

**OFFICE OF
THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
TOWN HALL MEETING, MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO**

**REMARKS BY
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GEN. AMOS: Listen, good morning. This is a great theater. It's a great time to be a Marine and it's good to be back at Quantico. My heart is here. Probably the hardest job I ever worked was the job Gen. Flynn has got right now. I mean, I'm working pretty hard right now. But the truth of the matter is, the toughest job I have is down here working on requirements, working on training and combat development, all of that.

So this is – we lived up on the hill where Gen. Flynn lives. Great house, great base, so it's good for – good for me to be back here. I'm joined up here with my sidekick, Sgt. Maj. Kent. You know we – he and I talked about this – about our team some time ago just when this thing was beginning to kind of break that I was going to be nominated to be the 35th commandant.

And I had this kind of cold rush in my heart. I thought, boy, I guess when I take over, that means I've got to go through the whole effort of finding another sergeant major, but I really love this guy. And if I had met Jim Conway four years ago and I'd have interviewed all the sergeants major that came through and their spouses, I'd have picked Carlton Kent. That's how much I think of him.

I was relieved a little bit when I found out that Sgt. Maj. Kent and I are going to be a team for another six or seven months. So it's great. He's a great sergeant major. You've got a wonderful sergeant major of the Marine Corps. It's fun – those few times with Gen. Conway would – (inaudible) – on a custody card to deal with the aftermath. (Laughter.) He and I – he and I would go around together and poke at one another and just have a great time. So Sergeant Major, I'm just glad that we're still going to be a team for quite some time to come.

Look, I've got some slides up here and I want to talk – here's how this morning's going to go. Let me back up a bit. I'm going to talk to you about the Commandant's Planning Guidance. And there's not a lot of slides up here. So this is not a – I'm not going to kill you with a PowerPoint. But it's the meaty things that are important to me and are important to our United States Marine Corps.

When we looked at the planning guidance – you know, I started fussing with this thing really about 90 days ago when it was all in the preliminary stages. I was working my way with a small group of Marines who were kind of helping me focus. We sent Marines out in the fleet to gather information about what commanders, what senior leaders, sergeants major, master gunnys, commanders at the lieutenant colonel level, commanders at the colonel level – I wanted to find out what you thought were the major issues as it relates to the Marine Corps as we look forward for the next couple of decades, certainly for the next four years.

And we got that feedback. We sent Marines – we sent teams up and down the East Coast, West Coast, sent them to Twentynine Palms, sent them to Hawaii, MIDPAC, all the way out to WESTPAC. So I have that feedback.

I sat with all of my three-stars. Every single three-star general. And I talked to them about the issues that they see for the Corps for the next four years. I wanted to get their perspective. I thought I had it – I mean, I thought I understood it pretty well. But I wanted to hear it from them.

And as a result of that, in my own personal notes and just things that are important after being a Marine for four decades, and having been a commandant – excuse me, assistant commandant – and the other jobs I've held, to be honest with you, we kind of have a pretty good sense – I did – for where the Marine Corps needed to go for the next four years.

So I wrote the Commandant's Planning Guidance. It's been out. I hope a lot of you have seen it. If you've not, it's on the web. You can get it electronically. And you need to see it. If you're a lance corporal out there and you go, you know, the commandant doesn't care what I think. I'm just a lance corporal. That's not true. You're the lance corporal and someday you're going to be the sergeant. You're the lance corporal; someday it's going to be the gunny. You're important. You're an important part of the future of our Marine Corps.

We got some interesting times we're about to enter. As the economy begins to – or as we begin to realize some of the effects of the economy in the Department of Defense. So I need your help. All right. So what I'm going to do this morning, is we're going to run through the things that are important to us as the Marine Corps. I'm going to try to not use the personal pronoun; I'm going to talk about "us". "Us" as United States Marines.

At the end of my – at the end of one section in my planning guidance, the part that talks about our ethos – I say, being a U.S. Marine is the single most important thing. It transcends being a general. It's more important than being a colonel or a lance corporal, being a commandant. What's most important is being a U.S. Marine.

When I wrote the Commandant's Planning Guidance, I wrote a letter to begin with to all our families, to all our Marines with a short paragraph in there to Gen. and Mrs. Conway. And I said thanks. Thanks for being the role models, and that couple that, wherever they went, everybody looked and said, that's my commandant and that's his lady. There was no doubt in anybody's mind when Jim and Annette Conway stepped center-front. I wanted to thank them.

The second section of my Commandant's Planning Guidance was written specifically for you. I spent a lot of time on that. And I had a lot of help. But it was written to you, and it talks about who we are. It talks about what this means to have the eagle, globe and anchor tattooed on our hearts and our souls. And I did that for a reason, because as we look forward we kind of plan on what's going to happen to the Corps. You have to always go back and remember who you are. Because we're different.

We are a unique breed of Americans that come less than one-tenth of 1 percent, that are willing to sacrifice and suffer for one another. I talk about that strange feeling that goes inside of you when the Marine Corps hymn is played. And you get those goosebumps. And you kind of feel like your hair is standing up on the back of your neck.

