

Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable With Major General Michael Keltz (USAF), Director, J-5, Strategic Planning and Policy Subject: The 14th Annual Chiefs of Defense Conference (CHOD) Time: 2:01 p.m. EST Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2011

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MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL KELTZ: OK. I'm up.

PETTY OFFICER WILLIAM SELBY (Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): How are you doing, sir? This is Petty Officer Selby. I'm going to be moderating the call today.

GEN. KELTZ: Yep.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And we're all set to go.

GEN. KELTZ: Fantastic.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: All right. Well, I'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense's Bloggers Roundtable for Wednesday, November 16th, 2011. My name is Petty Officer William Selby, with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, and I will be moderating the call.

Today, we are honored to have as our guest U.S. Major General Michael A. Keltz, director, J-5, Strategic Planning and Policy, who will discuss the recent 14th annual Chiefs of Defense Conference.

This engagement brought together senior military leaders from nations in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss mutual security challenges, improve relationships and foster security cooperation.

A note to the bloggers on the line today: Please remember to clearly state your name and blog or organization in advance of your question, respect Major General Keltz' time and keep your questions succinct and to the point. Please place your phone on mute if you are not asking a question. And if you are asking a question, please make sure that you stay in the lane of the topic.

With that, sir, the floor is yours for an opening statement.

GEN. KELTZ: You bet. First and foremost, thanks a lot. I appreciate that.

And next, I apologize, because we were going to go ahead and do this a couple weeks ago. I ended up literally having to race out of the office to go ahead and catch a plane as we were off to both Seoul and Japan. Even though we can talk about the CHOD conference -- there's a couple of elements there -- I'm wide open for the entire Pacific.

And quite frankly, I love this Bloggers Roundtable type of thing. I'm a Macintosh kind of wirehead geek from heck, so -- I've been using Macintoshes since 1986, and this is the kind of thing that I've been praying for for a long time.

So that said and done, I'm open for questions. Just go ahead and fire away.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Roger that, sir.

Somebody else has joined while you were giving your opening statement. Can I get your names, please?

Q: Gail Harris, Foreign Policy Association.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: OK, thanks, Gail.

And Chuck, you were first on the line, so you can go ahead with your question.

Q: Yeah. General, thank you for taking the time today. Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore Journal.

A question on relocating American troops, persistent rumors that we're going to home port ships in Singapore, and we have announced that we're going to have a unit of Marines in Australia. Can you talk about both of those?

GEN. KELTZ: You bet. Absolutely. I mean, it's kind of interesting how everybody's very concerned about that, on one hand, but on the other hand, it's a very natural next step that we have to take here.

Quite frankly, we've been focused, as we should have been, both on OIF and OEF and Iraq and Afghanistan as a nation. But quietly, in the background, we in the Pacific have been continuing to reinforce our relationships and our alliances through here. And some of that has to deal with how do we reposition our forces in the Pacific to meet our challenges in the future.

And quite frankly, our challenges probably deal more with building partnerships and partnership capacities as they deal with both illicit trafficking, drug trafficking, counterterrorism, being able to help our partners in the Pacific with maritime security, humanitarian

assistance, disaster relief. So what we're looking at, from an overall perspective -- and as you heard the president talk about with Australia, moving Marines in that area -- but quite frankly, it's a rotational concept in which we will just not focus on the northeast Asia portion, but start to spread out through all of Asia as we have been doing quietly, but a little bit more openly now, especially because of the -- in response to a lot of our nations, partner nations, have asked us for more specific help in certain areas such as, like I said, maritime securities, fishery problems, exclusive economic zones. How do we help those nations build that capacity to be able to protect their interests at the same time while we all protect the global commons for commerce?

Q: Any comment on Singapore?

GEN. KELTZ: Oh, Singapore, absolutely. I mean, we've been working with the Singaporeans for many years, for the last couple decades. There are some opportunities in which we can sit there and use some of their capability and especially infrastructure to help us as we transition out of the northeast Asia type of dominance and presence more down through the Southeast Asian realm.

There will be -- we're working on a bunch of different options right now with the Singaporean government to talk about whether or not we home base or whether or not we rotationally base, both ships and/or people, but nothing permanently based, as we talked about earlier. A lot of this will be rotationally based, very much like we have been doing for the last couple decades with the unit deployment-type process where you see that in the Marines or with just (sail ships ?).

Q: Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir. And somebody else just joined?

Q: Yep. Hello.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Yes, who is this?

