

Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable With Captain John Kirby (USN), Deputy Secretary of Defense for Media Operations; and George Little, Pentagon Press Secretary Subject: President Obama's Defense Strategic Guidance Time: 5:08 p.m. EST Date: Thursday, January 5, 2012

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JENNIFER ELZEA (Office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs): Hi. This is Jen Elzea, from OSD Public Affairs.

I have with me here in the room Mister -- Captain John Kirby, sorry, and Mr. George Little. And they are here to chat with the bloggers.

LIEUTENANT TIFFANY WALKER (Office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs): OK, I'll go ahead and get this started.

Hello, everyone. I'd like to welcome you all to the Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable for Thursday, January 5th, 2012. My name is Lieutenant Tiffany Walker, with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating our call today. Today we are honored to have as our guests Pentagon Press Secretary Dr. George Little, and Deputy Secretary of Defense for Media Operations Captain John Kirby.

They will discuss the Defense strategic guidance announced by President Barack Obama, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey this morning. The team will provide a summary of the strategy, and take questions from bloggers.

A note to our bloggers on the line today: Please remember to clearly state your name and blog or organization in advance of your question, respect our guests' time, and keep your questions succinct and on the topic of the defense strategy announced today. And if you're not speaking, please keep your phone on mute. It helps the fidelity of our audio recording and those of the bloggers that are on the line.

Now we'll take an opening statement from Dr. Little and Captain Kirby.

CAPTAIN JOHN KIRBY: Dr. Little.

GEORGE LITTLE: All right. Well, it's great to be with all of you today. Thanks for joining us late on a Thursday afternoon. We were pleased earlier today to announce the new strategic guidance for the Defense Department, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense."

As you all know, the president was here, in a first-time appearance by the commander in chief in the Pentagon press briefing room. And then he was followed by the secretary and chairman in articulating the new strategic guidance that the department, along with the president and his national security team, have been working on over the past several months.

As you all know, the Defense Department over the last year has been in the process of identifying several hundred billion dollars' worth of reductions in future defense spending. The Budget Control Act that the Congress passed last summer requires that we identify nearly \$500 billion in savings over the next 10 years. And Secretary Panetta, along with the civilian and military leaders of the department, decided early on, when the Budget Control Act was passed, that it was important that we identify future savings not through a numbers-driven process but by articulating a strategy that would guide their decisions on the defense budget. And the president was very much a part of this process all along.

So just a few points on the strategic guidance itself, maybe a couple of points on process, and then we can get to your questions after Captain Kirby talks a little bit as well.

The strategic guidance that was issued today I think reflects, as the secretary said, a strategic turning point for the United States and the configuration of our defense system around the world.

The strategic guidance recognizes that we, even in the face of fiscal tight-beltening (sic), we have to maintain our commitment to protect the United States and to protect the finest military in the world.

There are some key shifts, I think, that you probably noted earlier today, and that is that we're going to be placing increased focus on the Asia-Pacific region. We have an arc of interests and alliances from Japan all the way to India, and that region is very important to us. There are geopolitical shifts there, economic shifts, and we are going to remain a Pacific power, and we're going to remain committed to our alliances and interests there.

We will of course remain focused on the Middle East, and we're going to maintain our commitments to Europe and to other regions around the world. Naturally, we're still in a war in Afghanistan, and we're going to continue that fight. We're making substantial progress there, and we're losing sight of our commitments there.

That being said, we are at an inflection point. We are now draw -- drawn down in Iraq; we are drawing down over time in Afghanistan; and this is the right time to frame a defense strategy for the future.

We recognize that there're still security challenges out there. We still have rogue states like Iran, North Korea. We have al-Qaida to contend with, even though they've been radically diminished. We have a number of other challenges to confront going forward also. We are going to maintain the finest military in the world, and that's the -- that's the bottom line.

Now, the process we've gone through to develop the strategic guidance has been a monthlong process. The secretary, you know, directed his senior civilian and military leadership team to come together and produce the strategy guiding the budget decisions that we'll announce later this month or in early February.

The -- not just the civilian leadership, but the joint chiefs and the combatant commanders were -- the service secretary, the service chiefs, they were all part of this process. And they met not just here with -- inside the Defense Department, but they met with the president on a number of occasions and other national security officials in our government to frame this strategy. So this is not just a Defense Department strategy. This is the U.S. government's defense strategy for the future.

