that my understanding is water speed requirements won't be addressed -- or the analysis won't be complete until the fall?

GENERAL AMOS: Okay, I'll tell you right where we are. The Office of Secretary of Defense and Congress directed that we do an analysis of alternatives last year. That was completed. It was held at OSD, secretary of defense's level and the staff. We were an active part of it; the Department of the Navy was an active part of it. And that completed in June of last year. And reported out sometime probably around the July timeframe.

And what it did is it confirmed the requirement for an amphibious vehicle, a tractor as I described earlier, some type of surface born capability that you could use both in a combat environment for a forcible entry kind of thing if you ever had to do that again and certainly it became the follow on. It's not an expeditionary fighting vehicle, it is a replacement for our current tractor, but it is a fighting vehicle. So, it confirmed that. We took a look at that and we said okay, it didn't say anything about high speed or slow speed.

And for the difference, for everybody in here, when you have a

vehicle like that and it's under development, the old expeditionary fighting vehicle actually had the capability to get up on planes. Imagine a water skier getting up on plane. And once you got up on plane you could go significantly faster, and as I recall, the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, the EFE, was somewhere around 28 knots. Well, that gave you an awful lot of capability to be able to leave a ship and then go someplace where the enemy's not.

The current vehicle we have is what we call a displacement vehicle and that's a vehicle that goes about -- the one we have doesn't go eight knots, but it becomes a vehicle that stays, it swims. I mean, it's not below the surface, but it's like a boat that doesn't get up on a plane. And you get into physics here and you literally cannot push a heavy vehicle through the water of that size any faster than about eight knots.

So, what I asked was okay, let's go back. As I said earlier, we were only going to get one more bite of this apple and we want to do it right, let's go back and just make sure that we understand the difference between the value between a high water speed and a displacement vehicle. So, the analysis of alternative is done.

What we're doing right now, we're working with industry and we've actually got two corporate partners that are teamed together and they will report to the Marine Corps in this fall and they'll tell us what the art of the possible is with regards to high water speed versus regular displacement vehicle.

And then what the cost is. And I made it clear to everybody cost is a variable in this. I mean, folks, we cancelled the EFE because of costs and

because of a host of other things, and I'm not about to go do it again. And, so, we want to get it right and I'm confident that by the time we hit the fall, I'll have enough information to be able to actually make an educated recommendation to the secretary of the Navy as to how to proceed. My sense is we'll make a decision in the fall and then probably around the beginning of next year, release what we call an RFP, Request for Proposal, and we'll have money available to do that.

So, that's where we're headed. We've got a modest amount of money in the five-year future defense plan for research and development and we don't have any procurement dollars in there, it's just research and development.

MR. O'HANLON: Come back here to the third row. Gentlemen in the orange tie, please.

MR. LAMOTHE: Good morning, General. Dan Lamothe with *Marine Corps Times*.

I wanted to ask you about your special operators. You've been a huge proponent of MARSOC over the last few years. They're, like many other parts of the Marine Corps, moving in transition, moving with more of a maritime feel.

What do you see their missions and roles being in out years and how will that affect the recognizance and force recognizance communities?

GENERAL AMOS: Yes, thanks. I'm pretty proud of, in fact I'm very proud of Marine Special Operations Command. Stood it up, it's in its 6th year now and it sits about 2,600 strong. It's based out of Camp Lejeune, North

Carolina, headquartered there, and then we've got battalions there and we've got one out on Camp Pendleton. And they're an integral part of Admiral McRaven's Special Operations Command. He owns them. We provide the Marines, we provide not all the equipment, but we provide the standard equipment and we provide the salaries and all that stuff. So, they have done very, very well. I mean, if Admiral McRaven were here, he would confirm that.

So, their future is bright in the kind of decades that I described. I mean, that's why I started with what I thought the world would look like over the next two decades because if you believe that, then there's plenty of work available for a special operations force and we're a partner in it. I've got no intention of downsizing special operations because I think the value added for a nation, I think it's one of those things that's good for a nation.

We're working right now on a concept and we will prototype it this fall with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit off the west coast on training with special operations forces again with the ARG MEUs, the MEUs, Marine Expeditionary Units, it'll go to sea on those three amphibious ships.

There was a period of time in the '90s in really the very beginning of the turn of the century where every aircraft carrier had it wasn't a sealed team, but it would be a group of seals that would be aboard at every ARG MEU, every Amphibious Ready Group Marine Expeditionary Unit had a team of SEALs onboard. In about 2000, 2001, that changed and it became a function of well, there are other things and then the war in Iraq broke out and they become preoccupied. They've not been back aboard naval vessels except for unique,

specific, surgical-type operations on any kind of routine basis since then.