Q: This is William Wan from The Washington Post.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: OK. And did anybody else join whose name I didn't get? (No response.)

OK. Well, we'll move on to Kyle.

Q: Yes. Hello. Good morning, General. My name is Kyle Mizokami and I work for The Diplomat and Defense Security Watch. And I'm curious, at the chiefs' conference, if Operation Tomodachi was brought up and within what kind of context, if there is some sort of -- if -- talk of some sort of regional response to HA/DR contingencies?

GEN. KELTZ: I'll tell you what; that was a three-hour long discussion that was just fantastic. And the chief of defense, General Oriki Ryoichi went ahead and briefed everything that happened during

Tomodachi, talked about the Japanese response, talked about the regional response and how the actors within the region, whether or not they were allies and partners, whether or not they're just friends and how they responded over -- I want to say it was over 50 nations responded to help the Japanese during that.

As you know, there initially was an earthquake, then the tsunami, and then all of a sudden the nuclear accident in Fukushima. What was really fascinating was watching General Oriki talking about how the regional response was very, very crucial and how they interacted with that and, quite frankly, how it has helped the Japan Self-Defense Forces be able to react to a humanitarian assistance/disaster relief context within their own nation.

Moving the -- one of the southern armies out of basically Okinawa, the vast majority of it, up to the northern provinces was something that had never been done before, really, or it hadn't been done since, you know, 60 years ago. And the ironic portion was is that the Australians came full-force to help with the disaster relief.

Q: Right.

GEN. KELTZ: You know, they have four C-17s, and they offered up three of them. They would have offered up a fourth one. They just didn't -- that fourth one was in maintenance, and they couldn't bring it out. So they actually used Australian C-17s to help move Japanese troops out of the southern Ryukyu Islands up north to Fukushima -- and then later on with New Zealand, with the Bechtel water cannons to help with the nuclear accident, being able to transport those huge beasts from New Zealand up to Japan.

It was very interesting. General Oriki was very forthcoming with what the incident was, how they went ahead and reacted to it, how the military has changed. And you being in the Japan security (blog forum ?), you very well know there's a very distinct difference in the way that both the Japanese populace, the media and also the politicians are starting to use the polite form of Japanese when referring back to the Japan Self-Defense Forces. And it's wonderful to see that transition in the public, transition in their eye, and also to see how the military was used to be able to help in such a huge calamity.

Q: All right. Thank you very much, General.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And I'm not sure -- I may hear a little bit of background noise.

I hope everybody has their phones on mute if they're not asking a question.

Megan, you were next.

Q: Yeah. Hi, this is Megan Eckstein with Inside the Navy. Going back to the rotation of troops over in Australia, I was just

wondering to what extent PACOM would have the sole authority to move those around the region versus, you know, whether you'd have to coordinate with Australia, and then also what that freedom sort of sends to others in the area; you know, whether they're allies of the U.S. or other countries.

GEN. KELTZ: Oh, that's a great question. And part of it is that there will be PACOM-assigned forces, and then -- within both the legislative and also the responsibilities and authorities that are vested within the USPACOM commander, Admiral Willard. We do have the flexibility and, quite frankly, the luxury of being able to react very quickly being able to move forces internally within the PACOM area region of responsibility. As you know, it's huge. And being able to have Marines in the Southeastern Asia area, especially when it comes to both humanitarian response, disaster response, a presence or need or in conjunction with exercises with our allies or other partner nations, having them there gives us incredible flexibility.

And I just want to reiterate for the entire blog, as we talk about forces being moved around and this impression that for some odd reason people thought that we've been leaving the Pacific, we have not been focusing on the Pacific, I can tell you categorically that's absolutely false. I spent 3 1/2 years in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Special Operations Forces, and right after that, in February of 2003, I was assigned to Korea as a general officer. I spent 3 1/2 years in Korea.

I just spent the last year down at the Headquarters Pacific Air Forces staff for a year, which the responsibility was the entire Pacific region. And now I just took over as the J-5 for the Pacific region.

And I can tell you that in the last 10 years, if you look at the capability which the United States had and allies and partners had in the last 10 years, even though you can say that we've numerically taken some things away, we've been quietly but very effectively increasing the capabilities that we have in the Pacific, increasing our technological edge and also increasing the integration that we have with our both partner nations and alliance nations.

