

Office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps

Address to the Atlantic Council of the United States

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GENERAL JAMES AMOS: I thought you were going to talk specifically about all of the things that are going on in the world and really set me up for some hard questions here a little bit later on. Looking around the room, I'm a little bit nervous. I see Carl Smith in the background. No dirty stories, Carl. Listen, Arnie, thank you for the great introduction. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to be here. I take every opportunity I can get to tell the Marine Corps story and talk about Marines. When I go to visit them, the Sergeant Major and I go, which is often, we always promise while we're standing out at the combat outpost and the forward operating bases and you're talking to the young men and women that are out there that haven't showered or -- or bathed in -- in 30 days that we'll tell their story. We'll tell their story when we come back, and we do it as often as we can.

Knowing that there's no shortage of news out there, I'm going to keep my opening comments here short, so I can get right to your questions. This is certainly an important time for the military, but even more importantly for our nation. Students of history and those who can remember back some 50 years ago when the Atlantic Council was first formed, would likely say that that period helped shape and define the next 50 years for our nation. Those of us that grew up in the 60s and 70s and 80s and 90s will certainly attest to that. Back in the early 60s, long before the internet, the headlines from our nation's newspapers spoke of things like the Soviet Union flexing its muscles trying to fill a void left by Nazi extremism. It talked about the Cold War and the Soviets threatening nuclear destruction. It spoke often of the Bay of Pigs confrontation and the near nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union. President Eisenhower warned America of the increasing power of the military industrial complex, and then even John Kennedy, when he was elected and he was taking office, it talked about him subsequently sending 18,000 military advisors to Vietnam.

It's destructive to remember that in 1961, when the Atlantic Council was formed, the Marine Corps was 185,000 strong. We're not heading to 182,000 as a result of the Budget Control Act of last fall, and yet the world certainly doesn't seem to be getting any nicer. In '61, the Marine Corps was assisting famine relief efforts in the Congo and earthquake disaster victims in Turkey. Marines from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina conducted rescue operations in Texas and Louisiana following the devastation of Hurricane Carla. Elements of the 2d Marine Division deployed to Guantanamo Bay to reinforce the base as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis, all at a time when our Marines were getting their fair share of introductions to Southeast Asia and a country called Vietnam. A defining point in our history for sure. Similarly this past week, Marines rapidly responded to the violent protests at several US Embassies in the Middle East. FAST teams, Fleet Antiterrorism Security Teams, were on the scene in matters of hours de-escalating the situation while providing protection of American personnel and their property overseas. This happened in Tripoli and it happened again in Yemen. These events occurred while others who wear the cloth of our nation's Marine Corps continue to fight counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and train with our allies around the world.

As we gather in this wonderful establishment for tonight's Atlantic Council event, there are in excess of 30,000 Marines forward deployed around the world, poised, ready to respond to any crisis. For 237 years, we have fought our nation's battles both large and small. We have defeated pirates. We've hunted insurgents. We fought regulars and irregulars, always running to the sound of chaos, always ready to answer America's 911 call. This is our *raison d'être*. The Marine Corps serves our nation as its premiere crisis response force. Our nation has always

wanted a Marine Corps; it's always been that way. In 1952, in the wake of our nation's difficult first year of the Korean War, Congress made its intent known by defining the Marine Corps as:

“A ready force, highly mobile, always at a high state of readiness... most ready when the nation is least ready... to provide a balanced force in readiness for a naval campaign and, at the same time, a ground and air striking force ready to suppress or contain international disturbances..”

Today, we maintain our forces in a high state of readiness so when the President needs options to answer a crisis anywhere in the world, we are able to provide a force that can respond to today's crisis today, not tomorrow, not next week, but today. Because the events in the world are not always clear or easily discernible, our forward deployed forces provide our national leaders with options and time. In short, we create decision space until the required course of action can be determined. We did this in Japan after last year's devastating earthquake and 600-mile-per-hour tsunami. Marines moved immediately from Okinawa to northern Japan flying in our 44-year-old CH-46 helicopters. Those aircrew flew for 45 days in and out of the radioactive plume of the damaged nuclear reactor while rescuing and providing relief to the stricken Japanese people. We did the same 400 miles deep in northern Pakistan two years ago after their epic floods and we sailed on a moment's notice to the coast of Libya last year to enforce the no-fly zone and to rescue a downed American pilot, using one of our MV-22 Ospreys.

In 2010, after seven tough years, we left the Anbar Province in Iraq under a victory pennant, and as you know, we're heavily engaged today in Afghanistan's Helmand Province. Teamed with the Navy, we come from the sea; it's our maneuver space. Having our Marines embarked aboard amphibious ships and available around the world accomplishes many things for our nation. The mere presence of an amphibious warship offshore loaded with Marines or even the knowledge that they're potentially only a few days away has often enough to help curb the actions of many actors around the world. While each of our sister services operate predominately in a single domain, the Army on land, the Navy on sea and the Air Force in the air and space, the Marine Corps' role in the nation's defense is different. We don't operate in a single domain; rather we operate in a lane, a lane that opens up in the early stages of conflict and crisis that most likely transcends all three of the domains that I just spoke of. In that temporary lane, we bring a combined arms force that can respond as quickly as required. This force may be needed to open the door for the larger joint force or to simply enable follow-on capabilities across the elements of our national power.

