

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

**FLETCHER LUNCHEON REMARKS AND Q&A**

**REMARKS BY  
GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS,  
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I'm a little bit surprised the room is this full. I learned as a young brigadier general that when – you know, when you get invited to conferences – and it's always the last day and it's usually the afternoon – and I would prepare for weeks and I would – I mean, weeks! You know, all the big-name people would be there early on and then I'd show up there all ready to go in the afternoon. There would be like three people there – (laughter) – because everybody's caught the train and the planes and the buses and left town. So I'm pleasantly surprised.

I am honored to be here. This is our first, as you know, effort to work with the Fletcher School and to bring something like this together. It was important for me that General Dunford kicked it off so he could frame what the Marine Corps was thinking about. And I read what Joe wrote and spoke about. We are a mindmeld, all of our general officers, and I'm pleased to see so many of them. They've come from all over – I mean, they've come from all over the Marine Corps. And they're not wasting your dollars; I don't want you to think for a second that they're wasting your dollars.

But we have – I'm glad they're here because we have worked very hard for the last five-and-a-half months to make sure that the Marine Corps always – that the leadership of the Corps clearly knew where we were headed. It was important – it was important in anticipation of the budget; it was important in anticipation of kind of the way the world we thought was going to evolve over the next two decades. And so I'm – I realize there's a panel this afternoon. That will be important; I'll be here for that and at the end of it, I'll make some closing comments and thank everybody again.

But it's probably timely for me now to kind of come in and see if I can put the wrapping paper on this and the ribbon, so that you can climb inside of our minds and inside of my mind the last – really, about the last eight or nine months.

But before I do, I have my – first of all, I want all the general officers in here and all the lieutenant colonels and majors and captains to understand that I went out and ran the combat fitness test this morning. My heart did not explode; I didn't die. (Laughter.) I thought I was going to die and I just – you know, I'd forgotten how intense it is. You don't understand: It's like about 20 minutes of just pure agony. And so if I pass out up here – (laughter), you need to come up and give me CPR. (Laughter.)

But it's been a good morning. I started out with the – with our chaplain of the Marine Corps. We've got a great chaplain of the Marine Corps: a female; Navy rear admiral Margaret Kibben. She's absolutely wonderful. Margaret comes by once a week and she kind of gives me some spiritual guidance and asks for what things she can pray about and we have some prayer in the office. And she leaves and I just feel rejuvenated.

So she came by this morning. We were talking a little bit about it – and Margaret is married to a retired Marine lieutenant colonel, Tim. They have a great family, teenage kids. And their son David, who is a senior in high school – Margaret was kind of looking at him and going, well – talking to Tim, this is probably time that we ought to try to help David figure out and understand what he's going to do for the rest of his life. Little bit worried about it. So they thought, well, I'll tell you what we'll do: We'll do a little test.

And so David left and went off to school. Margaret and Tim snuck in there and they put a Bible on the table and they put a bottle of whiskey on the table and put a silver dollar on the table and they put a Playboy magazine. And they thought, okay, we'll sort our way through this and we'll figure out – we'll just kind of see what he does and that'll be very discerning of the – what our son's future may hold.

So David came home from school. Margaret and Tim were kind of hiding in one of those little louvered closets. (Laughter.) And David came in, threw his books down and was kind of bustling around. Margaret's telling me this now and I'm – I mean, I'm on the edge of my seat.

And as David was going out of the room, he noticed the stuff on the table. So he looks over and he takes the Bible and puts it under his arm and picks up the silver dollar and puts it in his pocket, uncaps the bottle of whiskey. He takes a swig while he's staring at the centerfold in Playboy magazine. (Laughter.) And out of the louvered comes a small female voice: My god, he's going to be a Marine! (Laughter.) That pretty much says it all.

I wish I had the quote – I should have memorized it. We're the most despicable, nasty, disreputable bunch of great American war fighters that America has ever known. There's a writer that did a better description of that. But that's the company you've been keeping for the last day-and-a-half and I'm awful – I'm awful glad you're here.

Let me take you back here for just a second to last – almost this time last – yeah, last year when they asked me in a private session setting – (inaudible) – will I – would I consider being the 35<sup>th</sup> commandant of the Marine Corps. And my generals know this: This was not something that was – you know, that Jim Amos and Bonnie Amos were headed down this path. We were pretty comfortable with where we were going in life.

And so once that happened, things began to – more and more private interviews and sessions. And that's when I began to step back and say, okay, I want to make sure that I understand, for our Corps, where we're headed. For all of us that wear this uniform, we can ask any of us and say, you – do you know what the mission of the Marine Corps? Do you know what we do for our nation?

