The State of the U.S. Military

Proceedings from
the 2009–2010 Forum Series

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University of Virginia

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The State of the U.S. Military

George H. Gilliam &
Cristina Lopez-Gottardi Chao,
editors

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Contents

4 **Acknowledgements**

6 **Introduction**

12 **Strategic Challenges in the Middle East**
General John P. Abizaid

32 **Evolution of the War in Iraq and Prospects for the Future**
Brigadier General Herbert McMaster

60 **Rules of Engagement**
Raffi Khatchadourian and Peter Hegseth

84 **The Fourth Star: Four Generals and the Epic Struggle for the Future of the United States Army**
Greg Jaffe

108 **Afghanistan and Pakistan**
Mark Mazzetti

128 **Obama's War Over Terror**
Peter Baker

150 **Wired for War**
Peter W. Singer

U.S. Marine on street patrol in Marjah, Helmand province, Afghanistan, 2010

Acknowledgements

With the exception of Vietnam, the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have lasted longer than any U.S. military conflict in the last century. In addition, the nature of these engagements have unleashed unprecedented challenges for the U.S. military leading to one of the most profound military transformations in our nation's history. Together, these dynamics bring into question the current state and health of the U.S. military.[1] In particular, in what ways has the military transformed in response to post 9/11 threats? What implications does this have for U.S. national security policy? What challenges does the U.S. face in the Middle East, and what resources are we utilizing to address these concerns? The answers to these questions and the extensive transformation made by the American military since the Cold War remain poorly understood, leading scholars at the Miller Center of Public Affairs to explore these issues at the heart of U.S. foreign policy. We are deeply indebted to the contributors of this volume for giving of their time and energy to this project. We are particularly grateful to those who have served our nation. We appreciate their unspeakable sacrifice and firsthand knowledge of events on the ground.

The Miller Center of Public Affairs is a leading public policy institution. Through its many academic, public and policy programs it serves as a national meeting place where engaged citizens, scholars, students, policy makers and members of the media gather to research, report and reflect upon issues of national importance to the governance of the United States, with a particular emphasis on the role of the executive branch. This volume, like the ones before, is a product of this process offering important insights to what is likely to remain the most significant military engagement of our time.

We are grateful to the numerous individuals who made this project possible including the Miller Center's Director, Governor Gerald L. Baliles, for his constant support; Shirley Burke for her administrative expertise in managing the logistical details of the Forum program; and Anne Chesnut for crafting the book design. Finally, we are deeply indebted to the Miller Center Foundation and our loyal contributors whose generous gifts make studies such as these possible.

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1. For a groundbreaking survey of high-ranking military officers on this subject see "The U.S. Military Index," *Foreign Policy,* March/April 2008.

Introduction

Defining the post 9/11 world order has been a challenge for academics and policy makers alike. While the global architecture of the World War II and Cold War periods was based largely on great power struggles between expansionist states such as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, post 9/11 threats have been unique, emerging not only from hostile nations, but also from a variety of failing states and stateless rogue actors. This has created unprecedented challenges for U.S. national security and has significant implications for the strategic direction and mode of operation of the U.S. military.

The massive transformation of the U.S. military from one shaped by Cold War era doctrine, strategy, culture, and weaponry cannot be overstated. In many ways, this transition is not yet complete. According to journalist and New America Foundation Fellow Fred Kaplan, the modern notion of military transformation, one of the prevailing approaches in the Pentagon in the 1980s, became re-popularized under former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (2001–2006) who led the initial engagement into Iraq. According to Kaplan, "this was a theory of warfare that envisioned lighter, faster, more agile, yet also more lethal combat forces."[1] Based on the development of new precision guided munitions and improved communications and sensory equipment, enemy targets could be dismantled with a single shot and with limited troops in combat. Early success in Iraq, and later in Afghanistan, seemed to support the utility of such an approach.[2]

By mid-2004, however, conditions in the region began to deteriorate making it increasingly evident that a swift victory, with limited troop engagement was unattainable. In fact, it was later determined, "occupying, securing, stabilizing conquered territory is a fairly static, decidedly low-tech enterprise that requires almost nothing but troops—the more, the better."[3] Critiquing the U.S. overreliance on technology, Brigadier General Herbert McMaster,

U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornets

draws lessons from the Vietnam War arguing that in both the Vietnam and Iraq conflicts "a fixation on American technological superiority and an associated neglect of the human, psychological, and political dimensions of war doomed one effort and very nearly the other."[4] This realization spawned vigorous debates within the military community and amongst policy makers in Washington, and by 2006 counterinsurgency and a surge of troops became central to U.S. strategy in Iraq changing the course of the war and with important lessons for future military operations.

Many of these lessons are summarized in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The QDR outlines Department of Defense strategy and priorities through an assessment of threats and challenges facing the nation as well as a review of resources required to address these concerns. As such, the QDR reflects the transition that followed the Cold War's end and is arguably the best indicator of both the state of the U.S. military and a guide to what

U.S. Marine providing security for a new school inspection speaks with an Afghan boy

the military considers the nation's most pressing national security concerns.[5] According to U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates (2006–present), the 2010 QDR stresses the need to rethink the very "construct" of national security arguing that "we have learned through painful experience that the wars we fight are seldom the wars that we planned."[6] Given the global diffusion of power of the last few decades, and the rise of non-state actors, the QDR recognizes a "broader range of security threats," including cyber warfare.[7] U.S. military leaders also acknowledge the difficulty of precisely anticipating future conflict calling for greater flexibility of force and for a departure from the long held goal of fighting conventional wars on two fronts.

Based on early lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan, the QDR stresses the need for a comprehensive strategy that links the nation's combat mission with political, social, and economic dimensions. This in turn requires what the Center for New American Security has identified as the urgent need to revitalize training of

America's officer corps now being asked to perform a variety of tasks and "complex interactions" no longer focused on combat missions alone.[8] The QDR also calls for a continued focus on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategies, as well as further support for capacity building of partner states.

In the early Fall of 2010, the U.S. officially announced the end of combat operations in Iraq. Meanwhile, the war in Afghanistan wages on and continues to adjust to a recent change in U.S. military leadership and the infusion of new troops authorized by President Barack Obama in the Fall of 2009. Significant challenges remain for the United States on these two fronts and pressure will continue to mount as the withdrawal deadline approaches.

These issues and others central to current U.S. military commitments are addressed in this volume. A collection of edited Forum transcripts from 2009–2010, this volume brings together some of the leading minds on the state of the U.S. military. Contributors include high-ranking military leaders, journalists who cover military affairs, and policy analysts.

The series opens with **General John P. Abizaid** who presents a strategic overview of U.S. interests and prospects in the Middle East. General Abizaid is a retired General in the United States Army and former Commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), who succeeded General Tommy Franks in July 2003 and commanded U.S. forces in Iraq until his retirement from the military in the spring of 2007. He currently serves as a fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Distinguished Chair of the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, and arguably one of the nation's most influential military leaders.

Discussing the rules of engagement, **Raffi Khatchadourian**, journalist and writer for the *New Yorker,* and author of "The Kill Company," is joined by one of his sources, **Captain Peter Hegseth**, a graduate of Princeton University, who served in Iraq with the third brigade of the 101st Airborne Division for their deployment in 2005 and 2006. Hegseth was awarded the bronze star for his service

in Iraq. Together they discuss the very complex rules of engagement which highlight both the unprecedented demands placed on military officers and the intensity of these current conflicts.

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster, who General David Petraeus appointed in the summer of 2010 to head a joint anticorruption task force at the International Security Assistance Forces headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan, takes us through the evolution of the War in Iraq. He critiques the military's overreliance on technology, highlighting lessons learned, prospects for the future of the U.S. military and possible outcomes in Iraq. As former Director of the Army Capabilities Integration Center's Concepts Development and Experimentation, Brigadier General McMaster has been widely recognized for the innovative training of his troops and for success in securing the Iraqi city of Tal Afar.

Pulitzer prize-winning *New York Times* National Security Correspondent **Mark Mazzetti** discusses the treacherous political and military landscape posed by Afghanistan and its neighbor, Pakistan. Mazzetti is the recipient of the 2006 Gerald Ford Prize for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense and the Livingston Award in the category of national reporting for breaking the story of the C.I.A.'s destruction of videotapes showing harsh interrogation of al-Qaeda detainees. Since 9/11, he has made several reporting trips to Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa including 2 months he spent embedded with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and as a reporter in Baghdad in 2003.

New York Times White House Correspondent and former *Washington Post* reporter **Peter Baker** explores the legacy of the George W. Bush administration and the struggles that President Obama faces as he balances national security and the protection of civil liberties. In a *New York Times Magazine* article, which was the point of departure of his talk, Baker assesses the new administration's handling of terrorist threats.

Peter W. Singer, Director of the Brookings Institution 21st Century Initiative, ends the series with a fascinating view of changes in warfare and an analysis of the army's reliance on robotics and other new technologies on war, politics, ethics, and law in the 21st century. The author of the new best–selling book, *Wired for War,* Singer was named by *Foreign Policy* magazine to the Top 100 Global Thinkers List of 2009, and is considered one of the world's leading experts on changes in 21st century warfare

More information about *The State of the U.S. Military* series is available on the Miller Center website, http://millercenter.org/public/forum/series/military, including archived video of all Forums. Conference transcripts have been edited and corrected for accuracy and clarity.

Endnotes

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Strategic Challenges *in the* Middle East

General John P. Abizaid

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. General [John P.] Abizaid retired from a distinguished military career in May 2007 after 34 years of service, including missions in Grenada, Bosnia, Kosovo, Lebanon, and Iraq during the first Gulf War. Following his graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point and later from Harvard University, where he earned a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies, he rose from infantry platoon leader to become the youngest four-star general in the army and the longest-serving commander in the United States Central Command [CENTCOM]. As the commander of CENTCOM, he oversaw American military operations in a 27-country region, from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East to Central Asia. He replaced General Tommy Franks as U.S. CENTCOM Commander in July 2003 and was promoted to the rank of four-star general the same week. Recognized as an expert in Middle Eastern affairs, General Abizaid is the first Annenberg Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, and the Distinguished Chair of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. General Abizaid has been strategically positioned in key areas central to U.S. national security, so he brings a unique on-the-ground perspective to our understanding of international politics and to U.S. foreign policy. We are very pleased to have him here to initiate our series on U.S. military preparedness. Please join me in welcoming General John Abizaid.

General John P. Abizaid. Thank you very much. It's great to be here. It's a very interesting time for us in the Middle East right now. I can't imagine that things could come together more than they have, or perhaps you might say not come together so well. But what I'd like to do today is talk about the strategic situation in the Middle East, the U.S. role, and the position of our forces there. But I'd like to give you a little bit of background first.

The first time I went to the Middle East was back in 1978, when I served at the University of Jordan for a couple of years, and learned to speak Arabic. Even though my last name is of Lebanese origin, we didn't speak any Arabic at home. I knew the culture, but I didn't know the language. I learned the language, spent some time in Jordan, and I was in that part of the world during the Iranian Revolution. It was amazing to see what Islam and Islamic radicalism could do in essentially an instant to change the outlook of people and to move the region away from Arab nationalism, essentially, toward a much more religious view. And you will have to understand that as I talk about these problems in the region today, I'll frequently talk about religion—not to be critical of it, but to make sure that we all understand that the problem in the middle of the Middle East has as much to do with religion as with anything else. We need to understand that in order to understand the context of our involvement there.

After opportunities in Jordan, I went to Harvard University and got a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies. Then I went back to the field, to the First Ranger Battalion, and they were singularly unimpressed with the fact that I had just come from Harvard. You may find that surprising, but I did not. And I remember at one point, maybe a year after I'd been in the Rangers, I called the Infantry Branch Chief and I said, "Well, I'd really like to get involved in a unit that has something to do with the Middle East so I can use my Arabic and my understanding of the region." And he said, "Son, there's nothing to do with the Infantry that you'll find in the Middle East." Well, he was right then, but he's been wrong ever since. As a matter of fact, the strategic focus of the United States Army in my career shifted from the plains of Europe to the middle of the Middle East, probably imperceptibly, in the mid-1980s, and it has been solidly there ever since. The vast majority of our forces are deployed there.

Today, when you count our air and naval forces, it ranges anywhere from 350 thousand to about 400 thousand troops, airmen, sailors, marines, coast guard men, soldiers, and they have been fighting a very difficult enemy for a long time, and they've been doing so quite successfully. Despite the setbacks that you read about and the skewed reporting that is frequently in place in our own media, it goes without saying—at least from my point of view—that we've done pretty well. I've been to Iraq a couple of times since I retired. I most recently came back from there about a month ago. And it is important for you to understand that while all the focus today is on what's going on in Afghanistan, the situation in Iraq is far from over, and we need to keep that in mind.

Let me talk about the area that I commanded. I was either the Deputy Commander or the Commander there for nearly five years, so I spent an awful lot of time over there, understanding the region, dealing with the leadership, and certainly dealing with the military problems. The region goes from Kazakhstan—everybody knows that area because of the great movie *Borat*—down through Afghanistan, Pakistan, over and across Iran, the center of the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, and then across to Egypt. And at the time I was commanding it, it included the Horn of Africa as well. As I came to look at the difficulties there, it became very clear to me that there was more afoot than just problems in specific countries. There were big strategic problems that we had to deal with, and yet it seems as if—and it continues to seem that way today to me—we insist upon dealing with them country-by-country, as opposed to regionally or in the broader scope of a globalizing planet, and therein is a problem for us.

For those of you who don't know, when it came time for me to retire, my wife and I talked about where we should retire. We said, "Well, we could go to Washington or we could go home," which is Gardnerville, Nevada, and of course nobody ever knows where that is. And people would say, "Why in the world did you decide to retire in Gardnerville, Nevada?" I said, "Well, it reminds me a lot of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area. You know, everybody's heavily armed, they don't like the federal government, and there's a propensity to build militias." But the truth of the matter, of course, is that the reason we went to Gardnerville is because we wanted to go home and be as far away from Washington as we could possibly be, and I think that's worked out pretty well so far.

I'd like to talk to you about what I consider to be the four big strategic issues in the region. And of course I'm going to leave an awful lot of time open for dialogue with you, and we can discuss whatever you want to discuss. I'll answer any questions that you want me to answer, and believe me, I know how to answer questions. I've testified before the Senate and the House numerous times, which actually probably means I know how not to answer questions. But there are four big strategic issues that the United States confronts and has confronted for a long time, well before 9/11, and will continue to confront well beyond this President's term of office, whether he serves for four or eight years.

The first and foremost issue, which people have a hard time grasping and understanding, is the rise of Sunni Islamic extremism as exemplified by organizations such as al-Qaeda and people such as [Obama] bin Laden. But

it's not only al-Qaeda and it's not only bin Laden, and it's not a bunch of crazy terrorists hiding up in the hills of northwest Pakistan. It is an ideological movement that has strength; it has power; it has a desire to fit into the globalizing pattern, as long as the globalizing pattern is on their terms. If you want to know what they believe, it's pretty easy. You can go to numerous websites and see what they think. You can read numerous books and see what they have written. And it has always interested me that, if I were to get an American audience together and put up the list, put up pictures, of the 10 most notorious leaders in World War II, most American audiences would not have any problem with it at all. Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, Hideki Tojo, etcetera. They'd recognize them, see them, understand them. But if I were to put up the 10 most important people in the al-Qaeda organization, minus bin Laden and [Ayman al-] Zawahiri, you would not get them. You would not know their names, you would not know what they stand for, you would not have read about them. And it is fascinating, I think, for us to think about this idea that in the eighth year of war we know relatively little about the people that we have been fighting, people that killed three thousand of our citizens on 9/11, that have had something to do with the death of nearly five thousand American troops in the Middle East and others at times before 9/11. And certainly there will be more deaths ahead because of the nature of this ideological movement.

It is an intensely religious movement. It is extreme, it is radical, it is not at all mainstream. And if there's good news anywhere—and this is the most important point I'll probably make today—it is that the vast majority of people in the region don't want this ideology to become mainstream.

It is an intensely religious movement. It is extreme, it is radical, it is not at all mainstream. And if there's good news anywhere—and this is the most important point I'll probably make today—it is that the vast majority of people in the region don't want this ideology to become mainstream. Yet the ideology is strong, it's resilient, it's in the field. Not only is it fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere, but it's figured out how to attack targets that they think are important all over the world. And we could name countless countries: Indonesia, the United States, Britain. We could go on and on.

They figured out how to hit ships on the high seas, to include U.S. naval vessels and to include a French tanker that was sailing off the coast of Yemen. So it is an organization and it is a movement, an ideological movement, that is well organized, networked, but, interestingly enough, stateless. And yet the fact that it is stateless doesn't seem to really get in the way of raising money, getting converts, putting troops in the field, organizing, equipping, training, and then, in a very decentralized and networked fashion, put them on the field in a way that achieves at least the ability to stay alive, if not gain ascendancy in some areas.

The debate today is how we will confront them [al-Qaeda] from here going forward, whether we do it in an indirect fashion or we do it directly.

Again, emphasizing the point that the vast majority of the good people in the region—which are the vast majority of the people in the region—don't want this ideology to win. You need to understand that when it was ascendant in Afghanistan, that people really did not like it. Soccer stadiums were used for execution, no music was allowed, women had absolutely no role whatsoever in public life and very little, to be honest with you, in private life. And so this ideology is not appealing to people, yet it remains resilient, it remains strong, and it's certainly still in the game. And at the end of eight years of battle against al-Qaeda, while we have had success in many places—in Iraq, but it's not all over; Afghanistan, it's not all over—we also see it raising itself and its stature and its capabilities in places like Somalia and the Horn of Africa, Yemen, North Africa, and elsewhere. And, of course, it has shown itself from time to time, as a movement, in the largest Muslim nation on earth, Indonesia.

It is very clear that we have to take this group of people seriously, that they have managed to do quite a lot. The debate today is how we will confront them from here going forward, whether we do it in an indirect fashion or we do it directly. We have done it directly for eight years now, but ultimately it's my opinion, and that of many others who wear uniforms, that we must figure out how to confront them indirectly, by turning over capabilities in the antiterrorist realm and in the governance realm and those areas necessary to gain the support of the people, of legitimate governments. We have to turn over that type of activity to the people in the region and their legitimate governments and help them help themselves against this ideological threat. Ultimately, it will be up to them to defeat that ideological threat, and it will be done with our help.

The second big issue is another form of Islamic radicalism and extremism, such as the one that emerged in the Iranian Revolution and continues to this day in Iran. The Iranian Shi'a revolutionary movement remains resilient; it remains relatively firmly in control in its own country, although its most recent elections showed some chinks in its armor. And, different from al-Qaeda, it is connected to a nation-state, and nation-states can be deterred. Nation-states can be isolated. Nation-states can be contained. Yet it is moving forward to developing a nuclear weapon, it desires to build hegemony in the greater Persian Gulf region, and, like al-Qaeda, it knows that in order to achieve its aim, which is domination, it must expel American power from the region. Sunni radical extremism and Shi'a radical extremism: two movements in the region that are strategic, that are anti-American, that seek to dominate the region. And the worst outcome for us would be that either one of these two movements would become ascendant in a way that is contrary to our interests or contrary to the development of good governance and accountability in the region, which I believe ultimately will show up there.

The third big strategic issue is the continued problem associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some people say, "Well, it's really not the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Egyptians are at peace, the Jordanians are at peace, others are thinking about being at peace." And they say, "It's not really the Arab-Israeli conflict, it's the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." But I would say to you that there are elements within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that can lead to a broader war, even at this late stage, if that conflict is allowed to continue to fester. It creates a sense of hopelessness in the region. It is a recruitment capability for extremists, not only within the Arab community but also within the Israeli community. And it creates a dynamic of hopelessness that feeds radicalism in a way that's not good for the region.

The fourth big issue has to do with what we do every time we fill up our cars. It's our reliance on Middle Eastern oil, and I would call it our overreliance on Middle Eastern oil. Middle Eastern oil is so important to us that we have now fought two major wars in the region, we have well over 300 thousand troops there at any given time, fighting. It's not the single cause for what we're doing, but it is an important cause. And in those areas where we are not so dependent upon an economic resource, it is interesting to note that we do not spend the same level of time, effort, energy, and strategic capacity to deal with the problems as we do in the Middle East. Our overreliance on Middle Eastern oil creates a strategic handcuff for the United States in the conduct of its foreign policy. And while I know there are no simple solutions to weaning ourselves away from Middle Eastern oil, it is important—and I think it is imperative as we move forward into the 21st century—that we find a way to deal with reducing our reliance so we gain what I would call more geopolitical maneuver space.

So, what about these four issues? Of course, I'm sure there are many in the audience who could talk about many more, but these four issues require that the United States continue to confront al-Qaeda and its allies wherever we can find them, that we take military action against them in a way that keeps that organization and that ideology from gaining military ground in the region. It is important that we confront and contain Iranian power, it's important that we move the Arab-Israeli peace process forward, and it's important that we work to wean ourselves away from Middle Eastern oil. I think these are strategic imperatives. The strategic imperatives would tell you that there is a need for a grand strategy to deal with the region. Yet when you search for it, it's hard to come by. We look at Iraq through a soda straw; we look at Afghanistan through a soda straw; we seem to think that what happens in one is unconnected from the other. We don't necessarily believe that what's going on within Pakistan or Saudi Arabia affects the broader outcome of the region, but of course all of these are intimately connected in ways that are very important for us to understand.

Perhaps 20 years ago it would not have been so crucial that we deal with these issues in a way that makes sense from a grand strategic point of view, but today the region is already "nuclearized." Pakistanis have nuclear weapons that may or may not be safe. The fact that I would even say "may not be safe" should send a certain amount of chill into the audience. Were a weapon to go loose, were it to be sold or captured by extremists, it's very clear from everything the extremists say that they would use it against us, and it is important for us to do what we can do to prevent that from happening. First and foremost, we need to help increase the capacity of the Pakistani government to deal with the many threats in its region and to understand that what goes on in Afghanistan is intimately connected to what is happening in Pakistan, in India, in central Asia, and in the broader region around it, not to mention the greater Middle East.

So I would say that these issues require our prompt attention, but they can't be just an issue of military forces. Military forces gain time for other things to happen. Diplomatic, economic, political, educational: all of these are part of a long-war strategic plan that needs to be implemented, needs to be supplied, needs to be organized in a fashion that gets at these broader issues that cause extremism in the region to have the strength that it currently has. If we don't get at these "soft

power" skills, if we don't employ national and international power to deal with these soft skills, then we will have a very long war with military forces only. Certainly, the situation is improved. More economic activity is happening in places like Iraq. Some economic development is going on in places like Afghanistan. But the educational development necessary to counter the extremist message is really nonexistent, in my opinion, throughout the region, and it needs to be strengthened—not just by us, but in conjunction with the international community—in order to confront the problems that exist out there.

But the educational development necessary to counter the extremist message is really nonexistent, in my opinion, throughout the region, and it needs to be strengthened—not just by us, but in conjunction with the international community—in order to confront the problems that exist out there.

This difficulty in organizing the international community and our own national power to complement our military power has made it very difficult to come to grips with this enemy in an effective fashion. And it is essential, as we think about whether or not we put more troops in Afghanistan, that we ask ourselves the broader question: "What else do we have to do, at a broad, national, strategic level, to get at the problems that are endemic to the region, so that it doesn't continue to move in a bad direction and, God forbid, so that it doesn't move to the point where this ideology, especially of al-Qaeda, could become ascendant?"

I think, as I move to close, I would like to talk about the current situation in Iraq and in Afghanistan and, again, give you some perspective on how our forces are doing over there. Certainly, just having come from Iraq maybe a month or so ago, and having spent some time with our commanders there in my capacity as a retired officer who looks around and tries to help them think about the tough problems that they've got to deal with, we have made remarkable progress. The progress is unmistakable, in terms of security. There is some economic activity that's going on that looks promising. The Iraqi armed forces are certainly better than they were four or five years ago, and they are taking responsibility, and the government is trying to move beyond its sectarian challenges toward being more inclusive of the broader nation-state of Iraq. Yet, all those things having been said, it remains fragile. And in the words of General [David] Petraeus and CENTCOM, it remains "both fragile and reversible."

What are the sorts of things that could reverse it? Well, certainly some sort of armed conflict between Kurds and Arabs. Certainly some sort of renewal of sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'a Islam. An election that becomes illegitimate in the eyes of various sectarian groups, or an election that is complicated by corruption. And this election period is coming up in January 2010. Of course, it's not the election that's the period of difficulty; it will be the period leading up to the election. Then there will be an election, and then there will likely be a period—a long period, unfortunately—of sorting out among all the different parties until a government finally emerges. And, of course, as a new government emerges during a period of weakness, it provides exactly the type of opportunity for extremist groups to move forward in a way that's not good for the country. There are plenty of people that would like to wreck Iraq; al-Qaeda is at the top of the list. They continue to operate in places such as the northern city of Mosul, in the central city of Baquba, and elsewhere. They are certainly down, but they're not out, and it is important for us to understand that it has always been difficult to finish this movement militarily. You can suppress it, but ultimately it will have to fall to the good people of the region to figure out how to finish it and make it go into the dustbin of history. But we're a long way from that.

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Our troops left the cities on the 30th of June 2009. They moved themselves into regions that are less susceptible to occupation, and they continue to work very closely with the Iraqi armed forces. There's a good relationship between our advisors and the Iraqis, yet there is not what I would call a good feeling of liberation among the Iraqi population. They feel like our stay there has not been good for the country. They want us to leave, but on the other hand they are cognizant of the understanding of the problem that the rapid withdrawal of American forces, especially around that election time period, could be problematic for them, because they're not quite sure how, in a moment of real sectarian strife, the armed forces might perform without having the backup of American power. I think there's a good chance that Iraq will stabilize, but

there's a reason why the commander there has continued to keep his force levels and to ask for his force levels to stay robust.

In Afghanistan the situation, of course, is somewhat different. The situation has deteriorated. The number of forces there has gone up substantially from what they were. And it should come as no surprise to us that when we made the decision to surge in Iraq, we were accepting military risk in Afghanistan. Unlike World War II, we have decided to fight this war without mobilization. We have decided to fight this war with an all-volunteer force—mobilized National Guard and reserve component units—but it creates a dynamic for the Chief of Staff of the army and for all of the services, but especially the land power, that constrains the amount of force that can be used at any given time. Considering the fact that there is really no decisive point on the battlefield, where in World War II we could destroy the Wehrmacht and capture Berlin, here we have to outlast insurgents in difficult and tough terrain for probably a long time to come.

Afghanistan, of course, has come into the public light as a result of the request for forces from General [Stanley] McChrystal. General McChrystal wants more troops. He's asking for more troops at the same time that the commander in Iraq wants to keep his force as relatively robust as he can, and therein, of course, is a problem for us to make sure that we understand. It's not a simple matter of giving him the troops that he wants. It's a matter of having troops in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and some land power available to deal with other unexpected contingencies and problems that could happen in Iran, North Korea, or some other unexpected place. One thing I can tell you as a soldier, that I've come to understand very clearly, is that you can't predict the future. When I graduated from West Point in 1973, I would have never said that I would be fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq for most of my career. I just never could have imagined that. But yet, here we are.

All of this having been said—and I know this will sound like a daunting challenge—we do have the capacity as a nation to deal with these problems. If it was a matter of just walking away from al-Qaeda, I would say, "Let's just walk away from them." But that's not the way that that organization works. It's not the way they think. It's not the way that the ideological movement would react. It would react to move in a much more aggressive manner throughout the region and ultimately move us into a much worse strategic position. Now, as we move forward, we are in a different position today strategically than we were in 2001. Between 2001 and about 2007, we spent [money] in an unconstrained fashion to deal with the problems that we found abroad. Today, we can no longer do that. We have to be mindful of our resources during a period of financial constraint, and we also have to be mindful of the fact that other challenges exist around the world that may or may not challenge us in a way that could be bad for the interests and long-term health of our nation. I am very proud of what our armed forces have done over there. I think they have done a great job under difficult circumstances. My son, my daughter, my son-in-law have all served. A couple of them served over there; one of them was wounded over there. It is a tough fight. It's a difficult fight. It's not a matter of our incompetence that we haven't won yet; it's a matter of a resilient, resourceful, and dangerous enemy that we have to make sure we understand how to deal with.

As the debate moves forward in Washington, we need to be aware of the simplistic notion that it's only a matter of more troops or less troops in Afghanistan. The issue is, "Strategically, how do we move ahead from here?" And I think it is a very good thing that the administration has taken a time-out to ask that most difficult question. I only hope that they're not just thinking about Afghanistan, but the broader region as a whole. I welcome your questions. Thank you.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Thank you, General Abizaid. Last year, *Foreign Policy* magazine and the Center for a New American Security published a study titled, "The U.S. Military Index." It was based on over three thousand surveys of current and former military officers, and it reveals that over 60 percent believe that the military is weaker today than it was five years ago. I was hoping that, based on this, you could share your thoughts about sentiment within the ranks and, again, address the issue more broadly of U.S. military preparedness in terms of current commitments and future adversaries.

General John P. Abizaid. Great question. From a strategic flexibility point of view, we have a lot of flexibility in our air and our naval power. It is not what I would call overcommitted, although it is heavily committed. We could deal with other problems with a very robust capability of air and naval power. Our ground forces are stretched thin, and they are stretched thin in many different ways. They're stretched thin numerically, and you need to understand the army's point of view in particular. I'll talk about the army since I'm a former army officer. It is true that you are either in Iraq or Afghanistan, recovering from Iraq or Afghanistan, or getting ready to go to Iraq or Afghanistan. In other words, you can understand when you have a long-war situation on your

hands that you must rotate your forces, and that rotational base requires essentially one-third commitment of the force, one-third preparing the force, and one-third reorganizing the force that's come back from difficult combat. My father went to war in February of 1942; he was in the navy. You may wonder why I went into the army. It's not because of the army-navy game, I can assure you. He went in February of 1942 and he came back in August of 1945 or so. And he only came back maybe once or twice for some schooling or leave. I'm not quite sure that he even came back to the continental United States. I think he came back to Hawaii. My son-in-law, who is now a company commander in one of our special operations units, has a year of duty in Afghanistan and about the equivalent of three and a half years of duty in Iraq. He was wounded in Iraq fairly seriously, recovered, and went back to Iraq. My daughter, who's a soldier's daughter—has two great little kids, my two grandkids—you can imagine what she thinks about that. And as they look forward, there are more prospects of that. He's not afraid of it, she's not afraid of it, but on the other hand, these demanding deployments—my son-in-law already has more years in combat than my dad did in World War II. And my dad in World War II had the whole rest of the nation behind him, because they were all mobilized. My son-in-law does not. He's got a volunteer force behind him, which accounts for a small group of people.

And although none of us necessarily expect a conventional war, the ultimate guarantor of the nation's independence is the armed forces' ability to fight against a major opponent. That training capability has to be restored.

That having been said, we've yet to really lose a tactical engagement in either Iraq or Afghanistan, at the platoon level or below. That's a remarkable statement militarily. The force is robust; it's capable. I just came back from a course of new one-star level officers at Norfolk, Virginia. These are the joint forces' newest leaders. And they're pretty committed people, they're very tough, they're very capable. But on the other hand, it's essential that we figure out how to restore strategic flexibility, because we will need land forces for something else sooner or later. We have artillery units that have not fired artillery weapons in a long time. We have tank units that haven't exercised with their main tank guns. And although none of us necessarily expect a conventional war, the ultimate guarantor of the nation's independence is the armed forces' ability to fight against a major opponent. That training capability has to be restored.

So, yes, there are strains. Yes, there are stresses. But when you think about where the armed forces are today, after eight years of war, on the positive side they have developed a skill and tactical competence that's really unequalled, I think, since the days of the Roman legion, and that is not a minor thing. The junior officer corps, the senior noncommissioned officer corps—these are the people that fight our battles, that lead our battles—are getting very tired, and we've got to figure out how to take care of them. And finally, most importantly, we've got to figure out a way to take care of our veterans when they come home. We've got to put our arms around them, we have to help them find a job, we have to make sure they know that they're going to be OK in our communities. We can't just let them come back and fall through the cracks. And while that hasn't happened a lot, it happens more than it should.

Question. General McChrystal is conducting what some may consider to be a rather open, public campaign for new, additional troop commitments in Afghanistan. On CNN [Cable News Network] in response to a question from John King, the National Security Advisor, General [James L.] Jones, gently called him down and said these appeals ought to come up through the ranks. This raises the question, how well informed should the public be about the debate that may be going on among our military leaders, and what should be the role of the public in making these decisions?

General John P. Abizaid. Well, I don't know the circumstances as to why this has become so public. It could be because of the leaks that have taken place, where the commanders in the field and the Central Command Commander and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff thought that they had no choice but to make a comment about it. That is unfortunate, because you would hope that secret military communications between commanders in the field and people in Washington would stay private and not become public. But again, you know, my view is—and I'm not going to speak to the circumstance of General McChrystal, because I don't know all he's dealing with. My view is that military advice—and the hardest thing that senior military leaders have to do is talk to the Commander-in-Chief in a way that allows the Commander-in-Chief to understand the situation and give his advice—needs to be given without regard

My view is that military advice… needs to be given without regard to the political situation but with a clear understanding of military realities.

to the political situation but with a clear understanding of military realities. Then, perhaps after some dialogue, civilian instructions are given. And that almost always, in my career, has been done in private. Once the decision has been arrived at, you salute smartly, and if it's a legal and lawful order you say, "That is what we will do, and we'll do it to the best of our ability." So the public nature of this is rather exceptional. That doesn't mean that it's unprecedented; it's happened before. But it is exceptional.

And I would say that the public certainly needs to be informed about what's at stake, but I think if you were to dig into the debate that's going on, it has to do with how much of the force will be strictly applied for combat—U.S. combat missions only—versus how many will go to work on the Afghan national armed forces, what kind of strategies will we use to get the rest of our soft power into the fight that's still not quite into the fight the way we'd like it to be. And those are pretty complicated issues that are not surfacing in the press. Again, we've oversimplified it, as we tend to do, and sometimes it's difficult for people in Gardnerville, Nevada, or people here in Charlottesville, Virginia, to work their way through it, you know? Stay informed the best you can. Understand that good people are trying to deal with difficult problems. And ultimately the Commander-in-Chief will decide. And when he does, we will do what he tells us to do.

Question. Thank you very much for your service. The big debate right now, of course, is between counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, where in counter-insurgency we're doing nation-building, much like what we did in Iraq, to pacify and help the people out. And then the other argument is, "We can use drones and a few strike forces and remain hands-off." It sounds to me like counterinsurgency is the only option as far as you're concerned, but if it comes down that counterterrorism is the option that's chosen, would it be better for us simply to leave, or do we have to stick with that? What's your view?

General John P. Abizaid. Well, I don't think there's an option that would allow us just to leave. And it's a great question about counterinsurgency versus counter-terrorism. In the early days after 2001, I was the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy on the Joint Staff, and I recommended to my bosses, the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense, that the strategy that we use in the Middle East should avoid at all costs what I would call an occupation strategy, because an occupation strategy would be very difficult in the Islamic world. That doesn't mean that they said no, I'm wrong. There was a pretty robust debate about how to do it. But ultimately, in order to have a counterterrorist strategy, you have to have good intelligence. In fact, you have to have excellent intelligence, superb intelligence. And at that particular time, our organization for counterterrorism intelligence was not enough to enable precise targets to be hit in a very difficult region where we had no basic infrastructure.

Now, today the intelligence problems have been solved somewhat. Of course, you need a strong Central Intelligence Agency in order for intelligence activity to be properly coordinated. The Central Intelligence Agency is having a bit of difficulty in the number of investigations that it's undergoing that distract it from what we need it to be doing. And while I look to see if we've crossed over to the point where we could go strictly counterterrorism, I don't think we're there yet. I think the combination is partnership with our friends and allies in the region, some limited basic infrastructure that would allow you to move forward effectively, and very robust intelligence. Right now, we do that on a network of connected organizations and units, a thick architecture that is provided by our conventional forces on the ground. As that loosens, it is difficult to gain the necessary situational awareness to get after the counter terrorist problem. Is it possible? Ultimately, I think we have no choice but to move to a counterterrorist strategy and have much less of an occupation, where we become indirect. But from where we are now, I think it requires stabilization in Iraq, stabilization in Afghanistan, and confronting the problem where we see it raising its ugly head elsewhere.

Question. First, I'd like to thank you and your family for your service to the country. Second, I'd like to suggest that you should reconsider and move to Washington and share some of your insights with the powers that be.

General John P. Abizaid. No, thank you.

Question. You never know unless you ask.

General John P. Abizaid. I'll provide it by Internet or something.

Question. My brother was the first boy from the state of Maryland killed in Vietnam, so I've always had a very special feeling for our soldiers. And ever since this war started, what I cannot understand is, why did we send volunteer troops, who we used to call "weekend warriors," rather than our highly trained army 24/7 fighting machines over into this battle? Thank you.

General John P. Abizaid. Well, thank you, ma'am. And thank you for the service in your family as well. Our 24/7 armed forces are totally engaged, and they

have been, but they can't be engaged without the reserves and the National Guard. There are not enough of us to do it on our own. And so, as a matter of fact, I would say that our "weekend warriors" are no longer weekend warriors; they've become very trained and hardened professionals, and we ought to be proud of what they have accomplished. You know, the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army wants to get to the point where for every one year deployed you have two years off, so you can reconstitute your thinking and brush yourself off, get to know your family again, get yourself reorganized. And his goal is for that in the reserve components, I think, to be either one-to-four or one-to-five. But we're a long way from that. Right now it's probably closer to one-to-one. And if we increase the force ratios in Afghanistan without substantially reducing them quickly in Iraq, that is liable to get even more challenging. So the total army and the total marine corps—all of the armed services—are pulling their share of the load. And I'm very proud of what they are doing.