Lastly, since we are all concerned about the fiscal challenges facing our nation that Arnie talked about, I thought you might be interested in knowing what America gets for its low sticker price it pays for its Corps. For only 8% of the total Defense budget, for \$23.9 billion out of \$525.4-billion budget for the Department of Defense, the Marine Corps provides 15% of all active duty brigades, 11% of all fighter-attack aircraft and 18% of all attack helicopters and seven scalable and flexible Marine Expeditionary Units which deploy forward around the world on 22 amphibious ships. When a nation pays the sticker price for its Marines, it buys a triple-purpose force. One that has the ability to operate in a stabilizing role, one that can immediately respond to a crisis or when necessary, rapidly scale up to meet the requirements of major theater war. For fewer than 10% of the Defense budget, expeditionary naval forces provide an efficient and effective hedge against the nation's most likely and most dangerous security threat.

In closing, let me once again thank General Punaro -- and allegedly, General Jones is in route from Baltimore, probably stuck in the rain -- for inviting me speak tonight. I enjoy every opportunity to tell the Marine Corps' story, and I'm proud as hell of the young men and women that wear my cloth. Lastly, as a member of the Joint Chiefs, whose sole mission in life is the defense of our great nation, I want to thank each of you here that promote -- at the Atlantic Council, that promote international security around the world. Thank you and I look forward to your questions. (Applause)

BARRY PAVEL: Well, thank you, General Amos, for your very insightful thoughts and for allowing so much time for questions and answers on all the important issues of the day. I'm Barry Pavel. I run the International Security Program here. On Friday, we'll officially be renamed and launched at our International Awards Dinner in New York as the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, which features intensified and much broader programming on international security issues that still retains transatlantic issues at its core, but looking at all regions and a number of other functions including long-range trends and cyberspace statecraft. I also wanted to join in thanking Ambassador Liljegren and Saab, North America for their generous support of the Commander series. This has been a very useful series, and I'm sure tonight will continue to generate some important insights on these issues.

General, there's a lot of headlines, there's a strategic review coming up next year, the Quadrennial Defense Review, there's a potential fiscal cleft towards the end of the year related to sequestration and other -- other issues. I wanted to sort of return to the basics, and that is the title of your talk here was The Role of the Marine Corps in US Defense Strategy. That defense strategy featured a strong emphasis on sort of returning to Asia after ten or so years of sustained warfare and CENTCOM. Can you talk a little bit about sort of the Marines role in that, the Marines prominence, what we've already seen I think in terms of announcements featured the Marine Corps presence in Darwin, Australia, sort of -- if you could sort of put bounds around that and give us a sense of what might be coming next.

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Yeah, I'll be happy to, Barry. You know, as we sit here tonight, we have -- we have about 20,000 Marines forward deployed west of the International Date Line right now, and they're in -- some of them are in Okinawa, some are down in Darwin, Australia, some are aboard ships. We've got probably 3,500 to 4,000 give or take up in Iwakuni, Japan, so we never left the Pacific. The Pacific is actually, it's kind of our home. We've been there for a long time. We've got a lot of experience on every island, all the way from New Zealand, fighting our way all the way up to the Solomons. I was just on Guadalcanal on August the 7th to celebrate the anniversary of the landing at Guadalcanal. So we've got -- I mean this is an area that we're very familiar with, so as we -- as the President has re-oriented the strategy towards the Pacific -- and I think it's the right thing to do. All the Service Chiefs were involved in the development of that strategy.

We're kind of returning back to an area that probably we understand. We bring a lot to that part of the world. With our Navy partners on board Navy ships, quite honestly, we can partner with any nation along the littorals that wants to deal with us. We don't need a base; we don't need a base of operations. We can actually just operate either off the ship or we could come ashore with a very little footprint, so we intend to capitalize on that as we shift our forces coming out of Afghanistan, and we'll end up with about 22,000 Marines west of the International Date Line. Let me make a comment on the Pacific for just a second and the importance of that.

I mean it's always been important to our nation. You know, we are a Pacific nation. The President says that. The Secretary of Defense Panetta just said that this week in his visit out in the Asian-Pacific area. We are a Pacific nation. 61% of the world's population lives in the Asian-Pacific area. 49% of the oil around the world comes through the Straits of Malacca. 15 of the 28 of the world's megacities are in the Asian-Pacific area. I think it's 7 of 15 of our largest trading partners are in the Asia -- for us, the United States of America, are in the Asian-Pacific area.

We've got five major treaties with countries that start all the way from Japan over to South Korea, where Skip was, and continue on down all the way to the Philippines, continue on down to Australia, so there's a great interest in commerce, freedom of navigation. And it's just good for the United States to get back in the Pacific, and we're going to be a part of that, and I'm excited about it.

