



THE CENTER ON LAW AND SECURITY AT THE NYU SCHOOL OF LAW

TODAY'S MILITARY: Its Challenges, Mission, and Future





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TODAY'S MILITARY: Its Challenges, Mission, and Future

April 24, 2009

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While much of the public discussion of the U.S. military in recent years has focused on U.S. strategies and encounters in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are broader – and equally urgent – issues concerning the future of our armed services that warrant examination not only by our uniformed and civilian leaders but by the nation as a whole. The Center on Law and Security convened its conference “Today’s Military: It’s Challenges, Missions, and Future” as a step towards raising public awareness of these momentous debates.

At issue are the matters of mission and method, of composition and goals. Who serves in our military and how the military interfaces with civilian society and with other governmental departments are as important to understand as the likely long-term consequences of transformations in the military’s resources. Ultimately, it is essential for civilians to understand the unique challenges that face those who serve in the military and for the military to understand the importance of establishing a dialogue with civilians, both those in government and those in the private sector.

The answers to these questions for present-day America are intimately related to the many policy choices that lie on the horizon in considering the funding, staffing, and training of the armed services. For example, in pursuing counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, how does the ideal division of labor between the military, the State Department, and nongovernmental organizations differ from what is realistically possible? Further, to what extent should we anticipate that future conflicts will also entail a counterinsurgency mission? What are the roles of the National Guard and Reserves? Are the current educational opportunities available for the U.S. military in need of reform?

These questions can only be answered through informed debate, requiring public attention and participation. The conference’s participants have generously shared their thoughts, their doubts, their hopes, and the challenges they foresee. We hope that the proceedings herein will serve as a starting point for a better understanding of the challenges that confront both the U.S. military and American society as a whole as it enters the 21st century.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Karen J. Greenberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen J. Greenberg, Executive Director

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Participant Biographies; April 24, 2009

Gen. John P. Abizaid retired from the United States Army in May 2007 after 34 years of active service. After graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point, he rose from second lieutenant of infantry to four-star general. At the time of his retirement, he was the longest-serving commander of United States Central Command, with responsibility for an area spanning 27 countries in the Middle East, Southwest Asia, and the Horn of Africa. Units under his command have included the 1st Infantry Division, a brigade in the 82nd Airborne Division, and two Ranger companies. Gen. Abizaid worked on the Joint Staff three times, the last as Director. He studied at the University of Jordan in Amman, holds a master's degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University, and is widely considered to be an expert in the field of Middle Eastern affairs. Gen. Abizaid serves as the Distinguished Chair of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. Through his consulting company, JPA Partners LLC, Gen. Abizaid advises small businesses through Fortune 500 companies nationally and internationally, and serves as a board member for both USAA and RPM, Inc.

Lt. Gen. David Barno, U.S. Army (ret.) is the director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University. Subsequent to his selection to Major General in 2001, he served as Commanding General, United States Army Training Center and Fort Jackson. During this assignment, he deployed to Hungary in 2003 as the Commanding General of Task Force Warrior with the mission to train the free Iraqi forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Gen. Barno deployed to Afghanistan in October 2003, commanding over 20,000 U.S.

and Coalition forces in Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. For 19 months in this position, he was responsible to U.S. Central Command for regional efforts in Afghanistan, most of Pakistan, and the southern parts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Gen. Barno has recently been appointed as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans and Families by Secretary of Veterans Affairs James Nicholson. He holds an M.A. in national security studies from Georgetown University and is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.

Phillip Carter is an attorney practicing government contract and national security law with McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP. Prior, he served as an officer in the U.S. Army, including nine years of active and reserve service with military police and civil affairs units. In 2005-'06, he deployed to Iraq with the Army's 101st Airborne Division, where he served as an advisor to the Iraqi police. He is a founding member of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and recently served as National Veterans Director for the Obama presidential campaign. His national security practice includes appellate work in the landmark cases *FAIR v. Rumsfeld* and *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, in which he authored amicus briefs. Carter has contributed articles to *Slate*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Monthly*, among others, and has also appeared as an expert on CNN, MSNBC, National Public Radio, and PBS's *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*.

Karen J. Greenberg is the Executive Director of the Center on Law and Security. She is the author of *The Least Worst Place: Guantanamo's First 100 Days* (Oxford University Press, 2009), co-editor with Joshua Dratel of *The Enemy Combatant Papers: American Justice, the Courts, and the War on Terror* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), editor of the books *The Torture Debate in America* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) and *Al Qaeda Now* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), and editor of the *NYU Review of Law and Security*. She is a frequent writer, commentator, and lecturer on Guantanamo, detention, torture, terrorism trials, and other issues related to the war on terror. Her work has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Nation*, *The National Interest*, *Mother Jones*, TomDispatch.com, and on major news channels.

Eric Greitens has worked as a humanitarian volunteer, documentary photographer, and researcher in Rwanda, Cambodia, the Gaza Strip, and elsewhere. Greitens's book of award-winning photographs and essays, *Strength and Compassion*, grew from his humanitarian work. He is also a United States Navy SEAL officer, and currently serves with a reserve unit at Special Operations Command. His awards include the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Purple Heart, and the Bronze Star. In 2005-2006, he was appointed to serve as a White House Fellow. In October 2008, he was awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award for his work with wounded and disabled veterans. He is a Senior Fellow at the Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri and a Senior Fellow at

the Center for the Study of Ethics and Human Values at Washington University, where he teaches on public service, ethics, and leadership.

James Jacobs is the Warren E. Burger Professor of Constitutional Law and the Courts and Director of the Center for Research in Crime and Justice at the NYU Law School. His doctoral dissertation, *Stateville: The Penitentiary in Mass Society* (1977), a classic in penology, is still assigned in classrooms around the country. Since coming to NYU, Prof. Jacobs has convened the monthly Hoffinger Criminal Justice Colloquium. He has published fourteen books and more than 100 articles on such topics as prisons and imprisonment, drunk driving, corruption and its control, hate crime, gun control, and labor racketeering. Prof. Jacobs frequently involves law students in his research projects. For example, he co-authored *Busting the Mob: U.S. v. Cosa Nostra* (1994) with law students Christopher Panarella and Jay Worthington III and co-authored *Gotham Unbound: How NYC Was Liberated from the Grip of Organized Crime* (1998) with law students Robert Raddick and Coleen Friel. His most recent book, *Mobsters, Unions and Feds: Organized Crime and the American Labor Movement*, was published by NYU Press in 2006.

Mark R. Jacobson has been a Professional Staff Member at the Senate Armed Services Committee since January 2007, where he focuses on investigations and oversight of Department of Defense activities and programs. Most recently, he was part of a team investigating detention and interrogation policies at the Department of Defense. He formerly served as a National Security Fellow in the U.S. Senate and at the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security. Prior, he served in a

number of positions at Office of the Secretary of Defense, including as the Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Policy, an advisor at the Joint Staff Directorate for Special Operations, and a foreign affairs officer at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict. In 1993, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve, and deployed in 1996-97 as part of the NATO Peace Implementation Force in Bosnia. He accepted a commission as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy Reserves in 2001. In 2006, he deployed for a year to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, where he supported a U.S. national counterterrorism mission, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and NATO special operations forces. He has authored numerous opinion pieces, journal articles, book reviews, and chapters and has appeared on programs including MSNBC's *Hardball* and CNN's *American Morning*.

Fred Kaplan is the national-security columnist for *Slate* and the author of *Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power* (2008), *The Wizards of Armageddon* (1983), and the forthcoming *1959: The Year Everything Changed* (June 2009). A former congressional adviser on foreign and defense policy and bureau chief for *The Boston Globe* in Moscow and New York, he has a Ph.D. in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

W. Patrick Lang is a retired senior officer of U.S. Military Intelligence and U.S. Army Special Forces (The Green Berets). He served in the Department of Defense both as a serving officer and then as a member of the Defense Senior Executive Service. He is a highly decorated veteran of several of America's overseas conflicts, including the war in Vietnam. He was trained and educated

as a specialist in the Middle East by the U.S. Army and served in that region for many years. He was the first Professor of the Arabic Language at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. In the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), he was the Defense Intelligence Officer for the Middle East, South Asia and Terrorism and later the first Director of the Defense Humint Service. He was awarded the Presidential Rank of Distinguished Executive for his service in DIA. He is an analyst consultant for many television and radio broadcasts, including *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*.

John Nagl was appointed President of the Center for a New American Security, where he was previously a Senior Fellow, in February 2009. He is a Visiting Professor in the War Studies Department at Kings College, London, an Adjunct Professor in Georgetown University's Security Studies Program, and a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Dr. Nagl was a Distinguished Graduate of the United States Military Academy Class of 1988 and served as an armor officer in the U.S. Army for 20 years, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His last military assignment was as commander of the 1st Battalion, 34th Armor at Fort Riley, Kansas, training Transition Teams that embed with Iraqi and Afghan units. He was awarded the Combat Action Badge by General James Mattis, USMC. He is the author of *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* and was on the writing team that produced the *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*. His writings have also been published in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Foreign Policy*, *Joint Force Quarterly*, and *Armed Forces Journal*, among others.

Timothy W. Nichols entered the Marine Corps in 1989 after graduating from the University of Virginia. Lt. Col. Nichols reported to the 2nd FSSG as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence in 2000. During his three-year tour, he served as the Director of Intelligence (J-2) for Joint Task Force 160 in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and as the G-2 for the Marine Logistics Command during Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2003, he reported to the Joint Special Operations Command, where he works in the Operations Directorate. While in this billet, he served in combat tours in both Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2006, he reported to his current assignment as the executive officer for the North Carolina Piedmont Consortium. His personal decorations include: the Bronze Star (one oak cluster), the Defense Meritorious Service Medal (two oak clusters), the Joint Service Commendation Medal (two oak clusters), the Navy and Marine Commendation Medal (gold star and combat V device), the Joint Service Achievement Medal (oak cluster), and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Suzanne Nossel is Chief of Operations for Human Rights Watch. She served as Deputy to the Ambassador for U.N. Management and Reform at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations from 1999 to 2001 under Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke. She was awarded the Distinguished Honor Award in recognition of the successful conclusion of a consensus agreement on reforms of the U.N. financial system and payment of U.S. dues. After leaving the U.N., she served as Vice President of U.S. Business Development at Bertelsmann Media Worldwide from 2001 to 2005. She then served as Vice President of Strategy and Operations for *The Wall Street Journal* from 2005 to 2007. She is the founder of the blog www.democracyarsenal.org and a contributor to *The Huffington Post* and *The New Republic*

online. Prior to her government service, Nossel served as a consultant at McKinsey & Company. During the early 1990s, she worked on the implementation of South Africa's National Peace Accord. Nossel is the author of *Presumed Equal: What America's Top Women Lawyers Really Think about Their Firms* (Career Press, 1998). She writes frequently on foreign policy, and has published pieces in *Foreign Affairs*, *The National Interest*, *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas, Dissent, The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Boston Globe*.

