

**OFFICE OF
THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

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**REMARKS BY
GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS,
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

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MR. : All right. Well, here we are. General Amos, thank you for meeting with us. What we're going to do is give General Amos a couple of minutes up top, and then we can go into Q&A. So with that – General Amos.

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS: Okay. Thank you, everybody. I know that you typically jump right into Q&A. And I appreciate, since this is my first chance to sit here with you at breakfast, I thought I'd just hit a couple of highlights right up front.

I spent Christmas in Afghanistan with our Marines. We were over the entire holiday period. And I'd be happy to talk and answer any questions, obviously, later on about how we're doing. But my sense in Afghanistan hasn't – I spoken to the commander on the ground yesterday, which is Major General Rich Mills. He's our two-star that has been there for almost 13 months now – continued to reaffirm what I picked up when I was there at Christmas in our piece of Afghanistan, in Helmand. I think there's real reason for optimism.

We're seeing it in towns that last year we were fighting in. This time last year we began the operation at Marja, as everybody knows. And yet at Christmastime, we walked through there with no body armor on, no helmet on, and through the market, and spent time in Marja and towns like Now Zad and Golestan and these places that we fought pretty hard in. So I'm pretty optimistic; Rich is as well. It doesn't mean that there's not hard times ahead, so this is not Pollyanna. But I – Rich's comments to me yesterday on the VTC – we talk weekly with it – just confirmed what we saw face to face when we were out there at Christmastime.

Transitioning to the Marine Corps for a minute – this document that we slid out in front of you is not a paid political announcement. But when I was tagged to become the commandant of the Marine Corps, I had about 60 days' kind of advance notice. And I've been doing a lot of things in that period of time, but one of the things I wanted to work on, (Barry ?) and we spent a lot of time on – was the mission of the Marine Corps. In other words, there's lots of discussion out there about where you are, second land army, and how do you fit and what's the competition with other forces within the United States of America.

And so we spent a lot of time on the mission of the Marine Corps. And in this document, it's articulated on – I'm not asking you to turn – but page 5 in that – (inaudible) – box talks about – talks about what we do for the nation. We are forward-deployed, forward-engaged. We are our nation's crisis-response force. We respond to today's crisis with today's force today.

So as I began to look at the – at the lanes the Marine Corps operates in for the future, we took a look at that and said, okay, this is what – this is what the Marine Corps will do, what we're doing today and then what we will do in the future. The other thing is, is that I describe this as a middleweight force. I spent a little bit of time thinking about that. Didn't want to be a heavyweight force; heavyweight forces have a hard time getting places. It takes time. It requires a lot of equipment. A lightweight force may not – may get there quickly, but it may not carry the day when it gets there.

So middleweight force – kind of the boxer analogy. You can – you can fight up, you can fight down depending on what the scenario is. And I'd say that in Afghanistan right now, this is a classic case of that middleweight force fighting up.

The third point I'd like to bring out is, we just completed in the latter part of December a force structure review group effort – force structure review effort. We actually began it in early September. Secretary Gates, as you remember, in a speech in San Francisco said, I want the Marine Corps to take a look at what it should like post-Afghanistan. And that was the key – when you come out of Afghanistan, what should the Marine Corps look like? So we did that, worked very, very hard. And what we used to formulate that was decisive things like the Quadrennial Defense Review, the National Security Strategy and the Guidance for Development of the Forces (ph), and all these things.

In addition to that, we took this mission statement which had been approved by the senior leadership of the Department of Defense, and then we projected that into the future security environment – in other words, what we thought the world would look like over the next two decades. We spent a lot of time on that. And in fact, we actually had – in my former life down at Quantico, I spent a year working and trying to determine what we thought the future world would look like. We knew we weren't going to get it exactly right, but we didn't – we for sure didn't want to get it exactly wrong. So based on that, on the future security environment, the mission of the Marine Corps, we build a force, a capabilities-based force through this force structure review. And I'll be happy to answer any questions on that.

And the final thing is, is that as I've – as I've been in this job now for almost precisely four months, it's clear to me that we need to get the Marine Corps back to becoming the frugal force. We have always been – it's always been our nature – in some cases, to our detriment because we've ended up with in some cases older equipment and things like that because we've been so careful.

But I want to get the – I want to get the Marine Corps back to our Marines thinking that this is the environment we're in. We need – we need to get back to our roots – (inaudible). We've always been the best bang for the buck – 8.5 percent – a couple of figures that are interesting. And these are accurate because I ran them into the ground: 8.5 percent of the DOD budget is the United States Marine Corps. We provide 31 percent of the ground-combat forces and ground-combat service support forces. We provide 12 percent of the – of the fighter-attack aircraft in the Department of Defense. And we provide 19 percent of the rotary-wing attack aircraft. And that's 8.5 percent of the budget.

So with that, a little paid political announcement to kind of set the stage on some of the things that are – that have been hot to me. I'll be happy to take your –

MR. : General, thank you very much. We do have questions backed up here. We'll start with Mark Thompson. You wanted to start?

Q: Yeah, I did want to start. Anyway – sir, just a quick follow-up on what you just said: 8.5 percent. Haven't the Marines historically been a nickel of the DOD dollar? In the last decade, have you guys gotten a bigger share?

GEN. AMOS: Now, what's happened is we typically had advertised about 6 percent. And when I asked my staff, I said, tell me how much we really – I want to go back. And General Mundy used to call it "the thin red line." In other words, for this very thin piece of the budget, this is how much capability you get. And what we did on this one is we added everybody in: we added the Navy doctors, we added the Navy, Marine corpsmen, the chaplains, what that – what we call, kind of, blue in support of green – the stuff that the Navy provides us.