BARRY PAVEL: Okay. Let me ask you a couple of follow-up questions, and then I'll open it up to the audience for questions as well. You mentioned megacities and there's some work going on here at the Atlantic Council on long-range trends out to 2030 that shows that the urbanization trends that we've seen to date are going to accelerate. I think we're talking about 60% of the world's population in cities by 2030, 70% by 2040 or so as I recall, and so it seems like the Marines are particularly useful in urban warfare settings. What I'm seeing in these trends is the future of the world is going to be in cities for good, for ill, for other, and so how are you sort of paying attention to the long-range trends like that and getting the Marines ready for urban warfare in the future while still paying attention to some of the near-term training priorities that I'm sure your focused on?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Well, you know, if you take a look at the population growth and we talk about 15 of the 28 megacities in the Asian-Pacific Area, the truth is that over 75% of the world's largest cities are within about 100 kilometers, 62 miles of the coastline. So if you map that around the world, all around Europe and came around Asia, to include our country, to include Europe, you'd see that the bulk of the population is centered along what we call the littorals. So that makes Naval forces -- and I'm a little bit prejudiced here and you've asked a Marine to come talk to you, so you got to put up with a little of that, but I'm a little bit prejudiced because I think that we have an opportunity then, as Naval forces, to actually be able to interdict and be able to -- to deal in that kind of environment where the population is predominately.

Back to the issue of urban warfare, you know, we had kind of gotten away from it, and boy, I'll tell you what, we jumped in it with both feet in Iraq, and it began in Baghdad, and it's never left. So we've been heavily involved in urban warfare both in some cases, small villages, small things, small places that we would in America would just call a bump in the road but yet there's homes, there's markets, there's people, there's density, there's human terrain and we, along with our Army partners, have been heavily involved in urban warfare. So I think we're going to continue that. I think we're going to continue to be involved in engagement with our allies, the partners that are important to the United States of America and predominately, I'll be honest with you a lot of those are along the littorals where the population is growing.

BARRY PAVEL: Thanks. And then my last question and then I'll turn it to the audience. So still sticking with Asia, General Scowcroft has articulated in some of our public events, his concern that sort of the signaling we're doing in terms of our defense emphasis on Asia, which is

necessary to make sure we have the capabilities to deal with future contingencies, he's been saying that the signaling can be counterproductive, that it stimulates the Chinese establishment to keep producing countervailing capabilities. So how do we avoid -- sort of going to the strategic level, how do we avoid a dynamic that brings about a conflict or a crisis that we'd rather not have, but still make sure that we're prepared for future contingencies in Asia?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Yeah, Barry, that's a great question. I think Secretary Panetta actually touched on that. It was either yesterday or it may have been even this morning. When he was talking and the issue of China came up and, you know, it's -- people want to kind of imply that because we're pivoting the Pacific or shifting to the Pacific, that that portends a confrontation with China. Actually, it's just the opposite. What I think Secretary Panetta said is that the very best thing we can have is -- and I'm calling it relationship building, but dialog, interaction and he specifically talked military-to-military, which is actually, in many cases, easier because we may wear a different uniform and we come from culture differences, but when we're within our own services, there's a similarity there. So Secretary Panetta said the very best thing we could do to preclude either misinterpretations, miscalculations is to have dialog, have military-to-military dialog and to develop that relationship.

And I couldn't agree more. I think, you know, it's in the very best interest of both our countries to have good relationships for trade. You know, I mentioned that 7 of 15 of our largest trading partners are in the Asian-Pacific area. I mean I just built a log cabin in the mountains of Boone, North Carolina and so I wanted to outfit it with furniture, so I went down to -- and I won't say the name of the company -- a famous furniture manufacturer in North Carolina, and you can just imagine the little guys down there with lathes and bib overalls on. So I bought all this furniture and when they delivered it to my log cabin, it had the name of this major furniture -- and as I opened the door, every single one of them, every piece of furniture was made in China. We have great commercial interest in having a good relationship with China, and I'll tell you what I think our President and I think Secretary Panetta are right on the money. Let's build the relationships, help build the trust and confidence and let's become as transparent as we possibly can.

BARRY PAVEL: Thanks, General. And now I'd like to open it up to the floor for questions. If anyone has any, please, signal to me that you'd like to ask a question. I was remiss in not recognizing Ellen Tauscher, the Vice Chairman of the Brent Scowcroft Center, who is here in attendance with us today. (Applause) So, any questions for the Commandant? Yes, in the middle there.

PATRICIA PUTMAN: Good evening, sir. My name is Patricia Putman. I'm a Booz Allen employee who works in support of the Marine Corps at Headquarters Marine Corps in support of the International Affairs branch, and my portfolio and my colleagues work in support of Marine Corps security cooperation. And you spoke to the readiness and the operability that the Marine Corps has and the relationships that we have in the Pacific, and can you speak to the effects that sequestration is going to have with building those relationships and enhancing those relationships through security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: I think -- you know, my good friend, Arnold Punaro, said there was no either adjective or superlative that could describe it. I'll be honest with you if sequestration happens, all of our engagement will be on the table. In other words, we're going to

have to come back and look at everything. We're going to have to look at the strategy that we spent all last fall developing and the President announced in February. That is all going to have to be back on the table, so the ability to be able to security force assistance engagement the -- the things like what we call IMET, International Military Education and Training, all that is going to be laid out and we're going to end up having to make business decisions as a nation and then as the Department of Defense and then as a service as to what we can afford. You know, it's the same way with all the Service Chiefs.