George Packer became a staff writer for *The New Yorker* in 2003 and has covered the Iraq War for the magazine. His book *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* was named one of the ten best books of 2005 by *The New York Times* and won the New York Public Library's Helen Bernstein Book Award and an Overseas Press Club award. Packer was awarded two Overseas Press Club awards in 2003, one for his examination of the difficulties faced during the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq and the other for his coverage of the civil war in Sierra Leone. He is also the author of *The Village of Waiting* (1988), about his experience in Africa. His book *Blood of the Liberals* (2000), a three-generational non-fiction history of his family and American liberalism in the twentieth century, won the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. He has also written two novels, *The Half Man* (1991) and *Central Square* (1998). Packer has served in the Peace Corps, in Togo, West Africa, and was a 2001-02 Guggenheim Fellow. He has contributed numerous articles, essays, and reviews on foreign affairs, American politics, and literature to *The New York Times Magazine*, *Dissent*, *Mother Jones*, *Harper's*, and other publications.

Kathy Roth-Douquet currently serves as senior legal advisor to the Center for Naval Analysis, a think tank in Washington, D.C. She has worked in presidential campaigns in every presidential election of the past 25 years, most recently as an advisor to the Obama campaign and transition. She is a Senior Fellow for the Truman National Security Project and a Fellow with the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces in Society. She is the co-author, with Frank Schaeffer, of two books: *AWOL: The Unexcused Absence of America's Upper Classes from Military Service and How It Hurts the Country* (Collins, 2006) and *How Free People Move Mountains* (Collins, 2008). She has appeared on the *Today* show, *Fox & Friends*, NPR, PBS, and others; her commentary has appeared frequently in *USA Today* as well as other major newspapers and magazines. While serving at the Pentagon as Principal Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acting), she received the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service for her work on defense reform. Roth-Douquet is founder of Blue Stars Families and serves on the advisory board of the wounded-warrior charity *Hope For the Warriors* and the veterans charity *Beyond Tribute*.

Elizabeth Rubin is the Edward R. Murrow press fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. She is a contributing writer at *The New York Times Magazine*. Since October 2001, she has reported extensively from Afghanistan on the overthrow of the Taliban, life and politics under President Hamid Karzai, the rise of the new Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and American counterinsurgency efforts. For the past decade she has worked as a foreign correspondent, writing from Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Russia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Africa, and the Balkans. Her stories have

appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Republic*, *Harper's*, and *The New Yorker*: Her reportage "An Army of One's Own," published in *Harper's*, was a National Magazine Award finalist and earned an Overseas Press Club citation for excellence. She was selected for a Livingston Award for International Reporting for her *New Yorker* piece "Our Children Are Killing Us," about the Lord's Resistance Army. She also won the Kurt Schork Award for International Reporting and a Michael Kelly Award.

Frank Schaeffer is a *New York Times* best-selling author. His three novels about growing up in a fundamentalist mission – *Portofino*, *Zermatt*, and *Saving Grandma* – have been translated into nine languages and have received international acclaim. *Baby Jack*, a novel about service, sacrifice, and the class division between who serves in the military and who does not, is his most recent novel. His latest book, a memoir, *Crazy for God: How I Grew Up As One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back*, has been widely acclaimed. Schaeffer's nonfiction also includes the *New York Times* bestseller *Keeping Faith: A Father-Son Story about Love and the United States Marine Corps* and *AWOL: The Unexcused Absence of America's Upper Classes From Military Service and How It Hurts Our Country*. Schaeffer is a popular blogger for *The Huffington Post*. He has written for *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Baltimore Sun* and others on topics ranging from his critique of American right wing fundamentalism to his experiences as a military parent and novelist. He has been a commentator on NPR's *All Things Considered* and PBS's *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, as well as a frequent guest

on C-SPAN's *Book TV*. He has appeared on *Oprah*, *20/20*, the *Today* show, and many others.

Michael A. Sheehan is a Distinguished Fellow at the Center on Law and Security, a security consultant, and the author of the recently published *Crush the Cell* (Crown, 2008). Sheehan was the Deputy Commissioner of Counterterrorism at the NYPD from 2003 to 2006. Prior, he was the Assistant Secretary General in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the UN, where he was responsible for mission support to UN military and police peacekeeping forces around the world. In the late 1990s, Sheehan served as the Ambassador at Large for Counterterrorism and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of International Organizations. He served at the White House under three National Security Advisors and two Presidents (George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton). Sheehan is a retired lieutenant colonel of the U.S. Army Special Forces and was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge among other decorations for his service in the Army.

Shanea Watkins works at the Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis, where she performs social science research in the areas of education, poverty, immigration, and family structure. Her recent work includes evaluations of the demographics of the U.S. enlisted and officer military force, the relationship between school spending and academic achievement, and how stimulus or tax policies will affect families. She received a doctorate in public policy from George Mason University in 2007. She also has a master's degree in psychology from East Tennessee State University and a bachelor's degree in psychology and administration of justice from the University of Virginia's College at Wise.

Keynote Address



Gen. John Abizaid, U.S. Army (ret.). *Photo by Dan Creighton.*

Karen J. Greenberg:

Today's discussion will be the first of four conferences that the Center on Law and Security will be hosting on the topic of military/civilian relations. Including this subject on our agenda has been a goal of mine for at least two years, but we have been in such a reactive mode trying to follow events around the world that we haven't had a chance to do what people in a university like to do, which is think about what interests them. So I made a number of phone calls over these two years, and I have found that people have completely different understandings of what "military/civilian relations" means. To some people it means issues surrounding the draft. To others it means the relationship between the civilian Pentagon and the uniformed military, and to yet others it means the civil society building that is being attempted in Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, and elsewhere.

What I initially thought was a narrow topic became very broad, and today's conference is designed to raise broad questions. One thought to bear in mind is that throughout the eight years of the war on terror, no one has taken the time to sufficiently examine what

the U.S. military is; what its role is; what its place is within the context of American society, American politics, and the international realm; and where it is headed. I am delighted to begin the discussion with the program today.

Michael Sheehan:

The standard way to introduce General Abizaid is to review his impressive credentials and to say that he is eminently qualified to speak about the subject. That would work,

but I would rather recount what other people have said about him, because there are a few consistent themes. The first is his physical and moral courage, from jumping into a hot landing zone in Grenada to confronting some of the most difficult political/military issues of our time. The second is his skill in leadership at all levels. The third is the trust people place in his friendship – his integrity and the goodness of his heart and soul – which is consistently recognized by Democrats and Republicans, by Army Rangers and by heads of state around the world. So thank you, General, for kicking off our conference.

Gen. John Abizaid, U.S. Army (ret.):

After 34 years in the military, I retired to Gardnerville, Nevada. I did so because Gardnerville reminded me an awful lot of Waziristan. Everyone is heavily armed, they do not like the federal government, and they have a propensity to build militias. It is a good place for a retired general to be.

I would like to talk a little bit about the role of the military in society and the strategic setting, both currently and in the future, but first I would like to say that we need to appre-

ciate what the U.S. Armed Forces have done over the past eight years. My son-in-law, who is now in Iraq, has spent more combined time there and in Afghanistan than my father spent in the Pacific during World War II. My father left in February 1942 and came home in September 1945. While he didn't come back until the war was over, there is no prospect of the current conflict ending soon or easily. So the pressures on the professional military force are enormous.

On the other hand, we have built a professional joint force that is quite capable. I went to Grenada in 1983 for the armed forces' first real joint operation since Vietnam. Although the enemy was not very sophisticated, it was an armed enemy all the same. We had a fairly complicated mission and 10 percent of my 150 men were either killed or wounded in a very short period of time. At one point I looked over my shoulder and saw a Navy destroyer. I wanted to call in their support to help us with a machine gun position, but my fire support officer told me that we weren't able to communicate with them. We were able to talk to an Air Force aircraft overhead to call in an airstrike, but they were using a map with a different grid system than ours. We had a similar communication problem with a Marine Corps helicopter. It was probably the low point of the joint forces of the United States of America. But then in southern Afghanistan in 2003, two young sergeants on a radio and a computer called in an airstrike on Taliban activity. The target was hit and destroyed within 15 minutes. That airstrike was precise and professionally done in a way that made me realize how far we had come. We traveled a tremendous distance in our professional capability between 1983 and 2003, and we are continuing that progress today.

If the Soviet Union had crossed the border into Germany in 1973, when I was commissioned, I am not sure that we would have won

that war. We probably would have had to resort to nuclear weapons very quickly. We were not ready to deal, militarily or professionally, with an enemy of great strength and capability. Now we have become the best tactical force on the planet, and also the best conventional military force.

The strategic setting is interesting and bears consideration. The force today is professional, competent, extremely stretched, and very worn out. We have to beware of preparing the armed forces to fight the perfect war in Afghanistan and Iraq and finding out sometime down the road that we face Iran, China, Russia or who knows what other adversary. We have lacked a grand strategy to describe what we're trying to do, which has made it difficult for the people fighting the war to understand where we are headed, why we are headed there, and how we are doing so. It is something I hope the current administration will act on, and will quickly move to a certain degree of coherency.

The Middle East has always interested me. I was responsible for a volatile area made up of 27 different countries, from Kazakhstan in the north, down through Pakistan and Afghanistan, over and across Iran and the middle of the Arabian Peninsula, and down into Egypt, Sudan, and the Horn of Africa. The area, and Islam within it, is in an internal fight to try to come to grips with a globalizing, modernizing planet. Yet when I would return to the United States to either testify on Capitol Hill or to talk to my bosses, it was clear to me that we were looking at what was happening in Iraq and Afghanistan as though through soda straws, as though they were disconnected. In my view as a theater commander they most certainly were not. That part of the world is moving in a direction that could be extremely contrary to U.S. interests if the problem of Islamic extremism, particularly Sunni Islamic extremism, were ever to

become mainstream.

As I looked at the area in which I was operating, I saw four strategic problems that we had to deal with: the rise of Sunni Islamic extremism, as exemplified by groups such as al Qaeda and people such as Osama bin Laden; the rise of Iranian Shia power, particularly Shia theological power; the problems associated with the Arab/Israeli difficulties; and our reliance on Middle Eastern oil. These strategic imperatives existed when I took command. They exist today. They will exist in the future. For our senior leadership, they mean that we must coherently deal with a broad-based problem in the Middle East and formulate a grand strategic vision to deal with it. I believe that the current administration is trying to move in that direction, and we will see how it does so. But our preoccupation with Iraq and Afghanistan has caused us to lose sight of what is going on in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere. The situation in Pakistan, a nuclear state and the second-

largest Muslim nation in the world, is dangerous. If it were it to become an extremist state (although I am not saying it will), that would be a disaster not only for the Islamic world but also for the United States and for our friends and allies around the region.

As we look at this problem that we will be undoubtedly facing in the Middle East for the next 10 years or so, we have to contemplate where we are as a nation. It is clear to me that the wealth of the world is shifting from our part of the world to the East. I am not sure where it will end up, but as political and economic

power flows, so flows military power over time.

We have spent money on our military in an unconstrained fashion over the past eight years because it has been necessary to spend money in order to deal with the problems that we were assigned to deal with. But we must understand that from this point forward we will not be operating in an unconstrained atmosphere. Resources will become tighter, and we will have to take a clear view of the strategic landscape over the next 20 years to make sure that we build the armed forces in a

way that is appropriate for the challenges the country will face. If power is moving to the East, we must be competitive with them, and that is our dilemma right now. How do we move from armed forces that are so focused on asymmetric warfare that they might not properly prepare for the balanced force that needs to emerge in the next 20 years?