A case in point: This is the first time, of the six F-22 squadrons in the world, three of them are stationed in the Pacific. There are only two C-17 squadrons that have been deployed outside of the United States, and they're both in the Pacific, in Alaska and Hawaii. The very first Global Hawk deployments were out of Guam. The very first ones that are stationed outside of the United States came to Guam. The upgrades that we've been doing now to ballistic missile defense; the Aegis capabilities that we have; the Kitty Hawk was replaced by a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

When you look at those instances and you look at those modifications and the increases of capability we have done over the last 10 years, I could argue and everybody can argue very easily that we are a lot more capable as a United States (force forward?). The training that we've been able to do and the increases in technology that our partners

have been able to do for interoperability and exercise and training, we as a whole in the Pacific are a lot more capable now in so many different ways -- command and control; humanitarian assistance; disaster relief; building partnership capability and capacity for counterterrorism; human trafficking; piracy, the illicit trafficking that's going on in both arms sales, drugs and people.

Those kind of things, we have really made a lot of progress in the Pacific theater while we've been still focusing on Iraq and Afghanistan.

I hope that answers your question.

Q: That does. Thank you very much.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And Charley, you are next.

Q: General, thank you. Charley Keyes from CNN. Yesterday there was a report delivered to Congress by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review. And they were pretty blunt about some growing risks involving China. They talked about a growing risk of escalation due to miscommunication and miscalculation. And I just wondered, from your vantage point, what do you see, and how do you prepare for that?

GEN. KELTZ: You know, and that's a huge thing as we look at how we reposition ourselves through the Pacific, how we sit there and re-evaluate where we do mil-to-mil engagements. And it just reinforces how important mil-to-mil engagements are. I don't care whether or not it's with China, whether or not it's with India, whether or not it's with Vietnam, whether or not it's with Australia or the Philippines. The military engagement that we are doing that also includes the whole-of-government approach both from a Department of State aspect, from an economic aspect, is so important for one reason and one reason alone: so that we can understand each other better, which decreases the potential for a misunderstanding or a miscalculation.

So as you see us begin the better interaction with our allies and partners and folks who traditionally have not -- we've not been able to talk to -- for instance, China -- inviting them to as many forums as possible is something that is in everybody's interests. It's a shame that the PRC did not -- we've invited them 14 years in a row, and they've elected not to go ahead and attend the Chief of Defense Conference that we've been doing. We're hoping that China changes its mind on that. There are other traditional folks that we never would have thought or dreamed or inviting to a Chief of Defense Conference.

Vietnam was there. Cambodia was there. Everybody except -- we even had a retired former chairman of the Joint Chiefs for India at the Chief of Defense Conference.

And those are the kind of forum, whether or not they're regional forums, whether or not they're entire Pacific theater forums -- are very important, and the mil-to-mil engagement, which leads to diplomatic engagement, is exactly that. It is meant to decrease miscalculation and

increase a mutual understanding of where each one is coming from, especially as we look at the global commons and how that is so integrally tied to the economic prosperity of not just the Pacific region, but the entire globe.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And on to John Doyle.

Q: Good day, General. You mentioned India just now, and I wanted to ask you, how is the U.S. building its strategic partnership with India? Particularly, what kinds of exercises or operations or exchanges are you -- are you doing with them? I know some Indian troops have done a training exercise in Alaska, and of course they've been, (I guess ?), that red flag for a couple of years now. What else is the U.S. military doing with the Indian military? Thank you.

GEN. KELTZ: Hey, thanks. Appreciate that. (Chuckles.) Great question, and it's one of those things, too, where we are finally able to -- because of, you know -- our focus has been elsewhere in the world, we're finally able to use some of the capability and also some of the folks that are here to start that interaction. And as you know, getting to India anywhere from the Pacific is quite hard to do.

We've had a significant increase in both mil-to-mil engagements and also security forum engagements. I just attended just about 15 months ago a humanitarian assistance/disaster relief conference run by the Asia-Pacific Center and the Center of Excellence here in Hawaii that dealt with that.

And we actually had the Indian equivalent of the FEMA director there, working with that, and also some of their military.

We're doing as much as we possibly can, and obviously it -- they are dependent upon where their government wants to go to. We'd like to do more. There is a potential for us to be able to do more, and we're going to do it through the full spectrum, whether or not it's pure mil-to-mil engagements -- we've also seen Indians participate with us for Partnership for Peace, and also with the Sea Angel programs in which we're doing humanitarian assistance and also just cultural visits with other folks without -- throughout the region.