And everyone, somehow, whether it's a lieutenant colonel wearing wings over here, it's an infantry officer or captain, a four-star general – (inaudible). It doesn't matter. They would go intuitively, yes, I do. And when asked that question, I would say, just as – just as viscerally, yes, I do. I know what we do for our nation. And I would quickly go to my mental – (inaudible) – Rolodex file and I'd start thinking about the things we've done in the past. And I thought about it and that's important. That's historical. Those are landmark events for our nation.

But what does our nation need in its Marine Corps for the future? And we began an effort. There are several young majors and lieutenant colonels and a couple of colonels in this room in here that we called out and, over the summertime, when it became legal to do so, we set up, up at the Navy Annex and spent days and weeks and months working through what the Marine Corps should do for our nation, not necessarily what we thought we should do for our

nation. That would be the answer that I would have given you earlier. But what is it our nation really needs?

And to understand that, we had to take a look at what we anticipated the future security environment was going to be. In other words, you can write the missions all you want. But it has to apply to the face of the world, the landscape that we will be required to operate in. So we had to go back and make sure that we had that right.

I had a little bit of an advantage because when I had George Flynn's job, when General Conway was the new 34<sup>th</sup> commandant of the Marine Corps, we spent about a year, year-and-a-half. Colonel Steve Zotti headed that effort up for me. And we began to take a look at what the world would look like through the next few decades. And that was important. We knew we weren't going to get it exactly right. But we also knew we couldn't afford to get it exactly wrong. I mean, that was the – that was the driver on this thing.

And so you might think we just went to ourselves and said, well, what do you think? Well, we went to the U.S. Army or OSD policy. Well, we didn't do that – well, we did that. We went to all the services. We went to think tanks, many of which are in this room. We spent time with them. What do you think? We went to other governments – we went to other nations' governments and asked them, what do you think the world in the next two decades is going to look like?

And then we sat down and pulled this together. And we said, okay, this isn't quite good enough. What about industry? What about corporate America? They probably are concerned about what the world is going to look like because it's the bottom line for them. You don't think Microsoft or Exxon or Ford Motor wants to know what the world is going to look like over the next two decades? It's their earnings. So we went to them.

And through this, it took six to eight months. It was not an easy effort. And to render it all down, we came up with a – and I've got one slide, so let's put the next slide up. This is about a four-inch document, rendered down to about five or six bullets. I'll be interested to see, when we get to the question-and-answer – and I really do want your feedback; I want you to ask – I want to get your input. But we've tested this now against many different audiences and it hasn't – I haven't had anything thrown at me yet.

But as we look at the next two decades, we'll be out of Afghanistan – and someday we will. We will come out of Afghanistan the same way the United States Marine Corps came out of Iraq last year. We had, on average, about 30,000 Marines, give or take four or 5,000, for about eight or nine years in Iraq, and we're out. They've got about 85 Marines still in Iraq. They would be – their nose would be out of joint if they thought their commandant was saying we're out of Iraq – but, no, I'm in here; what are you talking about? But the fact is, they're on staffs in Baghdad; they're on training teams down in Basra. But for the most part, all of our equipment and all of our Marines are out of Iraq.

That will happen in Afghanistan. I don't know when. You read the same newspapers I do; you listen to the same speeches. It will happen. So we will come out of Afghanistan. So then, once the – once the – where is the Marine Corps going to operate?

We've got a thing we call the – the kind of a global map flattened out and it's called the arc of instability. And in a nutshell, it's the areas of the world that tend to be growing, overpopulation. Some of the things that you see out there: urbanization. A lot of them are along the littorals.

They start in the northern part of South America and they kind of come across the Atlantic; encompass a big chunk of what is now the continent of Africa; swing through the Middle East, some of the countries you might imagine, areas that are in the newspapers today – headlines. Those are areas that are where we call the – they enter or they become prime – these countries are part of that arc of instability. Then you swing through that part of the world over through Pakistan – Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, India and move yourself right around the Pacific until you get down to some of the areas where we know there's potential issues, and right on up to some of our friends that are called the Marines. So that's the arc of instability.

Interestingly enough, we used to, about five to 10 – actually, about 10 years ago say that 70 percent of the world's population lives within 400 miles of the littorals. And now that estimation is about 70 percent of the world's population lives within 200 miles of the sea – of the ocean. So those are the areas where we believe the United States naval forces – Navy and Marine Corps; us as a team – can have our greatest influence. That's also the areas, coincidentally, that are probably going to be, in many cases – not in every case – the most unstable. They're the areas that you read about in the paper today.

It's going to be – it's going to be characterized by urbanization. Essentially, Europe is a declining population right now. They're declining. And yet in the areas that we're talking about, the population is growing exponentially, and you're going to find a lot of it in the urban areas now. It used to be out in the unpopulated – not the case anymore. It's going to be primarily urban. People are going to be living in cities; they're migrating to cities. It's going to be this overpopulation that we talked about.

And it's really a youthful demographic. And who am I talking about here? I'm talking about young men. Now, this is not a sexist or a gender-focused debate. But it's young males, in many cases uneducated, in many cases unemployed, ripe for attachment to things we would call in East L.A. gangs: kind of a gang-identity mentality.