Trying to predict the future 20 years from now is a very difficult thing to do. A French officer after the end of the Paris Peace

Conference in 1919 would not have expected the Germans to be in Paris in May 1940. A young U.S. military officer in Grenada in 1983 would not have expected to spend most of their career fighting in Afghanistan or Iraq. So we predict the future at our own peril. Yet it is clear to me that the most important thing the military must do for the nation is not to dominate others, but to defend the nation. We must have a force that is capable of doing so in order to provide the ultimate insurance policy for the nation in a period of constrained spending and global competition. Global com-



“[I]t is clear to me that the most important thing the military must do for the nation is not to dominate others, but to defend the nation. We must have a force that is capable of doing so in order to provide the ultimate insurance policy for the nation in a period of constrained spending and global competition.”

Gen. Abizaid

petition was not part of the equation for the past eight years, but I believe it will be for the next 25.

It is difficult to know what may happen, but we should be aware that the competition from al Qaeda could become a regional ideology that is threatening not only to the region, but also to our interests there. Should it be successful in achieving what it wants to achieve in

Pakistan, it could become nuclear-armed overnight. Yet we also know that the world's resources are limited. There will be competition for those resources, and while I do not know whether or not that competition will become militarily inclined, we are going to have to ensure that we have armed forces that are prepared to deal with these problems. These are the central themes that I see emerging for us.

What will the armed forces look like? Right now, we have become land-centric. We have become asymmetrically inclined, and rightfully so, because we must deal with the problems of Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet we would be wrong to think that there are only Iraqs and Afghanistans ahead of us. History tells us that at some point in the future of the republic, we will face a battle against some foreign power for our survival. I recently discussed these issues with the young one-star officers and not-so-young three-star officers who are coming up through the Joint Armed Forces Staff College and Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia.

I also believe that we need to examine the state of political/military affairs as we move forward. Are there problems? Well, I think there is a problem when a senior-ranking member of the administration asks me, as a



“[W]e would be wrong to think that there are only Iraqs and Afghanistans ahead of us. History tells us that at some point in the future ... we will face a battle against some foreign power for our survival.”

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four-star general, whether or not a particular three-star officer is a Democrat. That was an interesting question to be presented with. I had never thought of my colleagues as either Democrats or Republicans. I had thought of some of them as smart or not so smart, as good or not so good, but never as Democrats or Republicans. That question really bothered me. I do not think we

should ever try to figure out the pedigrees of the members of our officer corps, and there was something that I did not like about watching the political campaigns gear up from the sidelines and as a civilian receiving phone calls from numerous sources to come join their respective lineup. It is one thing to run for office and something else again for retired military officers to stump for particular candidates. It is an interesting question. I believe that the officers of the republic must remain apolitical and must understand that they have constitutional obligations. There are too many people in the armed forces who have a religious view of their service, which from a constitutional perspective does not fit well with the way I was brought up. There are officers who believe they have the moral high ground by virtue of their position and that they should therefore let people know what they think about how society should work. That is not what the framers of the Constitution had in mind. The framers had a non-professional military in mind, and they would be quite surprised to see a military that is so professional and has fought so well for so long. They would probably wonder whether that is a good thing, which is a question that we ought to ask ourselves here today.

In closing, I would say that I am extraordinarily proud to have served in the uniform of my nation. I have loved being an officer in the armed forces, but I have always been alert to the problems that every great nation has faced with their military. Will the military serve us, or at some point will the military ask us to serve them? We need to constantly examine the nature of that relationship, whether it is professional, whether it is constitutional, and whether it is serving the national interest in the way that it was designed to. The professional force of the United States was not designed to fight this war for eight years without mobilizing the nation, yet that is precisely the decision that we made, which may have interesting consequences. It is important both for those of us who sit on the civilian side and for those of us who sit on the military side to understand our duties, to understand our missions, to plan for our future, and to stay apolitical in our profession of arms.

EXCERPTS FROM THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Question (*from the audience*):

Historically, we have had highly political generals, including George McClellan and Douglas MacArthur. Is it realistically possible to keep politics separate from the military?

Gen. Abizaid:

When you become a general officer, you take on a responsibility to give military advice, which is not the same as saying what it is that we are going to do. There are people on the civilian, policymaking side who think that they should do whatever a general says. That is not the case. They are in charge, and they have to be aware of that. The problem is that we do not speak the same language. That is one of the great challenges that I dealt with as an officer. I would go in and talk to the president or the secretary of defense and tell them what I thought. I would leave the meeting thinking that they had agreed, but weeks later I would find out not only that they hadn't agreed but that they hadn't really understood what I had said and vice versa. So speaking clearly, coherently, and effectively to people about complex military problems in a common sense, straightforward way is a challenge for military professionals. We need to be better at it, but so must civilians, which requires some degree of practice within the national security apparatus.

Yes, there is politics involved within the military, but what I constantly faced was a challenge from the political leadership to be on their political team. I was not a member of the administration. I was an officer in the Army. I had to give my advice. I had to state my opinion and I had to support the lawful decisions of the leadership, which I did fully and without complaint. There are people who see the senior military as members of the

administration, and you have to resist that. At a certain point you realize that they don't want you to go on the Sunday talk shows in order to advance the mission but rather to advance the political agenda. When you're asked to do that, you have to say no.

The last thing I'll say on this subject is that military officers in the field should not be called to testify in front of Congress except under exceptional circumstances. There are other officers already in Washington who can do that. My job was to fight in the field. We need to stop trying to bring our commanders forward in order to advance political agendas. Commanders need to fight the fight, and the people in Washington need to defend the policy. When the policy is unclear, which it frequently has been and always will be, we need to work harder at the policy level to clarify it, which is related to speaking about a clear and concise grand strategic vision, which we lack.

Question *(from the audience)*:

It seems that the military is being called on to train foreign armies. How will that fit into the military in the future?

Gen. Abizaid:

John Nagl is going to talk about that later today. It is clear that we must get out of our occupational strategy in the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia and move into a cooperative strategy. We have to help people help themselves against the extremist threat. It requires an indirect approach, and that indirect approach is best enabled by a professional, capable group of American advisors, trainers, equippers – people who give opinions on how best to employ military forces. We have been slow within the professional military to embrace that. It has much to do with the way that we have structured ourselves. There is a debate within the Army today as to whether or not we need a professional advisory corps. I

believe that there is more and more advisory work ahead of us. Ultimately, we need to advise the Pakistanis, who have only let us advise them in very small areas. We need to advise them more over time and we need to have a robust advisory effort. But I resist the notion of a military that is not versatile along the whole spectrum of conflict. I believe that we can take good units and have them mis-sioned against advisory tasks, and I think we are starting to do that now. We have been late in doing it. Yes, it is a growing role and yes, it is important.

We are fortunate to have a great military. It is professional, capable, well armed, and well equipped, but in the 25 years ahead of us, it is going to be challenged. It is going to be challenged constitutionally. It is going to be challenged financially. It is going to be challenged by an even broader range of missions. We are going to be in a competitive environment. I believe that the period of American domination is behind us, but the period of American indispensability in the international arena will remain. The question for us is how to ensure that the armed forces of the United States are trained, equipped, and led in a way that brings the nation to not only protect its values, but to help others to achieve the values of peace and freedom.

Civilian/Military Relations Now

Panelists:

Lt. Gen. David Barno, U.S. Army (ret.);
Phillip Carter; W. Patrick Lang; Suzanne Nossel

Moderator:

Karen J. Greenberg

civilian communities, and what he called the “bubble” effect – how life inside the military is not conducive to the conversations, discourse, ties, and mutual understanding that are so necessary. Perhaps he will expand on that and other topics today.



Phillip Carter; Lt. Gen. David Barno, U.S. Army (ret.);
Karen J. Greenberg; and W. Patrick Lang. *Photo by Dan Creighton.*

Karen J. Greenberg:

One thing we have learned here at the Center is the difficulty involved in getting members of different communities and professions to talk to one another. When we first started our work, the discourse between policemen on the frontlines of counterterrorism and the legal scholars who think about counterterrorism policy was much the same as General Abizaid’s description of the difference between military officers in the field and those thinking about policy critically or proactively. It is as if we were back to square one, except with a different professional focus.

This panel will discuss some present and future issues. Lt. General David Barno is a returning guest at the Center, who recently spoke in an off-the-record session about the severity of the divide between our military and

Lt. Gen. David Barno, U.S. Army (ret.):

As I was thinking a couple of weeks ago about how to approach today’s topic and the separateness of the military from our society, I realized it was about eyeglasses. Military people do not go to Pearle Vision or other stores, they get their eyeglasses from the military. I made a list of all the different things that put the military in that bubble.

Military installations are the ultimate gated communities. They

are protected by guards and ever-growing amounts of security, in part because of the aftermath of 9/11. Not all military people live on military installations. Around Washington, D.C., most live out in the greater Washington community. But around other places in the country – such as Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Lewis, Washington; or Fort Benning, Georgia – a sizeable number, normally the majority of military people based there, live on base. I was in the Army for 30 years, and I spent only seven of those years living off-base. I owned a house for two years of that time. For most of their service, military people live on military installations. If you are in the military, your health club is there, with a fully stocked gymnasium where you work out. Your healthcare and dental care are there. Your grocery and department store are there. The Army

has a major project designed to increase the amount of on-base housing, so your chances of being out in the community, living amongst neighbors who aren't in uniform, diminish every year. Your childcare is provided there at a subsidized rate. In many posts and stations across the country, the entire school system is there. If you want to go on vacation, you can go to the post travel office and get a

special rate. There are military vacation locations, including military hotels in Waikiki Beach, Hawaii, and in Garmisch, Germany. There is also Shades of Green, right next to Disney World in Florida, so you can stay inside the military community when you go on vacation. Your churches are on base, and everyone who goes to them is fit, good looking, and has short haircuts. There is no one there older than a certain age except for retirees who do not want to leave that environment. Virtually every aspect of your life during your time in uniform can be taken care of on base.

Military people believe that they are part of society. They do not realize that they are separate and distinct. Much of this did not occur to me until I left the military. When they drive out the main gate in the morning or on a Saturday to go to the local Walmart, they think they are part of the community and part of that society. But when they go back on base in the evening, they are in a very separate world. They are in a world where everybody looks and often thinks like them. It is like a box of crayons in which all of the crayons are the same color.

This is a small, carefully selected group



“You need to know who is in your military, how they think, and what kind of people they are. They need to know what country they are serving and participate more broadly in the life of the nation so that they can better reflect its values.”

Lt. Gen. Barno

with a different cause and mission than the rest of society. Just before I left active duty, an Army survey found that more than 25 percent of generals had sons or daughters in the military. I think the percentage has increased since then. I have two sons, both Army captains. Very good friends of mine have lost sons and daughters in combat, and I know a number of others whose children have been

wounded. This group of people is paying a disproportionately high price within the broader society for the nation's objectives and policies. Only about one out of every 300 American families has a son, daughter, close relative or immediate family member inside the military.