So it's really a full-spectrum push with India, and we've seen some wonderful results on that -- I mean, even with them buying the newer equipment. We've got that and that's what we like to see, especially when it comes to interoperability. But it's just wonderful to see the opening of that market, and especially when we start to see the Indo-Pacific region, writ large. People have a tendency just to view -- I mean, to zero-in on the Pacific. But when you start to take a look at piracy, starting in Somalia, as it goes across the Indian Ocean, across the Bay of Bengal and then into the Malaccan Straits and then into the Pacific, that is something that will be very, very important in the upcoming years, is that we tie India towards the Southeast Asian region, from not just a security perspective, but protecting the global commons

perspective for commerce, unimpeded commerce, and also global (economies ?).

Q: Thank you, General.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And Walter.

Q: Walter Pincus, at The Washington Post. I'm interested in how you look at the Chinese threat now and in the future. But starting off, where are the three F-22 squadrons based, and why -- what's the threat that led you to put them out there?

GEN. KELTZ: Well, it's a -- it's just a burgeoning of technology to be quite frank, and we had to recapitalize. It's one of those things -- and I'm going to go ahead and address the F-22 question first.

The F-22, as you know, is not just an air-to-air fighter. It is an extremely capable, leading-edge technology platform that gives American combatant commanders an unprecedented amount of situational awareness across a very fluid and dynamic battlefield, not just in the air-to-air regime, but also in the cyber regime, the electronic warfare regime.

We went ahead and we have obviously the Guard squadron that's out here at Hickam. We have two F-22 squadrons up at -- in Alaska. We do normal and periodic rotations constantly, both to Guam and also to Kadena in Japan, to be able to interact with our foreign partners and alliance partners.

And the reason why we -- (chuckles) -- basically brought them out here is because the F-15, quite frankly, even though a very capable aircraft -- when you look at it, that darned thing is almost becoming 40 years old. And fighter aircraft just don't last that long, and we have to recapitalize. And the entire Air Force, quite frankly, from an airframe perspective, is old and tired. I mean, if you look at the old F-100 series aircraft -- the 101, the 102, the 104, the F-4 -- we used to recapitalize based on advances in technology. Now we recapitalize based upon economic ability to be able replace our fleet. So that was really a natural progression, going from F-15s to F-22s.

Let's go ahead and transition a bit to the PRC threat. But before I do, Walter, is that -- does that answer your question on the F-22?

Q: Yes.

GEN. KELTZ: OK. The PRC threat, you know, I'm a -- I look at China in a nontraditionalist type of view.

I don't look at them as a friend. I don't look at them as a foe. I deal with China as China.

Ten years ago I wrote a paper with Dr. David M. Lai, who was a former foreign service officer, he and his wife both in Chicago. And while I was at Air War College, I got to spend a year with him. And it was interesting. We wrote a paper, and the premise of the paper was -- is do not treat them either/or, or don't label them. Follow the old George Washington rule when it comes to there because if you label somebody a friend, you label somebody an enemy, you are held captive to that label.

China is China. It is that -- it's that simple. They have an incredible 5,000-year history. They have an incredible dynastic history. I mean, I'm reading right now a book by Dr. Kissinger called "On China," and I'm just reviewing the history of China, the proud traditions and how they were able to break through the initial portions of the westernization, and now where they're at today. And so understanding China more, both from a historical aspect, which would mean I have very deep roots, but also on a cultural and competency aspect, not just normal sensitivities, we will understand them better and understand that the threat really is something that we have to be aware of.

The -- it's interesting. We don't really say that they're a threat, but I have a quote from the Japanese LDP policy chief, Shigeru Ishiba. And it was interesting, something that he said about the PRC. He says, "PRC is not an enemy but is morphing into an unstable and unpredictable state with a rapidly modernized military and low transparency." That dichotomy of low transparency casts doubts on the PRC intentions, and the more that we interact with one another, I believe we will understand what their intentions are and what their strategies are. And in that process of understanding their strategies, I believe we can go ahead and reduce what we believe a threat is and go ahead and continue to focus on what's important: our mutually integrated economic requirements, trade requirements, commerce requirements and protection of the global commons.

Q: If I can just follow up for a minute, the --

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Walter, we're going to have to -- I'm sorry. We'll be able to get to your follow-up.

Q: OK.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Just I'm going to get around the horn once.

Titus?, you were next.

Q: Yes. Titus Ledbetter of the publication Inside the Air Force. General, appreciate you taking the time.

