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THE FUTURE OF LAND WARFARE

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. IGNATIUS: Are we amped up, miked up? We are. Good. So, I'm David Ignatius. I'm a columnist for the *Washington Post*. It's my pleasure to moderate this discussion today. We have a wonderful opportunity on a day when the White House is announcing that we will have boots on the ground in Syria, we're going to talk about the subject of boots on the ground in the broadest and most systematic way that I've seen in quite a while. And we're going to do that by talking about the new book by Michael O'Hanlon, *The Future of Land Warfare*.

Often in Washington, there's an implicit question mark at the end of that phrase. The future of land warfare (Laughter)? Really? And Michael has looked at that question very carefully in this book, and so, we're going to talk about it in some detail.

Let me just briefly introduce the speakers. We have our author, Michael O'Hanlon, who as you know, is a senior fellow and a director of foreign policy research here at the Brookings Institution, and we have General David Petraeus, who is now chairman of the KKR Global Institute, and has been in his extraordinary military career, probably the best known U.S. Army officer of his generation.

He has served as commander of CENTCOM, commander of the U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Quite literally, there is no one in the country, or maybe the world, better qualified to comment on this question of the future of land warfare than Dave Petraeus.

So, let me ask Mike O'Hanlon to begin with, a brief summary for this audience of the arguments in this book, and then I'll turn to General Petraeus, and then we'll have a discussion. I should note that at the end of 45 or 50 minutes, we'll turn to you for your questions. So, please be thinking of them and we'll come back to you.  
Mike?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, David. Thank you, everyone for being here. General Petraeus, it's a real treat to be discussing this topic, and for you all to be allowing me to plug my book a little along the way. But of course, the topic is broader, and this is one of those rare Brookings books without a subtitle (Laughter). We just decided to lay out the topic and let it swim or sink on its own, and --

MR. IGNATIUS: Bold.

MR. O'HANLON: (Laughter) Thank you.

MR. IGNATIUS: Well, Dave, thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, indeed. By think tank standards, that counts. And so, what I would like to do in these, just couple of minutes, to get the conversation going, and again, thanks for the way you summarized the basic book and the genesis of it. I think we all know where the debate stands in the United States now that we'd like to argue, that land warfare is becoming less likely, less important to our security.

Heaven knows, we would like to see our troops not have to do another Iraq or Afghanistan. And I'm sure General Petraeus (Laughs) is near the top of the list of people who would just as soon not be deployed, yet again. And yet, the question is, can we really look into our crystal ball and be quite that confident?

And so, the main thing I want to do here to start, is to remind you of how often we've tried in the past to be just that confident, and how often we've been wrong. And so, my basic contention here is, to put it in policy terms, when the Obama Administration declares in its recent defense planning documents, like the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, or the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, that we're not going to size our military any longer for prolonged, large scale stabilization missions, that that's actually incorrect. That's actually a strategic mistake.

I don't want to overstate the dilemma here. We still have an Army that is

extraordinarily good at these operations, and a military, more generally, that's very good at these operations, with all the experience of people who often served under General Petraeus, worked with him, developed the counter insurgency methods and tactics and strategies that we employed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But you know, you want to get into debate early, before the harm is done. And I think right now, the ideas that are being kicked around are dangerous, even if the state of the Army itself is still pretty good. And so, again, let me remind you of how much of a national tendency we've had historically to think we could foresee the future of warfare, or at least, of those wars that affected us.

So, for most of our first 150 years, we had a very small standing Army, except during the Civil War. And then, leading up to World War I, we still didn't have much of an Army, and we hoped that we could avoid of the ways of the old world, from which many of us or our ancestors had come. And so, I think before World War I, we had the 17th largest Army in the world. By this point, the United States has become the world's largest economic power. So, to be 17th in the world in ground forces, is pretty small (Laughs) compared to our capacities and our population.

And then, of course, we ramped up for World War I, after trying to stay out for the first three years of that conflict. But right after World War I, we went back down to 17th, and then, I think we were 19th in the ranks just before the outbreak of World War II. I'm not going to blame the entire outbreak of World War II on our unpreparedness, but I think it was a contributor and symptomatic of how we were thinking.

Then, obviously, after World War II, when we had eight million soldiers, we did have to downsize, but we did it so far and so dramatically, that what had been until that time, the world's greatest military machine ever, five years later, could not even

fend off the North Koreans. And when you think about how short of a period of time that was, and how much damage and harm we did to our preparedness in half a decade, it reminds you of how fast bad ideas can take on a life of their own. I don't think we're in quite the same danger these days, but I still want to remind you of that case.

Again, we had other cases. After the Korean War, we tried to rely on nuclear weapons, and even the U.S. Army brought nuclear weapons into its force structure as the equivalent of artillery. And while that idea didn't last too long, with the pentomic division, nonetheless, we went into a Vietnam with a firepower intensive approach to warfare, because that was pretty much all we thought of as a nation and as a military at that stage.

After Vietnam, we then learned the lesson, we're not going to do any more of these. And the best way to make sure is not to let the Army prepare for them. And it wasn't the Army's fault. I'm not blaming the Army. The country, as a whole, came to this strategic conclusion.

And so, historically, we've gone through these ups and downs of the size of our military and our confidence that technology, whether it's nuclear weapons, air power, Curtis LeMay, you know, flexible response -- all of the concepts that we've seen historically, could somehow prevent us from having to deploy troops abroad, and every single time, for reasons that varied from case to case, we've been wrong.

And so, lo and behold, we wind up in the 21st century, and luckily, we had outstanding leaders like General Petraeus, who were themselves, mentally and militarily versatile, and had seen a few of the inklings of this new, more complicated world in places like the Balkans. But we still were unprepared, and we took three or four years, arguably, to really get ourselves up to the kind of proficiency and counter-insurgency that was ultimately required.

Now, we are starting to risk going back to the same kind of pattern, where we say that kind of war is over. This time around, it's not going to be Curtis LeMay and B52s and you know, jets. It's going to be drones and cyber war and space satellites and air-sea battle that rescue us, or allow us to play a different kind of military role in the world.

I hope most of those things prove to be useful in specific ways, but I'm dubious that they can be the full answer. This is not a pitch for a much larger Army, but I think we have cut enough, and it's time to recognize that we're in danger of cutting too much. Thanks.

MR. IGNATIUS: Let me turn to General Petraeus and ask him to offer some brief opening thoughts in response.

MR. PETRAEUS: Well first of all, look, it's a pleasure to be back at Brookings. This is one of the great intellectual critical masses of our nation's capital, and it's a particular pleasure, really, a privilege to be on the stage with two individuals for whom I have such great regard, and to talk about a topic that is obviously, near and dear to my heart.

The truth is that you know, Mike and I have known each other all the way back from the days when we were at graduate school in Princeton together. We were running buddies then, and we're still running buddies now. And during extended periods, we get together every Sunday morning. We'll run about six miles together, and we try out ideas on each other.

And so, starting about, I don't know, two and a half years ago, maybe even longer, Mike came up with the idea that he was going to challenge the emerging notion that ground forces weren't needed; in fact, that we don't want them, because we'll end up in Iraqs or Afghanistans. And this is the period, I think, where the pendulum had

swung quite a ways over toward again, not getting involved in any of these kinds of situations, again, which is very much predictable.

It is something we've experienced in the past, with the no more Koreas, no more Vietnams, and so forth, and so on. And I said, look, Mike, I'm intellectually with you, and I'm convinced of the thesis, but it's going to be a tough argument. I think again, the conventional wisdom right now is very much against what you're going to argue, and you're going to have to come up with some plausible scenarios and just in -- just the same as, you know, some Bob Gates (sic) does, that we have a perfect record on predicting engagements of the future, and it's zero for whatever. We've never anticipated what it was we ended up doing. And that's a good argument. It's a powerful argument to make, but it's, at the end of the day, not sufficient.

So, Mike came up with the two scenarios in his book, and you know, candidly, one or two of them are actually slightly plausible (Laughter). And then, along the way, reality intruded, and here we are, several years later from our first discussions going up the Hill out there in North Arlington.

And in fact last fall, there was a period in which every single division headquarters in the U.S. Army was committed. And by the way, a number of these were not for the kinds of engagements that we would have prepared in the past. And in fact, in some respects, they're engagements that we'd really, still not rather prepare for.

We'd love to get back to fighting the big battles and the preparation for say, the Korean scenario. And in fact, there was a division, of course -- there's still a division committed there. There were several divisions, I think, actually on the ground in Afghanistan at the time. Rich, great to see you.

There were a couple getting ready for it. There was one doing, of all things, the footprint, if you will, the base piece, for the Ebola crisis response of the United

States overall as a government. And we had, of course, the 82nd Airborne Division on call as the nation's strategy force. And oh, by the way, a division back -- division headquarters back in Iraq as the over arching element providing command and control there for the brigade that was split over the train and equip mission.

