

Lt. General Richard F. Natonski
Presentation
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GENERAL NATONSKI: I'll tell you, if I'd known this, I wouldn't have sat next to you. [laughter] I'm going to talk about operational challenges that we in the Marine Corps face in implementing the maritime strategy. I think you've already heard today that 75 percent of the world's surface is ocean, that 90 percent of the trade occurs on those oceans, and that the vast majority of the world's population is on the littorals. But this is a dangerous world. We're seeing global terrorism, an increased nuclear threat, a race in competition for resources, everything from fresh water to fossil fuels. And we see a rise in our peer competitors.

We also see a demand out there from our regional combatant commanders. They want persistent forward presence. They have a requirement for building partnership capacity and they want forces for shaping and deterrence. So there are a lot of challenges out there, and I'm going to talk about the challenges that face the Marine Corps and I'm going to talk in terms of force structure and equipment and conceptual doctrine because no one told me I couldn't.

The first thing I'm going to talk about, and probably one of the biggest challenges we in the Marine Corps face today, is in the CENTCOM AOR. We have a singular focus today in the Marine Corps on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Our forces are fighting the fight in the Al-Anbar Province and throughout Afghanistan, and what that does is essentially tie up our forces in the CENTCOM AOR. We're unable to meet the combatant commander's demands across the world.

How are we looking at solving that problem? And also being able to conduct full spectrum operations? For example, a unit today in the Marine Corps that's going to Iraq has got about seven months at home. It's going to deploy for seven months, and when it returns home, it's got seven more months before it goes back. Those seven months at home, after they take out a couple weeks of leave on both ends, are focused entirely on counterinsurgency operations. So that mean we've not had the ability to practice the full spectrum. Amphibious warfare: we have lieutenants and captains who've never been on an amphibious ship, and we have pilots who haven't landed on a big deck amphib. We are trying to solve that problem right now with an N strength increase. The Marine Corps is growing by 27,000. It's going to grow to 202,000.

What's that going to do for the Marine Corps? One, it's going to help us address the high demand, low density units that we have in the Marine Corps. Today, our attack squadrons, Intel personnel, combat engineers, infantrymen, they have operational tempos of even less than a one to one dwell. So when we start building this 202k, and we're already in the first increment. We're going to grow about 5,000 a year for the next five years. Our goal, by the end of this month, was 184,000. We've made that, and we have not lowered our standards. The DOD requirement for high school grads is 90 percent. The Marine Corps requirement is 95 percent, and we're recruiting to that number. But what does that 202 buy is? One, it addresses those low density units. It buys us dwell time so that when marines are home, they can be home, hopefully, twice the amount of time that they're deployed. So not only can they focus on a counterinsurgency and going back to Iraq or Afghanistan, they also have time now to do that amphibious training, to do the combined arms training at 29 Palms, to get out up into the mountains or out into the jungles.

It also better balances our marine expeditionary forces worldwide so that we have MEFs on the east coast, the west coast, and in the Pacific that are all about the same in terms of capabilities. And, of course, it postures us better for the long war because I think we all acknowledge the fact that even when things end in the Middle East, this thing is going on for a long time in the future.

Another challenge at the high end of the spectrum, when we talk about maritime strategies, is our ability to deter the enemy and win our country's war. We have always provided the country with probably its premier forcible entry capability. What do you need for that forcible entry capability? Today, we see enemy access, anti-access technologies, missiles from the beach out to the ships, and I think we can acknowledge truthfully that the days of launching those amphibious assault vehicles from a mile off the beach are over because the ships are at danger when they come in that close. So they're going to have to do it from over the horizon. And if you've ever been in AMTRA, you don't want to go much more than a mile. The expeditionary fighting vehicle that we're developing right now will enable us to launch amphibious vehicles from over the horizon and move to the beach at speeds in excess of 25 miles an hour. The V22, which is the first squadron is en route as we speak to the Middle East for its first combat deployment, will allow us to go a hundred plus miles inland so that we can actually maneuver from the sea and not go up against the enemy defenses. That's some of the technology and equipment we're using to address that challenge we have with a forcible entry capability.