Four decades of being a Marine and it hasn't gone away. Every now and then, my eyes get teary when I think about being a Marine. Not about being the commandant, not about being three-star general but about being a Marine. That's the second section.

The third section is I talk about the future security environment. I want you to understand where we are going to do our business for our nation, more than likely, for the next several decades.

When I was down in Gen. Flynn's job, we spent about a year-and-a-half writing Gen. Conway's vision for 2025. I spent almost a year traveling around this nation, talking to think tanks, flying to other countries, talking about their vision of what the world is going to look like over the next several decades. You'll see that. I'll talk about the future security environment in here.

And based on who we are, what the world is likely going to look like that we're going to operate in, then I say, Marines, these are the important things that we're going to do. These are the things that we're going to do. And I'll get into it. It's organized that way. Next slide.

The pictures of the future security environment. I mean, this could be a host of different cities throughout the world. And I'll talk about some of the attributes of where we're going to find ourselves, but Marines are going to find themselves in places like this. We're going to find ourselves in urban areas, tightly contested. Areas that are probably in some of the – what we might consider to be the least desirable places to operate in. That's where Marines are going to find themselves for over the next few decades. Next slide.

The future security environment. Now, I'm going to describe this. This does not mean that the Marine Corps will not be prepared, and ready, and understand its responsibility in a major-theater war. We will do that, and should major-theater war take place, we will be on the forefront of that. You can take it to the bank. The same way we were when we crossed the border in March of 2003 into Iraq; the same way we were when the first provisional brigade was formed by Gen. MacArthur; and we proudly gathered the Marines and surrounded the city of Seoul and took back Seoul after the landing at Incheon.

So we will be at the forefront of any major theater war. That is probably the high end, and I would hope the least likely, of all the scenarios we're going to find ourselves in. But most likely, there's going to be operating in this kind of environment. Where you saw the pictures of the urban areas, you take a look at what's happening around this world. There's a tendency towards urbanization. Populations are going back into cities. They're going to be in areas that are going to be tightly contested by gangs, by criminal organizations, by terrorists and extremist organizations. But they are going back to cities because that's where they find sanctuary.

If they're out in the countryside, and there's suburbs, it's easy to deal with. But in the cities, they become faceless and nameless, and hard to deal with.

Overpopulation. You take a look at Central Europe, Europe as we typically think about it and know it. That population density is decreasing in Central Europe, and yet in what we call the

developing areas of the world, the population is exploding. It's exploding with young men and women. And you take that – you take the fact that you're going to meet a lack of education and jobs in a lot of these, what we call, contested areas. All of a sudden, you got a recipe: you've got unemployment, you've got young males, and you've got extremist ideology. And it doesn't take a lot for us to think about gangs, and how do gangs in parts of our country take root.

What causes the young man or woman to want to join a gang? First of all, they probably have a – they probably come from a bad family. Or a family that's dysfunctional. They want to join an organization that gives them a sense of identity. They come to take up a cause. And as they were an outsider on the rest of society, but in a gang they become an insider. That's what's going to happen in the world over the next few decades. In these areas that are underdeveloped, that are actually what we call kind of developing nations. But they're developing only because their populations are growing.

But these are the areas, along the littoral parts of the world, where Marines are going to find themselves operating.

Poverty, lack of education, competition for resources. There's prognostications – in other words, folks are making guesses that water will become a more valuable commodity than fossil fuels will be. They'll pay more – there are people in this world that will pay more for a gallon of fresh water than will for a gallon of gasoline or a gallon of diesel fuel. Competition for resources is going to be extreme in these developing countries.

It's all going to be fueled by extremism, recruitment by criminal gangs. You don't think that's the case? Just take a look at what's going on, on some of our borders right now with criminal activity. Drugs. We see that in some of the places where we're operating in right now, to include even Afghanistan.

And finally, the thing that probably is the most frightening of all, is we have all this recipes, alchemy, what the world's going to look like that we're going to fight in and we're going to be a part of, we're going to enter that – we're going to train in, we're going to be called to work in. And many of these people are going to have access to some of the most deadly weapons available.

They have it because they're funded by organizations that have a lot of money. They're going to have the best in technology. Remember when the Hezbollah launched that unmanned aerial vehicle and flew out in the Mediterranean and almost sank the Israeli frigate? How did they get that technology? How did that they get that weapons? They got it because they could afford it. They got it because they're funded by extremism.

So that's the world we're going to work in, more than likely. Again, it doesn't mean we're not going to be prepared for major theater war. But I think, based on everything I've been able to read and studied, this is where the Marine Corps is going to do its work when we come out of Afghanistan –next slide.

The role of the Marine Corps in that environment – a little bit of everything for all of us in here to include humanitarian decisions. I don't want it to escape anybody in this room that last May, when that terrible disaster hit our NATO country Haiti; seven U.S. Navy amphibious ships full of 5,000 United States Marines and sailors boarded and went to Haiti and were there for 45 days. Do not take that for granted.

The Marines were coming ashore in helicopters and their landing craft. They brought water, they provided medical support, they stayed there for 45 days. They came and they were able to come ashore in places that nobody else could. And we know how to operate in (austere ?) conditions. We did that.