So, we spent a couple of weeks doing some war gaming here last month and we've agreed to a concept. We're going to try it out this coming fall with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, and we'll have Marine Special Operations Forces that will have trained up with the MEU as it goes out and we'll also put Marine Special Operations liaisons into what they call the theater combatant command, the theater's special operations command.

And, so, we'll have a habitual relationship. We'll know exactly what's available as we move in and out of theaters. We'll have some special operators onboard the ship and they will be our eyes and ears and our liaison, they're the ones that are going to work and they know our capabilities and we'll know theirs and they'll know the capabilities of the special operators in theater. And we think this is a pretty good installment now to provide relevance for the theater combatant commanders.

So, that's where we're headed. I think the relationship, the fact that we are reemphasizing our amphibious roots, actually and that's pretty well with special operations. So, we're just going to have to wait and see. My expectations actually are very positive on this thing.

MR. O'HANLON: We've got time for about two more questions and I'm going to ask one of them and then I'll come to you and I wanted to get at the issue of how you're thinking about China, but I'm going to do it in a specific way, and obviously with the coming summit between the presidents of China and the United States and all the concerns about China's growing military capabilities

and ongoing tensions in the East and South China Seas, there's a lot to talk about.

But I actually want to get at this through more of a force planning and budgeting dimension, more in line with your direct responsibilities through the concept of air-sea battle. And air-sea battle, of course, for those of you who don't know as much about it, it's primarily an Air Force and a Navy idea. It's not really a formal doctrine. But it's gained a lot of attention and it's seen as a response in some ways to the growing prevalence of precision strike weapons and people try hard to say it's not about China specifically, but, obviously, China has the resources to buy a lot of these precision strike weapons more than most.

So, I guess I support and admire a lot of the concepts behind air-sea battle as an idea, but just two specific questions. One is: Are the other services and the allies now becoming part of this concept because, initially, it was primarily an Air Force and Navy thought, and, of course, you're part of the Department of the Navy, but you're a separate service.

I wanted to ask you what role the Marine Corps, if any, is playing in air-sea battle? Is it something that inspires you, is it something you look to for guidance? Is it a debate you're contributing to or was it a sort of a one-time Air Force-Navy thought that's sort of had its heyday and is now fading a little?

But then the second part of the question: Do you think the name needs to be reconsidered, if nothing else, because it hearkens back to air-land battle, which was our way of dealing with the Soviet threat to Europe. It's a catchy but confrontational-sounding slogan that China in particular seems to take

a little bit of you know, a bad reaction to? And, so, could you comment just on how you're thinking about air-sea battle these days?

GENERAL AMOS: Yes. I hadn't thought about changing the name, but you're probably right. Without having put any thought to that, it's probably like a lot of things when they're first conceptualized, you look back and you go there's probably a better way we could have marketed it. So, what would be a new name, I don't know.

But to your point about the concept, and it is, it's a concept. I kind of look at it as a phase of an operation and I think that's the safest way to look at it and to put it in context of whatever the overall operation is going to be. And by that, I mean it's an anti-access aerial denial. I mean, how do you deal in an environment where people don't want you to come in?

And, by the way, that's not new. Now, the technology has become more advanced to push the force offshore or push them back in the air, but the actual aerial denial thing, it's historical. I mean, it goes way back. So, I look at it as a phase.

If we have an operation where we are actually trying to impose our will somewhere in the world, the enemy is going to try his best to ensure that we don't and he's going to do that through a variety of means, one of which could be kinetic weapons, it could be air-breathing weapons, it could be exoatmosphere weapons that come back down. It could be cyber. I'd argue that cyber is an area where you could be denied. I mean, the impact of cyber could prevent a force from certainly accomplishing its mission and being able to have access.

But as we kind of think about terrain and we think about okay, coming ashore in a posed environment, I think all the services are playing at it, Mike, and not playing it, I think we take it very, very seriously. It is a phase. When you're going against a determined enemy, the last thing you want to do is go where the enemy expects you to go. You know, when you start thinking about broad coastlines and extended ranges, what you want to do is put the enemy on the horns of a dilemma. So, it's not just bullet versus bullet or missile versus missile, you could do that and there's a part of it that fits that, but it actually, since most determined enemies can't defend on every frontier, what you want to do is you want to have forces that are capable to challenge the enemy on a very wide front.