My concern is not only that the nation as a whole is not participating in the defense of the country and not bearing these sacrifices, but also that as the officer corps grows up this isolated environment it becomes a force that is extremely different from the rest of society. Polls of military officers show that their political inclinations all tend to be on one end of the spectrum. That is becoming increasingly the case. There are some positive aspects of the bubble as well, and we need to recognize those. This is a high-quality, carefully selected group of people who have gone through tremendous training and educational experiences to get to where they are. They understand the mission and are utterly focused on accomplishing it. That is clearly what society wants from the military. But we have to be concerned with the downsides, which I think General Abizaid touched on earlier. This is not a group that looks or necessarily thinks like

the rest of America over time. There are some fairly significant political disconnects.

Balance is lacking in terms of political outlook, and the military as a group is probably far more focused in terms of religion than we see on the outside. One of the controversial questions that society is currently grappling with is the policy regarding gays in the military. Does the military think about that issue the same way the rest of the society does? Should they? What is the impact of that? If the policy changes, can a military that is conservative, oriented in a single political direction with this kind of a value set, adapt? What will some of the challenges be?

Because it is so carefully selected, the military does not look like society at large in terms of physical fitness, disability, age range, and things of that nature. In fact, in terms of recruitment, the military says that only about 25-30 percent of the 18-22 year-old population can even get through the door because of health, physical fitness, and educational standards. So this is a carefully selected, extremely small group that has a huge impact on society overall. The officers have 25, 30, or even 35 years of experience in this environment, which has walled them off from the rest of the American people.

As we look at the future of the military, one of our national priorities must be to increase the interaction between our military officers and the civilian world. You need to know who is in your military, how they think, and what kind of people they are. They need to know what country they are serving and participate more broadly in the life of the nation so that they can better reflect its values.

Karen J. Greenberg:

Does the cohesiveness within the military population help in the theater of battle? Is there a philosophy that having a coherent, cohesive community helps when fighting the enemy?

Lt. Gen. Barno:

I think that it is helpful in many respects. This Army has been kept together by what has been called the “band of brothers” effect. For the first time since World War II, we are now rotating units into combat that are staying for 12 months. They come back home as a unit, they train together for another year typically, and they go back into combat again. During this time the families will be part of a community, and are all going through the same challenges. In contrast, people were typically sent to Vietnam as individuals. They lived in communities that had no idea what their husbands were doing there. It was a very different environment and the national ethos was different.

So I think that it has helped the military in this long period of war, but I think the unit rotation has helped as much as the fact that people are living together on posts.

Phillip Carter:

My job as national veterans director for the Obama campaign from July to

November 2008 was to find the blue crayons in the box, and to call people like General Abizaid. It is in that capacity that I wanted to share some thoughts from the campaign trail. You know, 2008 was a year of change, including on the civil/military front. Our challenge was that we had a nonmilitary, brilliantly charismatic politician running against a bona fide war hero whom everyone on our side



“[M]any veterans and military voters do not vote on the basis of their military affiliation.”

Phillip Carter

respected and thought very highly of. The challenge, which was difficult, was to essentially take down a war hero while respecting his service and respecting the military and its commitment to the kind of heroism that John McCain showed in Vietnam.

As a former Army officer, I always think in Army terms, and we developed lines of operation to do this. Getting volunteers who could pound the pavement and get votes on Election Day mattered very much. We had terrific people around the country who built a coalition of veterans, military families, and others. Communications were important, including everything from blogs to getting generals who could validate a nonmilitary candidate to write Op-Eds in their local papers. It wasn't so much what the general was saying – the symbolism of a general or an Iraq or Vietnam veteran saying that they trusted this person's judgment was more important than the policy merits themselves. The Denver National Convention, speeches around the country, and organizational outreach to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion all mattered a great deal.

How did we do? Senator Obama – now President Obama – received 44 percent of the veterans' vote, according to CNN. John McCain received 56 percent. The key statistic is not that we lost the veteran vote, but that we actually did better than John Kerry did in 2004. Think about that – the nonmilitary candidate running against a war hero did better than the war hero running against someone who spent time avoiding military service. That is significant, and it reflects a couple of points. First, we were somewhat effective. Second, many veterans and military voters do not vote on the basis of their military affiliation. In the active duty force, they are in a bubble. But once they become veterans, their primary political affiliation might be that they are African-American, or Christian, or a mem-

ber of a labor union. It might be something else entirely, but it is not their veteran status. We found that as our boat rose or fell with the waters of the economy that was the deciding factor for us. That is what got those veterans' votes for us – the economy and our larger success in the election.

We received six times more donations from deployed service members than the McCain campaign did. When we looked at our microdonations (although the public data is only for donations above \$200), we found that we were getting many times more donations than the McCain campaign was. We had no idea why. We thought that part of it might have been that no one wanted change more than service members on their third tour in Iraq. We also thought that it was part of our larger innovation about social networking and getting people involved, and that if a service member was going to donate, they were likely to do it as a dissenting impulse rather than just another vote for the status quo. Major military base communities turned Democratic this year, including Norfolk, Virginia; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Fayetteville, North Carolina. These communities had no chance of being Democratic four years ago but turned that way because of the economy, health care, and, I'd like to think, events overseas. Major veterans' organizations did not endorse either candidate. That is kind of a draw, right? But when you are running against someone like John McCain, that the VFW and the American Legion stayed on the sidelines says a lot.

The activity of military personnel was, I think, the most controversial aspect. People like me were calling distinguished former officers like General Abizaid quite often in order to urge them to join the team, saying that it would make a big splash if they were to go to Denver, stand on stage during the convention, and speak on our behalf. Paradoxically, we found that the best officers

would not do it. Marine Corps General Paul Van Riper – who is regarded within the military community as a brilliant, iconoclastic officers’ officer who would give advice to both sides – said that he did not believe in politics; that he believed in serving his country but would not get involved. We did get more opportunistic officers who joined, as well as

many officers on both sides who cared very deeply and wanted to get involved. The net effect was that we had many generals who were deeply and publicly involved in politics this year. The most controversial part of our military outreach may have been putting generals on stage at the convention, pushing them out very publicly, and getting them to advocate for policy positions that they had worked against two years ago while they were in the administration or the Pentagon, or, even more troubling, which they still had subordinates and friends working on. That presented the problem of generals on the outside pushing a political position that people on the inside did not know what to do with. Their loyalties were torn asunder. They did not know where the military institution stood, and I think it muddied the water a great deal.

I think that the Obama administration’s first steps have been absolutely brilliant in terms of military outreach. The first trip to Iraq, the first salute, going to Camp Lejeune to give a talk about Iraq – all of these things have shown what many of us have known about President Obama for some time: that he is a leader who likes to engage people around him and bring them into the process. If he has something tough to say, he is not going to sugarcoat it. He is going to tell you face to face



“[T]here is unending pressure from the political establishment ... to draw general officers into the political process as supporters. I find that to be destructive.”

W. Patrick Lang

and get your support for it. Where did he announce the decision to ramp up in Afghanistan? At Camp Lejeune, where the Marines who are going to go are based, so that they could hear it from their commander in chief. I think that style of leadership resonates well with the military because it is the kind of leadership that officers like General

Barno, General Abizaid, John Nagl, and others show. The military wants to see a commander in chief who leads by example, who they can trust and believe in.

The first lady’s outreach to military families has also been an important component of building bridges across the civil/military divide because it shows that the White House cares about people, and that the leadership of this country understands that with sending our sons and daughters into harm’s way comes the burden of leadership and responsibility. We must follow through on that burden.

I think the next four – and hopefully eight – years will be a continued story of success in this area. One thing we must do is respect the apolitical nature of the military, probably back off of some of things we did during the campaign to seduce the military, and treat them more as a tool of policy rather than a tool of politics.

Karen J. Greenberg:

Do you think that one reason the Obama campaign received the military response it did may be because the military feels somewhat damaged by what has happened abroad since 9/11? Is there an expectation that what has happened to the military as an institution will be addressed?

Phillip Carter:

The *Military Times* conducts annual surveys of its readers, who tend to be career military personnel – officers and senior noncommissioned officers, the cultural leadership in the military if you will. Over the past five years, we have seen a steady shift from the hard right to the center right among this population – not in terms of their ideas or their policy positions, but in terms of their party identification. They have pulled away from the Republican Party towards the middle. I think that is a significant shift, a good shift, but one of the reasons for it has been the Republican Party's mismanagement of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is an expectation that we are going to do better in the Obama administration. If we don't, we are going to pay the price politically.

I also think that if we misstep on decisions involving everything from personnel issues like stop-loss, or equipment issues like body armor, or bad strategic decisions like torture, the consequences for us are going to be more severe because of the critical rhetoric of the past seven or eight years. The standard is now much higher. It is going to be a difficult rope to walk.

W. Patrick Lang:

I represent the idea of the Army as a family business. My family started in the U.S. Army in 1861 and served continuously until I retired. The Army developed largely from a tradition of frontier posts being built before there were towns around them. The towns grew up around the posts or outside their gates. Everyone lived on the post because there was no place else to live.

That tradition, which I enjoyed as a child and have always enjoyed, has strongly persisted, but it is unusual. Members of European armies generally do not live on their posts. They live in civilian communities, often in

places subsidized by the respective Ministry of Defense or the equivalent. The list of social services that General Barno mentioned and that we enjoy so much often does not exist in other places. I recently learned to my surprise that the British defense establishment no longer has any hospitals. Their soldiers who are shot in Afghanistan or Iraq are treated in civilian hospitals. That has caused a great deal of unhappiness in British veterans' organizations.

The tradition of our force, based on our historical development, is peculiar and not inevitable. If there is a feeling that the armed forces are too isolated, the policy could be reversed. Housing in the outside world could be subsidized to reduce that sense of isolation. Not everybody would be happy about that.

Living together on post is separate from the idea of unit rotations. I was fortunate to serve three years in Vietnam, and I distinctly remember the terribly destructive effect that individual replacement setups had. We had to try to overcome that all the time. The policy was to take half the people – who had all trained together for a couple of years – out of an arriving unit and to spread them all over the country. They would be replaced by people from other units, so that the members of the unit wouldn't all rotate and go home at the same time. You can imagine how destructive that was. A lieutenant would have all of these people whom he had never seen before, and suddenly he would have to go out and fight with them. So, as General Barno said, the current tendency is for the Army to be concentrated and to live on post. The concentration of religious fervor that is building in the officer corps tends to be further isolating in a larger society that is becoming increasingly secular.

At the same time, there is unending pressure from the political establishment, as General Abizaid said, to draw general officers

into the political process as supporters. I find that to be destructive. In the old Army, officers simply did not vote, which served as an emblem of their complete neutrality in the political process. They saw themselves as servants of the state who would serve under any president, anyplace, under any circumstances. People often ask me how many presidents I have served under and who they were. I have become used to that, but it used to offend me.

It had never occurred to me that it was at all significant. What difference did it make to me what political party they belonged to or who they were as individuals?