So if you add all that together, the 8.5 percent is probably the – if I cull that out, we're back to probably close to a nickel.

Q: Okay. You have M1s with Marines now in southern Afghanistan.

GEN. AMOS: We do.

Q: That kicked up a little interest several months ago when it was announced. Why were they needed? What are they doing? And what do they bring to the fight peculiarly that we need there?

GEN. AMOS: We have 17 of them on the ground right now in Afghanistan – brought them in, brought the tanks in just before Christmas, brought the crews, trained the crews again, kind of refreshed them, and then got them in there right after – right after Christmas. A lion's share of them are now up in the northeast corner up in the Sangin River valley. And they're operating with about 2,000 Marines that are up there. And that's really the last stronghold – I mean, the last really tough stronghold in the Helmand province.

So they're up there, and they've – and I can't get into it. I'll just tell you that the reports that I'm getting on the classified side of the nature is, they have been having a powerful impact in –

Q: Psychologically?

GEN. AMOS: Psychologically and kinetically. And just – I'll leave it at that. But that's – they have been a plus-up for that operation up there.

Q: Can you give us an indication, a rough number of how many rounds they've fired?

GEN. AMOS: No, I can't. I really can't, thank you. But they're – but they're – I'll tell you that we're very pleased that we put them on the ground, and that it was the right thing to do. And the Marines think a lot of them. You know, when you – when the Marines are pinned down by an enemy that they can't see, but they're getting shot at – but they know where the rounds are coming from, and a – and an M1 tank round fires downrange, it has a way of quieting things rather quickly.

Q: Any plans on sending more?

GEN. AMOS: No. No.

MR. : Okay. Sandra Erwin?

Q: Thank you. General, on the F-35, the PEO, Admiral Venlet, said this week that you were really getting hands on (the new ?) F-35B, that you were really getting involved. And that you were learning a lot of things about the program. Can you talk about what are you learning that you didn't know before? And as far as a probation for two years, are you thinking now about a plan B? Because in the past, you guys have said, there is no plan B, that you have to have the VTOLs. But at this point, are you thinking about a plan B?

GEN. AMOS: A couple thoughts right up front. My sense is – and I've known Dave Venlet since he was a Navy captain – we've got the right guy in charge of this program. I think there's a right oversight, there's a right amount of emphasis at the Department of Defense, OSD, the services level on this thing. So I'm very confident in Dave Venlet. I'm confident, and I know the leadership down there. We've been down to Patuxent River, Maryland. He's been up to brief me several times. We went down there and looked at the airplanes, touched them, talked to the aircrews, the pilots, and then sat and worked our way through – this is before Christmas – worked our way through, okay, where the program is and, you know, what are the major issues.

And to date, the real issues – and this applies to all three variants, both the Air Force version, ours and the Navy – is there is a production – there's a manufacturing delay. In other words, they're not being produced at the rate that everybody thought they were going to be produced at. There was some test-flight delays. In other words, the airplanes that are out there flying, they're flying these tests because we're in developmental test right now. There was delays in that.

And then, the last thing was, is there are software challenges. The airplane, as I recall, has 6 million lines of code. And just to give you a sense of – an order of magnitude on that, the last time I heard anybody talk about how much lines of code in software, the F-22 had – it was about 2 million. So kind of an order of magnitude above is the challenge.

So those are the things that we're – that we're competing on all three versions, and cause everybody to go, okay, the whole production thing is slowing down. So we got to pay attention to that. And in our version, we had some structural issues as a result of the vertical fan: The airplane flew great horizontally; it flew great vertically; it was the transition between those and the structural effects it was having on doors and that kind of thing.

So I – number one, we got the right leadership. Number two, I'm absolutely confident that Lockheed Martin has the right people on this thing. I've met their senior leadership. I talked to their senior – I just talked to their president and CEO a day before yesterday. So what I've done with Dave is – I've told him, I said, look, this is Marine Corps – this is a Marine Corps program. At the end of the day, nobody has more interest in the F-35B than the United States

Marine Corps. This is money that Congress has given the Marine Corps. They didn't give it to the program manager; they gave it to the United States Marine Corps. And we turned around and have given it to you, Dave Venlet and the program manager. So let's – I want to make sure that I have oversight of this.

So to do that, I talked to Dave. I sat down with the senior leadership in the building. And I said, I'm going to become like Bill Russell was. I'm going to become the player-coach. And that's exactly where I am. I'm not the program manager; there is legal implications on that. But I am a player-coach. And so I have sent the program manager – I've sent Lockheed Martin through the program manager a set of metrics that I track daily, weekly and monthly. And I sit with the senior leadership of the program and Lockheed Martin. And we – and I host a conference in my – in my building. And we go through where we are.

Things we're looking at are weight: How is the weight growth on the airplane? How are the numbers of test flights performing versus how many – I mean, how many are they actually doing versus how many were they scheduled to do? How many test points every test flight goes up? And it's going to – sometimes, it's four or five test points; sometimes, it's seven or eight. How many test points are we doing – have we flown? What's the scheduled performance of the airplane, or the actual performance versus the scheduled performance of the airplane?

For the STOVL version, there's things called vertical bring-back, which is, you've got to have enough thrust to be able to hold the airplane in level flight and slowly come down, control that rate of descent. So those are all the things that I'm tracking. I watch it. And my goal is, there will be no surprises. I'm very comfortable with a two-year probation. I want to get off the probation as soon as we can. I'm going to do my best to try to help that come off probation. But I – but I think we're on the right – absolutely, the other thing I'd tell you is on the engineering fixes: absolutely drop-dead confident that Lockheed Martin can figure this out.