So that's what we're seeing in these areas. We've talked about poverty; we've talked about competition for resources here. But what we haven't – I need to – I need to mention that – I was reading an article just – not too long ago that actually said – that said, in one of the African countries – countries, that clean, potable water was more precious than fossil-based fuel.

We've been alluding to that but I actually read it internally. That's what is going to happen, we think, over the next few decades. Natural resources competition; food, whether it's things grown or things raised or things eaten or things that you drink – it's going to be a

competition for those resources among those people that are called the have-nots. Extremism is going to be – is going to be ripe. It can be more than religious extremism – it can be any kind of extremism. But religious comes to mind right now with all that we see around the world.

And then finally, the proliferation of the basic weapons. We see a world where these nations – or really, these organizations, these stateless organizations have the ability and the – and can afford state-like weapons. We see it with Hezbollah; we saw an instance – this is two-and-a-half, three-year-old information with them. And we know it's there; we know they can get it. They have access and sometimes, the extremism in real states feeds those weapons into the stateless, faceless organizations, uniformless organizations, sometimes crime-related, as in our southern borders, in Mexico, in – excuse me, in Texas and Arizona and New Mexico. It can be crime.

But we see that's probably what the world is going to look like for the next two decades. A lot more information there, but we think that's going to be our backyard because this is primarily the littorals, because these are kind of the nasty missions and things that, quite honestly, don't require 20,000 Marines on the ground. They may only require a Marine rifle company; they may require a training team to go in and help train border police of some of the nations that we want to help gird up and secure their borders.

We're doing that in Libya right now, today. They've got about 62 American forces on the ground there and – of which the Marines are – have a colonel and we've got about 32, 34 Marines there. And we're training the Libyan – two infantry battalions. (*Note: Gen Amos later corrected this comment. The Marine Corps is training forces in LIBERIA not Libya.*)

That's what we can do in the world of future decades. My sense is, it's going to be a while before the United States of America has the stomach to put 100,000 U.S. forces on the ground somewhere. I'm not saying it can't happen; I'm not saying the world situation may not drive us to that. But my sense is, it will be a while, assuming the decision – we're able to make a decision to not put that number of U.S. forces on the ground. I think it will be a while.

I think the world – the focus for the United States of America will be in areas like this and for the Marine Corps in particular in areas like this. This is what we can – this began to define what my thoughts were with, what can we do for our nation? So, armed with that and believing that we're probably 85 percent correct, understanding that something bad could happen in some of the big-name countries around the world and the United States would step up to the plate and the United States Marine Corps would be an integral part of that, let's set that aside for a moment. So, understanding what we believe the future security environment will be, we sat down and spent a month writing the mission statement of the Marine Corps: what we do for our nation. Next slide, please.

I tell the folks that I've written a couple mission statements in my life, a couple for real – I mean, the ones that really count, not the ones that are a screw-over or – the ones that actually help young Marines when their lives are at stake. This is not a pretty mission statement. I would get, probably, a barely passing grade from our training team that teaches us how to do this kind of thing.

We spent a month. And many of the officers in here that were with me understand how difficult and painful this was because we wanted to capture – at the end of this, we wanted Marines to be able to look; we wanted – we wanted the secretary of defense to look at this; we want the think tanks in Washington to look; we want Congress to look at this; we want the American people to look at this and say, okay, we get it. We know what the Marine Corps does for our nation.

This began to define what I will call our lane and I'll talk about that here in just a minute. But if you kind of go with me on this for a second – Joe Dunford has already talked about expeditionary – America's expeditionary force in readiness. A lot of – lots implied in it. That's just not a bumper sticker; it's not – it's not an, okay, we're the 911 force or – that's not what we're trying to say here.

We are saying that America has a responsibility to interact around the world. A portion of that is to have a highly deployable expeditionary force that comes with this stuff. There's a lot implied in that. So that's kind of the umbrella that everything below that on that mission statement fits.

I say we are a balanced air-ground logistics team. When we first started writing it, we had a balanced air-ground team. And to General Gray – he's not here and I regret he's not – General Gray came in and sat with us and he said, let me tell you something. The thing that makes the difference in the Marine Corps is your logistics. You come with your stuff. You don't have to box it up and put it in 20-foot containers and put it on black-bottom ships and wait for 28 days for it to get there. Crises don't wait. Crises require something to be there now. Logistics, Jim, are the difference. That's the difference in the Marine Corps.

And I want you to know, sir, I got it. And all of us that have stumbled around in places like Iraq understand that when the force has to stop and pause so we can get our logistics up with us so we can get ready for the next phase, logistics is the heartbeat of what we do. There's no shortage of courage and there's no shortage of enthusiasm, but there can be shortage of logistics. So logistics is important. We are that air-ground logistics balanced team.