Now, what's interesting is that a number of these tasks, again, were somewhat non-standard. Even those in Afghanistan had come to the point of being advise-and-assist missions, no longer the actual clear-hold-and-build forces that we had when I was privileged to command the international security assistance force. And again, the mission in Iraq was not just advise-and-assist, it was really train and equip.

And then, the Ebola, again, yet another one -- this is support to humanitarian operations, sounds simple. It's not. This is about expeditionary logistics. It's about expeditionary warfare, if it comes to that. So, the only really, conventional mission we still had going on was the one on the Korean peninsula, preparing to respond to any action by North Korea, together with our Korean partners.

What this has told me is really, that Mike's thesis is right. You can argue about some of the dimensions of it, and so forth, and I would go even farther to say that what this has done is underscore the validity, yet again, of the need that we wrote into the leadership manual; actually, that period that I was out at Fort Leavenworth where did the counterinsurgency field manual and some others.

There was also a leadership manual. And the argument in that manual was that today's Army needs pentathlete leaders. These are leaders that can not only perform the traditional tasks of war fighting, as we've always known it, but could also perform the tasks associated with stability operations, with humanitarian relief, support to homeland authorities, in the case of a natural disaster, and so on.

And so again, a versatility rather than a real sole focus on the kinds of



tasks that were really the occupation of the Army for the bulk of the first two decades or so, or more, that I was in uniform. Beyond that, therefore, you need also, pentathlete units. Now, the idea there, again, is that units have a degree of versatility, although as you approach the road to deployment for a particular unit, or the road to preparation to deploy, that you do focus it on the kinds of tasks that you think it will be likely to perform.

And so that's, I think, the ground force really, of the present and the future. One can argue, again, about the overall size of it and some of the composition of it, but I think that Mike's thesis has actually been borne out by reality. And you know, this is a reality that is informed by that great -- I think it was a Communist or whatever saying -- you know, you may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you. And we could extend that to say you may not be interested in stability and support operations, but they may be interested in you, as well. And that's how I would expand that great quotation.

Since I think it's my role to ask questions that are skeptical of this thesis on which the two of you basically agree, let me start with today's news about the decision by the White House to commit less than 50 special operations forces to Syria. Even that very small commitment is drawing criticism from people who said, wait a minute, Mr. President. You said no boots on the ground, and now we're going to have 50.

But in terms of Michael's thesis and General Petraeus' comments, what's interesting is that these are special operations forces. One of the things that Michael argues against in the book is the quite popular view that yes, we may need land forces, but we should emphasize what's been effective, which is special operations forces, and reduce the spending and focus on the much broader impact, traditional land forces.

So, let me ask you to think about Syria, the situation there, the military requirements there in light of today's announcement, and offer your thoughts. Michael?

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks, David. Well, first of all, the fact that I think

there's a possibility of large scale land operations doesn't mean I advocate them as the standard or first approach. And so, I'm not averse to a special forces/air power first strategy for Syria. What I'm seeing today, however, causes me some concern that it's again, a minimalist, incrementalist approach.

I don't know what you can really do with 30 or 40 people, but I'm glad to see a start down this path. I've been arguing for it for several months, based on a political framework for a future Syria of a more confederal model, and then trying to work locally with various partners. General Petraeus, by the way, if you haven't read his Senate testimony from last month, I recommend it very highly, and he delves into some of these aspects himself.

So, I'm not saying that special forces are the wrong way to go in most of the places we operate. In fact, at this point in Syria, that's what I would do, too. I would also combine that with a selective use of certain types of a no fly zone operation, not necessarily the kind we had in Iraq in the '90s, where we just try to keep everybody out of the sky all the time, but possibly, a punitive or retaliatory no fly zone, where you declare that a Syrian aircraft that violates our rules will, perhaps, be the target of a future action at a time and place of our choosing.

That's the kind of no fly zone concept that I would -- so, in other words, just to make the broader point, I'm not advocating an invasion of Syria today. And some of the ten scenarios that General Petraeus teases me about, I hope, very much like him, are not plausible, because I hope that the deterrent effect of having strong capabilities will convince Vladimir Putin not to try to slice off part of Eastern Latvia, for example, my first scenario.

I'm not saying that's a likely scenario. I want to keep it unlikely. So, in many of these cases, the goal is deterrence, not the actual use of force, and I hope that's

the case in Syria, somehow, as well. I'll stop there on Syria, except that I do think down the road, there is a very high likelihood of an international peace implementation force, as you know, where I think we would have to be part of that effort. But that's down the road.

MR. IGNATIUS: So, before I turn to General Petraeus, and I'm especially curious what he thinks today about the Syria situation, Michael, I just would note in your book, in your carefully argued scenarios, one of them that you posit is a Syria stabilization force of 50,000 to a hundred thousand U.S. ground forces.

That's a very substantial number. Here we are at, I would say, probably the apex of demand poll for U.S. forces, and you know, you may quarrel about whether is too few or too many, but the idea that we'd be talking about 50 to a hundred thousand, is there any foreseeable situation in which you could see that being something that this president or a successor would advocate?

MR. O'HANLON: Not this president. There's no way this will be right for anything that President Obama might want to do, anyway. But the 50,000 to a hundred thousand is me putting on my force planner hat. So, I'm not necessarily predicting it or advocating it, but when you think about the fact that in Bosnia, we sent 20,000 U.S. troops in that first year.

We didn't stay at that level for long, but the first year, we had 20,000, and NATO itself had 50 to 60,000. That was for a country 1/5 the size in population of Syria, and probably 1/25 the danger. So, if we wound up with this sort of a deal -- and by the way, I advocate confederation to try to keep the numbers down. What I'm hoping to do is imagine autonomous zones that largely self police, and the international force would, by this concept, deploy along the separation lines, and then in that central population belt.

By the way, you know so much about Syria. You've done amazing reporting, and I hope that you'll offer your views on this, too. But my point is that this is

meant to be an upper bound, maximum requirement. But when you're doing force planning, you're supposed to think in those terms, because if something becomes urgently necessary, you want to have the capability. And we have to debate how many wars at a time and you know, we can't spend all the national treasure on being ready for multiple things, each one of which is unlikely. But ultimately, being ready for one big operation and two smaller sustained operations, I think, is the right framework.

MR. IGNATIUS: General Petraeus, share with us your thoughts about Syria, in light of what's been announced today, and generally, the situation there.

MR. PETRAEUS: Well first of all, let me just actually come back to the question about you know, isn't special forces or special operating -- aren't they enough. And the answer simply is no. Now, don't get me wrong. There's special operation forces writ large, and I'm talking now about both so-called black special operations, the special mission units, publicly known Delta Seal Team Six and the Rangers for over the last decade under JSOC control, conducting targeted, precise, counter terrorist operations, as many as 10 to 15 per night on average during the surge in Iraq, and just about that during the surge in Afghanistan, as well.

And there's never enough of those, frankly, and there certainly aren't enough of the so-called white soft, the Green Berets special forces. And then also, the Seals and the Marines that can conduct those missions, as well, and did so very skillfully in Afghanistan. There's just never enough of them. And I know, because I tried to find every single one in the inventory, and tried to get them into Iraq, Afghanistan or the greater central command area.

So number one, even in steady state times, we end up having to augment them quite considerably, or literally, use conventional forces to perform missions that under ideal circumstances, you would use Green Berets again, or Seals or

Marines. And so, look at the case again, in Afghanistan. Much of the train and equip mission there is done by conventional forces. Certainly, the SF are doing that, and certainly, the special mission units are carrying out operations, as well.

In Iraq, you have the same situation. You have an entire brigade. It was of the 82nd Airborne Division. Now, it's 10th Mountain, under a division headquarters, the 82nd Airborne Division headquarters, that is essentially doing train and equip or reconstitution missions, and then, some advise and assist at quite high levels.

As you know, I advocated taking them at least one level lower, but not to the battalion level, because I think it's too easy for us to take over units, and for the gains to be sustainable, these need to be conducted by Iraqi security forces. In fact, just a very quick diversion.

I've said that what is needed in Iraq is essentially, the same comprehensive civil and military campaign plan that we executed during the surge, with all of the components, except, and a huge except, that Iraqi security forces are the ones conducting the clear hold and build operations, perhaps with some paramilitary forces or popular mobilization forces and militias, and that the Iraqi government has to do what was a critical component of the surge of ideas, and that was reconciliation.

So, the on bar awakening this time has to be led by Prime Minister Abadi and his government. It cannot be done as we did last time, with us in the lead, at least, and on bar, and then, the government coming on later on. But again, to come back to the bottom line, it's that there are never enough special forces, never enough special mission unit elements. And so, we end up having to use conventional forces to perform tasks that in an ideal world, you'd do with Green Berets or again, counter terrorist forces.

Beyond that, it's always been the case that even when you have enough special forces to do rotations through, say scenarios in Africa and different engagement

programs that we have there, that again, they're extraordinary, but they're not all that good at say, tank automotive maintenance, or perhaps logistics systems establishment, or perhaps artillery, or perhaps rotary wing helicopter.