Q: This oversight role, is that going to take more time than you wanted to spend on this program?

GEN. AMOS: Well, I think the F-35B has slowed down. In other words, the ramp rate on the – on the F-35B, the production rate, has slowed down. It was –

Q: No, I mean your own time.

GEN. AMOS: My –

Q: Your oversight that you're doing now, is that going to take more time, more of your time than you wanted to spend managing this program?

GEN. AMOS: Well, it's going to be – sure, it will. I mean, everything takes more time. Everything competes for all the other things on a given day for me. But it absolutely will. But since I'm a – I'm a cyber-kind of a guy, and I've got all this stuff now being displayed – all my IT guys are putting all this stuff on a – on a dashboard for me, electronic. And it's being updated

daily. So I'll be able to look at that. And then, we'll sit down at our big pow-wow once a month and look each other in the eye and go, okay, where are we? What are the issues?

And the thing that's important in that – and then I'll – then I'll stop on this, but is that that gives us an opportunity as the end-user to be able to make decisions. When things come up and they – and they say, well, is there a trade that we can make here and there? And we as a user can say, yeah, that's a trade that we're willing to – we're willing to buy off on. So that's the importance of having oversight. The Marine Corps has got oversight on that.

MR. : Christian Well (ph).

Q: General Amos, given your – what you said earlier about progress in Helmand province, why did the Marine Corps announce recently that they were going to be plussing up their forces down there with a – with a mini-surge, essentially?

GEN. AMOS: Oh, yeah.

Q: The 26th MEU BLT went in there. So if security is so good, why did you have to put more forces, A, and B, do you think that you'll be able to follow the administration's timeline in beginning a withdrawal this summer?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah, I – look, Christian, first of all, I've said right from the beginning and even in my confirmation testimony that I supported the president's efforts to begin withdrawal in the summer of – the summer of '11. I don't know what – I don't know what that means. I don't know how many and who and where it's going to happen. So I don't know that. And I've always tied that to my confidence in Dave Petraeus and Jim Mattis and their combat leadership. So all that remains the same. So I'm confident we're going to start that. I don't know what kind of effect that will have on the Marine Corps.

But back to your – back to the first part of your question, the leadership – both General Petraeus and General Mattis wanted to capitalize on some successes we've had. We've had – a lot of these places, these names and these towns – Marja, Now Zad – they are for the most part under Afghan control. In other words, the Afghan army, the Afghan police are there; the district governors are there. The district governor is like a mayor. I mean, that's what we call a mayor. And they're in charge of their villages. And we are in – we are providing backup support for the Afghan National Army.

But up in Sangin, up in the northeast corner, which is where we have been fighting pretty hard for the last – about four months – and we have met with great success. And I think we're what I call past the tipping point there. In other words – in other words, the Taliban have been driven out. They've either been killed – those that wanted to stay were killed. Those that, you know, didn't want to stay have squirted out.

But some of the indications are, their tribal chiefs sat right after Christmas and met with Governor Mangal – the provincial governor – and General Mills, and signed an accord where the fighting and the violence would begin to subside. And as of yesterday, that accord has held. The

other thing was, they were going to show the Marines where the IEDs were. And that's held. So the violence and the really tough fighting piece has begun to kind of over the – tip over the side. I see this in the amount of casualties that we're taking; that has dropped off dramatically.

So the effort to bring the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit on the ground – and it wasn't all of it; it was just a slice of it, about half of it – was to reinforce success. So in other words, if you have the – if you have the enemy on its heels and it's reacting to you, and you have the opportunity to reinforce that success, then you want to do that because that might just – that might hammer the final nail in this thing. And you might not have to go back and fight in that same spot again at a later time. So that's – that was the genesis behind this thing.

They're doing well. They're just south of Sangin – the MEU is. And I asked about it yesterday. And they are a combat multiplier.

Q: But that's it for the plussing-up –

GEN. AMOS: That's as far as I know, at least, Christian. I don't know of anything else.

Q: All right.

MR. : Okay. Thank you. Where are we? John Bennett.

Q: Sir, it looks like Congress is going to get out of town again without doing another continuing resolution, or extend a loan to the defense appropriations bill. I'm curious, how does that affect – a year-long CR or no 2011 defense appropriations bill – how does that affect the Marine Corps? What might you have to stop doing, or – do you – are you still – at this point, this many months into the year, how much money do you still have to move around?

GEN. AMOS: We don't – we don't have a lot of margin on that. And it – and it will affect us. I think you're probably aware that all the service chiefs and the chairman and the vice chairman signed a letter to Congress encouraging them to work their way through and get a defense appropriation. I was one of the guys that signed that thing; I believe in it. We provided information to both the Senate and the House on what the impact will be for the United States Marine Corps. And it will be significant.

But probably the greatest example I can give you is, we have a little over \$2 billion in military construction in FY '11. There were contracts poised and ready to build 13 bachelor-enlisted quarters. Now, those of you that have been on Marine bases, you know that they are probably more austere than you might see at other bases. And as much as we have wanted to in the years past to upgrade our barracks for our young Marines, that has suffered over the years until we started building the Marine Corps up. And we have begun over the last, about two or three years building new barracks. And they're beautiful. But we've got a long ways to go.

We're going to miss out on 13 brand-new barracks this year. And in the way I look at it, I mean, that's significant because I can't roll that into next year. I can't – I can't simply because '12 is already – '12 is on the Hill; '12 has its own – its own focuses. So I think it's – I think it's

significant. I've been up on the Hill for the last – this week, I was up there until late last night in my – in my role as the service chief encouraging both the Senate and the House to pass that appropriations bill.

Q: How many Marines will be housed in those 13 barracks, sir?