You know, when you take all the things aside, whether it be an exchange or a commissary or DoD schools and all that stuff -- and I don't want to see all this on the front page of the Washington Post tomorrow, okay. But you take all that aside, the Marine Corps exists to do the nation's bidding and to be that crisis response force, and we have all the other things that we're a part of to help us do that with our families and all that, and they're all very, very important. But, as I look at this thing, when sequestration, if it happens, when the dust finally settles, and it will finally be a while before it finally settles and you realize just how much money you have, then what I've told everybody is okay, at that point then, I'm going back to the fundamental roles and missions of the United States Marine Corps because I have to provide that to the American people. I've got to provide that to Congress, and I've got to provide that to the President of the United States.

And I'll go back and I'll do everything I can. I'll start divesting myself of things so that I can provide the force that, no kidding, is the most ready when the nation's the least. I mean I really believe that and that's people, things and training. I mean I've got to get it up. It's got to be balanced, and I'm going to end up having to do that, but we're a long ways away from that and getting to that point will be, I think with sequestration, will be very painful. You know what I worry about with sequestration? We in Washington understand, we actually even know how to spell the word. You go out across America and they don't know, and it's not because -- it's just -- they don't understand it. People say do you want to balance the budget, and do you want to pay your bill? And we all go yes, then sequestration is the way to do it. They have no idea what it will do to the defense of our country, the posture of our country, the fact that we're a global power and our ability to be able to influence for good, all those things I think will be in jeopardy.

BARRY PAVEL: Yes, in the front row.

FRED GRIFFIN: Yes, Fred Griffin. First of all, General Amos, thank you for your distinguished service. You and Bonnie are doing a great job running our Marine Corps, and I'd like to compliment you, especially the young Marines who had the burial detail at ceremony the other day at Andrews. They were --

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Thank you.

FRED GRIFFIN: -- did a terrific job and were a great -- did a great service for our country, but also, who were your Marines, getting them to do that, so that was world class. You mentioned Darwin, do you envision that the Marines based in Darwin would eventually become your 8th MEU and do you see -- kind of because we're going back to our mobility in expeditionary force as opposed to being land-based, do you see more MEUs on the horizon that Congress will authorize you to put in line more MEUs?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Let me answer your last question, Fred, first. There's not a plan for more MEUs for -- a Marine Expeditionary Unit for everybody that's out here and that's -- that's about 2,500 Marines and it's got an infantry battalion that is reinforced. It's got an aviation squadron that's reinforced, and it's got a logistics -- not quite a battalion, but pretty good logistics capability and they float around the world on three amphibious ships, and we've got three of them afloat right -- three MEUs out there, around the world right now; one in the Central Command, one in the far Pacific, and then we've got actually one sailing I think on Monday, heading out. In fact, I think it headed out this past Monday.

So typically, we've got them out around the world, and they're very handy. It was a MEU that pulled off the coast of Libya and actually did, for the first three or four days of the no-fly zone, they actually controlled the air, the airplanes that were flying off the USS *Kearsarge* were enforcing the no-fly zone, picked up the Air Force pilot, so they do an awful lot for our Nation. There's no talk right now, Fred, we've got seven of them, of increasing to eight or to nine.

But to Australia, we were down there about a month and a half ago, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and I were there, and we were there to get a sense for where we're headed as two nations and two militaries, and then, also, to see the Marines at Darwin. So we started at Canberra, and it was terrific and very, very warmly received. But, there's the point I'd like to make. As I sat with their head of policy in the MoD, he said General Amos, will you turn around and look at the map on the wall. I turned around and there was a map and Australia was right in the center of it, and right over here was Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand. I mean you could see it all. You could see the Straits of Malacca. They were right there and the Indian Ocean, but Australia was right there in the center, and kind of up there was Japan and Korea and way over here, you could just see kind of the fringe of maybe Honolulu and it had concentric rings that went out. And he said that's why our two nations need to continue with their relationships and their alliances because look at where we are in the world, and I thought boy -- in fact, I'll tell you how impressed I was. I actually came back and told my guys, "I want a map just like that for my office."

So I understand what he was trying to say. The value of our relationship with Australia, who has been a traditional partner with the United States of America for the Army, the Air Force, the Navy and the Marines, for when we fought and we continue to this day to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with them. So and they can help us when you start thinking about the Asia-Pacific area because they have relationships with some of these countries that we don't have. We've got a good relationship with them, so I see goodness out of this thing, so that's how I sense the importance of it, so very well received. Do I see an eighth MEU on the ground in Darwin? I don't think so. Our two nations agreed that when the timing was right and when everything is -- I mean there's a whole lot involved here, that we will eventually get up to about 2500 Marines in Darwin. That force that will be there will look probably a lot like a Marine Expeditionary Unit. It will ebb and flow. Sometimes there will be more infantry on the ground and less aviation and -- but there will always be logistics, but it will probably be about 2500 and it will probably have an infantry battalion, and it will probably have a reinforced aviation composite squadron.