We'd like to be forward-deployed and forward-engaged. Right now, we're forward-deployed in Afghanistan, and pretty heavily. We just swapped commands out. We've got a little over 20,000 Marines and sailors on the ground in Afghanistan. That occupies about 60,000 Marines: 20,000 there, 20,000 that just got back and another 20,000 getting ready to go.

So, about 60,000, which is about – which is about 55 percent of our operating forces in the United States Marine Corps are narrowly focused on Afghanistan, and rightfully so. That's our number-one priority right now. It's my number-one priority as the commandant, is Afghanistan: to provide whatever is required, to do whatever is required – people, equipment, money – for the Marine Corps to complete its mission successfully in Afghanistan.

But in the future, you take a look at areas like the Pacific. If Admiral Willard was in here, he'd be waving the flag right about now and saying, preach on, preacher because he'd be going, we need to reengage in the Pacific. We're not there.

So when I talked about forward-deployed and forward-engaged, that's what we do. We recruit young men and women to live in hard conditions, be willing to give up comforts, whether it be aboard a ship or whether it be in some Third World country. That's what we – that's what we do. We sign up for that. And Marines who want to do that, we need to get back to that. My sense is, we're not there. That's what we do for the nation. You have that forward-deployed force so that when something like Libya kicks off, you've got a force that you can do something with. You may not know what you're going to do with it, but you have an option.

You come down and I talk about, we create options and decision space, and I know Joe Dunford talked about that. That's a critically important piece of this. It became more important the more we talked about it, and Libya is a classic example. You saw in the press, you saw in Congress, you saw folks talking about, why don't we do – let's put a no-fly zone up! Let's do this! Don't do that! No, it's going to commit U.S. forces! We can't afford it! Why aren't we moving fast enough? The Libyans are dying! You know, on and on – Gaddafi's moving out! He's left Tripoli; he's headed towards Benghazi; what are we – you know, it just went on and the rhetoric went on and on.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's become clear to me that situations are not always clear. It's not always easy to determine what's best for our nation. What's the next move? We don't know. And I think we've got a hell of a good secretary of state and secretary of defense and I'll tell you why. And, you know, I've got complete confidence in them. If you think it's easy to sit down and try to determine what the next move is, and then it just – commanded staff or war college, just posture alignment, it doesn't. It's always included; it's always fuzzy around the edges; it's never quite clear.

These forward-deployed forces – this enables, for us – because we're there, provides options for our leadership. It gives them an opportunity to go, okay: We're not quite sure what we're going to do. We're not quite sure if we're going to participate in a no-fly zone over Libya. But let's deploy – let's move the amphibious ships with the Marines off the coast. Let's get them through the Red Sea; get it through the Suez and get it off the coast of Libya, and then we'll figure it out.

That's what we bring. That's what we – we provide decision space. And I can't tell you, the older I've gotten and the more I've – the more I've been fortunate or unfortunate enough to be involved in at least some of the decisions, some of the discussion about, what do you think we ought to do, the more I begin to value, okay, I'm not quite sure: I don't want to really – I don't want to really mess this up; can I – maybe I just need to think about it for another day. We buy that time.

And I talked about in there, we respond to today's crisis, with today's force, today. Joe talked to you about that. We've been hitting that hard within ourselves. I don't want any Marine to walk out of any discussion about what we do for the Marine Corps, what we do for the nation



without clearly understanding that when you respond to today's crisis a week from now, you're irrelevant because today's crisis requires something – we don't know what it is; that may be just movement of ships and forces – to buy the time that we talked about.

But we respond to today's crisis, with today's force, today. President Obama, a year ago in December, on that December 1<sup>st</sup> – I think, as I recall, it was a Monday night – this was announced: They'd plus up our forces. And he spent a lot of time, and his staff, working through, you know, how many. And of course, typical Washington, D.C., we're very critical. I mean, everybody's going, move faster! Make a decision! It's clear!

No, it's not clear, folks. It's not. And when he – and when he made his decision and he announced it at West Point on that Monday night, he said, I'm going to send in – by then, the cook time, by the way, we had – we were in Helmand province down south, and we had 10,000 troops on the ground. And he announced, I'm going to plus-up the forces – U.S. contribution – by 30,000: 10,000 U.S. Marines and 20,000 U.S. soldiers.

Tuesday morning, the lead elements of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Marines were airborne in U.S. Marine Corps C-130s, flying into Afghanistan. That was December the 2<sup>nd</sup>. I arrived on the ground on – I think it was December the 21<sup>st</sup>, I think, we were there, and General Flynn was with us. December the 21<sup>st</sup>, the entire battalion was on the ground with all its equipment. Half of the second battalion was there with half of its equipment. The third battalion arrived – that battalion closed by the end of Christmas, and the third battalion of the plus-up arrived by the middle part of January.