GEN. AMOS: Probably – I'm just going to guess here. I'm thinking it's probably like 350 (Marines) per barracks. That sounds to me to be about right. So you just multiply that. Each battalion typically will take two structural barracks per battalion. So you're talking about six battalions' worth of Marines. And it's significant, especially when you take a look at some of the older BEQs we've been living with for a long time.

Q: And what about within your hardware-program accounts? Will there be an impact there?

GEN. AMOS: There will be. There will be. There are things like Hellfire missiles, HIMARS rockets. Those procurement accounts will be affected. And of course, those are things we're using in Afghanistan today. We're shooting HIMARS rockets and we're shooting Hellfires off our weapons systems, our airborne weapons systems. So there will be.

Q: Greg Jaffe. You talked a little bit about the Marine Corps being a more frugal force. What did you mean when you said that? And as you look to the future and kind of possible budget cuts, how comfortable are you with being able to find other potential savings, or did you guys broke that down?

GEN. AMOS: Well, I – as I've talked to the Marines, and I've – and I've gone out, we haven't – they haven't been in front of everybody yet. But we've been working pretty hard to try to get eyeball to eyeball with most of the Marines in the corps. I've talked to them about this. My sense of what we've been is kind of a culture of plenty, is what I've called it. And I'm talking the last six years. We've been tightly focused on Iraq, with 25 (thousand) to 30,000 Marines on the ground there. If you needed something, you got it. And you didn't have to sit around and try to barter and figure out, okay, what's more important? I can only have "A" or "B," but I can't have "A" and "B."

For the last six years, we have been able to have "A" and "B." And so when I say, get back to our frugal roots, that's what I mean, Greg. We've always had to make choices. And the choices boil down to what we need versus what we want. And so I've told all the Marines, and I've told the senior leadership, the general officers and our commanders we're going to get back to our frugal roots. By that, I'm not talking about going back and turning all our GORE-TEX in, you know, and going back to the M-1, but I am talking about needs versus wants. That's the first thing.

The second thing is, is that as we take a look at what we need for the future in the way of – in the way of equipment, we need to be able to make sure that not only is it something we need, but it's got to be something we can afford. EFV is a good example; I'm confident that somebody at the table will talk to me or ask me a question about the Expeditionary Fighting

Vehicle. And it was a – it was a – it was several reasons, but the primary one was budget-driven, Greg. It was a matter of affordability.

So I've got to be able to build a force based on what we probably all around this table think will be the ever-tightening budgetary environment over the next several years. And I've got to be able to source that force and fight that force – and train it. So that's what I mean about getting back to our frugal roots. It's a mindset. And I want the Marines – we've put them on notice and said, okay, let's start thinking about what we need versus what we want.

Q: Are there things out there that you see that sort of illustrate that paradigm in the force right now?

GEN. AMOS: I do. I do. I'll give you an example. I think EFV is the classic one. I'll give you another one that also deals with the effort to try to lighten the Marine Air-Ground Task Force, you know, in size and cube. So EFV is a great example. We found out as we began our efforts to get more oversight, really pay attention to weight and cube of the Marine Corps. Remember, we're the expeditionary force you respond to today. You can't do that if you got a – you got a huge footprint. And we don't want a huge footprint.

We found that we were buying a new water bull. Now, for everybody here, a water bull is not an animal. It's a big – it's a water tank that holds, I'm guessing, I don't know, four (hundred) or 500 gallons of water.

Q: A water-buffalo type thing?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah, it is. Yeah. That's it. We call them "water bull," but that's like a water buffalo. And you tow it behind a Humvee or a seven-ton truck or that kind of thing. Now, that's where Marines get fresh water. You pump fresh water in it. You go up there, and Marines are up there shaving, and all that stuff. And we've got a good one. We've had that one since I was a lieutenant, and it works just fine. Nothing wrong with it; (served us as Marines ?). Well, we found out that – and I'm not sure who, but we said, well, we need a bigger water bull. We need one that's about three or four times as big.

And we said, well – then we see this picture of this thing, and it's huge. It not only takes up more cube, it's heavier. Well, why do we need it? Well, because we've got a seven-ton truck now that can tow it. (Laughter.) Because we can. We said, let's buy it. We canceled that program. So there's an example. Greg, there's others that are out there. But being frugal just means going back and paying very close attention, close scrutiny on everything we're buying, making sure that we can – that it's something we need.

And by the way, as we built the '12 budget, we found \$3.1 billion in efficiencies. Remember Secretary Gates directed all the services to go back? We did that, not sure what we were going to find because we've been in this culture of plenty. That was kind of the time when the mindset was beginning to change. We found \$3.1 billion – not \$3.1 billion in swimming pools and golf courses, \$3.1 billion in things that we could probably live without if we compared it to things that we really needed now.

We took a big chunk of that money and moved it from the outer years, like '14 and '15, moved it to the – what we call moving in budget terms, moved it to the left into '12 – '11, '12 and '13 to buy what we call our home – buy up our home-station readiness. You know, we've got shortfalls in equipment at home station right now because we've taken that equipment and sent it to Afghanistan. You know, we've been at war for nine years.

Do you know that acronym?

Q: Water-buffalo – (inaudible, laughter).

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. We've been at war for nine years. And so we said – I forgot what we were talking about.

(Cross talk.)

GEN. AMOS: Home-station strength. Yeah. So I got so excited about the horns, and being – (inaudible, laughter). But so we said – so we said, so we're short on some equipment. We're about 30-percent short at our home stations across the Marine Corps. So in other words, if you have – if you're supposed to have 10 of this vehicle, we've got seven. So we took that money, part of that \$3.1 billion, moved it to the left and said, let's start buying up those other three.