Turn the clock forward to just about a month-and-a-half ago, two months ago when Pakistan had the terrible floods, the monsoons that flooded the entire country. You saw those pictures of those heavy-lift helicopters, the CH-53s with the United States Marine Corps painted on the side of them.

And while we're in the middle of a war and we're in Afghanistan and while Harriers off the Peleliu were flying combat operations and sorties and while the Marines off the Peleliu were doing their good work in Afghanistan the 53-echo helicopters were flying 400 miles north inland carrying water, medical supplies, taking the refugees, moving them around the country, getting them out of harm's way. We did that for almost two months and we're on the tail end of it right now.

And by the way, while that was happening ,one of the ships was the 15th MEU, sailed due west and captured the Magellan Star away from the pirates. So all of that is going on while we're sitting here at Quantico. Next slide.

There's the role of the Marine Corps. This is the mission statement. Now, there was a period of time in my life that I was a deputy on the MAGTF Staff Training Program headquartered right here at Quantico and I can write a mission statement. I've done it both in training and I've done it for real many, many, many times.

This is not a good example of how to write a mission statement. It's too long. It's got too much. But I tried to figure out how I could capture, for you and for everybody else that's going to take a look at where the Marine Corps is headed, what we're going to do. So it's wordier; it's longer than I'd like. But let's take a look at some of the things that are critically important.

We are going to be, we are now and we are going to be America's expeditionary force in readiness. Marines ask, when people say what does the Marines – you know, tell me, son or daughter or friend, what does the Marine Corps do? We are America's expeditionary force in readiness.

That last word in there, in readiness, implies an awful lot. That implies a force that is ready today – to go today to fight today's battles. Last December, early December, when our president spoke at West Point and he talked to the nation and he announced in a major strategy

speech that he was going to increase the U.S. force level in Afghanistan by 30,000 – 10,000 of those would be United States Marines.

Now, we already had almost 11,000 Marines on the ground at that time. But he made that announcement and I think it was a Monday night. The very next day, Marines from 1st Battalion, 6th Marines were on board Marine C-130s flying to Afghanistan. You think about that. No other force has the ability to do that.

No other force in our country, quite honestly, has the congressional mandate that we have to be the most ready when the nation is the least ready. That was written in a 1952 congressional letter. You will be, Marine Corps, the most ready when the nation is the least ready. That dictates that last word, a very high state of readiness. And I'm dedicated and we will maintain our high state of readiness in the Marine Corps.

We are not going to – (inaudible) – our readiness because when the president calls, which is the very last sentence in that mission statement, we're going to be ready. We're going to be ready to do whatever he wants us to do. We're going to be forward deployed and forward engaged. We're a balanced Marine air, ground, logistics team.

While we were going through this, writing that mission statement the whole concept of the importance of logistics just jumped out at me. If we weren't able to take on logistics and have it with us and have this, kind of, packaged up with us we would be – we wouldn't be ready and we wouldn't be who we are. Logistics is the hinge pin on this entire operation. So we are that balanced force.

We create options and decision space for the president. That's an important point, you need to understand that. Can you imagine when something happens around the world – just, I mean, something. It could be something as bad, as heartbreaking as Haiti. It could be something as heartbreaking as the floods, the monsoons of Pakistan. It could be something that requires absolute combat power and military operations.

And you're the president of the United States and you're trying to – you've got your key leaders together, you've got the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and you're working through this. Okay, what should we do as a nation? What should the United States of America do? In the meantime, while we're trying – and by the way, that's not always clear. It's not always just jumps out at you and you go, I know precisely what we're going to do.

While the decision-making is – while that decision-making is going on, the United States Marines will deploy. And we'll provide space and provide our senior leaders options. We will be the forerunner. That's what I want the Marine Corps to be. I want us to be there first. Not some prideful thing with me, but because that's what we get paid to do.

I want us to be there first and I want us to provide some space and some time for our national command authority to say, okay, what's the best step? That's what Marines do. We've done it for a long – we've done it for 235 years and we're going to continue to do it during my commandancy.

We respond to today's crisis with today's force today. We don't have to wait a month. We don't have to wait two months. We closed 10,000 Marines, we have – first of all, we had 1st Battalion, 6th Marines and 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines on deck in Afghanistan in less than 30 days. We closed the entire force in about two months. No other force on the face of the earth could have done that.

We enabled and participated. This part right up here – we enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any kind. I'm very comfortable with the Marine Corps enabling and helping and assisting our joint partners. We don't have to be in charge of everything, that's not my goal.

My goal is to be that force that's there, gets there first and if it's a humanitarian assistance, then we'll help our partners that are dealing with humanitarian assistance. If it's combat operations and we're going to – where we have U.S. Army Forces blowing in behind us, then I'll be more than happy and pleased to set the conditions for those heavy Army forces to come in behind us.

I'm more than happy to set the conditions for special operations forces to flow in. I'm more than happy to provide them and help them with some enablers who we have whether it be helicopters or logistics or engineers. I'm more than content to do that because we're going to help and we're going to enable our fellow organizations and services with assistance. But we're going to be there first. Sometimes we're going to be in charge and sometimes we're not. But we're going to participate and we're going to be team players.