Some of them could stay awake while they talked to you and others couldn't, and that was one of the major differences involved in dealing with them. The neutrality of the officer corps has been breaking down for some time. A few years ago, I was astonished to see a serving, active-duty Army general officer sitting on

the stage, although in civilian clothes, at a political convention in New Orleans. Unfortunately, that would no longer be very shocking. Administrations have tried to break down this separation of the officer corps throughout our history, but there has been a systematic development in this direction since World War II.

None of the general officers or admirals who ran things during World War II had a Ph.D. in political science. The current assumption is that it is normal, natural, and necessary for a serving officer to have a doctorate from a prestigious university in order to be an

effective, good, useful person. I doubt that is true. If a large group of people has those sorts of credentials, and is constantly being asked for their opinions by an administration that tells everyone that they won't act without them, the temptation for them to believe they are running policy can become overwhelming. I have recently heard examples of general officers saying things that did not indicate to me complete subordination to the country's

political authority. That is not a good tendency.

I have served in the Special Forces and was also a member of the Foreign Area Officer Program. Although we must have a balanced force in the future to deal with various threats, there are many things we are going to be doing, including training foreign armies. There seems to be an impression that we didn't do that before, which is not true at all. We have had a specialization program for officers in difficult foreign areas, which is

now called the Foreign Area Officer Program, since the 1930s. Before the Special Forces developed into a kind of giant SWAT team, the specialty of the Green Berets was in training and leading foreign guerrilla troops, insurgents, and counterinsurgents. That has all somehow gone away, and the impression I have is that the Army never really took the Foreign Area Officer Program very seriously and has moved significantly away from the original mission for Special Forces.

From 1976 until 1979, I was the first professor of Arabic at West Point. I worked very hard to train a bunch of young people to be



“After much effort to try to see where else the resources could be mobilized, the military reluctantly stepped into the breach out of necessity and with a deep commitment to turning the Iraq operation into a success.

That gradually became enshrined into doctrine.”

Suzanne Nossel

proficient in Arabic and to understand the culture in the East as much as possible. The Army, in its benign neglect, never sought out any of my former students to send to the first Gulf War. Several of them went, but only because they practically went AWOL to find a place on an airplane or boat to get there. That has improved somewhat, but one of my best students served as the principal cultural advisor to General Petraeus and to General Odierno. He is a full colonel now. Despite all of the talk about how we have to be culturally sensitive and knowledgeable, he and people like him are not getting promoted to brigadier general. We have to ask what the Army's real priorities are. If we are going to do that kind of thing, we are going to have to take it more seriously.

Karen J. Greenberg:

Could you please discuss the distinction between intense education at lower levels and advanced graduate degrees? It seems that you feel differently about the two.

W. Patrick Lang:

Education is of course a good thing, but it is a bad idea to think that you need to have general officers who are all political scientists. Their primary role is to lead, organize, plan, and fight in the field. There is a disadvantage in developing a group of people who are intensely interested in being participants in the national policy process, which we have started to do. That is very different from having field soldiers who have a master's degree in area studies and who can speak Arabic, Pashtun or whatever the relevant language is. I personally find the latter requirement to be more important than the first.

Karen J. Greenberg:

The intersection between human rights agendas, human rights organizations, human rights law, and national security issues has been a focal point of our work at the Center. It is a story that has not yet seen the forward progress that will be needed. The human rights community has been isolated during the war on terror, and it will be interesting to see how the discourses of international human rights and of the future of national security come together. The composition of the military may be an important aspect of this conversation. Ms. Nossel, what do you think?

Suzanne Nossel:

I would like to discuss the military's role in reconstruction and stabilization operations, which I wrote about in 2003 and again in 2007. The issue appears differently to me now than it did six or even two years ago. My conclusion is that the military has really taken this area over, and that change will be irreversible. I will talk a bit about how we got here, and then tease out what the implications may be.

I first addressed this topic in 2003. People were beginning to recognize that the end of active hostilities in Iraq meant the war had just begun, and that we were immersed in a painful slog of counterinsurgency, reconstruction, and stabilization for which we were woefully ill prepared – notwithstanding similar missions in places like Kosovo, Bosnia, and Somalia that had met with varying levels of success. It was a mission the Bush administration had foresworn coming in, but which became the defining mission of – and in many ways broke – Bush's presidency.

At first there were fervent debates about whether this responsibility was military or civilian. A wide range of tasks are involved, from building up the rule of law to policing; water and sanitation; civil administration;

building schools, hospitals, and clinics; handing out aid funds; and catalyzing economic development. The division of labor initially set out for these sorts of tasks was 80 percent civilian and 20 percent military, but when people looked around to figure out how this work would get done, the civilian resources were nowhere to be found. Part of the problem was simply a matter of size, with the Department of Defense 210 times larger than USAID and State combined, but civilians were resistant to being deployed to Iraq because of security concerns and other hardships, and there was a lack of a tradition of deploying those personnel involuntarily. There was also a lack of expertise within civilian agencies, particularly the State Department. After much effort to try to see where else the resources could be mobilized, the military reluctantly stepped into the breach out of necessity and with a deep commitment to turning the Iraq operation into a success. That gradually became enshrined into doctrine. At the end of 2005, stability operations were formally elevated to a core military mission on par with major combat operations. The military also recognized that it would be not only supporting but also leading these operations.

The debate has been settled and the military is in the lead. They have developed the expertise, resources, and capacity to a far greater extent than any other part of our government. That would be difficult to reverse, and there is much ambivalence still within the military. There are some ways that it has become entrenched, and there are also serious concerns.

There are a few signs that this is becoming entrenched. The Department of Defense's role as a provider of assistance grew from 5.6 percent of U.S. foreign assistance in 2002 to 21.7 percent by 2005. I do not know what the number is today. Since 9/11, the Army has retrained 116,000 people for these kinds of

roles. Just this year, on January 23rd, DoD Directive 1404.10 directed the Defense Department to begin organizing, training, and equipping a Civilian Expeditionary Workforce composed of DoD volunteers to serve in combat support, relief, and reconstruction missions abroad. We are also working to augment our partners' capacity to do this. One analysis of Secretary Gates's latest budget says that his estimate is that 50% of it is for conventional warfare, 40% is for dual use, and 10% is for straight counterinsurgency operations, or focused on reconstruction or stabilization operations. News reports just this week say that we are having to turn to the Reserves to fulfill the latest requirements for civilian manpower in Afghanistan.

In the meantime, the State Department has tried to play catch up, and created an office for this in 2004. It has enjoyed some limited success, but there has also been difficulty in mobilizing resources. It has ultimately not built up the kind of bureaucratic muscle needed to be a force here.

I do not foresee the trend changing, for four reasons. The first is funding. This was obvious six years ago. If you were thinking about where this mission would get resourced, the probability was much higher in the Pentagon. The second is organizational culture, which is related to the difficulties of trying to build an expeditionary culture and way of doing things within the State Department. The State Department does not have that. The military does – it is for a different purpose, but in some ways their culture has been more easily repurposed for this mission. Third, there are inevitable security concerns associated with these missions. The fourth factor is momentum and inertia – the fact that the necessities and exigencies of Iraq and Afghanistan have taken us to this point and it would be difficult to reverse right now.

So, what are the implications of this? On

the positive side, the job is getting done. When we need these roles filled in Afghanistan, there are people who can fill them. It no longer takes months or years to get personnel in place, as was initially the case in Iraq. The DoD is also taking it seriously, and it is in many ways becoming an integrated part of planning and deployments rather than an afterthought.

Several concerns are frequently articulated. The first, from the military side, involves the impact on combat readiness and the military's ability to fulfill its traditional roles. The second is framed broadly as the militarization of U.S. foreign policy and the ways in which this could point to the military becoming the face and voice of U.S. foreign policy abroad and at home. This involves the related issue of how the military would go about this task, given the cultural factors that we have been discussing here today. Third, which is connected to our work at Human Rights Watch, is the blurring of the civilian/military distinction and the danger that humanitarian space, which is so critical in conflict zones, will be encroached upon or disappear. Military personnel can be legitimate targets under international humanitarian law, even if their functions involve building schools or bridges.

I think it is probably too early to pronounce judgment on this, and I question whether it is reversible, but I do think it is very significant and something to which we should be paying more attention.

Karen J. Greenberg:

Is that military role being done by contractors, or are you specifically talking about unformed military?

Suzanne Nossel:

I do not know the exact figures, but I have seen a real effort underway now to replace much of the work that is being done by con-

tractors with U.S. personnel for all of the reasons we know about having to do with the problems that have arisen with contractors. So I do not think the long-term approach is to contract these tasks out; I think it is becoming embedded as an integral part of the military.

Karen J. Greenberg:

I have several related questions that I would like for all of the panelists to address. Is it actually possible to transform the military in order to take on what lies ahead? If so, what is the foremost priority? What does this mean for collaborative work, with NATO for example? Are we expecting NATO to become a civil-society building organization as well?

Phillip Carter:

History suggests that it will be difficult. The Army was buying coastal artillery to defend against the threat of British invasion until as recently as World War I. History also suggests that we may focus too much on our successes in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the extent that we have achieved them, and not prepare well enough for the wars of the future.

I like Defense Secretary Robert Gates's new budget. I think it strikes a good balance between conventional, dual use, and irregular warfare capabilities. It is just a plan, however, and no plan survives first contact with the enemy, in this case Congress. The budget is not going to be enacted as designed and we are going to have a difficult time implementing the necessary changes.

Lt. Gen. Barno:

Successful militaries must continuously transform. This is a remarkably successful military right now. Unless you continue to challenge your basic assumptions and look at how you could move in new directions, unless you dig into the budget, into the force structure, doctrine, and the culture to make sure this

becomes part of who you are for the long term, you will ultimately stagnate and fail. There have been examples in all militaries, and I think it will be a challenge.

The balanced portfolio is a good approach. The budget reflects that quite well. The bigger challenge will be that the cultures in the military do not tend to absorb the idea of a balanced portfolio. There is cultural predisposition towards conventional warfare throughout the military, even today. Funding will help change that, but the military culture must absorb the idea more than it has so far.

W. Patrick Lang:

That is not going to be easy. Equipment questions are easier. Getting these two cultures to mesh effectively into one balanced force will not be, because the Army has had a predilection for heavy-forces, conventional warfare for a long time and it is bred into people. People like me, on the irregular warfare side of the fence, have always been thought of as interesting but a bit odd. So there is a problem, and the larger community has tended to move towards getting rid of the smaller community. Getting these two groups to effectively meld so that they are both fully represented will require work for quite a while.

Suzanne Nossel:

I agree; I think it is difficult. I do think there is also a real question about what we are going to be facing going forward, and whether all this transformation based on very painful experience in these two wars will, in retrospect, look like we're fighting the past war rather than the next one.

EXCERPTS FROM THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Question (*from the audience*):

What is the current relationship between the Guard and Reserves, who come into the military with civilian skills and return to civilian life, and the active military, given that the Guard and Reserves are doing an increasing amount of the heavy lifting and compete with the active forces for resources?

Lt. Gen. Barno:

I think that everyone in the active force would say without hesitation that this conflict could not have been sustained for the last eight years without the critical components of the National Guard and Reserve. It has been by far their biggest deployment since World War II, and it has changed how the active Army thinks about them. Their level of respect within the active Army is higher than it has been since I first got involved 30 ago. So I think that is good.