What I'm not satisfied with is the degree to which other elements of national power—from the diplomatic, political, economic, educational, agricultural side, you name it—have been used to deal with these problems. You know, our provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan are designed to be multiagency, and yet very infrequently are they truly multiagency. It's better now than it was, but it's not good enough. There are important things that have to be done, and there are probably ways to get private enterprise involved in developing Iraq and Afghanistan that we haven't completely looked at. I understand that private enterprise isn't interested in operating in a war zone, but I do believe there are probably authorities that could be used that would encourage them to be out there.

Question. Can you explain the relationship and the difference between al-Qaeda and the Taliban? And are we fighting them both?

General John P. Abizaid. No, and I should mention the Taliban, because of course—and thank you for that question—it's an important point. The Taliban is a movement. It's an Afghan movement, it's primarily Pashtun. It's intensely religious, it's radical in its ideological orientation, and it is well aligned to al-Qaeda. If you'll recall, in 2001 al-Qaeda had a safe haven in Afghanistan, thanks to the protection provided by the Taliban. The Taliban and al-Qaeda continue to draw funds from some of the same sources, ideological inspiration from some of the same sources. And it is also true that some people who call themselves Taliban are tribal people that are not ideologically oriented, that are not committed to Osama bin Laden, and have more of an anti-American or anti-Western approach because of what they regard as the occupation of their country by people that are not Muslim. So it's a complicated situation. There are parts of the Taliban—and even within the Taliban, there's mainstream Taliban and there are other organizations that are run outside of the framework of the Taliban that operate in the northeastern part of Afghanistan and the north central part of Afghanistan.

So I think it's clear that there are opportunities for the Afghan government and for the international community—for the Pakistanis and others—to look for ways to deal with parts that are willing to reconcile, willing to reduce the violence, and willing to be part of a better future. Certainly al-Qaeda is not reconcilable, and you should understand that, in the ideology of the region, the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, is regarded as the Commander of the Faithful. And while we may chuckle at that title, the people that are fighting for him do not. And as the Commander of the Faithful, he is essentially the person that people swear loyalty to before bin Laden. So, tough connections, but not connections that are unbreakable. Just like in Al Anbar province and in various places in Iraq, once we decided to work our way through some of the difficulties associated with allegiances there, we had some success. I think that might be possible as well in Afghanistan, and I'm certain that people like General Petraeus and General McChrystal are thinking in that direction.

Question. First, I'd like to thank you and your family for your service to this country. My question has to do with your comments on Iran. Since Iran's war with Iraq in the 1980s, the regime seemed very concerned about security. That's largely driven its approach toward the region as a whole. And in recent years, the United States has made comments regarding regime change in Iran and our desire to see regime change. Do you think that Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon is for deterrent value, in an attempt to defend itself from a perceived insecurity, rather than an attempt to dominate the region or try to extend its hegemony?

General John P. Abizaid. Well, that's a wonderful question. My personal view is that the mullah-led government of Iran desires to dominate the region. They desire to spread their brand of Islam, Shi'a revolutionary Islam, especially among the Shi'a communities. You see them operating on the northern Israeli border through Hezbollah, that's in southern Lebanon. You see them operating within Shi'a communities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, eastern Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere, and it's very clear that they desire the withdrawal of American

forces so that they can be the dominant player in the region. If you look at the geography of the Persian Gulf, and you see where Iran sits, and you know how big Iran is in comparison to the Arab states on the western side of the Gulf, it's very clear that Iran has what the navy would call "gross weight tonnage." I mean, it's a country that can't be easily dismissed. It has the capacity to close the Gulf. It has a way to move forward and become a very difficult player for the international community. And, let's face it, the global economy depends upon the continued flow of Middle Eastern oil, unchecked by anybody. That's one of the reasons that we're operating out where we're operating.

That having been said, the government of Iran is not popular with its own people. The recent election has shown a certain amount of weakness there. The belief that if you contain Iranian power, over time it might change, is, I think, something that would be good for the region. It's a deep culture; it's a vibrant culture; it's an old and great civilization. Its current leaders speak in very crazy ways about what they intend to do to Israel, yet, on the other hand, the historical evidence would suggest that Iran is not a suicide state. So it's my military belief that Iran can be deterred. But, you know, deterrence is all about having the means, and it's important to be vigilant about what the Iranians are doing. If the Iranians were to develop a nuclear weapon, could it be deterred? Maybe. It's easier for us to think yes than it is for the Israelis. For the Israelis, it is an existential threat that really can't be easily wished away, and they will have to work with us and others in order to confront this. My belief is, give it some time and the Iranian Revolution will, like many revolutions, start to peter out, the good people in the country will move forward, and Iran will ultimately become a responsible member of the nation-states in the region. But it won't happen if everybody just leaves them alone to do their craziness, which is what they're doing right now.

Question. If we had not invaded Iraq and concentrated on Afghanistan, would the situation over there be better, worse, or who knows?

General John P. Abizaid. Well, who knows? We did what we did, and we are where we are, and we've got a long way ahead to make it better. And we can make it better, but we really have to have some very strategic thinking going on about what we're doing. But the notion that if we had stayed out of Iraq, things would be better in Afghanistan, Pakistan, really does injustice to our enemies, which we should be wary of doing. The enemy has a plan, they have a way ahead, they have a way of thinking about the world, and they have global reach. If it wasn't Iraq, it could have been somewhere else. And even though I was the commander for the region where we had to deal with Iraq and Afghanistan on a daily basis, my two greatest concerns were Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and their stability. To lose stability in either one of those places, to have either one of those places move into the hands of extremism, would have been something that we'd have no choice but to fight over. Fortunately, the Saudis have been rather robust against their internal threat recently, and the Pakistanis seem to be waking up to the threat that is imposed by the Taliban within their own territory.

Tough, difficult questions, but all I know is that we're moving in a positive direction in Iraq. I can't say it'll be sustained. We should beware of thinking that things in the Middle East move in a straight line. They do not. Unfortunately, it's kind of a roller coaster sine wave, and history has proven that to be true. The question is, How do we move to the point where we can hand over more responsibility to the people in the region, like we're trying to do both in Iraq and Afghanistan, to let them take their future into their own hands?

Question. Thank you General Abizaid, for your military experience and your service to our country. With U.S. troops stationed all over the world, does this now make us global policemen?

General John P. Abizaid. Well, we shouldn't be the policemen of the world. And I understand the question. I've felt sometimes like the traffic cop myself. But it is important to remember that, in Afghanistan in particular, there's a pretty robust NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] coalition that's trying to work to the extent possible against this difficult problem, bring Afghanistan forward into some sort of a better future. I think we should beware of trying to make Afghanistan into Switzerland. We need to probably make it good enough, and part of the problem is determining what good enough is. But also, we have to understand that in Afghanistan it's not just us who have an interest in its stability. It's Pakistan, Iran, Russia, China, India, and we need to figure out a way to ensure that those countries play a responsible role in that stability and that it is not just us working it alone. So, in the future, not only are we going to have fewer resources and more competition, but we're going to have a need to be much more engaging with friends and allies. American exceptionalism and unilateralism don't have much of a role in the 21st century, with the exception of having to defend ourselves from an attack on our country.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. General Abizaid, thank you very much for sharing your deep experience and for your service to our country.

EVOLUTION *of the* WAR *in* IRAQ *and* PROSPECTS *for the* FUTURE

Brigadier General Herbert [H.R.] McMaster

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Today we welcome Brigadier General H.R. McMaster as part of the Miller Center's state of the U.S. military preparedness series. Currently the Chief of Concept Development and Experimentation at the U.S. Army's training and doctrine command, McMaster has had a distinguished military career, joining U.S. Central Command in 2003, serving as Director of the Commander's Advisory Group until 2004, and through 2006 as the 71st Colonel of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment.

McMaster is a graduate of the West Point Military Academy and of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he earned a Ph.D. in American history. His thesis, which criticized American strategy in Vietnam, was later detailed in his 1997 book *Dereliction of Duty*. He has taught military history at West Point and has spoken and written widely on the reliance of the war effort on technology. Today he will reflect upon the evolution of the war in Iraq and consider prospects for the future. Please welcome H.R. McMaster.

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster. Thank you so much. It is really a great privilege to speak here at the Miller Center, a place that means so much to scholars and students, not just of military affairs, but public policy and foreign relations. And so as a historian, to be able to come here to Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, and the Miller Center is a special privilege for me. So thank you very much.

I thought that it might be useful to talk about the evolution of the conflict in Iraq. And we have the opportunity to do so just following the elections of last week, and to consider what the prospects might be for the future. In doing so, I'd like to address what I think really are two misconceptions about the war in Iraq. First, there is an expectation that progress in war is linear. That expectation derives, in part, from what we might call an American view of war and warfare. We tend to take an engineering approach to war in which

we imagine the goals and objectives we would like to achieve, map out a course to those goals and objectives, and then assume that what we decide to do is not only going to be relevant, but be decisive to achieving those goals and objectives. But war is inherently nonlinear for a wide variety of reasons. First of all, and I think the most fundamental, war is nonlinear because of the continuous interaction with the enemy, and in Iraq, with multiple enemies that are bound to take you off course.

So a conflict like the one in Iraq is going to evolve over time. And so what is most important is to make sure that you can adapt your actions, adapt your approach to the war. And while you continue to focus efforts on achieving policy goals and objectives, it's very important to continue to adapt actions based on a sensitivity to and appreciation of how the conflict is evolving.

And I think the second misconception, which is related to the first, is that we tend to take an almost narcissistic view of war; we tend to define the future course of events based mainly on what we would like them to be and define the war only in relation to us. And as a result, we neglect or grossly underestimate the enemy. We do not talk enough about our enemies and our adversaries. As a result, the American public, in large measure, does not understand the stakes involved.

And we also tend to blame ourselves for enemy actions. We should be very critical of our own efforts because the stakes are so high in war. And obviously, as all of us in uniform know very well, those stakes involve life and death. So we can't afford not to be critical about our efforts. But we also ought to remain determined to achieve an outcome consistent with our interests to, in effect, win the war. And winning requires determination. And determination, the commitment to winning, derives in large measure from our understanding of the nature of our enemies and what they're trying to achieve. An understanding of the enemy reveals the stakes, and an understanding of the stakes helps us sustain our commitment to winning—to achieving an outcome consistent with our interests.

But I think we were behind in Iraq from the beginning. We were, in large measure, blinded by opportunities and failed to consider many of the complexities associated with post-Saddam Iraq. I'd like to go back to late 2006, when we were reevaluating our Iraqi strategy. As you might recall, there were a whole series of studies going on at the time, including the Baker-Hamilton report and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Council of Colonels. And you might recall that there was an accelerating cycle of sectarian violence in Iraq that was not only unhinging our efforts there and what we wanted to achieve, but was also creating a large-scale humanitarian crisis in the country.

This was due to a number of factors. It was due to al-Qaeda in Iraq, which had become this alliance of convenience between the former elements of the Saddam [Hussein] regime, and this Takfirist or Salafi-Jihadist organization associated with al-Qaeda, and really the effect of their strategy, the shift in their strategy that had begun in early 2004 from one of attacking our forces initially to a strategy—and hoping we would leave. The idea was as happened in the movie *Black Hawk Down*—you may recall that Saddam distributed large numbers of that movie on CD to his principal advisors and military officers. The idea was that if you inflict casualties on Americans, Americans will leave. Well, that wasn't working initially in the spring of 2003. So the strategy shifted to one of attacking infrastructure, really making sure that there was no progress in connection with reestablishing public services in the wake of the collapse of the Saddam regime, the tearing down of power lines, the destruction of water lines, and so forth. This is consistent with what [Vladimir] Lenin said about insurgencies, right? The worse, the better. The idea was to grow the pool of popular discontent, and then use that popular discontent to recruit more people to the cause.

And you saw the insurgency again change its approach to one of attacking nascent Iraqi security forces. If you remember, our approach right after the collapse of the Saddam regime was initially just to get out. I mean, we really had not thought through what it would take to reestablish a viable state and to achieve an outcome in Iraq consistent with our interests.

And so we were largely in denial and had not thought through what it would take to stabilize Iraq as the regime collapsed. Then we recognized that we had a problem of a growing insurgency. So the shift in our strategy in that period of time was to rapidly transition to an Iraqi government, interim Iraqi government, and rapidly transition to Iraqi security forces.

We initially had a plan to just grow very small numbers of Iraqi security forces, and then we realized, as the insurgency was coalescing, that we would have to grow those security forces much more quickly. As I mentioned, war is not linear. The enemy has a say in what happens next. And they attacked

these nascent security forces in a very determined way before they developed the resiliency to withstand these attacks. So [Abu Musab al-] Zarqawi, who became the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, realized in a memo in November of 2003 that if these security forces become strong—the Iraqi army, the Iraqi police at the time, what we were calling the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps—the gig is up.

Americans have trouble finding out who the enemy is, identifying the enemy, because of cultural and language barriers. But once the Iraqis were strong enough, then the enemy would be unable to move freely. So this is when you begin to see attacks on these security forces, also attacks on international organizations, most famously, of course, the murderous attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad.

So the enemy, in addition to attempting to collapse the nascent Iraqi security forces, was also attempting to isolate our efforts in Iraq from international support for reestablishing the Iraqi state. These are just some of the interactions with the enemy and the enemy's strategy during the first year of the war.

Then in late 2003, Zarqawi and others promoted the idea of inciting a civil war. There is this conventional wisdom that the civil war in Iraq didn't begin until the bombing of the mosque and shrine in Samarra in February of 2006. In fact, the enemy, al-Qaeda in Iraq—this umbrella organization, this alliance of convenience between elements of the former regime and al-Qaeda—began deliberately trying to start a civil war in early 2004. And the analogy they used was an analogy to Afghanistan. The idea was, if you just set conditions for a civil war by pitting Iraq's communities against each other, once American forces are withdrawn, you can accelerate that cycle of violence and create a chaotic environment. Certain portions of the population, the Sunni Arab and Turkmen populations in particular, would look to al-Qaeda for sponsorship, look to them as patrons and protectors, and bring them into their communities, thereby allowing them to establish control of portions of Iraq's territory. By 2006 different portions of Iraq were declared the Islamic state of Iraq; the enemy began to establish a high degree of control in some key areas. Al-Qaeda used those safe havens and support bases to launch attacks into adjacent areas, mixed sectarian areas and Shi'a areas, for the purpose of committing mass murder, but also for the primary purpose of inciting retribution attacks against the Sunni communities.

In fact, the enemy, al-Qaeda in Iraq—this umbrella organization, this alliance of convenience between elements of the former regime and al-Qaeda—began deliberately trying to start a civil war in early 2004.

Then, after those retribution attacks, they could say, "See, we told you. We told you that the Shi'a were going to come in and completely destroy your communities. You need us to protect you," and thereby consolidate their control over certain portions of the country. And their idea was to establish an Islamic state in Iraq across, if not the whole country, certainly Baghdad and the northern and western portions of the country.

So it's this evolution of strategy that is, I think, really important to keep in mind as we evaluate our efforts, and evaluate whether we were flexible enough or adaptable enough to keep ahead of the evolution of the conflict in Iraq.

So if we talk about adaptability, flexibility as applied to military affairs, you might describe it as being open to change and these kinds of shifts in the character of the conflict as opportunities, having a tolerance for ambiguity, and then adjusting rapidly to these new or evolving situations. Inflexibility, though, and an associated failure to adapt to the evolving nature of the conflict in Iraq, I think it's fair to say, complicated our efforts and contributed to the severe deterioration in the security situation in 2006.

Inflexibility, though, and an associated failure to adapt to the evolving nature of the conflict in Iraq, I think it's fair to say, complicated our efforts and contributed to the severe deterioration in the security situation in 2006.

In 2006, as I mentioned, Iraq really was descending into chaos. The Iraqi security forces were demonstrating every day that they not only lacked the capability to do what we were asking them to do, but also lacked the willingness to do what was necessary to stabilize the situation and defeat the enemy. Once Zarqawi and al-Qaeda in Iraq had succeeded in pitting Iraq's communities against each other, the character of the conflict shifted from what was fundamentally a problem of insurgency and terrorism to a civil war, and Iraqi security forces, in large measure, became participants or parties to

that civil war. So they not only lacked the capability to do what was necessary to stand up to these strengthening, really armed illegal groups—Sunni-based insurgent groups and terrorist organizations, and now increasingly stronger Shi'a Islamist militias with ties to Iran and the Islamic revolutionary guards corps in particular—they lacked the willingness to do what was necessary to stabilize the situation, again, because they had become a party in the sectarian civil war.

Also, the strategy at the time was not only to transition rapidly to Iraqi security forces, but to transition rapidly to an Iraqi government. But the Iraqi government was a government in name only. The Iraqi government, after its collapse in 2003, had never really rebuilt its administrative capacity. It was rife with corruption. And ministries of that government in the period 2005 to 2006 had become captured by Shi'a Islamist militias in large measure, many of whom were tied to Iran.

So the Iraqi government that we were transferring authority to didn't have the capacity to do what was necessary and, like the security forces, didn't have the willingness to do what was necessary to stabilize the situation. We had this curious situation in 2006 in which our strategy is one of rapid transition to Iraqi security forces, rapid transition to the Iraqi government, but in retrospect, certainly we could say that that strategy could really be nothing other than a rush to failure in Iraq.

So how does this happen? How does this dissonance happen between the nature of the situation and the strategy at the time? I think a simple answer to this question is that we started from a deficit based on our lack of understanding of the situation. We were blinded, I think, in large measure by possibilities in Iraq, but didn't pay enough attention to the difficulties associated with achieving outcomes there consistent with our interests. That ignorance, I think, was based in large measure on not paying attention to history, not paying attention to culture, by taking an engineering approach to war and having too much faith in American technological superiority in a military sense, and believing that American technological superiority could deliver victory in war. And there was an associated neglect of the fact that war is still an extension of politics by other means, and that war unleashes human, cultural, and psychological dynamics that defy technology and the ability to provide easy solutions to the problems of war.

And we were set up, I think, by this lack of focus and attention to the complexities of a post-Saddam Iraq. In part, it was from listening to some of the wrong people. Some of the people who were advising us, Iraqi expatriates, remembered fondly the heyday of Baghdad in the 1970s, but hadn't paid enough attention or hadn't remained aware of what had happened to Iraq in the 1980s and 1990s. I mean, an incredibly destructive war against Iran from 1980 to 1988, the withering away, the hollowing out of the Iraqi state by the Saddamist regime after the Ba'athists took power in 1968, and then onward and accelerating through the Iran/Iraq war, the reaction to the failed invasion of Kuwait in 1991, and the U.N. [United Nations] sanctions that followed. The reaction to the regime in that period of time was to reduce public services, especially education. This has a big effect, because you have a generation of young Iraqis coming of age who were undereducated, largely illiterate, which makes them very susceptible to the demagoguery of Takfirist and Salafi-Jihadist imams and extremists on the Shi'a side.

And then you have the deliberate effort of the regime in 1993 to cloak itself in the legitimacy of Islam with the return to the faith initiative. And so if you talk to some of the expatriates who left in the 1970s, they would say that Iraqi society is very secular and that people are very well educated. You know, "Iraqis don't really sign up for particularistic agendas based on sect or ethnic group." You know, "Iraqis are all Iraqis," and so forth. And of course the Iraq that we find after the collapse of the Saddam regime is much different. I mean, it's a very fractious society. It's a fragile society. It's a society that is traumatized in many ways from the brutality of the Saddam regime. And it's also a society that's suffered tremendously from this degradation in social services.

It changed significantly because the regime became kleptocratic, you might say, and in trying to evade the U.N. sanctions, it had a thriving black market economy and essentially a structure that was basically an organized crime structure that bridged over into its intelligence service, an intelligence service that was very successful in carrying out its primary responsibility, which was to keep the Hussein regime in power and to do so to incite fear among the population. So you have this clandestine regime, this clandestine organization, the Iraq intelligence service, that is essentially running a large black market economy that in large measure depends on evading U.S. sanctions by smuggling operations across the border into Syria, for example. That clandestine network and smuggling network is facilitated in large measure by the intelligence

services of neighboring countries, the Syrians in particular. This gives them access to transnational terrorist organizations that provide foreign fighters into Iraq even before our invasion in 2003.

And so you can see that the conditions are set for a change of mission of the Iraqi intelligence service from one of repressing the Iraqi people, evading the U.N. sanctions, keeping Saddam in power, making a good dollar at it, and keeping alive, through that money, a patronage network throughout the country, to now one of organizing the insurgency. What was initially a localized, hybrid insurgency coalesces over time, bringing in the al-Qaeda element, a powerful combination of people who really understand the country well, because they've been keeping their eyes on the Iraqi people. They understand all the various communities, and people know who they are and are afraid of them. And that is now essentially aligned with al-Qaeda, who brings in ideology that can recruit disenfranchised, undereducated, largely illiterate young men to the cause.

We're slow because of the deficit at the beginning, the misunderstanding, really, of the character of the conflict, not recognizing that we had not only this coalescing insurgency, but we essentially had a failed state that demanded the efforts to build a state in the wake of the collapse of the Saddam regime.

And as I mentioned, the strategy evolves over time. We're slow to react to that. We're slow because of the deficit at the beginning, the misunderstanding, really, of the character of the conflict, not recognizing that we had not only this coalescing insurgency, but we essentially had a failed state that demanded the efforts to build a state in the wake of the collapse of the Saddam regime. And we had this latent problem, 2003 to 2004, of a growing communal conflict, a communal struggle, mainly sectarian, but also an ethic one between Kurds, Arabs, and Turkmen in the north that could lead over time to a full-blown civil war.

So we're behind in this period of time, and you couldn't even say the insurgency word in 2003. We did anyway, obviously, as far as the military was concerned. And then I think there was this belief, though, that we could continue to win the war on the cheap in terms of commitment of U.S. forces, on the cheap in terms of commitment of expertise, and to some extent, resources.

A lot of this was a hangover, I think, from defense thinking in the 1990s. Not only did we perhaps not pay enough attention to the nature of the situation in Iraq and what we would have to do in the wake of the collapse of the Saddam regime there, but we also, I think, were disadvantaged because we misunderstood the nature of war generally based on defense thinking in the 1990s. Defense thinking that grew primarily out of a misunderstanding of the lopsided victory in the 1991 Gulf War and then morphed into what you might call the orthodoxy of the revolution in military affairs or defense transformation, the main thesis of which was that advanced technologies—especially surveillance technologies, communications technologies, information technologies—and precision munitions had revolutionized warfare.

The theory was that while in the past war had relied mainly in the realm of uncertainty, these technologies would lift the fog of war and move war more to the realm of certainty. And then based on that certain understanding of war, we could target our enemies with a high degree of precision. We could see the enemy. I mean, even the army's capstone doctrinal manual in 2001 said, "Future commanders will have unprecedented awareness about every aspect of the battle area." The Chief of Staff of the Air Force said, "There won't be anything that happens on the planet that we won't be able to see and track."

And of course this turns out, based on our hard-won experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, to be quite an inaccurate vision of the nature of war. But this created the idea that if you believe in absolute certainty of war—that you can see the enemy, understand the nature of the enemy, understand the enemy's strengths and weaknesses—you can target that enemy very precisely. This bled over into some ideas called nodal analysis, which stated that war would be made easy because you would understand the enemy from a system of systems approach to the enemy. You would know exactly what nodes are most critical in the enemy organization. And then just by targeting those nodes and applying power with a high degree of precision, you could win the war cheaply, quickly, and efficiently.

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What was often used to explain this strategy was an analogy of a table. In the old way of war we would just smash this whole table. But with nodal analysis, the system of systems understanding of the enemy, we can just target the

joints where the legs are, very precisely, and the table will collapse. War's over and we can go home.

So targeting enemy organizations was equated to tactics, which was equated to operations, and really equated to strategy. And what you see in this period of time is an emphasis on the military application of force in a vacuum, in a vacuum of what we want to achieve politically. I mentioned the neglect of the human and the cultural dimensions of war. So you see war essentially being depoliticized and dehumanized in this period of time. And this is why I think the debate that you could have about Iraq is really not the decision for war itself, but why did some people think it would be easy? I think that goes back to this orthodoxy of the revolution in military affairs and defense transformation.

Now, what this broad story about the strategic and operational level belies is the tremendous adaptation on the part of our forces at the tactical level. You may be familiar with some of the literature on this period that tends to point out the failures. And there were failures as American forces struggled to adapt to a war that we didn't prepare for, that we didn't envision, because we had divorced military operations from what we wanted to achieve politically.

But I think our forces that were in close contact with the enemy and with civilians populations adapted extremely well. There were failures, the most famous of which is the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. There were abuses. There were heavy-handed tactics in places. But the focus, quite rightly on our part, on those failures to learn and get better from them, obscured what is the dominant story of tremendous adaptation at the tactical level.

So, as our forces are grappling with this problem of insurgency and counterinsurgency, I think what you see is success in certain areas, but it was very limited, mainly because we never committed the forces necessary to take a population-centric approach to the problem of insurgency. If you don't have enough forces to secure the population against an enemy who's operating in the ways I described, then you really, by default, are conducting a raiding approach to counterinsurgency. And again, this is a carryover from this nodal analysis, this system of systems approach to war. And so the idea being, if you can just gain visibility of the enemy's network and attack those nodes, then you can succeed. But the problem with that is that the two main battlegrounds in a counterinsurgency like this are intelligence and perception. And if you don't secure the population, if you can't lift the pall of fear and intimidation off the population so they can cooperate with you and help take

responsibility for their own security and provide you—and preferably your partners, Iraqi security forces—with the information you need, then you can never really take away what is the principle strength of the enemy in these situations, which is their ability to move freely in and among the population and achieve a degree of anonymity.

And that security is also related to this battleground of perception. Because, as I mentioned, the bold outlines of the strategy has evolved over time, but all through this was a very sophisticated propaganda and disinformation strategy that hinged mainly on the enemy's ability to commit mass murder and then blame someone else for their own murderous acts. One of the reasons they could do that was because we weren't among the population. We could not then clarify our intentions with our deeds, as well as our actions, as well as we wanted to. We could not expose as well as we could have the brutality of the enemy by tracing the people's grievances back to the enemy organization. And we were therefore unable to counter the enemy's disinformation and to bolster the legitimacy of our partners, the Iraqi security forces.

By not engaging with the population, not having enough force to secure the population, we severely disadvantaged ourselves on what you could argue are the two key battlegrounds in a counterinsurgency: intelligence and perception.

Now, that changed dramatically, I think, by the end of 2006, as Iraq was descending into chaos. I think, based on the decisions made by the President in late 2006, early 2007 to reinforce the security effort, and the strategy—building on assessments that were already made by General [George W., Jr.] Casey and Ambassador [Zalmay] Khalilzad, General [David] Petraeus, and Ambassador [Ryan] Crocker—basically lay a foundation for a fundamentally different approach to the situation in Iraq because the conflict had evolved in a way that had shifted dramatically from the period 2005 to early 2007. And this shift, I think, was important because it was based fundamentally on a political strategy that subordinated military actions to that political strategy. The political strategy essentially aimed to move Iraq's various communities toward political accommodation that could address the fundamental sources of violence, and could remove among all communities sponsorship for these illegal armed groups, insurgent terrorist militia groups, that were fomenting the violence from within those communities.

So the political strategy had a number of dimensions to it. The military strategy was subordinate to that in that it focused on, first, physically breaking that

cycle of sectarian violence that was accelerating at the time, that was leading, as you may recall, the sectarian cleansing campaigns in Baghdad in the mixed ethnic and sectarian areas along the Tigris and Diyala Rivers. And once that was broken, to then help mediate between them from the bottom-up, to move toward a kind of political accommodation, while there were certain political initiatives that worked top-down at the same time.

The security sector reform aspect of the effort was also subordinated to the political strategy, recognizing that one of the problems was that a large percentage of the population viewed Iraqi security forces not as protectors, but as predators, because they were no longer representative of the population. Why? Because al-Qaeda came into certain areas and said, "Hey, if you join the security forces, I'm not only going to kill you, I'm going to kill your whole family." So the security forces became imbalanced demographically. As we improved security in areas, one of the key efforts was to rebalance those security forces, undertake an expansion of Iraqi security forces simultaneous with a reform effort, with an emphasis on competent leaders who were going to help bring these communities together, and become part of the mediating effort that we were undertaking for this bottom-up kind of political accommodation.

…our technical assistance effort was no longer just geared toward building capacity, but it was also part of an influence strategy and a reform effort to move those ministries toward more responsible leadership.

The development effort, the technical assistance effort to the Iraqi government, was also subordinated to this. The Iraqi government had in large measure become captured by Shi'a Islamist militias that were pursuing a particularistic agenda, inimical to our interests. The Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Transportation, Education, Health really had become front organizations for a sectarian cleansing campaign and for some of the worst atrocities of 2006 and early 2007.

So our technical assistance effort was no longer just geared toward building capacity, but it was also part of an influence strategy and a reform effort to move those ministries toward more responsible leadership. One of the foundations for the kind of political accommodation that was necessary, was to remove the malign actors and organizations from those ministries and use that as a

functioning government that was becoming better at providing basic services to the people on a nonsectarian basis. I would go into more detail regarding the rule of law if I had time, but there were a whole host of initiatives, all subordinated to a single political strategy that I think helped move us to where we are now in Iraq, and where the Iraqis are now in Iraq.

…we know that situational understanding is not going to be delivered by sensors on a big, flat screen; situational understanding is our army's new capstone concept, based on the need to develop the situation through action, by first understanding the situation in width, in depth, and in context.

There's a lot we could talk about from 2007 and 2008 in terms of how the conflict continued to evolve. I think a pivotal period was the spring of 2008, when the Iraqi government takes on the malign Iranian influence and activities in Iraq directly with the Charge of the Knights operation in Basra, the subsequent operations in Amarah, and then in Sadr City. This was a huge turning point in the war that I think we see still manifest itself to some degree now in the results of the election.

But as you can tell, I get kind of exercised when I talk about Iraq. I could go on and on but I'll just leave you with a couple of things. What did the American military take from this? I think, first of all, as military officers we recognize that we have to place what we're doing in the context of our policy goals and objectives. We can't come into the comfort zone of just conducting military operations against largely mirror-imaged enemy forces. So all of our force is very experienced now at fighting what we call hybrid threats, multiple enemy organizations, networked nonstate actors, some of which enjoy state support. And we also still have to be prepared to fight against state-based, more conventional forces. We recognize that we have to conduct what we call in our army full-spectrum operations, which is offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations, the latter also including counterinsurgency efforts.

We recognize the need for us to understand the situation, not just focused on the enemy. We used to think about the enemy in context of the terrain armed forces. Now it's the enemy and armed forces in context of the terrain. And the enemy certainly in context of civilian populations and the political objective that we're trying to achieve. So we know that situational understanding is not

going to be delivered by sensors on a big, flat screen; situational understanding is our army's new capstone concept, based on the need to develop the situation through action, by first understanding the situation in width, in depth, and in context. This may sound familiar to some historians who have heard Sir Michael Howard talk about how to study military history.

And then we have to act. We have to interact with the environment, and continually reassess that interaction and adapt our actions based on the way the conflict evolves. So this is a fundamental adaptation that we've made. We've adjusted tremendously in connection with leader development and education and how we train our force. I think that our armed forces generally have adapted very well to this point, to the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course there's much more to do. I think it's also important for us now to consolidate what we've learned, make sure that it affects us in our institution deeply, that we do the deep institutional learning, and we make a grounded projection based on our experiences today, into the future, to prepare our force not just to win the fights we're in as called for in the recent Quadrennial Defense Review, but also to remain prepared for the national security threats that we're going to encounter in the future. We can talk much more about that if you'd like; it's the main portfolio that we're working on at TRADOC [United States Army Training and Doctrine Command], which is how to build a bridge from the current force into the future force.

I could go on and on about that, but I'd really like to hear what's on your minds, and where you'd like to take the conversation from this point on, either in the direction of Iraq or questions about where our army is today and some of the adaptations we're making. Thank you.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Thank you very much, H.R. You describe a long, difficult learning process to our approach in Iraq. But can you give a good illustration of your experience, particularly in Tal Afar, both in terms of training of your troops leading up to that engagement, your experience and success there, and then how that's informed, both your view of nation-building more broadly, and also in terms of current training for troop deployments today?

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster. Well, obviously, the thumbnail that we use to describe the environments we're operating in, in Iraq and Afghanistan, is one of complexity and uncertainty. I had the tremendous experience to be able to serve with General [John] Abizaid from 2003 to 2004. That gave me the opportunity to travel to every brigade and to almost every base in Iraq and in Afghanistan, so it was a tremendous education for me. I learned from my contemporaries who were in brigade command. Then we learned from each other when we came back. When our regiment came back from Iraq, we had a week-long seminar and we broke down into purpose-built groups to really think and write about our experiences, but most importantly to identify implications for our training strategy and our education strategy, and how we were going to operate once we got to Iraq.

So we were able to do a lot of nonstandard things. By that I mean specialized training in skills that are in high demand in Iraq. For example, getting soldiers certified as EMTs, emergency medical technicians, because, as you can imagine, you can't rely on the two medics in a company to be able to stabilize your patients when you're in a dense urban terrain. So we had everybody trained, one hundred percent of our regiment, as what we call Combat Lifesavers.

But we also had two additional soldiers per platoon who were trained as emergency medical technicians in a civilian program, snipers obviously. Additionally, we sent about 350 of our troopers to college for a four credit-hour course at local universities on Arab and Islamic history, with an emphasis obviously on the history of Iraq. And we did the same thing with immersion language courses that were eight weeks long, but then evolved into giving soldiers materials in Arabic to continue their training, two per platoon in each category. And finally, everybody received basic language and cultural training.

And one of the reasons for this is that we tend to neglect in peacetime the importance of psychological, moral, and ethical preparation of soldiers for these complex environments. Right? You have a brutal, murderous enemy who's operating in and among the population, very ambiguous and uncertain conditions. There are some people who would say, well, if you're fighting an enemy like that, you've got to apply firepower with less discrimination, because it's their fault if there are civilian casualties.

Obviously, nothing could be further from the truth. I mean, the exact opposite is the case. You have to continue to train your troopers to overwhelm the enemy in every fight, but you have to apply firepower with discipline and discrimination. And that involves your soldiers taking more risk to protect innocent life. So one of the key reasons why we do this education program in our army today is because you really want to be able to at least ask the right questions when you get into a certain area. You're not going to be an expert

on a particular area of Iraq or Afghanistan, but if you study the history and the culture, you can ask the right questions.

You also have to evaluate the sources of your information, because in these environments, all insurgencies have an aspect of civil war to them. All of the parties are trying to influence you in some way. So you have to be able to evaluate the sources of information. Without cultural and historical knowledge, you can't do that. But one of the key things is to develop empathy for the population. And then I think your soldiers have to be able to empathize with the population so they treat the population with respect, even under the most difficult circumstances. Understanding how Iraqi society was traumatized under Saddam, and what they had suffered after the descent into violence in 2003, allows your soldiers to not get frustrated with Iraqis by saying, "How come they're not telling me who are the bad guys in the street?"

And then I think your soldiers have to be able to empathize with the population so they treat the population with respect, even under the most difficult circumstances.

Well, this is a survival mechanism for many people. And they're waiting until the situation is more secure before they'll offer that information. I think that kind of understanding is immensely important, the need to treat people respectfully within their culture. That is the best counter to the enemy's propaganda and disinformation. It's important to appeal to soldiers from a Kantian, treat man as an ends, sort of perspective. But it's also important to approach soldiers from a John Stuart Mill, hard utilitarianism perspective.

If you treat Iraqi civilians—if you treat people—disrespectfully, you're working for your enemy. You're undermining your own efforts. So part of our education program is to show soldiers enemy propaganda of American soldiers and say, "Your actions can either confirm that or counter that depiction of what American soldiers are all about." American soldiers are inculcated with our ethos, which is consistent with Aristotelian virtue and respect. You could say that the army's value of respect comes right out of Aristotle. So I think this kind of values education is important. It's important to do it in units that are getting ready to fight, because it's the communal nature of training that is important; it's man's expectation of each other that informs how you define yourself. The way that soldiers define each other and what they expect of each other before going into combat is very important.

So one of the main reasons for this kind of training and education is to develop empathy for the population, reducing stress, because cultural stress is an element of combat stress. If you have ignorance, that leads to uncertainty. If you have uncertainty, that leads to fear. Fear is the most debilitating thing that can happen to a unit in combat. And if you have fear, it can lead to behavior that you don't want to see. It can lead to breakdowns in discipline. It can have a corrosive effect on an organization. So how do you inoculate your unit? How do you build resilient troopers and cohesive units that can resist this kind of corrosive effect? And our training is meant to do that. You think of training as a very practical way to prepare units for combat, but there's a very important educational dimension. And I think the days are almost gone, really, where you can draw a stark line between training and education.

Question. When you consider the global landscape of national, tribal insurgencies, transnational terrorism, and the increasing reluctance of European NATO [North American Treaty Organization] members to carry their own share of the burden, add to that an emerging China, Iran, how do you see the future of the American military? Because you cannot really fight China the same way you fight the Taliban, for example. How do you see the transformation of the American military?

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster. That's a really great point. As you know, there's been this debate about what kind of conflict to prepare for. How should forces be optimized for what some people would say is the high end of conflict, such as against another major nuclear-armed power or power with significant conventional force capabilities, or on the low end, which they would typically characterize as an insurgency or counterinsurgency?