You know, again, we have very small capabilities -- very, very small in some of these areas, but not the industrial strength capabilities that we have needed in a number of cases in the last 15 years. And I think for the foreseeable future, we're going to have even more of these, and you can see again, where we could be headed in the case of Syria.

I think this is a positive move. I think that the limiting factor all along in Syria has been the absence of a Sunni Arab moderate force that we could support. The fact is, I don't care what your objective is in Syria. If your objective is that Bashar must go, you have to have a Sunni Arab force that's going to get him to go. If your objective is to get to the diplomatic table, and we're there now, to a degree, you have to have a military context.

There is no military solution, as everyone is fond of saying. There is a military context that has to be established, without which no one is going to go to the negotiating table, or at least they won't negotiate seriously. And oh, by the way, if you want to degrade and defeat the Islamic State and the Al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra and the Horison Group, the Al-Qaeda element sent there for establishment of a cell in Northern Syria, you're going to have to have a ground force.

We can do a lot with the air capabilities. And by the way, it's very, very important to note that our capabilities now are just so vastly greater than when we did the fight to Baghdad. The armada of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft that we have over the skies in Iraq and Syria is just breathtaking.

As a guy who is a division commander, you know, in the fight to

Baghdad, fought along as all the other division commanders were for the one predator line that was you know, given a portion to the V Corps of the Army, to have everything that is there now is again, truly extraordinary, and candidly, it is a result of the demand that has been placed on the system which Secretary Gates, more than anyone else, responded to when we were doing again, the surge in Iraq and subsequently, operations in Afghanistan.

So, this has enabled us, and we are truly fighting in a very, very different way, because we have very augmented capabilities in that regard. And it has taken us probably, the better part of a year to get to the point where we can actually understand what we're seeing below us. And this is historically about right.

We've done this in other places. It's publicly known that we've gone after Al-Qaeda's senior leadership and others, and it takes a long time to develop the baseline knowledge on which you can then operate with the kind of confidence, and with the generally appropriately restrictive, although I'd actually relax a tad of that, rules of engagement that we're observing in Iraq and Syria, as well.

MR. IGNATIUS: Focusing for the moment, not on the kind of targeted operations that you're describing, which are technology driven, enabled by all of the advances that you're mentioning, but looking more broadly at the question Michael is trying to engage in his book, I think it's fair to say that the president, and probably, I'm going to guess, most Americans, looking back at the experience of the last 12 years would say that that period has taught us as a country, the limits of military force, both air and ground, to achieve U.S. political aims.

And I'd say as a subchapter of that, the limits of our ability to develop local forces that will carry this fight for us through our train and equip capacities -- that's one of the reasons that the president, clearly, has been wary about the use of military

force. He thinks that the lesson is that in the end, it's very hard to achieve our goal.

So, I want you to engage -- that's really the question at the heart of this, I think, Michael and General Petraeus -- speak to that, if you would. Michael?

MR. O'HANLON: Well you know, one way to address it, David, is to get out of this Middle Eastern quagmire mentally just for a minute. And of course, we've been trying to get out of there strategically for a few years, and we find that we can't. And that really bears repeating, because you know, let's hope we can do it with a few special forces and a few airplanes here and there. But so far, we're sort of working hard to tread water in Syria and Iraq, and we might have to do more.

And to get any deal to stick, by the way -- Secretary Kerry is out there negotiating in you know, Geneva, I guess, over this Syria process. But let's say he gets a deal. Let's say he finds 20 individuals of different sectarian groups willing to work together, and you know some of them personally with your excellent reporting and analysis that you've done over the years on Syria.

There are such people, and it's conceivable that he could persuade them to form a government of national unity. It's remotely conceivable, perhaps, that he could persuade the Russians to get Assad to take exile in Crimea or someplace (Laughter). But once this new government declares itself the government, who is going to give it authority? There is no credible police force or army that can do that.

So, it's going to issue all the edicts it wants, and the violence is going to continue, unless somebody steps in. So, our very policy that we claim we're following today presupposes a peacekeeping force that shall not be mentioned, because the country is not ready for it. But the minute that we get the peace deal, there is going to have to be an implementation force, I would argue. But that's the part I said I was trying to get away from. So, we always say we're trying to get out of the Middle East. We can't.



Let me give you one more scenario, which General Petraeus may put on the list of those he doesn't find credible, but I'm going to stick it out there, anyway. Let's do something even scarier. Presuppose Indo-Pakistani war. Now, I don't think I'm getting too crazy to say that, because they've had a bunch, and they certainly came plenty close in 2008 with the Mumbai attack.

In fact, India displayed a kind of strategic restraint after that attack that I don't believe we would. If we got hit like that, we would retaliate. India did not. General Petraeus dealt with this issue at CENTCOM. A lot of people in this room have thought about or dealt with this issue, and I'm impressed that the Indians held back. But the next time, they're not going to hold back, in my judgment, in my prediction. I think they've almost said as much. The South Koreans have also said they're not going to hold back if there's another Cheonan sinking like the North Koreans conducted in cold blood, in 2010.

So, there are ways this war could begin. Once it begins, and let's say the Indians do something like their cold start, which never quite became, I guess, a formal doctrine, but they were thinking along these lines. I think you've talked to them a little bit about it, and maybe weren't always thrilled. I'll let you speak for yourself in a second.

But let's say that there's an Indian reprisal into Pakistani territory, meant to really just make a point, take out a couple of terrorist camps. That's the Indian intention. Okay. What do the Pakistanis interpret that to be, however? They have a narrow country, and they've spent 70 years building up a vision of India that portrays India as the arch enemy, and as the large hegemon next door that would love to squash them, if it could.

In other words, they're going to worry about possible regime change; that this is not a punitive attack, that it is the beginning of an invasion targeting Islamabad, which means very early in this crisis, they're going to think about mating their nuclear

weapons, which they've been devoting a lot of money to for a reason, to their delivery vehicles, and at least trying to make the threat of a nuclear attack.

And let's say that India doesn't get the message and keeps coming. Maybe India just wants to come 10 more miles, but the Pakistanis interpret this as 10 more miles towards Islamabad, and the Pakistanis decide to set up a nuclear weapon 2,000 feet up above an Indian air field that's being used to support this invasion. If that sounds crazy, let me remind you, we spent 50 years in this country developing doctrine to do exactly this sort of thing, and some of these Indian and Pakistani strategists read our stuff and bought into it.

And so, you know, you can convince yourself that's a limited surgical nuclear strike, if you read enough of this Strangelovey nuclear theology. And then, so where does this stop? Well, I suggest -- again, I'm taking us down a Tom Clancy-like scenario without the talent of Tom Clancy, so my apologies.

But I suggest that what this might lead to is an international force to essentially stabilize the situation, with the request of India and Pakistan, their governments, recognizing they have no choice but to invite this force in, because the alternative is the risk of all out nuclear war in South Asia. And at this point, we send in an international force, both to police the line of control and the border between the two countries, and also, perhaps, to do a trusteeship for Kashmir, which is the reason Pakistan claims it has justification for harboring and nurturing all of these terrorist groups, to get Kashmir back.

And we say okay, we're not going to reward Pakistan for this aggression, but we can essentially impose a trusteeship on Kashmir, and after a 10 year period or whatever, the Kashmiris themselves will decide their future political orientation. I know it's a lot of detail. That's the only scenario I'm going to throw at you with that much detail.

But it seems to me, that kind of a big scenario -- I'm looking out 20 years in this book. That kind of a scenario cannot be dismissed out of hand. And if that kind of thing happens, we're not going to want to begin the debate about what kind of army do we need in five years to possibly handle that implementation mission. We are going to need the Army right then, as part of an international force to stabilize this otherwise extremely dangerous situation.

Even if that scenario only has a 5 percent or 2 percent chance of beginning to happen, if you combine that with 10 other scenarios, each of which has a 2 percent chance, that begins to justify the kind of military and the kind of Army that I advocate.

MR. IGNATIUS: Spoken only as one who -- didn't you understand physics as an undergraduate?

MR. O'HANLON: You're right about that, yeah.

MR. PETRAEUS: Look, you know, David, I have to say that the scariest scenarios that we envisioned when I was the Commander (Inaudible) of Central Command inevitably involved something to do with Pakistan. And the reason is, of course, the very sizable population, the very dense population in a number of areas, and the presence of nuclear weapons, which now are on the threshold of becoming tactical nuclear weapons, as well, which is an even more destabilizing situation in a crisis, needless to say.

I mean, I'm not convinced by that scenario, in all honesty, but the truth is, again, we have failed to conceive of the scenarios in which we have ended up engaging so often, that I think it's impossible to dismiss even some of the more outlandish possibilities. The fact is, to come back to the Syria situation, if I could, just for a moment, a lot of what we've said about Syria here just argues, once again, for a sanctuary. And

this is something I know you've advocated.