Can you talk about the Air Force's involvement in that deployment to Australia that was recently announced? And if you could provide some specifics in that Air Force involvement, that would be great.

GEN. KELTZ: Yeah, you bet. And like I said, the specifics right now are starting to emerge, and this is just the beginning -- the prime minister's statement and the president's statement up in Darwin as they relate to strengthening our regional capability in that area in Southeast Asia, being able to increase the capabilities for exercises and training, being able to integrate within the Australians.

And keep in mind that they've been an alliance partner for 50-plus, almost 60 years. That things like ISR, that is something that is just starting to really take hold, and we've really been working with this for the last 10 years, as you saw in Iraq and Afghanistan. So how do you integrate the production, the exploitation, the dissemination across allies and partners in the Southeast Asian region. And we're using ISR and Global Hawk and the PED, production -- like I said, production and exploitation and dissemination, to use that as a foundation of how do you interact better as air forces.

As you know, the increase in threats and capabilities of surface- to-air systems is increasingly decreasing our ability to penetrate battle space, so the better that we interoperate with both our allies and partners, and specifically here in Australia, being able to up-gun and increase some of the capabilities that they have at the -- their runways and some of their air forces.

I have a very special relationship with the air marshal, Geoff Brown, who is now the chief air marshal in Australia, just to help with the interoperability piece of that. They've transitioned from F-111s to F/A-18s. They're looking to F-35 interoperability. And we're starting to look now into the Northern Territory, specifically for that region to be able to start and better and enhance our training, especially as we bring on fifth-generation fighters.

Titus (sp), does that answer your question? And if not, we can come back later on.

Q: I may have a follow-up later on.

GEN. KELTZ: OK.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And Gail.

Q: Yeah, General, Gail Harris with the Foreign Policy Association. I apologize; I missed your opening statements. But I was wondering -- I have a big-picture question. What is it, as you look at the 21st century and the various national security threats and challenges -- what would be two things that could keep you up at night?

GEN. KELTZ: (Chuckles.) Two things that keep me up at night: quite frankly, miscalculation, to a certain degree, but really cultural competence.

It -- one of the things that we have done -- and I'll go to cultural competence first -- in the last 10 years, if you look at the American military and how they have interacted in Central Asia, how

they've interacted in Iraq and Afghanistan -- my son -- my youngest son is a Marine; my oldest son is in the Army -- one of the things that they're teaching us is cultural competence is just almost as important and sometimes would obviate the need for kinetics by -- able to understand, one, the environment that you're in and the cultural requirements that are around us. So it's a more of a complete understanding of how do I train soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marine, Coast Guardsmen and my civilians to be culturally competent through a very multilateral, multicultural environment such as the Pacific.

There is a difference of knowing how to speak properly in addressing folks in Korea. I mean, there's a difference between "banma" (ph), which is like the colloquialism, and the difference between "unyonghaseyu" (ph) and "unyonghashimnika" (ph). And you see that also in Mandarin, in Chinese. You see that in the Muslim cultures. How do you interact better with those individuals?

And as we start to engage folks, one of the things that keeps me up at night is that I'm helping our United States forces interact better with our allies and partners. And oh, by the way, leveraging our allies and partners' capabilities and coming back to Australia -- they have an incredible amount of experience down in Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Indonesia and Malaysia, using the Singaporeans to help us understand Chinese better, understand the Malaysians better, to understand the Indonesians better. That's one the things that kind of keeps me up, which is ironic because usually when people say, what keeps you up, you think a threat. And I'm really thinking of increasing the capabilities of the individual, a very soft-power, smart-power type of environment.

Now --

Q: Thanks -- OK.

GEN. KELTZ: That's the -- one of the main things. And quite frankly, I can't really think of a second thing that keeps me up besides my wife spending a lot because I was promoted to major general, and she's spending money like a lieutenant general's wife.

Q: (Chuckles.) Thank you, sir.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir. And William.

Q: Could you talk about the miscalculation part of that that you were -- you had started saying, in terms of things that keep you up at night. How does that play out, or what would that situation look like?

GEN. KELTZ: Well, yeah, I wouldn't want to sit there and try to project what would happen in miscalculation. I mean, we could read any good W.E.B. Griffin novel or, you know, one of those type of things to see what miscalculation projected could be like. I think we both understand that. How do I combat miscalculation -- that is really the question.