Well, first there is the correct perspective of conflict. If you're in a fight for Iraq or Afghanistan, there's no low end about it. A fight is a fight, to a certain extent. And as far as armed forces are concerned, the fundamental price of admission to any conflict is competency in our ability to fight, our combat prowess, combined arms, what we call "combined arms capability." And so for those who say, "Well, you need a certain set of skills for this kind of a conflict and a certain set of skills for another one," I think in large measure that is a false choice. In effect, to be able to go into any fight, you better have a high

degree of competency in your ability to conduct combined arms warfare, which is a combination of infantry, mobile-protected firepower, engineer capabilities, indirect fire, army aviation, and joint capabilities in surveillance, in reconnaissance, and strike capabilities.

The conflict will continue to evolve in Iraq and Afghanistan. So if you go with a force that's optimized for just a certain kind of conflict, you can be certain that the enemy is going to shift the character of that conflict to something completely different. And so you've got to be ready from day one for a mission of humanitarian assistance, with a force that's ready to fight, because there could be a destabilized situation that could follow that humanitarian assistance effort, especially, for example, if it's an area that's already contested.

I think this is kind of a false dilemma in many ways. Now, the key thing we have to guard against is the idea that there are always those who will want to pose a simple solution to the complex problem of war. And we Americans tend to be impatient. We tend to take an engineering approach, as I mentioned. Also, we tend to take a kind of business approach to war. We think that certain capabilities that have had a significant effect in the business world or in the economy may apply directly to war.

But I think [Carl Von] Clausewitz and Sir Michael Howard have it right when they say that wars still resemble each other more than they resemble any other activity. So it's important to pay attention to the continuities in war as we prepare for future armed conflict.

In the 1990s, remember, we were quite taken by this idea of a revolution of military affairs. Now, you could say that that thinking has its roots in strategic bombing theory, which is a simple solution to the complex problem of war.

As we look to the future, you see some new concepts coming in, such as the air-sea concept. Well, why is there not a land component? Because once you start fighting on land, things get pretty complicated because, of course, you're dealing with people in a direct way. But I think it's important for us not to delude ourselves that we can achieve really complex political objectives by applying power from the aerospace or maritime domains exclusively.

Our ability to operate freely in the aerospace and maritime domains is essential to any military operation, because we're mainly based in the continental United States. If we're ever going to go anywhere to fight, we rely on our air force and our naval forces. But in peacetime, there's often momentum that builds behind the idea that you can have a simple solution to a complex problem. The complex problems are land-based.

Why is war on land different? Well, it's typically where you have to achieve political outcomes. An example is the piracy problem. We can contain that a little bit, but it's a land-based problem. And until there's a political solution or, really, a social solution to that problem, it's going to be a problem off the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia.

So to say that in war you can solve complex problems by projecting power from the aerospace and maritime domains, I think is something we have to be very skeptical about. And we have to understand that war on land is different, again, because of the political outcomes. People live there. In the aerospace and maritime domains, the revolution of military affairs was based on this idea that you could identify and engage a finite set of targets. But on land, you may have tens of thousands of targets, all of whom are trying to avoid being classified as such, and taking traditional countermeasures of dispersion concealment, intermingled with the civilian population and so forth. So I think it's important for us to take a clear-eyed view of future conflict, and not get caught up in this false dilemma. We need to prepare our forces for what we call the full spectrum of conflict, and then really put a premium on our ability to adapt quickly once the real demands of the next conflict reveal themselves. Because we're not very good at predicting what the conflict's going to be.

Question. I really appreciate what you've had to say. Ronald Reagan, though, had a very simple national security strategy. And that was, trust but verify. So I'd like to ask a question of you at the tactical level about trust and verify in terms of where we are today and where we're going in the future. Based on the 2006 and 2007 political strategy that you've described, what has evolved since the 2009 report by General [Michael] Flynn about reinventing intelligence, shifting to human intelligence with boots on the ground and our airborne assets doing the verification?

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster. That's a great way to think about it. There's not much to add except to say I think I agree with you completely, that you have to have the combination of these capabilities. You have to have the capability to develop the situation, what we call in our capstone concept as being in close contact with the enemy, and with civilian populations, which

puts a premium on human intelligence. But what oftentimes gives context to that human intelligence is your surveillance capabilities and your technical intelligence.

I think General Flynn's report is excellent. It lays out a clear way ahead in terms of the evolution of military intelligence and how we really have to collect intelligence and conduct analysis on all the key battlegrounds of a counter-insurgency. And of course that's going to be in cooperation with other intelligence activities, and with local partners, which is most important. Because it's the Afghans and the Iraqis who will always know a lot more than we ever will, no matter how hard we study and analyze it. And so building those partnerships is really what will help deepen your understanding.

What General Flynn is trying to get at is that combination. In Iraq, General Flynn was at the forefront of establishing what we called fusion centers. And these fusion centers were very effective at targeting enemy organizations, al-Qaeda and Iraq in particular, which was a very important element to defeating the militias as well. Because once al-Qaeda was defeated, which means it can no longer effectively pursue its strategy, a big part of the rationale for the Shi'a Islamist militias was removed. And as a good Shi'a friend told me, "Everyone in this conflict has to sweep in front of their own house."

It allowed the Shi'a to take on the militias on their own, so this targeting capability is important. But it has to be combined with an understanding of how enemy organizations are networked into and bridge into legitimate governmental institutions, into illicit drug trafficking organizations, into security forces, and how they exert influence there. You have to ask the sorts of questions that get at the real fundamental causes of violence. Is it a clan- or family tribe-based issue that gets sponsorship for a certain thing? The Taliban is not monolithic. There are at least four or five major groups and all sorts of subgroups. What enemy organization is operating in this area? What is their connection to the population? To what degree do they enjoy genuine support and why?

Those questions can't be answered by technical intelligence alone. So what General Flynn is advocating is exactly what you're talking about, which is regional cells that collect on all of these key areas, combined with technical intelligence and surveillance capabilities to give a more holistic picture to drive what is fundamentally going to have to be an approach to a local problem set that's complementary to the overall political strategy in Afghanistan.

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster
Miller Center of Public Affairs
March 15, 2010

In my view, one of the key elements of the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan is that you often can't aggregate your understanding of it because the situation at the local level is so different. Once you aggregate, do statistical analysis of technical intelligence, it becomes meaningless, or dangerous really, because it creates the illusion of understanding, the illusion of control. For example, you can have a great bar chart of attacks in Iraq week by week, but it means nothing until you are really sensitive to the local realities, and understand what can and cannot be aggregated. But it's a great point. That's a good way to think about the combination of collection capabilities and analytical capabilities.

Question. What is the impact of the targeting against education in places like Afghanistan and the emigration of the educated middle class?

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster. Well, I think you bring up just an absolutely critical point. This fight against these people who use a narrow and irreligious ideology to foment hatred and violence, we can't win that fight, "we" meaning

all civilized peoples, OK? Because all civilized peoples is really who the targets are from these Takfirist, Salafi-Jihadist kind of organizations.

You really can only win in the long term on the battleground of education. I guess you don't want to call it a battleground, but until people are educated in such a way that they can reject this demagoguery, that's what it is, a battleground. Because I don't think you can have the kind of hatred that these people foment without ignorance. And you can't have the kind of violence that you see with these mass murder attacks of innocents without that kind of hatred. So it's fundamentally a problem of education to break that chain.

What you see when al-Qaeda comes into an area in Iraq—and you see the same thing with certain Taliban organizations as they come into places in Afghanistan or in Pakistan. We've seen this in dramatic fashion in Bajaur, in Swat, not so much in southern Punjab in certain areas because of the state's control there, but in the northwest frontier provinces, in the federally administered tribal areas in Afghanistan, and what is the first thing they do?

The first thing they do is look at whatever the social structure is, the social order that exists, and they kill everybody, sometimes whole families, so they can supplant a different social structure. They target the legitimate imams in the mosque. They pull them out. They run them off or they murder them. And then they kill the teachers or run them off. They bulldoze the girls' schools. They understand that keeping people ignorant is one of the most important ways for them to stay in power. So education is the most important long-term effort in this fight against these extremists and murderers.

So I think anything we can do militarily to create the space, the security space to allow education reform to happen is good. Some of the guys here may have been in Regional Command East in the greater Paktika area, which is an area that is very much affected by [Gulbuddin] Hekmatyar's group and some of the most heinous of the enemies that we're fighting in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. And in these areas, we're able to improve security, build schools. Children went to school. That's what their parents want, right? They want their kids to be educated, but not in a madrasah, where they're doing rote memorization of the Quran and being brainwashed.

So what happened was that a lot of Afghan refugees started coming back in from Pakistan because there was now an alternative to their children going to these madrasahs as in Pakistan. So I agree with you completely; it's the most important long-term effort.

Question. I am a first-year ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] cadet here and I wanted to thank you for coming and sharing with us. It's a great privilege and very informative as well. In the decades leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, one of the main driving forces of policy on the ground was the competition between the United States and the former Soviet Union. And then, of course, in the aftermath of that collapse, we had essentially free rein in the region. But with the emergence of China, can you share your thoughts on what the potential might be for a reemergence of a superpower competition and fighting over spheres of influence in the Middle East? This is not specifically over ideology anymore, but more over resource competition as China looks to expand its oil capacity, especially highlighted by their recent acquisition of the Iraqi oil contracts. I know in terms of Iraq and Iran going back for many decades, the superpowers would essentially split up the two countries and play off that rivalry. Do you see any emergence of that coming back, and how the United States might preempt China's move into the Middle East?

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster. Obviously, there's an effort underway to not be in a position where we have to preempt anything or to be confrontational. It's really a policy question. I probably am not really grounded in my expertise to talk much about it. I would just say that I think a lot of our interests align based on access to strategic resources, the need to have a vibrant global economy and so forth. So I would think that our government and those engaged in diplomacy with China have this in mind.

But I think there are many areas in which out interests align. From a military point of view, we are not any more focused on a specific sort of threat, like a one-threat country, you know? So we're not doing order of battle analysis on the Chinese military and seeing how we match up. What we're doing now in terms of our planning efforts for the army's foundation for future modernization is that we've come up with a series of what we think are plausible scenarios that could result in the commitment of U.S. joint forces. And those come from a number of classified sources, but some open sources as well, such as the National Intelligence Council 2025 document [*Global Governance 2025: At a Critical Juncture*], a portion of which deals with conflict. No surprise, right? I mean, failing states, increased competition for scarce resources, a sort of ethnic nationalistic nationalism, and all sorts of ecological factors as well.

So we have listed these contingencies. And then we've worked with the Defense Department, of course, and others to make sure that these look about right and then we determine what kinds of missions we would conduct in those environments, what kind of enemies we would confront in those environments, what kind of capabilities they would have. That's what really helps us think about how we *need* to operate in the future, and then based on that description, of how we're *going* to operate in the future. So we define the problem, basically, on how we're going to operate. And then we ask, what are the required capabilities for our force in the areas of doctrine, organization, training, leader development education, material solutions, or equipment?

You might think back to the kind of hubristic language we used, "No peer competitor 'til 2025." Some of those who were most enthusiastic about the revolution of military affairs said, "Hey, we're going to be able to have such an advantage that we'll be able to dominate"—the word dominance was really big in that period—"...across the spectrum of conflict."

So that's how we've laid the foundation for army modernization into the future, which is different from the approach we took prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. You might think back to the kind of hubristic language we used, "No peer competitor 'til 2025." Some of those who were most enthusiastic about the revolution of military affairs said, "Hey, we're going to be able to have such an advantage that we'll be able to dominate"—the word *dominance* was really big in that period—"...across the spectrum of conflict." And by using a business analogy, we could in effect lock out our competitors from the market of future conflict. I mean, there was all this very confident language.

We don't use any of that anymore. We talk about a need to continue to evolve our capabilities based on a grounded projection into the future. And rather than what people at the time were calling a capabilities-based approach, just envision what kind of capability we'd like in the future—and I think what we did was to define words, in parentheses, of what we'd like it to be—and then set out to develop those capabilities.

Instead, we're taking this grounded projection that is more threat-based, but not necessarily a specific threat from a specific country or its military. And, of course, the problem is, if you take that leap-ahead approach, you're just about guaranteeing that what you've set out to do is going to be irrelevant or only tenuously connected to what you need to do in the future, because you don't interact only with enemies inside of wars, like we are in Iraq and Afghanistan, but you interact with adversaries in-between wars. So, there have always been countermeasures whenever you try to develop a silver-bullet capability. The latest silver bullet for us was the network. The network was going to solve the problem of future war. I'm overstating it, obviously. But there were other silver bullets in military history. The crossbow was one, and you could go farther back. But you have the machine gun, the tank, then a tank missile, the submarine, the sonar, the bomber, the radar. So we should always remember that there's this continuous interaction.

Question. The army is adapting very well to asymmetrical urban warfare and will need to do that as you encounter failed states in the future. But it seems that in Afghanistan and Iraq, we're dealing with nation-building more and more. And the army is not really designed for a nation-building mission. So my question is, are the people who are working on military doctrine looking at the specific issue of nation-building, and working more closely with the Department of State or other NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] in an integrated fashion to accomplish this? Because otherwise, when the war's over, you can't go home if you don't have something stable left in the wake of the combat.

Brigadier General H.R. McMaster. That's a great question. We have to develop certain expertise within our army in the area of development, technical assistance, assistance to indigenous security forces—not just army, but also police forces—and to assist in the establishment of rule of law.

The problem obviously is one of capacity and one of security. If you see people in large numbers with U.S. Army blazoned across their chest in a certain area, it's probably because it's not a safe place, right? So to get civilian expertise is difficult, especially under diplomatic security rules and that sort of thing.

So, by default, the military has to undertake those kinds of efforts. We have to develop in our leaders those kinds of skills that are more typically associated with a governance advisor, public financial management; not just reconstruction, but also how to bridge reconstruction efforts into enduring economic growth and job creation. I think that has to be in the portfolio of our officers. We will

never be the experts. The military will only get it so far. And then you're going to have to bring in development experts, people who understand how to inculcate a spirit of entrepreneurialism within that culture; people who understand not just international best practices, but also understand the indigenous systems, and can put indigenous systems and leaders at the forefront of development efforts.

But the military is often going to have to do this in these large-scale efforts. And we always have, OK? We just go into denial about it in peacetime. If you go back to the reconstruction period after the Civil War, or if you go back to the Philippine Insurrection, the aftermath of the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, to our efforts in Vietnam, when we did this only tenuously, and we had a large civilian effort there.

But we've always been called on to do it. And so we have to acknowledge it. Now, we want to get out of that business as quickly as we can by stabilizing the situation. We have to work in close cooperation with partners across other departments and other agencies. We don't want a policy role. We just want to assist in execution. So if you look at just the area of security sector reform, for example, the key is to align responsibilities, authorities, and capacity. There's been a huge disconnect in Iraq and Afghanistan. And now we're working together in integrated civil military teams to compensate for each other's strengths and weaknesses. For example, you have the U.S. military effort; you have a State INL [Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs] effort that runs mainly through contracts, the training of police forces; you have ISETAP [Intergovernmental Science, Engineering, and Technology Advisory Panel] from the Justice Department; and you have various Department of Homeland Security activities for customs and border police and so forth that all need to work in an integrated manner.

So, you could say that there are a lot of animals roaming the plain, just in the area of security sector reform. Now, in development in Afghanistan, you could list all kinds of U.S. government, nongovernmental organizations, and international actors that are involved in the ability to coordinate that important leader competency. So one of the things we're saying in our capstone concept is that we used to be comfortable with just strict military chain of command, unity of command. Now we have to help forge unity of effort without clear lines of authority, and do it collaboratively. In the places where you have integrated civil military teams, it's worked extremely well. If you look at the provincial reconstruction team effort in Iraq, how that has matured—I mean, it got off to a halting start. You know, everybody looked at each other like: "What are you here for? What do you do?" But then we figured out how to work together. And so in areas where we have these very courageous civilian officials working with military units, the synergy is really powerful.

Now, in large-scale reconstruction efforts and large-scale governance assistance efforts, the key is that connective tissue between district and province and government ministry. And so you need some kind of staff organization, in the area of public financial management, mainly, in terms of budget formulation, execution for capital and operating budgets. If that doesn't work, nothing works in government. OK? And so there are efforts to provide that connecting tissue. The military has a role in that. But also rule of law is another whole area in which that kind of integration cooperation is immensely important.

So we think the future is full of more cooperation, with civilian officials and agencies together with the military, providing assistance in these areas. And we're trying to organize. We have a number of initiatives underway to look broadly across our civilian workforce in the army and also in the Department of Defense so we can find the people who can help with these institutional capacity-building and governance assistance efforts as well.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Thank you very much for sharing your insights, and especially for your many years of service.

Rules of Engagement

Raffi Khatchadourian & Peter Hegseth

George H. Gilliam. Raffi Khatchadourian is certainly no stranger to the Miller Center Forum or to readers of the *New Yorker.* Mr. Khatchadourian, a graduate of Trinity College, who earned his master's degree in international relations from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, first spoke here in 2007 about his very long *New Yorker* article entitled "Azzam the American." He's been a participant in the annual CIAG [Critical Incident Analysis Group] conferences held here at the University of Virginia, and Raffi has written major articles on, among other topics, the vigilante Sea Shepherd Conservation Society in Antarctica, Bob Barr, illegal logging and China, and about the New York Republican Party. Recently, he published in the *New Yorker* an extraordinary article called "The Kill Company," which we'll discuss today. When I contacted Raffi this summer about speaking here on the important issues raised by "The Kill Company," he suggested that we involve one of his sources, Captain Pete Hegseth, in the conversation. Pete Hegseth, a graduate of Princeton University, who played basketball there, is presently pursuing a master's degree at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He served in Iraq with the Third Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division for their deployment in 2005 and 2006. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Iraq. Rather than a formal opening address, today's Forum will be in the form of a conversation. Please welcome Raffi Khatchadourian and Captain Pete Hegseth.

Raffi Khatchadourian. Thanks, George. It's great to be back here at the Miller Center and to sit down with all of you to talk about another piece that I had an opportunity to work on. Just as a bit of introduction, this is a piece that I began probably about a year or so ago, and it required an incredible amount of research to assemble. I didn't travel to Iraq. What I've done here is, I've reconstructed the events surrounding a war crime that took place in Iraq a few years ago, and I've tried to do so in as neutral a way as is possible. I tried

to figure out what happened, why it happened, and what can be learned from this story—to use the war crime as a case study, almost. To do that, I interviewed dozens of people and I gathered hundreds of pages of documents. So I just thought maybe at the outset I would let you all know how it is that I have come to know the things that I know. Of course, Pete [Hegseth] can provide direct, firsthand experience.

This is a very difficult subject to talk about, in part because this particular war crime is embedded in a lot of other larger issues, which is partly what made it so worth exploring in the *New Yorker* at such length. But for some of you who aren't familiar with the specifics, I'll start by recounting the basic facts of the case, from the viewpoint of the squad that was involved directly with the crime. From there, we can work backwards, and talk about some of the larger issues.

This story is set in 2006 in Iraq in the Sunni Triangle at a moment of great difficulty for the U.S. military—a moment prior to the surge, when subduing the insurgency was obviously something that was of utmost importance. In the Sunni Triangle there were a number of cities that were particularly hard to control and there were also a lot of vacant areas, let's call it, where insurgents had the capacity to regroup and meet, among them some of the most senior leaders of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

The brigade that George mentioned, the Third Brigade Combat Team, the leader of that unit was a man by the name of Colonel Mike Steele, and he is a storied commander within the army. He's probably most well known for his involvement in Operation Just Cause, which was popularized and described in great detail by Mark Bowden's excellent book *Black Hawk Down,* and in the movie that was based on that book. Colonel Steele has a reputation for being hard-charging, aggressive, and highly focused on military training, and his focus is on core principles, on fighting skills, and we can get to more of that later. In Iraq, Colonel Steele was basically in command of this very difficult province—Salah ad Din province—and throughout 2006 he tried as best as he could to conduct large-scale operations in that area. These operations were typically geared toward regions outside the cities, and one of them, Operation Swarmer, was among the largest air-assault missions conducted by the army in Iraq after the invasion. The operation that is at the heart of my story, Operation Iron Triangle, is cut from that same mold as Operation Swarmer. It involved hundreds of soldiers, and the intent was really to go to remote places where senior al-Qaeda militants seemed to be operating and to flush them out, to capture them, and to kill them. That was the focus of these things.

Very briefly, I'll now go to the third squad of the third platoon of Charlie Company, or the so-called "kill company," which is the title of my piece. The third squad is the unit that got into the most trouble during Operation Iron Triangle. It was commanded by Staff Sergeant Ray Girouard, who was born in New England and grew up in Sweetwater, Tennessee, living with his grandparents. Ray joined the military just before 9/11. I went down to Sweetwater to get to know where he had come from, and some of the descriptions that people in Sweetwater shared about Ray very much matched the descriptions that were later given to me by people in the military. He was someone who was charismatic, but he was also somewhat of a loner. He surrounded himself with outcasts at school; he brought them into his rock band, mainly. And he did a similar thing, it seems to me, in the military.

On paper, Ray Girard was considered to be an excellent soldier. He advanced rapidly. He wasn't too much older than the soldiers who were serving under him. He had studied Arabic and had attained a fair amount of fluency. He had experienced a previous deployment in Afghanistan. He had been commended by his superiors, but aside from that, there were drawbacks to his leadership style that are also worth pointing out. Two weeks before Operation Iron Triangle occurred, one of the soldiers involved in the war crime, Corey Clagett, was actually kicked out of his squad for repeated disciplinary problems, and Ray took him in. I don't know exactly how that was done administratively, but Ray basically arranged to have Corey in his unit. And, in general, Ray seemed to trade discipline for affection. He allowed his squad, while on patrols, to goof off. Occasionally they would steal alcohol from locals, confiscate it for their own consumption. While on patrol, Ray would allow his soldiers to dress in an undisciplined way, to put do-rags on their heads as if they were a kind of paramilitary unit.

Ray would tell other soldiers sometimes that he kept an AK-47 in his Humvee to be used as a drop weapon, suggesting that if something were to go wrong, if a civilian had unfortunately been killed, the weapon could be left behind as evidence. For me, things like that are very hard to evaluate. It's hard to know whether something like that is bravado or seriously intended. Of course, because I wasn't there, it's not something that I could really judge.

And finally, just one other thing: Ray seemed very much worn down right before Operation Iron Triangle. A number of soldiers who served with him talked to me about his use of military-issued Valium, even while he was on patrol. All of this is just to set the stage. In the weeks before Operation Iron Triangle, Charlie Company was suffering a number of attacks at command outposts. The soldiers had been undergoing a grueling series of patrols. They were under a lot of stress.

Then, on May 9th, when Operation Iron Triangle began, they were ordered to relocate from their base, in the Samarra area, to Tikrit, to prepare for this large air-assault mission. What did they learn when they got to Tikrit? Well, a message transmitted down from the brigade staff, from Colonel Steele, and filtered through the command staff of Charlie Company, was that Operation Iron Triangle was going to be one of the most dangerous missions of the deployment. There was intelligence that was being relayed, with varying levels of specificity—probably becoming less and less specific as you got further down the chain of command—that there were maybe 15 to 20 hardened al-Qaeda militants at this one particular location on a striplike island of about five miles in length and about three miles wide, in a very remote place. The area was actually so remote that Saddam Hussein had decided that it was where he could experiment with the development of chemical weapons. That experimentation was long shut down by 2006, but al-Qaeda militants had apparently seized upon the same idea: because of its remoteness, this area was a good place to do bad things. The island contains marshlike terrain along its edges, I should add, just so you can picture the geography. It is situated to the east of a large reservoir called Lake Tharthar.

In the weeks before Operation Iron Triangle, Charlie Company was suffering a number of attacks at command outposts. The soldiers had been undergoing a grueling series of patrols. They were under a lot of stress.

Ray's unit was told that they were going to be part of this large operation, that there were going to be al-Qaeda militants there, and that the rules of engagement were going to be somewhat different from what they were normally accustomed to. In short, the army had determined that there was enough intelligence to establish that all the people at one particular objective—two huts on this island—were hostile, and that the people there were to be treated as enemy combatants. The significance of this, it was explained, was that soldiers did not have to wait for a hostile act to "engage," or to fire upon, the people in the huts, especially any military-aged males who might be there. During this operation, the army called the two huts Objective Murray.

In short, the army had determined that there was enough intelligence to establish that all the people at one particular objective…were hostile, and that the people there were to be treated as enemy combatants.

Throughout the preparation for Operation Iron Triangle, the notion of what territory should be defined as hostile, worthy of immediate attack, expanded. Exactly why this is so is something that's open to debate, but from the point of view of this simplified narrative right now, Ray's unit and Ray's company commander and the staff of his company command were all under the belief that every settlement on this island, not just Objective Murray, should be regarded as hostile, and that the rules of engagement should apply in the way that I just described.

Operation Iron Triangle began at midnight. Ray's unit left at five in the morning for their portion of it, and flew out in a helicopter through the darkness to Objective Murray. They're joking in the helicopter. Some people are sleeping. People are trying to burn through their anxieties in various ways. The helicopter touches down, and everyone runs out prepared for the fight of their lives. They run out, and they're shooting at the building, until they reach the building and they realize that there's no one there.

This immediately, of course, requires a shift in focus, and some members of the company command staff began going through the regular routine of securing the area, establishing a command post. At that point, Ray's company commander decides, OK, we've secured the worst area of what we were told was the worst area, and now we're going to send out our units to the various other clusters of mud huts on the island. These buildings are very unsophisticated. I mean, just imagine biblical structures, adobe, very primitive construction. So, basically, the company falls into a routine: OK, we've taken care of this place; it wasn't what we thought it was. Now let's take care of the other clusters.

Ray's unit moves by helicopter to a cluster of homes three miles north of Objective Murray. By that time, it's daylight, or it's dawning. They touch down. Ray is out on the ground and he's leading his men. The unit seems to be operating according to the rules of engagement established earlier for Objective Murray. Ray and his men are running toward the first building, a house, and they're prepared to shoot. As he is running, Ray sees movement in a window. He doesn't know if it's a sheet blowing or if it's a human being. He thinks it could be a man. He shoots. Later, Ray testified that he believed that he had every right to fire because of the rules of engagement that he had been given, and the military seems to have agreed. I guess "agree" is a strong word, but his actions here, shooting somewhat preemptively into the window, wasn't considered a criminal act later.

Ray and his squad reach the building, they enter, and they find a man who has been shot. He is about 70 years old. He's struggling to breathe. He's by the window, on the floor, bleeding. In the next room, there are six other people: three younger men are hiding behind three women. Now, some of the other soldiers told me that hiding behind women like this was a common al-Qaeda defensive technique. It's hard to say whether that's the case or whether it was a more generic Iraqi method to avoid getting shot during a raid. I really can't speak to that.

A couple of things that happened next are very interesting to me. Ray is in complete control of this situation. When he sees the old man on the floor, he does something that's very human. He orders a few of his men to take the old man's body and carry it out into the light where a medic can examine it. But just as they're carrying the body, he says, "Stop." Ray senses that this man is going to die before getting to the door, and he wants the man to die in peace, it seems, and so he orders his men put the old man down. Ray runs over to the body and, with the medic, stays with this man until he dies. There's another detail here that's very human, and very telling about the relationship between a squad leader and his subordinates. Two other soldiers start taking the women out of the building, and Ray again says, "Stop." He orders them to put some kind of drape over the women's heads so they don't see this old man—who might be their father, who might be their relative—suffering and about to die. And the soldiers comply.

The squad gets into its routine again. It gets back into its rhythm. There are some Iraqi army soldiers who had come with them, and there's some debate about whether killing the old man was the right thing to do. Corey Clagett, the soldier who Ray had invited into his squad, climbs up to a berm and says "Hey, there's another house over here, Sergeant G." So Ray gathers his men together, and—another key detail in this story—tells his men that, as they approach the house, they are not to shoot directly at it. He tells his men, "We're not gonna do that this time." Maybe the memory of the old man is still with him, I don't know. He says, "We're going to shoot at the dirt berm above the building's roof," and this is what the men do. They run toward this building. They're shooting. This building is like the previous one. There's a bony cow nearby eating its scrubby grass. There's a carpet drying in the sun. Maybe the residents were farmers, though the soldiers did not believe there was any real arable land. All these little details, I think, are important, as we can talk about them later, in trying to make a decision about what you're supposed to do in very trying circumstances with very limited amounts of time at your disposal.

As the men are shooting at the second house, a man comes out of it and he holds a two-year-old child, his daughter presumably, in front of his chest, and he's moving the girl around as a way to prevent himself from getting shot. I think this man's actions had a profound effect on Ray's unit. It's hard to say exactly. People who were there at the time spoke about how angry the man's use of this little girl had made them. A number of the soldiers talked about how they were thinking of their own children as he did this, and it seems to have been a very emotionally charged moment. Ray was yelling in Arabic, "Put that girl down! Put that girl down!" And finally the unit came down upon the man, clobbered him, and separated him from the girl. Two of the soldiers took the man inside his house and began beating him, and Ray—aware of this—allowed it to continue until a combat photographer came over the berm.

And what happens next is perhaps the most perplexing part of all this, and it's at the heart of this whole discussion. It's the heart of my piece. The unit goes back into its rhythm of routine. That second house is secured. Ray and his squad go back to the first house where the old man had been shot. And what happens next is a bit contested, because Ray says that basically he went back to the landing zone, and nothing really of significance occurred. The five other people in his squad, though, say differently. They say that he called a meeting, exclusive to the people in his squad, in that house. He brought everyone together into a circle. At first the mood didn't seem especially serious. He spoke in a tone that was more fraternal than commanding, and what he

said—the quote to me by someone who was there—was, "Hey, we're gonna do these guys."

What's interesting is that Ray here is referring not to the man who elicited all that anger, the guy with the baby girl, but to the three Iraqi men who they first encountered hiding behind the women. These three men—two of them were actually boys—were now tied at the wrists with zip ties, and blindfolded, just outside the first house. They were detainees. Ray leaves the huddle, and two of his soldiers, Corey Clagett and Bill Hunsacker—and Hunsacker, I should say, is another soldier who was, up until that point, extremely well respected within his unit. In fact, the day before Operation Iron Triangle he was told he was going to be promoted. He had every reason to do just the right thing and get out, because he was planning on getting married. He had leave coming up soon. He was going to go back home and find an apartment with his girlfriend. Anyway, Hunsaker and this other soldier, Corey Clagett, go out to the detainees. They cut their zip ties. They pull their blindfolds down. They tell them to run, and they shoot them.

They cut their zip ties. They pull their blindfolds down. They tell them to run, and they shoot them.

At the sound of gunshots—another very interesting detail—Ray comes around the corner. His face is pale. A number of people recall this. Two of the detainees are dead and one of them is dying. A soldier later testified that Ray said, "Put him out of his misery," and the soldier, thinking about his grandmother's strained breathing, basically shoots the man.

After that, the unit strives to do what it can to cover up the crime. Ray punches Corey Clagett in the face to make it seem like there had been a struggle and he cuts Bill Hunsacker in the arm. I think that he also scratches Bill in the face to make it seem as though the detainees had committed some act of violence during an escape. And of course that's important, because that would establish the Iraqis, if they were Iraqis, as combatants, not as detainees who had been murdered.

And really, that's my quick summary of the basics of the story, because out of this very perplexing set of events come all the other issues that we're going to talk about now. I'll just list a few themes to think about as we begin our discussion.

One is the rules of engagement. I didn't go into huge amounts of detail about that here, but the rules of engagement were not customary for these particular soldiers during this operation. Two: how should you run a counterinsurgency? When should soldiers use lethal force, and when not? The performance of Colonel Steele's men, and his willingness to use force, are still being debated in the army. And finally, even though it's not explained in any great detail in the piece, another theme involves command relationships. This case study has a lot to offer on that topic.

So that's my quick introduction. I'll make one other point. One reason why this case attracted so much attention is because the soldiers who committed the war crime, in their defense, alleged that a necessary part of this whole story—something that the military justice system had to consider when evaluating their guilt—was the actions of their brigade commander, Colonel Steele, a soldier seven rungs up the chain of command from a squad leader. I mentioned at the beginning of this conversation that Colonel Steele already had a very strong reputation in the military, and he quickly became very much a focus of the discussion surrounding this crime.

So that's why I began my research at Fort Campbell, where Colonel Steele trained his men and began to influence their behavior. It is also where Pete, of course, enters this story too.

One reason why this case attracted so much attention is because the soldiers who committed the war crime, in their defense, alleged that a necessary part of this whole story—something that the military justice system had to consider when evaluating their guilt—was the actions of their brigade commander, Colonel Steele, a soldier seven rungs up the chain of command from a squad leader.

Peter Hegseth. This is where I first met Colonel Steele and joined the unit. But before we begin, I want to thank George for having me, and I think you all see the seriousness with which Raffi has undertaken this particular set of circumstances. As a soldier, we usually inherently mistrust guys like Raffi from the *New Yorker.* We don't want them over there telling stories about us, but it's different when you've got a guy like him who worked so hard through this process to talk to every possible person from every possible angle and under-

stand every complexity. Because it's very easy for us here, or folks reading the newspaper, to make a snap judgment about a guy like Colonel Mike Steele or Captain [Daniel] Hart or others and say, "You know what? What they did was wrong." What Raffi did is capture the complexities and the shades of gray and the nuances. Of course, I'm not talking about what happened in Iron Triangle and what happened to those detainees. Of course that's wrong. Nobody's here to defend that. But I'm talking about the complexities of the situation and the rules of engagement and the pressures that these individual corporals and sergeants and lieutenants are under when they're deciding whether or not to pull the trigger. So I just respect a great deal what Raffi did, and I think he wrote a very fair piece from all perspectives to all entities involved. But I was a platoon leader within Charlie Company for the first six months. I was not in Charlie Company when these incidents occurred, but I know most of the leadership within Charlie Company very well. I still remain in very close contact with guys like First Sergeant Eric Geressy, who's now a Sergeant Major. I was intimately involved with a lot of people in the article.

I joined Charlie Company at Fort Campbell in an interesting set of circumstances—only a couple of weeks before our company, battalion, and my platoon deployed. And one of my first interactions was sitting in a large theater as a young lieutenant with a platoon of 40 men and listening to Colonel Steele give a speech. Imagine sitting in that seat. You're about to command 40 men into harm's way. You read what everyone else reads in the *New York Times,* but your commander is telling you that you're going into the most hostile part of the country. Violence is up, and you need to be aggressive, and if you look at Colonel Steele's background, having served in Mogadishu, having lost 18 men, what he took from that was that his men weren't prepared to commit violence on the enemy sufficiently. So all of his training and everything he instilled in his men was to make sure when they came to that decision point, they were prepared to pull the trigger on the enemy before the enemy pulled the trigger on them.

There was nothing malicious about what he was trying to instill in his men. The question is: Did some of that go a bit too far? In my particular company there was a kill board where tallies were made of enemies, enemy killed, where at some points there were innocents included on the board. There are these shades of gray where when you've got platoon leaders and sergeants and others making decisions, and they're beginning to wonder, "Am I going too far? Am I not going too far?"

And so the question arises of rules of engagement, which basically govern when indeed we are to pull the trigger. What justifies American soldiers pulling the trigger or engaging the enemy in any particular circumstance? Those become very weighty questions, and Colonel Steele had a much different perspective on rules of engagement than most of the Army did at that point. Just to flesh it out in two particular anecdotes, before we get into any other particulars about this case: When we arrived in Baghdad at FOB [Forward Operating Base] Falcon, I had been told through Colonel Steele and others that the Rakkasans don't fire warning shots. A warning shot is when a vehicle is approaching you, or someone is approaching you, and you're not quite sure if they're enemy; rather than shoot them, you shoot into the ground or the air or somewhere else to warn them and let them know they're about to be in imminent danger and could be in danger of being killed. This makes sense as you think about it, but cops don't use it because in urban areas, if you fire a warning shot in the wrong direction you could hit an innocent. And that was Colonel Steele's perspective: "Hey, we're not firing warning shots. It's not something we should be doing. You should only be engaging somebody if you believe that they're a threat to you." So a warning shot to Colonel Steele is when you've put two in the chest and one in the head to his buddy. Now, he knows that he had better not advance any farther. I mean, Colonel Steele is a hard-charging guy, and he wants to protect his men, and that's the guidance that we've been given: "We're gonna be aggressive when confronted with threats."

We showed up in Iraq and got a briefing from a JAG [Judge Advocate General] officer, and, you know, infantrymen are inherently skeptical of anyone involved in the legal field, including JAG officers. Apologies to anyone out here who's a JAG officer. They're great, but this particular officer had been in Baghdad for a while and gave a briefing to my platoon and said, "Here are a couple of different scenarios about rules of engagement, vignettes, that we'll provide for you. OK, you see a man running into the street. He's got an RPG, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, and he steps out but he's not pointing it at you. Is he an imminent threat?" And all my guys are like, "Oh, hell yes!" You know, "Absolutely." And I'm sitting there saying, "Yes." And he says, "No, he's not. Now. And you cannot engage him. But the minute he turns that RPG and points it at you, now he's become an imminent threat to you, and you can engage him." And I remember all my guys just sitting here saying, "What?" I mean, what have we been taught for the last year? And this is totally contradictory to anything I've been hearing from my command. And if you're

a sergeant or a lieutenant or anyone else, most of the information you're getting, you're relying on your chain of command, so if it's coming from your chain of command, you're assuming that indeed that's army-wide or that's the policy of the military. Well, at some particular point, Colonel Steele had made a decision that they want to loosen the rules of engagement for our brigade vis-à-vis the rest of the army in a particular sense, so the rest of the army was dealing with a set of rules of engagement that were much more restrictive than the Rakkasan's were in this scenario. You can make value judgments one way or another, but that was the fact.

