

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

**Military Strategy Forum:
General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps**

**Crisis Response and Expeditionary Operations:
The Future of the United States Marine Corps**

**Introduction:
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JOHN HAMRE: OK, good morning, everybody. Thank you all for coming. This is – this is really going to be interesting, and I am very, very grateful for General Amos joining us today to speak about the directions that the – for the Marine Corps.

You know, it's ironic, I think, we – you know, it was just dumb luck that we did this after the election. Here we ended up spending \$6 billion as a country, and we didn't change anything. You know, I mean, it's just worse. (Laughter.) It's exactly where we were, you know, about a month ago.

And of course that's the central dilemma that's confronting the commandant. If you – if you look to say, well, where are we going as a country and what does it mean for defense? Are we really going to do a sequester? Are we going to jump off this fiscal cliff? I mean, we don't have answers to any of that. And yet the commandant is leading an organization with a very proud history that goes back 237 years. The birthday is Saturday, as you all know, and I hope that everybody's going to be someplace to celebrate. (Applause.) No? And we're having our Marine Corps birthday tomorrow here.

And – but think of the challenge it presents to a commandant, a man whose charter to not only – not only ensure that tomorrow if we have to go to war we can do it, but also is making the preparations that 10 years from now and 15 years from now, 30 years from now, we can do that. In this kind of uncertainty, this is – this is a challenge that is – that goes to the very best of the officer corps, and fortunately we have that in General Amos. He's – has an enormously distinguished career, most senior aviator, I believe, in the naval service. Is that –

MR. : And the Department of Defense.

MR. HAMRE: Yeah, and the Department of Defense. (Laughter.) And – (laughter) – and he still flies, as everybody knows. He – although he did – he did aver some concern about being in the front seat of an F/A-18 on recovery, because he said, I wasn't exactly sure how to reset the controls, he said. Well, I'm sure that somebody would have given him some help on that – (laughter) – if he needed it. But we're very lucky to have General Amos here. Would you please welcome him with your warm applause? (Applause.)

GENERAL JAMES AMOS: Thanks, everybody. Sometime either while I'm up here or sitting down, if I start to cry, cough, I'm – it's not because I'm dying and I'm old. I'm on the cusp of trying to get rid of a cold. So everybody that I shook hands with – (laughter) – in fact, some of you I'd like to come back up and do it again. (Laughter.)

It is our birthday coming up, and it's pretty exciting. It begins – this has nothing to do with my pitch here this morning – but it starts about two weeks ago. I mean, we're – you know, we've been – we've been accused of being a pedantic bunch of extremists and everything else over our – over our life. But actually probably the highest compliment that I've ever received was at a dinner between – after I'd come back from Iraq on the second tour and had gone to Quantico, and I was the commanding general of the combat development command down there. And we had the new Iraqi ambassador to the United States for dinner. So he was down there and was talking to a whole bunch of our young Marines, and we sat at his table. And somebody had

written something publicly about pedantic and extremism and then all this stuff for Marines – (audio break) – and he says, oh, no.

And by the way, this guy was from An Nasiriyah. So for all the Marines in here, they know where that was, because you cross the border into Iraq, you know, pass over the tank traps, and then you go north through the al-Faw oil wells. And then you make a left about 90 degrees or 80 degrees, and you head up and you hit this town called An Nasiriyah. And we fought pretty hard there for about three or four days.

So he's from there. And he said, oh, no, the Marine Corps is a tribe. And he was a sheik. And then he paid – course I didn't really care at that time because I was just a lowly three-star with no aspirations, thinking that my career was behind me – and he said, and a commandant is the sheik of sheiks. So ladies and gentlemen, this morning you have the sheik of sheiks here with you. (Laughter.) (Inaudible) – I don't know what the hell that has to do with anything I'm going to say here this morning.

Folks, I'm really glad to be here. And Dr. Hamre, I've lost you; where'd you go? All right. Sir, it's good to see you again. Thanks for everything. And I got to spend time – got to meet Kim as I walked in here, and Dr. Murdock. So – and the trustees – everybody, thank you for inviting me. I've been looking forward to it. I said it this morning. Some things are really – you know, I say that, and I really don't mean it. I actually mean it this morning.

I mean – (laughter) – I think about organizations that actually serve our country. You know, you may not be in uniform today – many of you have been in uniform – but you understand what's going – this is – this is national security. This is our nation's future. And you get to probe and poke and talk and think about it and do things with regards to our nation's security that are actually very important. And people listen, and you know that. So I've been looking forward to this. I think it's a great opportunity for me to be able to talk about our nation's Marines, our nation's crisis response force. And you'll hear me use that term throughout the morning often.

I note that it's been 50 years since the founding of CSIS. If you think back to the security environment of 50 years ago, you really get a sense for the timeless nature of security challenges. Back then, a long counterinsurgency effort was under way in Algeria and was beginning to draw to an end. The number of U.S. counterinsurgency advisers, on the other hand, were dramatically increasing in a little-known place called Vietnam. Colonial nations in Africa were just beginning to gain their independence. China and India were clashing over disputed borders. State conflict threatened as cooperation between Cuba and the United States – excuse me, Cuba and the Soviet Union was beginning in earnest and escalated eventually into the Cuban missile crisis.

Whenever we think we've reached an end to instability and conflict, whenever we think we can predict with certainty the nature of our security challenges, we probably need to spend a little more time reflecting back on history.

We've got a little bit of an anniversary of our own this week. I've talked about it. Many of you know that Saturday we will celebrate our corps' birthday. We've been in business now

since November the 10th, 1775. I won't tell you how you got our beginnings – I won't dwell on it, the fact that we began in a tavern in Philadelphia on the waterfront. That also began the very warm relationship between Marines and beer. (Laughter.) So it's no coincidence that there are 24 bottles of beer – (chuckles) – in a case and – never mind, I won't go down there. (Laughter.)

But at that time there were lots of things happening. In 1775 the British Empire struggled with a messy counterinsurgency campaign in the American colonies, kind of counterinsurgency in reverse from the way we look at it. And soon the French, Spanish and Dutch sought to chip away at the British hegemony, all in a globalizing world. Competitors everywhere sought to take advantage of the perceived weakness of an overstretched power. Sound familiar? Taking stock of where you have been always seems to be a good way to figure out maybe where you're going to head, on what cardinal heading you're going to strike out on.

I'd like to talk to you just a little bit about where your Marine Corps has been over the last several years. I think that that will help shed some light on where we are today as a corps and perhaps give us maybe a little bit of an azimuth check as to where we're going to go over the next few years.

Today we have about 6,800 Marines remaining in Afghanistan, down from 21,000 at our peak. I'm not going to give you a play-by-play of the last three to four years in Helmand, but the results have been very encouraging. The Marine Corps has served shoulder to shoulder with some great heroes from the U.S. Army, United Kingdom, Australia, Georgia, Jordan, Bahrain and a host of our other allies and friends. We have worked closely with special operators from all services – with the U.S. Air Force overhead and our ever-present Navy brothers and sisters right there on the battlefield side by side with us.