And the way that we're going to it is with this increased exercises, increased relationships with our partners, increased interaction, quite frankly, increasing not just bilateral relationships but multilateral and trilateral relationships. I mean, we're starting up a trilateral relationship between the United States, Korea and Japan. And who would have thought of that just even 10 years ago? Another trilateral relationship that we're starting up with the Australians in Japan also, working that throughout the entire region and then accelerate that into a regional multilateral forum.

That is probably the best way I can combat miscalculations, because of being able to use the capabilities and experiences of our allies and partners to formulate our policies, to formulate our objectives better, to integrate our views, especially as we talk about the global commons and economics and trade and commerce. That is probably the best way to go ahead and attack the miscalculation problem.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Did you get that, William?

Q: Yes. Thanks so much. I really appreciate it.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: OK. Major General, do you have time for a few short follow-up questions?

GEN. KELTZ: Stand by. Let me take a look here real quick. (Pause.) I've got a call coming in from a three-star general, but we do have time. I can go ahead and give him a call back later. I also wanted to get back to William's and also Titus's follow-up too when we can do that.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Roger that, sir.

What we'll do, we'll go ahead and do -- Chuck, did you have a follow-up?

Q: Yeah, kind of the elephant in the room, the one thing I haven't heard yet, Taiwan. Can you talk about U.S. military relationship with Taiwan?

GEN. KELTZ: I don't think that has changed, really, in the last 50 years. And it looks like the administration is publicly stating that, too. I mean, we have a pretty straightforward policy vis-a-vis Taiwan and China. I mean, we want to see a peaceful resolution to the "One China" issue. In the meanwhile, we have obligations under TRA, the three communique -- six communique, excuse me -- I mean three communiqués, and also the six assurances.

If you take a look at the entire China policy and our relationship with Taiwan, especially vis-a-vis economics, they're all tied together. As a matter of fact, we're just having the Taiwanese over here right now talking on a day-to-day basis. Last week, we had interactions with our military talking to their military at the lower

levels, talking about interoperability, talking about military capability.

But quite frankly, what we're concentrating on with Taiwan right now is humanitarian and disaster relief, especially after the Morakot -- excuse me, the Morakot flooding and also the cyclone that happened there.

So, interesting because their focus right now is on how their military can help them, not only just with the defense of their nation, but how their military can help them in a disaster-response, disaster-relief area. As a matter of fact, we're doing a table-top exercise this week to talk about how do you interact with your interagency? How do you get the whole of government to be able to interact with that? Lessons that we learned from Katrina; the lessons that we're also learning with the forest fires that we have; lessons that the Japanese learned during Tomodachi: And they want to -- they are very, very interested on how the military can interact with their civilian counterparts and civilian organizations to be able to better respond to natural disasters and calamities within their land.

And that's -- basically, it's a continuous and ongoing affair with the Taiwanese, and one that has been -- we cherish, very much so, and have a long relationship and standing relationship and history with them.

Q: Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: And Kyle, did you have a follow-up?

Q: No, I'm actually good. Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: OK, Megan, did you have a follow-up?

Q: Yeah, only because I had read some conflicting things. I was just wondering if you could speak to, real fast, you know, how much of the training with the Marines in Australia would be, you know, just amongst U.S. forces, versus how much would be, you know, joint exercises with the Australians, and then also whether the Darwin location specifically plays any role in how you'll do that, or if it was just sort of, you know, a convenient place to go.

GEN. KELTZ: Could you say the first part? I didn't quite get at what you're trying to get at on the first part of your question.

Q: Oh, I'm sorry.

GEN. KELTZ: (Inaudible.)

Q: Yeah, I had been under the impression that it would be joint exercises with the Australians, but I guess the president had made some comments about how it'd be the first time that the U.S. Marines would be doing solo training over in Australia. So I was just wondering, you know, whether it'd be a combination of the two or if, you know, they would just be training on their own or how that was working.

GEN. KELTZ: Well, what we want to do in talking to the marine force's specific commander is be able to do as much -- maximize as much training as possible. And quite frankly, there's certain competencies that you have to do by yourself because that's when you're doing unit-level training, just being able to shoot, scoot and communicate. But the vast majority of training will be joint. It'll be joint not only between -- I mean, excuse me, combined not just between the -- I mean, with the Australians and the Americans, but also joint warfare, as we have been demonstrating for the last 20 years, interacting between air, sea, naval, ground, space and cyberforces as we start to do that.