And that way, at home station we've got the vehicles and the equipment, what we can use to train with. And then, if the nation needs us to go someplace else in another part of the world, then we've got the equipment to be able to do it. So that's what I mean by that.

MR. : Okay. Dan Wasserbly from Jane's.

Q: Okay. Sir, you mentioned, I think it was last week, that you're – even as the Marine Corps is supposed to be reduced in the size in the future, but you're going to grow the cyberforces across the board by, I think it was 60 –

GEN. AMOS: Sixty-seven percent.

Q: Sixty-seven percent. What do you see the Marine Corps' role in cyber being? What are – what are the missions or roles that you've looked at, achieved?

GEN. AMOS: In my former life, not the one I was – when I was assistant commandant, but when I was – the job I had at Quantico, one of the positions I held, I was the commander of Marine Forces Strategic Command. So I had a staff out at Offutt Air Force Base – it's STRATCOM. And that's when I was educated on what was happening in the cyberworld. And it's pretty significant. I spent some time with the NSA up here at Fort Meade and was getting briefed on network attack, network defense, what's happening around the world. And then, I applied that to what I saw on the battlefield in Iraq with just this fundamental use of cyberspace

where the enemy was able to turn information. And that information was happening just like that, much of it erroneous, but it fanned the coals of the insurgency.

So cyberspace is a domain. And I'm absolutely a firm believer in it. There's parts of it I don't understand, but I am convinced that as we move along, we're going to see cyberspace used more and more in warfare, and both in attack and defense. So every service is going to play in that. So it's not so much a matter of who has – who is the bigger dog in this thing, it's a matter of, we absolutely have to be a part of that. And so I'm actively pursuing that. I believe in it. And so we have plussed that force up significantly.

And we're going to – and by the way, the Marines are pretty excited about it because we've got actually a slice of Marines that have been doing some of that stuff in our radio battalions. And they're pretty excited about being able to continue to contribute in that area.

Q: Can you say, is the – is the bulk of that plus-up going to be in the radio guys? Or is that going to be in MARCOR (ph), or cyber, or –

GEN. AMOS: It's going to be a little bit of both because here's what we do: We will plus the entire force up. And then we rotate those forces because when they go up here to Fort Meade and they get all of that special training that's so unique to NSA, they get all that training which is – which we can't talk about here. But then we rotate those forces back into the radio battalions. And those radio battalion Marines go back into – up to Fort Meade. And so it's a constant rotation. It's one of these things where all boats rise at a rising tide.

And so the Marines that are forward-deployed now in places like Afghanistan come with a lot of that – a lot of that cyber, and all the capabilities that are resident up at NSA. So we rotate that entire force internally to the total number. And it works – to be honest with you, I think it's a role model for how you can get the most bang for the buck.

MR. : Okay. I want to ask everyone to limit their follow-ups. I have 10 questions here, and I'd like to try to fit everybody in. So with that, Roxanne.

Q: Hi, sir. I have a V-22 question, a reliability-of-parts question. I was wondering whether you think the situation with reliability of the parts is acceptable, and whether you're leaning on contractors to do better. And what are you doing to –

GEN. AMOS: Yeah a couple – a couple –

Q: – make the situation –

GEN. AMOS: That's a good question. And a couple of points on the V-22: I got a message yesterday that it passed its 100,000 flight hours yesterday. In other words, the – and it's interesting, the airplane had actually flew – it registered the – and that's – if you're an aviator, and I am, that's a big deal. So the actual airframe itself, it flew the 100,000th hour in Afghanistan flying Marines around. So that hit the press, or that hit us yesterday. And I told my guys, I said,

we need to put something out, and to the Marines that are maintaining, to the company, and just say, thank you. So that's the first thing.

Number two, you're always leery to say this if you're an aviator, but right now it's one of our – it's either our safest airplane or it's close to one of our safest airplanes. Because I was in Washington, D.C., when we lost the one in December the 13th of 2000. So this airplane since then has flown three combat deployments in Afghanistan, three combat deployments in Iraq and three Marine Expeditionary Unit deployments.

So the airplane is flying well. I flew all around Christmas. I mean, that's where – once we got on the ground at Christmas, that's where I flew all through Iraq – excuse me, Afghanistan – in this thing. The part support on the – on the airplane has been a challenge. And I – and I can explain that, but in a – and it will make sense to you, but I'll do it – I'll do it real quickly: When we brought the airplane out of the kind of – in the area where it was canceled in 2000, 2001 after that accident, we put the airplane on what we call a minimum-production rate, which is 11 a year. We were getting – the Marine Corps was getting 10, SOCOM was getting one.

And at that – and that stayed that way for, I don't know, years. The problem with that is, is that all the mom-and-pop suppliers out there that'd make widgets and gears and hydraulic knuckles and – they were not incentivized to build parts, buy equipment, buy new manufacturing equipment – dyes and all that stuff – to be able to do – they weren't incentivized because the production numbers were so small. So we have struggled with the supply side of that airplane since then.

It's getting better. Bell-Boeing is dedicated to fixing that; we're dedicated to fixing it. I've watched it progressively get better over time. We probably got a little bit longer to go before we're out of the woods on that topic.

Q: How are you fixing it?

GEN. AMOS: Number one, the company is working to incentivize the production – you know, all those – all those production folks that build the parts, build the generators, build the hydraulic lines, build all the pumps and all, incentivizing them to up their production rate so we can get it – what we call a deeper supply bench – in other words, more parts on the bench.