But, that's out in the future. That's the agreement that our two nations are working towards, but right now, we've got 200 Marines, we've got a Marine infantry company on the

ground there. They'll come out this month; the rainy season starts in Darwin. I had no idea it rained that much down there, but it does. So they'll come out and then we'll come back in again in March. And we'll probably keep that size force rotating in and out of there, a couple of hundred for probably a couple of years. It's event-driven by the two nations, by the United States of America and by Australia, when are they comfortable in increasing that number. The training is phenomenal, and we've already seen some benefits. That rifle company was on Darwin for probably 90 days, got on ships. I think it went to Thailand. I think it went to Singapore, participated in exercises and then came back, so that's part of that engagement in the Pacific now.

BARRY PAVEL: Yes, in the third row here.

[AUDIENCE MEMBER]: Hi, my name is [Unintelligible] from China Center Television. The question is about a Marine Corps team that has been sent to Yemen to deal with the anti-American demonstrations, but the Sudan government seems to refuse that; are there any further actions to be taken and what is your comment? And, another thing is according to General Richard Mills, there's a concept called Air-to-Sea Battle in the future, so is there anything that the Marine Corps is doing with that?

BARRY PAVEL: So two questions. One on we've sent FAST teams to Tripoli and to Yemen, is there anything next and second, what's the Marine role in Air-Sea Battle?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Yeah. We have 18 FAST teams in the Marine Corps. We've got three companies, and they're predominately headquartered out in Norfolk, and we dispatched those out around the world. They've got some in the Pacific Command. They've got some in the Central Command. They've got some in the European Command. So the FAST teams, a percentage of those that are forward deployed at all times, so the FAST team that went into Yemen came out of the Central Command. The FAST team that went into Tripoli came out of the European Command. So, right now, those are stable. We have other FAST teams poised. We've got some of them forward deployed, and that's really a decision that our President makes, the State Department makes, the Combatant Commander makes and, even more importantly, actually the sovereign nation that the FAST teams could deploy to.

The sovereign nation has to say yes, "We'd like a FAST team to come in," so it's one of those shock absorbers. It's one of those things that the leadership has in their hip pocket that says if things start getting out of control, then we can deploy a FAST team in. So, there's no plans that I'm aware of right now to deploy FAST teams, but they're sitting ready and they're on about a four-to-six-hour tether, so in many cases they're sitting there ready to go. So that's goodness for our country, and it's goodness for the State Department and the Combatant Commanders.

The second question?

BARRY PAVEL: The second question was about Air-Sea Battle, is there a Marine role in that and --

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Yeah, there is. In fact, it's developing, I think, as a very large role. When you start taking a look at coastlines and littoral areas, we're talking thousands of linear miles of coastline. One of the things that amphibious forces do and we've practiced this at

exercises in other war games around the world is that we actually put the country that we might go to war with on the horns of a dilemma because you can't possibly defend an entire coastline. You can't defend every single asset. It's impossible, and because we're sea born, and I mentioned earlier in my remarks I said, you know, the sea is our maneuver space. We can go anywhere we want, and so the enemy actually has no idea where we are, and all of a sudden, he finds himself with a formidable force on the flanks.

So I think we're in the process of developing that and making sure that the Marine Corps and plus the fact we're going to have fifth generation airplanes. Now, we have actually pretty strong capabilities, so I'll think that there will be a very strong role for the United States Marine Corps in Air-Sea Battle, and as you're aware of, Air-Sea Battle is kind of developing right now. It would be a mistake to think that Air-Sea Battle is a concept of operations or Air-Sea Battle is a war plan. Air-Sea Battle is a phase of an operation. It's an ability to get through a highly defended, access denied, aerial denied kind of environment but it's a phase, so it's not THE operation. It's a piece of the operation, and I think the Marines will play in all phases of an operation.

BARRY PAVEL: General, let me follow-up and take things in a different geographic direction. We're here at the Atlantic Council, which has a global mission but focuses on working with our transatlantic allies on global challenges, and it strikes me that the Marines were so central to our operations in Afghanistan over the last ten years, working in ISAF, working largely with a lot of European militaries as well. How do we sort of leverage the interoperability gains and the -- sort of the familiarity and the skill and working together with our European allies for this future? Undoubtedly, we'll be working with them again in the Middle East in various capacities and operations, and perhaps there's also lessons to be learned and gained for our work in Asia with Europe, but I don't know if you've thought about that much or...

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Well, we have and I almost think there's just a little bit of a misinterpretation. Because the strategy talk was about a focus in the Asia-Pacific area and while maintaining a focus in the Central Command area, that meant that our NATO partners, that meant that South America and Africa, actually are not part of that strategy, and the truth of the matter is they really are. It may have been a function of words, more than a quantity of words than it was what was really intended, because I'll tell you we just spent last week with all the Combatant Commanders, the Service Chiefs and the Secretary and if Admiral Stavridis was here, he would remind all of us about what the percentage of military expense is by NATO. It's huge. I mean it's enormous. You know, if you take all of NATO together and you add up what their military budget is, it's significant, and he's quick to remind us all of that. So, we have that partnership. We developed it, and I think it's in our very best interest to continue to do so, and I'll be honest with you, I'm absolutely confident we will.