So almost everything that we do will be a combined or joint nature with our allies and partners. There will be some unilateral training, which is normal, day-to-day unilateral training, but any kind of the major training will always be in conjunction with our partners and our allies.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And sir, just so you know, whenever you have to go, just let me know. And if anybody still has follow-up questions, they can send them to me too and I can forward then on to you.

If you have another few minutes, Charlie did you have a follow-up question?

Q: Yes. Charlie Kai (sp), CNN. General, I just want to take another run at this China issue. If the Chinese reject your mil-to-mil invitations and both sides are modernizing and building up, how concerning is this risk of miscalculation to you?

GEN. KELTZ: Well, that's interesting, but quite frankly, they haven't shown us that they're going to be rejecting any of that. If anything, it's actually been improving, even in light of the Taiwanese arms sale. So we're going to go ahead and continue to run down that line, and any opportunity I have, whether (or not ?) sending the U.S. Army Band or whether (or not ?) sending the commander of USPACOM to China, is something that we'll go ahead and explore.

But I'm no fool. They're not going to be showing us the crown jewels and not be as open and transparent as we'd like them to. And like, you know, Ichigero (ph) sat there and said, is the transparency portion and the intent through mil-to-mil engagements, I can understand that better and help formulate better how we interact with the Chinese.

And it's just not a mil-to-mil thing. I mean, it's a whole-of-government approach. It's commerce. It's diplomacy. It's interaction with the regional partners and actors. It's, you know, staying within the rule of law, the international laws, within the U.N., you know, convention, the law of the seas, especially as it deals to the sea lanes and commerce and South China Seas. Those are the kind of things that we can formulate from a regional perspective, an international perspective, as everybody plays by the rules.

Q: Thanks.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: John Doyle.

Q: Yes. Very quickly. How serious a problem is it for you, the ongoing disputes in the South China Sea with all these different countries claiming -- in some cases getting a little difficult with each other -- how hard a dance is that to do to stay on everybody's good side but still maintain the posture of the U.S. needs to maintain in that part of the world?

GEN. KELTZ: I would say that the dance was more difficult a year ago. But if you just -- looking at open source and just reporting on the -- just the last week and month alone, both the Philippines and the Vietnamese, looking at their claims and ensuring that they are within international standards now and making sure that they meet the -- conform to the U.N. Convention on Law of the Seas (sic) and international law and the rule of law so as to have a better legal foothold for their states and claimants.

And like we've stated before, though, it's -- you know, we don't take a position, quite frankly, on any territorial claim, especially not a claim that is somewhere in the South China Sea. But we believe every one of the countries has their right to assert that, but they don't have a right to pursue it through intimidation or coercion. Then they should be following, like I said, the international law, rule of law and the U.N. Convention of the Law of the Seas (sic).

And so it's quite -- that's been -- that has been brought up many, many times both by our secretary of state, also by the foreign ministers. And I think we're seeing that change right now. I think that you will be seeing a substantial change of where the claimants will start to go ahead and conform within international law and -- so that they can go ahead and bring their claims to an international tribunal, over to the U.N. for resolution or to a regional forum for resolution.

Q: How big a risk is miscalculation there among the parties?

GEN. KELTZ: Yeah, I think the risk of miscalculation is kind of small there.

Will there be dust-ups? Yeah, probably. But what we have to really worry about is that everybody's running from the same sheet of music; everybody is playing by the same rules -- and that they play by the rules. And I think that we're seeing a lot of our allies and partners in the region starting to go ahead and apply by those -- and abide by those, excuse me.

Q: Thank you very much.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Do you have time for one more, sir?

GEN. KELTZ: I think Walter Pincus still had a follow-up.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Yeah.

GEN. KELTZ: And I was never able to get back to him.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: I've been trying to get back to him -- (laughs) -- I'll just make it first. Thank you.

Walter, are you still there?

Q: Yeah.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thanks.

Q: Just to follow up on the China thing, the threat from China, particularly in the naval sense, is being used here to continue spending on ships and not -- sort of fight the cuts. And one of the testaments is the fact that they're building an aircraft carrier, or they're -- sent an old aircraft carrier out to sea and they're training to have one or two of their own.

I mean, do you see that as a major threat, or is that just an evolution of a country that is beginning to move away from their own coast because their own trade depends on a blue-water navy?