Right now, we're taking a lot of the parts we have on the bench and we're sending it to Afghanistan. They're forward-deployed. We've got a squadron-and-a-half on the ground in Afghanistan today, another half-a-squadron onboard the Kearsarge. So that's our priority of effort. So they're building the supply bench; it just takes time. That's something that doesn't happen overnight.

Q: Thank you, sir.

MR. : Okay. Phil Stewart.

Q: You were very positive about the situation in Afghanistan at the top of the breakfast. I'm just wondering, you know, we're about four months out from the start of the withdrawal. Are you prepared to say that we're winning? And if not, do you believe that you'll be able to say that by July?

GEN. AMOS: I think so. I mean, I'm trying to imagine why my position would change in between now and July.

Q: So you think we're winning right now in Afghanistan?

GEN. AMOS: Pardon?

Q: We're winning – we're winning, have the upper hand.

GEN. AMOS: Well, I – you know, I stayed away from winning and losing. And as much as I'd love to use that term, I can only talk to you about the piece that we're responsible for – we, the Marine Corps – and that's Helmand. I mean, I certainly – just like you, I pay attention to what's going on in Uruzgan and Nimruz and – you know, I pay attention to all the provinces. But our piece is Helmand.

And so I don't talk about winning and losing; I talk about reasons for optimism. I mean, I can give you the examples. I mean, a year – a year-and-a-half ago, I flew into Now Zad several times. And as soon as you landed in Now Zad in your helicopter, you jumped out and you ran with your body armor on and got in an armored vehicle, and you went immediately to combat outpost. A year ago at Christmas, at the beginning of December, the Marines surrounded Now Zad with two kandak battalions, and freed the villagers – freed the – the Taliban had taken over Now Zad for four-and-a-half years.

I walked through there with the district governor. So I – that's when I say optimism. You know, if we can train the Afghan army and we can train the Afghan police, then they can provide the security. So that's what I mean by optimism.

Q: But is optimism a reason enough to start withdrawing? Or – (inaudible, cross talk).

GEN. AMOS: I don't – I don't know. My sense is, and of course it depends on where the withdrawal begins and in what areas the withdrawal – then what it means to, you know, are you pulling out of this district? Are you pulling out of this province with what size force? And then, how secure do those people feel as a result of the Afghan National Army?

The key in my mind is the police – the police and the army. The army has great credibility in Afghanistan. And every time I'm around their brigade commanders and their generals, I'm just – I'm wowed by them and their – and their ferocious fighters on the ground. And they're honest and honorable men.

The police has not shared that, or enjoy that same high regard in the culture of Afghanistan. We are working very hard – we, the Marine Corps, and we, the United States of

America and the coalition forces up in – up in Kabul with their national training academy to train police: rule of law; how you take care of people; honesty. We're even teaching them literacy because the lion's share of them are not illiterate (ph). So there's a literacy program going on.

So I mean, that's the key to being able to say – to answer your question, how confident do you feel, you know, to pull out in July? It depends on where we pull out, and it depends on the stature of the police and the Afghan National Army, and how confident is the leadership of that town.

MR. : Andrea – Andrea Stone – (inaudible).

Q: General, can you give us an update on the training and preparation for training on the “don't ask, don't tell” repeal? And you know, do you feel differently about the decision to go ahead with that repeal than you did back when you talked about it before the repeal?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah, did you have a – have you had a chance to see the video that Sergeant Major Kent and I made, Andrea? We made it right after – right after we came back from Afghanistan for Christmas. We got through the – we took a little bit of leave, and he and I made a video. Because the law was changed while we were in Afghanistan over the holidays.

And so just as I promised in my testimony when I was being confirmed, and just as I promised in December 3rd, I promised that if the laws change, the Marine Corp is going to aggressively pursue this thing. And I didn't say it at my testimony, but in my heart of hearts I went, and the Marine Corps will lead the other services in this thing. That's what I'm thinking mentally, and that's exactly what we've done.

So he and I produced a video and looked at all the Marines – it's pretty short. You can get it if you go to www.usmc.mil. Click on there, you'll see Commandant and Sergeant Major's video on the implementation. So we talk about it; the law has changed. We follow the law. We're the Marines; that's what we do for a living. And so we got after that.

So I'm very optimistic about it. We have – the law changed while we were in Afghanistan, as I was talking. And we looked – 20,000 Marines on the ground, we looked just about 12,000 of them, probably, in the eye, and had all the commanders and the senior staff NCOs, looked them in the eye, and this is what I did. I looked at them and I said, okay, everybody, pay very close attention to these eyeballs. This is the United States Marine Corps, and I'm the commandant. This is what we're going to do: We're going to step out smartly. The law has changed.

And every time I did that, Andrea, I looked around in the audience, I looked at – you know, it didn't matter whether it was this large group or small group, all my senior leaders did this. Their heads moved north and south. I just had the commanding officers – all were brand-new commanding officers, lieutenant colonels who have squadrons of battalions, and then all our colonels, who have regiments and their groups and things and Marine Expeditionary Units – had them at Quantico last week and the week before, talked to every one of them, talked to them and their spouses, did what we call Tier 2 training for them, which is where the leadership gets the

block of instruction on how we're going to implement it, what are the key tenets to implementation.

And we talk about issues and questions – what are the kinds of questions that can come up? So the leadership now is locked in on what the issues are, and how we're going to implement it.

And then Tier 3 training, that's going on right now. We began this Tier 1 and Tier 2 training the very – at the end of the first week in February. Tier 1 is where we train all our lawyers, we train all our family-readiness officers, we train our chaplains. They are unique communities of folks that really needed probably more in-depth because they're probably going to get more questions.