We have to be able to do that. Somebody has to be able to respond to today's crisis, today. Not everybody has to do that because that requires a state of readiness that I'm not convinced our nation can afford. But we can provide that. It has always been our lane. I know General Dunford went back to the '40s and '50s; he kind of tapped into some of the language. That's really what we do for our nation.

We can saddle up on a battlefield with 90,000 Marines, as we did when we crossed the border into Iraq in March of 2003. We can do that. And if something happens in some of the bad places of the world, the big – big-ticket places, you're going to find Marines there with huge numbers.

But that's not why the United States of America buys the Marine Corps. That's an insurance policy. That's one of those, I'm going to get a two-fer out of this organization. America and Congress spends money on the United States Marine Corps to respond to today's crisis, with today's force, today.

And we've had – I've had a lot of commentary the last, really, just – I saw it happening in the springtime before the change of command; read about it in the paper: people quoting, “the second land army.” And, shamefully, we're the ones who started that language. And then we got our nose out of joint when people were rubbing our nose into it. So I'm going, okay – but we're the ones that said it: We know we're a second land army; we've got to get back to our

amphibious roots, we've got to – and then all of a sudden people started using that language. And then they became critical of us: Well, we don't need another second land army.

Well, I'll tell everybody in here I make no apologies for what's happened in Iraq or in Afghanistan. The caveat is, we do whatever our nation asks us to do. Whatever the president asks us to do, we will be there. And I'm pretty – I don't think I'm falsely arrogant on this thing. I think we've done pretty damn well in Iraq. And I'd ask you to think, when was the last time you saw an article in the paper about Fallujah or Ramadi or Habbaniyah or al-Qaida or bad karma. You can't remember the last time. So I feel pretty good about it. I feel pretty good about what's happening in Helmand; it's a tough fight. Helmand is still – we don't know. We don't know what's going to happen in Afghanistan.

So I make no apologies about that. And we do that because the president directs. But America has a Marine Corps to respond to today's crisis and buy time for the national command authority. They need somebody to be forward-deployed and forward-engaged. Joe talked about the concept of a middle-weight force: I think that's us.

I think that's us. I mean, that's who we are. We need to be light enough to get to Iraq quickly but heavy enough to carry the day when we get there. We don't want to just – we don't want to just get in some place and then immediately, after 24 hours, go, holy smokes, we need more logistics; we need more combat power; we need – you know, we need help! You know, we're – (inaudible) – or we're going to – (inaudible) – but we don't have it; we don't have the depth on the bench. That's not us.

But we sure as heck don't want to be so heavy that when something happens and the president, the national command authority says, okay, we need to send some forces – and it may not be combat; it may be – it may be a show of force; it may be something like that – and for us to say, I'm sorry, we can't get there tomorrow because I'm going to have to put all this stuff on black-bottom ships because they can't fit inside C-17s or I don't have any ships available; I'm sorry; won't be for 40 days but I can put it on a railcar and I've got to get it there by railcar. That's where we fit.

So when we wrote this – this mission statement, we wanted to capture that sense of, this is not – we're not – we can do – we can hand out Beanie Babies and MREs; we're doing – not Beanie Babies, but we're doing – (laughter) – but when we get to hand out those Beanie Babies, that's your – 75,000 of them, as a matter of fact – pretty damn proud of it. (Laughter.) But they fit pretty nicely in your cargo pouch – (laughter) – and it takes care of two or three at a time.

But we can take care of people in a humanitarian disaster. We did that in Haiti a year ago in spades. We're doing it right now just west of Sendai. That airport was clear – the one you saw in the – when the tsunami came through; that huge tragedy – huge. Remember the wave came over and you saw the jetways out there? That was the Marine Corps' clearing operation. The Air Force went in there with Red Horse and engineers; we went in there; the Army went in there – it was the greatest joint effort – just like that. And the Marines went up there with 42-year-old CH-46 helicopters and 550 Marines to help our brothers and sisters in northern Japan. And we've been there ever since – ever since.

But we can do that. We can also recapture the Magellan Star from the Somali pirates. We can do that. That's today's crisis. It fits where we have – what we have done in this mission statement. It's not the prettiest mission statement, but it ends with what I think is most important for us: We're going to do whatever the president tells us to do.

So when we – we looked at that, we sat and said, okay, well, then what does that mean? To be able to work in that environment and do what we believe our nation asks of its Corps, then what does that mean in size, in capabilities? That was the next step.

I know you're aware that in here, we started a force structure review effort last September. It went all fall; it completed just before Christmas. And I'm aware that you were briefed yesterday, that the secretary of the Navy was – we briefed him in January; secretary of defense, he said, good.

And it's going to downsize the Marine Corps from 202,000 down to 186,800. To operate in that future security environment, to do the things that we say we believe our nation requires of its Corps, it's a more capable Marine Corps; it's more focused on the things – the lessons learned over the last nine to 10 years of conflict in counterinsurgency environments and it fits the fleet – the future for us. That's where we're headed.