I mean, David, by the way, is the only one of the three of us who has actually been inside Syria in the last few years, at the least, and very early on, was calling for a sanctuary, an enclave that we would protect. And that protection is crucial, because if they're getting barrel bombs dropped on their head every afternoon, obviously, it's not going to succeed.

But the importance of the sanctuary is not just as a place where security forces can train and equip and expand, and then, from which they can conduct operations. It's that you could actually have a portion of Northern Syria, and perhaps, Southern Syria in which you have local authorities established. You have again, the basic services rebuilt and re-established, and you have even local security forces, police coming back to work.

And so, you have something there with which you can work when you're at the negotiating table, or at least from which you can work when you're at the negotiating table. And perhaps, the refugees return to these areas and reduce that particular element of this overall you know, geopolitical Chernobyl that is serious viewing -- violence, instability, extremism and refugees over the region, and indeed, now, into Europe, as well.

And so, if again, the advisors or the again, train and equip members help with the establishment of something like this, and if we have a credible guarantee that we are not going to let them be hit by Bashar's Air Force again with barrel bombs, and we have the ability, I think, to very credibly say if you do this, we will ground your Air Force. We have now a very significant added element of complexity, though, in the form of the Russians, and it's widely known that the Russians are not only killing more civilians than they are the troops they're targeting, but the ones they're actually targeting are about 90

percent our guys and 10 percent, perhaps the Islamic State.

And so, that is a huge issue, and that can get you to start to consider whether you say, look, if you keep going after our guys, we start going after your guys, Bashar's guys -- and by the way, I say all of this again, with the idea that -- don't get rid of Bashar until you know what's going to follow him. That's not to say that he can be part of the solution, but he cannot.

He is the magnetic attraction that will continue to draw Sunni Arabs and Sunnis from elsewhere in the world, really, to Syria, to fight against the individual they see as responsible for the death of a quarter million Syrian citizens and displacement, internally or externally, of half of the population.

But now, to come back to the overall issue here, I think that what we have seen over the past gosh, three, four years, whatever it may be -- perhaps even longer, is the swinging of a pendulum. And it is a swinging away, an aversion to the kind of frustration, extraordinary expense that we have experienced with Iraq, where of course, we had 165,000 American troops alone at the height of the surge, and Afghanistan, where we topped out at about a hundred -- a little over a hundred thousand.

But we have learned that we have not been ending wars. What we have done is ended our involvement in wars, and then in some cases, of course, we've had to go back in, because the situation proved unsustainable for a variety of reasons, and in Iraq, primarily because of the sectarian actions of Prime Minister Maliki, our former partner.

And so, I think I've seen the pendulum start to come back, somewhat to an acknowledgement that there is no substitute for U.S. leadership; that while that U.S. leadership should take action that is informed by this very, very costly, very frustrating, maddening experience that we've had in the wars of the post 9/11 period, but that

nonetheless, again, there is just no substitute for the United States, albeit always in a coalition context. And I think the coalition that's been put together for the fight against the Islamic State is truly extraordinary.

What the administration, Secretary Kerry, John Allen have done is really quite unprecedented. I am a huge believer in coalitions, by the way. I very strongly support Winston Churchill's observation that the only thing worse than allies is not having allies (Laughter). I spent a great deal of time in particular, in Afghanistan doing coalition maintenance, as we called it, realizing at some occasions that I was giving more minutes to a particular national delegation than they had actually given troops to us, (Laughter) but nonetheless, willingly continuing to do that.

So again, the real bottom line here, to get back to the discussion that we've been having, is that I think the pendulum has begun shifting back. I think that's a pendulum that is very heavily still influenced, and rightly so, by the experiences that we've had. I think we have realized that our ambitions have to be tempered by an understanding of reality on the ground; again, that the cost of these can be so very, very considerable in lives and in money, and in indeed, the damage to countries on the ground, but at the end of the day, that America has to take action, and that if we don't, it is going to be unlikely that you will see successful action by others and leadership by others.

I mean, even in the case of Libya, where we were supposedly leading from behind, I think it's accurate to say that the sorties were 65 to 70 percent still American, even though it was French and British leadership, ostensibly, that was taking the campaign forward.

MR. O'HANLON: I should just say to the audience after General Petraeus' comment, I do share a lot of these views about Syria. I've written at over

length (sic) my own views drawing on --

MR. IGNATIUS: When did you first advocate a sanctuary? How many years ago?

MR. O'HANLON: I'm trying to figure out --

MR. IGNATIUS: It's multiple years.

MR. O'HANLON: -- what I thought about Syria. I went into Syria with the Free Syrian Army in September, 2012 and spent several days there. Went to Aleppo as it was beginning to be destroyed, and made three observations that one, that Assad's army would never control the whole country again.

MR. PETRAEUS: Yep.

MR. O'HANLON: You could see that at the time. Two, that the so-called moderate opposition, the Free Syrian Army, was a mess, and that absent serious American help, would remain so. And number three, without that kind of assistance, without that kind of moderate force, the extremists, who you could see all around you, and that were the best fighters and the most charismatic even then, would get stronger and stronger.

I wouldn't change a word that I wrote back then, but anybody who wants more detail, I just published yesterday a long, 6, 7,000 word essay in *The Atlantic* on this story. So, coming back --

MR. PETRAEUS: By the way, that was, just in -- that was before Lebanese Hezbollah was on the ground, I believe. It was before the sizable involvement of the revolutionary (Inaudible) force and their leaders. It was before -- I think, before the Islamic State had really stood back up.

MR. O'HANLON: Absolutely.

MR. PETRAEUS: And it was before the -- certainly before the Harrison

Group (Inaudible) --

(Simultaneous discussion)

MR. O'HANLON: Even (Inaudible) was weak at that time.

MR. PETRAEUS: That was just still -- that's in a nascent stage.

MR. IGNATIUS: Well, General Petraeus, it's well known, advocated the creating precisely that presence at the time, and wasn't successful. We could continue on this, but let me take us back to the broad issues of Michael's book. And just focus on Russia, and how Russia answers this question of the use of land forces.

As I read Russian actions in both Crimea, Ukraine and now in Syria, what I see as a Russia that, however decisive Putin has been in his actions, seems to think that there is a disutility to the use of traditional ground forces, and therefore, has invented the men in green in Ukraine. Hybrid warfare is the term that's been used for the way the Russians are seeking to project force.

So, my question to you, Michael, and General Petraeus is, they seem to have a different answer to your puzzle. Not the very large, traditional ground forces, but something quite different. Are they wrong in this, or are they on terrain that we ought to be thinking about, too?

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah, great point. Well, first of all, of course, what they've done has set back their country -- let me just be very clear, and I'm sure none of us are fans of Putin up here -- probably very few of you in the audience. But I think that the overall effect of what they've been doing is going to set back their country economically and otherwise.

But militarily, I think the Crimea operation has certain attributes that could be respected. And I think even in Syria, the Obama administration has been too quick to say that Russia will fail, because they're measuring Russia's actions against



Russia's stated goals of defeating ISIL as opposed to Russia's actual goals of shoring up Assad. And I think the latter approach, actually, will be somewhat effective, at least in the short to medium term.

So, yes, there are some things that Putin's done militarily that have been effective on their own limited terms, and I'm glad that for all of the terrible things he's been doing, he hasn't wanted to invade anybody in the classic sense.

MR. PETRAEUS: He did.

MR. O'HANLON: But he did.

(Simultaneous discussion)

MR. PETRAEUS: (Inaudible) which I'll point out in a second.

MR. O'HANLON: But in 2008, he did --

MR. PETRAEUS: But that was --

MR. IGNATIUS: Yes, but you'd argue that that was a limited success.

MR. O'HANLON: Right.

MR. IGNATIUS: Because it was in many ways, a botched operation.

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah. So, I think the most likely things we have to worry about to respond to Putin don't involve multiple American ground divisions, let's hope and pray. Because the minute we're up into that world, we're also up into the world of potential nuclear escalation.

MR. PETRAEUS: But in part because nobody wants to take on the United States tank on tank. And that's the main point.

MR. O'HANLON: Good point.

MR. PETRAEUS: And everyone, for however remote the memory, people still remember when we turned what I think was the third largest army in the world, Saddam's army, into the, I don't know, 6th or 7th largest army in the world in a

hundred hours of ground combat in Operation Desert Storm.

And that memory is very much alive, and they've seen what we can do when it comes to conventional force operations, as well, whether it's a Sadr City or Amadiya, Fallujah, Diyala, you name it. Again, that capability is extraordinary, and is truly unmatched.

And I think, actually, that's where you know, a conventional deterrence is yet another whole component of why you should have fairly sizable and fairly capable land forces.

MR. IGNATIUS: But General Petraeus, if your adversary understanding that tank on tank it's a loser, decides instead, on this hybrid form of warfare --

MR. PETRAEUS: Sure.

MR. IGNATIUS: -- where, rather than going at U.S. forces directly, proxies will be used --

MR. PETRAEUS: Sure.

MR. IGNATIUS: -- with a degree of deniability --

MR. PETRAEUS: Yes. Mm-hmm.