And then, Tier 2 training is the leadership. That's us; that's the battalion commanders, that's the generals. Three weeks ago, I had all the three-star generals – all of them – and the assistant commandant down at New Orleans. And we had our spouses there. And we were at an executive off-site. We're down at the Marine Reserve center down there in New Orleans. And we went for an hour, about an hour-and-a-half, and we went through Tier 2 training. So that's the leadership training for all of us. So that's where we are.

I'm very optimistic. We've forecast we'll be done with Tier 1 and Tier 2 by the middle of next month, so by the middle of March. We're forecasting it'll be sometime early June by the time we get all the Marine Corps trained. I am optimistic it may happen even before then because at the very end, at the – you know, at the far points of the – of the leadership, you know, all the way down to a Marine rifle company where you got a Marine captain and a first sergeant, he's going to have that binder of material, which by the way is pretty doggone good. It's a great – and we've had a part in building it.

He's going to have had a chance to go through that, and he's not going to sit down out in the field at 29 Palms or – he's going to look his Marines and say – he's not going to throw PowerPoint slides up. he's going to go, okay, let's talk about how we're going to do this. Let's talk about being Marines. Let's talk about respect. Let's talk about dignity. Let's talk about the way we treat one another. Let's talk about the fact that whoever wears this uniform is a Marine. And that's what's going to happen.

So I think we'll be done with that – we're forecasting the beginning of June. My goal is to have the Marine Corps complete –

Q: Can you just tell us, do you have any idea where the Marines are compared to the Army and the Navy and the Air Force in terms of the training? And is everybody at the same level in terms of how much they're done?

GEN. AMOS: Well, I can't speak to where they are, but I've seen their timelines. And of course, when you have larger forces like the Army, it's going to take you a little bit longer. We have taken an aggressive position on this, right from the very top. So I can't tell you precisely where they are because I'm not tracking it. We all are going to do Tier 1 training, Tier

2 training and Tier 3 training. And one of the – one of the things the Secretary of Defense was very clear about is, the major tenets of implementation has to be the same for all the services. And what we did is we took those, and then we Marine-ized them. We put them in our culture. We use Marine terms. We use terms that Marines would be familiar with, like rifle companies and things like this.

So I can't tell you where they are. I would just tell you that it's my intent the Marine Corps will get after this smartly.

Q: Can I just follow up before we leave this subject? Very, very quickly.

MR. : Yeah, quick – yeah, quick.

Q: Though you may be committed to it, sir, probably there are some people who won't be. Do you have any feedback or blowback yet that gives you an indication of whether you'll be losing people because of this, or not getting as many recruits? Any indication of that so far?

GEN. AMOS: I haven't had any indication yet at all. Not at all. And you know, I look – I look for – I have a pretty good read on the people. And I look at my commanders in the eyes, and I mean, sometimes it's in a group setting, and sometimes it's like you and I. I'm looking, and I get four or five of my senior leaders and my battalion commanders and sergeants major. You know, you get an enlisted sergeant major that's been in the Marine Corps for 28 years, and you – and you look him in the eye and go, okay – you know, I give him the two-finger eyeball poke. And every one of them said, sir, we got it. We're going to do this thing.

I mean sometimes, it's in a group setting and sometimes, it's like you and I. I'm looking at – I get four or five of my senior leaders and my battalion commanders and sergeants major. You know, you get an enlisted sergeant major that's been in the Marine Corps for 28 years and you look him in the eye and go okay. You know, I give him the two-finger eyeball poke and every one of them says, sir, we've got it. We're going to do this thing.

Q: So you're not expecting – (inaudible, cross talk).

GEN. AMOS: You know, I think it would be naïve to think that somewhere down the road, there's not going to be issues. I think there probably will be in probably all the services. But I don't – I don't think it's going to be of any magnitude that's going to cause a – much more than a blip. So I'm very optimistic.

Q: Thank you.

Q: Frank Oliveri, Congressional Quarterly. I spoke with General Flynn maybe six weeks ago, five weeks ago and he had talked about laying out sort of the plan for replacing EFV and dealing with its absence, filling that gap. So there are three RFIs that are going to be coming out.

I wanted to talk a little bit about sort of how EFV turned into what it did and hopefully, address this also in – maybe the context of the F-35, where requirements seem to get out of

control. And that's a question of leadership, to a certain degree, because it's very hard – you know, from a congressional point of view or whatever.

But so can you sort of lay out for me how is the approach – he said that this would be the model procurement program. So how do you anticipate keeping control of these requirements so that they don't get out of control as they've done? And sort of – if you can lay out some of the things – the measures you put in place to ensure that, that'd be great.

GEN. AMOS: Okay. As I said earlier, I had General Flynn's job at one time, so requirements were my life for about 26 months. And so I – I'm pretty familiar with it. I think, if you go back to the EFV and just use that as an example, it's probably a poster child. We wrote the requirements for the EFV over two – almost two-and-a-half decades ago. That's a long time. You think about what's changed.

I mean that was – we hadn't even done Desert Storm yet. We were in what I call the interwar years and we wrote the requirements for the EFV then. And then those requirements stayed. Now, somebody – requirements, by the way, typically don't go away. If anything, they grow. And so somewhere along the line, I'm sure there were probably what we call iron majors that said, you know, this vehicle ought to be able to do this; if it can do that, it ought to be able to do this.

So my sense is, requirements grew on that thing, although I can't specifically give you some examples. But regardless, it was designed conceptually by – requirements-wise, two-and-a-half decades ago. We have – and you know where it is today. So how do we respond to where we're headed in the future, which is – which is what I'm most concerned with.