As a team, we've effectively pushed the Taliban out of the ribbon of civilization that runs through the Helmand River valley. In Helmand province we've established an economy and a decent governance in our wake and have made major progress in replacing opium poppies with other cash crops. Most importantly, we've accomplished – we've – excuse me – most importantly, we've left an accomplished and will leave an accomplished and well-trained 215th Corps of the Afghan army as our relief force. These men are tough, they are disciplined, they are well-trained, and they are absolutely dedicated to freedom and just rule inside their nation. They are our close, personal friends. They will not willingly allow the return of the Taliban state. They have come too far for that.

Our accomplishments have not been without cost, however. They have come at the expense of a lot of hard work, battlefield courage, long deployments and wounded young men and women. In some cases, our successes have come at an even higher price, the life of a young Marine or sailor. We honor the service of the 1,223 Marines who have been killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan. Memories of their service and their courage will live on in our corps for another 237 years.

But while we've been fighting hard in Afghanistan, Marines have also been operating around the globe, protecting our citizens, our allies and our interests. These Marines, working in close partnership with our Navy brothers and sisters, have been operating behind the front page

of the papers but very much on the front lines of crisis. Marines have been continually forward-deployed and at sea for decades as the nation's ready expeditionary force; the last several years have been no exception.

It was Marine aviation that provided the initial strikes and initial airspace control for the NATO force that responded as part of Operation Odyssey Dawn. Marines in MV-22s, operating from the USS Kearsarge just off the coast, conducted personal recovery operations with the Air Force F-15 pilot on the ground. Other Marines responded from the sea to the massive floods 700 miles deep into northern Pakistan. When Japan suffered a triple catastrophe from its earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant disasters, forward-deployed Marines responded immediately with heavy equipment, aircraft, personnel and precious, life-saving supplies.

Just in the last year, Marines have shared exercises, training and partnership building in over a hundred nations. We even showed up in New York and New Jersey this past week, helping folks recover from the devastation that Sandy left behind. As we gather here this morning, nice and warm and dry, Marines are still helping our fellow Americans in need in New York City and New Jersey. Marines are daily engaged in everything from reinforcing our embassies with FAST teams to supporting Joint Special Operations counterpiracy and counterterrorism missions around the world.

Marines are purpose-built for exactly the kind of world that we're living in today. In that regard, I'd like to talk briefly about the role of the Marine Corps in today's security environment. First, let me reiterate that Marines are first and foremost a naval force. I know that does not sit comfortably with some whose context for warfare is strictly tied to the physical domains. There may be added complexity in the idea of a force that operates comfortably on land and in air and on the sea, one that specializes in those cross-domain seams. Some would like to see us branded as ground forces or a second land army. We are not. The Marine Corps fills a unique lane in the joint fight, one that leverages the sea as the primary conduit for global power projection. The sea provides the primary global common through which America(n) power is projected, and Marines with amphibious warships that carry them are purpose-built for exploiting this avenue.

But while we are not a second land army, we are still able to contribute significantly to a land campaign. We've done that many times over our nation's rich history, and in each case, we've acquitted ourselves well, from Trenton to the Bealleau Wood, from Anbar to the Helmand province. When the nation has needed to throw us into the breach, we've been there. You'll get no apology from me for our broad utility and the flexibility we give our national leaders, nor for the strong performance of our Marines on the ground in Helmand and in the – in the Anbar province.

But that should not serve to confuse anybody about our primary role. Our nation pays for a Marine Corps to be its principal crisis response force, a force that is in such a high state of readiness that it can respond to today's crisis with today's force today – not tomorrow, not two weeks from now, but today. Amphibious forces provide a range of capabilities from the sea. We can loiter unseen over the horizon or provide a visible deterrent. We can temporarily work ashore, building strong partnerships and swiftly re-embark that same force to respond to a crisis at a distant land. With modern aviation, we can provide kinetic strike or responsive maneuver

from hundreds of miles out to sea. We can influence events ashore and return to the sea with the same swiftness that we arrived. That broad-based utility makes amphibious ships with embarked Marines the ultimate Swiss Army knife of the joint force.

Instability is an enduring feature of a rapidly globalizing world. At CSIS, you see it every single day. Because of our forward engagement around the world, we do as well. Changing demographics and competition for resources has the potential to breed violence and extremism. The Marine Corps provides the force able to swiftly intercede in these types of crisis. Our readiness buys time and decision space for our national leaders, probably their most valuable commodity when things have gone bad. Our readiness and strategic mobility gives our leaders time to assess the situation and formulate a more deliberate response. As a nation, we desire peace, but there are times when our enemies compel us otherwise. Because we operate from the sea and our forward-deployed locations, we provide an effective initial crisis response capability when our citizens, our allies and our interests are threatened.

Third, Marines provide a stabilizing forward presence that deters conflict. Forward presence builds trust that cannot be surged when a conflict looms. Forward presence matters. I've heard talk – I've heard folks talk about virtual presence, and I understand what they're trying to say, but from our allies' perspective, virtual presence is actual absence. Actual presence demonstrates shared commitments and shared dangers. These are critical as we bolster national credibility and deterrence through persistent forward naval engagement. Virtual presence says something much less powerful. Virtual presence would not have helped in Sendai; it would not have helped in Pakistan, and it would not have helped in the Philippines last year. With those first expeditionary units afloat near likely crisis areas and pre-positioned equipment stationed forward aboard deployed shipping, the Navy and Marine Corps team is a visible and tangible reminder of our nation's resolve.

Fourth, Marines build strong partners; Marines build trust. I get the sense, at times, when I'm speaking publicly, that some folks think that an investment in building partner capacity is charity work. It is not. It's an investment in global collective security throughout the world's commons. Our national grand strategy has an element of collective norms and collective security at its core. Then partnerships are incredibly – if our nation has grand strategy that has collective norms and collective security at its core, then partnerships are incredibly important. Marines have long been a security partner of choice.

Sea-based Marines tread lightly on host nation infrastructure and sovereignty, making our present less onerous on host governments. Most of the nations we deal with have defense forces that are much smaller than their U.S. counterparts. Because we're sized more closely to the security forces of many other nations, the U.S. Marine Corps provides a model of tightly-integrated air-ground logistics force. That's something they are eager to achieve with their own armed forces. The scalability of Marines resonates with them, as does our warrior ethos.

Fifth, Marines assure access ashore. Nobody likes to think about this one, but I think we take great risk if we discount the capability to project our national power at the place and time of our choosing. There are times when the U.S. must create access to protect our citizens, defend our innocents and intervene in dangerous situations, even when that access is not freely given.

Our power projection capabilities enable the U.S. joint force to push open the door of access when and where we need to. This ability to go where the nation is not invited fundamentally underwrites the deterrent value of the joint force and provides strategic decision-makers options that complement precision strike and other national and more significant capabilities.