We may move -- we may move capabilities around the world, but the importance of Europe, the importance of our alliance and NATO, the interoperability between our NATO allies, you know, we still train today. We train in the Republic of Georgia. We've got Marines over in the Black Sea right now working on the Black Sea rotation. This is just my service. The US Army has got a lot of forces in Europe, so it's in our best interest to continue to build that alliance, and I'll tell you the alliance, the NATO alliance is, if you go back to when NATO said okay, I'm going to step into the Central Command AOR and be a key player in that. They have

done that, and they've done that well, and we're shoulder-to-shoulder with them today, so I think it's in our best interest.

I think it will always be that way, and by the way, we've got great interest in Africa. We've got great interest in South America, and today, we've got US forces training, working with -- we've got US Marines down in Columbia. Columbia is one of the greatest success stories of turnaround of narco-terrorism in a country that was consumed by that, and we've been down there for probably about 15 years training side-by-side with the Columbian Marines. And so I mean there's too much goodness in the rest of the world. We need to continue those alliances, and as a Service Chief, I have every intention to do that.

BARRY PAVEL: Thank you. Yes, in the second row here.

BRUCE KLINGER: Thank you, sir. Bruce Klinger, senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation and father of a young Platoon Commander in 2d LAR down at Lejeune. Turning back to the Pacific, under the Marine Realignment Plan, the Marines are moving farther east to Guam and beyond, farther from the conflict zones, farther from potential humanitarian disaster areas. Do the Marines have enough lift, particularly sealift, to get back to the area, if need be, and a second question is the Marines are planning to move the Ospreys from Iwakuni down to Okinawa. Are there things that can be done to overcome sort of the image problem? It seems like journalists can't write "Osprey" without adding, "The world's most dangerous aircraft" or "accident prone." Are there steps that can be done with that, either on Okinawa or Japan at large?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: I'll come back to the Osprey in a second, but the answer to the question, to do what needs to happen in the Pacific with regards to the strategy, I mean really be able to go back to Australia, turn the map up like this and really take a look at that part of the world from that perspective, there isn't enough lift. And that's one of the things we're struggling with, capital ships are expensive. I work with the CNO on this matter all the time. If you put a capital ship in a budget, that's a lot of money. So imagine a budget that's already pressurized, imagine a \$487 billion Budget Control Act, which laid out that bill across the Department of Defense over the next ten years, and then throw sequestration on top of that, the potential of that. So if you have a strategy that talks about the Pacific and the importance of it and all this, and the ability to be able to build capital ships, is reduced markedly as a result of budget pressures and sequestration, whatever, then there's probably little hope certainly within the budget to be able to build the lift that you need to have.

So the next question is well, "How do you get around?" Well, there are some creative ways we can do this. We are building Joint High-Speed Vessels. I mean that's in the budget, and those things are very, very effective. There's a limitation to them. There's a sea state limitation; I think it's normally around three, sea state 3, but you could move a lot of Marines and a lot of equipment around once you get kind of down in that part of the world. The oceans are huge down there when you get into the Asia-Pacific are. I flew what seemed like days to get down there, to cross the dateline and the equator to get all the way down to Canberra, so there's creative ways, we're using airlift, using ships that we currently are building.

I've even told my Commander in the Pacific, don't wait for a perfect solution set to move forces around the Pacific. If we have to hire commercial ships to do that, I'm willing to do that in the meantime, but let's not wait because the strategy is too important. And what we'll do is

we'll work in hopes that the resources catch up with it, so I'm hopeful. It's always a strain on lift, grey-bottom amphibious ships for the Marine Corps, it's always been a strain and it's not because we're bad people. It's just because you've got a finite amount assets, and when you start talking ships, they're very, very, very expensive. It's not like buying a single airplane, so that's the first thing.

The second part on the Ospreys, they're sitting in Iwakuni. I was through there when I came out of Australia and came up, ended up, after passing through many countries to include Korea, back in Tokyo. But, I was in Iwakuni; the Ospreys are sitting there and they're not flying. They're almost brand spanking new airplanes, and the Secretary of Defense was just with Defense Minister Morimoto, I think, yesterday. They're working their way through this thing. We have been forthright with our accident in Morocco. We've given them a copy of the accident investigation. We've actually sat with them and debriefed them, took their assessment team down to New River where our training squadron is for V-22s, put them in the simulator, actually showed them the mishap from flying it in a simulator and then put them in an airplane and actually flew them around in an airplane, so they have everything. The US Air Force has come forward and they've done exactly the same things, so the Japanese government has the facts of the two mishaps. Both mishaps were pilot error. It's a tragedy. In our case, we lost two Marines, two Crew Chiefs in the back, so that -- I don't ever want to downplay that. I mean that's serious, but both accidents were not caused by mechanical failures.

To your point about when people write about the Osprey, there's always dot, dot, dot and then they start rehashing press written by somebody really almost 10 or 11 years ago. The facts are this: The airplane itself is absolutely competing to be the safest airplane in the first 100,000 hours of flight. When you build an airplane and you field it, you take a look at how it performs in the first 100,000 hours. That airplane is tied for first place across all the airplanes we've ever built. All the ones we're flying now and all the ones we're flying overseas and off aircraft carriers it's tied with the CV-22, interestingly enough, the Air Force Special Op, and the H-60 helicopter. Those are the three safest airplanes in the first 100,000 hours of flight.