We're a middleweight force. I got to tell you that we spent days talking about how to describe this. I had everything – I mean I had the – sort of your general-purpose force but I didn't like that. That sounded like a sack of flour – (laughter) – you know, I'm a general-purpose flour so we're going to make biscuits out of the Marine Corps – or bread. I didn't like that.

Okay, you're a heavy force. Well, that just means we're fat. (Laughter.) We're not going to be fat. That means we can't get there for 120 days because we got to put it on trains because we've got a – it's too heavy to get on ships or we got to – you know, we can't get on the C-17s because it won't fit. I don't want to be a heavy force.

Okay, you're a lightweight force. Well, shoot, I don't want to be known as a lightweight. (Laughter.) You know, let's send in the lightweights. (Laughter.) What the hell does that mean? Middleweight. While we're talking about this I had this vision of a boxer and we had all these really smart majors in this who worked this – (inaudible) – to kind of grind it through.

I'm telling you, Marines, I spent two weeks on this. We were doing other things, but we spent two weeks. Every day, we went back and went through this. And I had all these smart majors and I know that's an oxymoron. (Laughter, applause.) But all these smart majors – I got to be careful of what I say now that I'm a commandant. (Laughter.) I could get away with that before. I can't now so much.

But they were working and they said, sir, you can't do middleweight. I mean, people are going to – what do you do? I mean, what the heck is a middleweight? And I said, well, it's a boxer. I mean, if you want to box heavyweight, you just go down to Burger King and eat a few more heavy burgers with a couple of milkshakes and you step on the scales and now you're in there with some fat tub of lard and you're going – but you're going to have boxing.

And then if you really want to have your day, you just get on Nutrisystem for about a week and – (laughter) – and now you can get in the lightweight and you can have your way with that lightweight. And they said, sir, Marines aren't that – (inaudible). Sir, they're going to think that, that's stupid. (Laughter.)

There was a young sergeant in there who was a part of this whole thing while we were going through this and he's great for me – and I won't tell you his name because a bunch of you know him – and I said, what do you think devil dogs?

And he said, sir, I think it's a great name. He said I'm a boxer; I grew up boxing when I was in high school. And he says if you're middleweight guy, I mean, that's the right – and that's what it was and I said, that's it. A Marines sergeant named what we are as a force. So all of you sergeants out there, you can thank the young Marines sergeant for calling us and helping me settle on, we're a middleweight force.

We operate through all kinds of different spectrums of conflict. We could do special-ops, we could do the humanitarian stuff which is on a what we call a range of military options – (this all the way on the left-hand side ?). We could go all the way to the right of the scale and we could do heavy, heavy combat.

We're probably going to operate, more than likely, by – (inaudible) – in this hybrid-warfare time. And we're ready to respond when the president calls. And by the way, that's in congressional law as well – next slide.

Okay. These are my four priorities. Marines, I had – I mean, I had hundreds of things that I had been writing over months. Hundreds of things that I got from the sergeants major and the commanders and hundreds of things I got from my three-stars. And we, kind of, rendered them down to four major areas.

Our first and primary focus, Marines, I want it to be clear to everybody in here that it is to do our mission in Afghanistan. That is job one with me. We are not going to back off of it. We are meeting, by the way, just for your information, with some pretty doggone tremendous success.

We have reason to be optimistic. I testified that to that in my confirmation hearing to the Senate Armed Services Committee and I feel even stronger today than I did a month ago or a month-and-a-half ago when I testified. We have every reason to be optimistic. It is not without cost.

Sgt. Maj. Kent, his wife Liz and Bonnie and I, my wife, spent eight hours on Saturday in Bethesda. They've got a lot of wounded Marines in that hospital so it's not without cost. But we are going to finish the mission and we're doing really, really well and you'd be very proud of your brothers and sisters that are in Afghanistan.

We're going to rebalance our Marine Corps. There's an effort on – (inaudible) – right here in Quantico. It is fairly closely held. It's about, I don't know, maybe 100 very senior and bright Marines of every background that are working what we call the Force Structure Review Group. And that's an effort that we've been directed by the secretary of defense and by the secretary of the Navy to do. And we're going to look and reshape the Marine Corps post-Afghanistan.

What does the Marine Corps need to look like when we come out of Afghanistan? How big should it be? We've advanced a lot of technology. We've learned an awful lot in eight years. How do we apply those lessons to force structure, the kind of equipment? How big, how small? There's going to be dramatic changes. We're looking at all active-duty units, everyone.

It doesn't matter whether you're a future Joint Strike Fighter or you're an infantry battalion or you're combat logistics. It doesn't matter whether you're a V-22 squadron or whether you're tanker or an artillery. It doesn't matter. We're looking at 100 percent of all units. We're looking at 100 percent of our headquarters, bases, stations, MEFs, divisions, MLGs, wings, our regional headquarters.

We're looking at it all. And then we're looking at all 49,400 reserves. What does the reserves need to look like? I mean what do we need? We need capabilities in the reserves. So what should they look like and what is their real mission? And finally, we're looking at 100 percent of our civilian Marine manpower structure.