MR. IGNATIUS: -- which seems to be Putin's MO in Ukraine, not in Syria -- how should the U.S. be sizing its forces and strategy to deal with that reality of our adversary's power?

MR. PETRAEUS: It's again, why you need pentathlete leaders and pentathlete forces. He has actually employed a number of different types of campaigns, really. The Crimea campaign was one for which he had obviously prepared for quite some time. Frankly, that was a given. You put enough of the little green men on the streets -- he has already air and naval bases there.

He controls that island, and oh, by the way, the majority of that particular

part of Ukraine was ethnic Russian and Russian speaking, even though obviously, sizable, very sizable minorities including the Tatar. So again, a big, big difference what he did there. Now in the other case, he's doing what we call you know, buy with and through. He's got others that -- the operations are being conducted by separatists, some of whom he clearly has trained and equipped and stiffened with some Russian troops and advisors.

And he is in an advisory capacity there. That's different from the strictly special operations or Spetsnaz or GRU forces in Crimea. If you do go back to South Ossetia and Abkhazia, yes, I guess it failed. I mean, it didn't cut, ultimately, the East West Road pipeline rail line that he probably had as his objective. But you know, he does control South Ossetia and Abkhazia. And it remains jutting into Georgia proper.

And indeed, just his threat of sizable conventional forces again, can hold some other countries at a degree of risk, and give him a degree of political. The one I'm most worried about, actually, is the smash and grab, and then extend the nuclear umbrella in one of the three Baltic states. So, you take one in which there is a very sizable ethnic Russian, Russian speaking, and in fact, even Russian citizenship still, because they're allowed dual citizenship.

He says he has to create some pretext to have go in there and protect them. He does that very rapidly, and then, throws the nuclear umbrella over top of it and says, your move, NATO. And that's one that we have to be prepared for very much, and indeed, the presence -- you know, as you know, we agreed not to put forces on the ground in the three Baltic Republics, so what we have are never-ending exercises on the ground there in the three Baltic states, and we need to continue those on a never-ending basis, and indeed, build infrastructure to receive these, so that they can get the full training value of what they're doing, and so on.

So again, what we have to do, though, the bottom line is, we have to respond appropriately to what it is he's doing, and therefore, we have to have our own answer to hybrid warfare, which I think is by no means beyond the capabilities of our ground forces, augmented enormously by also, what we can do, of course, in the air and at sea, if it's an area contiguous to the water.

MR. O'HANLON: One tiny thing, if I could add, by the way (Laughter) -- you can see why it was nice to have General Petraeus on this panel. That was a fantastic answer, and I'm glad I only have to sketch a couple of additional things, because that was extremely thoughtful and comprehensive.

But let me just clarify, or maybe confuse you by saying that even though in the book, I advocate having a strong enough capability that we can go head-to-head with Putin in Central Eurasia. If this scenario that you just sketched out, general, were to take place, I might not be the first advocate of trying to reverse it with a counter-invasion.

You know, I'd like to have the capability to shore up the deterrence. If we fail, and we haven't yet put in forces in a place in the Baltics where we could actually have a trip wire and stop this thing from happening, I might wind up saying, you know what, it makes a lot more sense to me to go into comprehensive sanctions mode and squeeze Russia like we did in the Cold War, economically, and maybe even more severely, if we can, and be patient, because as much as we'd hate to see those parts of the Baltic states taken away from NATO, and as much as it would cause some people to doubt the sincerity of our Article 5 commitment, it may not be worth risking nuclear war.

And if we can have a strong enough economic response, I might actually advocate that. So, this book is not meant to be a hawkish argument that every single time you see a problem, use the Army to solve it. But I would like to try to reduce the chances of any of this happening in the first place, which is why the deterrence is so

important.

MR. O'HANLON: Let me pile on, if I could, on that one, just briefly. Again, the response that we would take, in advance, is to actually make sure that our partners on the ground, in this case, our allies on the ground, with whom we have an Article 5, collective self defense obligation, have the ability to cause enormous pain for any kind of Russian force that comes in.

Now, you might say, well, that's -- how can they possibly do that? Well, how can the Ukrainians possibly be doing what they're doing in Southeastern Donbas? The reason this is a frozen conflict is not just because of the pain of the sanctions, although that undoubtedly is what has ultimately led Putin to say, okay, let's just hold what we have got.

The Ukrainian forces of a variety of different types have fought very, very tenaciously with relatively limited support. And imagine what they could have done if we had provided them shoulder launched anti-tank weapons systems, by the way, which it's publicly known, tow missiles are being provided to the opposition forces on the ground in Northern Syria, and have taken out dozens of Russian tanks. It's all available on YouTube. You can see it there, first.

So, in Southeastern Ukraine, again, just providing -- and no one can accuse of giving offensive weapons. You're not going to take Moscow with shoulder launched anti-tank systems. You can take out advanced Russian tanks with them, and again, that would be a very, very effective, I think, counter, without being overly escalatory in nature.

And you know, if you're hesitant at that, well, put them in an arms depot in Hungary, where we have those, and take pictures of them and say, if this breaks out again, these are going to be delivered to the separatists -- or not the separatists, the

counter separatists, to the Ukrainian armed forces, with which we are now together with some allies, helping to train and equip and professionalize. And I was just actually in Kiev, recently.

MR. IGNATIUS: One more question for me, and then I want to turn to the audience. And this last question draws on what I think is the special value of this book, which is the intellectual rigor. I'm going to read a brief passage, and then I'd like to ask Michael and General Petraeus to comment on it.

Historically, the United States has had several periods of coherent grand strategy. The Monroe Doctrine in the 19th century, victory in Europe, first in Europe first, and the Pacific later, in World War II, containment of the Cold War. And the nation, as well as its allies, should aspire to some coherence and cogency in the future, as well.

So, I want to ask you to think about land forces, land warfare in the context of that coherent, cogent grand strategy. Often, in today's Washington, when people talk about big strategic ideas, some version of what theorists call the off-shore balancer approach -- not intervention, not invasion, as in Iraq, but off-shore power that stabilizes the situation, is prepared to help allies, is prepared in the extreme case to intervene, that's the kind of thing that people are talking about.

Michael, you thought very deeply about this, and no one has thought more deeply about this than General Petraeus. Talk a little bit about sensible strategy and sizing forces to fit that strategy.

MR. O'HANLON: The short answer I would give, David, is I think that we've probably had a better grand strategy in modern times than we sometimes give ourselves credit for, and I would describe it as engagement and deterrence. And essentially, what we've done through this is to keep cohesive a western alliance system of some 60 nations, with a combined total of 2/3 of world GDP and 2/3 of world total

military spending under our loose leadership.

And we're smart enough not to try to coerce people into fighting with us in wars they don't want to fight with us in, because then, they would perhaps depart the alliance. But it's remarkable that even this degree of loose cohesion would remain in the absence of a clear, agreed threat. And it's also the reason why we're seeing democracy gradually spread, even though the Arab Spring has been a setback.

We've seen big progress in Latin America, Eastern Europe, in our adult lifetimes. We've seen some progress in Africa. It's a reason why global prosperity is expanding. It's a reason why, despite the fact that there is now this interstate conflict in Ukraine, that nonetheless, the frequency of interstate war is far less. Even the lethality of civil war -- it's gone up a little bit in recent times, but it's less than it had been in the 1980s and '90s.

And so overall, I would say our grand strategy of trying to lead this western collective alliance system is working, and that strategy requires presence and engagement and intensive interaction. And let's remember, 3/4 of all of the world's military personnel are soldiers.

Most other countries have Army dominated militaries, because they're most concerned about internal or near abroad issues. We're the only ones that have this balance across all four services, because we are expeditionary. We're here in North America, largely secure, but we're committed to these allies abroad.

I think the strategy is basically working, and it requires the engagement and the joint exercises and the reassurance and the deterrence that ground force presence, as well as the entire joint force, can provide. So, that's my overall answer.

MR. IGNATIUS: General Petraeus?

MR. PETRAEUS: Well, you know, grand strategy, I think is composed of

grand ideas. You know, big ideas, as we're fond of saying. And I think in truth, that our big ideas have evolved very considerably in the post 9/11 period. And I have talked some about -- I mean, a lot of that has been involved with this pendulum that has swung back and forth in very understandable ways, but has, I think, come back somewhat to the center, if you will, in an acknowledgement that again, there is no substitute for U.S. leadership, and that if you're going to engage in leadership, you want to have persistent engagement. You'd like to be able to shape situations. You'd like to be able to avoid situations and prevent them from getting worse.

I think again, probably, the lesson that we will learn from Syria has something to do with that, I would think. And then, if you get into, you know, just sort of sizing operations and all the rest of that, you've got to look at the different -- obviously, the geographic combat and commands, noting that by the way, there should be a new combat and command out there; a new region, which is cyberspace.