It's a great tragedy that we had the mishap in Morocco. I can't pull that back, but we went for years without having a mishap. The airplane has been -- the program, the airplane has been restructured. It's on its 15th combat deployment, the 15th, so when you go into Afghanistan now and you fly and I do all the time or you get over there, everybody wants to fly around in an MV-22 Osprey, everybody does. There's a reason for that. So I'm very optimistic. I'm optimistic that our two nations will be able to work their way through this. I wrote a piece and to the government of Japan and I said look, I'm a pilot, I'm the senior pilot on active duty in the military today. I just flew a CH-46 around Okinawa probably about five weeks ago. I know the area. I've grown up flying in and out of that area. I know it well. I am equally as mindful of my responsibilities for the safe operation of that airplane for the people of Okinawa, the citizens of that great nation as I am mindful for my own Marines and their families that will be flying and have family members in them, so I take that very, very seriously. It's a heck of a capability, and I think it's in the best interest of the alliance to have that forward deployed.

BARRY PAVEL: Thank you. We have time for a few more questions. This gentleman in the second row, can we give him a microphone, please.

ED VERONA: Thank you. Ed Verona, President of the US-Russia Business Council, but I'm actually here because I am the father of a Marine with the 24th MEU, and I wanted to ask you, sir, about --

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: He's deployed now, yeah.

ED VERONA: Excuse me?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: He's deployed right now.

ED VERONA: He is deployed.

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Yeah.

ED VERONA: He called me today, he said couldn't say where he was. He wasn't even sure which ocean it was, but -- (Laughter)

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: I'll tell you offline.

ED VERONA: Okay, thank you. I wonder if you could address the questions related to morale. I mean we're coming off a very long engagement in Afghanistan. We're going into a downsizing, the sequester must weigh on people's minds. You've been dealing with some of the more thorny social issues that have come up in the last few years with don't ask, don't tell, with women going into combat infantry training and so forth. Can you talk a little bit about how -- what sort of reaction you're seeing coming from the rank and file and -- and how you're dealing with it?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Yeah. Well, let me ask you before I pitch in here, what's your sense? What's your son say? What his sense?

ED VERONA: My son says that when a Marine stops complaining, there's something wrong. (Laughter)

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: There's a lot of truth to that.

ED VERONA: I think -- my sense is that his morale is pretty high. He did a deployment in Afghanistan and came back and seems to be coping well with it. I mean I think it's a tribute to the Corps that it instills a certain degree of, a high degree of esprit de Corps, and people learning how to compensate for these fluctuations. But, one can't help but pick up a little bit of concern about, you know, where things are going and particularly cutting scores and re-enlistment bonuses and things like that.

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Thank you for that and thank you for loaning me your son. I mean that sincerely. The interesting thing right now -- and when I say this, you're going to say well, he's a Service Chief so he has to say this. Actually, I am a Service Chief, and I don't have to say this, but I'm going to say it anyway. Morale right now has probably never been higher than it is right now. The Marines feel good about doing what they're doing, and how do I know that? Well, first of all, I talk to them, and you might think that they would withhold themselves from me when I walk up to them, but they actually are pretty forthright.

You can measure kind of the mental health, the happiness of a unit or the service, by how things are with re-enlistments, how things are with young men and women that are standing at the door trying to get in. So let's talk about that for just a second. Re-enlistments today, when a young Marine, a young man or woman, finishes their first four years, they have an opportunity -- they're at a decision point, "Do I sign up for another four-year contract and stay on, or do I get out and I go to work, or I go to my family business, or I go to school or whatever I'm going to do." Re-enlistments right now are higher than they've ever been. In fact, we're challenged in the Marine Corps because we're drawing the Marine Corps down from 202,000 down to that one eighty-two [thousand] that I talked about in my comments, which means the competition to stay in is very, very keen, so we have a higher number of young men and women that want to stay by a factor of probably three or four than we have space for, so re-enlistments are high.

If you want to become, for instance, an officer in the Marine Corps today -- and I know this because I track it. In fact, I was just working it this weekend, and I'd have never made it. Carl Smith probably -- neither one of us would've made it. But -- but here's the average SAT score for a young college graduate that's applying to become an officer in the Marine Corps. I'm not making this up. The SAT score is 1250, 3.22 GPA, no felonies. None of that kind of stuff. No nasty tattoos that are visible, which is difficult in today's society, and you're heavily involved in sports and heavily involved in extracurricular activities. So 3.22 GPA and SAT scores of 1250 just to make the cut, and then you sit around and they start talking about okay, then... I looked at a record this weekend that had a SAT score of 1550. I didn't even know it went that high. (Laughter) That's twice as high as Carl Smith's and mine. (Laughter) You know, so okay, so now if he said I want to be a young enlisted Marine. I don't want to go through that SAT and college and stuff.