So we get to Baghdad and they're saying, "We've been told we don't fire warning shots, but they're telling us that we can't even shoot at a guy with an RPG in the street unless he's pointing at us." So I'm in a situation as a platoon leader where I pull my platoon together after that briefing, and I said, "What that JAG officer said is bleepity-bleep. Not true, and we're not gonna do that. If you see a guy with an RPG, you'd better engage that guy 'cause he's not friendly to us. But you're also in an environment where the enemy doesn't wear uniforms, and you've got different groups and different complexities, so you've gotta understand the situation, but what he said isn't what we do." So that's at one extreme. The army is sort of saying, "Be careful when you pull the trigger," and I'm saying, "Don't necessarily go all the way in that direction."

And if you're a sergeant or a lieutenant or anyone else, most of the information you're getting, you're relying on your chain of command, so if it's coming from your chain of command, you're assuming that indeed that's army-wide or that's the policy of the military.

But the night before the first operation, my platoon was going to hit a night al-Qaeda target, a mortar team that had been deemed to be an al-Qaeda target, but we weren't quite sure. The intelligence was pretty good, and we were going to go in, kick down the door, and find who we had to find. And the rules of engagement pertaining to our particular unit were, as we had trained on, kick the door down, and you're ready to pull the trigger on any military-aged male in that house. *Military-age male* is the term for those who are most apt to be insurgents, any age from 15 to 45. Military-age male.

George H. Gilliam, Raffi Khatchadourian, and Peter Hegseth, Miller Center of Public Affairs, November 6, 2009

I don't even know the exact parameters, but be prepared to pull the trigger at any moment. So I went around having not conducted a real on-the-ground mission yet—it was my first one—to other platoon leaders that had been there for a while, and they said, "Wait, wait, you're gonna pull the trigger on every military-age male when you enter that house? Is this your guidance?" And I remember thinking "Yes." Then, as we were having these conversations, they said, "That's not what happens around here, and if you do that, your guys are going to be pulling the trigger on a lot of people that they shouldn't be pulling the trigger on." And that goes to counterinsurgency, and the counterproductive nature of when you kill civilians in this environment, and what it actually does to your mission. That is, you're hurting yourself a lot more than you're helping yourself even if you kill five bad guys, but if you kill two innocents, you've set yourself back more than you've moved forward, and that gets into the larger questions of counterinsurgency.

But in this particular instance, I went to my company commander and said, "Sir, I don't think what we've trained on is necessarily sufficient, or goes too

far than what this actual environment requires." And I remember going on that mission and nothing went down, thankfully. We scaled back the rules of engagement, but I remember going on that mission so weighted myself. I've got a couple of potential lieutenants in the audience here. Don't ever be the first guy in the door, which is what I ended up doing in that house because I wanted to bear the burden. When I'm going in I don't know if this is going be hostile or not hostile, but I guess I should probably make the decision if this is my platoon rather than thrust it on a young corporal or specialist or private who's going to kick that door down and have to make that decision. And thankfully, the folks that we were looking for weren't there. But we hid, and they came, and we got them, and it was a whole different situation but it didn't require the level of firepower that we had been trained on.

So all of this brings you toward Operation Iron Triangle, and—minus the very particular atrocities that occurred, because those are a no-brainer—the cover-up that occurred, clearly wrong, and the army has taken that on, but otherwise, you've got platoons and a company here, and a particular battalion in Samarra that was dealing under a much more aggressive set of rules of engagement in some senses than their environment always required, and so that meant that they were going up to the line of the rules of engagement and sometimes crossing it and sometimes not. And we can get into some of the details about that, but I just appreciate the extent to which Raffi has given a fair hearing on this case. If anybody hasn't read the article, please do. I think it does a good job spelling out what occurred.

Raffi Khatchadourian. I just want to add, if you don't mind, one point. From a legal perspective, the removal of warning shots was actually considered a restriction, a tightening of the rules of engagement, and I'll just explain very briefly why so that there isn't a perception that Colonel Steele just came up with some sort of illegal maneuver when he did this, because he didn't. Basically, as I understand it, soldiers have, from a legal point of view, essentially three possible coercive reactions to a given situation when they're firing their weapon. They can fire a warning a shot. They can fire what's called a disabling shot; for instance, when a vehicle is coming toward you, you can put a bullet into the engine block, and you've disabled that vehicle. And then, of course, they can fire a lethal shot.

From a legal perspective, the conditions that are required for any of these three reactions are potentially lethal and so by removing the warning shots,

Colonel Steele and the brigade staff were able to restrict the number of options available to soldiers. What's interesting is that in the summer after Operation Iron Triangle occurred, there was a massive command climate investigation conducted by a general of the 101st Airborne Division. What the officer learned, actually, was that despite Colonel Steele's command guidance on the use of warning shots, there was not a uniform response to this order throughout his brigade. Some soldiers were like, "I'm gonna use warning shots. I just cannot try to put a bullet into a vehicle."

Peter Hegseth. And that's what our platoon did. I mean, my guidance at the platoon level to my platoon—no disrespect to Colonel Steele or others, because we followed orders—was, "Gentlemen, this is too complex of an environment to always understand whether it is indeed a lethal threat, and if you need to fire a warning shot, you'd better fire a warning shot, because it's late. It's dark. Things are confusing. A vehicle is approaching, and the driver could have driven for six hours and doesn't see our roadblock. That doesn't mean he's a suicide bomber trying to run into our roadblock, but at the same time he very well could be, so you'd better use the same escalation of force." And the term we use is *escalation of force*. First it's a warning shot, then it's a disabling shot, and then a lethal shot.

Now, sometimes you don't have the time to make that kind of decision. So with my guys, they understood that "If you feel threatened, then you need to engage." That's the nature of the way that our enemy fights us, but if we have an opportunity to escalate and do so responsibly—you're not going to do it in a crowded market, where those shots are going to be flying all over the place—then I think it does make sense to fire warning shots. There were many instances where we did just that, and because we did that, you save dozens of lives in any particular situation.

Raffi Khatchadourian. Another interesting fact about this unit—one that I mentioned at the end of this story—is that roughly at about the time when Colonel Steele's brigade arrived in Iraq in 2005, and for the duration of 2006, Multi-National Corps-Iraq had instated basically a program to track the number of these escalation of force incidents. So this put a burden on basically all the units operating in Iraq, as I understand it, to gather data on the number of times that they were occurring and to submit them to the army's command in Baghdad. For what it's worth, it appears that the number of escalation-of-force incidents for Colonel Steele's unit was at about the median when measured

against the data from every other brigade in Iraq at the time. It's just an interesting statistic that I thought I would share since we're on that topic.

George H. Gilliam. Before we get into dialogue with our audience, I'd like to point out that Colonel Steele's speech that he apparently gave fairly regularly to those who were departing for combat is available on YouTube. You refer, Raffi, in your discussion of the rules of engagement, to three terms that it might be useful for either you or Pete to define briefly before we start with audience questions. What is a conduct-based target, what is a status-based target, and what does the term *positively identify* mean? How much ambiguity is there in that term?

Raffi Khatchadourian. Those are all terms that obviously I learned while researching this piece. The rules of engagement are largely secret, so it took a lot of effort to figure out precisely what they were at the time. They also, by the way, in their broad strokes, are fairly static, but in their nuances, they are adjusted over time in ways that sometimes are consequential.

I'll give a very brief answer to the question. A "conduct-based target" is the kind of target that is someone who you can attack—presumably not even just a person; a vehicle, perhaps—based on its actions. The example that I use in the piece is if a cabdriver approaches a checkpoint and pulls out a gun and starts firing at the checkpoint, that person's conduct suddenly puts him into a new category from the legal point of view. He is now acting as a combatant, and you can engage him.

Peter Hegseth. Or if you see two militants firing at you and they go into a building, that now becomes a conduct-based target and you can drop a bomb on the building, because the guys that have gone in there have just attacked you.

Raffi Khatchadourian. I'll just add something about intent, which is a much more difficult thing to register. If someone displays hostile intent—and, again, the example I use in the piece is if that same cabdriver doesn't have a weapon but is driving at 65 miles an hour straight into a checkpoint, you have to make a decision. Is this a suicide bomber in a vehicle-borne IED [improvised explosive device]? Is this just a drunk driver who doesn't know what he's doing? Is he not reading the sign? So a number of very quick and very difficult decisions have to be made to decide whether this is a conduct-based target because of the person's intent. And the army makes a lot of effort to scrutinize all of these things. It's not just left up to you in the end. These things are evaluated after the fact.

One more thing, before we go on to status-based targets, is that probably 95% of the time soldiers in Iraq are dealing with conduct-based targets when they are firing their weapons. The status-based targeting is used for a much more specialized situation, and why don't you take it.

Peter Hegseth. In fact, I would say *status-based rules of engagement* was a term I had not heard until I got to Samarra. I mean, we didn't really even talk about it in Baghdad before we went to Samarra. It was a new concept in a sense. The idea that Raffi uses as well in the piece is like in World War II, if you saw an SS officer drinking coffee at a cafe, you could shoot him, even though he's not shooting back at you or putting in a bomb or anything like that. The same idea applies, but it's on a battlefield where the enemy doesn't wear uniforms, but he still lives and works among the population, so why should he have free rein? Only if he's shooting at you can you shoot back at him? Otherwise he could do what he wants. So what you need in a status-based rules of engagement environment are two things: You need positive ID [identification]. You need intelligence that he is indeed a member of an insurgent group, and that needs to be from two independent sources. I may miss some of the details here, but these are the broad strokes. A couple of independent sources who can identify that he is a member of an insurgent group or a member in that kind of activity. The second piece is that you must positively identify that person before he is engaged. So for the most part, Special Forces use it for night raids. It's not something that's normally used by conventional troops as much. It's usually Special Forces in raids, or with snipers. This was used very effectively in Samarra at the battalion level with battalion snipers in the city. Think about it this way: You've got a list of a couple of insurgents who you know are bad guys. You've got photos of them or an informant right next to you, and a sniper is in a tall building at a major intersection. So when Joe Insurgent is filling up his car with gas, he gets a round in the head, and he's an enemy just like anyone else. Why does he deserve free rein among the population?

You can imagine the psychological effect of such a policy when employed correctly at that level. So now insurgents think they're on a list. They don't know where our snipers are, and they don't believe they can even effectively live and work among the population. We had a couple of insurgents come to the [Samarra] City Council President, who we worked with very closely, begging for amnesty. They said, "We're on the list. I know I'm on the list. I don't want to be engaged," when in fact the list was, like, this long. It was perhaps four people,

but everybody who was involved begins to think, "Well, they must know who I am, and what can I do?" So it has a very strong psychological effect. However, what Charlie Company ended up doing, and some other units as well, was take it to a very personal level. So now, if we know someone's an insurgent—and there's some of this in the article and there's more that we could really flesh out about this—then can you kick down his door, identify him, and shoot him from two feet away. Is that a question of proximity? It feels OK when it's a sniper, but does it not feel OK when he's two feet away? What if he's holding a kid up in front him, and you've got to move the kid and then what? There are many different questions about when are you crossing this line between when they've surrendered or when they haven't surrendered, and so status-based rules of engagement worked well on paper, but how you translate it down to the unit level, you need to be very specific and very particular about what qualifies. And I think in some instances within our battalion, it wasn't always as well defined as it could be; therefore, you get rules of engagement issues where, you know, platoon leaders or company commanders are not quite sure exactly what that guidance is, and they are inherently aggressive, wanting to protect their men, who are under fire on a daily basis from an unknown enemy. They've got intelligence, but they're being told it might not be good enough, and they want to act on it out of the safety of their own men and getting rid of the insurgency.

So it can get very complex, and then to positively identify the enemy it can be very ambiguous and there are several different situations. But usually you're told as a soldier or a marine not to fire on anything unless you've positively identified it as a hostile threat or a hostile target; so you're usually not supposed to fire into a building because you see something moving. But in that particular situation, they'd been told that everyone on that island was affiliated with al-Qaeda so the normal rules of engagement of positively identifying didn't necessarily apply because, they were told, it was automatically a hostile target. So you can begin to put together how these rules of engagement in different situations and different scenarios start to change, and your soldiers begin to question, "Should I pull the trigger? Is he hostile?" And he's in an unfamiliar place, where he doesn't speak the language. This doesn't justify a single atrocity that's committed, but it begins to put the picture together for you of how complex that environment really is.

Question. I am shocked that you go into active combat, about to be killed and sent home in a box, and you have a wife and three kids at home waiting for you, and what you're telling me is that the first thing you think of is not survival, but the rules of engagement. I think that's noble theoretically, but it really shocks me, and I hope we're not fighting our wars that way. Thank you.

Peter Hegseth. That's a very important question, and a very difficult one, and you're absolutely right. And as the war has gone along in Iraq and elsewhere, sometimes you get the lawyers involved and it becomes much more complex, and that gunner at the top of the Humvee is thinking twice before he shoots, and that's a problem. At the same time, the lines are so blurred, and it's such a confusing environment, and if you're fighting a counterinsurgency—and this is what we have finally learned after years of messing it up in Iraq, and we'll hopefully get right in Afghanistan—well, in fighting a counterinsurgency, you have to be nuanced. In some ways and in some environments, you have to put troops in a little bit more of a riskier situation in order to get the payoff. To protect the population, you can't be on the big bases. You have to be among the population, living with them and patrolling with them, but when you do that, you inherently make your troops more vulnerable. But the payoff on the back end in a counterinsurgency is that the environment improves, the level of access rises, violence drops, and your troops are thereby more safe. It's counterintuitive in that sense, but that's where the rules of engagement blend into the mission, and counterinsurgency, counterterrorism. I don't have a great answer for you, but usually the less the lawyers can get involved, the better.

Question. Did our soldiers go into Iraq with basically no knowledge of the country or its people? Did Colonel Steele at any time train in Israel, to your knowledge? And lastly, who issued the orders or instructions that the people on the island were to be considered enemy combatants regardless?

Peter Hegseth. I would say there was very limited Arabic language/cultural awareness training in our particular unit. I don't think that was army-wide. I think that was indicative of the command climate, in a sense. Our job was to go over there and be soldiers, not necessarily cultural ambassadors. I think the army has learned and changed that, and at this point is putting much more emphasis on language training and cultural awareness so that we're not making the kind of cultural mistakes in setting ourselves backwards.

Raffi Khatchadourian. I'll just very quickly touch on two other points. I don't believe that Colonel Steele has ever served or done training in Israel, but it's not something I could say with any certainty. As to your third question, about the orders in terms of who made the determination that the people on the island were combatants, I'm going to have to unfortunately say that this is an

extremely complicated discussion that occurred at a variety of levels of command, and I'm just going to ask you to take a look at the piece. I'm sorry; it's not a rewarding answer, but in the time remaining, it's too complex to get into right now.

Question. Thank you, this is most illuminating, and I'm a lawyer. I have to say that in this discussion I'm reminded of the old FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] street agent aphorism: "I'd rather be tried by nine than carried by six," and it strikes me that you bear an enormous burden if you have to think and make these determinations on the battlefield. I'm overwhelmed by this. I believe in rules of engagement, but when your adrenaline is pumping, and you're coming into an area that you don't know, how do you, Pete, as an officer, deal with this particular situation? Your troops are not lawyers. Your troops want to survive. The troops don't want to kill in cold blood but, I mean, they're looking at this thing from the standpoint of survival. It's a very scary thing.

Peter Hegseth. It is, and the first thing you can do as a leader at any level is back up your men and tell them, "I'm giving you my guidance, and at the end of the day, I'm going to back up your judgment on the ground at that moment, provided you're acting in good faith. And we're not talking about atrocities committed of innocents, but if you told me you were threatened, and you had to pull that trigger, then you were threatened, and you pulled that trigger for the right reason." And that came all the way from the top. And Colonel Steele, to his great credit, was stalwart on that. He said, "You know what, I'm gonna give you these rules of engagement, and when you use them, I'm gonna back you up to the tilt." Maybe to a fault at times, but he really believed, "If we're gonna be out here in this hostile environment, and I'm gonna give you these rules of engagement, then I'm gonna stand behind you." So it came to leadership standing behind their men and, thankfully, I think the army does give the benefit of the doubt in very serious ways to that guy on the ground who's pulling that trigger and saying what he saw is what he saw. He's been trained on these rules of engagement, on when and where and why, and if he's pulled it, it's most likely because he had a very good reason to do so. So I agree with you, but for the most part, the command structure is set up to support that war fighter, even if there are a ton of regulations on top of it.

Raffi Khatchadourian. There are two phrases that come to mind. One is that Colonel Steele continually told his officers to "point the arrow downward," which implied exactly what you said: focus on the men beneath you in the

Peter Hegseth
Miller Center of Public Affairs
November 6, 2009

chain of command, not the officers above you. The other phrase was something that a company commander shared with me, which is the "Steele Umbrella," which expresses the sense that Colonel Steele wanted an aggressive unit, but that if things went wrong, and there were legitimate judgment calls—again, I want to separate this from a war crime—if, in a moment of difficulty and confusion, something went wrong, soldiers, I think, were very much aware of that Steele Umbrella.

Peter Hegseth. That is a wonderful point, because the last thing you want as a soldier at any level is a commander who you fear at the end of the day might throw you under the bus if you make a wrong decision, and put his political career first. Colonel Steele always put his men first, and you can disagree with him on a lot of things—and I did in principle on counterinsurgency and the way we approached some things on the ground—but Colonel Steele put his men first, and he saw their welfare as his top priority.

Question. I'm a second lieutenant, commissioned this May, and in the position of very likely being an infantry platoon leader some time in the near future. We talked a lot about the fact that Colonel Steele has an excellent military bearing and the fact that he was extremely intent on rigorously training and preparing his men for the fight that he saw coming. What is the specific connection between that sort of command rhetoric that he imbued the unit with—both from your perspective as an individual in the unit at that time and from your perspective, Raffi, in research—that fed into what is reasonably considered, and I think very clearly, a war crime? I'm not completely sure. We've talked a lot about the ROE [rules of engagement] and how difficult that situation is, and that's something I can't even pretend to understand yet, but how, specifically, did that command environment—and certainly, we saw the speech on YouTube, where Colonel Steele is certainly not advocating that type of war crime?

Peter Hegseth. No.

Question. What happened? How do we draw the connection, if there is one, between that command environment and the atrocity that happened on the ground?

Peter Hegseth. I'll give you my perspective, and then I think Raffi can give you a better perspective from the entire brigade level, because I was down at the company and battalion level. The way that it could have done that is, in listening to that speech and being at Fort Campbell before we deployed, if I was in a media void and wasn't reading what was going on in Iraq I would have thought we were going to—like, the beaches of Normandy—an all-out conventional fight against that sort of enemy. So in that sense, it was very black and white. If you listened to that speech or elsewhere, it was the enemy, and we're going to go kill him; I understand that. But at the same time, there are all these other civilians, and there's a world over there, and nobody wears uniforms. What about that? What do we do when we go into the market and we can't see the enemy? There wasn't a whole lot of preparation. I wasn't there the whole time. I want to emphasize that I only joined my platoon about three or four weeks before we left, but I got the impression that this was a conventional fight that could be solved for the most part through lethal means. And that was emphasized over and over and over again, and not as much on the counterinsurgency piece; that wasn't talked about very much. So as a platoon leader or a sergeant or others, they were going in by default addressing most scenarios with lethality or with a kinetic approach. I don't think enough time was spent on the nuance, on the cultural understanding, on the fact that you can't win a counterinsurgency purely with bullets, so nothing he said was out of line in that sense. There was just too much emphasis on the conventional piece of the fight in Iraq in 2005.

Raffi Khatchadourian. You're essentially asking, I think, is Colonel Steele responsible? Was there a direct connection between the rhetoric and the war crime? And implicit in that is a question of responsibility, because if you establish that there is a direct connection then you would have to say that Colonel Steele bears some responsibility. That question is central to my piece. That's what I'm hoping the reader is going to wrestle with after going through 15 thousand words, to try to make that assessment. That's the central question. In fact, it's just under the title, so let's leave it at that.

George H. Gilliam. Captain Pete Hegseth and Raffi Khatchadourian have really helped us untangle very complicated and subtle questions and given us additional reasons to respect the military and what they're confronting. They have also given us additional reasons to respect the integrity of a journalist like Raffi Khatchadourian. Thank you.

The Fourth Star: Four Generals *and the* Epic Struggle *for the* Future *of the* United States Army

Greg Jaffe

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Today we welcome Greg Jaffe, the Pentagon correspondent for the *Washington Post* and the author, along with David Cloud, of *The Fourth Star: Four Generals and the Epic Struggle for the Future of the United States Army,* which he will be discussing. Prior to his position at the *Washington Post,* he was a reporter with the *Wall Street Journal,* where he covered the Pentagon beginning in early 2000. A graduate of Williams College and Columbia University, Jaffe has made numerous trips to Afghanistan and Iraq since 2003 and he's embedded with troops at all levels within the military. He's been widely recognized for his work, including a Pulitzer Prize in 2000 for a series on defense spending. In 2002 and 2005 he was awarded the Raymond Clapper Award for Washington coverage. He also won the Gerald Ford Award in 2002, and just this past week it was announced that he is the recipient of another Ford Award for distinguished reporting on national defense for his coverage of Afghanistan. We congratulate him for that. This forum is part of the Miller Center series on U.S. military preparedness. Please welcome Greg Jaffe.

Greg Jaffe. Thank you very much for having me. I'm sorry my colleague David Cloud couldn't be with us. He works for the *Los Angeles Times* these days. I always feel badly talking about the book without him because it was very much of a group effort.

I recently returned from Afghanistan so I'm happy to answer questions about that as well. I'll talk about the book and then pivot toward the end to talk about Afghanistan. The book is about four generals—Generals [John P.] Abizaid, [George W., Jr.] Casey, [David] Petraeus, and [Peter W.] Chiarelli—who played a critical role in the Iraq War. We follow their lives from 1970 through today, and try to tell the army's story and how the army changes, how it embraces new ideas, and why it thinks the way it does through the lives of these four men. At one point I think David and I, like all new authors, were

totally lost in this book. We had budgeted a year to complete it and we had figured it would take about a month or two to do their early lives, the 1970 to 2000 period.

Unfortunately, that two months ended up being four or five months and we had boxes and boxes full of information and interviews and no sense of what they were about or what they added up to. We were really starting to panic. Then one day David took out a piece of paper and wrote the four generals' names in giant block letters and in a frustrated sort of way said, "OK, what's the key moment in each one of these guys' early lives?" And we started with one key moment for each of the four generals, and over time we added more but each of those key defining moments really became the anchor of the book. I think they helped us understand why these generals did what they did when they got to Iraq, why they saw the war the way they saw it. I think it helped us make some sense of the army, how it thinks, and how it changes.

So I'm going to run through the four key moments that we chose. And I should say we picked them in consultation with the four generals. We didn't randomly select them; they came out of interviews. And then I'll explain how it affected the way they fought in Iraq.

The first general, the oldest of the four, is George Casey. He was the son of the most senior general killed in Vietnam. Casey's father was killed in the summer of 1970 as he was leading the U.S. incursion into Cambodia. He was a two-star general at the time. Young George Casey tells a very moving story of the last time he saw his dad. It was April 1970 and George, his dad, and his father were driving from their home in Arlington, Virginia, near the Pentagon to put Casey's dad on a plane that would take him to Vietnam for the last time. George, the younger Casey, was finishing up at Georgetown University, a campus that was racked with anti-Vietnam protests. In fact, they called senior exams, final exams his senior year, largely in protest of the incursion into Cambodia that his father was leading.

Anyway, George had just asked his long-time girlfriend Sheila to marry him and he announced the engagement to his parents as they were speeding down the BW Parkway, the Baltimore Washington Parkway, to put his dad on this plane. They reached the airport and George and his mother watched his father walk down the jetway to the plane to begin his journey back to Vietnam. It was his father's third Vietnam tour. His father had also done a tour in Korea, where he'd won the Silver Star for leading troops at Heartbreak Ridge.

Anyway, George turns to his mother as his dad's walking down the jetway and says to her, "You've done this so much it must get easier." And his mother had always remained stoic for her children, especially when their father was heading out to war, and this is one of those few times where she didn't hide her anguish and she said, "No, George, it just gets tougher." And that's a moment that never leaves Casey, and I think it affects how he fights in Iraq. Casey goes on from there to join an army that's broken and defeated from Vietnam, and I think this broken and defeated army becomes a refuge for him. He throws himself into it and turns out to be a terrific soldier.

Next, I'd like to talk about John Abizaid. Abizaid grows up in a tiny little town in Colville, California. There are 24 kids in his senior class. He goes to West Point, comes back, marries his high school sweetheart, Kathy Abizaid, who is also from this little town, and has never been outside the United States. Eight years later they both learn Arabic and he moves with his pregnant wife and three-year-old daughter to Amman, Jordan, where he enrolls at the University of Jordan. It's interesting that the State Department at that point doesn't want him to go because they think a young captain there who doesn't know anything about the region and his pregnant wife are just going to be trouble. So they advise them that it's too dangerous and that he shouldn't go, but he goes anyway. He actually has almost no interaction with the embassy. They live completely immersed in Amman, which was this dusty little backwater town back then. It's not the city we know today.

Abizaid studies Islamic history and he writes these wonderful letters home describing what he's going through. In one of them he writes of his Islamic history class: "It's quite a surprise for the Arabs to see an American taking a course with them in Arabic, and they will always marvel at my ability to understand what's going on in class. If they were ever able to look beneath my confident expression they would see the stark terror of a student who understands much less than they think he does." He and Kathy befriend a Bedouin sheik who lives on the outskirts of Amman. They live in this sprawling complex without electricity or water. Kathy writes in one of her letters home—which actually are a good bit better than her husband's—that one evening the sheik and his brood, about 13 relatives, show up in their small basement apartment that has no windows and that Abizaid had dubbed the "fuehrer bunker." Anyway, they come and announce that they've come to bathe all 13 of them, because they don't have running water, and one of their relatives was coming from the United States and she was used to running

water. So they cycle through their bathroom over the course of many hours and Kathy serves them Arabic coffee and tea; she makes a big dinner for them and they counsel her over her inability to make rice the proper way.

In 1983 he sees his first suicide bomber and he witnesses his first roadside bombs. We think roadside bombs were somehow invented in Iraq in 2003. The fact is, John Abizaid was experiencing them in 1983. He witnesses the rise of Hezbollah in response to the Israeli occupation, and I think he sees firsthand the harm and damage that a group of lightly armed rebels can do to a modern Western army.

Abizaid and Kathy befriend their neighbors and fellow students at the university. During their first months they're very much a curiosity for the people around them who have never had contact with an American family, particularly a U.S. military officer that moves in among them. On their last night Kathy describes a tearful goodbye at their apartment with one of their closest friends, a woman named Asma Ali and her husband. I'll just quote from a letter quickly. Kathy writes, "Asma was playing with the baby and crying." She's referring to her daughter that was born when she was over there. "I found myself crying too. In a country where families live in the same village for centuries, the departure, perhaps permanent, of a friend was so much of a loss. We both felt that then."

A few years later, Abizaid is back in the Middle East as a UN [United Nations] observer in southern Lebanon and he's watching the Israelis fight a fierce insurgency. It's an emotional thing for Abizaid, who's of Lebanese descent, and I think finds himself somewhat disgusted with both the Lebanese and the Israelis. In 1983 he sees his first suicide bomber and he witnesses his first roadside bombs. We think roadside bombs were somehow invented in Iraq in 2003. The fact is, John Abizaid was experiencing them in 1983. He witnesses the rise of Hezbollah in response to the Israeli occupation, and I think he sees firsthand the harm and damage that a group of lightly armed rebels can do to a modern Western army. At the time his army is preparing for a big war in Germany, and I think he has a premonition that the war that he's watching in Lebanon is a war of the future and that his army is not going to be prepared to fight it.

David Petraeus is obviously the most famous of the four generals. He's certainly the most fanatically ambitious of the group. Everything is a competition to young Dave Petraeus, and I think he drives some of the fellow officers and sergeants who work with him as a young officer completely batty. David Cloud and I joke, and this is a little bit of an overstatement, but to understand a young Dave Petraeus, picture him at the motor pool in sleepy Fort Stewart, Georgia, and he's dressed in neatly pressed coveralls with a megaphone and a maintenance manual in front of him, reciting the step-by-step instructions for greasing an axle or changing an oil filter to a bunch of sergeants who think they know how to do it better than he does. Something really funny happens to Dave Petraeus at Fort Stewart. He went there because he was eager to join the Rangers, who are considered an elite infantry unit. Instead, he ends up as the aide to Major General John Galvin, who is a bookish, stubborn, and somewhat contrarian officer. Galvin's a little bit out of shape. He tells Petraeus he likes to run at the back of the pack in formation runs. Petraeus, in case you are curious, is adamantly a front of the pack kind of guy. And Galvin tells Petraeus that you learn more in the back of the pack because you can watch everybody in front of you. Petraeus wants his mentor to look the part of the general so he hides Galvin's candy bars and becomes a little obsessed with buffing up his image.

But Galvin, I think, changes Petraeus a lot more than Petraeus changes Galvin. Galvin pushes Petraeus to go to graduate school at Princeton and then to teach at West Point. And he teaches at a place called the Department of Social Sciences [at the United States Military Academy at West Point], which is known as SOSH, and I think SOSH is really the defining moment in Dave Petraeus' life. I like to say that from the outside the army looks like this big, homogenous, green blob, but in reality it's a collection of tribes and subtribes that compete for power and influence. I sometimes joke with army officers that it's not that different from Afghanistan. And most of the tribes in the army, as you would expect, are built around major weapons systems: there's aviation, artillery, infantry, tanks, armor. SOSH is interesting because it's one of the few disciplines,

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one of the few subtribes, that's not built around some aspect of warfare. The young instructors in SOSH are sent to the country's best universities and then they come back and teach cadets at West Point in international relations, economics, politics, and things of that nature. And the guys in SOSH see themselves as intellectuals, or as close as you can get to being an intellectual in an institution with a fairly deep anti-intellectual bent, which is the army.

There are two kinds of officers in SOSH. This is a little bit of an oversimplification but I think it is largely true. There are the generals in waiting, guys like Petraeus, and then I think there are heretics or dissidents who poke and prod the institution. And it's the interaction between those two groups that makes SOSH really special and different and interesting. During Petraeus' time at SOSH, he's finishing his doctoral dissertation on the lessons of the Vietnam War; it's a painful subject for the army in the 1980s and I think one that held little interest, surprisingly, for most army officers. But in SOSH they debate it incessantly and passionately. And Petraeus writes this dissertation largely the last couple of chapters, which I think are the most interesting while he's at SOSH that criticizes the prevailing view in the army that the military should be committed only to these big wars where it can use overwhelming force to achieve a quick, decisive victory. Years later this will come to epitomize the Powell doctrine. I think Petraeus' belief was that sooner or later the army was going to be forced to fight a protracted conflict in which its enemies would try to blend in with the people, as the Vietcong had done, and that these wars couldn't be won just with firepower but through a mastery of politics and economics, culture and religion. I think the message that Petraeus absorbs at SOSH and that he carries with him through most of his career is that you don't get to choose your wars and you better be ready to fight these types of insurgencies.

The last of our four generals is Pete Chiarelli. I think he's the least well known. In the army, high-flying officers get promoted to what's called "below the zone." That means you get promoted ahead of your peers. Chiarelli is perhaps the only four-star general in the army today, maybe one of the few four stars ever, who never manages to secure an early promotion. He's never below the zone. And it's a point of pride for him. Like Petraeus, I think the defining moment for Chiarelli's career comes at SOSH, in the Department of Social Sciences, where he teaches as well. But he has a very different SOSH experience than Petraeus. Petraeus spends only two years at SOSH. Most officers spend at minimum of three years teaching cadets there. Petraeus gets

snapped up early by one of his four-star surrogate fathers, again General Galvin, who is at this point the head of the U.S. European campaign, and he pulls him out of there after only two years. Instead of the normal three years, Chiarelli spends four years at SOSH. He hopes that staying an extra year would allow him to be competitive for a teaching position there, which he doesn't get. Interestingly, if he did get it, he would have stayed the rest of his career at SOSH and would have retired as a colonel. Instead, the SOSH department kicks him back out into the regular army.

And it's interesting that his time at SOSH, the four years he spends there, nearly ends his career. Chiarelli is part of the SOSH tribe but his other tribe is the armor tribe. He's a tank officer. And his other tribe, the armor tribe, I think saw his time at SOSH as a dilettantish diversion from real soldiering. His assignment officer said he was so disgusted by the time that Chiarelli had spent in academia that he was going to take his personnel folder, which had his little name right there, and turn it upside down because he couldn't bear the thought of looking at Chiarelli's name anymore. It was sort of the equivalent of a pox on your family. Chiarelli actually returns to the army's good graces by winning this thing called the Canadian Army Trophy, which is this big Cold War tank competition that took place in Germany. And we had the best tanks in the world, the most expensive tanks in the world—the M1 tank at that point—and we couldn't win. Every year we'd lose to the Germans, the Dutch, the French, and it was driving the army—and Congress, who was footing the bill for this tank—completely batty. And Chiarelli really wills a group of soldiers to win this competition. I don't think it has anything to do with how good a fighter or how good a commander he was in Iraq, but it is the thing that the army values and it is the reason he gets promoted.

So, how did these experiences shape how our generals perform in Iraq? What can we learn about them? I think Abizaid's time in the Middle East makes him deeply skeptical of the [George W.] Bush administration's goals in Iraq. Abizaid has no doubt that U.S. troops will topple Saddam Hussein, but he was deeply skeptical that the United States could build a thriving democracy in the Middle East, which became the stated goal. I think when he looked at Iraq in the early days of the war, he saw Lebanon. And I think, in a tragic way, his knowledge of the Arab world, his knowledge of Islam, and the complexity, constrains him. He commands this massive force, but I think he worries that if it tried to do too much it would make the situation worse. I think he looks at the complexity of a place like Baghdad and wonders

whether a 28-year-old company commander or a 40-year-old battalion commander can ever master enough of the complexity to really influence it—the tribal, the historical, the cultural, the religious complexity of this fight. Abizaid's favorite phrase is, "You can't control the Middle East. If you try, it'll end up controlling you."

I remember I talked to Petraeus once about this. I said, "Abizaid likes to say 'You can't control the Middle East; if you try, it'll control you.' " And Petraeus kind of looked at me and said, "I'm not sure I agree with that," in not quite as nice a way as that. I think if there was a model for fighting in the Middle East it was one that Abizaid had seen when he was a student at the University of Jordan. He spends a lot of time there in his off time traversing the region. And he travels to Oman in the latter days of that country's insurgency, and he's actually a translator brought along by the U.S. embassy. They're scouting for runways to use during Operation Desert One, which was the failed hostage rescue effort. And Abizaid comes across this tiny band of British soldiers in the wilds of Oman who are training the sultan's army and advising the sultan's army along with essentially a battalion of Pakistani troops on putting down this insurgency. I think in some ways this becomes Abizaid's model for how he'd like to fight in Iraq. You know, a small group of very tactically competent officers who have a deep knowledge of the region advising these local troops, advising the indigenous troops, to take care of their country's own problems.

I think Abizaid's time in the Middle East makes him deeply skeptical of the [George W.] Bush administration's goals in Iraq. Abizaid has no doubt that U.S. troops will topple Saddam Hussein, but he was deeply skeptical that the United States could build a thriving democracy in the Middle East, which became the stated goal.

I think there are a couple of reasons why this doesn't work in Iraq. One is that, culturally, the army has a hard time fighting this way and embracing this approach, which involves a lot of risk. I mean, you're really putting soldiers out there on their own. The second problem was that this approach to fighting only seems to fit a John Abizaid type, and I'm not sure the army had enough John Abizaids who were capable of doing it. And I think the third flaw was that by that point following our invasion, Iraq was such a broken place that the Iraqis really couldn't stave off the chaos.

The second guy is George Casey. I think Casey is forever torn during his time in Iraq between protecting the army he loves and winning the war. He arrives in Iraq determined to keep his goals limited. You know, not to take on things beyond the army's ability and purview. I think he believes military power can drive down the violence but it can't win the war. There's an anecdote in the summer of 2006 as Baghdad's completely falling essentially into complete chaos. General Chiarelli, who's Casey's deputy commander at the time, comes to Casey and begs him to extend the tour of a brigade called the 172nd Stryker Brigade. They're supposed to go home and he asks if we can keep these guys here because it's the only way we're going to hold off this place that's falling apart. Casey hesitated. I don't think he wanted to keep the brigade back, but he told us he could see the concern in Chiarelli's eyes, he could hear the worry in Chiarelli's voice. Finally he relents and said OK, we'll keep them. Some of the soldiers in this brigade had already returned home to Alaska and had to be pulled back. A large portion of the brigade was in Kuwait.

I think Casey is forever torn during his time in Iraq between protecting the army he loves and winning the war. He arrives in Iraq determined to keep his goals limited.

What's interesting to me is that after Casey makes this decision to literally yank these guys back for another four months, his in-box fills with emails from soldiers' spouses chastising him for keeping their husbands and wives in a war zone for another four months. They're basically telling him you couldn't possibly understand what you're doing to my family. There are a number of these soldiers who would have made it home alive who now aren't because of this. And really upset, as you would expect, emails from spouses telling Casey he couldn't possibly understand what they were experiencing. The irony of it is that Casey, because he'd gone through this, was one of the few generals in the army who really could understand. And I feel strongly that it affected the way he fought in Iraq. If you ask General Casey about it, he will say that it didn't, that he was there to win the war and not to protect his army. But I guess David and I both thought, after talking to him, that he really was torn

in this way and that it really does affect the way he sees the war and the way he fights.