And my hope and thought would be that cyber command is actually elevated to becoming a full geographic combat and command that has responsibility for cyberspace, and also, by the way, has the service responsibilities of actually recruiting, training, educating, equipping, operating and retaining, because that's going to become increasingly important, even while still providing those capabilities to the other geographic combat and commands, as well.

But as you look at, again, how would you size all of this, you know, it's good to go back again to the fall of last year. I think that was the period. Whenever it was that we had the 101st Airborne Division as the base piece for the Ebola virus response by the entire U.S. national government, and indeed, by other partners, and look across at where we were engaged, and recognize that that is very, very possible again in the future.



Even as we have drawn down in Afghanistan, even as we've dramatically drawn down, of course, in Iraq, but then gone back up, you keep seeing these requirements. And then, you have to remember that the one third, one third, one third rule -- one third is actually engaged, deployed, in some form of operation. One third is recovering from it, and one third is getting ready for it.

So, whatever your requirement is, you've got to multiply it by three, or you get into the kind of surge situation that we had for a period in the army that was very, very challenging for our soldiers and Marines and airmen and sailors, and their families, obviously. And we asked a tremendous amount of them.

So, you've got to think your way through that, as you are doing the sizing. And I'd be very careful, actually, not to resort to the normal method of force reductions, which is always, let's cut all the headquarters and let's cut the institutional part of the different services, because first of all, we've pursued that, I think quite aggressively. I was part -- out at Fort Leavenworth when we were going through that, at that point in time, just to get as much as we could into a rock in Afghanistan.

And I think you have to be very careful not to eat the seed corn of the future, and it's in the institutional Army Navy Air Force Marines that you're actually building the future -- the leader development, the unit, collective training and all the rest of that. And frankly, again, we keep coming back to the fact that for all the people that want to get rid of all the division headquarters, let's say, and just have corps and brigades, on the whole, we keep having a need for division headquarters, and oh, by the way, brigades and corps, as well.

So, I think we're actually at a structure right now that I hope we can maintain in the service I know best. But frankly, in the other services that I was privileged to employ, again, particularly in central command writ large, and knowing the capability

and the importance of our maritime capabilities with the new challenges in the East and South China Seas, the rebalanced Asia, which I strongly support, and the capabilities that we've got to preserve in the air and at sea, including our Marine -- our amphibious capabilities, as well as the ones that we've been talking about here today.

And my hope is, again, with this new budget deal that the restoration of at least part of what the administration intended to do, plus some OKO and other creative solutions will enable that force to remain in being.

MR. IGNATIUS: Let me turn now to the audience. Please identify yourselves as you ask questions. Keep the questions short. Yes, ma'am?

(Discussion off the record)

MR. IGNATIUS: Hold on, because we have --

SPEAKER: Is that a microphone?

MR. IGNATIUS: We have a microphone coming, yes.

MS. MCKELVEY: Thanks. My name is Tara McKelvey. I work for the BBC, and I'd like to ask about what you thought in 2012 about what the U.S. should be doing in Syria.

I guess you and Hillary Clinton were talking about what would make sense. And what you -- you know, looking back on that time, what you've learned. And would you revise your advice? And how do you see it being played out now today, like today with the 50 special operators? Thanks.

MR. PETRAEUS: Yeah, this is a little bit difficult question for me, because if indeed, I advised doing something in 2012, it would have been as a director of the CIA. That means it would have been covert action. And that means that I can't talk about it (Laughter).

Now, it is true that there have been memoirs published in which some of

this has gotten through the official -- the publications review board, or whatever the State Department and Defense Department have, and certainly, there have been reports about individuals advising aggressive programs to train and equip moderate Sunni forces. And I think, David, you'll affirm that there were some moderate Sunni forces at that time.

MR. IGNATIUS: Yeah.

(Laughter)

MR. IGNATIUS: There were. They were pretty ragged.

MR. PETRAEUS: Yeah.

MR. IGNATIUS: But they were there.

MR. PETRAEUS: And according, again, to testimony -- Secretary Gates supported it, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Dempsey supported it -- that was in public testimony and in Hillary Clinton's book, and subsequently, she has said that she supported it, as well.

I mean, let me just say, I just -- if nothing else, it's hard for me to imagine how the situation could be anything worse than it is right now. I guess I can. I guess it could completely come apart and you could have a flat-out free for all, but it's pretty close to that right now.

In fact, one of the challenges is, of course, that there has never been the emergence of coherence in leadership between the political would be elements of the Sunni opposition, and those on the ground, in part, by the way, because again, there's never been a sanctuary safe enough where the political authorities could go in and actually stay and survive for a considerable period of time.

And that challenge has been amplified, of course, by the fact that you now have very fierce in-fighting between ultra extremists, extremists, and opposition forces. That means that the opposition that we have been trying to support, and there is

a pretty good force on the ground that did not result from the military train and equip program, obviously, and it took some time to come into the being. But in the south and the north, there are forces that are fighting.

But they're fighting in several different directions, and that's very, very challenging. I mean, they're getting beaten up by Bashar al-Assad's Air Force. They're getting beaten by, in some cases, Jabhat al-Nusra, the Islamic State. And then, there's some internal wrangling. So, this is a tough, tough situation.

MR. O'HANLON: It is -- just a point of information, it does appear to be the case that the Russians, with all of their decisive military intervention, have not pushed that line back significantly in --

(Simultaneous discussion)

MR. PETRAEUS: They've actually been losing some ground, or the regime forces have been losing some ground. It's really an interesting --

(Simultaneous discussion)

SPEAKER: And in the meantime --

MR. PETRAEUS: It could be that ISIL actually cuts the logistics line into Aleppo, which will be a real challenge for the regime forces.

MR. IGNATIUS: General (Inaudible) --

MR. O'HANLON: By the way, can I point out --

MR. IGNATIUS: Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: You know, the Russian aircraft, most of them don't even have the legs to get all the way out to Rocca. I think it's certainly less than the fingers on two hands. I think it may be less than on one hand that can actually get all the way out to Rocca. And the Russians don't have refueling aircraft on the ground to refuel those that could do air refueling. So, that, just right off the bat, calls into question the

assertions by Vladimir Putin that he is fighting against the Islamic State.

SPEAKER: First of all, what I'd like to do is compliment David for that article he wrote yesterday for *The Atlantic*. It is absolutely the best --

SPEAKER: Yeah.

SPEAKER: -- article I've written (sic) on the rise vices in the Middle East.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Second, I'm conflicted between asking a question about Syria and a question about the topic at hand. On the issue of sanctuaries, which I fundamentally agree with you, David, I'm concerned about our experience with sanctuaries or political solutions; whether it's the statelets we've created because of Dayton and Tiffe, or the notion that these sanctuaries become mini statelets when they take on their own governance systems that we've seen in Southern Lebanon.

How do you square that stability operations with the stability mission, Michael, if the end-state of the stability mission is that we have created many statelets, many who are unable to survive on their own, or as we see in Southern Lebanon, where they actually become antithetical to what we're trying to achieve in a country like Lebanon.

MR. O'HANLON: I'll start that, and others may want to jump in. Maybe we have different visions, and there is no way to prove one right or wrong, of how these statelets would tend to form.

I'm imagining that if you got to a point in a year or two where you could negotiate some kind of a confederation, that you would have had some degree of merging of some of the smaller statelets. And you may have to try to encourage that through the kind of assistance programs you've provided, and so forth.

So, I'm imagining possibly a Kurdish zone, possibly a Druze zone, an Alawite sector, and then, the question becomes how many Sunni Muslim sectors, and how do you handle the central populated cities. And that's going to be the job for Secretary Kerry or his successor -- probably his successor.

So I'm thinking, anyway, we're all speaking hypothetically. I'm imagining six or eight sectors. So, they are like states. They are not tiny. They are not big. But that's the kind of entity that I'm hoping we could persuade Syrian actors to gradually form. As David has pointed out, and you know, it's a ragged, motley crew right now, and you've got a lot more than six or eight main groups fighting.

But I think that over time, working with American and other trainers on the ground, facilitated, perhaps, by some other people, as well, you could try to create some coalescing. And that would be the kind of basis for a negotiated settlement.

MR. PETRAEUS: Let me just take tag the tag with my buddy. Look, Mark, first of all, you know Dayton certainly has been less than perfect. And in fact, I spent a year on the ground there as a brigadier/general. I've actually been back in my business role since then.

KKR has done a \$1.5 billion telecommunications deal in the Balkans, which is the largest private equity investment in their history -- not a long history, but it's substantial. And it has been working, but we've been you know, back in there on a number of different occasions, and so, I'm quite familiar with the current situation.

And in fact, I just met with the president of Bosnia when he was in New York for the UNGA. And it is, again, far from perfect. There are far too many layers of if you will, headquarters (Laughs) of the different -- of entities and communities and municipalities, and then, the federal structure and so forth.

But you know, compared to Syria, nobody is leaving that country in huge

numbers. There is hope on some days. There are pockets of real goodness and development. And I think at the very least, it will evolve in a way that is certainly not the kind of destructive civil war in which it was engaged for you know, nearly five years, until we entered with a coalition, and then, eventually went in on the ground in the wake of the Dayton Accords.