That requires a certain amount of equipment. We're working through that right now: certain numbers of airplanes; certain numbers of helicopters; certain numbers of vehicles. We're struggling right now – we're not struggling, we're working our way through right now, well, what do we want to have with vehicles – (inaudible) – this expense? And we want to be able to fit on amphibious ships and get back to where we can get on C-17s without being outsize vehicles. We want to be able to get back where Marines can carry what they have with them.

And we're making efforts. We already cancelled some programs that we not only didn't need but were way too big and way too heavy. We're checking, changing some of our weapon systems, going from weapons that weigh, you know, 35 pounds with all our ammunition down to weapons that weight half that, with a much more capable system.

So we're doing – we're headed that direction, ladies and gentlemen. I mean, it's – this is – this is serious business for us. This is not talk. We are going to lighten the Marine Corps. We're an air-ground task force. Now, it's going to take – it'll go past – it'll go to the 36<sup>th</sup> and probably the 37<sup>th</sup> commandant, but we are going to do it. And we're in the process of doing it right now.

Now, lay all that I just said on what transpired in the last two weeks of the budget. And I'll tell you: I don't – it's not the matter of being – (inaudible) – or pressing, but the budget – the reality of what we've seen is about to unfold in front of us over the next – really, the next, probably, three to four years. We are acutely aware of that. Next week, we're meeting with all the three-stars – and Joe and I will be down in Camp Lejeune – for three days. And we're going to spend a day-and-a-half on nothing but macroeconomics.

Now, I have a degree in finance. But it's from the University of Idaho so it doesn't really count. (Laughter.) I wish I had paid a whole hell of a lot more attention to the frog when the frog was teaching me macroeconomics. Now, bless his little dead soul right now, the frog was a pretty good teacher, but I didn't learn everything. I have taken a Ph.D. in macroeconomics in about the last three or four weeks, I promise you that, and all the Marine three-stars are going to take that same course that Joe and I have been through for the last – we're paying attention. We understand.

My sense is this – and I'll close it with this – is that, when I say that we have a leg up, that's not – that's not bravado and I don't want my Army brothers to go run out and call (Marty Dempsey ?) and say, Jim Amos has said he's ahead in the race. (Laughter.) That's not –

But because we have been going through, since last summer, the defining, okay, what is our lane? What is it we do, that we provide? I don't want it to be fuzzy. I want it to be crystal clear. And then I want it to pass the test – the Fletcher conferences. I want you to go, you're wrong or, we think you're pretty false or, have you thought about this? And then we need to lay it across the budget on what it is – the fiscal realities of our nation. Our nation can't afford to have all four services be a crisis-response force. It doesn't mean we've – we've jumped into somebody's lane.

Listen: Here's how – here's my perspective on this thing, and we thought about it. Remember, I talked to you about our lane? We don't have a domain that the Marine Corps operates in. Domain is going to become kind of the buzzword and really, it's true. I mean, think about it, you know?

Let's switch to the Army. The Army's domain is primarily on the land. We've got the greatest army in the entire world, bar none. They're heroic; they're – I mean, they are tenacious and they're extremely capable. The Army's domain is principally on the land. Yeah, we've got helicopters and we've got ATACs (ph) – I understand that, and you're in cyber.

But your domain, when you think about the United States Army, is land. When you think about the United States Air Force, you think about above the ground and you think about space, and they're in cyberspace, just like all of us are. But you primarily think of stuff above the ground. When you think of United States Navy, you think of water. You think of the domain of the oceans of the world, above it – I mean, on it and below it. And certainly, they're above it, I understand. But that's their domain.

Well, what's the Marine Corps' domain? We don't have one. We have a lane. Imagine those domains in the shape of a Venn diagram and kind of right in the middle of that is this lane. And I don't – I'm not interested in getting the Army's lane; I don't want to get in the Navy's lane and I don't want to – I don't want to be in competition in the Air Force's lane. Our lane is pretty narrowly defined. And we operate in all of those domains: all three of them – of the big ones, and cyber and space, but primarily those. That's where we fit.

So when we look at that money and we look at that – kind of, at our nation, our president has said in his speech, day before yesterday; secretary of defense has commented on it – you

know, we're going to go back as a nation now, as the Department of Defense and take a look at, okay, what is it we ask – we should ask of our Department of Defense? And then, what is it we have to be able to do as a nation? And then, out of that, what is it we can afford to do?

And that that you can't afford to do, you either figure out how you can afford to do it or you recognize the risk and you take – you take extraordinary measures to mitigate that risk. That's how this is going to work. And then, you sit down as the Department of Defense and you say, okay: Army, this is what I want you to do; Air Force; Navy; Marine Corps.