So that effort will report out in late December. I'm working it every week. I meet with – lots of hands-on, player-coach kind of stuff. And then I'll report to the secretary of the Navy and secretary of defense in January. We're going to reshape the Marine Corps.

We're going to better educate our Marines. For those of you that are at Marine Corps University, I don't see Gen. Neller down here. He probably won't show up. (Laughter.) Those of you at the Marine Corps University – (inaudible). But it doesn't mean we're not doing a great job on our schools because we are.

I think we've got probably the best present PME around, but we can do better. I've watched for years that we only have one command and staff class a year. Yet, we say, we tell all of our majors, this is really important. Now, we're going to change that. I watched every year, I had this job and then I became MEF commander.

As we pull captains out of expeditionary war, they're still around, March and April so that they can go to the Mojave Desert so they can join their battalions in training so they could become company commanders so they can deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan. And we did that because we had one captains' course every year.

We're beyond that now. So we're going to change that. We're going to double the numbers of majors going through. We're going to triple the numbers of captains going through. It's going to be a combination of things like – (inaudible) – to begin with and then – in preparation, and then come to resident school.

It's expensive. All the money guys are going to say, you can't do it. It's too expensive. We've tried it before. It won't work. What about PCS? What about families? What about, what about, what about. And I'm telling you, I'm going to blow right over the top. We'll figure it out how to do it smart. We're going to do it the right way.

I've got a very high priority on NCO training, very, very high. We're going to change that. We're going to make that better than it is. It's good but we're going to make it better. So education's a big part of it.

And then finally, we're going to keep taking care of our Marines and our families and our sailors. That deals with everything from things like family readiness to care for our wounded. We are legendary, in the Department of Defense, on care for our wounded, legendary. We set the bar and we continue to set the bar.

And you have my personal promise that this will continue. So we're going to continue to take care of our families. There's a lot of things we can do to take care of our Marines and we'll talk about some of them. Next slide.

Okay, just a couple things – I'm going to read each one of those and then we'll get to questions. And by the way, be thinking about what you might want to ask Sgt. Maj. Kent or I. We're going to – unit cohesion is an important thing. I've watched it now. I've watched these last-minute fills with the right leaders and it just absolutely tears a unit apart. I mean it's not the way we ought to do – we've learned differently and we're going to fix that. So I'm not sure how we're going to fix it, we're going to fix it. I've already got some folks working on that thing.

Resiliency training. I've talked to Gen. Dunford when he was MARCENT with 1-MEF, four, five months ago. The whole concept of how do you build a Marine – how do you shape a Marine? How do you train a Marine? How do you make him or her more resilient? Well, what does that mean?

Does that mean that we're not tough in combat? No, that's not what I'm talking about. This is – that's not what I'm talking about. But how do you make a Marine able to cope with the stuff that's going on? First of all, we've got the best Marines we've ever had. We train better than we've ever trained before.

And they're absolutely – and almost every one of you are part of the millennial generation, folks wringing their hands over the millennial, oh shoot, they're not going to be courageous. They're not going – they're going to be self-centered. They're not going to worry about – it's all going to be me. That couldn't be farther from the truth. That could not be farther

from the truth. Our Marines are absolutely selfless and they're absolutely fearless. That is not the issue.

Though since they're trained hard, they still come in droves – (inaudible) – sign up to be a Marine, it'd be eight months before you can check in to Parris Island or San Diego, eight months. We've got no problem recruiting quality Marines. We've got no problem retaining quality Marines. That's not the issue.

So they're fearless, they're smart, they're selfless. They're willing to deploy again and again to go into harm's way. They're willing to work long hours in the Pentagon. They're willing to work long hours at Quantico. That is not the issue, Marines.

What causes a young Marine to just come around because of something he or she has seen in combat? What causes a young Marine to say, you know, I can't take it anymore and decide to go down a path where they're willing to take their own life? How does that happen? I don't know. But I think there are things that we can do.

I think immersion training that we're doing, hopefully, Twentynine Palms, immersion training like we're doing down at Camp Pendleton, immersion training we're building down at – (inaudible) – Camp Lejeune, bases. That's part of it. But there's more. How do we build the coping skills for our young Marines such that when something happens in life?

It could be AJP (ph); it could be, I got caught doing something really stupid and I'm disappointed with myself and disappointed my fellow Marines. Maybe I'm disappointed my wife, maybe I'm disappointed my parents. But I'm going to suck it up and deal with it. I'm not going to think about going off someplace and taking my life.

How do you build those coping skills? That's what this is all about. It's more than just suicide. It's coping skills for combat. You take some young – your best friend and he dies in your arms. How do you deal with that? So we're going to work very hard on that.

I'm done and fed up with having what we call low-density, high-demand. You know, what we've done now for eight years. You know, we keep taking these – some of these unique MOSs and we send them back to back to back to back. And why is that? Because we haven't built any more. We're going to make all these low-density, high-demand asset MOSs into high density, high demand. We're going to solve that. Next slide.