This doesn't mean we're committing or we're counting on conducting amphibious assaults as you've seen in the movies. Those images of past successes sometimes cast a long shadow. That isn't how it's done in the modern day; it's not how we operate as part of the joint team. Modern amphibious operations seek to achieve precision maneuver that creates and exploits seams in forces that might oppose a landing. Uniquely, Marines operate without the requirement for nearby land bases, and they can sustain themselves from the sea without intact or secure ports and airfields. The fact that you can accomplish that mission with the same forces that are out there daily building collective security partnerships and responding to crises around the world makes Marines a pretty compelling security investment when money is tight.

Let's talk quickly about how Marines respond to human disaster. Although amphibious capabilities are built for war and maintained to fight, their application to relieving human crisis is a natural extension of our national domain utility. In this increasingly globalized age, one where every national, natural or man-made disaster draws the attention of the world, the U.S. cannot be silent in the face of humanitarian crisis. I absolutely believe that timely U.S. responses strengthen the credibility of our security promises and increase the effectiveness of our deterrence. The ability of amphibious forces to provide air, ground and sea response in times of humanitarian disaster without imposing burdens on already stressed infrastructure makes us a unique contributor to U.S. capability and influence.

That's a short list of some of our major roles. I may be a little bit biased, but I think, when you look at the numbers, Marines are a pretty compelling security investment. The Marine Corps provides a significant return on investment for every security dollar spent.

When the nation pays the sticker price for her Marines, she gets not only the least expensive force in the – (coughs) – excuse me – the DOD arsenal – (coughs) – it's happening – she not only gets the least expensive force in the DOD arsenal – for about 8 percent of the total DOD budget, you get highly-skilled forward-deployed forces that are able to operate across the full range of military operations.

Perhaps our most important role is the congressional mandate we've carried proudly since 1952. For over a half a century – it's really unseemly when the commandant gets up here and starts crying – (laughter) – it – I've got an image I've got to portray here – it's not helping. (Laughter.) It's not helping me at all.

For over – (coughs) – for over a half a century, the Marine Corps has met the mandate of the 82nd Congress to be the most ready when the nation is the least ready. This ought to tell you how dedicated I was to getting here today. (Laughter.) When I leave here, I'm going to go check into Bethesda. (Laughter.) They'll have me in ICU and I'll be dying up there.

For over half a century, the Marine Corps has met the mandate of the 82nd Congress to be the most ready when the nation is generally the least ready. Perhaps Jay Leno – and I love his quote – said it the best three days after the attacks on 9/11 – when he said, now it's time to send in the Marines to settle the score. There's an expectation by our fellow Americans that such a thing would happen.

Let me talk briefly about fiscal constraints, as that's what's mostly on everybody's mind today. We know – we know the department will continue to be challenged in the upcoming fiscal environment. While impacts will be potentially significant, I'm confident that we'll weather this storm as well. My measure of success is the quality and ethos of the individual Marine. My most important measure is not how many Marines or items of equipment we have but how ready we are to accomplish our mission. We have to be ready when the nation calls, each and every time. Protecting our readiness is probably the No. 1 concern on my plate. Being our nation's expeditionary crisis response force, there is no effective substitute for readiness. A hollow force is not an option for the United States Marine Corps.

I'm also concerned about impacts to our investment accounts. The Marine Corps spends 14 percent of its budget on modernization. That means we have a lot of small programs that suffer disproportionately when funding is restricted, even when cuts are proportionately applied. For us, that means a diminished ability to equip Marines with the things that give them a qualitative edge over their opponents on the ground.

We've been able to sustain our nation's defense strategy with smaller numbers of well-trained and well-equipped individuals, and I think there's a moral responsibility to continue to do so for our Marines and their families.

The Marine Corps is a young force and a lean one. There's not a lot of fat or overhead on the Marine Corps. We're essentially just muscle. To me, that implies another mandate: to invest in those individual Marines, as I said, and in their families.

We live in the day of the strategic corporal. That's been clear – clearly evidenced over the past 12 months. Our young men and women are making decisions of consequence on the battlefield each and every single day. We are gearing our training and educational establishment to ensure the level of knowledge, competence and skills that make these young Marine leaders so successful today does not erode or atrophy over the next decade.

OK, enough. Let me close by telling you thank you, get off this stage up here and sit down for a minute. Thank you for attention and your patience. Thank you for your fellow hand wringing when I was gagging up here. (Soft laughter.) But more importantly, thanks for the opportunity to talk about the Marine Corps. Truth of the matter is, I could go on all day. I could tell stories about Marines, their courage. I could tell you stories about what's happening in New York City today, in Jersey, and Marines all around the world and what they're doing for our nation. I'm very proud of them. It's a grand time to celebrate our birthday. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for all that you do. Thanks for the opportunity. And Dr. Hamre and the whole team and Kim, I'll look forward your questions. Thank you. (Applause.)

All right.

Q: Sir, can I ask –

GEN. AMOS: See if I can get over here without dying there.

MR. : Well, sir, thank you very much. We're looking forward to a lively dialogue with you, particularly since we're putting you through this medical distress.

GEN. AMOS: Well, to –

MR. : So we're very thankful you're –

GEN. AMOS: I should get extra credit for this.

MR. : You do. You absolutely do.

Three quick things, if I may. First, we want to thank Rolls-Royce for sponsoring this series, the Military Strategy Forum. It's been a – it continues to be a great opportunity to talk to important people about issues that concern the nation. So we're very appreciative of that.

Secondly, if you haven't already, please turn off your cellphones, so the – for all the obvious reasons.

And finally, the way we're going to deal with questions, because we do want to get questions from the audience, because the – this is a great opportunity to dialogue with the commandant, we're going to focus them through Maren Leed and Nate Freier. So you've been given cards to write those questions on. If you need a card, hold up your hand. Someone will get it to you. When you have a question, again, hold up your card and they'll get it, as they're doing it now, to Maren and to Nate. And then they'll try and aggregate a number of those questions, because oftentimes they're in the same lanes, and then we'll proceed and have a great opportunity.

So, sir, thank you.

GEN. AMOS: Yup.

MR. : And if I may, I'd like to just kind of pursue a couple of the points that you made in your opening remarks because people often do lump the Marine Corps with ground forces in general, and you have described the Marine Corps as a crisis response force. The Army chief of staff was with us last week. He didn't have that particular opportunity. My guess is he would describe his – two of his divisions in the same way. Help us understand the lanes there and what – what's important for national security in maintaining those capabilities.

GEN. AMOS: You – well, when I took the job about two years ago, I'd been in – I sat down for the summer prior to taking the – taking this and I wanted to be able to clearly articulate

to the Marines, then to external audiences just exactly what the Marine Corps does for our nation and where it operates, you know, what are its primary responsibilities, because the commentary, the second land army was kind of floating around. It was – people were using it pretty frequently. And I – and interestingly, by the way, it began with a senior Marine saying that in public the first time, which I deeply regret.