So when I say I think we have a little bit of a leg up, it's because we've been working through this. We've gone through the pain of taking an introspective look at just what we do for our nation. And it's not everything. That's not what we're trying to do. We want to be in that lane right there. We think that lane not only is historic, which is important but not critical to the future, but it also fits.

So that's where we're headed. I think it's exciting. I'm glad they passed the budget yesterday; it's the first of many, many hurdles. We all anticipate that. But I'll stop here and take your questions until you either can't stand them any longer or you think I'm lying to you and then we'll work with that. (Inaudible, applause.)

MS. : Who would like to ask the first question?

GEN. AMOS: (Inaudible.) (Laughter.)

MS. : Not quite that easy.

GEN. AMOS: No.

Q: Yeah. Afternoon, sir, Captain Arthur Karell; I'm with the AFPAC Hands program. What implications does the mission statement and the force structure review have for the personnel managing system – officer and staff NCO retention?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. For us, when we sat down and did the – or wrote the commandant's planning guides, we made some personnel, administration and, really, administrative kind of changes. In fact, I just took a brief yesterday by Manpower and Reserve Affairs for going back and revisiting how we enlist and – excuse me, not enlist but reenlist subsequent times to make sure we get the right people. We're going to draw the force down – what you don't want to do is have “first come, first served.”

What you want to do, when you're going to go from 202,000 down to 186, you want to make sure you get the best of the best. Sometimes, the best of the best doesn't always come forward, no matter when, because they're hedging their bets and they're trying to see – you know, trying to figure where the best offer is going to come from.

So we've changed that. We changed the way we're doing that. We're going to announce that in – (inaudible) – here in the next little bit. We know that we are not used to being – when

you were a – when I was a young kid growing up, you were an on-call Reserve officer and then you went before an augmentation board to become – by the time you were a captain, to become a regular – you had a regular commission so that you could serve indefinitely. And then we changed that, years ago, and it was, if you made captain, you became a regular officer. So the captain selection board became our criteria.

That's not it – that's not the case anymore. So we've got – we're changing our company grade augmentation procedures right now. It's in effect right now and it's about – we're augmenting about 60 percent; I think the numbers were 60, 65 percent of the captains that were up for augmentation were being selected; 35 percent are not. Sixty-five percent sounds like an easy – you know, a piece of cake, but actually, it's – you'd be amazed. Some Marines that thing that they really should be in that 65 percent are not being augmented, so there's that.

We've taken a – I just agreed three days ago – today's Friday; probably Tuesday – that we are going to bring our select number of staff NCOs – staff sergeants and gunnery sergeants and master sergeants – send them to Monterrey to get their degree and become an foreign area officer and a regional area officer. I don't know if – I don't know what the other services – you know, the Army calling it as the best area program and it's certainly – but I don't know whether they're going to have or we're going to do that.

The lessons we've learned in the last nine to 10 years is that our unit – our enlisted can do a whole heck of a lot more than, you know, we ever gave credit for. They're much more capable. So we're going to double – there are a thousand RAOs in the Marine Corps; we've already agreed to that. I agreed to that about two weeks ago. But then we're going – on top of that, we're going to bring in – we're going to allow people, through a selection board here, within probably the next 60 days, and bring our staff NCOs in and put them in there as well, so that they can – they can help blow that balloon up. So there's a personnel issue for us.

We are going to make some changes because when we went through the – (inaudible) – we began – we understood that we don't honestly have enough majors and enough lieutenant colonels to do the many things that the world is going to dictate for the future. We don't have any. Look at all the numbers of individual augments we have right now. And typically, it's a master sergeant, a gunny or a senior captain or major or lieutenant colonel. So if we believe in the future security environment and we believe that this is what we're going to do, then we're going to need to be able to have some more majors and lieutenant colonels. So we're going to go into Congress and ask for dollar relief so that we can grow more majors and lieutenant colonels.

I mean, that's an example of some of the things we're doing. Now, there's probably a lot more. The personal admin system, which I took the brief on yesterday: We're changing the portion of that to make small-unit leaders have more access to records and things like – so there's things going on. But that's the – that's kind of the genesis of it.

Q: (Off mic.)

GEN. AMOS: Where are we? Okay. Go ahead. Thank you.

Q: Thanks for your comments. Just one clarification: You mentioned two training battalions; if – I may have misheard – those were in Libya or possibly some – some other location? And another follow-up, sir: You mention a lot of concern on the international scale of all those issues. What gives you the optimism, looking on the international scale?

GEN. AMOS: What is what – (inaudible, off mic)?

Q: What gives you optimism, sir?

GEN. AMOS: I want to make sure I understand your question.

Q: Sir, there were two questions. One was about the training battalions, whether those were in Libya or if I misheard that. And the other is, you mention population growth and competition for resources, that those are areas of concern. I was wondering, sort of counterbalancing that, what are areas for your optimism?