For Chiarelli and Petraeus, their time in SOSH is what really affects how they fight in Iraq. And I think it affects similarly, so I'll run through Petraeus and not Chiarelli. Within hours of arriving in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul at the early part of the war in 2003, Petraeus had already begun plotting Iraq's first election in that area and the reconstruction of the city. And he's really the only division commander who's thinking this way. He cuts a deal with the Syrians to sell them Iraqi oil in exchange for badly needed electricity. His number-one concern is getting the power back on in Mosul. The Syrian deal, essentially shipping them oil in exchange for electricity, comes as a real surprise to then Secretary of State Colin Powell, who in 2003 was trying to freeze out Damascus. But because the deal was already inked, nobody countermanded it. Actually, the joke at the 101st Airborne Division, which is the division Petraeus was commanding at the time, was that they were the only division in the United States army with their own foreign policy. Anyway, they sign this deal and I think this little scene is somewhat telling: to bless the deal, they all get in Black Hawk helicopters and fly out to the border. And there's literally this big valve that you turn that sends the oil flowing into Syria, and the Syrians would then send the electricity back.

Anyway, there's a little Iraqi band playing a lilting tune. The Iraqi and Syrian officials and the U.S. officials, which is mostly Petraeus and his immediate command staff, slaughter a lamb and they dip their hands in the blood and lay their hands on the pipeline to bless the deal. This is very Old Testament. And I have to tell you, I asked Petraeus what it felt like to do this and he gave me a very Petraeus answer, which is that it was warm. But it does capture a good bit of him. I mean, he recognizes that he has to play the role of a tribal sheik up there. He's the sheik of the most powerful tribe in northern Iraq, which is the 101st Airborne Division. And rather than dealing with him as he would deal with their soldiers, he really does play the role of the sheik of sheiks up there.

It's interesting. I think Petraeus's experiment in Mosul is a failure in some ways, but it's a really illuminating failure for him and the army. I think it fails for a couple of reasons. The first reason is that he gets replaced. He's got 20 thousand troops there; they replace his division with about 5 thousand, and that's simply not enough forces. But I think it also fails for another reason

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi and Greg Jaffe, Miller Center of Public Affairs, May 5, 2010

that gets written about less, which is that at that point it was all about Dave Petraeus. After he held the elections in Mosul, General Petraeus typed up a PowerPoint briefing explaining how he did it. The idea was they were going to send it to other divisions in case they wanted to hold similar elections. And the most telling slide in the brief is one that was entitled "Commanding General Involvement." And I think it captures what was flawed about the Mosul experiment more than anything.

Here are a couple of bullet points from this slide on how to hold elections in northern Iraq. "Must continuously suggest direction and priority. Don't let up. Must outlast them, must outwork them." So you think that last one—must outlast them, must outwork them—he must be talking about the enemy. He's actually referring to his Iraqi partners there. And within days of his leaving Mosul, the political compromises that he's forged to have this election move forward begin to fall apart. And I think they fall apart largely because they held on the strength of his personality. I'm not sure Petraeus has ever admitted

a mistake to me, but he certainly learns from his mistakes. And I think as he comes back to Iraq in subsequent tours, he builds something that's much more sustainable. It's interesting that Petraeus gets a lot of criticism early in his career for spending a lot of time as the aide to four-star generals, or to senior generals. I think he does it four times. Once for a two star, and the other three were all four stars. You know, when you're in the army you're supposed to be out getting your boots muddy with troops, not so close to the flagpole. But I think in some ways it's Petraeus's time working for these four-star generals that really makes him effective as well, because it teaches him how to run a massive organization.

And he [Petraeus] really creates an army that, I think, by 2007, 2008 is really looking and thinking about the fight differently. It's a massive challenge because when you picture the army, it's literally lots and lots of little company-sized outposts scattered all over the country, each fighting their own fight, each potentially moving in their own direction.

We have this vision of army generals from the movie *Patton,* I think, as the guy with the riding crop leading the tanks across North Africa. Really, generalship, at least as I saw it in Iraq with General Petraeus, was a bunch of PowerPoint slides and his laser pointer. He has this thing called the "battle update assessment." It's a morning briefing, and for Petraeus it's a work of art and he really uses it to drive the force. And I can talk a little bit more in the post-remarks about how he uses it, but it's a fascinating device and he really uses it to change the way the army thinks; to think about politics and economics and getting the power grid up and all those sorts of things that end up being crucial to winning in Iraq, to courting former enemies. And he really creates an army that, I think, by 2007, 2008 is really looking and thinking about the fight differently. It's a massive challenge because when you picture the army, it's literally lots and lots of little company-sized outposts scattered all over the country, each fighting their own fight, each potentially moving in their own direction. I think it's Petraeus' bureaucratic skill that he's able to lash these guys together and get them somewhat moving in the same direction, and questioning and trying new things.

Just to conclude with Chiarelli, I think it's Chiarelli's job to ensure that this army takes risks, tries new things, worries about getting the electricity grid going, and worries about how to convince enemies to lay down their arms

through political negotiation. It's Chiarelli's job to make sure this army endures. It's interesting, Chiarelli returns home from his second tour in Iraq feeling as though he had failed, and he badly wants to go back for a third tour but he never gets the chance. Instead, he gets promoted to a job called Vice Chief of Staff of the Armies. That's the number-two army four-star job in the Pentagon. And I think he worries it's a job that's going to leave him stuck behind a desk administering the army's far-flung posts and installations, and fighting its not so glamorous budget wars instead of its real wars.

One of Chiarelli's responsibilities is to talk to all the new one-star generals in the army about leadership, and he typically ends his presentation to them with an anonymous quote from an article that was written by an army officer. The quote dates from the spring of 2007, when the Iraq War was at its low point. The quote is: "America's generals have repeated the mistakes of Vietnam in Iraq. The intellectual and moral failures common to the army's general officer corps constitute a failure in American generalship." Chiarelli will put this quote up on a screen—and it usually will generate large numbers of groans from the new one stars—and he will say, "Does anyone know who wrote this quote?" And inevitably someone will raise their hand and say, "Paul Yingling wrote it." Yingling is a product of the SOSH department, which, if you remember, earlier I said had future generals and dissidents, and he falls into that dissident category a little bit. Yingling wrote those words in a 2007 essay titled, "A Failure in Generalship." Not surprisingly, the essay doesn't endear him to the army's senior leaders. It doesn't help his career. They end up sending his battalion to Iraq without him, and it's only through the intervention of Petraeus and Chiarelli that he gets to go to Iraq and be with his soldiers.

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Chiarelli tells the one stars, "I understand why Yingling's incendiary words make you groan." And he'll say, "I don't even agree with everything he said." But Chiarelli will also say, "Isn't this the kind of officer we want?" Yingling does three tours in Iraq, and he volunteers for all three. He's passionate, he's intelligent, he's engaged and willing to take intellectual risks, and in some ways I think this is the army and the officer corps that Chiarelli wants to build. It's an officer corps that looks a little bit more like the SOSH department. I think it's one that respects

authority but one that also argues, debates, and takes intellectual risks. I think the question—and I think it's one I'm wrestling with now—is to what extent does that army exist in Afghanistan today? I think it does, to a certain extent. My worry with the army is that, as with any big bureaucracy, it tends to gravitate toward a couple of really big ideas and then simplify those ideas so they can be distributed out in the force. And the big idea now is what we call "population-focused counterinsurgency." You're going to protect the population, make them feel safe, and then that will create space for political compromise. And that's essentially a very dumbed-down version of the playbook in Iraq, and I think it's a very dumbed-down version of the playbook that we're trying to implement in Afghanistan. I worry it gets oversimplified. David and I joked that it over-simplified to a checklist mentality; here are the things that you need to do to pacify the village. And David and I joked that in its worst form, you go out on a patrol into a village and you have what's called KLE, which is a key leader engagement; you pass out some HA, which is humanitarian assistance; and then if you really want to win them over you bring an MRK, which is a mosque repair kit, which is an actual thing, with speakers and some materials to clean up the mosque. And then the village is pacified, which obviously is not the case.

But I think we do run the risk, if we don't have an army that's continually intellectually engaged and that's willing to debate and poke and prod, that you get that checklist mentality. I mean, the other thing that I worry about a little is whether population-focused counterinsurgency can work in Afghanistan the way it worked in Iraq. In Iraq the idea was you move into the neighborhoods and you protect the people. And in Iraq in 2007 the people really needed protection. Sunnis were worried about marauding bands of Shiites moving through their neighborhood and killing them off. Shiites were worried about marauding bands of al-Qaeda Sunni extremists moving through their neighborhood. Everybody was desperately afraid of the other, and having U.S. troops in their neighborhood provided them a degree of protection. I guess I worry a little bit, based on this last trip, that population-focused counterinsurgency applied in a similar fashion in Afghanistan may not produce the same results. I worry in part because, as a battalion commander said to me, "The people here in Afghanistan don't really want or need our protection in many cases." He'll say that "most of the elders I deal with from these villages who are my allies, who are the guys we're giving money to do the reconstruction projects, who are the guys who are sitting on the local shuras, which are the like city councils, most of their sons and nephews are in the insurgency and they don't want me clearing those guys out. They don't want me arresting and killing those guys because they're their sons and nephews." Certainly they want peace and they want a resolution, but in many ways it's a much more complicated problem set.

Because, at least in the east—I think it may be less true in the south around Kandahar, where we're going to have this big offensive soon—what we consider an important defensive the enemy is so intertwined with the population that you can't clear them out. And the elders really don't want you to kill or arrest them. So it really does put a lot of pressure on battalion commanders and company commanders and brigade commanders to help negotiate and facilitate political solutions. They also need to reconcile enemies to the local government and to the national government and help solve these ongoing tribal disputes. And it's a difficult, tricky, and amazingly complicated thing. So I'll end there and I'm happy to take questions about the book or the army or Afghanistan.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. As you described, the army of today is of course very different from what it looked like in 2003. In some ways, soldiers today are being asked to behave more like anthropologists than like traditional soldiers. As a result, there have been significant changes in terms of training and preparedness for troops before they go on their missions. In fact, General Abizaid and Brigadier General H.R. McMaster, who were also here, led some of these very early efforts. But is the training that we're doing adequate? Is it creating the types of soldiers that Chiarelli is looking for?

Greg Jaffe. I don't think training is adequate. I don't think any training is adequate for what we're asking officers to do. That doesn't mean that they can't do it or that it's impossible. I mean, I actually think what's really necessary is education more than training. It's forcing young officers out of their comfort zone and forcing them to debate new ideas. I think sending them to places like the University of Virginia or Princeton or Harvard or the University of Washington, where General Chiarelli went, forcing them into an academic environment kind of at a midcareer period, because it really does force them to confront new ideas and new ways of looking at the world, which I think in some ways, rather than any kind of training, is what you need in Afghanistan.

We have this notion that if we're just culturally sensitive, you know, if we drink "three cups of tea" with the elders, that they'll do what we want and that's how you win the war. And it certainly helps not to be a jerk and blow

up people's markets, but at the end of the day nobody in Afghanistan is going to do what they want because they like us. And whether they like us, I think, is in some ways irrelevant. They're going to do what they think is best for themselves and their families and their villages. And that requires a really nimble mind on the part of officers to figure out how can I broker these deals? And it's fascinating to me to watch the battalion commanders currently in Afghanistan. They fight three companies. So a battalion commander is a guy about in his 40s, about my age actually, and he's got three companies, each of about 100 soldiers. Typically in a conventional war, the battalion commander will fight his companies. He'll move them around the battlefield and tell his company commanders—who are guys in their late 20s, early 30s—what he wants them to do. And it's interesting how battalion commanders spend almost no time actually fighting in their companies, because you rarely have a situation where you have two companies in the same fight where you've got to "deconflict" them. Each of the companies is doing its own little thing and the average company commander can handle the military aspects of his fight, which are not that complicated.

Really about 90% of your average battalion commander's time is spent trying to figure out who are my enemies here, who are my enemies that are irreconcilable, who are the ones that I can win over, what are the right incentives I need to bring them around, what are the tribal and political disputes that are causing this insurgency to continue, to what extent is my real problem the Afghan government, which would rather just have me continue to pound away at these guys than cede any power or influence to them? So it's interesting to watch these guys, and I'm not sure you can train somebody to do what they do. I think you just need really smart, nimble officers. I think sending them to universities, which is something that Abizaid and McMaster both benefited from, is what you need to do. And the tricky part is that there's a resistance to doing it because you don't want those guys, your smartest officers, hanging out at some graduate school for three years; you want them in Afghanistan. But in some cases you need to make that sacrifice if you're going to turn them into the officers you really want them to be.

Question. Mr. Jaffe, what were the ties, if any, among the four generals about whom you spoke? They must have been aware of one another. Were they rivals, were they influenced by one another, or were there not many connections at all?

Greg Jaffe. No, there are connections. And it's funny: in the army, you can't really say that somebody's a rival. I don't know quite why, but everybody will deny that up and down. But there are rivals, in a sense. I mean, it's a very competitive organization. They all know each other; they all cross paths at various times. I think Abizaid and Petraeus become interesting because by the time they're both majors it's pretty clear to everybody that these guys just have something special and are outstanding in a way. If you ask people, they're both the kinds of officers, even in their 30s, who people are saying these guys are going to be our future generals, our future leaders. I think that was less true of Casey and Chiarelli. They really fight their way up through the system. But no, they certainly cross paths. It's interesting that Abizaid and Petraeus both command the 1st Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division back to back. Abizaid has it first, then he turns it over to Petraeus. They're both great brigade commanders, they both do a good job. It's interesting how completely different they are, and to a certain extent you really can see the rivalry there. In fact, I think I called them friends and rivals, and I got an email from Petraeus where he said, "I don't know why you call us rivals, we're great friends. Here are all the places we served together throughout our career." But I think they were rivals.

It's interesting that Abizaid's office was empty, his desk was empty, yet he would run the entire brigade out of a little green army field notebook, circulating, talking to his brigade commanders. He's an inspirational guy, he's very funny, he's tactically competent. One of his staff officers half-jokingly said his feeling was, "Tell me when we're out of bullets and we'll get more bullets," whereas Petraeus wanted to know exactly how many bullets you had at every moment. I remember talking to General Petraeus a little bit about what it was like to take over from General Abizaid and him saying, "There were no systems and processes in place to run the brigade." And the fact is that Abizaid didn't really need systems and processes in place to run the brigade. He had three thousand guys, it was small enough that he could really power down and run it through his commanders. And I think Petraeus' systems and processes that he instituted for the brigade mostly drove people crazy and weren't totally necessary. In some ways I think if you talk to people in the brigade they'll say Abizaid was a much better brigade commander than Petraeus was. But those same systems and processes become invaluable when you're running this giant bureaucracy that is MNF-I, or the Multi-National Force-Iraq command, with its 130 thousand soldiers sprawled all over the place.

So it's interesting to me that one of the things I find fascinating is that the army picks its generals based on who's the best brigade commander, who's the guy who did the best job commanding these three thousand-man units, and I'm not sure that the skills that make you a good brigade commander necessarily make you a great strategic leader and somebody who's good at running a massive sprawling bureaucracy. There are some that certainly overlap. I think you have to be very intelligent to do both; you've got to understand tactics and you've got to understand how companies and battalions fight. But they're really different skill sets, and I worry at times that the army, as it chooses its strategic leaders based on who are the best brigade and battalion commanders, may be choosing, to a certain extent, blind. I mean, we get lucky a fair amount of the time. I think we get unlucky in some instances, though, as well. I don't have the answer but I wish there was a better model for selecting who our three and four stars are going to be.

Question. You didn't mention [Secretary of Defense] Donald Rumsfeld, and I wonder if you could comment on how these generals managed their relationship with him and how the army's transformation that you're speaking of relates or doesn't relate to the vision of transformation that Secretary Rumsfeld had when he came in.

Greg Jaffe. I'll address the last one first because I can do it very quickly, which is that I think it doesn't relate at all to Rumsfeld's transformation. I think Rumsfeld's transformation is 180 degrees out from where we're moving right now, for better or worse. In terms of their relationship with Rumsfeld, I'll answer that two ways, one's through General Casey and one I guess through General Abizaid and General Petraeus. I think Secretary Rumsfeld has a very negative impact on General Casey's tenure. And this is my own judgment, not General Casey's. I think that working for Secretary Rumsfeld is like having a pit bull in your front yard, a pit bull that loves you and hates everybody else. Rumsfeld was very quick to defend General Casey, but he was also this pit bull who I think kept him isolated and away from the intellectual firma and the ideas that were taking place elsewhere in the army. I'll give a small example of that.

Philip Zelikow, who was former Director of the Miller Center, makes a trip to Iraq working for Secretary [Condoleezza] Rice and visits H.R. McMaster, who's a brigade commander at the time up in Tal Afar in northern Iraq. H.R. is really doing a bunch of new things that become essentially the model for what we do in Iraq in 2007 and 2008. It's this classic population-focused counterinsurgency: clear, hold, and build. Move out into the populations, protect the Shiites from the Sunnis, protect the Sunnis from the Shiites, live out among the people in small outposts. And he really effectively drives down the violence. Now, Zelikow visits McMaster and comes away I think incredibly impressed with what he's doing and impressed with how effective it is. So he brings back this idea that is essentially a carryover from what we were doing at the end of the Vietnam War, which is this notion of clear, hold, and build. You clear out the enemy, you stay in the neighborhood to hold it, and then you build. But what he doesn't do, interestingly, is share that idea with General Casey, because he knows if he tells Casey, Casey will tell Rumsfeld about it, and Rumsfeld will flip out, because the last thing Rumsfeld wants is intervention from those people over at State. He wants to control the thing and he's very bureaucratically adept.

So Secretary Rice ends up giving a speech publicly where she talks about clear, hold, and build, based on Zelikow's input, and Rumsfeld flips. You know, where did you get this clear, hold, and build stuff? The Iraqis need to be doing the clearing, the Iraqis need to be doing the holding, and the Iraqis need to be doing the building. And he really makes a huge effort to kill it. I think in some ways it's a good anecdote that shows the negative effects of Rumsfeld's tenure. I mean, what Casey really needs is a sense of what other people are thinking, and I'm not sure he gets it. He's very isolated in Baghdad. And I think he's even taken by surprise when he's removed from command in 2007. He doesn't quite realize that this insurgency against our strategy is taking place in Washington because he's so isolated by Secretary Rumsfeld.

Question. Mr. Jaffe, I've had the opportunity to read your book and it was fascinating. I was particularly impressed with the description of General Petraeus, and I couldn't help but wonder as I read, is he another modern [Dwight D.] Eisenhower and is he suitable to become a candidate for President?

Greg Jaffe. I think he could be a very effective President. I don't think he has any desire to run. I think what he wants to do is stay in the military. I think he'd like to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think he really embraces and sees himself in a nonpolitical role. I know that's hard for us to get our minds around, especially when you see President Bush mentioning his name 40 times in a Rose Garden press conference. But he really does see himself as an apolitical player. I guess I'm skeptical, too, that in this day and age—and

this is going to sound like I'm saying something negative about General Petraeus and I don't intend it to be that way—I'm very skeptical that he could win. I think being a politician means that you have to have certain skills, and in some ways those skills are not the same skills that make you an effective general. And one of those skills, and I think you see it with President Bush and President [Barack] Obama, is an ability to connect and show empathy.

I guess I sometimes wonder, because Petraeus is such a striver and I think he has a lack of patience for people who he thinks aren't striving, and I have a hard time picturing General Petraeus in a cafe or whatever in New Hampshire in the winter having coffee with somebody who got laid off and is talking about how they don't have health insurance and him telling them that what they really need to do is lose weight so their health will get better. And go to school and retrain in something else, which is not what people want to hear. Maybe I'm wrong and I know that's obviously extreme, and he's got more sense than to do that, of course, but I do think that that's one of the skills that you develop as a politician that you don't necessarily develop as a general, and it's a tough transition. And I think he's smart enough about Washington to know that being a good candidate is different from being a good leader and being a good President. Those are skills that are learned just as being a good general is learned, and I'm not sure he's got them right now. That's not to say he couldn't learn them, but I don't think he has the fire in his belly to do that. He sees himself as a military officer and that's what he wants to be.

Question. Can you talk a bit more about General Petraeus' morning brief and how he uses it?

Greg Jaffe. Yes, I think it's a fascinating thing. It's called the BUA [Battle Update Assessment], and Petraeus will talk about it like it is a work of genius and it's a work of art, and he's intensely proud of it. Basically it's approximately a 50- to 70-slide PowerPoint briefing, which I know makes most people want to groan, but it covers everything from an effort to restart the poultry industry to what al-Qaeda in Iraq is doing. And Petraeus used it brilliantly, I thought. I give him a hard time for describing it as a work of art, but it really is kind of a work of art, kind of a geeky work of art but a true work of art. And I'll give an example from how he used it. Like I said, it's basically this 50-slide PowerPoint briefing but he really uses it to drive this force, all these little scattered companies, in the same direction. So he gets to Baghdad and there's this electrical transmission tower called Tower 57, which is really just a big steel tower that carries electricity from southern Iraq up into Baghdad, and it got knocked down about six months or a year before Petraeus got there. It got blown up by some insurgents. It really wasn't that important a tower or a transmission line. The engineers had figured out a way to route power around Tower 57 and not use that line and still get the same amount of power into Baghdad. But Petraeus latches onto it in his morning briefing. Every morning he wants to know if Tower 57 is up yet. And he's badgering a West Point classmate of his, who's also a terrific general, named General [David A.] Fastabend, who's retired now. What are we doing about Tower 57?

And interestingly, they transcribe the morning BUA and distribute it to all the brigade commanders. Now, nobody reads the thing because it's not readable, but everybody does look through and scan to see if they're talking about him. And so the poor brigade commander who's got this downed tower line in his sector is trying to figure out how to get it up, and the battalion commander is also wondering, and it takes months. Petraeus doesn't dictate a solution, he just continues to ask, "OK, what's the plan?" And it requires a massive effort that cuts across all sorts of disciplines. The State Department has to get involved, the Iraq Ministry of Electricity has to get involved, the Ministry of Defense has to get involved. You've got to work with the local tribes down there to secure the thing so after it gets put up it doesn't just get knocked back down again. You've got to work with private contractors who are going to send people out there to get it built. And it takes about six months to get the final thing wired so you've got all the right parties participating. It takes a good dozen failed efforts to get it done, but once they finally get it, it's up in about three days and it has a couple of big effects. One effect is that everybody knows about it after a couple of months, so every battalion and brigade commander is thinking I better get the damn power lines up in my area or I'm going to be the next whipping boy, I'm going to be the guy he talks about every morning after his cup of coffee.

And the second thing is that it forces these nontraditional solutions. It forces everybody to get together to fix this tower, which then becomes a template for other solutions. The next one that he latches onto is a bank in west Baghdad in a Sunni area that gets shut down by the Shiite Ministry of Finance. Now, why are banks important? Banks are important because that's where people go to get their pension checks that most former Baathists survive on. If they couldn't pick up their pension check at their local bank they'd have to drive through Shiite territory to get their check and then come back into their

neighborhood through these checkpoints with a decent-sized pile of money, which you can imagine, if you're a Sunni, is not a safe thing or a comfortable thing. But Petraeus hammers on the bank and it again forces the military commander to work with the Ministry of Finance, to work with some private contractors to rebuild the bank, to get a local security force to guard the bank. It's an incredibly effective tool that happens in this BUA. And it's something that he develops again by working through all these four stars over the course of his career. He gets criticized for it a little bit as not spending enough time out in the field getting dirty with troops and all that kind of stuff, which is valuable experience. I don't mean to sound like I'm minimizing it, but he learns a lot about how to run a big organization, both how to do it well and how not to do it well, from these four stars that he works for. And it's tricky. I don't know how you give people the education that Petraeus gets doing that because he's very much an outlier.

He also develops a really terrific sense of Washington politics and how not to get himself in trouble, and also how to build support on the Hill for what he's doing. It's an insult to be called a political general in the army, but I think he is a political general in a good sense of the word.

Question. Can you discuss the poppy problem in Afghanistan and whether the banks are trying to encourage a change in crops?

Greg Jaffe. The poppy problem is a really difficult one. They are trying to encourage other crops, whether they are wheat or fruit trees, which is the other big one. You can make more money growing pomegranates than you can poppy, but it takes three or four years to get a decent fruit tree industry going. And again, the poppy one is an interesting example because it shows that it's not just about the poppy. Part of the reason they grow the poppy is that you don't need a refrigeration system to grow it; you don't need good roads, it doesn't go bad, you can move it relatively quickly and easily; it's perfect for a completely fractured state like Afghanistan. It's light, so you can move it by donkey over trails rather than roads. Now, if you want to grow something like wheat for export or pomegranates, all of a sudden you need an actual real infrastructure. You need roads, you need refrigeration systems, and you need a banking system that's going to give people loans. Right now the Taliban will give the farmers money prior to the growing season to grow their poppies and then once they sell their poppy crop they'll pay it back. But the farmers need that money to survive the winter. So it's not just about plowing under crops; it's not just about eradication or convincing farmers to grow wheat or pomegranates. It's really about rebuilding a whole economy, which includes roads and government and banking systems, and I'm not sure we've got our arms around what it takes. I'm not sure we've got enough people focused on the problem to fix it. But I could be wrong. But it just goes to show that it's not about the poppy, it's about everything. It's about governance and transportation and economics and all that kind of stuff. And you can't fix the poppy problem until you've fixed everything else.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Thank you very much, Greg, for a fascinating look into the army.

AFGHANISTAN *and* PAKISTAN

Mark Mazzetti

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Today we welcome Mark Mazzetti, a correspondent for the *New York Times* who has covered national security for the newspaper's Washington bureau since April 2006. In 2009 he shared a Pulitzer Prize for reporting on the intensifying violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan and the response from the White House. The previous year, Mazzetti was a Pulitzer finalist for reporting on the detention and interrogation program of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]. He's also the recipient of the 2006 Gerald R. Ford Journalism Prize for distinguished reporting on national defense and the Livingston Award in the category of national reporting for breaking the story of the CIA's destruction of videotapes that showed harsh interrogation of al-Qaeda detainees. Before joining the *New York Times,* Mazzetti was a staff writer for the *Los Angleles Times,* where he covered the Pentagon and military affairs; the Pentagon correspondent for *US News and World Report;* and a correspondent for *The Economist,* covering national politics. Since 9/11, he has made several reporting trips to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Horn of Africa, including two months that he spent embedded with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and as a reporter in Baghdad in 2003. Mr. Mazzetti received his bachelor's degree in public policy and history from Duke University, where he graduated summa cum laude, and later earned a master's degree in modern history from Oxford University. Please join me in welcoming Mark Mazzetti.

Mark Mazzetti. Cristina, thank you very much for the very kind introduction—a very kind introduction especially for a Duke graduate. It's fabulous to be back at this great university at the Miller Center and to speak before this very impressive audience. Looking at the list of people who have spoken here at these forums, it's humbling to be up here. I want to lay out some of the issues on this topic. I understand that the title for today was the war in Afghanistan, which is a very nice, simple subject you can easily deal with in one hour's time, right? But the good news is that it is so broad that I can

bring a lot of things in and, short of talking about the Iraq War or Goldman Sachs, I think that we can cover a lot of ground and then get to the discussion.

When you talk about the war in Afghanistan, in many ways it's somewhat of a misnomer to think that the war in Afghanistan began on September 12th, 2001. In Afghanistan the wars never end. It has been one succession of war, one after the other, and it's just the players that have changed. When you go to Afghanistan and you talk to people, you learn that people mark time by the different wars that went on. People introduce their son and they say, "So and so was born during the Soviet war; so and so's daughter was born during the civil war of the 1990s." That is how major events are marked. That is how people differentiate important things like the births of their children. And it is probably very naïve to think that this war really will end any time soon because of the complicated dynamics. That may mean that the United States may pull out, there may be a settled negotiation between the [Hamid] Karzai government and the Taliban, yet the conflict, the tensions, are not likely to dissipate any time soon. But I think what's going on now is different in a lot of ways than the wars of the past or the major conflicts of the past. It's different from what's called the Great Game period of the 19th century when Britain and Russia were vying for control of central Asia. And it's different from the 1980s during the Soviet invasion when the United States and Pakistan, specifically the CIA and the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence], Pakistan's intelligence service, were funneling money and ammunition to mujahideen fighters against the Soviet Union.

The reason that I think it's different right now is that it's much more complicated; the stakes are much higher than even that period in the 1980s for a couple of reasons. On the one hand, India and Pakistan are now both nuclear powers. They were not in the 1980s, although they were trying hard to become so. And so you have these two bitter rivalries, nuclear-armed rivals that have nuclear weapons, who are using Afghanistan to some extent as a proxy for their fighting. It is unlikely—knock on wood—that they would escalate into a nuclear confrontation, but make no mistake: they are playing this out in other ways, and one of those places is in Afghanistan. So you have that as a backdrop, and I'm going to get into that a little bit as well. But also in this technology age, the conduct of the war in Afghanistan is influencing billions of people in a region of the world that is not necessarily favorable to the United States and whose opinion about the United States and U.S. policy are formed by, for instance, how the United States conducts itself in military confrontations. So it's this confluence of factors, and technology is a huge part of it, that make what is happening now in Afghanistan and in Pakistan that much more complicated and that much more significant, and where the potential for something going wrong really could have disastrous situations.

So let's get at some of the dynamics that are going on now in Afghanistan and Pakistan. I'm going to talk just as much about Pakistan as Afghanistan because it is absolutely critical, and you can't talk about one without the other when you're looking at the conflict and you're looking at the U.S. interests in the region. I was just there in February for a few weeks in both Islamabad and Peshawar, Pakistan, and then went to Kabul afterwards to get different perspectives, and they are very different perspectives, on what is going on. I get the sense that the dynamics at this moment are changing very rapidly in ways that I've still not been able to figure out. It sounds somewhat trite to say the dynamics are changing, but what we're seeing now with the U.S. military surge going into Afghanistan—with the Pakistani government and the Pakistani military and intelligence services trying to figure out what the effects of that surge are and how it's going to impact Afghanistan as well as the Karzai government's own calculations at this moment—I think make it incredibly complicated and incredibly dynamic. And it's safe to say there's no story I've covered that is more complicated than this. Especially going to Pakistan—I told some friends that it's the most complicated country I've ever been in, and each day I was there it was safe to say I knew less and less. I wrote this in an email to one of my colleagues and he said, "Get out of there before you know nothing." And it's true. By the time I left, any preconceived ideas I had were out the window and I was thoroughly confused. There is truth somewhere, but I never found anyone who's been there even for many years who's found it.

So let's talk a little bit about Pakistan and then we'll move across the border to Afghanistan. I think some of the dynamics in Pakistan are especially interesting. This is something I'll just say definitively: the war in Afghanistan will be won or lost in Pakistan as much as it will be in Afghanistan. What happens in Pakistan and what the Pakistani government does or doesn't do to dismantle the sanctuary for Taliban leaders in the country will be one of the greatest determining factors for whether the current [Barack] Obama administration strategy works. When I talk about what the government does or doesn't do, I will give a very brief bit of background into some of these dynamics. One of the things that has been the iron law of Pakistan in recent

years, and really dating back to the 1980s, is that the Pakistani intelligence service, the ISI, will steadfastly support the Taliban for many reasons. But the ISI and the military—which, make no mistake, is the most important institution inside Pakistan—sees the Taliban and other military groups as proxies, as a bulwark on the western border of Pakistan that allow the military to focus on what really matters, and that's India. So if you have proxy groups in the west like the Taliban—and the Taliban are Pashtun, like the majority of Afghanistan, and so there is some ethnic convergence there—then you don't have to devote divisions of Pakistan's army needlessly on the western border when you can go deal with Kashmir.

By the time I left [Pakistan], any preconceived ideas I had were out the window and I was thoroughly confused. There is truth somewhere, but I never found anyone who's been there even for many years who's found it.

So that is a very simplified explanation that is one of the principle reasons why there has been the support. There's the Pashtun element, and just the idea of having a proxy force means you can move your military off that border. And it's not just the traditional Taliban as we know it. There are a number of militant groups in the tribal areas of Pakistan that have had strong connections to the ISI over the years. One of those is called the Haqqani Network, which was originally founded by Jalaluddin Haqqani, who was one of the fighters that the CIA supported in the 1980s and then took a turn toward a much more radical viewpoint and became closely aligned with the Taliban. His network is known for, and it's believed is responsible for, a number of attacks inside Afghanistan, including the bombing of the CIA base in Khost in December of last year as well as the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul in 2008. So there's a group of militants that the ISI has traditionally supported. And the ISI and the military, it is believed, have provided this safe haven inside Pakistan for the leaders of the Taliban who are seeking sanctuary in Pakistan but are actually directing the fighters over the border in Afghanistan. And over the years, especially since the September 11th attacks, the United States has been on Pakistan's case repeatedly to help wrap up the leaders of the Taliban. The United States says we know you know where they are; stop supporting them. And they believe that the biggest factor in the outcome of the war in Afghanistan is whether the Pakistani government moves against these leaders, most of them in a region of Pakistan called Baluchistan, and more specifically around the city of Quetta in the south.

So it was very interesting in late January that the CIA and Pakistan's intelligence service got some information and picked up a top Taliban leader named Mullah Baradar in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi. My colleague and I found out about this several weeks after the fact and we thought this was quite a big deal. Why? Who is Mullah Baradar? Mullah Baradar is the vice president of the Taliban. He is Mullah Omar's—or he was Mullah Omar's—right-hand man. I think he's the brother-in-law of Mullah Omar and is essentially seen as the military leader of the Taliban, directing military strategy. Last year he put out rules of conduct for the Taliban in Afghanistan, how to go about your business in Afghanistan so as not to anger the local population. It was very interesting to read how the Taliban is interested in their own hearts-and-minds strategy in Afghanistan because both sides agree that it's the population that must be won over. Either side is going to win if they are able to win over the population. So Mullah Baradar was in charge of these rules of behavior.

So we reported the story that Mullah Baradar had been picked up by the Pakistanis. This was really the biggest arrest of a top Taliban leader, and it was a joint raid with the CIA and the ISI. But the fact that the ISI participated seemed like a very big deal, and it is a big deal, I think, meaning that maybe the dynamics have changed to some extent. Now, right after the story came out I had all these ideas and I went to Islamabad ready to test out my theories. And this is where everything that I thought went out the window. Basically it came down to three theories about what is happening, answering the question, why would the Pakistanis after all this time decide to wrap up one of the biggest, most important Taliban leaders? Have things changed? And if they do that, are they going to do more? And are they really serious about cracking down on the Taliban? That could have a really big impact on the war in Afghanistan.

Pakistan wants to accelerate the end game in Afghanistan. An endless war in Afghanistan does not do anyone any good, especially the Pakistani military and intelligence establishment, the civilian government, and they are going to do enough to weaken the Taliban to get them to the negotiating table in Afghanistan.

So there are three theories, and I'll go through them quickly. First is that Pakistan has totally changed its tune. The Pakistani government now firmly believes that it can't distinguish one militant group from another, they are all potentially dangerous, and that they have finally caved to U.S. pressure to move against some of these leaders. That's theory number one. Conspiracy theory, that's number two, is that the Pakistanis are playing a game. And this has been in some of the reporting. Why did they go after Mullah Baradar? Because he was involved in negotiations with the Karzai government. The Taliban was going to negotiate with Karzai and the Pakistanis were dead set on that not happening, and the only way they could tank those negotiations was by picking up the main interlocutor of the Taliban, and the CIA was their dupes in this effort. So they picked this guy up, the CIA goes along, and all is well because these negotiations don't go anywhere. That's another theory and it is actually believed by many, and it has been out in published reports that this is all that's going on.

Finally there's the third theory, which is actually what I believe. It's a little bit of a hybrid because there's not one easy clean explanation when you're talking about these situations. Pakistan wants to accelerate the end game in Afghanistan. An endless war in Afghanistan does not do anyone any good, especially the Pakistani military and intelligence establishment, the civilian government, and they are going to do enough to weaken the Taliban to get them to the negotiating table in Afghanistan. But they won't do this without extracting what they want, and influencing the dynamic of the end game. Pakistan is not going to simply turn over the negotiations to the Karzai government and let Karzai have his way in the future of Afghanistan without having their own seat at the table. Pakistan is determined to have a significant amount of influence in Afghanistan hopefully when the shooting stops. So they're going to try to determine how these final negotiated settlements work. If they can exert influence over the Taliban even by picking up some of its leaders, then they can have influence over a large swath of Afghan territory in any kind of future negotiated settlement. That's really what Pakistan is interested in. They don't want to take over Afghanistan but they do want to have a significant amount of influence because it's in their own national interest. The other thing they want to do is beat back Indian influence inside Afghanistan.

One of the more interesting moments of my time in Pakistan was sitting in a wedding, a Pakistani wedding in Islamabad, speaking to an ISI agent at the wedding with his young son bouncing on his knee. He was going on and on about how the Indians were making mischief in southern Baluchistan and the United States was helping them, and the only way for the Pakistanis to get back at India was to use militant groups to launch attacks inside Afghanistan. So he firmly believed that the United States and India were conspiring against Pakistan, so why shouldn't they do it on their own? So this is the level of conspiracy that goes on that's believed by very serious people, very smart people, and people who are actually in power.

One thing that I'd like to point out is that since Mullah Baradar's arrest at the end of February there has not been a wave of subsequent arrests. It does not seem as if Pakistan is determined to take down the entire leadership council in Pakistan. So it is still unclear how they're going to weaken the Taliban. Are they going to do this over time, trying to influence Mullah Baradar during his interrogations and then get him to turn over some of his people? It's still unclear what's going to happen. But I do believe that this dynamic is changing a bit because from talking to enough people on the Pakistan side of the border, they do believe that the war needs to end but they want it to end on their own terms.