With that, I'll turn it over to Captain Kirby, and we'll take your questions.

CAPTAIN JOHN KIRBY: The only thing that I would like to add from the military perspective is there is -- there's just a few elements here in the strategic guidance that I think are worth noting about what this means for the military. You heard the secretary talk about being smaller, more flexible, agile, ready. All that is absolutely true. We will be leaner, therefore, in a -- we will be -- we will be smaller in terms of -- in terms of numbers. But we're also going to maintain the superiority that we've enjoyed in the technological spectrum. We're going to remain networked. We're going to remain very focused on cyber.

But if I could just sort of -- four big chunks here that I think are important to make sure we make clear. We're not backing away from a global presence.

We are now and will remain a globally postured force. Some of where we will be will change in size and scope, but we're still going to maintain the security commitments that we've made around the world.

We're going to protect some new capabilities and investments, things that we have learned -- oftentimes the hard way -- over the last 10 years of war: counterterrorism capabilities, the great work of our Special Forces, irregular warfare, counterinsurgency capabilities, unmanned capabilities. All the things that we've learned about this changing nature of war in the modern age are not going to go away. We're still going to be able to invest in that, and we're going to want to keep

those sharp. Again, it might be a scope issue, but we're not going to turn our back on these things.

We're also going to make sure that we're aligning force composition and size to a full range of missions and activities. I mean, some of you may have seen some of the press coverage, and some of it suggests that we're -- you know, we're walking away from counterinsurgency. We're absolutely not going to do that.

We want to be fully prepared, as we are now, to defer -- deter and defeat aggression wherever we need to. So even if we are committed, you know, to a large-scale operation in one theater, we're going to remain able to deny an adversary their capabilities to defeat us in another.

And then the last thing that -- the -- now, when I go back to counterinsurgency, on the size and scope, again, we're not losing the lessons learned, but we aren't going to size the force anymore for large, long-term stability operations. That is -- that is -- that is something that the secretary has decided we aren't going to do.

And then the last thing -- and this is a -- it's not a small point -- is inherent in this strategic guidance, this strategy moving forward, is what we call reversibility. We want to -- we want -- we want the organization, the institution itself, to be flexible enough that if we have to reverse any of these decisions, if we have to -- we need the ability to surge or regenerate a capability or force structure, we can do that, if we have to.

So, again, those are just some large sort of underpinning elements of the -- of the strategy that I thought from a military perspective was important to get out there. And that's all I've got.

MR. LITTLE: All right.

LT. WALKER: All right. Thank you.

MR. LITTLE: We'll be delighted to take your questions.

LT. WALKER: All right. Thank you, Captain and Mr. (sic) Kirby. We had one more blogger join us on the line. I'd like to find out who that is before we started. (Pause.) Anybody?

OK, we have six bloggers on the line today. We'll go ahead and start with Mr. Andrew Lubin. Go ahead, Andrew.

Q: Yes, gentlemen, thank you for taking the time. This is Andrew Lubin from the Leatherneck magazine out of Quantico. I've got the document open in front of me, every primary mission of the armed forces -- deterrence -- deter aggression, protect power -- (inaudible) -- access denial, provide a stabilizing presence, conduct stability and COIN ops, and conduct HA/DR.

But The New York Times reports you're cut back the size of the Marine Corps yet again. Will you be instituting a draft, or how do you intend to turn around and actually conduct these missions?

MR. LITTLE: No, our focus is resolutely on preserving on the all-volunteer force. That is a core principle that the secretary and chairman has -- have laid down, and it is a bedrock of this strategy. The all-volunteer force is important to American society and to our military. So there are no discussions at all under way related to the institution of a draft.

CAPT. KIRBY: No, I don't have anything to add to that. I mean, it -- we are going to be a smaller force across the board, sir. There's no question about that. In fact, and the Air Force and the Navy have -- on their own, before the development of this strategy, were coming down in end strength. And that's just a reflection of where we are after 10 years of war and what we anticipate being the strategic requirements moving forward.