But regardless, as I sat and looked at it, I thought about how the other services operate, you know, when they operate in the principal domains – I used the term “domains” in my – in my opening comments – and they do. When you think about the Navy, you think about the sea, both above it and below it. When you think about the Air Force, you think about space; you think about the air above it, the flying domain that many of us operate in. When you think about the ground domain, you think about the U.S. Army and you think about where they fit with regards to the ground.

Now each one of the services operate in other domains – the cyberdomain, the special operations domain and all this stuff. But really, you know, you know, when you kind of – you kind of lump the whole world into these three major domains.

And so, well, where does the Marine Corps operate? And we don't have a domain.

And so the best way to describe it for me is, we have a lane, and the lane appears when something happens, when there's a need. It could be – it could be Tomodachi. It could be Odyssey Dawn. It could be the reinforcement of the forces up in the northeast corner of Helmand province by ships that pull off and you fly up into Afghanistan. It could be a variety of things.

But there's a lane that appears. Typically it appears early on, in a crisis, when things are happening where you're not quite sure what the nation should do. When that lane appears, the Marine Corps comes in with its joint partners but principally naval forces when they operate in there. They set the conditions early on, and then the lane disappears. We either enable – we either – we're either the forerunners of the joint force or we are supporting a capability, but eventually the lane disappears and the Marines leave.

So we have – and I mentioned in there we operate in those areas because we operate in cross-domain – we are comfortable on the seams between the air and the land and the sea. And we're in cyber, and we're in special operations.

So we're not – the nation doesn't buy a Marine Corps to be a second land army. We've already got one. We've got the greatest – you know, when I'd see a soldier in the Pentagon – and this is no kidding, and my staff knows this – I walk up to every single one I run into as I walk around, and I share his or her hand, and I just say, how's the greatest army in the world today? I really mean it. We've got the greatest army on the face of the earth today, period. They know what they're doing.

We don't buy a Marine Corps. We don't spend \$23.9 billion – in this budget that maybe will get – hopefully will get passed up on the Hill we don't spend \$23.9 billion on a Marine

Corps to be a second land army. America needs a force that it can call on today. It cannot – it needs a crisis response (force ?) – I keep using that term, but that’s how we fit in.

And by the way, when I was in the process of taking this job, I sat with Secretary Gates, and he said – he said, Jim, I want you to design a Marine Corps that focuses primarily on the most likely things that are going to happen, and that’s – if you take a look at the range of military operations, you’ve got from the low end, which could be something like just dealing with some humanitarian crisis, doesn’t mean it’s low end to the people that are in the crisis. But across a range of military operations, that’s on one end. You’ve got the high end, which is what we used to call major theater war. He said, in the middle is the things that where that all kind of comes together. It’s occluded in some cases. Some cases it deals with hybrid threats and everything. But that’s the most likely thing you’re going to deal with. It’s a crisis. It’s a daily issue. It’s something that happens. Jim, make sure the Marine Corps is focused on that. And I want you not turn your back on the high end or the low end.

And that’s what we’ve done. So we kind of fit in there. We fit in the seams. We’re very comfortable there. We’re highly expeditionary. And we really do set ourselves – our equipment, our training, our readiness – to respond to a crisis today – that’s our niche. America needs that.

If – here’s the last thing I’ll say on this thing, is that – is that if America didn’t have that capability to respond with an expeditionary force today, rapidly; if they said, OK, we can’t afford it, then they’d reinvent one. They’d have to build one. You can’t – you can’t abrogate your responsibilities as really the world’s only superpower right now. We are. Whether we like it or not, whether we admit it or not, we are the world’s only super – we got growing powers, I’ve got it, but I’ll tell you, we have global responsibilities. So you need a force to be able to do that. You’ve already paid for it. So that’s kind of how I see we fit in.

Is that more information than you wanted to know?

MR. : No, that was very helpful. Thank you.

Another issue that often gets discussed that would be helpful to hear your view of – and you talked a little bit about it – is the amphibious landing issue, particularly in a forced entry situation. And you described the secretary asking you to deal with the most likely circumstances. A lot of people say that’s not a very likely circumstance because of technology and the fire suppression we use – the Marines are part of that – to prepare the battle fleet, so there’s really not a forcible amphibious entry necessary. Could you help us understand how you view that and why we should value it?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. I think – I think you got to kind of start large first and then we’ll neck it down to eventually a forcible entry thing here. But you’ve got to – you’ve got to take a look at – and I call it the ultimate Swiss army knife. I mean, it really is. If you take – if you talk – if you brought in any combatant commander, any regional combatant commander, any of them – SOUTHCOM, PACOM, CENTCOM, EUCOM, AFRICOM – and you said, OK, list all the requirements you have for amphibious forces, it exceeds by a factor of about four what we can provide on a daily basis.

So in other words, the real people – not us that are back in Washington, that are thinking about it and writing about it and hypothesizing about it – the real people that see the needs for amphibious forces have already levied their requirements. The requirements are real. We just can't – we can't support it. We don't have enough ships, we don't have enough forward-deployed forces to be able to satisfy the appetite of the combatant commanders. So that would be the first thing I'd say.

The second thing is, is that this ultimate Swiss army knife, these forces that the combatant commanders have – or excuse me, want – are also the same ones that are responding to not only the training and the partnership capacity-building I talked about in my opening comments, but they're also the ones that are responding to crisis. They're also the ones that actually underwrite our ability to project power and influence around the world. It's the same force. It's on the same ships; it's the same Marines; they do the same training; they have the same capability.

So the amphibious forces that are out there are doing a host of things across – around the world. I mean, when Haiti hit – you know, we've – we haven't forgot it, but it was, you know, 2 ½ years ago – seven amphibious ships, seven – I mean, almost 6,000 Marines – seven amphibious ships were parked there. Not one, not one virtually present from Norfolk, seven amphibious ships were there. And by the way, they were shuttling people back and forth and shuttling supplies back and forth, amphibious tractors and LCUs, and they were feeding people. They were caring – they were taking medical supplies back and forth, food and water, and evacuating people and taking people out to hospitals on the ships.

So those amphibious ships provide all of that, which is the daily fare, but then when it's time, when something happens and you need an ability to be able to actually impose your will – and you go, well, I don't think that's going to happen. Well, it happened right after 9/11. I mean, you know, people go back and they go, well, what about Inchon? And if you're a history buff, quite honestly, and you use Inchon as a bad example, you need to go back and read history because you're actually just – you're wrong. It's probably the greatest example of maneuver behind the enemy's flank and behind the enemy's rear than anything else that's ever been done on amphibious assault.