The question of the future is very difficult. The Guard and Reserve have certainly proven their worth in this arena. They now, for the first time, have a four-star officer assigned to be their senior representative in Washington, which in a hierarchical force structure is a big deal. The challenge is not only one of competing for resources with the active force, which will resurface again now that budgets are shrinking, but also one of purpose. Let's consider the National Guard specifically, which belongs to each of the states. Each of the state governors feels strongly committed to being the commander in chief of their respective Guard. The federal government owns and operates it only when it is federalized and under central control from Washington during deployments, but the federal government underwrites most of the costs for equipment and other such expenses. So is the Guard

going to be primarily a disaster response force? Is it going to be a border security force? Is it going to be a homeland defense force? Or is it going to be an army-in-waiting to deploy to combat operations overseas? I think that will be the big debate over the next several years. It is starting to play out now, especially in the Southwest.

Karen J. Greenberg:

What is the Guard's current status?

Phillip Carter:

There is a strange dualism that has existed since the founding of the republic. In peacetime the Guard reports to their governor and can be placed in active duty either on a state or federal status when they are sent to war. When they are sent to war, they report to the president.

But a paradigm shift is underway. The Guard and the Reserves are no longer the same ones your parents knew. They are no longer a strategic reserve that only goes to major conflicts and then comes back. Rather, they are an operational reserve. The concept is for them to deploy approximately one out of every five or six years. That has changed the social contract and has had a fundamental impact on the culture of the Guard and Reserves, and also on their support systems. Civilian employers are now much less supportive of Guardsmen and Reservists. Many enforcement cases about Reservists who no longer have their jobs when they return are coming up through the Labor and Justice Departments. In this economy, some jobs just do not exist when they come home. That is a major issue that we have to face. We are also seeing medical and mental health issues – they do not have the robust infrastructure when they come home, and their communities cannot absorb them in the same way. We need to look at these fundamental questions

and decide where we want our force structure to go.

General Creighton Abrams's model of putting critical functions into the Reserves as a political tripwire so that the country cannot go to war without them may not make sense in a long-war environment. This rebalancing issue is something that is being looked at in the Quadrennial Defense Review and other strategic reviews, and will be a difficult force structure challenge going forward.

Question (from the audience):

Writing in *The Washington Post* on April 19, Thomas Ricks argued that the service academies should be closed. He suggested that civilian universities may be better able to train future leaders. What do you think?

W. Patrick Lang:

Although I am not an alumnus of West Point, I was a professor there. The United States gets good value for the money it expends on the Military Academy. I don't think you can argue with that point. It is obviously not the only way that officers could be trained.

But there is a larger issue involved. The service academies, particularly West Point, have a special meaning for Americans that goes beyond the requirement of producing officers for their respective services. They are symbols of national unity and a career open to people with talent regardless of where they come from. The idea that West Point cadets come from some sort of white-gloved, upper-class society is wrong and has been wrong for a long time. It always has been wrong to some extent. In fact, I think the idea that these schools produce a leadership cadre in the citizenry of the United States on the basis of merit is so strong that any question about their value on a cost/benefit basis is irrelevant.

Question (from the audience):

Could you please discuss the blurring of the distinction between humanitarian actors and military officers? In the administrative office of a hospital in southern Iraq, I saw a uniformed American military officer with a stack of \$20 bills paying the doctors and nurses whom Saddam Hussein had stopped paying. The U.S. military is doing an increasing amount of humanitarian work. At the same time, there has been an escalation in the killings and the kidnappings of humanitarian workers in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia.

Lt. Gen. Barno:

I wrestled with this issue while I was in Afghanistan for an extended period of time. I used to have breakfast every Monday with the senior representative of the secretary general of the United Nations. One morning he said, “You know, I have finally realized that this is not a post-conflict reconstruction operation. It is an *in*-conflict reconstruction mission.”

This is a different environment from that which the development and the aid communities have grown up with over the last 30 years. My perspective, at least in Afghanistan and in Pakistan today, is that there is no humanitarian space. The enemy is deliberately targeting people serving in nongovernmental organizations, Westerners especially, as part of a broader offensive and a broader information campaign, for want of a better term. That is part of what they are intending to target. Warfare has morphed into a different environment in these kinds of conflicts, and I do not attribute that to the fact that there are military people doing these kinds of tasks. The reason that we are doing armed nation-building there is because people would be killed if they were doing it unarmed. In order to get the mission accomplished, in order to help the population, we are going to have to provide a different

model than the one we might have used in the 1960s, or that we have used after conflict is over or in conflicts where humanitarian space exists.

Phillip Carter:

An interesting political coalition has formed between the military officer corps and the human rights community on the issue of torture. The two groups come at it from very different places: the human rights community from a position of ideals, the military from a position of interests. There are sections of the counterinsurgency manual that talk very plainly about it being in our interest to observe human rights practices and to set the example. That, along with the culture of honor within the military and the professional code of chivalry that dates back centuries, has created an alignment of interest that has been critical to advancing the agenda of human rights within the U.S. I do not think we would be where we are today regarding torture and detainee issues without the support of the military, including the Judge Advocate Generals. That is going to be one of the most interesting friction points to watch in civil/military relations over the next four years.

Suzanne Nossel:

I think there are two different issues here. Mr. Carter is addressing the fact that there is some emerging common ground between the human rights community and the military on the importance of carrying out these functions in a fashion that respects human rights. While we come at it from different angles, I think we can agree that this is imperative for many practical and tactical reasons, particularly as the military’s role expands and blurs. The degree to which that broader role is carried out with respect for human rights and human dignity is essential to the military’s effectiveness in those settings.

But I think there is a separate issue, and I agree with General Barno that there are places where there is no humanitarian space. There is a reason that the military is carrying out stabilization and reconstruction operations in those environments – nobody else could do it under those security conditions. At the same time, we should be cautious about giving up on the idea of humanitarian space because it is such a longstanding and essential feature of the ability of humanitarian organizations and organizations like ours to carry out our work. I would be very hesitant to allow the fact that it may not be possible in some conditions to lead to a fundamental questioning of the need for that role.

W. Patrick Lang:

I was involved in the CORDS program, the counterinsurgency strategy adopted and the organization implemented in Vietnam after 1967. From then until the end of the war, the function of the “big Army” out in the woods was to keep the North Vietnamese army from killing us while we were doing counterinsurgency. There was a robust mixture of civilians and military people in the CORDS apparatus in villages all over Vietnam. We worked together without any problems or disharmony. In some places, usually the more difficult ones in terms of security, the province senior advisor was a military officer. The senior advisor in other provinces was a true civilian, and in other provinces the senior advisor was a kind-of hybrid, like John Paul Vann. It was a fully integrated developmental and counterinsurgency apparatus in which civilians and the military worked together on a very amicable basis.

The Military's Makeup: Who Serves Today

Panelists:

James Jacobs, Timothy Nichols, Kathy Roth-Douquet, Frank Schaeffer, Shanea Watkins

Moderator:

Elizabeth Rubin



Timothy Nichols, Frank Schaeffer, Elizabeth Rubin, Kathy Roth-Douquet, James Jacobs, and Shanea Watkins. *Photo by Dan Creighton.*

Elizabeth Rubin:

Ms. Roth-Douquet, would you mind beginning our conversation?

Kathy Roth-Douquet:

During a lunchtime conversation, a lady whose husband had served in the State Department as the deputy assistant for humanitarian affairs said very passionately that we should send troops to Darfur. I knew that she had college-aged children, so I asked her if she would be willing to send them. She said that she would send them to Darfur but that she would never allow her children to join the armed forces because she did not trust the government to use them only in the way she thought they should be used militarily. So I asked her whose sons she would like to send. If they are not all of our children, husbands or wives, who are they?

That is where we are in this country. We have leprosy. We have a body that cannot feel one of its arms. Our Founding Fathers tried to design a system in which there would be circulation between the head, heart, arms, and legs. People were supposed to go from the civilian world into government and then come

back out, bringing those experiences and knowledge back with them. We were supposed to love the people who were serving so that we would care enough to understand their missions, to shape those missions, and to decide whether those missions were worthy of sending our loved ones to do. When people come back they are civilians again, contributing their voices, their knowledge, and their experience to

the mix, which enables us to make good future policy. Because we are such strangers to the military, we both overestimate and underestimate it. Many people in elite universities or involved in humanitarian affairs are afraid of the military and see it as something powerful that they need to fight. They have forgotten that civilians control the military. When Frank Schaeffer and I speak at Ivy League institutions, we often hear that students, administrators, and faculty do not like certain things about the military. Well, the military is not in charge of the way it is, civilians are. We have lost the sense of that responsibility. I am most concerned about finding a way to make it part of our society again, about reconnecting the nerve endings in our bodies. Our future depends on it.

Carl von Clausewitz – the author of *On War* and one of the great military strategists of

all time, who is studied by everyone in the military – said that three things are needed for a country to succeed in its military and foreign affairs: good government policy, a skillful military, and the will of the people. We have only focused on two of those elements for the last 20 years or so, including during the eight years that we have been at war. We are deeply illiterate about who the people in the military are and what they do. I know this first hand

because I was the same. I grew up in Shaker Heights, Ohio, at a great remove from military culture. I went to Bryn Mawr College and then to Princeton, where I got a degree in international affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School without knowing that there are three military departments and four military services. I probably knew the difference between the Army and the Air Force, but not between the Army and the Marines, or between a sergeant and a lieutenant colonel. I thought the fact that people like me didn't have to know these things reflected something nice about society.

I learned otherwise, especially after having met my husband, who is a Marine officer. I realized the range of things he did. Not only that, I looked around and saw that perhaps a hundred of my friends, who were at think tanks and newspapers, who were editors and television producers, who were in Congress and in government and who wanted to shape opinions and make decisions affecting the country, knew one person who served in the military – my husband. The only reason they knew him was because I happened to marry him. Knowing him changed what they thought



“[T]he military is not in charge of the way it is, civilians are. We have lost the sense of that responsibility. I am most concerned about finding a way to make it part of our society again, about reconnecting the nerve endings in our bodies. Our future depends on it.”

Kathy Roth-Douquet

about the military. He challenged their presumptions about what they understood a military person to be. When he was deployed, they became more keenly aware of what that meant because they cared a little bit about me.

It is not healthy when opinion-shapers and decision-makers do not understand what the military does or who they are. When the deciders do not know what the doers do, we cannot hope to have a very successful country.

But there is no constituency for changing this situation. The military has no entrenched interest in it because their hands are full with fighting and winning the nation's wars as well as the 44 other missions that we are currently engaged in and that most people have no idea about. We have 200,000 people deployed around the world in places other than Afghanistan or Iraq, but most people don't know that.

Who serves in the military today? The people who are the easiest to recruit: the children of those who have already served, and those who live in communities where there is already a high degree of service. They are the ones who are the most familiar with the military and see its positive aspects, and there are many positive aspects. The people who do not serve are those who go to schools like NYU and Columbia; people who have not met those who have served and who find it easier to follow a more socially accepted route towards other things. The military doesn't have time to articulate why they think service is good, because they have other things to do. It is easier for them in some ways to take in people

who already understand the culture.