We're going to rebalance the Corps. I've already talked about the force structure review group. That environment that I talk about is – supports the whole concept of irregular warfare. We've got a lot of organizations right now that we have built in the Marine Corps, all in good faith, all about the right reasons, all kind of focusing different aspects of irregular warfare.

I think we can consolidate that. I think we should. And we can figure out what it is we ought to be doing. That bullet on the MARSOC down there, that sub-bullet; I'm a big MARSOC fan. I think we've backed up to the table on MARSOC now. I was at Lejeune – I was a CG

down there of 2 MEF. I gave up my force-recon guys and they went over and they were the initial MARSOC.

I was there when the deals were struck between Gen. Hagee and Gen. Brown. I know everything about how we got to where we are today. My sense is, is that we have been in denial on MARSOC. We've got 2500 young Marines and they were – (inaudible) – they were corpsmen that were down there at Camp Lejeune and now at Pendleton. And they are doing fantastic work.

They're Marines. They're Marines first and they do special operations second. They don't run around in black tee shirts. They don't run around in beards – (inaudible, laughter). But they're Marines and they do some incredible things. And I'm very proud of them. I see them routinely. It's interesting when I visit them with Gen. – when Sgt. Maj. Kent and I visit them in the hospital. This is not – (inaudible) – or anything. That's mine.

So they're doing – I'm a big fan of this. There's some things we need to do to bring that back into the brotherhood, try to bring them back into this thing called the Marine Corps. And there's some things we need to provide to make sure that they're successful.

We're going to lighten MAGTF. We've talked, now, testimony for the last two years and we keep saying, we've gotten too heavy. We can't even get aboard ship anymore. We've gotten fat. Our equipment's heavy. We've got 30-ton MRAPs and a lot of this stuff happened – just happened.

But a good example of how we're going to lighten load is all that we went through when we built the new Modular Tactical Vest and Gen. – (inaudible) – was down here and how we got to worrying about ounces. And then we went to a plate carrier for Afghanistan, very, very successful. Very successful. That lightened the load.

I was viewing a piece of heavy – or a piece of equipment by a system service that I was wearing it not too long ago. And I'd been encouraged to put this piece of gear on. I'm not going to tell you what service or what, but I put this on and it was pretty cosmic. I mean it had a lot of electronic stuff on there and I'm wearing it and I've got it on my head and I'm looking out at stuff. And I'm kind of a technology guy, so I like it.

So I'm thinking this is really cool. It weighed 13-and-a-half pounds. But let me get this right. I've got a Modular Tactical Vest that weighs how much, Mike?

MR. : (Inaudible.)

GEN. AMOS: Thirty –

MR. : Eight.

GEN. AMOS: Nine? Thirty-eight pounds? A Modular Tactical Vest that protects the front of me, the back of me, I put side-stacking plates on because I want to come home. It

weighs 38 pounds. And then I'm going to put my ammunition on there, by the way. You can never have enough ammunition.

So you see Marines with stacks and stacks of ammunition. And then you put water and then you put all that so you end up with 65 pounds. And I'm going to put 13-and-a-half pounds so I can have cosmic little doodad that will give me complete situational awareness. We're not doing that.

I went at it last month and fired – now, all the infantry guys in here are going to choke, okay? I went out and I fired the infantry assault rifle out at a weapons training battalion. Now, remember, I'm a fighter pilot. So I'm not even supposed to touch a weapon unless it's a 2,000-pound weapon. I've got that. (Laughter.) But I went out and this thing could – notice I didn't say would – could replace assault.

It weighs half as much. Now, Marines, that is lightening the load. So we're going to work real hard on this one. By the way, it's a great weapon. If any grunts in here have not fired that weapon, you need to do that because fighter pilot old man here has done it and even I could put it in about that much, 500 yards away. I think it's an incredible weapon. Okay.

So we're going to lighten the load. We're going to work – Gen. Dunford's going to cheer for it – every piece of equipment we buy – everything. If it's a new helmet, if it's – whatever, it's going to come through the process the way it normally does. The last clearing authority will be this board.

Now, we're going to stick our nose in cyberspace operations. Gen. Flynn is commander of that. And the fact that all you do is text now and the fact that nations are trying to get into our websites by the thousands of times every day requires us to be smart. Next slide.

Okay, we're going to invest in NCOs and junior officers. This is, you know, we're going to procure Marines for the security operations. By the way, we are – we've done really well. We've got sergeants now owning battle space and controlling Marines in places that platoon commanders and company commanders used to deal with. So we're going to invest heavily on NCO training.

This thing down there – SEP, that's a special education program that goes on at Monterey for our officers. We're going to work on that, foreign area officer, regional area officer and fellowships. We take a young Marine, usually a captain or a major; we send them to Monterey. They go up there. They get an advanced degree.

Or they become foreign area; we send them over to the Defense Language Institute and they learn a language. They become experts in new areas and they're value-added and then we promote them.

How does that happen? You know, why would we spent a billion dollars to educate this Marine and he's value-added or she's value-added and then we won't promote them? We're

going to change that. Okay? Values-based training. Gen. Flynn started it when he was a two-star down here at Training and Education Command.