But that aside, go back to task, go back to post-9/11. Before Christmas, six amphibious ships came together, six of them, and over 5,000 Marines, and they flew 500 miles deep into – right outside of Kandahar, when the whole world – we didn't even know where Kandahar was, and yet that was the birthplace of the Taliban. And they landed out there in a dirt airstrip called Rhino. And they actually at that point in time broke the will of the Taliban at that point in time.

Now, history went on, we went to Iraq, we came back – I do understand that. But the ability for the nation, the president, to be able to say, I'm going to send forces in there; they're not going to like it; by the way, they haven't extended an invitation to me, but I'm going to impose my will on them anyway. And they did, and it was highly successful. So we have – there are plenty of examples of that.

Let me just kind of close with one thought for you. We are – I mean I've said it and I'm going to say it again. We are a global superpower. We have responsibilities to do that, with great honor and with great deference for our allies. But the world is not necessarily a nice place, and there's no indication from my part that the next two decades are going to be a whole lot nicer than what we've gone through for the last two.

So when we attacked the city of Fallujah – now, just to give you a sense for how big Fallujah is – you know, it was in the papers, you know, in 2004. I mean, everybody was hinged on Fallujah. We had six infantry battalions surrounding Fallujah. Six. That's it. Four Marines and two Army. And it took us, what, 40 days to – 40 days to beat the threat down and to force our will on a single city. What we're talking about, the capability for the United States of America, is six infantry battalions worth of forcible entry capability for the entire United States of America as we look at the Marine Corps and we start talking forcible entry. That's all we're talking about. So for our country, as global power, as powerful as we are, we're going to have the same capability that we had to force our will on Fallujah.

I think that's actually a pretty modest investment for a country that has global responsibilities. You don't know when you may need to force your will on somebody, but it would be very nice for the president and the national command authority to have that capability.

MR. : Thanks. Those are profound thoughts, actually. And you've raised a lot of issues.

We're going to get now to kind of the meat of the discussion, in many ways, because the questions that come from the floor oftentimes are the most interesting. So we're going to ask Maren and Nate, in whichever order you want to proceed, to offer some of those thoughts.

NATHAN FREIER: General, thanks for being here. Appreciate you taking the time. The first question we have really is – you really talked a lot about sort of where you think the primary focus of the Corps will be going forward from a contingency futures perspective. I'd be very interested for you to reflect a little bit on, given that future, where you see sort of a looming potential capability gap that's not necessarily being accounted for or filled from the Department of Defense right now, from your perspective.

And then another question would be, where do you see an area where the Marine Corps might be able to assume a little more risk as we go into sort of an era of declining resources?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. Let me – let me answer the last one first. You know, when we grew the Marine Corps from – and really when we started growing the Marine Corps at 2006 as a result of not only the war in Iraq but the war that was looming in Afghanistan – we grew from – we were sitting about 176,000 at that point, then we grew to 200,000 in 2000. And we've begun now dialing the Marine Corps back down.

When we did that, when we started coming down, one of the things Secretary Gates told me early on, he said, Jim, I want you to figure out how big the Marine Corps should be in a post-Afghanistan environment. He didn't tell me how big, how small, or – you know, is it big as a

bus or small as a breadbox. He didn't say. He just said, figure out – he said, the Marine Corps – or the nation doesn't need a Marine Corps of 202,000 post-Afghanistan. And I said, Amen, I'm with you.

So we spent almost a full year with what we call a force structure review effort. And it was really done very, very well. In fact, we were the only service that did it. And we came back, I briefed Secretary Gates – the secretary of the Navy, Secretary Mabus, and Secretary Gates, and they all said (OK ?). And it was a force – based on what the requirements that had been given me, both at the high end to be able to do this kind of major-theater war, the most likely kind of thing you're going to be dealing with, which is what Secretary Gates told me to do, and then be able to do some of the other stuff – was a force of 186,800.

Now, you can look at that and go, well, shoot, that's 10,000 more. But what had changed – you know, before you started (building ?) – what it changed in that period of time, from the 9/11 hit, is, is that we built MARSOC. We didn't have Marine Special Operations Command. We didn't have it. So we completely invested, pulled out all our – all our special operators, all our – you know, I was a three-star MEF commander down at Camp Lejeune, pulled out all my force reconnaissance, and we built MARSOC. And that's 3,500 Marines.

We – when we started the war, we were manned at probably around 90 percent. So for unit – (inaudible) – battalion required a thousand Marines, we really only had about 900 Marines in it. When you go to war, when the crisis hits, you don't want to be sitting at just below what you need – you actually – we spend a lot of time thinking about what – how big a unit should be in the time of war.

So we started cranking or manning up. That manning alone cost 6,000. In other words, you go across the Marines Corps, and you get to manning up to where it should be. That's 6,000 people.

And then we added close to a thousand cyberoperators because that's – I mean, that's a – that is a burgeoning domain I completely support – General Alexander, the secretary's efforts. I mean, I think that is – that is fertile ground for future investments because of the threat and the potential threat. So we've done that.

There is three or four other things that we've done. We've built a – we've built organizations to deal with counterinsurgency training and partnership building. So the bill actually is probably more like about 13,000 or 14,000 people. That's changed. So people say, well, what's changed since 9/11? Well, that's changed. You – the paradigm has changed, has been reshaped somewhat, and you can't approach the new world kind of like you sat around waiting for the old world to come – (inaudible) – operation in the old world. So 186,800 was – incorporated all of that. It allowed us to be able to do kind of a high-end operation but focused primarily on the middle. So I feel pretty good about that.

When the Budget Control Act came into effect last fall and the – and the Department of Defense had \$487 billion bill, our piece of it forced the Marine Corps to go down to 182,100. So you just take – you know, you can say, well, just take all those lessons learned over the last 10

years, 10, 11 years, just pretend like they don't exist anymore. You can say that, and then you can say, well, OK, well can't we just take the Marine Corps down?

Actually, you can't. You don't want – you know, everybody's told me, don't forget what you've learned in the last 10 or 11 years. I mean, I've had more senior leaders remind me of that. You can't turn your back on all the things that you've learned because we don't want to go back to that. I would say the forces we had – and certainly when I was growing up in the '70s and the '80s and the – and some of '90s, you know, the – what I call the interwar years was a hollow Marine Corps. I mean, I grew up flying airplanes where you had 12 planes in the squadron. If you had six up in a day and you had parts for six airplanes, you thought, God, we are (king of the pile?). We can't afford that today.

So lessons learned, we're going down to 182,000. We've already taken a risk now. I mean, that 182,000 force – now subtract – just subtract a 12,000 that I just talked about that are lessons learned. So now I'm down to – you know, I'm down to a 170,000 size force and a world that, quite honestly, doesn't appear to be any less threatening. We may come out of a major land operation in Afghanistan, but the world's not any less threatened.

So I've already taken risk. And right now any further reduction is going to reduce capacity. In other words, it's not – and in some cases, maybe some capabilities, but it's going to reduce capacity to be able to respond and to be able to respond against someplace else. You slowly work yourself down to a point where you don't have the ability to respond the way that you have to where a nation expects its Marine Corps.