Another challenge is amphibious vessels. Our commandant, in concert with the CNO, he has told the CNO, Admiral Mullen, that the Marine Corps's requirement to move two marine expeditionary brigades is 30 amphibious vessels that are operationally available. That doesn't mean 30 with 5 in the yards, because we all know there are going to be ships in the yards, but that means 30 that we can load when we have to with marines in order to conduct our country's forcible entry capabilities.

Another challenge that we have is meeting the combatant commander's requirements for forward presence and engagement. I'm going to briefly talk to you right now about a concept that we have been socializing with the Navy and internal to the Marine Corps. And I'd ask that my slides be pulled up right now. This is a new concept, a concept that kind of rolls together the Navy's global fleet station, and we've got marines right now on a global fleet station in the Caribbean. It brings together the traditional ESG and the MEU and creates what we call a security cooperation MAGTF. This is built around a

marine infantry battalion. And if you know marines, we task organize for the mission, so we would build that force to meet the requirements of the combatant commanders. If he wants us to go into a specific country to train their military, to provide some humanitarian support, dig wells, medical and dental support, just engage those countries, we will task organize.

And what is that security cooperation MAGTF going out on? It may go out on an amphib, on a joint high speed vessel, on an MPS ship. Or, it may be on a base in the region. One challenge that I think we're going to have in executing engagement for the sake of the combatant commanders is access. And I'm not talking about access where you have an enemy threat, I'm talking phase zero operations. But getting the combatant commander to work with the ambassadors in those countries to allow U.S. forces to go in and make friends with those countries. I think we can all acknowledge that if it hadn't been for the work of General Zinni as a combatant commander in the CENTCOM region and the friendships he made before we went into Afghanistan with the Stans, with Pakistan, and before we went into Iraq, the friendships he built with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, that we would have been in trouble. We need to get back out and do that, and unfortunately our focus in the central command area has tied up Marine Corps forces. We see as we draw down in the Middle East, we'll be able to implement more of this engagement around the world regionally.

The last challenge, I think, is one that faces all of the armed forces; and that's the budget challenge. Are we going to have the money to buy the manpower, the equipment and the training necessary to implement the demands of the maritime strategy? You can have the best strategy in the world, but if you don't have the means to implement it, then you're going to have a tough time. And I think with that, I'll open it up to questions. [applause]

Q&A for the Entire Panel

MR. RUBEL: Thank you, General. Okay, we'll take some questions. Unless specified, I'll regard the questions for the panel as a whole. If an individual panelist does receive a

question, I'll give the rest of the panel a chance to respond if they so desire. With that, I'm looking for questions here. Phil?

AUDIENCE: To the Marine Corps, the General addressed a fundamental issue of raise, train and equip military forces and the money needed to do that. The only way I see your getting money to do what you want, and what the others want to do, is to grow the pie. What do you see happening among the services in a cooperative manner to grow the defense pie?

GENERAL NATONSKI: That's a million dollar question. I wish I had the answer. I think it's going to depend on the next administration. You know, right now we're fighting a war, and we're going to have to reset the forces before we even start thinking about modernizing and increasing our forces for the future. Those are the challenges we've got. If you look at the defense budget over time, whether we're at war or at peace, it's a sinusoidal curve, it goes up and down. And right now, we're kind of on the top end of the peak. I think it's time for this country to acknowledge that we've got challenges, as I pointed out in the beginning of my discussion, we've got some major challenges out in the world and we better address those, and we better have the means to address them in our armed forces. It really is going to depend on where we go, I think, in the future and how important this country feels the defense of this nation is going to be. I'll turn it over to any of the other panelists.

ADMIRAL SHUFORD: I'll take one hit on that. To go back to some of the things that John was talking about at lunch, I think this maritime strategy is an effort that, if it proves effective, will serve to do just that because the issue is the understanding of the folks that vote those dollars, and the Congress which apportions them. You heard John talk about the two audiences for the maritime strategy. So that's what at least the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps are doing, and the Navy is doing in that regard.