Afghanistan. A few weeks after I left Islamabad, I went to Afghanistan, primarily to talk to the U.S. military, and it was a very interesting time to be in Afghanistan because it was right after the Marja offensive. Marja was the small town in southern Afghanistan that the U.S. military took over in essence after the invasion, and it's what the military hopes is the beginning of a wider offensive in southern Afghanistan that will probably culminate, as has been reported widely, in an offensive in Kandahar, the biggest city in southern Afghanistan. And there was actually a lot of optimism among the American military when I was there that this Marja offensive really was changing momentum, that after a year of sliding backwards, Marja was the first step toward reversing the momentum. And with the new troops coming in, it would be the first component of the counterinsurgency strategy that would allow the U.S. military, the Afghan military, and the Karzai government to take over, retake, southern Afghanistan after years in which the Taliban had exerted more control.

What is the reality? The hope was that this was really changing. The reality may be something different, although again, it's too early to make any kind of judgment. But just reading my own colleagues' reporting from Marja since that operation, there is some reason to be concerned. A colleague of mine,

Rich Oppel, went down to Marja earlier this month, about two months after the operation, and he wrote a story with the headline, "Violence Helps Taliban Undo Afghan Gains." His major point was that yes, they had this offensive, and yes, it had had initial successes, but by talking to U.S. military officers, it seems that some of those gains were ephemeral. One marine major was quoted in the article as saying the Taliban had, quote, "re-seized control and momentum in a lot of ways." And that so many people identify themselves as Taliban that it's difficult, really, for the American military to understand who the enemy is. Brigadier General Larry Nicholson, commander of a marine brigade in that town, said this: "We've got to reevaluate our definition of the word 'enemy.' Most people here identify themselves as Taliban. We have to readjust our thinking so we're not trying to chase the Taliban out of Marja, we're trying to chase the enemy out." Now if you think about that quote, it's confusing. And imagine how confusing it is to a young marine lance corporal who is trying to carry out a mission. You're not trying to chase the Taliban out, you're trying to chase the enemy out. So this sounded like a very telling quote, and it's just some of the very complicated dynamics about not only Marja but in a bigger operation for Kandahar, how will they be able to determine the success of a future potentially much more bloody operation in Kandahar? Especially with these long-standing ties that hook into the poppy production, the opium production, in the south between the Taliban and the broader Pashtun nationality.

Afghanistan is a very complicated picture and one that remains murky even as more American military forces move in and as they prepare for a Kandahar offensive.

We can get into some of these issues in the question session, but while I have a little more time I want to talk about how all these dynamics fit together and then get into CIA efforts going on in the region. Afghanistan is a very complicated picture and one that remains murky even as more American military forces move in and as they prepare for a Kandahar offensive. My colleagues in Kabul, who are far more expert on Afghanistan than I am, believe it's very hard to give any definitive answers about how the [Stanley] McChrystal strategy will really play out across the south.

One of the things I wanted to get to is the CIA drone campaign, most of which is taking place in Pakistan. It's a covert action, which in the CIA means the President signs a secret order and they carry it out and the United States denies what they do. But the drone campaign is like the most overt covert action in history because we write about it, people talk about it, there's a lot of winks and nods, and I think that's for some pretty interesting reasons. One reason is because the CIA believes it's having great success. The [George W.] Bush administration, at the tail end of its time in office, really accelerated the drone campaign. They'd reached a point where they thought the Pakistanis were not going to really move against militants in the tribal areas and they needed to do it on their own. It had become a clear and present danger. So they accelerated this drone campaign. What has been interesting in covering the Obama White House in its first year is that it has accelerated it from the Bush administration. There's been, I believe, twice as many drone attacks in the first year of the Obama administration as there were in the last year of the Bush administration.

...I think there is a political concern in the White House and among the Obama administration that the attacks from Republicans and the right and people like former Vice President [Richard "Dick"] Cheney might have some political effect. So I think they want to try to counter that message.

The White House has embraced this for a lot of reasons. One, I think, is because they believe it is having success and there are Obama administration officials who are very eager to get that message out, the message that they're having success in the tribal areas against al-Qaeda. And they get their message out because I think there is a political concern in the White House and among the Obama administration that the attacks from Republicans and the right and people like former Vice President [Richard "Dick"] Cheney might have some political effect. So I think they want to try to counter that message. Not to say that the drone campaign in itself is political, but I think the way this is being played out and the messaging of it has become politicized to some extent. And I am very eager to chat with you during the Q&A [question and answer period] about what you think of the drone campaign, and if you have more questions about exactly how these are carried out and what the strategy is and the reasoning for accelerating it. But I want to close on one

final point that I just found interesting and somewhat telling and, heartening as a reporter. Because, as I said, as reporters we're always trying to grope around in the dark to understand what's going on.

I was somewhat heartened earlier this year by a fascinating report that was made public by the top military intelligence officer in Afghanistan, a guy named Major General Michael Flynn. Flynn is the top intelligence officer for Stanley McChrystal; he is a very smart, seasoned individual, who was formerly in Iraq. And basically he called the intelligence community on the carpet and he said, "You guys are irrelevant. You guys are not giving me what I need to carry out a counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. You are not giving me what I need, which is a deeper understanding about how the country works. Don't just tell me where the bad guys are. Tell me who and which local leader is important in this area. Tell me which water source is creating rivalries in different regions. If you don't tell me, how do I carry out a counterinsurgency?" And to quote his report, he said, "Eight years into the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. intelligence community is only marginally relevant to the overall strategy. Having focused the overwhelming majority of its collection efforts and analytical brainpower on insurgent groups, the vast intelligence apparatus is unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which the U.S. and allied forces operate and the people they seek to persuade." That's pretty tough coming from the top intelligence officer.

And he goes on to talk about a new model for intelligence officers in Afghanistan to understand a Byzantine place like Afghanistan. And what is that model that he cites? According to the general, a man who has billions of dollars of American intelligence technology at his disposal, the people who he oversees need to become more like reporters. He actually talks about the role of the media in Afghanistan to decipher the tribal structure and the power politics, and he said this is what we need to know. So in other words, if the United States is going to have a shot in Afghanistan, and if the intelligence community is going to be relevant to the overall strategy and to really understand the country, intelligence officers better start acting more like reporters. So maybe in the end we aren't so much in the dark after all. Thank you very much, and I am happy to take questions.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. You touched upon the eight CIA operatives who were killed in Afghanistan in December and what it means in terms of intelligence efforts within the region, but what does it signify for the agency specifically and the direction that it's going in? You've also written that the CIA has been forced to essentially transform itself into a quasi-paramilitary organization. Can you comment on this more broadly?

Mark Mazzetti. Yes, and that's been one of the really interesting trends, I think, over the last several years, and it really hit home on December 30th when we learned about the base that had been hit. Not because we didn't know there were bases out there in eastern Afghanistan, but to learn more about the network of bases that the CIA has set up in Afghanistan, and I think to some extent over the border as well. But the agency's primary efforts these days are going after al-Qaeda, the Haqqani Network, gathering intelligence by signals intelligence, human intelligence, that will lead to drone strikes. That is what the White House wants the CIA to do, not to the exclusion of everything else, but it's really their main focus. And when you talk to CIA officials, that's what they're talking about.

Now, when you look at this as a transformation, the CIA has always had a paramilitary function. They've had paramilitary groups that have gone into countries around the world to carry out covert actions, but I think since September 11th it really is striking that the CIA is going around the world hunting and killing militants. And they were given that task shortly after the September 11th attacks. So it moves it away from an intelligence-gathering organization that is collecting information inside countries that is then used to inform policy makers, and much more of a military-like organization that is crossing names off a list of top militants. Now, that's neither a good nor a bad thing. It's something that is a fact, and I think the CIA has found itself in this position where in many ways they get a seat at the table at the White House because they're carrying out this mission. And as I said, both President Bush and President Obama have leaned on them to carry out this mission. I think, to some extent, many in the CIA see this as a way to keep the CIA very relevant when they've been barraged from all these different fronts since September 11th over the WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and then the creation of the Director of National Intelligence. Many believe they had been shunted to the side. Well, in the first year of the Obama administration they've been front and center.

Question. Mr. Mazzetti, I enjoy reading your articles in the *New York Times*. I've got two questions. Do you have an idea of where Osama bin Laden may be? And do you have a notion of whether we're going to be successful in locating him?

Mark Mazzetti. I guess it's somewhat telling that that's considered frivolous or that when you ask, people laugh or chuckle. And sometimes if I ask the question of a leader I feel frivolous asking it because it's amazing how far we've come, when initially the single most important thing to do was to find Osama bin Laden, dead or alive, and now it's almost an afterthought. It's an afterthought only in the sense that you know to stop asking people because you know they don't know where he is. The latest I heard was that the intelligence community thinks he is in part of the tribal areas of Pakistan north of North Waziristan, so one of the provinces above North and South Waziristan. But they don't really have any clear clue and they've not had any real, I think, hard evidence about his whereabouts for several years. I certainly am the last to know where he is, but I think a lot of people at the CIA are as well. I don't mean to sound too frivolous because they're trying. If you had asked me after September 11th if I'd be here almost nine years later and we would not have caught him, I would have said that's impossible. But they do think he is alive, as well as his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Question. The issue of the Predator and the success that we seem to be enjoying in taking out al-Qaeda leaders is something I support. I believe that this is an important thing to do but I worry about it being a covert action, and a military activity that a civilian organization is involved in, and that we're relying too much on our technology to fight our battles. Over time it may draw criticism in Pakistan and Afghanistan because of the collateral damage done and the fact that we're using our technology to do something terribly important.

If you had asked me after September 11th if I'd be here almost nine years later and we would not have caught him [Osama bin Laden], I would have said that's impossible.

Mark Mazzetti. Yes, you're using robots to do a man's job. I think your question is a good one, and I wrote a story in our "Week in Review" section about it a year ago, just raising this issue of what does it mean to rely on the seductive tool of drone warfare? And I don't think that those deeper questions are getting asked right now, at least by policy makers, because they're very focused on the successes, what these drones can do. But it does raise all sorts of questions about the future. Why would we use anything but drones, if we could, in the future?

The reason we're doing it in Pakistan is because Pakistan's government will not allow U.S. troops there and they can deny that it's going on, and even say, "We're angry about it," but in fact they're blessing all of this privately, they're giving intelligence for drone attacks. So the public angst over it is really just for public consumption in Pakistan.

But I don't think the long-term implications have quite been dealt with, and my sense is that they could extend the drone campaign to Yemen and beyond. Then, what's to stop other countries from using drones as well? Pakistan could start sending drones over the border into India. There are a lot of interesting questions. I will say that the impact does seem real in terms of sowing fear. I was talking to a former CIA officer who was just over there and he said that people in the tribal areas have stopped drinking Lipton tea because they're convinced that the tea bags have beacons in them that will lead to the drone attacks. So they've just sworn off Lipton tea. And it's not good for the Lipton Tea Company in Pakistan because people there drink a lot of tea. That's a humorous story but it shows the psychological impact of this stuff.

Question. From your presentation it seems there's no solution for the coming years. So are we not facing a repetition of the Vietnam drama? We've been in Afghanistan fighting a war for eight years, thousands of men and many dead. We are fighting for a government that is one of the most corrupt governments in the world, for Mr. Karzai, who like Mr. [Nguyen Van] Thieu, stole the election. You mentioned very vaguely the poppy business-can you address this and the overall U.S. strategy? If you are at war you either do it or you don't do it, but you don't go half and half. So is a country like the United States going to win this war and come out with honor? Otherwise it seems that what will happen in Afghanistan is the same thing that happened to the British. So how do we come out of this thing? Will we win this war or retreat?

Mark Mazzetti. These are good, provocative questions. Listen, there are a lot of complicated questions and no one that I've spoken to will pretend to have the definite answers of how they think it's going to happen. I watched people at the end of last year wrestle with this idea of whether to send more troops or not, and frankly, talking to people, I could have argued it both ways. I saw a real benefit of both, and I saw people passionately switching sides about whether to leave or whether to send more troops. And I'm not going to weigh in on what I think right here about whether or not it's Vietnam. However, I think that there are some concerns. And I didn't mean to leave the impression

from my talk that things are hopeless, because I think that there are some positive dynamics and there are some negative dynamics and we have to see how this shakes out. But I will say that there is a belief that they are taking this more seriously, that they are resourcing this war appropriately, that the people in charge on the military side are the right people, they've got the smartest people in the military doing it, after years of "underresourcing" the war, and that's a military term for saying you didn't have enough there.

Two commanders ago, General [Dan Kelly] McNeill gave his last public speech in Afghanistan, taking Washington to task for not caring about Afghanistan. There was a shift in focus to Iraq. He basically said we don't have enough resources here and you can't expect us to win a war if you don't give us what we need. And so they're doing that, and some would argue, well, it's too late. But there is a strategy in place and being carried out that they hope by the end of the year they will have not defeated the Taliban, but will have beaten back Taliban influence enough to establish local control and get Afghan security forces and police forces in these local territories to get the locals convinced that they're here to stay. Now, you've got the Karzai problem, which you raised, right? Frankly, there is a lot of concern in Washington that Karzai is hopeless, I guess I'd put it that way. No, there is a camp that believes the United States should no longer be supporting him. There is another view in the government that this guy was elected and he is all that there is.

You started out where President Obama wanted to have a different approach than President Bush. President Bush used to have weekly video conferences with Karzai as well as President [Nuri Kamal al-] Maliki of Iraq. It was very personal diplomacy, and Obama wanted to do the opposite and say you don't deal with me directly, you deal with my people, you deal with the ambassador in Kabul, and take a hands-off approach. And I think that the Obama administration is realizing that was not the right approach. Some of his advisors have actually told the President that you may not like it but you've got to be present and you've got to be in their face, specifically Karzai's face, and if you want to get him to change and get what you want from him, you've got to repeatedly ask. And I think that's a bit of a shift that we're seeing right now, and we'll see whether that works.

Now, I didn't mean to give short shrift to the poppy issue, which is a major issue. I was looking at the time and I was thinking, how am I going to deal with all this stuff, so I'm glad you raised it.

I was there in 2004 and I spent a couple of weeks with the Special Forces, a Green Beret team out in eastern Afghanistan, and it was amazing. I mean, the base where we were situated was surrounded by miles and miles of poppy fields, and you had this Green Beret team that would walk through the poppy fields every day on the way to their missions. You'd talk to them and they would say, "Frankly, our job here is not to get people to get rid of opium. We've got other things to do. We're a small team, these are people, this is their livelihood. It's going to take something a lot bigger than us." And they would go to local farmers and hand out flyers and say, "OK, next year you're going to plant wheat, right?" And they would say, "Yes, we're going to plant wheat." And it didn't happen, of course, not when there's such an economic incentive to plant poppies. And so there's a very serious concern in the intelligence community that Afghanistan could become a narco state, and that it is fueling the corruption that seems to be rampant in the Karzai government. I probably answered your questions only partially, but I couldn't go further or I'd get fired.

Question. What would you judge is the residual level of our interest in Afghanistan if the al-Qaeda leadership is either killed, captured, or turns up in a third country? And secondly, could you just say a word about the relationship between the fundamentalist Shi'a regime in Iran and the fundamentalist Sunni Taliban?

Mark Mazzetti. Good questions. This was a big part of the debate last fall inside the Obama administration before they announced that their new strategy was, do we really care about the Taliban? Or do we just care that the Taliban is aligned with al-Qaeda, and al-Qaeda is what we really worry about because they have the ability to attack the United States and attack western Europe, and if there was no al-Qaeda would we really care? It's a very legitimate question, because we're a long way from the early days after 9/11 when we were hoping, and there were public statements about, transforming Afghanistan into a democracy and making it a bastion of civil liberties. I don't think that's what the expectation is any more. But I think that there is at least a baseline understanding that even if the top al-Qaeda leadership were killed, they fled to Yemen, or they fled to Somalia, there would still be an interest in at least making sure the Karzai government or the Afghan government is competent enough, and primarily that their security forces could beat back a kind of threat in the future.

So it's not just a question of get al-Qaeda and go home. I think part of the strategy that McChrystal has laid out is really ensuring that you can leave

Afghanistan with a credible security force and that will prevent the pre-9/11 Afghanistan. In Pakistan, though, you go back to this question of what if sanctuary is going to continue in Pakistan? Afghan troops can't go over the border into Pakistan, and basically Pakistan's government goes hot and cold about whether they want to launch military operations into their own tribal areas. So even if the United States were to leave Afghanistan with credible security forces, there is the big question of whether that threat could materialize on the Pakistani side of the border like it had up to a point in 2008. So I think that there are lingering interests, although I think that the Obama administration will take less than the Bush administration would have taken in its early days to declare victory, I guess, to put it that way.

Your question about Iran and the Taliban is an interesting one. Yes, there's an ideological difference. There are religious differences. The military intelligence officials I talk to say that there has been support, there have been weapons shipments over the western border into Afghanistan to help the Taliban. It's an alliance of interests. Iran is trying to weaken the United States where it can in both Iraq and Afghanistan, so they'll even work with the Taliban, who are historically their enemies, to do it. But I don't get the sense that this is foremost on the minds of American commanders, that what Iran is doing over there in western Afghanistan is really a game changer in terms of making the Taliban a lot stronger.

Question. Pakistan has recently changed the name of the northwest frontier provinces to something akin to Pashtun, and I wonder if you see that as a significant step on their part?

Mark Mazzetti. I was actually there when this was happening and I spoke to the governor of the northwest frontier province, who said the change is because there's this air of British imperialism to the term northwest frontier province, which is what it was, it was the frontier of the British empire, beyond which was essentially the crazy tribal lands. Peshawar, the city in western Pakistan, was the edge. It's really a fascinating place. There's a fort on a mountain in Peshawar where the British garrison was and the Pakistani garrison is now, and it's really the edge of what was the British Empire and it is now the edge of Pakistani government control.

So why the name change? I don't know whether it has anything to do with a bid to have Pashtun nationalism or to ingratiate themselves with the Pashtuns on the other side of the border, but I do think that there is a belief by the Pakistani government that you have to appeal to the Pashtuns wherever they may be. And, where they are is southwest Pakistan, southeastern Afghanistan. And this Pashtun belt that some called Pashtunistan is the way for Pakistan to influence what's going on on the other side of the border, and they will continue to do that. And I think, when I talked about the end game, that the settlement they would probably accept is even if it's not called Taliban influence over the south, it is Pashtun influence over large parts of southern Afghanistan, which really would mean Pakistani influence as well; I think that's how they see it. Because President Karzai's government is made up of a lot of non-Pashtuns who are Hazars and Tajiks who are from the north and they don't like each other at all. The Pakistanis believe that the Indians are influencing the Tajiks, the Hazars, the rest of Karzai's government. And there are ties with the Indians historically. So, again, it's another place where the new Great Game of Pakistan and India is being played out in Afghanistan.

Question. Sir, I admire not only your reporting, but your courage as well because of the danger involved in reporting these days. My question is about American policy for military personnel in places like Afghanistan and certainly in Iraq. My impression was that the rule regarding tours of duty is that you serve for one year and then you go home. And it struck me that if you really need to get into the minds and hearts of the local people, learn what the people are about, make friendships with the local sheiks, and negotiate, that this doesn't make sense. Can you share your thoughts on this?

Mark Mazzetti. There's a lot of concern. You're right that they basically do one-year tours, but they extended the tours in Iraq and Afghanistan to 15 months. I believe that was the longest period of time. Secretary [Robert] Gates did it because they didn't have enough people. So the longest was 15 months, and they thought that was the longest they could do without breaking the army and the marine corps and basically having a mass exodus from the volunteer military. But there is a lot of concern and a lot of complaints from people in the region rotating out. They say, I'm finally understanding how this place works and now I leave. So then they have to have this elaborate changeover, which the military does well. I mean, they bring someone in, the new guy comes for six weeks, and the guy rotating out introduces him to all the local leaders and important people and gives him a feel for the job. But it is at most only a six-week transition. And there's a lot of knowledge that goes out, that gets on the plane and goes back to the United States, leaving the new group to start from scratch, to some extent.

Of course, the only alternative really is to go to a draft. I mean, if you want to have a volunteer military and maintain it and make sure that people maintain family lives and all that, and reenlist, you're going to have to do that. Or you're going to have an exodus and you're not going to have anyone to send to fight. And there's no movement that I hear toward a draft, so my guess is that that's going to be the way it's going to be for awhile.

Question. Thank you for coming. I appreciate your insights. I give you the rhetorical question, does the U.S. presence in Afghanistan support [General Ashfaq Parvez] Kayani in convincing himself that the Taliban in Pakistan is more critical to the stability of Pakistan than is the threat from India in Kashmir? Kayani is an interesting guy because he's a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College. He's been around. And quite frankly, right now we have two Pakistani officers, one of them just won the essay award at Leavenworth this year, but we have had Pakistani officers in the United States military education system for a long time until we tilted toward India. But this is a rhetorical question.

Mark Mazzetti. I think that there's a lot of attention and effort that gets put toward figuring out what Kayani thinks. For those who don't know, General Kayani is the senior military officer in Pakistan. He's in charge of the armed forces; he really runs the ISI, although there is a general in charge of the ISI. He's a former head of the ISI, so it makes him basically the most powerful person in Pakistan. And to your question, he has said publicly that we can no longer distinguish between Pakistani Taliban and Afghan Taliban. So in other words, the Afghan Taliban, to be clear, are the ones fighting in Afghanistan whose leadership, as I said, is based in Pakistan. The Pakistani Taliban, however, are kind of a whole other group. They're the ones who have been responsible for attacks inside Pakistan, believed to have killed Benazir Bhutto, believed responsible for a number of really significant suicide bombings in Islamabad and Peshawar, including the Marriott Hotel bombing in Islamabad. And so this group is the one Pakistani officials are really worried about, and this is the group the Pakistani army is going into the mountains to fight.

So can you distinguish between the two, and does the U.S. presence convince him of anything? I think he is concerned that the old Pakistan policy of using one group and fighting another, especially when they're all in the same area and drawing from the same pool, is probably fruitless. He probably sees a losing strategy of trying to have the Afghan Taliban as their proxy force while

the Pakistani Taliban are the ones they're trying to kill. He's a smart guy and it does seem that he does believe that. But at the same time this probably doesn't mean that they're going to cut all ties to the Afghan Taliban, again because the Afghan Taliban are going to be very essential for their future influence. I don't know if I've quite answered your question, but I think that the Kayani mindset is basically in many ways the most important thing for the United States to figure out. And he's the most important person for the United States to influence because he will shape the strategy for whether Pakistan does in fact take more guys like Mullah Baradar and arrest them or whether he sets Mullah Baradar free to go back to do what he was doing before.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Thank you very much, Mark, for helping us navigate this difficult subject.

Obama's War *on* Terror

Peter Baker

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Peter Baker, who has been covering the White House for over 20 years, has reported on the American presidency since his earliest days as a journalist. After two decades with the *Washington Post,* Baker is now a White House Correspondent for the *New York Times* and a contributing writer to the *New York Times Magazine.* In between stints at the White House, Baker and his wife, Susan Glasser, spent four years as Moscow Bureau Chiefs, an experience that later led to the writing of a 2005 book titled, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution.* He is also the author of the best-selling book, *The Breach: Inside the Impeachment and Trial of William Jefferson Clinton,* based on his years covering the Clinton presidency. Educated at Oberlin College, Baker has been widely recognized for his work and he frequently appears before various media outlets. Please welcome Peter Baker.

Peter Baker. This is a great crowd today. I really appreciate everybody being here. I'm not used to being on this side of the microphone—I much prefer being on the other side—so try to bear with me. Thank you for your hospitality; it's a great honor to be here. I grew up here in Virginia and, in fact, applied to UVA [the University of Virginia], so it only took 26 years to get here. I'm going to call my mom when I leave the podium to tell her I finally made it. But actually, I've always felt quite at home here at Mr. [Thomas] Jefferson's University. I covered Virginia for a number of years for the *Post* and for the *Washington Times.* I covered a certain number of people who may be in this room; hopefully, all good stories, or at least hopefully they've forgotten the bad ones. So it's a great honor for me to be here and I appreciate it.

When I think of Mr. Jefferson, I always think about what he used to say about my particular profession. He had a lot of wise things to say about a lot of different things, but he once said, "Were it left to me to decide whether or not we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without

a government, we should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter." He also once said, "Where the press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe." Now, those get quoted a lot, especially by people in my business, to sort of justify what we do. What we often forget to mention is what he said after he was President and he had had a chance to deal with the White House Press Corps, even in those times. He revised his opinion but he said, "The man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers." And he didn't even know what the Internet was like. He came to understand, of course, what all 44 presidents have understood, which is that it's not always much fun to have a press corps following you around day in or day out. As I said, there was no Internet or *Politico* or cable news in Tom's time. Imagine what Sean Hannity or Keith Olbermann would do with Sally Hemings. But some things are universal, and the relationship between the press and the President is one that is important, I think, in our society. It's one where we have multiple responsibilities both to try to explain to the public at large what a President is trying to do, what his actions amount to, what his motivations may or may not be, what his successes and mistakes are, and also to hold a President accountable to the ideas and the promises that he has made or expresses in the actions that he takes.

As Cristina said, I've covered the White House now for three administrations; this is the third President I've covered. Each of them is different, though some things are universal. I was asked to talk today specifically about President [Barack] Obama and the War on Terror, which, of course, seems particularly timely again, given the events in New York's Times Square not too long ago. That reminded us of what is still actually an ever-present threat and perhaps even an evolving and changing and more dangerous threat in a lot of ways. The Times Square attempted bombing was actually the most recent in a whole series of would-be attacks here on American soil, none of which, fortunately, have been successful, but all of which are suggesting that the war is evolving. The people who are attempting these attacks are not even just al-Qaeda, but other groups along the way that we hadn't thought could project the kind of violence that they're seeking to project here, to our own country. That takes us into a war that's evolving in an unpredictable way, in a new era, with a new President, who is trying to figure out the right way to recalibrate what's been going on in the last eight years, while keeping both the country safe and, in his view, returning to some of the American values that he believes were lost or stretched during the last eight years.

The Times Square case was interesting. Of course, it took 53 hours for law enforcement officials to catch Faisal Shahzad and less than 53 minutes for Washington to engage in its normal polarized and political debate about who's responsible and what went wrong, and how this War on Terror should be conducted. We called it "The War Over Terror." Almost immediately after Faisal Shahzad was in custody, you saw critics like John McCain and Peter King, the Republican Congressman from New York, criticizing President Obama because Shahzad was read his Miranda rights after several hours of questioning, which they thought was a bad idea that the more important priority at that moment had to be getting information about any potential attacks in the future, not preserving testimony that could be used in a court of law later. Ironically, it turned out to be—of all people—Glenn Beck, who took the other side and defended the administration and said no, that's not right; you have to Mirandize this guy, he's an American citizen. That's what the Constitution says and we don't shred the Constitution simply because it's popular. So that was very interesting. Odd bed fellows in terms of political allies at that point.

Senator Joe Lieberman came up with his own solution. He says, "OK, fine, let's take away American citizenship from people like Faisal Shahzad, who have been linked to foreign terrorists, who have been accused of providing material comfort or sponsoring attacks at the behest of foreign terrorists." Now, that sounds like quite a step, doesn't it? And I think it got a lot of people all worked up, but if you think about it, his point of view was American law already says you lose your citizenship if you join a foreign military that's at war with the United States. Is it any different, in this day and age, to join the Pakistani Taliban in launching attacks on American soil? These are all complicated, difficult, and torturous issues, really, if you'll pardon the pun, not intended. I mean, this is really a situation in which you have a lot of very good faith disagreement about what the right balance is in this country, layered on top of this very heated, polarized, political, opportunistic kind of debate. Unfortunately, the loudest voices in this debate often tend to be the ones that are heard the most, and the complexity and the nuances are often lost, and the details are often lost. So let's spend a little time unpacking the details if we can. Let's talk about what President Obama's policies really are when it comes to the War on Terror, because once we understand what they are, then we have a better chance, a more informed opportunity, to judge whether they are wise or foolish or somewhere in between.

Barack Obama, of course, was inaugurated as the first President to take office in this new age of terrorism, if we count the post-9/11 period as sort of the

beginning of a different moment in our history. He inherited two struggles. One was with al-Qaeda and its associated extremist groups, and another is one that divides our own country over issues like torture and prosecution, interrogation, security, and what it means to be an American. The first of those two struggles has turned out to be very complicated and daunting, and the second one makes the first one look easy.

This danger of terrorism was brought home to President Obama at the very moment he was taking office. The night before he's about to go up to the Hill, to take the oath on the Bible with the Chief Justice and a million people there on the mall, he's told that the intelligence agencies are tracking what seems to be a very viable and frightening threat by Somali terrorists who are supposed to be coming over the border from Canada with a plot to explode bombs on the mall during the inauguration. Now imagine that; I mean, the most symbolic moment of our democracy, the passing of power from one party to the other, the thing that makes a democracy great, the peaceful transfer of power, would be the target of violence and disruption. And even if the President were kept safe by the Secret Service, which of course had come up with all sorts of good safeguards for his protection, just the very image of such an attack, even a failed attack, would be devastating, especially to a new President taking over office in this moment of uncertainty. So even as the country was preparing for this celebration of a new President, the new President's team—Hillary Clinton, Jim Jones, and so forth—were meeting secretly in the Situation Room with President [George W.] Bush's outgoing team—Steve Hadley, Condi [Condoleezza] Rice and so forth—and together they worked to try to figure out what to do about this threat, what were the right responses to the possibility that this could happen. Now, it turned out not to be a real thing; fortunately, it was a false alarm. It was what the intelligence officials call a "poison pen," in which one group of radicals apparently tries to rat out another group of radicals to get us to take them out. It's kind of a clever idea if you think about it. You're one group of Somalis, you want to get rid of the other ones, so just plant the information out there and get the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] to go round them up. But what it really did was bring home, I think, to this new administration, from the very birth of its presidency, what is at stake here in America these days, and the nature of this threat and how complicated it is that you never know what's real, what's not, what's just chatter, what's about to actually take place. It's a cliché but it's true: the terrorist only has to be right once; we have to be right 100 percent of the time. So the minute you let down your guard is the minute you've let something happen.

He [Obama] inherited two struggles. One was with al-Qaeda and its associated extremist groups, and another is one that divides our own country over issues like torture and prosecution, interrogation, security, and what it means to be an American.

…President Obama came into office and basically adopted the strategy that was left for him in the Oval Office, and then tried to shave off what he thought were the extremes.

Since then, of course, we've had some very real threats, not just the Times Square bomber, as we talked about, but the underwear bomber at Christmas. We had Najibullah Zazi, who was plotting an attack in New York; David Coleman Headley, who was an American accused of aiding the Mumbai terrorist attacks. We had Major [Nidal] Hasan, the Army psychologist who killed some of his fellow soldiers down at Fort Hood, Texas. We had a group of Somali-American teenagers going over to Somalia to join the jihad there; and some Pakistani-American teenagers from right here in northern Virginia going over to Pakistan to train with the Taliban. And what all of this suggests is that if President Obama or any of us who hoped that the threat was going away—after all this time, after all this expenditure of money and all this blood and treasure we've invested in trying to decapitate or defeat al-Qaeda and its allies—it's not gone. It has gotten closer than ever before. And most disturbing of all is that many of these new would-be attackers are, like Faisal Shahzad, American citizens, which makes it that much harder for us to figure out the right way to approach it.

So what is President Obama's strategy for this War on Terror? Well, if you listen to critics, it's either a dangerous reversal of the Bush years or a dangerous consolidation of the Bush years. It's interesting to listen. In fact, when you really look at what he did, President Obama came into office and basically adopted the strategy that was left for him in the Oval Office, and then tried to shave off what he thought were the extremes. In the process, of course, you drew simultaneous fire from Vice President [Richard "Dick"] Cheney and from the American Civil Liberties Union. That, by the way, is no easy task,

but I think that put President Obama right where he likes to be, which is splitting the difference on a tough issue and presenting it as a course of reasoned judgment rather than dogmatic ideology. Where President Bush saw black and white, President Obama sees gray. Where President Bush favored swagger, President Obama is searching for a more supple blend of force and intellect. While President Bush saw Islamic extremism as a rather existential threat to our country, much like Nazism or Communism, President Obama thinks that warps the situation out of proportion and plays into the terrorist's hands by elevating them into such a threat that they alter the nature of our society, even if they don't successfully attack us.

With high unemployment and issues like health care and energy or Wall Street regulation dominating his agenda, President Obama didn't want his presidency to be about the War on Terror, the way he feels it captured President Bush's presidency. But notice he doesn't give a lot of public speeches about it; he doesn't talk about. He doesn't even like the phrase "War on Terror." The nation is at war with al-Qaeda, he likes to say, but not with terror; terror is a tactic, it's not an enemy. He views terrorism as a challenge, but not the challenge of our age. Now, this may be a rational approach, but what it has done is created a perception among some people who are more skeptical, who are of the idea that maybe he doesn't truly understand how dangerous this is. So that's why you hear this conversation about, does President Obama understand that we're at war? Does he take this as seriously as he ought to? Obviously some of this is politics; some of this, I think, is genuine concern on the part of people who spent the last eight years building up the defenses against a tough and elusive enemy. It is what one of his former advisors called the "mood music," sort of the choice of language, the outreach to Muslims, rhetorical at least, fidelity with the idea of rule of law, a shift in tone. To be sure, he's made some important policy changes as well, but they haven't been as radical as some people thought they may be, either wanted to be, or feared they would be. Instead, it's been more of an evolution rather than a revolution.

What many people miss is that the War on Terror actually had already changed significantly by the end of President Bush's second term, under pressure from the Supreme Court, from Congress, from the news media revelations about things. President Bush had already trimmed back some of his most expansive assertions of executive power, some of his most controversial programs. By the time President Obama was inaugurated, for instance, there hadn't been any waterboarding for years. For all the debate about it today, President Bush

wasn't having anybody undergo waterboarding in his second term either. President Bush had ordered the secret CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] prisons that were so controversial closed. The warrantless surveillance program that was so controversial, the military commissions that were so controversial, were sent to Congress and negotiated out with lawmakers and finally passed with bipartisan votes. President Obama in fact, as a Senator, supported the legislation authorizing the warrantless surveillance program that we currently have in place today. President Bush even wanted to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay. He didn't succeed. It turned out to be much harder than his people had hoped, but along the way, his people did release or transfer 500 of the prisoners who were at Guantanamo. So they took the first step toward the goal that President Obama would later adopt.

When President Obama came along, he continued this evolution. He formally banned the interrogation methods that were now out of favor. He set a one-year deadline to close Guantanamo. Obviously, that didn't prove to be any easier to do on his watch than it did on President Bush's watch, for a lot of reasons that we can talk about. President Obama left the surveillance program intact; he embraced the Patriot Act. He retained the authority to use renditions—this is where we go and snatch people from another country that we think are connected to terrorism and bring them back here or to some other country. He embraced some of President Bush's claims to state secrets in a lot of these court fights. He preserved the military commissions; he preserved the national security letters that he criticized so strongly on the campaign trail, although he added more due process safeguards; and he still plans to hold dozens of suspected terrorists either at Guantanamo or some other place, indefinitely, without trial, because his people have concluded, as the Bush people did, that there was no way to try these people but they're also too dangerous to release. This is controversial, obviously, and something he's had to struggle with, but that's the conclusion he's come to. And, of course, for all the discussion about whether he's weak or tough, he expanded President Bush's campaign of drone strikes in the Pakistani tribal areas; in fact, they've had three times as many drone strikes in the Obama presidency as they had in the Bush presidency. And he has tripled, or is tripling, the troop presence in Afghanistan.

Even after this Times Square case, you saw the administration propose a fascinating thing, where they said they were going to scale back Miranda rights in cases of suspected terrorism. This is an interesting switch because, of course, when they came under attack for reading Miranda rights to Umar Abdulmutallab

at Christmas or Faisal in the last few weeks, the administration dismissed the concerns saying, well, we got everything we needed to know from old-fashioned interrogation techniques. We don't have a problem with reading Miranda rights to these guys. But then suddenly they said, well, let's change the law so that we don't have to.

And, of course, questions were raised: Well, why do you need the switch? Which is it? Either you get what you need under the old system, the current system, or you're not getting what you need under the old system; so there's been kind of a conflict there. So, for President Obama, this is all a work in progress. You get the sense of somebody who is literally learning on the job when it comes to this issue, as any President probably would, as President Bush did. This is certainly not what President Bush came to office prepared to confront and, arguably, President Obama, while having more knowledge about what was going to happen when he took over, could never be fully prepared for what would be on his desk when he actually became President. It's a wonderful thing to intellectualize a threat like this. It's another thing to wake up every morning and get the Oval Office briefing on the threats that had been recorded overnight.

One time I went out to the National Counterterrorism Center in northern Virginia. I went into their operations center, and they have these screens everywhere. It kind of looks like the set of *24,* if you watch that, where Jack Bauer and the team are watching threats. It's just a little like that: all over the world, all these different streams of information are coming together, any one of which could be the thing that they really should pay attention to, and the vast majority of it is absolute bunk. Figuring out the difference between the two is never easy.

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Think about where we are today. When you hear President Obama talk about terrorism, he makes sure, these days, to emphasize that he knows that we're at war. He's retreated from the idea of putting the 9/11 plotters on trial in New York. Think about what would have

happened had Faisal Shahzad actually bought the right fertilizer, or if Umar Abdulmutallab had figured out how to make his underwear go off. It's crazy, right? It's crazy, but think about what our society would be like today had either of these things happened. Had any of these attacks that have been tried in the last few months succeeded, we would be a different country today. We would be looking at this problem a little differently today, and there would be an uproar, I guarantee it, in the political sphere, about what should be done, what the rules of the game should be, what it means, who is at fault, and all of these things. And it would also be a very different presidency for President Obama.