That's an offshoot to how we get to our moral fiber that causes us to make the right decisions? We instituted a boot camp down at the School of Infantry. That is so critically important to who we are that we're going to – we're going to incorporate that – we're going to put that in the Marine Corps University. We're going to elevate that up through our education system.

Finally, the last thing on there is Gen. Wilhelm, in 2006, brought a bunch of general officers together, really, really smart, really smart folks. And they met for a year-and-a-half and the question asked them was how do you turn a Marine Corps University into a world-class facility and an organization?

Right now, we've got great teachers. They do great work. Our instruction is super. That's not the issue. But there were, I think, four or five – there were four or five major recommendations coming out of that – what we call the Wilhelm study. And we are going to – and they're great.

One is to update our IT network and actually kind of get us to the 21st century. One is to double the size of our facilities and modernize. When Gen. Gray (sp) built that facility over there, he did it very quickly. And it was – it absolutely changed the image of Marine Corps University. It put the Marine Corps University on the map.

We're going to do that. We're going to double the size or maybe even triple the size of that facility. We've already got money in the budget to do it and we're going to do it. That'll be done at the end of my four years as being the 35th commandant. I'm dedicated to doing that. So all of those of you that are Marine Corps University, tighten your seatbelt.

Next slide. Last one on here is keeping faith. We've talked about the Wounded Warrior Regiments. Those things, post-traumatic stress. I could tell you story after story, TBI. We're going to continue to work on that. There's no easy solution. I'm going to go back through the (failure readiness ?) program and just we – put a lot of effort in that in the last eight to nine years. And we've got a lot of programs.

We're going to go through and take a solid review about what really works, what doesn't, what's needed. If there's more that's needed, we'll do that. We're going to – this is not about efficiencies on this thing. It's about effectiveness. So we're going to do our best to go through that and we're going to take a hard look at our single Marine program while we're going through that.

The third – (inaudible) – Marines, we've worked for the last four years to try to have the face of the American population on this issue on the – (inaudible). And we've not met the mark. And I'm not sure why. But we're not – (inaudible). We're going to fix that. I don't know what the solution is. We're putting together some smart people to help us, because I sit out; I look at formations and in my mind, they don't reflect the American people, the population.

And that's not good for us. This is not going to be – (inaudible). This is not going to be – this is not going to be lowering the standards. Right now, we've got 98 percent of our Marines coming in are high-school graduates. This is not going to be lowering the mental – (inaudible) – standards, none of it. We don't have to do that. But we've got to figure out how the world's greatest war-fighting organization that only needs less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the entire American population, what've we got to do to recruit Marines from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. How do I do that? We're going to figure it out because I'm not satisfied with what we have.

Transition systems. I've got to tell you. We've not met the mark in this. I've watched it. I've watched it since I was a captain. I've sat in on some of the classes. We have failed, Marines. When Gen. Krulak was a commandant, he said Marine Corps does a couple of things.

One, we make Marines. Two, we win our nation's battles. And the third thing Gen. Krulak says is we return back to America young men and women that are better than when they joined the Corps. And we return them back to societies, to their homes, to their families, to their churches, to their organizations. And they're better off. That's the part we're failing at.

Now, we return great Marines back. That's not the issue. But we can do better. How do we find all these Marines that are homeless? How does that happen? How do we find Marines that don't have jobs? The finish a great tour in the Marine Corps and they don't have jobs when they get out. Or they don't have any path for them to follow down to get to the next part.

How does that happen? We're failing; I'm just telling you. We're going to fix that. There's a great effort. It's already begun. Gen. – (inaudible) – started it about a year-and-a-half ago. We're going to turn this completely upside down.

We're going to integrate the behavioral-health of this – by behavioral health, I'm talking suicides, sexual assault, those kinds of issues that were always there, but now have kind of come to the forefront. We're going to put our arms around this and we're going to – on a matter we've been in denial. So we're going to do our best as a Marine Corps and help fix that, help turn those around. That's a big effort.

And finally, for all of you admin Marines in here? The YPAT (ph). There are several NCOs in here that love the YPAT. So what I'm about to say, they're going to choke. I'm telling you that one of the things that rang out loud and clear from the senior leadership to the Marine Corps was the matter of small-unit leadership.

Sergeants major, first sergeants, master sergeants said you know, sir, I can't – for me to get a record book key to see what's in a Marine's record on his page eleven or any part – any aspect about that Marine, I've got to get in. I've got to either get on my bike or I've got to get in my car and I've got to drive across base and I've got to stand in line and I've got to go, can I have the record book for Lance Cpl. Lance.

We're not going to do that. So there's pieces of - (inaudible) - so if you love YPAT, don't - have no fear, you're going to have a job. But I've listened to the leadership of the Marine Corps and we're going to pull out the pieces of YPAT that belong in the small unit so that our small-unit leaders can do their job. Okay, next slide.

I think that's it. All right. That's it in a nutshell. There's a whole lot of it. Please, if you haven't read - all of your lance corporal, PFCs that are out there, get online and take a look at it, please. I'm setting up a website to actually build - I think we're going to mix in as we - and that'll be my effort to stay plugged in with the Marine Corps.