So that's my answer to the – to the second part. And I can't remember what the first question was. I was hoping you could – (inaudible).

Q: Capability gap, emerging capability gap.

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. I think we're – I think one of the – one of the capability gaps we're trying to solve right now – and it's through – it's not an act of (commission?), it's an act of – (or omission?) – it's a – it's – we are really trying to solve this cyber piece right now. I mean – so it's a gap in that – in that there is a lot we don't know. It's a gap in the stuff that we do know. It infringes across a whole host of authorities that we just have to be very careful with, not only internationally but even nationally within the boundaries of the United States.

I think that – I think that cyberspace, I think the potential that's out there is significant. I mean, I think future commanders, if you end up in some major conflagration down the road – I mean, the future commander is going to have to have confidence in what he's – he or she is hearing, seeing – is it really the truth? Because I think cyber warfare is a – so I think that there is an area there's gaps.

And the other thing I'd tell you right now was – is that trying to figure out how much is enough – as we think about engagement, you know, we've been – we've been not narrowly focused but we've been principally focused on the central commander. We have allies, friends and responsibilities throughout all the other combatant commanders.

I think gaps are to how much – how do we get back into them? How do we help – how do we help our friends? How do we help them help themselves? And so I think there are gaps in there that we're going to have to kind of work our way through. How much is enough?

So that's kind of where I am right now.

MR. : OK. Go ahead, Maren,

MAREN LEED: Good morning, sir. Thanks for coming.

We have a series of related questions, so I want to try to – (inaudible) – if I could, about division of labor type issues between the services – (inaudible) – and some outside agencies. One (set of them ?) is about whether there is a potential for new synergies, new concepts, new capabilities in the area of what I'll call more conventional land operations with both the Army and with SOCOM. Another is in the indirect (foreign internal ?) defense-type partnership-building activities that you've talked about, that General Odierno talked about, the Army having do more of – and that – and that Admiral McRaven has also talked about SOCOM – (inaudible) – future. And then the final is sort of more in the direct-action side, both with MARSOC, SOCOM more generally, the Defense Clandestine Service and the CIA – so if you could speak to your view on what the Marine Corps' thinking is in each of those areas where you see divisions of labor, new ways ahead.

GEN. AMOS: Yeah, the first one was primarily the ground area, is that –

Q: Land operations.

GEN. AMOS: Land operations, yeah.

I think – the first thing I guess I'd like to do is dispel rumors and kind of maybe innuendos that – from my perspective, we're not in competition with our land brothers. I – you know, we have fought side by side. In fact, if you wander around, we don't wear patches on our uniforms. It's just – it's just part of what's happened over the years. We did World War II, and the commandant came after that and stopped it. When you see the combat patches on a lot of our shoulders – and they'll be 1st Marine Division or 2nd Marine Division because we fought side by side in Ramati (ph) and Fallujah, and I think that's pretty telling. And the relationship has been strong. It's – I don't think it's ever been better.

So I don't – I don't – I don't – my sense is there's not a competition for territory, for roles and mission here because I – you know, I think I explained pretty – at least I hope so – pretty well where I think the role of the Marines Corps is, you know, with regards to America's requirements.

But I do think that when we start talking land forces, I look at this thing as, you know, I just – (inaudible) – you know, the principle – when (we ?) – time to put land forces on the ground, I mean seriously put a footprint on the ground and do it with some sense of time and

endurance, I think – I'm happy to default to the Army. I mean, I – my sense is that's – we've done that throughout history. And that's one of the great strengths of the Army. I mean, you know, when the United States Army comes someplace, that's serious business. I mean, I really believe that.

So – but will I share that? Will I – will I maybe be the harbinger, kind of the John the Baptist of a ground preliminary operation if you – you know, if I can? And I think yeah, I think that's where we fit in there. I think – you know, I – I think our history shows that.

So I think there is plenty of room for both ground – I don't think they're redundant because quite honestly, what America needs to be able to do then is pull those Marines and go – something else. I mean, nothing ever happens all by itself around the world today, especially in today's world. It's going to happen around the globe. So we just need to be able to do that. I think there's plenty of room for that, shared operation, shared responsibilities, but there is no effort on our part at all to jump in or go, let me tell you what a great land army I am.

So I mean, I –

MS. LEED: But do you see new opportunities for – new ways of you collaborating together – (inaudible)?

GEN. AMOS: I think – I think absolutely. I don't know what they would be, but I think the last 11 years has developed relationships and trust between the two services that we never had before, ever had before. Now it's the same thing with the – with the Air Force. And the relationships we had with the United States Air Force today have never been stronger, and yet it was 10, 11 years ago, whether it was kind of acrimony or elbow throwing and that kind of stuff.

So I think – I think there's stuff that we don't even know yet, so the answer is yes. I think there is. I'm not sure – you know, to sit down and try to devise what it would be, I'm not – I'm not exactly positive. But I'll tell you, I think as we look into the kind of warfare we're going to be in and disperse, spread out into some of these thorny areas around the world, trying to influence and shape stuff, I think it absolutely would be.

As it relates to special operations forces – I want to make sure I get all – all your questions – you know, I think Afghanistan is the classic example of the way it should be and the way it needs to head. I'll give you an example: There is a collaboration today on the ground between special operations forces of any kind – you name it; could be Army, Air Force, Marines, SEALs – with what I call general purpose forces, there's a greater collaboration today and a greater dependency on one another than there ever has been before. If you go into Helmand province and you go up to Sangin, Kajaki; you go to anywhere around those areas there; and you're going to find – you're going to find SEAL teams in there, you're going to find Army Green Berets in there, you're going to find Marine special operators in there.

And they're – guess where they're getting their support. They're getting their support from four-bladed Hueys and Cobras. They're being flown around in MV-22 Ospreys, not the silvery kind that are – that got SOCOM on the – (inaudible) – they're general purpose forces.

Doesn't mean they don't get that kind of support when they need it, but it just means that there's a recognition now that the collaboration and the synergy between special operations forces and general purpose forces actually is a requirement. I mean, you can't – you can't do the things that our special operators do on large battlefields without support from general purpose forces. I'm not talking about the clandestine thing where they sneak in someplace and do something really bad to bad people, and then come out. I'm talking about the day-to-day battlefields special ops collaboration. I think it's better than it's ever been before.

And just so that you know, I told my wing commander on the ground there two years ago in Helmand, we – because we have a fair amount of capabilities on the ground there – and this was when special ops was primarily out west, out of Herat. I said, you look for opportunities. You put a liaison officer out there with them, you get a liaison officer in our command center, and you look for opportunities to support them with our assets and our capabilities, because it's – and it's worked out really well.