At dinner last night, I was sitting next to a former Democratic Party chairman who said that if even one of these attacks is ever successful, it's a whole new ball game as a matter of politics for this presidency, because Democrats have a particular issue with national security that Republicans don't, fairly or unfairly. It's part of the history of our recent politics. And so you could argue that President Obama and the country are just sitting there, waiting with baited breath every day to see whether what we're doing now is good enough and what the right trade-offs are, and how do we live with a threat that isn't going away but be true to our American ideals at the same time? I think I'll leave it at that, and maybe we can just open up for some questions.

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Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Recently you wrote an interesting piece on the relationship between Chief Justice [John] Roberts and President Obama, and their struggle to define the proper role of government in American society, which of course is at the heart of some of these terror debates. Can you discuss this, as well as Obama's nomination of Elena Kagan as the next Supreme Court Justice, and what this may mean in terms of some terror court issues coming forward?

Peter Baker. That's a great question. More so than last year, when President Obama nominated Sonia Sotomayor, he has focused this year on what he perceived to be the obstacle or the challenge of the Roberts Court. A Citizens United case in February, where the Court ruled that corporate spending in

elections amounts to free speech, and therefore the government can't restrict it the way it had been, was a sea change as far as President Obama and his people were concerned. It woke them up to the idea that this Court is willing to be assertive in its view of jurisprudence, and that its view is probably not going to be necessarily friendly to some of the things that President Obama wants to do. It's very conceivable that his health care plan, or aspects of his health care plan, the regulations that he wants to put on Wall Street, if they were ever to pass a climate change bill, a cap-and-trade type of bill—these types of initiatives are going to form the legacy, he hopes, of his presidency, and they could end up before the Supreme Court, and he hopes that the Supreme Court might be willing to reverse them. We've had this happen in history, of course. We've had struggles between presidents and the Supreme Court over the direction of the country, most notably—I think everybody remembers FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] and the court packing scheme, where the conservative court rejected any New Deal initiatives and President Roosevelt tried to overcome that by expanding the Supreme Court and packing it with his own appointees. I don't think we're at that stage, but you heard the President this time, in the State of the Union Address, directly challenge the Supreme Court, with the Justices in the audiences, in a very direct way. This is something you don't hear or see every day. And so as he's thinking about this appointment, as he's going to push for Elena Kagan as his Justice, he was looking for somebody who could help form majorities to counter Chief Justice Roberts. Not somebody who will be a [Justice Antonin] Scalia for the left, as liberals often put it; not somebody who is going to write minority dissents; but somebody who is going to be able to win over, particularly, Justice [Anthony] Kennedy, who is seen as the swing vote on the Court, who is going to be one of the five, not one of the four, as some of his people put it.

Terrorism is a great example of where the Court has weighed in, in the last few years, and will continue to weigh in, I think, in these future years. The Court said, even during Bush's tenure, that the administration's claims to executive power went too far, and that prisoners at Guantanamo can't have any access to Court to challenge their detention. It said that the military commissions that he had devised were not adequately put together. And I think you're going to see more challenges. The Obama administration is in the position of actually defending a lot of what President Bush had put into place. That's going to be a very interesting, years-long process as the country, through this executive-legislative-judicial tug-of-war, figures out the balance that it's willing to live with when it comes to security and civil liberties.

Question. I have a question about Miranda. Instead of ripping away citizenship, kind of formlessly, without any real standards, why isn't there a clearer standard we can set about when Miranda rights need to be or should be invoked in terror cases?

Peter Baker. Right. In fact, you're exactly right, sir. Of course, when they first had Faisal Shahzad in custody, they did interrogate him for a couple of hours, at least, under this public safety exception, the idea that maybe he knew about something that was going to happen immediately. When they determined that he did not, that's when they read him the Miranda rights. It's a good question as to how you define that. That's something that is fuzzy and that Congress might want to look at, to try to figure out what are the parameters, what qualifies imminent threat. Does it have to be something that is the next hour, the next 24 hours? Is it enough that he might know about something that would happen a month from now? Or simply that he knows the location of people who are plotting to do things to us generally, if not necessarily by the end of this particular day? I wouldn't be surprised if you see something along those lines. The administration is now open to having that conversation. Of course, the real test of this is something that's hard to judge, because we don't have the information about what it is that these folks have said to interrogators when they have been mirandized, as opposed to what they say when they're not. At some point, I think somebody's going to do a fascinating study as to what are the best interrogation methods that we have explored in these last few years, what works and what doesn't.

Miranda, of course, doesn't stop us from interrogating them. It simply says that we can't use the evidence, in a court, that we might have gained prior to reading him his rights. Some people argue, in this case, by the way, that we had enough evidence against the guy that we didn't need his confession. We didn't need him to say a word. We had enough evidence to try him, so forget about worrying about whether his statements are going to be admissible. Just interrogate him; just get as much information as you can out of him. It turns out that he's kind of a chatterbox. It seems like he's talking a good deal. In fact, when the customs agents came on that plane at JFK [John F. Kennedy Airport] to take him away, they said apparently the way this happened was they literally just called his name over the loud speaker, "Faisal Shahzad, please come to the front of the plane." He grabbed his backpack and simply went to the front of the plane. And he says, "Are you FBI?" The guy says no. "Are you CIA?" "No." He says, "Customs and border protection?" And he says, "Well, what took you so long? I was waiting for you." I think this guy kind of

wanted to be caught, or at least he doesn't seem to be objecting to the idea of talking and telling his story. But I don't know if we can count on that with every interrogation, so maybe a more systematized set of rules would make everything better for the interrogators as well as reassuring the country that we're doing what we need to do.

Question. My comment is not meant as a criticism, but at the very end of your remarks, I thought there was a bit of an apocalyptic tone in reference to what would happen if another terrorist attack were successful on U.S. soil. Now, I'm not talking about a 9/11-scale attack but a car bomb that killed 50 or 100 people, a bridge blow-up. After 9/11 I think we began to believe that we were going to be pretty safe. But I think recent events have shown that we're not very safe, and to the degree that I'm certain that something is going to be successful, what role do you think the administration and the press have in educating the public that some things can happen and if they do, this is not the end of our society if it does?

Peter Baker. Well, I didn't mean to sound apocalyptic, and if I did, I apologize. But I do agree with you though. It certainly would seem logical or inevitable that we're going to have a successful attack of some sort, not necessarily a 9/11 scale. It actually has been unfathomable to me that in the almost nine years since 9/11, these guys have not tried these more garden-variety attacks like the Times Square incident. I mean, I have to say, nobody has ever fully given me a good explanation about why that hasn't happened. You don't need to have four planes hit major targets to create terror.

It certainly would seem logical or inevitable that we're going to have a successful attack of some sort, not necessarily a 9/11 scale. It actually has been unfathomable to me that in the almost nine years since 9/11, these guys have not tried these more garden-variety attacks like the Times Square incident.

I was in New York the day of the Times Square incident and I was scared. Just the thought that it could happen any time, anywhere, even in small doses, would genuinely send a ripple across this country and it would be interesting to see how we recover from it. We don't have the attitude that Israelis have, for instance. I lived in Moscow during a period where there was more terrorist activity actually in Russia than there was in any other place in the world at that time, even more than Israel during one of the intifadas, because of the Chechnyans blowing up things. You saw recently that the Chechnyans blew up a subway train in Moscow. That was happening with great regularity when we were living there. They blew up two planes in the middle of the sky simultaneously at one point. Does anybody even remember that? No, they don't remember that. Two suicide bombers got on two Russian planes at the same time, within five minutes of each other, that brought them both down. And the reason we don't remember that, by the way, is because within a week, Chechnyan terrorists took over a school in southern Russia and ended up slaughtering a lot of children. So I've been in a place like what you're talking about, where this kind of thing becomes part of the fabric of life, and it changes society. Now, Russians have a certain stoicism about life and death that I don't think—if I can overgeneralize—we do. Do we have a responsibility to try to prepare the country for that? I think in a way we do. I don't know how to get that across or to tell people that yes, we may have a car bomb once every month or two, don't worry too much about it. It's a hard message to get across, right? Especially if they were to do it outside the Acela corridor, right outside the New York/Washington access. I've always been struck that if they went to Tulsa or Dubuque or places in the heartland, what a chilling effect that would have on us, the idea that it could happen everywhere; that it isn't only in these big places with big targets that it could happen. Fortunately, they haven't; and I think at least part of that is that we have to be grateful to the people who work every day to stop that from happening.

It's going to be luck in some cases. It was luck in the case of Faisal Shahzad not being able to make it work. But that also showed the law enforcement people how tremendously talented they are in figuring out who did it and figuring out where to get him, even if they lost him briefly, before he left the country; that's a remarkable piece of work. But I think you're right. I think that it's hard to imagine President Obama's presidency ending, especially if he goes for eight years, without something happening that will challenge our public perceptions of how we look at security in our country.

Question. I'm impressed by your writing and also your speaking, so thank you very much for being here. After I read your article last week, I again looked at the talk that President Obama gave at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony and, frankly, I was equally disappointed in reading it again, because he basically defended the use of force using the "Just War Theory." I thought that he blew a big chance to begin a discussion of a new way of looking at terrorism and even at war. Is there any discussion that you can pick up in his administration

of looking at terrorism and war in general in a whole different light? Because I think we're still using the old Dick Cheney approach.

Peter Baker. It could be all of the above. I think it's a great question, and it gets at the heart of a real dynamic one within this administration. I don't think they're trying to, at the moment, or at least they're not discussing the wholesale change in philosophy. I think that they came into office, no matter what they said on the campaign trail, with the idea of "mend, not end." Do you remember President Clinton's formulation for affirmative action? They wanted to fix the Bush counterterrorism strategy, not reverse the Bush counterterrorism strategy. Are they intimidated by Vice President Cheney? They would say no. Vice President Cheney, of course, is deeply unpopular, not a figure who can necessarily rally great public support. But on the other hand, Vice President Cheney has a powerful voice and he certainly speaks for a segment of the public that the President and his people worry about. As I said at one point, Democrats have the curse, I think, of being viewed as weak on national defense, and so sometimes I think they want to bend over backward to show that they're not. There's that instinct.

The fellow I had dinner with last night, a former Democratic chairman, said that if the same thing happened on a Republican watch that happens on a Democratic watch, the reactions would be different. And that may be the case, so I think he does worry about that. I think terrorism, to him and his people, is an issue that they don't want to dominate the agenda. They are not focused every day on it. When I say that, he's focused every day on it because he gets reports every day on it. He's looking and doing whatever he needs to do to make sure that the apparatus is trying to protect us. But it's not the dominant conversation in the White House. Health care, the economy, energy, Wall Street—these are the dominant themes of this White House. I think he's trying to make sure terrorism doesn't come up to become a problem, but I don't think he's spending his time rethinking the whole strategy, whether he should or not.

Question. Are renditions still happening, even though it's not the policy of the Obama administration, to continue those? Do you think they're still going on?

Peter Baker. Well, they specifically retain the authority. Remember, of course, that renditions are like when we go to the streets of Milan and take away a guy we think is a bad guy, and take him to Egypt, where they can interrogate him maybe a little less gently than we might. I don't know of any examples of that happening since Obama took office, but the administration has very explicitly said that we still think that we have the authority to do it. They have not renounced renditions as a whole, and they remind us that President Clinton used that authority from time to time as well, though not as prolifically, obviously, as the Bush administration did. So their view is that we have the authority to do it, it is a tool, but it shouldn't be overused; it shouldn't be abused as a regular tactic. It ought to be used only in the most extraordinary circumstances.

Question. Can you tell us what you know about the success of the coordination between various parts of the government? Do you have any examples that you could give us, of how this cooperation has prevented some events?

Peter Baker. The government is much more integrated in its fight against terrorism than it was nine years ago, there's no question about that. As I said, I visited the National Counterterrorism Center in McLean a few months ago, and they have people from the FBI, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Human Services, Customs—every agency you can think about are all housed together, and they do share a lot of information. A lot of the barriers to information-sharing have been broken down. But we saw, just at Christmas time, that there are still improvements to be made in that. I mean, we had information at the State Department about [Umar Farouk] Abdulmutallab, from his father, that never got to the people who would cancel his visa, which would allow him to get on a plane in the first place. It never got to the people at the airport, who could have looked at the name when it was on a passenger list. Those are things they're trying to fix now.

Do I have specific examples of whether they have? I don't cover them in the way that some of our intelligence reporters do. They would tell you of examples where cross-bureau, cross-agency cooperation have made a difference. I'm not as versed in the details of that as they are. I think catching Faisal Shahzad, though, suggests a certain degree of cooperation across agencies. In the end, the way they got him—was this guy was kind of smart, right? He took away the VIN number, the vehicle identification number, from the van he was using and paid for in cash. He used a burn phone, a prepaid cell phone with no registration, to make his calls. So he was trying to cover his tracks in that regard. Among the mistakes he made was that he took or made a call from the prepaid phone that he used, probably to one of his family members, and that phone number was registered in the phone. He also only got rid of the VIN on the top of the car; he didn't know that they also have it in the engine block. The FBI and police, of course, know that. They got that VIN number, traced it to the woman who sold it to him, went

to her, and she said, "Well, I don't know who he is but here's the phone number he used to call me." That phone number gave them the prepaid phone that he had. Then it wasn't that hard to figure out what calls were made by or to that prepaid phone. They put those phone numbers in the database and it pops up one hit. This is how close it came; it pops up one hit, one phone number. One phone number that called his phone, or he called, during the time period he used that throwaway phone. When he came back into the country from Pakistan in February—you know when you come in from other countries, airlines will ask you what's your emergency contact number? You put in the number for your wife, your husband, your parents, or your kids, and that phone number gets turned over to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and it's in a database. In his case, because he was coming from Pakistan, they did a secondary screening in which they asked him additional questions. They asked him where he'd been, who he had seen. All this information was put into a report routinely, not because they had any suspicion about him. It got put into a database at the Customs and Border Protection. So when this one number hits, this is how they discover who he is. They don't know who he is until that moment. They have a phone, they have a car, but they have no name. This number pops up, showing that it was given by a man named Faisal Shahzad when he came into the country in February. That's how they got him. So that's cross-agency cooperation with Customs and Border Protection, with the FBI, the New York Police Department, and the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Question. Would you please comment how we, as civilians, can help with identifying terrorists, and if we see a terrorist, what to do about it?

Peter Baker. Well, obviously, this situation in New York showed that eagle-eyed and public-spirited people have a new role to play in this country. For example, the two street vendors who noticed the van and noticed it was smoking and called over to a police officer. Hopefully, this won't be a situation in our everyday lives, where we need to look around us at all moments and think this guy could be a terrorist or this guy could be a terrorist. It's a hard balance to strike. You don't want to live in fear because then we've let them succeed, and yet you have to be aware of the possibilities, particularly in certain circumstances, that might come up. We've heard examples, of course, on planes, where people have noticed behavior by people, and then it turned out to be something very innocent. So there's a real hard line to figure between actual and possible. Am I going to call out somebody who probably is just tying his shoe and not actually about to set something off? Or do I risk being wrong and regretting it? We had the situation with a diplomat from Qatar recently on a plane who went to smoke in the bathroom. Now, you're not supposed to smoke in the bathroom so he's been kicked out of the country. We take our antismoking policy seriously. But he was confronted and he made the mistake of making a joke, and there's no joke to these flight attendants who live with this every day and I imagine must wonder, at any given moment, when the moment might come. I don't know that I have great advice. Patience, pay attention to your surroundings, but I don't think any of us should let it dominate the way we think about our world, because I think that would also be giving in to them, if that makes any sense.

Question. Many polls are now predicting that the opposition party will make significant gains in the off-year elections in November. If that is the case, which Cabinet members do you think will be the first to depart, and what policy changes could one look forward to?

Peter Baker. Wow. Which Cabinet members will depart? That's a good question. Even if the Democrats don't do too badly in the fall, it would not be surprising to see some transition after this election, because it's a very high burnout job. Rahm Emanuel, the White House Chief of Staff, I think he always imagined he would do it for about two years and then probably move on. I think David Axelrod, who is the President's Senior Advisor, had an understanding that he would stay for a couple of years, and then maybe if he left, his partner, David Plouffe, who helped run the campaign in 2008, might come into the White House in that capacity. So I think that's all possible. I think that's possible even if the election results aren't bad. If they are bad, it's going to be interesting to see.

President Obama hasn't shown a proclivity, at least publicly, toward pushing people out the door in moments of political crisis. When they do get pushed out, it's often quietly and months later, so it doesn't look like it's a reaction to something that might have happened. I can think of several examples of White House officials who have left the job with a certain degree of dignity in the sense that they were not literally told to pack up their offices on a given day. So it's not his nature to do that. Another possibility is Eric Holder, the Attorney General, who has been something of a lightning rod, for obvious reasons. But I haven't heard any specific chatter yet about individuals. I'll come back and let you know.

Question. President Obama left himself considerable wiggle room in setting his deadlines for getting out of Iraq and Afghanistan. How committed would you say he is to getting out of there by those deadlines?

Peter Baker. Well, I'd say on Iraq, he's pretty firm about it right now. The deadline is a twofold deadline: starting by August of this year, we are to pull out combat units and have only 50 thousand troops left that would mainly be purposed for advising and training and so forth. Now, these are still soldiers with guns, obviously. When we say combat troops are gone, these are still fighters. These guys can get in the thick of things. But it would be significantly less than the 140 thousand we had at the peak. So we would be down from 140 thousand at the peak, to 50 thousand by this August. He shows no sign of pulling back on that, even though, arguably, there are factors that have changed since his decision. When he had this schedule put in place, to get down to 50 thousand by August, it was predicated on the idea that the elections would be held in Iraq in December and that it would take a couple of months to figure out who won—even longer than Florida—and that we would want to keep enough troops around during that postelection and postgovernment period to make sure there was no vacuum that the bad guys could fill. Unfortunately, what's happened is the election wasn't held until March. It's now May and we still don't have a government. We're not likely to get a government for a while, possibly deep into summer, and so that time frame, the idea of having a substantial number of troops around long enough to make sure that transition worked out all right, is no longer really applicable, but he's sticking with the timetable anyway. I think their theory is that if you don't, you make it too easy on the Iraqis to punt, instead of coming up to the plate and making the decisions that need to be made and taking the responsibility they need to make. They've had some good successes lately in which Iraqi forces have led operations that have gotten some top figures in al-Qaeda in Iraq, so I think they're sticking to that schedule.

The second phase of that Iraq schedule is for all troops to be out by the end of 2011. Now, this is an agreement that we signed with the Iraqis under President Bush, actually, not under President Obama, but he has reaffirmed it. Whether we actually pull out all troops by the end of 2011, I think, is still an open question, because it wouldn't surprise me to see, after there is a new government, some discussion about whether or not some smaller force might want to stay in a longer-term capacity, much like we did in Korea or Germany or Japan, for a number of years. Hopefully not in actual combat situations, but more in a stability role. But at the moment, the rule is we have to leave by the end of 2011.

Afghanistan is different; it's very vague what he's promised there. His promise, after the decision to add an additional 30 thousand troops, was to begin withdrawing by July of 2011, but he didn't say what that means. That he could pull a squad out, and that would begin the withdrawal. There's no timetable for what that means, how long it would take, what pace it would take, when the final pullout might happen, and so that's a very vague and not very meaningful deadline at the moment. In fact, it's probably just a reflection of the fact that with this many troops, you'd have to begin to pull some out by that point. Just as in Iraq, we had to begin pulling out the surge troops after about 18 months, simply because we couldn't sustain the deployment that much longer. So I think Afghanistan is a very open question. I think he'd like to be down significantly by the time he's running for reelection, but that is a cauldron of animosity and uncertainty and tribal difference and violence. I wouldn't put money on it.

Question. I'd like to pick up on a question that was asked earlier. I thought I heard you say it would take one event of the Times Square type, which would lead to a political uproar. In your opinion, what type of an event or events would have to occur to lead to political consensus, which would move this up on Obama's list of priorities, which would allow us, for example, to define and codify the use of Miranda rights? Is it going to require an NBC [nuclear, biological, chemical] type of event?

Peter Baker. NBC, of course, meaning nuclear, biological, chemical attack. You know, that's an excellent question. What would it take to get us to come together? In this environment, it's hard to see right now. The atmosphere in Washington is toxic. It is absolutely—veterans will tell you—harsher today than it has been in a long time. Is it harsher than it's ever been? No, of course not. Let's remember that Mr. Jefferson was accused of all sorts of things when he was President, and he did all sorts of things himself to his enemies. So it's not unusual, or at least not unique, but it is very polarized at the moment, and I don't see much in the way of consensus when it comes to terrorism. I think there is a consensus at the moment about Afghanistan. Republicans supported President Obama's decision on Afghanistan; the liberals were unhappy about it, but they broadly, at least in Congress, swallowed their misgivings and went along with it. And there's more or less a consensus on Iraq right now because, again, it's a little easier when the fighting has subsided somewhat and there aren't as many casualties.

But on the question of terrorism, it's a visceral issue. It's something that really gets at people's guts. You either think these guys are bad and we have to do anything it takes to protect ourselves, or you think, wait a second, what happened to the Constitution? What happened to civil liberties? These are really visceral and powerful emotions that are held inside of us, and I think they are reflected in our

political system. So, would an NBC, would a real mass destruction event bring us together? We could hope that would be the response if something like that were to happen, and I guess we should hope it doesn't happen. I don't know. It's a good question.

Question. Your talk focused on counterterrorist efforts in this country, but how good is international cooperation between countries such as Pakistan and Yemen on counterterrorism issues?

Peter Baker. That's a great question. The answer is, yes and no. In some cases yes, in some cases no. The Obama administration is very optimistic that things are better now with the Pakistanis than they had been for a while. The Pakistanis seemed to have stepped up in some ways: they have sent troops into South Waziristan, they have rounded up a few people that we really wanted to have rounded up. But there are limits on that cooperation, even now, where the Pakistanis have a very difficult and delicate domestic political situation, where our drone strikes cause quite a good deal of civilian backlash, the idea that we can simply come into their country and shoot anybody we think we ought to shoot.

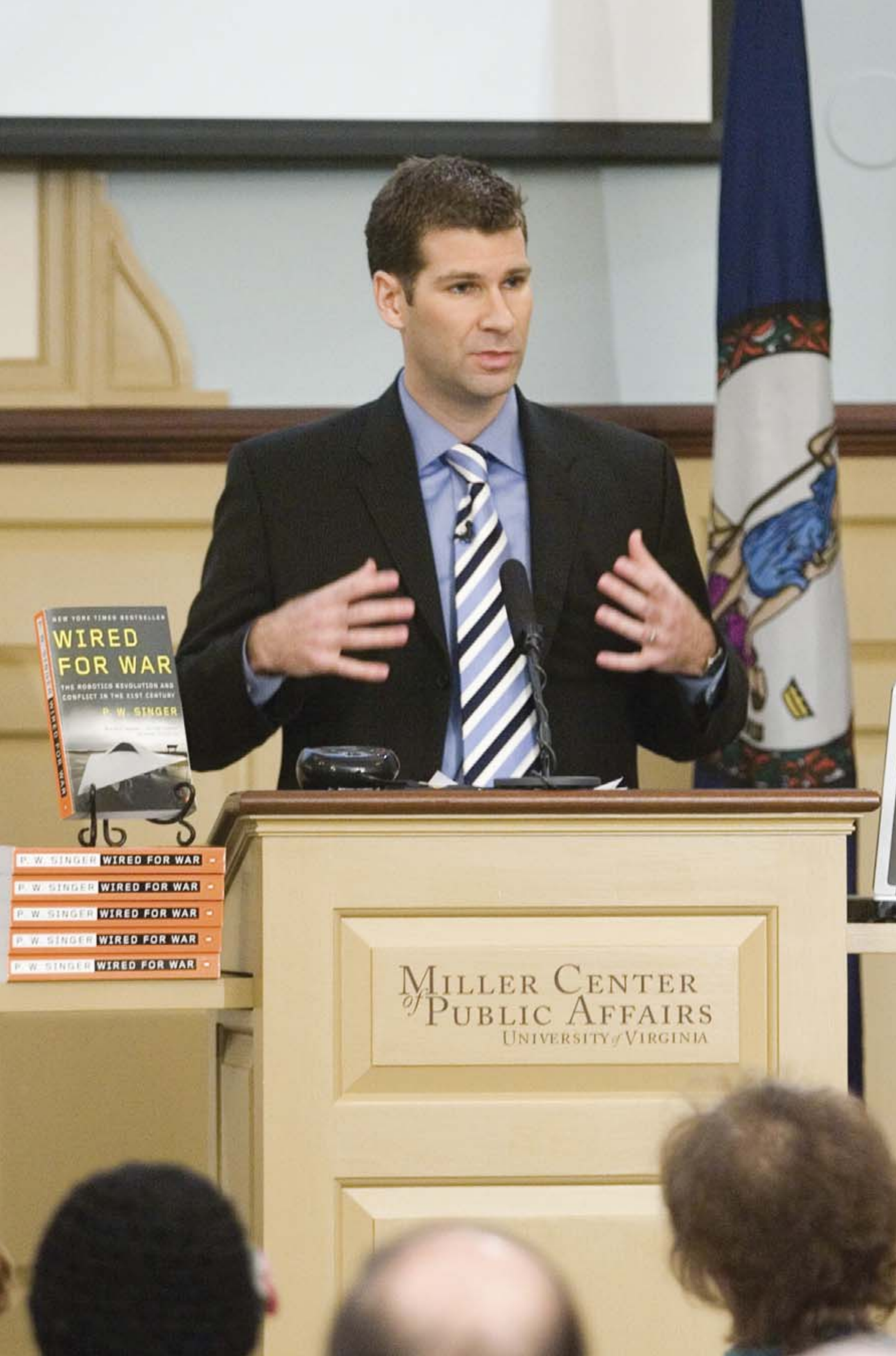
Are the Yemenis cooperating? Yes, to some extent I think they are, but I think that they have capacity problems in their own ability to do things within their borders. They have not just one but two different insurgencies in that country. The Saudis—you know, the Obama administration wanted them to create a rehabilitation program for the Yemenis like we have at Guantanamo, but then the Saudis said no. So it's a mixed bag, and I think that's the important thing to keep in mind, as you say, that in order to make this work, obviously cooperation across borders is going to have to be one of the most important things that any administration needs to work on.

Question. Much of what we know about the terrorism of our time flows from events since 9/11, and yet, two centuries ago, this country was engaged in a war on terror. The Barbary Pirates were seizing American ships, enslaving American sailors, demanding tribute; there were even negotiations. But that series of terrorist events, over time, vexed a number of American Presidents Jefferson, [James] Madison, [James] Monroe, in particular. And yet that war ended not with a bang, but with a whimper. How does this one end?

Peter Baker. That's an awesome question, Governor. Aren't I supposed to be asking you questions? We sort of have this backward today. That's a question, of course, that General David Petraeus asked specifically about Iraq, at the very beginning, to my colleague Rick Atkinson. Rick Atkinson is a fabulous journalist who worked at the *Washington Post,* and has written a number of books, if you are interested in military history. He interviewed General Petraeus; he was embedded with him at the beginning of the Iraq War, and Petraeus turns to him at one point and says, "Tell me how this ends." Petraeus asked earlier than most—this is in 2003—and we still don't know for sure how that one is going to end. We think we know where it's heading. I suspect you're right. I suspect whimper not bang. I mean, it's hard to imagine a single event or a single set of events suddenly changing the dynamic that we face today. Clearly, there's not going to be any victory ceremony like World War II. Will we know it when we see it? That's the other question.

My backdrop is that for a lot of years the Russians were fighting this Chechnyan terrorist insurgency in their southern borders, and they were vicious and brutal in the way they approached it. They had absolutely no regard for civilians or any of the things that we care about in terms of civil liberties. And it went on for years and years and years, and then basically around the time I left, actually, at the end of 2004, it started to slip away. There weren't as many fighting, there weren't as many incidents, and I don't think it had anything to do with the fact that I left, but they did knock off a few very important top people, and lack of leadership matters; decapitation, as it were. But we found again and again and again in Afghanistan and Pakistan or Iraq, when we knock off one guy who we think, that's the guy, and if we get rid of him, another one pops up. In one of the drone strikes in Pakistan, we got rid of Batula Massoud, head of the Pakistani Taliban. Well, Hakimullah Massoud ended up showing up as the leader. We hit him with a drone strike and we thought he was dead, and actually, he just turned up a couple weeks ago in a video. Not so dead. It's a whack-a-mole thing, and while the Russians at some point seemed to finally succeed in calming Chechnya down and ending the terrorist threat they were having, we saw what happened just a few months ago in their subway system. It's roaring up again. So I think part of the answer is that you may be able to squelch it to some extent, but that by itself can't be the only strategy. You have to do something to vent at some of those root causes that create that kind of atmosphere that feeds the terrorism to begin with. President Obama has talked about this, but it's hard to see how much success that has had at this point. It may be two Presidents from now before we finally feel like we've got this under control.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Thank you very much Peter.



Wired For War

Peter W. Singer

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Peter Warren Singer is considered one of the world's leading experts on changes in 21st century warfare. Named by the President in 2009 to the U.S. Joint Forces Command's Transformation Advisory Group, he is a Senior Fellow and Director of the 21st Century Initiative at the Brookings Institution. Among other acknowledgments, in 2005 Dr. Singer was named to CNN's [Cable News Network] "New Guard" List of the Next Generation of Newsmakers. And in 2009 he was named one of *Foreign Policy* magazine's top 100 global thinkers. He has written and consulted widely, and has delivered talks at venues ranging from the U.S. Congress to over 40 universities around the world. Dr. Singer has written three books, including *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry,* which was named best book of the year by the American Political Science Association. He also wrote *Children at War,* which explored the rise of child-soldier groups. His most recent work, *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century,* made the *New York Times* nonfiction best-seller list in its first week of release.

Prior to his current position, Dr. Singer was the Founding Director of the Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World in the Saban Center at Brookings. He also worked for the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University and the Balkans Task Force in the U.S. Department of Defense. Dr. Singer received his PhD in government from Harvard and a bachelor's degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. Please welcome Peter Singer.

Peter W. Singer. I appreciate that very kind welcome. I'd like to start with a story, and for this story you have to imagine yourself in Iraq. Ahead of you is what looks like a piece of trash along the side of the road, but an insurgent has hidden that IED, that "improvised explosive device," with great care. By 2006

there were more than 2,500 of these roadside bombings every single month in Iraq, and they were the leading cause of casualties among both American soldiers as well as among Iraqi civilians. Now, the team that's hunting for this IED, this roadside bomb, is actually called an "EOD team," explosive ordnance disposal. They're the pointy end of the spear in the effort to stop these roadside bombings. If you've seen the movie *The Hurt Locker,* it's about one of these EOD teams in action.

In a typical tour, an EOD team will defuse about 600 bombs. That is, they'll be asked to defuse about two bombs every single day. The number perhaps that's the better indicator of their value to the war effort is the fact that the insurgents put a reported $50,000 bounty on the head of one of these EOD troopers. Kill one of them, get $50,000.

Unfortunately, this story doesn't end well. By the time that the EOD trooper got close enough to the device to see that it was a bomb, that it wasn't a piece of trash, by the telltale wires coming out from it, it exploded.

Depending on how much explosives are packed into one of these devices, you have to be about a football field's distance away to escape injury or death from the fragments coming at you at bullet speed. In fact, even if you're not hit by one of those fragments, just the force of the explosion itself is powerful enough to break your limbs.

This soldier, though, had been right on top of that bomb when it exploded. So when the dust settled and the smoke cleared, the rest of the team advanced and they found little left of him. That night, the commander of the unit did the sad duty and wrote a condolence letter back to the United States. And in the letter he apologized for not being able to bring that soldier home. He talked about how tough the loss had been on the rest of their unit. They felt like they lost their bravest companion. Then, the commander tried to talk up what he saw at least as the silver lining from this tragedy. This is what he wrote: "At least when a robot dies you don't have to write a letter to its mother."

That story is actually the true story of the very first robot killed in action. That soldier, that trooper, was actually a 42-pound robot called a "PackBot." The destination of the condolence letter wasn't some farmhouse in Iowa, like in the old war movies, but was actually a factory just outside Burlington, Massachusetts, that has iRobot written on the side of the building. It's a real-world company named after the fictional Isaac Asimov novels (and the

not-so-great Will Smith movie) in which robots start out doing daily chores and move on to making life-and-death decisions.

Now, I'm not one for PowerPoint but with this topic I want to give you a sense of the reality of it because it seems so close to science fiction. What you're going to see play behind me is a series of pictures and images and videos of robots already in action in Iraq and Afghanistan, or already at the prototype stage. You're not going to see any Hollywood fantasy here. And this is not going to be a typical talk, as you can see, where I'm going to click through the slides, point, speak to them, click again, point, speak again to them. The images are just going to play behind me to give you a sense of the reality while I move on with the discussion.

So, to pull back on all of this, the book that I wrote, *Wired for War,* is about how there's something big going on in the history of war, politics, technology, maybe even the history of humanity itself. The U.S. military that went into Iraq in 2003 had a handful of "drones" supporting it, "unmanned aerial systems," "remotely piloted vehicles," whatever you want to call this technology. We went in with a handful of these. We now have over 7,000 in U.S. military inventory today. The invasion force that went in on the ground in 2003 utilized zero unmanned ground vehicles like that PackBot that you saw and that I spoke about in the oepning story. We now have over 12,000 in the U.S. military inventory. Last year, the U.S. Air Force trained more unmanned systems operators than it trained manned fighter plane and manned bomber plane pilots combined. That should give you a sense of the change that's going on here.

The important thing to remember, though, is that when we're talking about these PackBots and when we're talking about the Predator drones that you may have heard of, we're actually talking about the very first generation of this technology. We're talking about the equivalent of the Model T Ford or the Wright brothers' Flyer. And very soon we start to see redefinitions of commonly accepted terminologies.

For example, some of you may be familiar with the idea of a "killer app," short for a killer application. A killer app is a technology that comes along that basically changes the rules of the game. It changes the way a certain industry or field operates. The classic example of a killer app is what the iPod did to the music industry. That industry was changed fundamentally by this little technology that allowed you to store music electronically and share it

electronically. Well, these new technologies may also be a killer app. But we need to redefine it because when you're talking about a robot armed with everything from .50-caliber machine guns to Hellfire missiles, killer application takes on a whole new level of meaning.

…out of the entire U.S. aerospace industry right now, there's not a single company that has a manned combat aircraft under research and development. Everything that is under research and development is unmanned, which should give you a sense of where we're headed.

The important thing again, though, is that's what's happening right now. Peering forward, one U.S. Air Force three-star general that I spoke with talked about how very soon it's not going to be thousands of robots, as we have in our wars today, but "tens of thousands of robots." And there are a couple things that are interesting about this. One is the fact that out of the entire U.S. aerospace industry right now, there's not a single company that has a manned combat aircraft under research and development. Everything that is under research and development is unmanned, which should give you a sense of where we're headed.

But the rapidity of where we're headed is interesting as well, because there's a little rule that we call "Moore's law" that you may have heard of before. Moore's law is the idea that we've been able to pack more and more computing power into our microchips, into our computers, into our robots so that they basically double in their power and capacity just about every 18 months.

There's a better illustration of Moore's law. I'll ask you a question and please help me answer it. How many of you have ever gotten for your birthday or for Christmas one of those Hallmark greeting cards that played a little song when you opened it? Just raise your hand if you know what I'm talking about. OK. If you've ever held one of those cards in your hand, you held more computing power in that one card than the entire U.S. Air Force had in 1960. That's Moore's law in action. And that technology is doubling year after year after year.

And what that means is that if Moore's law holds true over the next 25 years the way it's held true over the last 40 years, then our technology, our robots, will be a billion times more powerful than they are today. And I don't mean a billion in the way we toss around that term like in Pentagon budgets—a billion here, a billion there. I mean, literally, multiply the power of these devices with a one and nine zeros behind it. Now, Moore's law isn't a law of physics. It doesn't have to hold true. So what if technology moves at a pace that we knock off a thousandth of it? Well, then it'll only be a million times more powerful than it is today within 25 years.

The point that I'm making here is that the kind of things we used to only talk about at science fiction conventions such as Comic-Con are becoming an issue of great importance at places like the Pentagon. What we have to figure out is, how do we make it through a robots revolution?

I was out in California last week, so I need to be very clear when I use that term, "robots revolution." I'm not here warning you that the "Governator," Arnold Schwarzenegger of the *Terminator* movies, is going to show up at your door. It's not that kind of robots revolution. It's the idea that every so often in history there are technologies that come along that change the rules of the game. They're revolutionary technologies. These are very rare in history. These are things like the printing press, gunpowder, the steam engine, the computer, the atomic bomb. And the important thing with these technologies is not just that they're rare, it's not just their power; it's the questions they force us to ask. Questions about what's possible that we never before imagined was possible. Questions about what's proper. Issues of right and wrong that we've never had to wrestle with before.

It's the idea that every so often in history there are technologies that come along that change the rules of the game. They're revolutionary technologies. These are very rare in history. These are things like the printing press, gunpowder, the steam engine, the computer, the atomic bomb.

And it's interesting, the answers people would give when I went around asking them about what they thought were the parallels of robotics in terms of history. For example, people on the engineering side would say, "Right now with robotics we're just about where we were with the automobile back around 1909 or 1910." It's also interesting the way we framed it back then. We called them "horseless carriages," much like today we call these

"unmanned systems." We can only wrap our heads around what they're not rather than what they are. Back then, Ford Motor Company was selling just about 250 Model T Fords a year. Spurred on by the developments and the need in terms of war, within a decade Ford Motor Company was selling more than a million of these vehicles.