MR. RUBEL: Robbie?

AUDIENCE: A question for the General Natonski and Admiral Salerno. It's fairly obvious that this new document will serve as the strategy document for the U.S. Navy. Will this document also serve as the strategy document for the Marine Corps and for the Coast Guard?

GENERAL NATONSKI: I'll take it from the Marine Corps perspective, and yes it will. I think all three service chiefs are going to sign up to it. In fact, I want to say we were pushing it last week up to the commandant for his signature. So we're on board. Coast Guard?

ADMIRAL SALERNO: That's correct. The commandant of the Coast Guard will be one of the three service chiefs signing this document, meaning it does reflect the way forward for the Coast Guard and our national defense role. Having said that, the Coast Guard also has a separate strategy compatible with this strategy, which addresses the full range of all of our missions. Some of our missions don't necessarily fall into a defense context, for example search and rescue and environment protection, fisheries, so we have a separate strategy that covers the full spectrum of our missions. But the aspect of our internal policy that coincides with the maritime strategy discussed here is very consistent, they're on the same page.

MR. RUBEL: Yes, sir?

AUDIENCE: Commander Brink Lavonne, I'm with the Joint Staff. This question is for Mr. Carmel. Sir, where do you see your greatest risk to your industry in context of this forum?

MR. CARMEL: Probably one I kind of alluded to during my comments, are ill conceived security measures that end up putting a chink in the supply chain, stopping it. For instance, the requirement that you heard about this morning for 100 percent scanning of containers overseas. If that's done wrong, that will be catastrophically bad, and I got to emphasize if that's done wrong. We don't know how it's going to be done, but until we

see the details of that, it's certainly something that is a concern for a whole host of reasons. First and foremost, there are about 30,000 containers a day that come into the United States and how that's going to get handled is hard to say.

As you heard this morning, though, that's only about half of the containers that actually enter every day. Certainly, if the supply chain is disrupted for finished goods, it'll have a big impact on things like inflation. You can build buffer stocks to deal with disruptions in the supply chain because of security measures for finished goods, but costs will go up, inflation will go up and that will be asymmetric inflation. It will hit people like Wal-Mart and the folks that shop there harder than it's going to hit people that shop at Saks 5th Avenue.

And lastly, as I mentioned, a lot of trade nowadays is not in finished goods, ready for retail. I think someone said underwear from China. In fact, a lot of trade nowadays is intermediate goods. It's components designed for a production process. And to the extent that component level stuff designed for production processes gets impacted by this, that supply chain has no tolerance and will not accept buffer stocks and things like that to develop, they'll just go someplace else. So the giant sucking sound that Ross Perot once talked about of industry fleeing the United States will just get a lot louder as it gets harder to do business here. So those are the kinds of things I think I worry about on one level.

And second, you know, the way I started my remarks, I worry a little bit about while we have good engagement at the very senior levels, Admiral Morgan, very big thinker and I like the way he thinks. I think he understands, I know he understands what we can bring. On a tactical level, day to day discussion, it's not so comfortable. We get talked about as an object rather than a participant. And any time you're the object rather than a participant, you know, how you end up in the whole thing, little nerve-wracking.

MR. RUBEL: Yes, sir?

AUDIENCE: Eric Kulisch, *American Shipper* magazine, also for Mr. Carmel. I guess you're talking about being maybe the eyes and ears for the military out there. But Dr. Flynn talked this morning about the willingness to share information, and I know with customs and border protection, with the stowage plans and things like that, that there's information sharing talked about and also with the Coast Guard. But is there a—Can you explain to what extent some of the day to day commercial shipping transaction data that the maritime industry or the shipping lines are willing to share to aid in this maritime domain awareness? And also, when you're talking about a wiliness to assist, are you talking about Maersk per se or the world liner or the world shipping industry overall?