If I could, on Syria, I think Syria may well be Humpty Dumpty that can't be put back together again, sadly, I guess, because I think, you know, in a perfect world, we'd love to see a multi ethnic, multi sectarian, inclusive government evolve. But I think that that becomes more and more remote, the longer the fighting goes on.

MR. O'HANLON: Perhaps what Mike has laid out is what results, and it could be that it just ends up -- you know, you harden into these different areas -- an autonomous Kurdish zone, an Alawite stand, different Sunni stands, and so on.

When it comes to Iraq, on the other hand, although I have no intellectual objection to the idea of a Shia stand, Sunni stand and Kurdish stand, the latter, of course, is already quite autonomous, but still, very much needs to stay plugged in to Baghdad, especially with the reduction of the price of oil by 55 percent.

I can't get there from here. And those that blithely say let it break up, I think owe us a description, an explanation of how, indeed, that would take place without becoming, again, like Syria. And also, by the way, we need an explanation of how the Sunni-Arab areas of Iraq would actually generate any revenue whatsoever, given that the coke oil (sic) fields that were the remaining, really, Sunni Arab controlled oil fields -- and Ambassador, great to see you, sir.

Given that they have all been now -- they're all controlled either by the Kurdish regional government elements, or by obviously, the Iraqi government in the case of Basra and Mason provinces. And I think that is highly problematic. So, I think at the

end of the day, you probably have some new kind of bargain between Baghdad and the Sunni Arab provinces, noting that one of the challenges right now is -- as is inevitably the case when a conflict goes on, that there are fractures, and you don't have, right now, where the Muslowis can agree with the Dercrides who can't agree with the Yanbaris.

And so, it just gets tougher and tougher and tougher. It's an argument, of course, for the reason to accelerate, if we can, the clearance of the Islamic State from Ramadi, from Fallujah, from ultimately, Mosul, but obviously, you can't rush to failure with this, and there's a limiting factor on what it is that we can do, even as we do understand better and better and better what we're seeing from the air, and as we are beefing up the capability, and perhaps, looking at some of the restrictions on our operations, as well.

MR. IGNATIUS: So, I want to get as many questions as possible. Let me turn to this gentleman, and then, the gentleman here.

SPEAKER: Thank you, sir.

MR. DUCKWORTH: Good afternoon, gentlemen. Thank you all for taking the time to come here today. My name is Ross Duckworth. I'm a consultant to the defense industry in Europe. I'm retired from the United States Marine Corps. I previously served in the Army, so I've seen the other side of the tracks, sir.

MR. IGNATIUS: We won't ask you which one you preferred, or (Laughter) -- and in which one you re-enlisted.

MR. DUCKWORTH: This is a short question with a short answer. You could say yes or no, and I have to set it up. First of all, I dislike the term "boots on the ground." Let's call it what it is, which is dismounted infantry, maybe mechanized, maybe cavalry armor, but it's people.

In the last month or so, I've been fortunate to hear a variety of people talk about the future of land warfare, from General David Perkins, CG of TRADOC, who I



greatly admire --

SPEAKER: Yep.

MR. DUCKWORTH: -- to most recently, Wednesday night, General John Kelly, CG of SOUTHCOM.

SPEAKER: Yep.

MR. DUCKWORTH: And in between, a lot of assistant service secretaries and assistant secretaries of defense, and also, foreign military leaders. And there seems to be a difference of opinion.

General Perkins says that the only way to secure and occupy ground is with ground forces. But it's now suggested by others that that is no longer necessary, even though air support and artillery never do the job 100 percent, we now have capability with unmanned autonomous vehicles, and EW electronic warfare to do something new, which is called denial. And it's not necessary to put people on the ground. At the same time, it's been suggested that all wars are political, domestically. We either enter them or exit them because of politics, and that seems to be tied to the election cycle. The American people are all --

MR. IGNATIUS: I'm going to ask you, because there are many other questions --

MR. DUCKWORTH: I meant --

MR. IGNATIUS: So let's -- yes.

MR. DUCKWORTH: Okay.

MR. IGNATIUS: Please, the question.

MR. DUCKWORTH: The American people are all for war, until people start getting killed. But if it's unmanned and a \$20 million vehicle is lost, that's okay. So, my question is this: If we go to the future, if we stay unmanned, we're going to increase

warfare. If we continue to have people there, we're going to decrease warfare. Where do you see it going? Thank you.

SPEAKER: Good question.

MR. PETRAEUS: Let me actually start that one. I mean, look, there's no question that ground forces, people, whatever you want to term it are required. The question is, actually, how many of our ground forces, how many Iraqi security forces, how many Afghan partners, how many Syrian partners? And that's really the question.

And there has often been a limiting factor, which is again, you know, we used to have that saying, you go to war with the Army that you have. You also go to war with the partners that you have. And they're not always necessarily sent from Central Casting, made to order to at least the specifications that you would like.

I think there were a few people (Laughter) in uniform, at least during my time, that had more experience dealing with a number of different host nation partners, and sometimes, those experiences were wonderful and heartening, and at other times, they were not. But at the end of the day, again, you're going to have to have a mix of some of our forces -- now they don't have to be in the front lines, necessarily, depending on the quality of those partners that you have, but you are going to have to have forces on the ground.

And I am very hard pressed to think of any occasion that has actually proven to be sustainable, where we or our partners didn't go in on the ground. I mean, there is a situation in Western Pakistan where Al-Qaeda senior leadership has sustained enormous losses over the past several years, and has very considerably been disrupted.

But at the end of the day, the weakness of a denial or disruption strategy is that you have to keep on denying and disrupting, because no one has ever actually taken over the ground. No one has ever cleared it, held it, and again, provided a security

force that could prevent individuals from having a sanctuary on that ground.

By the way, it reminds us that again, there is a reason we went to Afghanistan, and I think there's a reason why we are staying and should stay. And that is to make sure that Afghanistan is never again a sanctuary for Al-Qaeda or other transnational extremists, as it was when the 9/11 attacks were planned on Afghan soil, and the initial turning of the attackers was conducted there.

And for all of the challenges, frustrations, shortcomings, et cetera, that is still the case. So, we have actually been accomplishing that mission. What we have got to do, of course, is ensure that over time, and with some continued U.S. involvement to be sure, and I applaud the decision of the president to keep the current force on the ground, that again, we are able to help the Afghans be able to secure themselves and govern themselves through an Afghan good enough fashion, so that that does not become a sanctuary once again.

And the presence of some Islamic State elements there is a bit of a cautionary tale for us, I think.

MR. IGNATIUS: Let me ask the microphone runner to come to these two gentlemen. Let's pool your two questions. And then, let's come back to our panel, and we'll try to get one more round. Yes, these two gentlemen here.

MR. HASSINO: Omar Hassino, the Syrian American Council. My question is to General Petraeus. You mentioned sanctuaries in North and Southern Syria just now in the panel.

And my question is, how would we enforce such sanctuaries with the Russians aggression in Syria? You know, just yesterday, the Russians bombed Southern Syria, including CIA backed rebels in the south, supported by United States. And in the north, just yesterday, the Russians bombed the hospital by the Syrian

American Medical Society.

And so, my question is, how would you enforce such a zone, especially with Russian violations of such a zone? Would we shoot down Russian planes? What would we do with the Russian infringements? Thank you so much.

MR. IGNATIUS: The question is, if you could just hand the microphone to the gentleman next to you.

MR. ALTMAN: Okay, I have a -- I'm Fred Altman, and I have a -- I think probably, a naïve question. It seems when you go in with hostilities, you disrupt what's there. And so, you really -- if you wanted to work and not revert to, or it be worse than it was before, you have to have -- you have to stay there long enough.

And we certainly did that greatly after Germany and after Japan, but right now --

SPEAKER: And Korea.

MR. ALTMAN: -- the sentiment is let's get out as soon as hostilities end. And what's your opinion about that?

MR. IGNATIUS: Two good questions. Should we start with General Petraeus, and then Michael?

MR. PETRAEUS: Look, you know, as I said earlier, I think there are two elements against which we'd have to protect a sanctuary. First is actually Bashar's Air Force and the barrel bombs. I think that's pretty straightforward. You say if the barrel bombs continue to fall on the sanctuary, we will ground your Air Force. You just basically take out all the air fields.

Those are static positions. They're perfect for the kinds of capabilities -- you don't even have to put aircraft any further into their aerospace than we already are. The Russian, as I said earlier, is a huge complicating factor, and I think here is where you're

going to have to have some very quiet discussions with them, probably in the margins of the diplomatic talks that are going on.

It could get to a point, though, where you actually say if you come after our guys, we will go after your guys. And their guys are Bashar's regime forces, and so, you would have to start lofting into that area against them. I understand the escalatory nature of that, but I also understand what Russia is doing right now, not just, by the way, to actual forces.