I'll have all that stuff on it that - the report will be - (inaudible) - commanders, all the sergeants major, all the - (inaudible). I'll be able to talk to groups all around the Marine Corps if I just hit "send". Since - (inaudible) - that it can handle what we call the social networking thing on the backside of it, it can end up having a Facebook - your Facebook accounts and all that stuff.

So it's all there. We'll hit "send" on that I think, this week. So that's that. And that's what's important to us as a corps. That's where we are headed. Think about your question before I do. I want to give my microphone to my new friend, Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent.

SGT. MAJ. CARLTON KENT: Thank you, sir. I appreciate it. Good morning, Marines, ladies and gentlemen.

(Chorus of "Ooh-rah.")

SGT. MAJ. KENT: First of all, let me just, by starting off saying that it's an easy transition from the 34th commandant to the 35th commandant because Gen. Amos' focus is the same as the 34th commandant. It's to take care of Marines, sailors and their families. And I have served with Gen. Amos from the past.

He is a warrior and I can tell you, we were at the hospital visiting the wounded warriors on Saturday. Him and his lovely wife, Bonnie, and there was one Marine asked him, sir, will you allow me to stay in the Marine Corps? Missing both of his legs. And the commandant looked him right in the eye. He said, Marine, you have no worries. That's my promise to you, that you will be allowed to stay in the Marine Corps. That's the type of commandant he is because he's totally focused on you and your families.

So the Marine Corps is going to go to the next level under Gen. Amos and it's just an honor, you know, for me and Liz to finish off our tour over the next six months with Gen. Amos and Mrs. Amos.

You know, Marines, we are different as Marines and you know that. I don't have to tell you because each and every one of you got that branded in your heart when you earn that title, the United States Marine. Well, I can also tell you that that there's other people that want to be like you but they cannot be like you.

I can remember those recruits that was to my right and left in boot camp over 30 years ago. Some of them did not make it through and earn the title. And there's other services that's doing great things for this nation and they truly are doing great things for this nation but they are not a United States Marine Corps.

And let me give you one example of this and this is not to slam the U.S. Army because we love the U.S. Army. We have fought next to them in combat. But as you see this poster here about three years ago, we were visiting warriors out at Camp Pendleton. And they brought me this poster and they said, Sgt. Maj. Kent, have you seen this poster? It's a recruiting poster from the Army, signed by this squad.

And I started laughing when I seen it. I said, no, I said now, tell me, is this a joke? They said, no, Sergeant Major, we want to sign this poster, give it to you, then you go to the Army website and you will see it. And I did. And it's a true poster. And the poster reads, sometimes the best soldier for the job is a Marine.

MR. : Ooh-rah.

(Laughter, applause.)

SGT. MAJ. KENT: And you wonder why that poster is folded up and I taped it up over the last three years? Because I don't want it misplaced. I fold it up every night and put it under my pillow. (Laughter.) And my wife Liz always say, why are you doing that? Because every morning, I roll out the bed, drop to my knees with that poster in my hand and thank God that I'm a United States Marine and able to serve. (Cheers, applause.)

Well, the Marine Corps is in great shape for many, many years to come and it's because of Marines like you. You talk to some of our veterans from foreign wars. Matter of fact, one of them lives south of here, Sgt. Maj. Black. He's the oldest living sergeant major of the Marine Corps. He was number seven.

And last year, we went and celebrated the birthday with him on November the 10th. Took the birthday to his house. And when we went down there, we took a bunch of Marines from the Pentagon, took the commandant's message, had the youngest Marine and you, quite naturally, you know who the oldest Marine was. (Laughter.) It was Sgt. Maj. Black.

But he got emotional. Now, this is a Marine that fought in the Chosin with "Chesty" Puller and also two tours in Vietnam. And he said, Sgt. Maj. Kent, whenever you and the commandant speak to those great Marines today, you tell them that we are extremely proud of what they're doing for our Corps and our nation. And he caveated that by saying; in most cases, they are even better than us.

So I'm passing that to you because this November the 10th, we will roll right back down to his house and we will celebrate the birthday with him. And he's going to say the same thing every time I go down to visit him. He always want me to tell you that. And he's not the only veteran that's proud of you. All of the Marine veterans are proud of what you're doing.

So the Marine Corps is in great shape because we have Marines reenlisting every day at the highest rate that we have ever seen in our time as a Marine. And they're reenlisting not just to take a break. They are reenlisting to continue to deploy, deploy and deploy.

That says a lot about our Marine Corps today. And the recruiters are continuing this legacy because they're putting quality individuals in that would graduate boot camp, earn the title, go to SOI, go to the school houses and then come out to you. And you will continue to mentor them so they can be just like you.

So again, you know, it's just an honor, you know, for us to be here with you today. So we'd just like to open it up for questions.

GEN. AMOS: Anybody got a – Sgt. Maj. Kent and I can come off the stage here. How about questions from anybody? We'll give you honest answers. Anybody?

QUESTIONS FROM AUDIENCE FOLLOW

END TRANSCRIPT