MR. CARMEL: Let me address the first question last. Actually, it's on two levels. Certainly, the U.S. business, the one I represent and control, that we are absolutely ready to get engaged, and we are, in fact. In fact, yesterday the Coast Guard approached us about helping them test some sort of scanning technology looking for bubbles that have been placed on the exterior of hulls, and we're certainly happy to help stuff like that. So from the U.S. perspective, we absolutely are ready to participate. But it does extend beyond that. Admiral Metcalf was just out a couple of weeks ago talking to my counterparts in Singapore and they also ordered up and said, "Sure, we're ready to help. We need to know what you want us to do, when we see the details." But on the surface of things, we certainly want to participate.

I think that's a key issue there, what do you want us to do? I get back to my differing world view issue. You can't just come to us and say, "What can you do for us?" mainly because our world view is so different than yours. So what we want to know is what we can do for you? And I say that all the time. That said, there's not a lot that we don't already share, especially in the liner business, the container liner business, our skirts are pretty wide open already. Boy, there's not too much that isn't shared one way or another now. Like I said, in the tramp business, that's a little bit different. But still, we share pretty much anything, especially with the government, anything we're asked to. We can be the eyes and ears, some of the proposals that we've talked about that the Lockheed Martin technology is designed to capture AIS and radar data that we see out there and

transmit it back. We have to be careful, we are not an overt intelligence gathering activity and we can't seem to be such or we're going to end up triggering port state control problems all over the world.

But passive intelligence or passive data gathering we certainly can do, and that's one of them. So we transmit the AIS tags in the radar information attached to it which helps paint the picture and it gives visibility into contacts that don't have AIS attached to them. So there's a number of things we'd be willing to do, I'd say the list of things that we won't do is pretty short. And in fact, right now, I would be hard pressed to have somebody come to me and say, "Here's some data that we want that you won't give to us," because we share everything there is to share right now.

MR. RUBEL: In the back?

AUDIENCE: Jatin Bains with Channel Logistics. This is again for Mr. Carmel. We recognize that the data ship industry is about 15 percent of the global tonnage, and the non-container industry is about 85 percent. And out of the 85 percent, about 40 percent are general cargo ships. So the thoughts that you had just put forward on all these initiatives and data sharing, etc., I'm sure they come from the container ship perspective. Do you have any thoughts on what are the prevailing thoughts on the non-containerized shipping industry?

MR. CARMEL: You're absolutely right, and the big reason for that, for whatever reason, is that the world is fixated on container ships. I don't think anyone ever talks about a WMD coming in underneath a couple thousand tons of oils on a tanker. It's always inside a container, and so the world seems to be fixated on that right now.

However, you're right in that's a relatively small portion of the world, although in honesty, the vast majority by value of stuff moving across the ocean surface is moving in containers, so the rest of it's high volume, high weight, low value stuff. But I think the same general comments apply. It doesn't matter what kind of ship it is, if it's a container

ship or a bulker or a tanker, you know, the eyes and ears part of it, our ability to be present and to just relay back what we see is independent of what kind of ship we are. And in fact, a lot of the areas that we work in, in places like Africa, it's less the container fleet and more the tanker fleet and folks like that. So those ships can be a big part of it and should be a big part of it, from the fleet I control anyway, will be a big part of it if we're asked.

MR. RUBEL: Right down here?

AUDIENCE: Allen Deem. General, thank you very much for taking the national, or it's going to be the Navy and maritime strategy and reducing it down to what does it mean of the people in the Marine Corps, that's wonderful to hear. I was wondering from Admiral Shuford if you could do the same for Navy. Does this new strategy imply any new skills or competencies for Navy people? And if so, what's the Navy's PME plan for the road ahead?