So there was a third thing in there. So we talked special ops, ground forces –

MS. LEED: Direct action, CIA, Defense Clandestine –

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. Well, I think – I think that kind of nested a little bit with what I just talked about. Some of that becomes, you know, when you really getting into the clandestine piece of this thing – and now I'm way out over the edge of my skis. So I – so I – you know, so I know they're not the same. When I talk about special operations, I actually understand it's not the same thing. But I do think that they're probably – the same way we have evolved with special operations forces and the relationship and some mutual support with SOCOM, I think we could probably do the same thing with clandestine and CIA. So we just may not be there yet. And we – you know what? It may be going on and I don't even know about it. In fact, if it was going on, I wouldn't know about it. Yeah. But I think I'm – I'll tell you what. I'm really bullish on where we're headed with special ops, and the relationships we have. And Bill McRaven is a – is an incredible commander down there, and he really is, hey, let's – what do we got to do for our nation?

MR. FREIER: General, I'm going to lump a few questions together here that sort of relate to the same topic. I think it's – the overall theme I would start with would be, what should the Marine Corps and what is the Marine Corps taking from the last 12 years of experience, and how is it sort of projecting that into the future conflict environment and making sure it's sort of both looking backward and looking forward and taking the best out of that?

And then, I think, connected to that would – there's a – there's traditionally, at least in the last sort of 25 years, been a – been a resurgence of the tension between the Marine Corps' small wars tradition and the Marines Corps' naval tradition. And I think it's directly related to this, what's happened over the last 12 years, and do you translate it into the future. And I'd be interested to kind of understand sort of what – how the Marine Corps has viewed its recent past and how it takes that past and translates it into its future readiness.

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. Yeah. Remember, my – in my comments, I talked about, you know, one of the things we have to do is make sure we don't – we don't take what we've learned over the last – and let it atrophy and we overlook it and turn our back on it. You know, we came out of Vietnam probably as a – and certainly with a lot of experience in counterinsurgency operations. I mean, there was a – there was an enormous amount of experience. And it – and it actually had begun to work, and it's just unfortunate that things happened the way they did in Vietnam and the decisions were made the way they were. But we forgot about that.

Now – so when we went into a counterinsurgency in Iraq, we pedaled pretty fast. We were in good company; everybody was on the ground. This was pedaling pretty fast. We're going back and reading everything that happened in Algeria. I mean, I remember reading about that. I remember working with Dave Petraeus and the counterinsurgency manual when he was at Leavenworth and I was at Quantico, had a team of guys and gals who were down there cranking this out, saying, OK, what do we got; stood up – stood up commands and organizations and schools to talk about hybrid warfare and – you know, and all the 4G warfare and all this stuff. But we're pretty good at it now.

I tell you what. I doubt if there's any nation on the face of the earth that probably has more experience in counterinsurgency operations than the United States does. I think the Army, our special ops forces we do – we understand it.

So let me anchor that point right there, because as we look to the future – to kind of answer your question – would we – I think the real question would be, would we see ourselves as having to use these kinds of skills? And all the attendant skills, the culture, the sensitivity, the realization that there is a thing called human terrain – not just ground terrain, not just something I got to get over, you know, kind of the mobility of a force – there's actually people. And they have cultures, and they have norms, and they have things that are acceptable or not acceptable. And so those are all kind of tentacles to that whole thing that deal with that kind of warfare.

I'll tell you, I think that's the world we're going to be operating in for the next two decades. I really believe that. When I was at Quantico and Jim Conway had just become the commandant, we began an effort to write a – to help write a vision. To do that, we had to kind of get a sense for what we thought the world was going to look like. We spent almost a year – and it wasn't just a bunch of Marines sitting around going, I think this is a great idea. We actually went – we probably came to CSIS –

MR. : (Off mic.)

GEN. AMOS: We did. OK. We went all over, and we went internationally, by the way, and we went to corporate America. You don't think that major corporations that are – that are global aren't interested in what the world's going to turn out – you know, prognostication? And what we came away with is, we've probably got a couple of decades of this hybrid stuff going on around the world, and at places that can be very nasty, and not necessarily grand battles set on the ground. These are – these are kind of the day-to-day bumping and grinding scenarios where there's competition for resources, there's terrorism, there's extremism, and we think – and then things like humanitarian disasters.

So I think that – I think that – I’ve forgotten what your question was, but I know – you know, I think that’s where we’re headed. And I think that’s – those are the lessons as we reshape the Marine Corps.

So if you say, that’s a big chunk of it, and then you go, OK, well, what else is missing? What are – what are you? And that’s the combined arms. That’s the ability to take large-scale forces and actually put them together and nest them together, should you need them, you know, if you want to have that. That’s the ability to remind every Marine that actually we’re a nautical force. So let me introduce you to what the prow of a ship looks like, let me introduce you what the mess looks like, let me introduce you to what berthing looks like, how about a load plan on a ship.

And we’re getting back to all of that. We kind of were – because of our relationship with our ground force – I mean, the aviation and our fire as part of the Marine Corps have – I mean, there’s a real – when I say fraternal spirit, I’m not talking male or female, I mean just that bonding between our forces in a – in a combined arms environment. We’re good at it. We need to get back at it again.

So I think we take the lessons learned. We do not turn our back on them, because we can’t afford it because we’re going to be in it for the next couple of decades. So all those skill sets we’re continuing to nurture. And then, in the meantime, we’re reintroducing Marines – the bulk of the Corps. We never left amphibious operations. We’ve been at it. We’ve got seven Marine Expeditionary Units that have gone out around the world in the last decade. So they certainly haven’t forgot about it.

But what we’re going to do now is just make sure the rest of the Marine Corps gets back to their nautical, their naval, their amphibious roots. So I think it’s that – hang on to what we got. Don’t lose sight of that so we don’t look back 10 years from now and go, what happened to that? I – (inaudible). OK?

MR. WINCUP: All right.

Q: Sir, I have a question about – beyond your Title 10 hat, which I think we’ve spent much of the morning talking about mostly Title 10 functions. In your role as a member of the Joint Chiefs, should further cuts come and you had the opportunity to have some input into how those might actually be allocated – (inaudible) – I mean, for the second part, not the first. Where do you see opportunities, from a department-wide perspective, for accepting greater risk? Where do – do you see any fat on the bone? What’s your corporate view on that?

GEN. AMOS: Well, I do – you know, it’s – when I talk to all the Marines – you know, all the – (inaudible) – that wear this uniform. I – after we give a big hoo-ah and all that, I actually eventually set into my JCS hat. And I take that responsibility, as do all the other service chiefs – and you’d be surprised sometimes in the way the discussions go when we’re together and we’re dealing with thorny matters. We actually step out of that service role and we actually start, OK, what’s best for our nation?

So not only do we have the capability, we do it routinely. And it's a responsibility that we take very, very seriously. You know, none of us are sitting there right now with an expectation that we're not going to give through a period of austerity. We're in it right now. We're probably about a year and a half, two years in the beginning of a period of austerity. Everybody in this room has seen the – seen the cycle on the X-Y axis as we've come out of wars and how far we go down. Depending on what chart you're using, it could be 31 percent, it could be 30 percent, it could be 33 percent.