But again, reversibility is planned into this. So if we -- if we -- you know, if we had to do something in terms of end strength, I mean, we -- you know, we would want to be able to preserve that capability. And look, I mean, I'm not predicting that we're going to -- I certainly am not prepared right now to talk about specific end strength numbers for any of the services right now. Those are programmatic decisions that we'll be able to speak to later in the month, so I don't want to get into that.

But I would remind you, as -- and you know this better than probably anybody on this call -- that the Marine Corps was able to, in pretty short order, in fact, ahead of schedule, get up to over 200,000 in end strength in just the last several years when it was required -- when it was required to do that. And they've never, as you also know, had a problem with their recruiting numbers in the last 10 years of war.'

Q: Sure.

CAPT. KIRBY: So it's not that something like that couldn't be done.

Q: Well, right, right -- well, I'd like to follow up, guys, then I'll give it back to the -- to the other bloggers. You're cutting -- a very close cutback to 185(,000). Do you anticipate cutting beyond that?

CAPT. KIRBY: Again, sir, we're just really not prepared on this phone call today to get into specific budget programmatic.

Q: OK, thank you.

MR. LITTLE: These are very good questions. And certainly by the beginning of February we'll be prepared to answer some of the more specific programmatic decisions in more detail. Q: OK. I appreciate that.

MR. LITTLE: Thank you.

LT. WALKER: All right. Thanks, Andrew. Chuck, you're up next.

Q: Yes, thank you, gentlemen. Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore Journal. You talk about reversibility.

The current U.S. naval fleet is at numbers that it hasn't seen since prior to World War I. The -- there is, if I understand correctly, no air force fighter in the works to follow up on the F-35, which is already over a decade old. The F-22 production line will be shutting down. If -- how do you ensure reversibility if you've closed down the manufacturing that produced weapons to begin with? And in addition, you know, we -- the last decade has seen the lowest troop totals -- active duty troop totals since World War II. There, again, how do you reverse that with a volunteer army? If you can talk to both preserving the industrial side of it and how do you ramp up personnel in the event of necessity? Thank you.

CAPT. KIRBY: Well, the secretary has been very, very clear and emphatic about preserving the industrial base of the country. In fact, he recently went up to Groton, Connecticut, and toured a submarine that was under construction and spoke to the shipyard workers about how critical and how perishable, quite frankly, their skills are. So there's the -- there's absolute commitment on that. I mean, we understand --

Q: But an -- sir, that submarine is the last of its kind being produced, is it not?

CAPT. KIRBY: No, it's not. The one we went aboard wasn't the last one because he visited -- we actually visited two: one that was actually just beginning construction --

Q: (Good ?).

CAPT. KIRBY: -- and then one that was almost -- she had already been christened and was just months away from being commissioned.

But look, I mean, there's -- a couple of -- there's a lot in your question there, and I probably won't be able to satisfy you all, and I'll invite George to jump in too.

But as for the Navy, yes, the Navy is not as big as the prior years' shipbuilding plans had projected it to be. And what we've said is if the sequestration tool is put into place where we are -- you know, we are -- our cuts further -- another 500 billion (dollars) -- are mandated, you know, we're going to end up with the smallest Navy since about World War I, since Woodrow Wilson's administration.

But it's also true that with the Navy that we're putting to sea right now, that it's the most capable, most flexible navy in world history, period. And one Navy ship today could do the work of many, many ships from the Wilson administration or World War II. I mean, this is --

we're leaps and bounds ahead in terms of capability, and we're comfortable that moving forward we're going to -- we're still going to be able to put to sea the most advanced -- again, and given the cuts we know we have to take now -- I'm not talking about sequestration and the other 500 billion (dollars) that's sort of still hanging out there -- but given the cuts that we are planning for now over the next 10 years, we're still going to be able to maintain the best navy in the world.

And as for regeneration, you heard me talk about it a little bit ago. It wasn't just the -- it wasn't just the Marine Corps that had to bump up in end strength in pretty short order. As you know, the Army did as well, and was able to do so not as fast as the Marines, but they had a -- they had a longer road to hoe there in terms of numbers. But they -- but they both were able to do that.

And I think you're looking at -- and I hope you'll forgive me if I wax a little philosophic here, but you're looking at a young -- a youth generation here that is wired to serve. None of the services are having trouble making goal right now recruiting. And part of that, we believe, is because this young generation really does -- they really are committed to public service and are interested in being in the military.