ADMIRAL SHUFORD: Those are the three pages that I skipped in my remarks. [laughter] You don't want me to open that at 3:45. No, the implications for developing regional expertise, cultural awareness, languages, all those things, have huge implications and they're already being incorporated into the educational continuum. The key piece in terms of the headquarters that I was talking about, the ability to concert aggregate forces and to work with diverse set of political constituencies, NGOs, all that whole range of folks that have to be involved in a whole range of theater objectives, for example, not just conflict but humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, those sorts of missions. What happened in Pakistan, the tsunami, there's just no playbook for it and you can't train to it. All of our services are oriented, have huge systems for training and extraordinary amount of resources falling into training, something that we can measure, we can understand the demand for clearly, see the output, input and output algorithms, we all appreciate. But it's not quite the same thing for the sorts of skills, competencies, genius, the expertise that you were talking about associate with operating at the global posture like the general talked about, the security cooperation MAGTF, to understand how that is applied, what

sort of effects you would expect to be able to plan for, assess. They do, those sorts of things do require different skill sets and they're not things that are delivered in a cookbook that you can formulate and pass out to folks in boot camp. It's part of an education process, yeah.

MR. RUBEL: I think we've hit the end of our allotted time. I don't know that I see any more questions out there. One more?

AUDIENCE: Commander Pat Burns. I'd like to end with a really hard question. You want to increase the size of the Marine Corps, or you are increasing the size of the Marine Corps. You want to stabilize the size of the Navy around 322,000. The Marine Corps wants 30 ships of lift capability, the Navy wants 313 ships. Sea basing still on the table, you're going to have recapitalize after the war. You have an aging Navy air wing. It seems like the perfect storm, and now you have a new maritime strategy. My question is, should the perfect storm happen and you're facing possible budget cuts, as you're on top of that sinusoidal curve that the General talked about. What is the contingency plan, Plan B, or the plan for the worst case scenario?

[laughter]

MR. RUBEL: Notice the silence.

GENERAL NATONSKI: You know, in this country we've always stepped up to the plate. I mean, I think our readiness on the eve of Pearl Harbor wasn't there, and yet we stepped into high gear and we fought World War II and we won it. I would think in the future the threats are that much greater, especially the nuclear threat. But I have no doubt that this country would rally and do what it had to do and spend what it had to do to get where we're going. My concern is we don't drop back because we're pulling Navy out of the Middle East and think we're going to recoup all of these defense dollars for social programs. You can have all the social programs in the world, but if you don't have a country left after you're attacked, what good are they? So I think we have to make a

commitment, and as the Admiral pointed out, this maritime strategy will hopefully socialize to both Congress and the people of this country, that we do need a strong defense.

You know, the al-Qaeda have a website. If you ever look on their website, they have a plan and they're patient. You know, we want instant gratification. We want the war over today. This is a long war. Their philosophy is they're going to kick us out of the Middle East, they're going to overthrow all those secular Arab countries, they're going to eradicate Israel and they're going to spread their caliphate and that's their stated strategy and that's what they want to do. And we've got to be in it for the long term and I think it's up to us to get the message out.

MR. RUBEL: Anybody else want to handle it?

ADMIRAL SHUFORD: No, very well said. You can't end on a better note than that, Barney.

MR. RUBEL: I would add some emphasis in our conversations with the country and with friends around the world, I don't recall anybody not wanting the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps and even the Coast Guard out there present in various parts of the world for various reasons. But they want us out there. We did have an option that called for bringing everybody home. I mean, we had to consider all options. That might have been a cheaper option, but there was no support anywhere for that kind of thing, either within the Navy or in the country as a whole. So adding weight to the General's remarks, I think the country expects that of us and will do what's right when the time comes.

Okay folks, I'd just also like to say that I think the composition of this panel reflects generally what happened in the maritime strategy development process. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard worked as equal partners in it all the way. We had the joint world in on it, the commercial shipping and other commercial private sector inputs were there throughout. So I think you can have some confidence that—I know concern was

expressed that the interagency be consulted, that the private sector be consulted. Believe me, it was all in there.

In any case, I thought this was a stimulating panel. I'm very grateful for the comments of the panelists. Let's give them a hand and we're up for a break. [applause]