GEN. KELTZ: That's an interesting proposition. And the reason why I say that, it is something that we're wrestling with right now. And it's just not us. It's the Japanese asking the same question; the Filipinos asking the same question; the Malaysians and Indonesians, Singaporeans are asking the same question. Because if you look at their PRC defense white paper, they originally omitted having anything to do with aircraft carriers. Now they've reversed themselves and kind of flip-flopped twice now on that. And that just -- again, it clouds the transparency issue and their intent issue, and there's a lot of concern about that.

So consequently, when you take that -- and we've been piecing together their foreign policy, their strategic policy, their near-seas defense policy. And as you sit there and look at that strategy, they definitely look like they want to push everybody out of the region, of going -- start from the Bohai Gulf, the Yellow Sea up in the north by Korea, coming down through Taiwan, coming into the South China Sea, their 9-Dash line -- quite frankly, it doesn't conform to international law.

It doesn't conform to any kind of rule of law that we know. And it sure as heck doesn't conform to any of the U.N. Convention Law of the Sea's. So there's a concern there, and that is something that is prudent for us to be prepared for.

So when we look at threat, we -- people have a tendency to throw the world "threat" around very quickly, and I agree with you. This is more a pragmatic approach of taking a look at what their strategies are. And it appears their intent right now is starting to push people out of things that would be, normally, internationally-recognized waters. And

the international response to that right now has been alarm. And the international response to the Chinese is, hey, get yourself back into international norms; you're concerning us here, especially as it deals with the global commons and impeding commerce and trade in the area.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Did you get all that, Walter?

Q: Yeah, that's fine. Thank you.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: OK. And once again I guess we're going to go ahead and wrap up right now. We're just about out of time. I really appreciate your --

Q: Sir -- oh.

GEN. KELTZ: I think Titus is --

PETTY OFFICER: Titus?

Q: Yes, I had one more.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Oh, OK. Go ahead, Titus.

Q: Just real quick, it's my understanding that President Obama announced two new force posture initiatives, so including the fact that leaders also agreed to closer cooperation between the Royal Australian Air Force and the U.S. Air Force that'll result in increased rotations of U.S. aircraft through northern Australia. So I was hoping you could talk a little bit more about that. And if you had any numbers associated with that, that'd be great.

GEN. KELTZ: Yeah, the problem -- giving you numbers on that right now is like betting on Apple stock back in 1980. You didn't know -- (inaudible) -- coming. Q: (Chuckles.) OK.

GEN. KELTZ: So I can't give you the numbers right off the bat, because quite frankly, I don't know them. But I do know that we will -- PACAF is look at this right now, Pacific Air Forces Command is looking at this right now, of what we can do to increase it. Air Marshal George Brown -- Geoff Brown is looking at that also, how we will be able to take advantage of that. And quite frankly, the Northern Territory governors are kind of looking forward to it because of the way that we will go ahead and do some of the training and also some of the additional monies that brings in, obviously, when you rotate folks in for exercises, major exercises like that.

So I can't give you specifics right now because they're morphing on a continuous -- on a daily basis as we, you know, start negotiations with our allies and partners of what we want to do. Because it's not just the United States and Australia. We're going to be opening it up to other countries also, Singaporeans being able to fly in there with us. Hopefully, one day maybe we can even see Indonesian and Malaysian folks traveling down there, or the Thai air forces, having a true combined exercise capability, because Australia offers us an incredible potential

in some of their open area masses that are basically just wonderful training areas, to be able to take advantage of it.

Q: Thanks.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Sorry about that, by the way, Titus.

Q: It's all right.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: So we're going to go ahead and wrap up now. I'd like to once again thank everybody for your time. And once again, thank you very much, Major General Keltz, for your time. If you have any closing comments, you can go ahead with those now, sir.

GEN. KELTZ: You bet. Hey, folks, thanks a lot for participating. And quite frankly, I'd like to go ahead and do this periodically. If you want to go ahead and do this every four or five months, I could do that easily, just as long as we're not boring each other. But I think this is an awesome venue. I'd like to go ahead and take advantage of it more, and appreciate everybody's inputs.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you very much, sir. And thank you everybody on the line again. Today's Bloggers Roundtable can be found on dodlive.mil, where you'll be able to find source documents, such as the audio file and print transcript, as well as a story based on today's call.

That concludes today's call. Feel free to disconnect at this time.

Q: Thanks very much.

Q: Thanks a lot, Major General.

GEN. KELTZ: Thanks a lot, guys. Appreciate it.

PETTY OFFICER SELBY: Thank you very much, sir.

END.