And I know that's perishable as well. Nobody's saying that, you know, that same -- those same attributes are going to survive, you know, 15, 20 more years. But we really believe that if we needed to regenerate end strength, we could do that.

But we also believe very firmly that the decisions that we're making with respect to the strategy right now are the right ones given the world as we see it today and over the next 10 years in terms of threats and challenges.

And I'll pass it over to George.

MR. LITTLE: I think Captain Kirby answered very well, and far be it from me to answer questions on the Navy after him. But let me just make a comment or two on the industrial base.

The secretary, in addition to making this a very inclusive process inside the department and inside our government, he did bring in industry leaders, you know, early on in the development of the strategy to let them know that we need to partner with them, we need their help as we move through this reduction phase in our spending.

And they do understand that we are committed to preserving a very strong American industrial base. That's very important. Not just the actual weapons and other systems that -- and technologies that they produce, but it's about preserving skills and expertise in the industrial base. That is critical, especially as we continue to confront a variety of challenges and threats around the world.

So let me just give you a number.

As you all know, there are some 2.2 (million) active-duty, Guard and Reserve men and women in uniform, another 6(00,000) or 700,000 civilians inside the Department of Defense. So that's roughly, you know, 3 million people inside the department. The defense industrial base outside the department includes about 3.8 million Americans. So that is a lot of people in a lot of companies, not just large companies, but small businesses, too.

And if we were to move to the sequester mechanism, which would require across-the-board kind of meat-axe cuts that would take effect next January, a year from now, then we could lose -- inside that space of 6.8 million or so jobs, we could lose 1.5 million jobs. So we cannot afford to let sequestration happen. That is simply unacceptable. It's not just unacceptable in terms of jobs and the impact to the economy, which is, oh, by the way, about a 1 percent bump in the overall unemployment rate. So if we're at about 9 percent now, we'd be looking at about 10 percent unemployment if sequestration were to take effect. That's not good. I think everyone can agree to that.

Q: No, that -- yeah, it's, like, a 10 percent bump in -- or 11 percent bump in unemployment.

MR. LITTLE: That's right, yeah.

Q: It increases the unemployment rate 1 percent, but --

MR. LITTLE: Right, but overall, you're correct in -- yes, it's -- if -- that's correct. If we have about 14 (million) or 15 million people unemployed right now, it's an -- it's a 10 (percent) or 11 percent bump.

Q: Thank you.

MR. LITTLE: Thank you very much.

LT. WALKER: All right, thank you, gentlemen.

We'll move on to Gail Harris. Go ahead, Gail.

Q: Thank you. Gail Harris with the Foreign Policy Association.

I have a concern that's also a question. As you're aware, most of the nation's intelligence community resides within the Department of Defense, and the last figure I saw said that of the possibility -- I understand these numbers aren't in stone -- that the intelligence community was looking at a \$25 billion cut, possibly, over the next 10 years. And the DNI, James Clapper, was quoted as saying we're going to have -- we're going to have less capacity in 10 years than we have today and the days of worldwide emphasis are over. And how this relates to reversibility, and as we saw with this current crisis, there are certain skill sets that are hard to bring back up to speed. I remember when I was in the Gulf War and they had to recall -- one instance they recalled an Arab linguist that they had kicked out because he was fat. And he happened to fly in the airborne platforms, and I was talking to the

commander, and he was laughing, saying he wasn't sure the guy was even going to be able to fit in the airplane.

And I also know that there are ways other than cutting manpower to save money; like General Alexander, of course the head of both NSA and Cyber Command, recently said that by simply moving a lot of their IT efforts over the cloud that they actually had made a 30 to 40 percent savings in their IT budget. So I'm wondering, as we look at these cuts, particularly toward the intelligence community, are we going to be looking for smart ways to cut, going under the assumption that it's very difficult to predict where the next crisis will be, so if you cut back on humans -- say, like we did in the '90s, you know, that might jump back to bite us?

MR. LITTLE: It's a very good question, and I have been here at the Department of Defense about six months. Before then I had the privilege of serving at the CIA, so I know where you're coming from.

I think -- a couple of points. First, the intelligence community has been part of the process in developing the strategic guidance that was outlined today.