As I mentioned earlier, it is very widely recognized that they have been killing far more civilians than they have been killing actual forces, fighting forces on the ground. And they have certainly not devoted even a majority of their strikes to the Islamic State. And in fact, as I said, they can't even reach the Islamic State capital, if you will, Obraka, except with a small number of their aircraft, because of the range that they have.

MR. IGNATIUS: Look, I think what's interesting is that we have been engaged in the longest war of our history, and that is Afghanistan, and now you could argue that the presence in Korea is obviously six decades, plus. The+++ presence in Europe is even longer.

We haven't been taking casualties in those places. This has not been you know, anything like a wartime -- like the combat conditions in Afghanistan. But frankly, we have hung in there with Afghanistan, and I think there's a recognition again, that we went there for a reason, that we have stayed for a reason, that it represents an important national interest.

Clearly, the sooner would could generate to a very, very sustainable and lower cost operation in terms of loss of life and in terms of expenditure of funds, I think that has improved the sustainability of it. But actually, I think we've shown that we can conduct very long engagements a la Afghanistan, and we'll see how that goes in Iraq, as

well, and Syria now. Michael?

MR. O'HANLON: I agree with that, so let's go to the last round.

MR. IGNATIUS: So, let's do have a last round. And I'm going to go to this gentleman here, and if there's somebody all the way in the back, I see a striped sweater -- yes, please.

The gentleman here, and then the young woman in the -- yes. Those last two?

SPEAKER: Right here.

MR. IGNATIUS: That was not what your monitor register said, but that's fine. Sorry, sir. You've been overruled.

SPEAKER: Gentlemen, thank you very much for a great presentation. I really appreciate it. I'm Elliott Hurwitz. I'm a former state department employee and a former intelligence committee and World Bank contractor.

Would any of you like to comment on the AC130 attack on the Doctors Without Border Hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan?

MR. IGNATIUS: And let's go to the young woman, yes, there, and sir, we'll also get to your question.

MS. BERNSTEIN: Leandra Bernstein with Sputnik International News. A question for General Petraeus.

You were talking about building the capacity -- even more of the moderate Syrians. Would you support the United States giving more heavy military equipment to them, for example anti aircraft -- should launch anti-aircraft capabilities?

MR. IGNATIUS: And then, we'll go to the gentleman I recognized earlier. Yes, sir?

SPEAKER: I just want to pull in the thread. General Petraeus, you

mentioned the tank warfare that we did in 1990, '91. I want to put out, you know, that was 25 years ago, and we did it with the same major weapons systems that the Army had then, has today. There's no successor to those systems.

MR. PETRAEUS: They've been vastly upgraded. You can't remotely compare

SPEAKER: Well, they're vastly upgraded, but --

MR. PETRAEUS: -- the M1 tanks of that day to the M1 tank of today.

SPEAKER: But the Army dealing with the kind of operations we've been talking about, 80 percent of their budget is spent on O&M and personnel, and there's not another major weapons system upgrade in the next five years for the Army -- a new major weapons system.

I'm interested in the trade-off about these stability operations, peacekeeping operation versus the kind of combined arms, heavy tank warfare capability. Are we at risk of losing that?

MR. PETRAEUS: I'll take the last one. I think absolutely not. I think the upgrades that we have made to our different systems over the years, the advent of the enormous investment in the intelligence surveillance reconnaissance, by the way, not just in the Air Force, but also, the Army has far more of those, I'm pretty sure. Now, they're much less capable, but again, very, very considerable.

The investment we've made in distributed command to control, situational awareness, the intelligence systems -- all of this is really quite extraordinary. And again, the M1 tank of Desert Storm is dramatically less in capability (Laughter) than the M1 tank that we had in Iraq, which is less than the capability we have now.

We have continued to make product improvements. I mean, it's become the B52, if you will, of the U.S. Army. People say, well, the B52 is older than the pilots

who are flying it. Very true. But the B52 that's flying today is just vastly -- you know, they've literally taken it apart and putting it back together again on several occasions.

Stripped it down to the metal, as they say, and completely digitized it and everything else over the years. And that's really what we've done with the M1 tank fleet. And you know, really at the end of the day, the real test is, so who could actually even muster a force that would want to take on the U.S. Army and its ground combat capabilities. And the answer is, it's pretty hard to find somebody who might raise his hand and do that.

With respect to the arming of the Syrian forces, I think first of all, it's actually publicly known that we have been arming them with considerably additional systems, as have some of our partners out in the Gulf. I was just out in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh. You know, those tow weapons system are coming from somewhere. They've been very, very effective against the Russian tanks that have been provided to the Syrians, and it has been a real game changer on the ground.

There is always a big question about shoulder launched anti aircraft missiles. Because of the fear that they could take down a commercial airliner somewhere out in the region, we saw obviously a tragic mistake in Eastern Ukraine where a system, Dubuque, I think it was, operated we believe, by either separatists or Russians took down the aircraft with a lot of Australians on it, as you may recall.

I was in Australia recently, and they're very, very keenly engaged in that investigation. And then, actually coming to investigations, first of all, I thought it was very forthright of General Campbell, very early on, to say, by the way, after you wrote an op-ed on it, not that that spurred it, because I happen to know he was already intending to do so, but he very quickly said, there has been a mistake.

I mean, clearly, if you are doing multiple gun runs on a hospital facility,



you've got to ask why the multiple. There is some allowance in the law of land warfare. In some scenario, you can construct why you could actually hit a protected target. It is not something one would do lightly, and clearly, there was a failure to recognize what this was and the degree to which the individuals were pinned down.

But that's what General Campbell has already acknowledged. And again, I thought that was very, very forthright, that he did not wait and say, well, there's an investigation. We need to see what this is, when he and everyone else could see that there had been a mistake made.

In fact, there is a very fine officer who is going to investigate this. General Bill Hickman was the operations officer of the great 101st Airborne Division in the first year, in Mosul. He was the operations officer of the multinational security transition command in Iraq in a subsequent tour.

He was a brigade commander on the ground during the surge with the 101st Airborne Division, and he happened to be the executive officer for the U.S. central command commander and commander in Afghanistan, subsequent to that. He is somebody in whom we all have enormous confidence, and I know that he will perform a very, very thorough and very objective investigation of this particular incident.

Michael, last word.

MR. O'HANLON: What I'm going to do is use the first question about this topic of the hospital tragedy, not to speak further to that, but to raise one more big idea that I hope is useful in the book. And it's the notion of the Army responding to complex tragedies or disasters, which in some cases will have conflict as one of the contributors. In other cases, may be out of the blue.

Let me just make two very brief points. In doing the book, my research assistants, and let me thank Ian and Brendan and a big team at Brookings, Valentina and

Yelba and Cary and Gayle and a number of others who helped with the project along the way.

We looked at data and disasters of the last 20 years -- the various earthquakes in South Asia, the typhoon in the Philippine, the Fukushima disaster in Japan, the Haiti earthquake. These were all terrible. Our hearts went out. Our military and our civilian NGOs went out to help. And an interesting thing is that a lot of people of course, were hurt. A lot lost their lives. But these typically affected two to four million people.

It's sort of uncanny how the afflicted area, the acute area of most intense devastation was typically in that zone of two to four million people. It's very easy to imagine something 10 times worse in a world of mega cities. It's very easy to imagine a complex humanitarian disaster in a place like Karachi, and we don't want to go there if we can avoid it, but we did send typically 15 to 25,000 people to these smaller disasters. Now, multiply that by ten.

I'm not saying we're going to do most of it ourselves. I'm not saying it extrapolates automatically. But one thing about the world today is there are more people than ever, and armies are partly about addressing the various security and other needs of people.

So, in a world of more population, to have the world's population pushing towards 10 billion while the U.S. Army is becoming in some people's minds, sort of a boutique force that begins to approach the Marine Corps in size, according to some recommendations, I think is incongruous.

And the other thing I'll mention in concluding is that I constructed a scenario. This may have been just sort of too cookie cutter, but I just threw Ebola on top of Boko Haram, on top of civil conflict in Nigeria, three things all of which had happened

or were happening in Africa -- in West Africa. I imagine them happening all in the same place.

The Ebola tragedy was terrible, but it happened luckily in a place where the governments were relatively forthright in trying to help us, and where they were at peace. And so, the NGO community could dominate the response and the military could play a facilitating role, which it did very well.

But it's easy to imagine something like an Ebola outbreak in a place where the security conditions are such that you need to cordon off the area and provide protection for any health workers there, almost on a person by person basis. So, that's another category or scenario where I would say the United States military, also because of its logistics capacity to deploy and to operate long ways away from any home base is in an unparalleled spot.

So, this is one more reason why I want to see a strong U.S. Army -- not a big build up but something at least akin to what we have today.

MR. IGNATIUS: And that shows why it has been such a joy, over many decades, actually, but especially in the last few years, to run with Mike (Laughter) and to discuss (Laughter) the future of land warfare. Thank you, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: So that's a good -- for those of us who couldn't hope to keep up with either of you, up or downhill, thank you very much. (Applause)

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