It is not the military's job to solve this problem, we civilians control the military. What about the civilian leadership? Wouldn't making the general population aware and engaged in the military again be in their own interest? Not really, because we have broad consensus between our Democratic and Republican elites about what our world profile should be. There is broad agreement that we should be forwardly engaged in the world, helping to support its stability with the various missions that we undertake. Because there is agreement, there is no need to mobilize the masses to get political change. In some ways it is easier when people don't know about these things, because they are expensive and controversial.

So how do we convince people that we are in a dangerous situation that needs to change? Perhaps we need the leadership of The Center on Law and Security, the people here at NYU, the writers of *The New York Times Magazine*, or other people who have voices to help raise this issue. It may be that we the people are the ones who need to raise the issue. Perhaps the more important question is not who serves in the military but rather who does not, and what the implications are for the rest of us.

James Jacobs:

I was privileged to do a doctoral dissertation under Professor Morris Janowitz, probably the leading military sociologist and one of the great thinkers in U.S. history about the military and military/civil relations, at the University of Chicago in the 1970s. He drafted me into his organization, which was called

Armed Forces and Society – a small organization of four academics and others interested in the interaction and interrelationships between the military and society. Professor Charles Moskos at Northwestern was another major figure in that group. I had a terrific experience as part of it, going to meetings, giving papers, and being part of the dialog, especially in the wake of the controversies regarding Vietnam. I ultimately published a book on civil/military relations in the early 1980s that came out of that work. I only wish that Professors Janowitz

and Moskos were on this panel because they were great thinkers and cared deeply about the topic.

So, this panel conjures up subjects that have bubbled for a long time in American politics and history. One is the draft – drafting men and perhaps women into military service. This raises questions about whether a draft

would make a positive contribution to civil/military relations, and whether it would improve the military to draw a broader cross-section, although there has never been a pure cross-section given all the exemptions and ways out of being drafted. Some people think the draft would improve civil society because more people would have military experience, and youth would come out better trained, more patriotic, and better grounded in the obligations of citizenship. Others argue that the draft would have negative consequences for civil/military relations. They argue that it would bring people into the military who would not want to be there, who would be recalcitrant, contemptuous, and hostile towards it. It would create disciplinary problems; it is harder to manage a military comprised of people who are compelled to serve



“I am opposed to any kind of compulsory national service, which I think would cheapen and undermine the idea of volunteerism and service.”

James Jacobs

rather than of people who have volunteered. It could also be argued that it would hurt U.S. politics, because the draft has been connected with political conflict from the Civil War to Vietnam. It politicizes service and may create more hostility between civilian and military society. So the draft is a hot potato that I think only Congressman Charles Rangel is willing to juggle right now. He has been very vocal about reinstating the draft, but hasn't had much support.

In addition to the idea of the draft, there has always been the idea of universal military service – that everybody should serve in the armed forces, rather than just having a draft designed to fill manpower needs. That may be the ultimate expression of democratizing the obligation to serve and the dangers of service, and perhaps in a democratic society that obligation should be spread as widely as possible. Some countries do have universal military service. It does not seem likely or practical for the United States. We do not need a military of that size, and it would be a gargantuan task to absorb that many people. We would have to decide whether women would be drafted on the same basis as men, and who would be exempt, such as people with criminal records or mental health issues. It would open an enormous can of worms. We don't hear much about the idea of universal military service, but that doesn't mean that we won't in the future. General Abizaid made an excellent point earlier when he discussed the difficulty of predicting the future 20 years in advance. Perhaps people will start talking about another mobilization at some point and the draft will again rear its head.

The idea of national service is related. The term has many meanings, but the general idea is that all young people would either serve in the military or serve their country in some other way. It would connect military service to citizenship obligations and non-uniformed

service, and maybe spread the obligation of service more broadly. This is not a new idea. In a chapter I wrote some 20 years ago, I started with a quote that I would like to read you from William James's "The Moral Equivalent of War," written in 1910:

If now – and this is my idea – there were instead of military conscription a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would follow.

To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dishwashing, clotheswashing, and windowwashing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and sky-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youth be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. They would have paid their blood-tax, done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature; they would tread the earth more proudly, the women would value them more highly, they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation.

Intellectuals since that time have echoed James's position. It is a quite remarkable history. Donald Eberly, who founded the National Service Secretariat, was perhaps the person most closely associated with the idea in the '60s and '70s. He organized conferences all over the country, generating much leadership and mobilizing intellectuals on behalf of the idea of a national service. He was somewhat vague as to length, whether it would be com-

pulsory or voluntary, and how it would mesh with military service. But it attracted a lot of important people, including Margaret Mead, Morris Janowitz, Milton Friedman, and many leading academics around the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. Robert McNamara was a big supporter. The idea of national service was actively considered by President Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Selective Service, headed by Burke Marshall, but ultimately rejected as too vague an alternative. It was supported by Elliot Richardson, Hubert Humphrey, John Connally, Paul Tsongas, and Ed Koch. An entire plan for a national service system connected to a draft from which people could be exempted by performing national service was ultimately introduced into Congress in 1979 in a bill written and presented by Paul McCloskey. Congressman Rangel has made the same kind of argument. It still looks like a long way off politically, but maybe we will have a recurrence of this kind of debate.

One thing for sure is that the idea of voluntary service is now very hot in the United States. President Obama has just signed a bill to increase funding for voluntary service. He has not connected it to the all-volunteer force so it is supported outside that framework, but it creates a lot of energy in the direction of some kind of service. It might even end up being competitive with the all-volunteer force.

Timothy Nichols:

I am still on active duty, so in order for me to participate in the discussion today I had to get permission from a flag officer. The flag officer basically told me three things: stick to your observations, don't wear a uniform, and know your environment. I think I can do that.

I would like to talk about four observations, and leave you with something to think about. I recently read Daniel Pink's book *Free Agent Nation*, about the deconstruction of the

paternal company in America and what caused it. The book made me think about the military because, as General Barno alluded to earlier, we are very much a paternal organization. We provide everything you need. We have some rules and you are either all-in or all-out. We are comfortable with that. I am comfortable with that. I am comfortable with asking permission to come and talk to a conference like this one because I think that is part and parcel of being a professional officer. I am comfortable with getting guidance about what I should and should not talk about.

It is interesting that our society is moving away from this desire to be in a paternalistic organization. I have taken a few business classes and it is interesting to hear how eager some of my colleagues in business school are to leave their current companies and find something else. They call it "lily padding" – you get a degree and lily pad onto a company where you work for a while before lily padding somewhere else. That competitiveness and transitory characteristic of our young men and women has to have an impact on the military. Some people, like me, enjoy the paternalistic society and others, like my wife, do not. So that is my first observation – that there was much more paternalism in the business world 25 or 30 years ago, so the difference between the military and many other offerings for professionals was less pronounced.

My second observation relates to my teaching. I teach ethics to seniors at Duke, the University of North Carolina, and North Carolina State. During the first three weeks of class, I make them write an essay about whether or not military officers are held to a higher standard than civilians are. I think it is a fair question that we haven't yet discussed at that point in class. Almost every student says "yes." That concerns me because I feel the difference between civilian life and the military is that we simply enforce our standards. When

I ask them to elaborate, the students say that in the military you do not lie or cheat on your taxes or on your spouse because you could be punished. All of that is very true, but my father-in-law never served in the military and those actions would be as repugnant to him as they would be to any military officer. But the perception exists that there are two standards: military and civilian.

My third observation is that many of my colleagues are like me in that our spouses are smarter and more accomplished than we are. My wife is a tenured university professor. Once I passed 20 years in the service, she said, “So let me get this straight: You want to get promoted and go to Washington, and I am

going to quit my tenure-track job. You’re going to get promoted and continue to get promoted, and I am going to follow you around even though I have a \$2 million research grant, I am putting out graduate students, I make equivalent pay, and I really love what I do?” This is something that we have to contend with. It is different than it was 40 years ago. Many of our spouses are very accomplished, well educated, and contributing significantly to society. If you have a family, that balance is difficult to achieve. I do not have the answer, but I feel that it is one of the most significant changes in family structure over the last 30 or 40 years. Many of my colleagues are going through the same shoals: trying to balance the dad or mom who wants to be a career military person and the spouse who wants to be a career person in their own way. That’s difficult, and some families choose to live apart for years at a time.

The last observation that I will offer is my impression of why my students join the military. At Duke, we have many privileged young men and women who choose to serve. I would divide the students into four categories. The first are the adventure seekers and those who have lived in protected environments that they

have found to be relatively humdrum. They want to travel, to seek out experience, to be challenged, and to be uncomfortable. I guarantee that in the military. I received a phone call from the mother of a walk-in at Duke. She said, “You can’t let her join. We pay \$350,000 a year in federal taxes. We can afford Duke.” I said, “Ma’am, your daughter is 19, it’s her choice.” Her daughter told me, “It’s not

about the money, Sir. I want to get away from that. I want to go abroad and do these things.”

Those in the second category are the sons and daughters of military members or members of extended military families – their grandfathers served, their fathers are current generals or captains or colonels. Although they moved 15 times in 25 years, military life appeals to them. They like the structure and knowing where they stand. They understand it and it is in their comfort zone, so they pursue it.

The third and probably smallest category relates to a pure sense of service. There are some people who join who have no family experience in the military and no overly possessive parents. They simply want to serve their country, and I think they are being truthful when they tell me that. They feel that it is an important piece of their life. While they may not do it for 20 years, they will do it honorably for three or four years and maybe then



“[T]here was much more paternalism in the business world 25 or 30 years ago, so the difference between the military and many other offerings for professionals was less pronounced.”

Timothy Nichols

serve in another capacity. Finally, there is the category of students who are breaking out of small-town America. That is the reason my mother ended up in Washington D.C. working for President Ford; she grew up in Iowa and more than anything else in her life wanted to leave and to get involved in something bigger than herself. I think the same thing is true of many of the future ensigns and second lieutenants who choose to do this. These students want to break away and try something different.

It is not about money. I have the most students at the cheapest school. At the school whose tuition is \$7,500 a year, I have more than 100 students who are receiving scholarships. At the school whose tuition is \$50,000 a year, I have the fewest students and plenty of available scholarships to give. So I would correlate it to those other factors more than I would money.

Frank Schaeffer:

I am a good candidate to represent the military/civilian divide in this country. I live on Boston's North Shore, in a part of the country where people drive Volvos and worship higher education. It is basically hell for recruiters. They like South Boston better. There is a tradition of Marine Corps volunteers down there that does not exist where I live. I have three children: a daughter who went to NYU, a son who went to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service, and a third son, John, who at age 17 said that he did not want to go to college yet. This was in 1998. He would have fallen into one of Colonel Nichols's four categories of students – not in the patriotism line, but maybe in the adventure-seeking, stick-it-to-dad line. He started talking about military service. As a novelist and someone who has worked in the movie business, this was not, to put it mildly, the circle I moved in. I was not of the left in the sense of having protested the Vietnam War or anything like that, but I was

in the big, ambivalent, to-the-left majority of the kind of people who just do not think about the military except when they read about a military action. Remember, this was all long before 9/11, a different world. It seemed to me as though people in the military were “they,” a different class of people.