Second point is that they, I believe, will, you know, be subject to some level of cuts just as we are. I don't know the precise number. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence can probably help out with that.

But third, let me just make a point about post-9/11 military and intelligence community cooperation. There's a lot of discussion, you know, in the history books and in the American commentariat about civil-military relations and the relationship between the U.S. military and the intelligence community.

And let me just say that I think in my experience there is an unprecedented degree of cooperation between the intelligence community and military right now. There is not the kind of divide that some people speak of. We understand the importance of working together, of cooperating face to face and on technologies, on innovation, on research and development. And that spans the entire spectrum of INTs, as they call it, whether it's HUMINT or SIGINT or IMINT or GEOINT, and the other INTs that are out there.

So I think inside the Department of Defense and the intelligence components of the department that are housed inside, we -- you know, look, we recognize the importance of intelligence. Intelligence is critical, because to be on the front lines, we need to know where we're going.

Q: Right. You're kind of preaching to the choir. I might direct you to my book "A Woman's War," where I talked about this. Before 9/11, there was an intense amount of cooperation with the military and the intelligence community. Eighty-five percent on the intelligence community resides within the Department of Defense.

MR. LITTLE: Precisely. Well, I'm glad we're -- I'm glad we're on the -- on the same page. You know, if you go downrange -- overseas -- you know, there's a lot of talk about friction, historically -- not now, but historically, you know, friction between the intelligence community and the -- and the military in Washington. But I got to tell you, you go out to Kabul or you go out to other American posts overseas, it's team America between the intelligence community and the military.

Q: Exactly. I never -- as I said, I never ran into that, and I was in intelligence -- military intelligence for 28 years. Now, you might have run into somebody that thought maybe you weren't providing them what the information they needed because you weren't aware of their particular warfare thing, but that was something that's corrected.

As I said, my concern is that they don't -- because you can't predict where the next threat will be. Obviously cyber, as you've talked about, is going to be a major threat. Terrorism has been around forever and will be around forever. It's just hard to predict, you know. You have a problem in a geographic region like, say, Africa, that we're starting to focus on, and you cut the Africa shops; then it's hard to build up intelligence analysts with a decent background in that area, and that was part of my concern.

MR. LITTLE: Well, I think this administration and this department fully recognize the importance of collaboration between the U.S. military and the intelligence community. We can't do our work, you know, without that kind of cooperation these days. It's simply impractical. We can't have that kind of separation. So we're on the same page.

Q: All right. Thank you.

MR. LITTLE: Captain Kirby?

LT. WALKER: All right. Thanks, Gail. We have up next Christopher Radin.

Q: Hello. My name is Christopher Radin with the Long War Journal, and I have a question about the strategy side of the document.

MR. LITTLE: Sure.

Q: Specific -- one of the items that it discusses is south China, and it's -- specifically talk about a strategic relationship with India. It said, if I could quote, the United States is also invested in a long-term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to serve as a regional economic anchor for the Indian Ocean area. And I thought that was an interesting statement because if I look back on a document published by the administration last June -- that was the national strategy for counterterrorism -- it -- that document actually discussed a strategic relationship with Pakistan. And in that one it talked about a greater Pakistani-U.S. strategic cooperation across a broad range of military, political and economic pursuits.

And I guess my question is, I'm a little confused or maybe -- what exactly is our anticipation of our strategic relationship going forward with India versus our strategic relationship going forward versus Pakistan? And what's our strategic guidance on Pakistan today?

CAPT. KIRBY: Well, sir, I would tell you that with respect to both countries, it's not a -- it's not a zero-sum game for us. We value and very much want deep strategic partnerships with both countries, because both of them are vital to the Central and South Asia regions. There's no question about that.

I think we've long said and long believed that our success in Afghanistan is very much dependent on a strong constructive relationship with Pakistan.

That relationship is troubled. There's no question about that right now. But that doesn't mean that we don't -- both sides -- recognize the importance of working our way through this and getting to better cooperation and coordination across that border. The safe havens that exist in Pakistan are still an obstacle to our ultimate success in Afghanistan, and we're continuing to work at that.