GEN. AMOS: Let me go to the microphone there, please. I think our piece of that is to – is to work with the interagency. Right now, my sense is that we don't do a very good job – we the Department of Defense don't do a very good job. My sense is the interagency doesn't do a very good job as well. I think there's both – there's a lot – in other words, we can bring a lot of capability to – resource-wise, potable water-wise, we have that capability. We can bring people – we can bring capabilities like that to teach people to turn foul water into clean water. And we will do that.

But until we get into a resource situation, our responsibility at that point, I think, is to introduce it. I think it's the responsibility of the interagency and folks to help us plant those capabilities and train folks to sustain those capabilities over time. So my sense is, when we get into competition over resources, you know, we can come in and we can show people how to take better care of themselves. Not that I've got – sometimes the competition for resources can even be something like medical and hygiene. We can do that. But over the long haul, that will have to be something, I think, the interagency – we're going to need some help with that in the areas that we just talked about.

You know, we started talking about training teams – we started talking about nations needing help. The land that – it's a galaxy of possibilities. I told you about what's happening in Libya right now: We're training two infantry battalions. (*Note: Gen Amos later corrected this comment. The Marine Corps is training forces in LIBERIA not Libya.*) That's all they're trying to do, is just train two infantry battalions. And yet, there are other areas of the world where we're working right now where we're training border police. Nations that have borders but are very porous, and they want to control their borders but they don't know how: We can help train border police, military forces.

So my sense in that – in those worlds, we have a role. It's probably, in many cases – in some cases, like competition for resources, it's probably an introductory role. And we'll be happy to partner with the interagency and anybody else. We don't have to be the first ones in. We're well past that. The Marine Corps doesn't have to go in and wave the flag right up front. I

would be happy to have another organization come up and say, will you partner with us and will you go in with us, and we'll take the lead – them. And I'll be happy to be a part of that.

So I don't think it's black and white. I think the training piece makes sense. We've got a lot of capabilities. We're doing it right now. But I also think that when it comes to competition of resources, we are – we are an entrée. We are an introduction organization.

When you start thinking about overpopulation, when you start thinking about jobs and economy, the Marine Corps is probably not going to have a lot of capabilities there, other than to perhaps provide – help provide some stability in the way of training and that type of thing for governments that are – that are going through that. That's kind of the squishy answer around – (inaudible) – you know. I apologize.

MS. : Any other question? Yes, there's one.

Q: Hi. I'm General Colin Clark with AOL Defense. Now that you've got a leg up on the Army, to use your own language –

GEN. AMOS: Then don't tell the secretary of defense this at all.

Q: I won't, I promise. Does there need to be an OSD-level look at where Army and Marine Corps capabilities overlap, how to best mesh who should do what?

GEN. AMOS: Yeah. I think going to happen. I think this effort to adjust, described in – it's not clear yet because it's just been announced two days ago. But my sense is that you're probably going to find that now – you're going to find determination by – it's almost going to be a – it's almost going to be a mini QDR. The QDR we just went through was very helpful. Folks agreed or didn't agree but there's pieces of the QDR that I think we can reach in there and pull out that we're not going to have to go back through and re-plow that ground.

So my sense is, is that this next couple of months, the effort to define what it is – kind of a strategy for our nation: What is it that our nation needs to have capabilities to do around the world, to do the nation's bidding? And out of that, the next step then will become, okay, who is going to do it? And I don't want to – I want to manage expectations in here because when you do that, you tend to think dollars and cents and “This is going to be great; we will clearly have a lane that is this and there'll be absolutely no overlaps.”

And when you start talking defense of our nation on things that are really unpredictable – nobody predicted what was going to happen in Tunisia or Libya or – maybe Yemen, you – but nobody predicted this. Nobody predicted what happened up in – what was going to happen up in northern Japan. So the one thing that is for sure is nothing is for sure.

So there'll be – when we start defining capabilities and what service is going to be preeminent owner of those capabilities or the – or the executive agent of that, I think that's what it's going to boil down to. And then I think there's going to be some decisions on where – where there's overlaps and duplicity because the last thing you want to have, when a crisis happens, is



just-in-time delivery. This is not logistics of Walmart. This is, I've got to have it and I've got to have the capability to be able to do it.

And so that's my sense. And I think we're going to get to exactly what you talked about. I think there's going to be a – there's going to be an effort that's going to define what each service's principal roles are; what each service principally does for our nation. I would put it that way. And that's the sense where I've – that we spent a lot of time thinking about: What is a Marine Corps initiative? Okay?

Actually, you know, I meant – what did I say? Did I say –

Q: You said Libya.

GEN. AMOS: I said Libya?

Q: Yes, sir.

GEN. AMOS: When did I say Libya? (Laughter.) I meant Liberia. All of you that are talking on your notebook computers, you who just shot it off to AP, (laughter) – I take it all back. (Laughter.) Yeah. I memorized it.

MS. : Thank you so much. (Applause.)

(END)