But why was the horseless carriage important in history? Is it because I don't own a stable, I have a garage? It is because of the ripple effects. It is things like the mechanization of war and the mechanization of commerce in society. And these ripple effects go out beyond. So, for example, this thing, the horseless carriage, leads to changes in the global climate, literally. Global climate change we're experiencing right now. It reshapes the American city; there's no such thing as suburbia before the horseless carriage. It has social ramifications: there's no such thing as "dating." Teenagers used to "court" on their parents' front porch before the automobile gave them independence. It creates a new need for laws, and laws that actually understand the technology itself. So, for example, the very first traffic laws for horseless carriages entailed that someone was supposed to walk in front of the horseless carriage carrying a flag to warn people that they were coming. And when they got to an intersection they were supposed to fire a flare off into the sky. That made perfect sense when the world moved at four or five miles per hour. It doesn't make sense in this new world that horseless carriages created.

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, makes a very different comparison, and maybe an apt one for him. He says where we stand right now with robotics and artificial intelligence is where we stood with computers back in 1980. If you remember the computer back in 1980, it was a big bulky device that could only do a limited set of functions. The military was the main spender on computers, in research and development. And the military was the main buyer in the marketplace for these things we called computers. But very soon they advanced. Most importantly, we learned all sorts of new functions that computers could do. And soon we got to the point that we stopped calling them computers anymore. For example, I drove here in a car that has over a hundred computers in it. I didn't call it a computerized car. I have a computer in my kitchen; I call it a microwave oven. The same thing is playing out with robotics today. So, for example, the new Ford, Volvo, Mercedes, and Lexus cars all have two things. They have the ability to parallel-park themselves, and they have crash-avoidance technologies, which are nice ways we humans

put it for describing how the robot car takes on the tasks that we stupid humans are not very good at. We're not good at parallel parking, and we often don't look in our blind spots.

The point here again, though, is to think of the ripple effects that come out of it. Why is the computer important? Is it because I don't have to memorize long division anymore? The computer has these ripple effects on society, on war, on commerce. For example, the computer leads to a realm, a stock market, where billions of dollars can be made in a nanosecond, and billions of dollars can be lost in a nanosecond. The computer leads to changes in social relationships. I can be friends via Facebook with someone I've never met before. I may not like it, though, if my niece becomes friends with someone that she's never met before. We have new implications of law, of course, and not just in terms of the use of it in law enforcement. For instance, imagine the television show *CSI* without computers, without things like DNA scans and so forth. But we also literally see new crimes. Imagine explaining identity theft to your grandparents. We see literally new domains of war created by this thing called the computer. Cyberwarfare involves fighting in a place, cyberspace, that literally didn't exist before.

The final parallel that people make, I think, is a most interesting one, and perhaps a most scary one. A lot of the scientists say that this field, robotics, is a lot like where the field of nuclear physics was back in the 1940s. If you wanted to work on what was hot, if you wanted to work on what was the most cutting-edge technology, you were drawn to the field of nuclear physics back in the 1940s. Much like today if you want to work on what's hot, you're drawn toward this field of robotics and AI [artificial intelligence]. But people worry that, as happened with the atomic bomb, it may be a little bit like a genie that we can't put back in the bottle.

The point that I'm making here is that when we talk about technology we often focus on how the technology works, when the important thing is actually the ripple effects that it has on our world, on our politics, on our wars. And I'm someone who's obviously interested in the war side of these things. So a couple years ago I set out on a journey essentially to meet anyone and everyone connected to the realm of robotics and war. What's it like to be a scientist working at a university like this who's building these machines? What's it like for the science fiction authors who are actually advising the military on what to build? What's it like for those in the military? What's it like to be a 19-year-old

pilot sitting in Nevada flying a plane that's actually over Afghanistan? What's it like to be the commander of such a pilot? So I had interviews with every single combatant commander, the four-star generals in charge of each of our military regions. What's it like for the other side? What do insurgents in Iraq think about our robots? What do they think about you and me sending robots out to fight them? It's the war of ideas element. How are journalists telling the story of robots in war? Not just journalists in America but journalists in places like Lebanon or Pakistan.

And then, finally, there is the right and wrong of all of this to consider. For example, what do folks at Human Rights Watch but also at a place like the JAG [Judge Advocate General] school just up the street think about this in terms of the laws of war as they relate to robots? So the book that I wrote, *Wired for War*, is basically a gathering together of all of those stories of what it means to start using robots in war. I think those stories, while they're fascinating and they're scary and they're sometimes funny, the important thing is that they shine a light on these ripple effects that are starting to play out. So in the remainder of my time, I'd like to walk through some of what I think are the most important ripple effects.

The first one of these that you saw was the fact that although this is a robotic revolution, it's not just an American revolution. There is a rule in both technology and war that there's no such thing as a permanent first-mover advantage. I'll ask for a quick show of hands here. How many people in this room have ever used a Commodore computer? Raise your hand. How many still use your Commodore computer? The same thing plays out in war. For example, the British are the ones who invented the tank, actually inspired by an H. G. Wells short story about land ironclads. They invented the tank and they were the first ones to use it in World War I. They actually came out of World War I with 12,000 of these tanks. That's an interesting number. It's just about the same number of unmanned ground vehicles we have today. But, of course, if you know your history, the British may have invented the tank, but the Germans were the ones who figured out how to use the tank better by the time World War II rolls around.

What do they think about you and me sending robots out to fight them? It's the war of ideas element.

So the question for the United States is that we are definitely ahead in this space, but we're not the only player in town. There are 44 other nations that are building, buying, and using military robotics today. These are nations like Great Britain, France, Israel, Russia, China, Pakistan, and Iran. I think there's something broader to think about here in terms of the trend lines. Where do you think these trend lines have us headed? Where does the state of America's manufacturing economy have us headed? Where does the state of America's training in science and mathematics in our schools have us headed? Another way of putting it is, what does it mean to be sending out more and more soldiers whose hardware literally says "made in China" on the back of it and whose software is increasingly being written by someone sitting in India? Or what does it mean for U.S. security that last year we graduated fewer people with a major in information technology than we did in 1986? But we had a 500% increase in students who majored in parks, recreation, and leisure studies.

But this technology is not just one to focus on states. It also has implications at the nonstate level. This technology is open source, and this means that warfare may be heading to be open source as well.

But this technology is not just one to focus on states. It also has implications at the nonstate level. This technology is open source, and this means that warfare may be heading to be open source as well. That is, this technology is not like an aircraft carrier or an atomic bomb where you need a massive industrial structure not just to build it but just to use it. Instead, a lot of this technology is commercial, off-the-shelf, and even do-it-yourself. For example, you saw that picture of the Raven drone; it was that hand-tossed device. It's one of the most widely used systems by our soldiers in Afghanistan today. The editor of *Wired* magazine built his own version for $1,000. So what that means is, just like what's happened in the software industry, the big boys can't dominate it anymore. They don't have a monopoly anymore. We have a flattening effect.

Now, there's a cool story to illustrate this; it's one of my favorite stories in the book. It's about a group of college students at Swarthmore, a college up in Pennsylvania, who wanted to do something about the genocide in Darfur. So they held a battle of the bands, a fund-raiser. And at the end of that fund-raiser they had raised about $1 million, whereupon they did what any other college kids would do with $1 million in their pocket, they entered into negotiations with a private military company for the rental of drones to deploy to Sudan. One of the students talked about how he had to change the voice mail message in his dormitory room because when you are negotiating with mercenaries, the message, "Hey dude, leave a message at the beep," just didn't sound professional enough.

The thing here is that not everyone wants to use this technology to stop genocides. For example, the war between Israel and Hezbollah just a couple years ago was a war between a state government and a nonstate actor. And yet both sides flew unmanned aerial systems against each other. So I think this combination has certain trend lines that may play out. One is that it reinforces the ongoing empowerment of individuals and small groups compared to the state, which used to have a monopoly. The best illustration I can give of this is that during World War II, Hitler's *Luftwaffe,* Hitler's air force, was not able to strike the United States. It did not have the reach to cross the Atlantic. A couple years ago a 77-year-old blind man built his own unmanned aerial system and flew it across the Atlantic. So a 77-year-old blind man had the reach that Hitler's air force did not.

The second trend is that it eliminates the potential culling power of suicide terrorism. It makes both an al-Qaeda 2.0 or a next-generation version of a Timothy McVeigh far more lethal. The best illustration I can give of that is an interview I had with a DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] scientist, a Pentagon research lab scientist, who said, "Look, if you gave me $50,000 and I wanted to, I could shut down Manhattan today with my current technology." I didn't put the outline of how he did it in the book because the publisher is based in Manhattan.

The final implication of this is that we may even see new sparks of terrorism. Whenever we've had massive change in our societies, like the Industrial Revolution, there have been both winners and losers. And sometimes there are people who just don't like the future and try to fight the future. What I'm talking about here is, in essence, a Unabomber 2.0 and neo-Ludditism, which some people in the terrorism world are starting to get concerned about.

But another one of these ripple effects that I think is starting to play out is one within our own politics, within our own presidential politics. There are certain trends that are happening in our body politic right now that robotics seem to be taking to their final logical end point. We don't have a draft anymore. We don't declare war anymore. The last time we did that was 1941. We don't buy war bonds anymore or pay higher taxes for our wars anymore. We make our grandkids do that, but not us. And now we have a technology that allows us to carry out acts of war without having to worry about some of the political consequences of that letter going to someone's mother, of that condolence letter. The point that I'm making here is that the barriers to war in our democracy were already lowering, and now we have a technology that literally takes those barriers to the ground.

I don't think this is a theoretical issue. I think it's actually something that's playing out right now in the Pakistan war that we're fighting. Pakistan war, what do you mean? Well, when you count it by the raw numbers, we've carried out over five times as many air strikes using unmanned systems as we did with manned bombers in the opening round of the Kosovo War. But notice how we don't call it the Pakistan War like we called it the Kosovo War. Notice how we didn't have any President turn to Congress and say, "I need either a declaration of war or just simply a resolution." Our Congress hasn't had to have a vote either to support it or to go against it. Notice how the media covers it differently. At best when we carry out one of these air strikes, it may make it to page A13 of the newspaper.

What's going on here? I think it has something to do with this technology. Notice, even, who's conducting this war. Again, five times the size of the opening round of the Kosovo War. And it's not being conducted by the U.S. Air Force. The commander of the operation is not a four-star general. It's being conducted by an Executive Branch civilian intelligence agency. The commander of this air war is actually a former Congressman from California. I'm not saying they're doing something bad, and I'm not saying they're making mistakes. It's just very different from their background and expertise. What's going on here? Maybe it's just that what we used to call "war" isn't called war anymore because of the technology.

But the irony in this, again as you're seeing, is that we're using more and more machines but it doesn't mean that the implications aren't human-centric. So everything that's important about what I just talked to is actually about

human psychology and human politics. For example, we're wrestling with an incredibly tough policy dilemma right now. What is the message we think we are sending when we're using robots in war versus what is the message that's actually being received 7,000 miles away? That is, what is the impact of robots on the war of ideas? Now, again, I wanted to know the answer to this. So, just like the professors here would have their students do, I went out and interviewed a bunch of folks. And the one who encapsulated it I thought the best in terms of message sent was a senior presidential administration official who talked about how "our unmanning of war plays to our strength. The thing that scares people is our technology." But what about when you ask those people who are 7,000 miles away? This is what the leading newspaper editor of Lebanon described—and he's actually saying this while there was a drone flying overhead—"It's just another sign of the cold-hearted cruel Israelis and Americans who are also cowards, because they send out machines to fight us. They don't want to fight us like real men. But they're afraid to fight. So all we have to do to defeat them is kill just a few of their soldiers."

Now, I'm not saying that's right. I do not think we are cowards. But what we're talking about is two messages that are passing each other by in the war of ideas. And of course the importance in a war of ideas or in a counterinsurgency, as General [David] Petraeus laid out, is that ideas do matter, perceptions do have an impact in the actual course of the war. This issue of perceptions, though, I think is interesting, even when we look at home, as we're starting to use more and more of this technology in realms like border control and law enforcement. For example, Miami-Dade Police Department recently got a license to utilize unmanned aerial systems. The ripple effects that come out of that are both questions of perceptions; for example, having the all-seeing eye in the sky might be a deterrent against crime. Of course then, how does the broader public look at the police if they're always watching? It also has huge legal concerns. So, for example, I remember meeting with a federal district court judge who described how the continuing use of these systems will very soon mean that we will have a Supreme Court case in terms of touching on issues like privacy but also probable cause, because when you have the eye in the sky you can actually look over the fence in a way that used to require a warrant.

But well before we get to the world of robots being autonomous Terminator land—notice that I'm not using any of those examples; I'm talking about our current level of technology. We're seeing another huge ripple effect. The demographics of war are changing. Who can do what in war? One of my other favorite stories in the book is about a young 19-year-old who dropped out of high school. He wanted to make his dad proud of him again, so he joined the U.S. Army. The recruiting sergeant looked at his high school transcript and asked him, "What function would you like to do?" And the young man said, "I'd like to be a helicopter mechanic." He said, "Unfortunately, son, looking at your grades, you failed your English literature class in high school, so you're not qualified to be a helicopter mechanic. Would you like to be an unmanned aerial systems operator instead?" He turned out to be incredible at it. He turned out to be a natural. It wasn't that he was actually a natural, it's that he'd spent much of his life training for this by playing video games. He turned out to be so good that they brought him back from his first combat deployment and they promoted him. They made him a specialist. And then they made him an instructor in the pilot training academy. It's a really cool story from one perspective. Because of this technology this young man found himself, made his dad proud of him again, and is serving his nation with honor.

I told that story at the U.S. Air Force's national convention last year. They didn't like it because you have a teenage high school dropout enlisted man, not an officer, in the army who's not just a pilot instructor, but has taken out more enemy targets and saved arguably more American lives than every single F-22 fighter jet pilot. They look at him the same way the knights looked at the peasants when the peasants were given gunpowder. This issue of demographics and technology isn't just about people's roles. It's starting to change us ourselves. That is, as you saw, the technology is something that we're not just beginning to wear on our bodies or use, but we're starting to put it inside our bodies.

One of the other heartrending stories, but also in a sense redeeming, is about the more than 400 American soldiers who've lost arms or legs from these roadside bombs and had them replaced with robotic prosthetics. These new technologies are so good right now that over 400 American soldiers have gone back to serve in their combat units with these robotic arms and legs. Of course, this has the element of science fiction to it. In fact, the head of that program describes it as the Luke Skywalker effect because, if you remember in the *Star Wars* movies, or what I prefer to remember as the real *Star Wars* movies, in Empire Strikes Back our hero Luke had his hand cut off by a light saber and we the audience go "Oh, my gosh, our hero is done for."

And then at the end of the movie we see him flexing a robot hand, and he's back in action. That was science fiction when I was growing up. For over 400 American soldiers, that's been their reality. But, of course, we're humans. We don't stop at replacement. We start to work on enhancement: bigger, better, faster, stronger, smarter.

We're already, for example, seeing people add in things like USB [Universal Serial Bus] ports into their bodies, much like in this computer. Or just a few months ago there was a British special operations trooper who had laser eye surgery. What's the big deal about that? Has anyone in here had laser eye surgery? OK. Let's compare what your surgery did compared with his. Did yours allow you to see 400 meters? …At night?

The point that I'm getting at here is not just where we're moving with this capability but the questions of privacy and security that emerge as you start to put technology inside. Who owns the information of what I did with my implants? The definition of a virus takes on an entirely new meaning when I have technology inside me.

Much of what you're hearing from me is that there are always two sides to every technologic and political revolution. Moore's law is certainly in action, but Murphy's law hasn't disappeared. We're getting incredible science fiction-like capabilities, but it also means we have incredible science fiction-like dilemmas to figure out in our real world. And these dilemmas are everything from questions of accountability to questions of how to respond to things like "oops" moments. What's an oops moment? Well, that was when I asked a vice president of a robotics company, "What happens when things don't work out with your robot?" He said, "Well, that's just an oops moment." What are examples of oops moments so far in war? Sometimes they're funny, like when they were doing a field test of a machine gun-armed robot and it went "squirrelly." It started spinning in a circle and pointed its weapon system at the review stand of VIPs [very important persons] who were there to watch it. They were very glad that there were no bullets in the gun at the time.

At other times these oops moments can be tragic. About two years ago in South Africa an automated antiaircraft cannon had a "software glitch." We've all had software glitches with our computers. Well, in this case the antiaircraft cannon during a training exercise was supposed to fire upwards into the sky. Instead, it leveled and it started firing in a circle. It killed nine soldiers before it ran out of ammunition. Oops. And the issue isn't just that this actually happened, it's the questions of how do we respond.

Imagine if you were the young investigator, the young JAG officer asked to figure out accountability for these kinds of situations. What law would you turn to? This is particularly challenging in the realm of war because our prevailing laws of war, the Geneva Conventions, actually date from the mid-20th century. The most important technology that came out the same year as the Geneva Conventions was the 45 rpm record player. Now, that's a lot to ask of a law from that period, to keep up with 21st century technology such as a Reaper drone that can take off and land on its own in being used against a 21st century actor in war; for example, like an insurgent that hides out in a home full of women and children, not because he's ignorant of the laws of war, but because he knows the laws of war and is deliberately taking advantage of them. So, in a sense, we have the 20th century laws under siege on both sides, from the technology and the actors.

I was actually at Human Rights Watch and I asked them what law we should turn to, for example, when a Predator strike goes awry. And the two leaders there—it was a great moment for a researcher—the two leaders got into an argument in front of me. One said, "Geneva Conventions, the way we always have." And the other one said, "Hmmm, that's not going to work in this situation. We should turn to the *Star Trek* Prime Directive." He was serious. Now, it may be a good idea, and I certainly love Trek, like anyone else. The problem is that I can't actually call Captain Kirk as an expert witness in a real court of law.

This leads to the last thing that I want to bring up, which I think is particularly apt for this group here, which is the ethics side of all this. Typically when you talk about ethics and robots, people go, "Oh, you mean Asimov's three laws, right?" Wrong. There are a couple problems with Asimov's laws in reality. One is that they're fiction. How would you actually program "robot shalt not harm human"? How do you turn that into zeros and ones? The second problem is that they're fiction. In every one of Asimov's stories, the robots follow the laws, but then end up vilating their underlying intent. The laws are actually intended to be plot devices showing how we violate them even when we try not to. And, finally, we're actually deliberately violating them right now in our real world. You don't give a robot a .50-caliber machine gun or Hellfire missile if not to harm humans. That's the point. I don't want a robot that will take

orders from any human. I don't want a robot that walks up to Osama bin Laden and does what he says, like it would under Asimov's laws.

But the biggest issue is, again, we shouldn't be wrestling with the ethics of the robot supposedly; we should be wrestling with our own questions of ethics. So imagine the sorts of questions that a young graduate student working in robotics, say here at UVA [University of Virginia], might ask himself. From whom is it ethical to take research and development money? From whom is it not ethical to take research and development money? What attributes should I build into my machine? What attributes are not ethical to build in there? Who should be allowed to buy and use my machine? Who is it not ethical to sell to? Should there be training or licensing schemes attached to them? Who owns the information that's gathered by my machine? Or should it be open source? And most importantly, if things go wrong am I accountable? These are all questions of ethics that a young student might ask.

And of course there are also potential questions of law, because ethics without accountability is really empty. Yet, that student doesn't have a code to turn to the way, for example, he would if he were working in the field of medicine, where there is a code to turn to for guidance. We've left those students out there on their own.

And the challenge isn't just that the field is a new emerging one—it's understandable that medicine has that kind of code of ethics—it's also that right now we're avoiding that discussion for a variety of reasons. We're avoiding it because it feels like science fiction or because the implications of asking these questions seriously are really too tough to face, and this points to an attitude that's sometimes out there. Perhaps the most disappointing experience that I've had on the tour for the book was receiving an email that I got after a talk just like this at an engineering school. A professor sent me an email in which he chastised me for "troubling" his students by "asking them to think about the ethics of their work."

So, in ending, it sounds like I've been talking about the future, but notice how every example I gave you, every picture you saw, wasn't from the future. It was our present technologic and political reality. And so it sets a challenge before us. Are we going to let the fact that this looks like science fiction, feels like science fiction, keep us from wrestling with the implications of it? That is, are future generations going to chuckle at us the same way we chuckled at that

Peter W. Singer speaking at the Miller Center of Public Affairs November 15, 2010

past generation with the horseless carriage and the flag? Are future generations going to look at us the same way we look at the nuclear physicists back in the 1940s and go, "Gosh, did you not realize the significance of what you were working on? And why did you wait till after the fact to ask the hard questions?"

In conclusion, I actually want to jump to the realm of science fiction. A couple years ago the American Film Institute, the AFI, held a survey of its members about who they thought were the top 100 Hollywood heroes and Hollywood villains of all time. That is, out of every single movie ever made, what characters signified humanity at its best and humanity at its worst? And out of every single movie character ever, there was only one that made it onto both top 100 hero and top 100 villain lists: the Terminator, a robot killing machine. I mention this not only because it shows the duality of technology, that it can be used for both good and evil, but that it shows the duality of the people behind that technology, because it's our human creativity that distinguishes us from all the other species. We created fire, we created technology that took our species to

the moon, and we created works of art and literature and architecture to show our appreciation and love for the world around us and our love for one another. And now we're creating this incredible technology that, if you believe both the scientists as well as maybe the science fiction authors out there, we may literally be creating an entirely new species. But if we're honest about it, we're really only doing it because we can't get past our age-old human need to destroy one another. And so the ending question that I'll leave you with is this: Is it us or is it our machines that are the ones that are wired for war? Thank you.

Cristina Lopez-Gottardi. Thank you very much, Peter. I'd like to begin with one of the points that you raise. It's one of the most alarming points, which relates to the notion that these systems continue the empowerment of individuals and nonstate actors over governments in traditional government functions, being that of war, and really widens the playing field of those considering terrorism, both making it easier to conduct terror and also facilitating the ease of getting this into the wrong hands. But I wonder what, if anything, can be done about this? Have you thought about U.S. policy options that the United States can pursue in terms of trying to contain this? Or is it simply just open source and there's not much that can be done to contain it?

Peter W. Singer. Well, it's a great question. Again, it's a question that if we had asked it five years ago it would not have been suited for the Miller Center. It would have been suited for a science fiction convention. And yet it's a very real question and it touches on a couple of issues. One is issues of law. For example, let's make a parallel with the horseless carriage. Who was to be allowed to use it actually became an issue of law. And we created a series of licensing schemes and requirements that you had to have a certain kind of training. You had to have issues like insurance. It also meant that you were taking responsibility for that system itself. We may need to have a similar kind of discussion when it comes to robotics, particularly when it comes to things like weaponized robotics. There have been some discussions of this at the international level as to whether we should create structures that ban the use either of weaponized systems overall that are autonomous or simply try to limit it to state actors. That's an example of an international law debate that we're moving into right now.

The organizers of that movement are actually modeling themselves after the Pugwash movement that was founded by the nuclear scientists, who in the 1950s went, "OK, we created this thing called the bomb. Bad idea." And so the irony was that the Pugwash movement was built by people who created the atomic bomb and who then worked to try to limit and restrict and even ban its use. A similar kind of debate is starting to play out in the robotics field. What's interesting to me is that this issue is not just one on the international level. It's going to need to be one on the domestic level. For example let's not just frame this in terms of issues of war or issues of terrorism. Just like the car isn't just used for car bombs, there are other aspects of it; we're seeing the same realm here. As an illustration, there was a group of robbers who utilized micro-robotic helicopters to scout and steal out of locations that were inaccessible to humans and actually made off with $10 million worth of stuff, mainly jewelry, before they were caught.

Thus, we have groups that are in this quasilegal space. We call them either the "border militias" or they're "vigilante" groups. It all depends on what you call them. There's a group down in Arizona that's been flying its own private unmanned border patrol using three unmanned aerial systems that it bought for $25,000. Is this OK or not? This is the kind of debate we're going to have to get into.

The other aspect of it that I think is important is not just focusing on the first-level question but also the second-order issues that come out of it. So in the realm of terrorism the use of these systems has gotten a lot of very bad guys. We've killed a great number of al-Qaeda and associated militant group leaders. But we've also seen potential side effects come out of it in terms of public anger on the ground, which has manifested itself in other acts of terrorism. So, for example, the would-be Times Square bomber specifically said he got into this game because of the Predator strikes in Pakistan. So what I'm getting at is that this debate has to be one that doesn't just look at it in terms of law or doesn't just look at it in terms of the short term. We also have to think multiple steps ahead.

Question. I'd like you to expand on something that you touched on at the very end, and it's known as the singularity. It's a theoretical point where computers reach the level that we are at and then race ahead of us because they have infinite capacity. I've talked with a lot of fairly young people even who say, "Oh, that'll never happen. It can't happen." I say, "Look, it's already happening." People are merging with computers. They're getting cochleas. They're getting limbs. They're merging. And it seems to me that within our lifetime we might see this race of beings that you were talking about, a merging of the two. Where does that leave us? I wonder if you would expand on that a bit.

Peter W. Singer. It's a great question. Actually, there's a chapter in the book specifically on this issue of the singularity. It opens with meeting the fellow who's the founder of this thinking. And his idea is that we will reach a point that he sees as the singularity, where history is changed because basically the machines are smarter than us. It sounds silly until you find out that this same guy is considered one of Bill Gates' top advisers and has given the keynote speech at the Army Science Board's convention two out of the last five years.

I am a political scientist, which to a lot of people means that you're not a scientist. So I don't know whether the singularity is here or not. Whether it's real, or as someone else mocked it, they called it "rapture for nerds." But what I find interesting is that very serious people who are respected actually get into these incredibly heated debates on when it's going to happen. Some of them at these meetings say, "It's 2035." And I've seen these meetings. One was actually at the U.S. Army War College, to give you a sense of the setting. So one guy will say, "It's 2035." Another one will go, "You're a moron. Because of societal backlash it'll take until 2042." "No, no, no, you're a moron. Because actually when we get closer to it, the machines are going to get so smart they're going to accelerate. So it's actually going to be 2031." And they get into these heated debates. Now, what's interesting to me is that they're almost always using years that are before I'm going to pay off my mortgage. That's issue number one.

The second thing is, as you can see from the book and what I've said, I don't think we have to get to that point for important things to happen. The way a social scientist would look at the idea of a singularity is not that there's the singularity, but that every so often in history you have singularities. You have these moments where there are massive levels of change, where the world before and after is fundamentally different. So, imagine the world before the printing press and after the printing press. If you asked a young monk in the early 1300s, "Tell me about the post-printing press world," he would say, "Oh, maybe there'll be better designs in the sides of the Bibles that we're drawing out." They wouldn't be able to predict all the massive changes. And the important thing, again as a social scientist, is that those massive changes could be viewed as both good and bad. So the printing press, for example, leads to things like mass literacy. It leads to things like our modern notion of democracy and citizenship. We don't get to this place like we are at UVA. We don't get the idea of the Founding Fathers without having that technology of the printing press.

It leads to things like the Reformation that, if you're Protestant, you think is a really great thing. The problem is that if you're Catholic, you don't think it's a great thing. And most importantly, the ripple effects of that lead to the Thirty Years' War that leaves one-third of Europe dead. So I think we're at a similar point of singularity-type changes where the rules of the game are being reshaped and there are both good and bad implications that come out of that. The good is the more than hundreds, now thousands, of American soldiers that are alive today because of the use of robots in our wars. The bad is the potential of it leading to things like the Times Square bomber.

Question. Your talk was fascinating but also very frightening. I wanted to ask a question about what you said is happening in a hugely dissymmetrical situation, that on one side you have this extraordinary technology and on the other side you have people calling to a holy war. And what good does it do if every strike multiplies the enemy? And then I think there's also another war going on which is the conflict in the image. Because I come from Europe, and war was not only events and actual wars, it was also about passion. And it was also a mystic. And mystic is something that is incredibly powerful. Fighting with unmanned robots, makes the war act dehumanized. Are we not losing another kind of war? Do we not have to fight on another terrain? And are we not doing things that people of this country could not bear if they knew about them?

Peter W. Singer: It's a really powerful question that you're asking. There are two levels, in a sense, of answering it. One is that I think you're right. We're seeing in war a back-and-forth of asymmetries. Some of you may have heard of this idea of asymmetric warfare. Essentially it plays out like this, where the United States and its allies have an amazing advantage in conventional war, such that basically we have an asymmetric advantage. We basically say, "Come out and fight us in the open desert, wearing your uniforms, and we'll clean your clocks, like we did in 1991, where we may have a much smaller force but we'll absolutely dominate and beat you within 100 hours." The response to that has been another kind of asymmetry. "We're not going to fight you on the same battlefield. We're going to move to things like insurgency and terrorism. We're going to hide out among the populace. We're going to use things like roadside bombs."

So what has been our response? Another type of asymmetry; an asymmetry in terms of technology, an asymmetry in terms of spending. "You're using

roadside bombs and people hiding out among the populace, we're going to use things like PackBots and Predators to go and find those bombs or to gain an awareness of that population by flying over it, by being the all-seeing eye in the sky." We're then seeing an asymmetric response to that in everything from on-the-battlefield ambushes specifically designed to go after the robots to reaching asymmetrically back into the homeland. The suicide bomber that went after the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] cell in Afghanistan was going after a Predator-targeting cell. Again, as I mentioned, there's the Times Square bomber. We're seeing this pop up in recruiting and the like. War is a back-and-forth, always trying to find the other side's asymmetries. And so what I'm getting at is that even while we're using this incredible new technology, it doesn't mean that history is over. It's actually just another chapter in the book.

The second thing that you brought up is the connections to our wars. I think this is a very powerful one, because people often want to focus in on the experience of the soldiers themselves. But I think this technology is also having an impact on the public connections to war. I think it's another apt one for this setting that's looking at issues of presidential leadership and public administration. Because we're entering the era of YouTube wars, where the public is not just merely being removed from war, but its relationship with war is reshaping. There are several thousand video clips of combat footage from Iraq and Afghanistan up online right now up on sites like YouTube.com. Now, we could say this is a very good thing and that it creates more knowledge of what's happening out there in war. We're seeing connections between the home front and the war front that never existed before. You can download and watch what's happening in battle. But of course, again, this is playing out in our real world. For some people, the ability to watch a scene of combat on their iPhone is turning war into a form of entertainment. And the soldiers actually have a name for it; they call it "war porn."

I got a typical example of this in an email that was sent to me where the title line says, "Watch this." We all get emails like that, with a video clip of a cool dunk in a basketball game or a video clip of some nerdy fat kid singing in his basement for American Idol tryouts and he doesn't know we're watching. Something like that. In this case the video clip was of a Predator strike. Hellfire missile drops, goes into target, explosion, bodies riding the crest of the explosion. It was set to music. It was set to the song (I Just Want To) "Fly" by the band Sugar Ray. We turned an act of war into a crappy music video.

But we're seeing this in other areas; for example, the WikiLeaks episode, where we're watching more of these scenes, and the gun camera footage. But someone else is trying to tell us what's happening after the fact. And to be blunt, they're doing a really bad job at it.

In a sense, what we're getting at is a couple of sports parallels. One is public Monday morning quarterbacking of those actually active in war, making decisions where they're putting their lives at stake, where they're professionally trained for those decisions. But the second is the sense that we think we understand by watching things remotely. So it's a lot like the different experience between a basketball game, watching it on television with the little figures of these little tiny players on the screen versus seeing a basketball game in person and seeing what someone who is seven feet tall really does look like versus the experience of playing in the basketball game yourself, knowing what it's like to actually be dunked on by Kevin Garnett. These are very different experiences. But notice how in sports and now in war we think we understand what's happening. We yell at the screen. "How could you do that? How could you throw that stupid pass?" We're making judgments that we're not equipped and we're really not involved enough to be able to do. So it's a changed public relationship with war that has huge political consequences.

Question. As a psychologist could you also speak to the psychological consequences of these kinds of things?

Peter W. Singer. It's a great question because it points to another issue in terms of the support that we give those who serve. There are often people who believe that the soldiers that are using these systems are treating it like video games, that they don't care what's happening. And we're just now starting to discover the opposite, and it's striking to people. Now we need to pull back on all this and say, first, when it comes to the psychology of war, particularly PTSD, posttraumatic stress disorder, we've had 5,000 years of experience with one kind of war. And we really don't understand PTSD all that well with that type of war. So to think we understand it after just a couple years with remote warfare would be really silly for us. But what we are seeing is that among some of the units that are fighting remotely, there are actually higher levels of combat stress and fatigue than some of the units physically in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There are a lot of questions as to why this is so. It's everything from maybe the human mind isn't set up for this. Maybe it's because they're actually seeing

more trauma in war than, for example, the parallel. So the bomber plane pilot flies in over the target, drops a bomb, and flies away. The Predator operator actually sees the target up close before, sees what happens to the target, and sees the aftereffect, and not just the killing of others.

I remember talking with an Air Force NCO [non-commissioned officer], and she was so upset that she started banging the table. She was talking about an incident in which they watched American soldiers die. The system they were operating was unarmed, and they could only circle overhead. And then this is the next part of it. Then they walked outside and they were at an America that was at peace. So you've gone from psychologically fighting war to stepping into a realm where no one's fighting war. This may be the flip side of fighting from home. A lot of them talk about the challenge of, as one Predator commander put it, you're essentially at war killing enemy combatants, and then 20 minutes later you drive home and you're sitting at the dinner table talking to your kids about their homework. Our minds may not be set up for that.

The final aspect, the final challenge of it, is that it's a lot like the Jimmy Buffett song: when you're operating remotely it's war o'clock somewhere. That is, you can be fighting, and somewhere around the world there's some mission to go on. So these units are constantly serving. The other parallel they make is it's a lot like being a fireman and there's a fire every single day. So a combat unit in the field goes in, goes out, and then they get pulled out. Some of these units that have been operating remotely have been doing it 24/7/365. There are no weekends, there are no holidays, because there's a war always going on. And you can flip. You can swing operations from serving flying a mission over Iraq to Afghanistan to now Yemen. You name it. So what we're getting at, again, is that the psychological challenges, ironically enough, of using this technology may be the bigger part of the story.

Question. You started by talking about trend lines. And we've talked a lot about nonstate actors. I'm curious how much convergence there is among states in terms of their expectations of future trend lines. Do the Chinese and the Americans that are involved in robotics generally agree on which state is likely to take the lead? Or is there a big divergence? And secondly, I'm just curious. In the last few years, what's the proportion of robot-committed oops moments versus human error oops moments? Because the newness of it could be frightening, but I'm wondering in terms of the numbers who's doing the job better without those drawbacks?

Peter W. Singer. The expectations is an interesting one because for a while, when the United States was ahead in this, there were some indications that other nations were trying to use international law to try, for example, to ban it. To, in a sense, hold us back. Some of the nations you mentioned fell within that category. And then the more they've started to build them and use them on their own, their attitudes have changed. That's very typical of history. And I think we'll see that out on the international regime level.

The interesting thing, though, is not just whether to use them or not, but how to use them is an interesting legal question. And it's one that could have massive consequences. So, for example, there are very different social attitudes between the United States and, as an example, East Asia over things like the weaponization of robots. And it's actually over things just like robots themselves. In Western culture the robot, since the very first use of the term in a play back in the 1920s, the robot has always been the mechanical servant that wises up and then rises up. And that's true whether you were talking about the play R.U.R. [Rossum's Universal Robots] to the *Terminator* and the *Matrix* movies. So the point is that we have this built-in suspicion of robots.

In East Asian culture the robot has almost always been portrayed as the hero. So in their science fiction and anime, it's always the good guy, not the bad guy. It also connects to different cultural absolutes. For example, Shintoism entails that both animate and inanimate objects are endowed with a spirit. I have a spirit. The stream has a spirit. The factory robot has a spirit. You hear those kinds of portrayals in places like Japan. The result is as a machine gun-armed robot, automatically very spooky for us. In South Korea they actually deployed two robotic snipers to Iraq in 2004 with no public debate. Samsung actually created a commercial for an automated machine gun that it built. It wasn't just something where you went, "Ooh, that's scary." They built a commercial to celebrate that they were able to reach this technologic achievement. So there are very different attitudes and that can have a big consequence.

To your question of oops moments, actually almost all oops moments are human error in some way. The question, the difference of robotics, is that it both geographically and chronologically moves that error. For example, a software glitch. A software glitch happens because someone at some point in time, maybe some graduate student, had two Red Bulls instead of one to stay up, put a zero where he should have put a one. But the consequences of that can be something like the system goes in the wrong direction.

We've had a couple of air strikes that went awry simply because, again, of a human error of people putting the wrong strike coordinates in. The interesting thing, and it's a funny place to end on, is that they've actually found that one of the key issues of whether these systems are used successfully or not is whether we trust them enough. So everything you've heard from me is the challenges of trusting these machines to do more and more. But the Army and the Air Force both utilize very similar systems, the Predator class system. The Air Force for a while had higher crash rates, the trained Air Force pilots, than the Army operators. And the reason was that the Army operators who weren't trained as pilots actually trusted the machine to do more on its own. But of course the consequences of when they had crashes were tougher to figure out than the more frequent Air Force ones that actually had a human role in it.

This kind of debate is going to continue in everything from war to issues like medicine, where doctors are starting to use robots more and more for surgery. And so I think that's the best illustration of the revolutionary nature of it, both the possibilities of the world we're entering into, and the huge questions we're going to have to figure out as we move into that world. Thank you.

Cristina Lopez-Gottard. Thank you very much, Peter.

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