Eight months, if you sign up today, if you walked into the recruiter in downtown Washington, DC and you sign up and assuming that you're morally, physically, mentally and everything else qualified, you're going to sit in what we call a delayed-entry pool for eight months because we don't have room for you. It will be eight months before you ship -- what we call ship and go to Recruit Depot of Parris Island or San Diego. So what does that mean? That's an indication that young men and women want to come in. Our officer retention is probably higher today than I can ever remember it. I mean it's in the 90s and I'm talking Captains, and you might think well, Captains don't like that stuff. You know, they're the ones that are out there doing the heavy lifting. Actually, they want to stay. It's in the 90 percentile.

I'll tell you what I worry about -- so that's all good, and by the way, just like our brothers in the Army, we've been in some pretty tough times. This has not been without -- I've lost 1,123 Marines now killed in action since we crossed the border in March in 2003, almost 14,000 wounded, so it's not been without cost or sacrifice. But, Marines know that when they sign up. We tell them that it's going to be hard. We say we're going to deploy you around the world and do the nation's bidding, and we've actually been living up to that promise, and I'm not trying to be corny. We do and they actually like that. I think that's why the Marines in the 24th MEU like that.

What I'm concerned about now is that as we come down out of, in 2014, where we have withdrawn the bulk of our forces out of Afghanistan, so kind of major combat kind of operations have ceased, so to speak. We don't know what the rest of the world's going to do for us, but I'm going to have to make sure that my young men and women see job satisfaction, are motivated to

go to places like the Pacific, to go train with other nations, to go on board ships, and I'm going to have to work my way through that. I mean that's a concern of mine, because I've been a Marine the bulk of my time working out of the interwar years, you know, the 70s and 80s and 80s and 90s, and there wasn't a lot going on. I mean you trained, you deployed, you went here, you went there and we all worked. All of us worked hard to try to keep not only our morale up, but the morale of our young men and women. So, that's probably my greatest concerns. Not so much now as the morale -- how's the morale now? I think it's -- I think it's really good. As I look in the future, I'm concerned. How am I going to keep that up? Because I'll tell you what, kids right now -- and I say kids with great love and affection -- and our young men and women they step forward and they're willing to sacrifice. Don't worry about whatever generation we're talking about. They are selfless, they are courageous, and they're willing to step forward and give of themselves, and they're doing it by thousands. I'm just worried as we kind of come out of that, I'm going to have to promise them. That's why Australia is actually a pretty good deal, so I don't know. That's a heartfelt answer, and that's the truth.

BARRY PAVEL: Yes, in the second row here.

GENERAL DAN TAYLOR: General, Dan Taylor, Inside the Navy. Talking about the V-22, it's obviously had its first deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I'm wondering how you see that aircraft's role evolving as you -- and maturing, perhaps, as you send it over to the Asia-Pacific region?

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: I think it's got a great combat record by the way, and it's been shot up, by the way, coming in and out of zones. Again, like I said, it's on its 15th deployment. It's on its 13th or so combat deployment, but it's been shot up going in and out of zones, and it's done just fine. As you think about the Asia-Pacific -- so we know it will work well in combat, but what about in the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief area? Let me give you some figures that I think will catch your attention. In the Asia-Pacific area, every single year over 70,000 people are killed by natural disasters, tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclones. I just talked to my Commander on Okinawa on Sunday, he had the latest typhoon go through. The one that had gone through was like two weeks before that. These are super typhoons. These are what we would call a kind of category 5 kind of things.

All of that... When I landed in Manila, they had just had a typhoon that had sat over the Philippines for almost two weeks, and when I landed in Manila five weeks ago, whatever it was, the skies had just cleared and we landed. Half of Manila was under water, hundreds and hundreds of people had lost their homes... thousands had lost their homes, hundreds had died. They had an earthquake on the other side of the Philippines, a 6.4, as I recall, about two weeks ago, so the Asia-Pacific area is prone to natural disasters of almost epic proportions. So how does a V-22 fit in there? I can fly from Okinawa to the Philippines non-stop and be down there to provide relief. If I have to go down in my 44-year-old CH-46 helicopters, it takes me nine hours, because I've got to find little islands that I can stop and refuel at all the way down, and then when I get there, I probably got a combat radius of about 110 miles, which means I can fly out to someplace, loiter for about 20 minutes and come back. With a V-22 you don't have to do that.

All the advertisements we used in 2001 and 2002 to promote the airplane, it flies two-and-a-half times as fast, carries three times as much and goes like three or four times as far...it

actually is the truth. So, when you start thinking the Pacific, large massive areas of water and the huge amounts of potential goodness for our nation, that the airplane can help our allies with, I think it's got a key role in the Pacific, and I think should our two nations work through this, and I'm optimistic that they will, that we'll have an opportunity very quickly to probably be able to show that.

BARRY PAVEL: Great. Well, I think we're out of time unfortunately, General Amos. Thank you so much for just the enormous depth and breadth of your discussion here from the Asia-Pacific through Europe to the Middle East and from the strategic to the tactical and certainly your important -- important thoughts on taking care of our -- our Veterans and our active duty personnel, so just thank you so much for coming here and sharing your insights.

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Thank you very much. (Applause)

(END)