India also has a very, very strong role to play. This is a -- this is a country which is a growing economic power not just in the region but globally. It's a -- it's a nation with whom we've had a very strong military partnership going back decades. And they as well, the Indians, desire to play, and have been playing, a constructive role inside Afghanistan, conducting some training for Afghan troops and also showing a willingness to help out economically in Afghanistan. So it's -- we don't look at this, in any nation in that part of the world -- and this includes Afghanistan -- we don't look at this as one up, one down or one against the other. We want good, strong relationships with all the nations there. And more importantly, we want them to have strong relationships with each other.

Does that answer your question?

Q: Yes, thank you very much.

CAPT. KIRBY: You're welcome.

LT. WALKER: Christopher, do you have a follow-up?

Q: Yes, are you going to go around and come back or --

LT. WALKER: You can go ahead -- go ahead now.

Q: I have another.

LT. WALKER: I think we're going -- yeah, go ahead now. I think we're going to get through and then we'll all probably call it --

Q: OK. So I have a different question on a slightly different topic. Again, it's a strategy issue about Asia -- and maybe I can

anticipate the answer at this point -- but again, we talk about U.S. economic and strategic interests linked to the Pacific and Asia and South Asia. And because of the importance of that area, the rebalancing of some of our forces towards the Asia-Pacific region, and then we also - the importance of China and the emergence of China as a regional power.

On the other hand, we also talk about, in the document, our principal partner in seeking global and economic security is actually Europe, and that will remain so in the foreseeable future. And we talk about discussions about the importance of NATO.

So again, if I can play devil's advocate here, it kind of seems like Asia is very important, but for some reason, Europe is our principal partner. Can you kind of discuss what kind of are the -- why NATO is still important in our strategy, and why we wouldn't be placing more importance in relationships with allies in the Asia region?

MR. LITTLE: I have a couple thoughts, and maybe Captain Kirby wants to chime in as well.

NATO is probably the most effective military alliance in history. And we have had a steadfast commitment to NATO, to the principle of collective self-defense, since the formation of the alliance. Our commitment to our security relationships with our NATO partners is unwavering and will continue to be, and that is a very important part of the strategy.

One of the key components of the strategic guidance announced today is that we believe in the power of international partnerships. And the more that we can collaborate with our European partners on technologies, on new ways of protecting ourselves and promoting our collective self-defense, the better.

That doesn't mean that we won't establish or strengthen relationships with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The secretary recently took a trip to Asia and met with the ministers of defense from the -- from ASEAN. Very productive meeting, and overwhelmingly, the ministers from ASEAN welcome the presence of the United States in that part of the world.

So we may be shifting somewhat toward the Asia-Pacific region, but we're not forgetting Europe, our European friends and our European security commitments.

CAPT. KIRBY: The only thing that I would add -- and George is spot-on. One of the things that the secretary stressed when we were -- when he was in that part of the world was multilateral relationships in and amongst themselves as well. As we -- we certainly have strong bilateral relations with many countries in that part of the world. We want them to have those types of relationships as well, but we also are encouraging multilateral relationships between and amongst themselves, too.

And the other thing -- and George touched on this, but I think it's a really important point -- is a key component of this strategy that we released today is the idea of building partner capacity. So it's -- yes, it's about having good relationships, but it's also about helping them do things better as well and helping them build their capacity. And that's not -- I mean, that's a cornerstone -- it has been a cornerstone, quite frankly, throughout the last 10 to 15 years of our defense strategy, and we're not letting that go.

LT. WALKER: All right, thank you, gentlemen.

Walter, you're up next.

Q: Walter Pincus, Washington Post.

Could you expand a little on the phrase "the changing nature of warfare"? Does this mean that you're looking at no nation-to-nation fighting, with us being one of the two? And maybe it fits in with what you just said about building partnerships and not going it alone.

MR. LITTLE: Thank you, Walter. This is George.

No, we're looking at the full range of challenges and contingencies that confront us in the future. We recognize that there are nation-states in the world that might pose threats to the United States and to our allies, and we will be prepared to confront threats coming from those nation-states. There are non-state actors, too, as you know, that pose threats to our country, and we are posturing ourselves to confront those non-state actors as well. So we are creating a force that will be able to confront a range of challenges from a range of actors in the world.