I have a commitment from the secretary of defense, Dr. Ash Carter, AT&L, secretary of the Navy, Sean Stackley, who is ASN, RDA, research and development, assistant secretary of the Navy. We certainly have the motivation and the support of the commandant of the Marine Corps and the leadership of the Marine Corps that we are going to write these requirements and we're in the process of doing it right now.

(Inaudible) – we will release those three RFIs, I think, probably within the week. That's a request for information on what this new amphibious combat vehicle could look like. In other words, we're going to go out and say what's the art of the possible and industry comes back and says, okay, this is the art of the possible.

We're going to give them some things and say, we'd like it to go roughly 12 to 15 knots, carry 13 Marines, a rifle squad, have a 30 millimeter weapon on it and that kind of thing. So that goes out. The other thing that's part of this RFI that goes out is we're going to take a slice of our 1200 vehicles that we currently have, our amphibious vehicles. And we're going to SLEP them, service-life extension.

And we're not going to do them all. We're just going to do enough to get us for the next six to seven years so that the nation has that capability. And then we're going to take what was always going to be part of the EFV program, which was the 573 EFVs and then I can't remember

what the total numbers – around 600 – what we call Marine Personnel Carriers and that’s a tired vehicle, not tired like I’m sleepy, but tired like it’s got tires on it.

And that vehicle would then complement the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle as you went forward. We’re going to take that on an RFI and we’re going to say let’s do this sooner rather than later and by the way, I want a commercial off-the-shelf variant. I’m not interested in the development program. There are vehicles that are out there right now in our country and around the world that would suffice.

So that’s the first – we’re going to write the requirements so that they are good enough. Now, the example that I’ve been using, just for an analogy and for those us that are older, we appreciate this – we’re going to write the requirements for what the Marine Corps needs – back to Greg Jaffe’s point – and it will be a Chevrolet Bel Air or a Biscayne. It will not be a Cadillac Escalade.

So you’ve got to be careful when you put that in the press because GM will probably come after me. But that – but you get the sense for what I’m talking about that’s what I want. You know, we have to have an amphibious vehicle. The secretary of defense and secretary of the Navy are on it. They understand the value. Our nation needs it. So what’s good enough?

So that’s where we’re headed. So now, how am I going to – how am I going to ensure that we don’t – the commandant, two-and-a-half decades from now is not sitting around with the Defense Writers Group and saying, well, how the heck did this happen? Because I’m going to do exactly the same thing and the player-coach, provide a service-level oversight on these – on these three efforts as we’re doing on the F-35.

I don’t know what that’s going to look like, by the way, because we’re not going to worry about vertical bring-back. We may worry about weight. We’re certainly going to worry about cost and performance, schedule versus performance. So I’m – you know, once we get this thing kind of neck down and I think it’ll happen – I’ll tell you – we’re pushing real hard. This is not going to – I’m not going to admire this program or this effort.

We are going to use an MRAP-like acquisition process. It will not be as fast as the MRAP. So I don’t want anybody to walk out of here thinking, you know, some of those things that we did – but it will not be what I have seen in the paper, where they say 2024. Every time someone says 2024, I pick up something and throw it at them because we’re not going to do – we don’t have to do that. So that’s why the support of the secretary of defense and everybody is so critically important.

Q: Have you worked out with the Navy, yet, the range – how far out – or how far in –

GEN. AMOS: Yeah, we’re working it right now. In fact, we had an executive off site with all their – what we call the Navy-Marine Corps warfighter two weeks ago and Admiral Roughead and I agreed that that has to be a priority sooner rather than later. In other words, they need to be able to say, okay, we’re going to be able to bring our naval vessel down to this range.

Right now, what we're thinking about is probably somewhere between 12 to 15 miles. But we're going to – we'll have that nailed down here very, very soon.

MR. : Okay. I've been told one more question. Carlos Muñoz, you're up.

Q: All right. Just a quick question and I guess to circle back to the beginning – (inaudible) – force posture review.

GEN. AMOS: On what?

Q: Force posture review, you mentioned earlier?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah.

Q: I understand that's now – (inaudible) – implementation phase. A lot of forces are looking at how – (inaudible, background noise) – further down. Do you have any idea of what specifically you're looking now as part of doing that? Push down to a – (inaudible)?

GEN. AMOS: Well, you know, the first caveat – when I briefed the secretary of defense, he said, okay, I like this. This is great and so he blessed it. It's a post-Afghanistan, before we start coming down. And the secretary of defense, even in his testimony yesterday was clear that it's conditions-based.

I mean we don't know what the world's going to look like in 2015. So far, we've kind of misjudged – pretty successfully misjudged what the world's going to look like over the year. So 2015 is when it was – we were supposed to begin to dial the Marine Corps down. But what we're going to do in the meantime is we're going to – we've reduced, eliminated 21 headquarters.

We have taken a major three-star headquarters and consolidated and are going to move that three-star head space to another more important position. So there are cyberspace – cyber – it's the 67 percent of the Marines going to CYBERCOM, the 44 percent increase to MARSOC. Those are things we can do inside that 202K bill right now, you know, where we sit. We can just realign Marines and MOSs.

It sounds easy – a little bit hard to do because in some cases like CYBERCOM, you've got to train them. You've got to find out where they are. You've got to test them. You've got to educate them and then you've got to train them. And so that's – those are things that we're going to be able to do, I think, over the next two or three years and that's exactly where we're headed.

So we're going to eliminate some headquarters this year. We are going to look for MOS realignments so we can take – and plus some of these things up that we've agreed to. So there are things we can do between – I don't have to wait till 2015 to get the benefit of the force structure review.

MR. : Okay, well, General, we're out of time and thank you very much. I appreciate it.

GEN. AMOS: You're welcome. Thank you, everybody.

(Off-side conversation.)

(END)