And you start taking the slope down. And you take the peak of where everything was as good as it ever was to when the curve starts going back up again, and that's about 10 years, give or take a year. That seems to be historically, you know, with some sense of accuracy. So we're in it. We're about – and my guess, and I talk to all my generals, my senior leaders – we're probably about a year and a half into that right now – maybe two years, but probably a year and a half. So we've got this period of time where we're going to be in this period of austerity.

So you ask about where you can take risk, let me just tell you what we're done inside the Marine Corps and then I'll tell you where I think we probably can take risk, you know, maybe how to approach that, I'll put on my JCS hat. Inside the Marine Corps, I've looked at everybody and said, OK, everybody needs to understand where we are because this is not – this is not – let me just hope against hope this is where we are. So you have to anchor a few things, otherwise you're chasing the target all the time.

So I've anchored the Marine Corps at 182,000 because that's what the president told me and that's what the secretary of defense told me. And what I saw, at least before the elections, were Congress – that's where Congress wanted me to go. In fact, there were some folks in Congress who weren't happy with the drawdown in many of the services. So I said, OK, that's that. And that force now has to be able to do these things that I talked about – (inaudible) – and be able to do a – (inaudible). So I said let's just make sure that we have the readiness, we have the forces capable.

Now, inside that 182, how can I – how can I assume some risk? What is it I can do be able to afford that force in a – in a period of austerity? Am I going to be able to buy all the things I want? No. Am I going to be able to modernize the way I want? No. I'll give you an example: Joint Light Tactical Vehicle. When we signed up for this program four or five years ago, when I was just coming to be the assistant commandant, it was – we actually labeled it, we in the Army, labeled it as the Manhattan project. You know, it had kind of a cool name to it.

And we had – we expected – we gave all the requirements out and we said, OK, it's got to have MRAP-like protection, but it's got to be light. So we had these visions of having a vehicle with a V-shaped hull and an integrated cockpit and it's going to have armor on it the thickness of a – (inaudible) – paper towel. And it's going to weigh the same thing but it's going to cost us, you know, nothing. It can't happen.

As the program progressed, the vehicle got heavier and heavier and more expensive and more expensive, to the point about a year and a half ago, I said we're not buying it. Too heavy

for us; it's not going to meet our needs. It's come full circle now. The Marine Corps and the Army are in complete agreement on this – on this thing. But we were going to buy somewhere around 20,000 of them. It's a utility vehicle. You zip around – all those kids you saw on canvas-sided Humvees, well, they're going to be in these JLTVs because the Humvees are going away.

Well, I can't afford it. I can't afford 20,000. I'm only going to buy 5,500 I think. And I've turned to the Marine Corps and I said, figure out what's good enough. Get those Humvees – get the newer generations of Humvees and let's get them into the depots. Let's get our 7 ton trucks – instead of trying to buy a new one, let's get them into the depots, let's get the refurbished, let's get them rebuilt. That's good enough.

So inside the Marine Corps we are assuming risk right now with regards to modernization. There are some things I absolutely have to modernize. I always use the example of the Commodore 64. You know, the Marine Corps isn't a poor organization. We're still using Commodore 64s. That's not true, but if I did – (laughter) – we'd actually have to modernize. And we might want to go up to something that had a little bit more speed, a little more capacity.

MV-22s – we're flying now 45-46 year old CH-46 helicopters. We have to modernize those. Those things that we don't have to modernize we're accepting risk in and we're going to live with them during that period of austerity. And when things begin to turn and we start going through a period of transition, then we'll start releasing some of the controls on that stuff. But in that period of austerity – you can talk to every one of my generals in here and my senior colonels, and they've heard this pitch from me: We are in this period of austerity and, damn it, you better figure out what's good enough because we can't afford everything. So that's the service answer.

I think we got to do the same thing at – across the joint force. I think eventually we're going to have to say we have to begin with what is it we want, what is it our nation should do? I don't think you should begin with a, you know, what can we afford. I don't do strategy that way. It ought to be, what is it our nation should do as a global power? And then look at that and say – and really run that red team at it. And then say, OK, no kidding, we all agree around the table this is what our nation should do. All right, now how do we do it?

And then we ask ourselves the question, what's good enough? What's good enough to be able to do that? It could be capabilities, it could be platforms, it could be equipment, it could be force structure. But what is it that we're going to be able to do? And then you have to ask, how do we afford it? That's what we're doing in the Marine Corps right now. How can I afford a 182-size force? And I'm absolutely confident it can, but it's going to – it's going to be – it's going to be a little bit different than the way I'd have approached this problem four or five years ago. OK?

MR. WINCUP: Sir, mindful of your –

GEN. AMOS: What does that mean? Does that mean no questions?

MR. WINCUP: Well, it's mindful of your schedule and also the fact that you may need to get to Bethesda Naval fairly soon. (Laughter.) So –

GEN. AMOS: Hey, I've got one more Cepacol. I mean, I'm – (laughter) – you know, I – that's probably worth a couple of questions.

MR. WINCUP: But you're – you've given us some powerful thoughts as we all think through this period of austerity that's coming to face the country. And it's been enormously valuable and we're extremely appreciative of your taking the time, particularly how you feel.

GEN. AMOS: Can I made one question – (inaudible) –

MR. WINCUP: Well, absolutely, sir.

GEN. AMOS: You know, I've been – it's hard to imagine, but I actually have moved myself around the tank. And I'm now the senior guy on the tank, with the exception of, obviously, the chairman, which is a frightening thought because two years ago I was kind of at the end of the table. You know, you kind of move around this way.

So in my 27 months as the assistant commandant, hanging around the joint chiefs, and now my 23 months as the commandant – or, excuse me, 25 months – I've never seen the relationship better than it is right now. I just – I guess I want everybody in this room to hear from me, I mean, the relationship between the Joint Chiefs, it's never been better. I think – and I think that's really healthy as we go into these – this period of austerity because we are going to be making some hard choices, we are going to be asking what's good enough and all that stuff.

It is a pleasure for me to go into a tank when we've got at thorny issue and just sit down and listen to the leadership from my fellow service chiefs being led, of course, by General Dempsey, who is just a prince, I've never seen it better. So I guess I want everybody in here, as you start thinking about, oh, we don't know what the future's going to – I think the leadership is in place to make those hard decisions and to support whatever it is our nation, our national strategy is and to support the president and our country. I just – I feel really good about it and I like to tell audiences as often as I can, it's – I can't imagine it being any better.

MR. WINCUP: Sir, thank you. That's heartening. I – we all would hope you'd take that across the river on occasion and share that – those views with some of the folks that sit at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. But let me – please, help me thank the commandant for spending a fascinating – (inaudible). (Applause.) Thank you, sir.

(END)