And that's really where amphibious forces come in and that's where STOVL F-35 comes in. I mean, there are a lot of places not only on ships, but you could actually land them ashore around the world and without being on a runway somewhere. You can land amphibious forces, the mere threat of forces maneuvering on your flank, depending on where you are, what country it is that's trying to prevent you, it drains off assets. So, it's an anti-access aerial denial strategy and it's one that we all participate in, all the services do.

And, so, I don't think it's mature yet. I think it will get there. Everybody seems to worry about it, it's a bunch of programs. It could be programs. There probably are people that think it's these 150 programs. It's actually more than that. It's not a concept of operations; it's nested in a concept of operations to how we go against an enemy that's trying to prevent us from

coming ashore.

So, that's kind of how I see it. It's nested in there; we're all in it together. Services are very cooperative with it. So, it's more than just some number of programs that are very, very costly, it's actually it needs to be a part of how we conceptualize a concept of operation.

MR. O'HANLON: And last question over here. The gentleman in the tan jacket against the wall.

MR. TENANT: Sir, good morning. My name is Paul Tenant. I'm a British army officer actually working on exchange in the Pentagon.

I was interested in an earlier response to your question about major theaters of war and specifically the lack of a mention of the army's role. I'd be very interested in your vision over the next 20 years of in broad terms the boundaries and overlaps between the roles you envisage for the U.S. Marine Corps and the roles you would envisage for the U.S. Army.

GENERAL AMOS: Yes. Just so I make sure I've got this correctly, it's over the next couple of decades how I see the, what, coalition boundaries between the U.S. Marine Corps and our coalition partners? What exactly do you mean?

MR. TENANT: So, it's specifically how you see the roles and responsibilities of the U.S. Marine Corps mapping with the equivalent roles and responsibilities of the U.S. Army.

GENERAL AMOS: Yes, yes.

MR. TENANT: But I'm very interested in your vision of how that

may develop.

GENERAL AMOS: Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: Just for those that didn't hear, U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps and their relative roles, prospective roles.

GENERAL AMOS: Right, yes. Let me just make a couple of comments. We've got a phenomenal army and it's designed to be a dominant land army in a land campaign. I mean, it's designed to go to war and dominate on the battlefield.

The U.S. Marine Corps actually operates along the seams. If you take a look at – I've tried my best and I don't think I do a very good job of it, trying to describe the different domains, ground domain of the army, the air domain for the Air Force and the sea domain for the Navy. The U.S. Marine Corps actually works along the seams of all those domains. We don't really have a domain; we transit those domains depending on what the crisis is and what the need is, and most of the needs we have are urgent needs.

We've been on the ground now for 12 or so years. I make no apologies for that because I think we more than did our mission in Iraq and we're more than doing our mission with our partners in Afghanistan. But that's really not why America has a Marine Corps. America has a Marine Corps to be able to respond today. I mean, something happens today, not 30 days from now, not 40 days from now, not, "let me cobble together a force and train it," it's today and that's why forward presence is so critically important to us as a naval force. So, two different missions.

I would say just the same way America doesn't need a second land army, America doesn't need a second Marine Corps, and, so, we have a very specific capability set and talent pool that we bring to a crisis. And as we look around the international community, because the military to include your army from your country, and I was just with Sir Peter Wall last week in the U.K., is we travel to include the Asia Pacific area, our size of the Marine Corps and kind of how our ethos and how we do business actually fits pretty well with most of the armies around the world.

And I'll tell you there's an affinity. It's not a fraternal bonding, but there's an ability to be able to say okay, I like your expeditionary, you're responsive, you're adaptable, you're flexible. We'd like to have a force and build a force that's kind of like that or we'd like to fight alongside a force that's just like that.

So, there's a natural cohesion and affinity between the United States Marine Corps and many of the world's armies just because of size and really kind of because of our ethos. Again, we're not designed to be a dominant land army; that's not why we have a Marine Corps. My sense is most of the other armies around the world aren't designed to be a dominant land army either.

Does that answer your question? Okay.

MR. O'HANLON: General, we're very grateful for your time today, for your 42 years of service.

GENERAL AMOS: Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: We're all thinking of you and your Marines --

GENERAL AMOS: All the gray hairs up here.

MR. O'HANLON: Not too many. But we're all thinking of you and your Marines all the time and certainly in the course of Memorial Day weekend and beyond. So, we want to thank all of them and thank you very much.

GENERAL AMOS: You're welcome, thank you. (Applause)

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