CAPT. KIRBY: Yeah, and I think it's also important, Walter, to remember that -- on a -- from an operational perspective, you know, warfare has changed. I mean, just look at -- look at how we've evolved ourselves as a result of these 10 years of war. I mean, how we had to relearn a lot of counterinsurgency skill sets that we had let lapse since the Vietnam War. And even inside of that I think it's safe to say that counterinsurgency warfare has adapted and changed as we've moved through. And we're still seeing warfare change in Afghanistan.

So even -- George is right. From a strategic perspective, I mean, we want to be ready for a full spectrum of threats and challenges. But inside of warfare itself, I mean, it's a rapidly evolving domain of human existence.

That's just the way it has been and why we want so hard to preserve the things that we've learned over these last 10 years about how fast things have changed.

And that's the other thing, is it isn't just change itself, it's the speed of change. You know, you don't have to look any further than the advent of unmanned warfare systems. Particularly in this case I know we speak mostly of unmanned aerial vehicles, but unmanned in general and

the technologies that have allowed that to occur. It's just -- it's just unprecedented, the pace of change that we've dealt with in the last 10 years.

Q: If I can jump in with one more part of the same thing, is built into this new approach the idea if you actually go to war you'll then need, in effect, another OSIGO (ph) supplemental budget, or can you take on what you talk about being able to take on within the four corners of the core budget?

CAPT. KIRBY: I think the -- I think the president and the secretary have made it clear that where we're really moving in terms of budgetary processes is back to a baseline budget, Walter. That's where we're really working to get to, keeping things inside a baseline budget instead of supplementals.

Q: Great. Thank you.

CAPT. KIRBY: Yes, sir.

MS. ELZEA: thanks, Walter, sir.

John Doyle?, you're up next.

Q: Thank you, gentlemen, for taking the time to speak with us. John Doyle with the 4GWar blog. I was -- I'm still kind of confused about some of the stuff that was said today by the secretary and General Dempsey regarding the doctrine of -- I don't think it's spelled out in the guidance, but historically, I've been told, the doctrine of being able to fight two simultaneous wars -- war or conflict, I'm not sure which of the term of art to use -- at virtually the same time in different parts of the world.

And the guidance today talks about, you know, being able to do something like that for an extended basis in one place, but still having the capability to discourage or wound an opportunistic aggressor. And I'm just wondering, how is that different from the two-war concept, that it seems to be kind of the same thing, but just slightly pared down?

And if I can get in my second question, because I think it's related, I'm also curious about this concept that we've talked about earlier, reversibility, and I'm just wondering if part of reversibility, we -- it seems like there's going to be an increasing reliance on the National Guard and the active duty reserves and our allies around the world. But I'm just wondering if it also means for the existing U.S. forces, will there have to be some sort of cross-training or will people have to have more than one skill set since probably what's going on in the Pacific may not be what the forces you have there might be able to do in another part of the world, in another climate, in another culture?

And I'll stop babbling and listen to what you have to say.

MR. LITTLE: No, no, no, thank you. That's a -- it's a very good question, and we understand that there is a lot of talk about the

two-war strategy, which has become, I think, you know, to a lot of people kind of the bumper sticker for U.S. military doctrine. And I guess if the two-war strategy means that we can effectively take on more than one threat at a time, we will absolutely be able to do that.

We are going to be able to confront multiple threats at a given time. And, you know, we've been able to do that in the past.

So this isn't about going from a two-war strategy to a one-war strategy or one-and-a-half-war strategy. This is about creating a force for the future that is going to be able to address the full range of contingencies from the full range of threats and actors that are out there. And I think that's a very important point to make. We're not saying that we can only fight one war at a time. That's simply incorrect.

The -- let me just give you a tangible example, and this is all hypothetical, OK? Let me make that very clear -- (chuckles) -- all very hypothetical.

Q: Understood.

MR. LITTLE: But if we were to have to fight on the Korean Peninsula, that would probably require a sizable combat presence on the ground. We'd still be able to do that and confront the problem of, for instance, Iran closing the Strait of Hormuz. So we can do more than one thing, probably more than two things, two big things at a time and do it well and effectively, and we will win.

Q: How can you do that, since you're going to have smaller forces? And I'm assuming, you know, whatever you have to do in the -- in the Straits of Hormuz won't require a substantial land force, but you'll still need a lot of aircraft and a lot of naval vessels, though. I guess the word expeditionary comes up here, which is, as you know, a favorite word of the Marine Corps now. They're pushing that, that they're the expeditionary service and the go-to people when you've got to get a bunch of people somewhere in a hurry to settle things down.

So are we -- (chuckles) -- maybe Andrew will be interested in this. You know, given that, you know, maybe this is a good thing for the Marines, not the cutbacks people are worried about.

CAPT. KIRBY: Well, I don't -- it's not just about -- it's not just about cutbacks, sir. It's also about reinvesting in some capabilities that we have, by virtue of how we've been engaged over the last 10 years, let lapse a little bit. And some of those are those expeditionary capabilities that you talked about. And the Marines very much -- and you've heard General Amos say this himself -- they very much want to -- they want to make sure that they're able to preserve those skills and those capabilities that they really haven't had as much opportunity as I think they -- as they wanted to, to be able to exercise and to perfect and to advance.

And so this rebalancing here that is represented in this strategic guidance is going to permit the restoration of some of those skills and capabilities that we know we need, particularly if -- you know, if the geographic focus is going to swing a little bit more towards the Asia-Pacific region.

Q: Are you going to have enough time to do that, given the uncertainty of the world right now?

CAPT. KIRBY: Well, I mean, you know, you -- (chuckles) -- in our business sometimes, you know, you never have enough time, but we're certainly going to make use of every minute that we can. And I mean, there's a -- there's a real -- and I think this -- in addition to the inclusiveness that we -- that we think today's rollout embodied, you also, I hope, picked up on a sense of urgency or -- urgency by all the department's military and civilian leaders, in terms of moving ahead with this strategy.

Now is the time. This is the most opportune moment to do this. We have learned a lot over the last 10 years. Yes, there's some fiscal challenges that are impending and very serious that we're going to have to deal with very soon. But the world is also a different place than it was 10 years ago. And so we want to take advantage of every moment we have. And so, bottom-line answer is, I mean, we're going to move with all alacrity.

Q: I've got a million other questions, but I'll stop talking because I know there's other people who are waiting. Thank you very much. Thank you.

LT. WALKER: All right, thank -- oh, excuse me, sorry, gentlemen. Thanks, John (sp), for your questions. And thank you all -- to all the other bloggers. We've had some great questions and comments today. And as we need to wrap up today's call, I'd like to ask our guests, Mr. Little and Captain Kirby, if you have any final comments.

MR. LITTLE: No, I just want to thank all of you for joining, and we look forward to doing similar roundtables by phone in the future. And, just by way of segueing, I guess, to the next phase, you know, the defense budget will be presented to the Congress probably sometime in early February. So now we're in the strategic guidance phase, and later this month and early February we'll be looking at the specific programmatic decisions that are associated with that strategy.

And my final comment would be that we think that, you know, we have done this in a -- look, no one likes to have to cut, you know, money from any budget -- from our household budget or from our budget, you know, in government. But we think it's the right thing to do. Our nation is in tough fiscal straits right now, and we think that we can do this in a very responsible way that still preserves the finest military in the world and that keeps face -- faith with the all-volunteer force.

CAPT. KIRBY: I have nothing else to add to that beautiful example of eloquence there -- (chuckles, laughter) -- but I do -- I do

appreciate everybody chiming in here, late in the day like this, after, you know, a very big day here.

We appreciate your time.

I also very much appreciate the very intelligent questions. These were very good, thought-provoking questions that I think just really needed to be asked. So we really appreciate it.

MR. LITTLE: We'll do it again soon. Thanks, everyone.

Q: Gentlemen, thanks so much.

LT. WALKER: OK.

Q: Gentlemen, appreciate the time.

LT. WALKER: Yup. Thank you, gentlemen.

Today's program will be available online on dodlive.mil, where you'll be able to access a story based on today's call, along with source documents such as this audio file, and a print transcript.

If you have any questions, you can reach me at tiffani.walker -- T-I-F-F-A-N-I -- .walker -- W-A-L-K-E-R -- @dma.mil.

Again, thank you, Mr. Little and Captain Kirby, and all of our blogger participants. This concludes today's event. Feel free to disconnect at this time. Goodbye.

Q: Thanks -- (inaudible).

Q: Thank you, Lieutenant Walker.

END.