John started talking about military service, and what first caught my attention was the sympathy I got from other parents. Nothing will irritate a father like having people act as though his child had just been arrested for something that may appear weird to him but nevertheless echoes old movies about honor, service, and the rest of it. It struck me as odd that people were standing on the sidelines of his last lacrosse matches asking, “What went wrong?” A professor at Brown University actually called a parent/faculty meeting at my son's school to discuss the curriculum and what was wrong with it that it could have led to such a result. That gives you a picture of what we were doing in those days.

John went off to boot camp at Parris Island and I began getting letters from a frightened young man going through recruit training. In three months, he had turned into someone who was achieving more maturity than I had achieved while pushing middle age. I began to wonder what the Marine Corps was about, so I read Thomas Ricks's *Making the Corps*, and then invested a lot of time in reading. But what really happened is that I put a Marine Corps bumper sticker on my car. I found that the president of the Guadalcanal Association, who was in his 80s, lived up the road from me. Suddenly my oil changes down the road were free because he had a kid in the Marine Corps too. My views began to change. While my son was the one who had joined the Marines, he had connected our family to our country in a way that I had never seen before.

There has rightly been much discussion here today about how the military views itself.

I would like to talk about something different. If you would like to attach a date to the disconnect between the military and the civilian world, I believe it began towards the end of the Vietnam conflict, resulting in the all-volunteer military that Ms. Roth-Douquet and I wrote about in our book *AWOL*. But what began as a political question, when ROTC was kicked off of various campuses, for instance, has now become something completely different. I know this because I found it within myself. This is a *mea culpa*. It is sheer snobbery and class warfare under a different definition. The reason that ROTC has not come back to campuses today is not about gays in the military or about the Vietnam War. It is about the same statistic that has shown more and more people going into financial services and less and less people going into medicine and engineering. This is a culture that has become consumer-oriented, whose values are far away from those my son learned at Parris Island, in combat twice in Afghanistan and once in Iraq, and on a mission in the Horn of Africa.

When you graduate from an Ivy League institution in this country, you leave believing that you are the most important person in any room you enter. When you leave the Marine Corps after having been in combat with people of different skin color, persuasion, class, and economic background, you believe something else – that the Marine or the soldier standing next to you is more important than you are. These two worldviews are absolutely in conflict. Trying to talk people from the world in which you are always the most important person (which I understand well, because authors are into self-promotion and being self-important) into having a consensual relationship with the people who are the Fort Knox of a much older, and I think much more valuable, asset is a difficult proposition. This culture does not understand the words “sacrifice” or “duty.” We talk about being our broth-

er’s keeper in certain aspects, but very few people do it. The military has those values.

I happen to be of the left. During the last two years as a blogger on *The Huffington Post*, I have probably been the Republican Party’s harshest critic in the country. Having had a background in the evangelical movement back in the 70s and 80s, I met Ronald Regan, I met the Bushes. I know all of them. When my mom heard that George Bush, Jr., was going to be nominated for the presidency, she said to me, “Are you sure you have the right brother?” Barbara always told me to pray especially for young George because she never thought he would amount to anything.” I understand the value of military service through my son and the service he gave, including in a war that I do not support. You are looking at what can happen if civilian and military cultures can meet, not on the playing field of politics, but on the playing field of the human connection that is lost when the only people entering the military are from small Texan towns or are the children of generals. My life is richer and I am a better citizen because my son wore a Marine uniform. It is an experience that I would not replace for any other in my life, despite all the hardship and tears that I shed fearing that he was going to be shot. It is the single-most meaningful thing that has ever happened to me.

Shanea Watkins:

At the Heritage Foundation, where I work, one of our main policy initiatives is the defense of America. Over the past seven years, we have written papers evaluating the demographics of new recruits. This past year we released the third paper in the series that I’ve had the pleasure of working on. We looked not only at new enlistees but for the first time we also looked at the officer corps. I would like to discuss that paper’s findings.

We received our data from the Defense

Manpower Data Center. The information covered new, active-duty enlistees in 2006 and 2007. It also included information on new officer commissions from ROTC programs from 2004 to 2007 and data for all currently enrolled ROTC cadets in 2007. We also received data on West Point graduates in 2007. It included home-of-record address, race and education information, Armed Forces Qualifying Test results, and other demographic characteristics. Using this

data, we evaluated the force in four areas: income, race, education, and regional representation.

Family income records were not collected by the Department of Defense, so in order to evaluate the income of our new troops we used the median income for the census tracts of their homes of record as a proxy. We found that enlisted recruits are more likely to come from higher-income neighborhoods. The top three income quintiles are overrepresented amongst our enlisted recruits and the bottom two are underrepresented. Eleven percent of enlisted troops are coming from the bottom 20 percent of neighborhoods in terms of income, and 25 percent are coming from the top 20 percent of neighborhoods. That our recruits are being drawn primarily from low-income neighborhoods is a myth that is repeated on a regular basis.

Not surprisingly, new officer commissions from ROTC programs and West Point are coming from even higher-income backgrounds. Forty percent of recent ROTC commissions are coming from neighborhoods in



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Frank Schaeffer

the top-income quintile, and only eight percent from the bottom. Fifty-five percent of West Point graduates came from neighborhoods in the top 20 percent of income.

For new enlistees, who are mostly males between the ages of 18 and 24, we compared race information to the same age group in the general population in order to assess proportionality. In other words, are they representative of the population that they are being drawn from? We found

that whites and blacks were slightly overrepresented in 2006 and 2007. Alaskan and American Indian populations were largely overrepresented. Asians and Hispanics were underrepresented. The Hispanic results should be interpreted cautiously because the responses were incomplete in both years. In 2006, 7.6 percent declined to state their Hispanic ethnicity. In 2007, 4.3 percent declined to state their Hispanic ethnicity. The results might be different if the results were complete.

We compared officer commissions from ROTC programs to the 18-27 year-old population with college educations. We found that whites were proportionally represented and blacks were overrepresented. Hispanics were proportionally represented in all years, except in 2007 when they were underrepresented. Asians were underrepresented in all years. American Indian and Alaska natives were again overrepresented in ROTC programs in all years. We were not given race information for new West Point graduates, so we imputed this information the same way we did income, using census tract information. We found that

whites and Asians were likely overrepresented while all other race groups were likely underrepresented.

People who enlist in the active-duty military for the first time are typically younger than college age, so we did not compare the education of new enlistees to the overall population. Instead, we assessed based on high school graduation rates. In 2006 and 2007, only 1.4 percent of enlisted recruits did not have a high school diploma or the equivalent, compared to 20.8 percent of men in the general population aged 18-24. So, overall, troops are more educated than their peer group and have at least obtained a high school education, whereas a large percentage of their peer group has not. They are also more intelligent on average. All recruits are required to take the Armed Forces Qualifying Test, which is a basic aptitude test. Two-thirds of new recruits scored above the 50th percentile on this exam.

The officer corps is by definition highly educated. They have four-year college degrees. ROTC and West Point graduates have at least a bachelor's degree. Ninety-five percent of all officer accessions have at least a four-year college degree, compared to 25 percent of Americans between the age of 22 and 27.

Where are our troops coming from? Two regions stand out: the South and the Northeast. We have a strong Southern military tradition in this country. New recruits are disproportionately more likely to come from the South than from other regions. The Northeast/New England area is largely underrepresented.

There is a concern that we are going to draw people from populations where they feel like they have no other option than military service, and that people from disadvantaged or maybe minority backgrounds are going to be overrepresented in the all-volunteer force. Our research shows that that's not true. The all-volunteer force is not oversampling people from

disadvantaged backgrounds or from specific race classes. Our troops are more likely than not to come from higher-income neighborhoods. They are well-educated, with a roughly proportional representation of races.

Elizabeth Rubin:

Each of the panelists has mentioned the divide between civilians and the military, and how it can be addressed. National service has been discussed, as has the draft. How would a national service actually help and be absorbed into the military? Would it bridge this gap in some ways, and who would run it?

Frank Schaeffer:

I think the scandal is that recruiting has been left to 23 and 24 year-old sergeants cruising malls in urban areas, and that our presidents – whether George Bush or Bill Clinton, Democrat or Republican – have not seen themselves as the recruiter in chief. The prestige of the presidency and senatorial and other political offices has not been used to remind the nation that military service is not only honorable, but an option people should consider. The closest example I know of anybody doing so recently is the lectures that John McCain and then-Senator Obama gave at Columbia challenging the campus to reverse its ROTC policy. The university president felt sufficiently threatened by that, I suppose, that he then wrote a letter explaining why that would never happen. Real political leadership would help repair the divide.

People often talk about serving a cause greater than ourselves, and organizations like Teach for America, the Peace Corps, and others. Military service should be first on that list, not last. There is a whole group of men and women already serving our country who should always be first on the list. The priorities have to be reversed.

Kathy Roth-Douquet:

Frank Schaeffer and I discuss the idea of national service in two of our books: in the last chapter of *AWOL*, and also in *How Free People Move Mountains*. National service with both military and non-military components would be a great thing for this country. It would help connect people and reduce the leapfrogging mentality that Col. Nichols referred to in a way that would strengthen our country and repair some of the nerve endings throughout the system.

It would not have to be that onerous. It could be done through the military, for which there would be records, or else through a certified nonprofit organization for which there would be tax records establishing that the service was completed for whatever amount of time would be required – one year, two years, or whatever. Perhaps such a record would be a precondition for getting into college, being hired for a federal job, receiving a full tax refund, or whatever it is that society chooses to use as an enforcement mechanism. A giant government bureaucracy would not necessarily need to be created. If we do not want to make it universal but rather something that is highly encouraged, perhaps it could be tied to college loans, or there could be a two-percent reduction on your taxes for the rest of your life, or something else along those lines. I would love to see it.

James Jacobs:

I am opposed to any kind of compulsory national service, which I think would cheapen and undermine the idea of volunteerism and service. We have done much to expand oppor-

tunities for those who wish to volunteer, and I think that is entirely commendable. The definition of what would qualify as service is complicated. What about people who are or

who are planning to be teachers, police officers, firemen, or doctors? What should count as service is very subjective. As a professor, am I serving? What about people in human rights organizations?

Establishing a whole compulsory mechanism with carrots and sticks will never happen.

Second, it would be a form of coerced labor and would backfire. We certainly would not be able to provide meaningful experiences to the entire age cohort, so I think it would create a lot of anti-government, anti-state feelings. There is a romanticism about this that needs to be wiped away.

Shanea Watkins:

I think people should be able to choose whether or not they want to serve, and how they want to do so. Also, I agree with Prof. Jacobs about determining what would qualify as service. I do not think there should be compulsory service.



“That our recruits are being drawn primarily from low-income neighborhoods is a myth that is repeated on a regular basis.”

Shanea Watkins

EXCERPTS FROM THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Question (*from the audience*):

What examples have you seen of genuine civil/military engagement? My idea of service was to be a journalist, but how do we transfer some of these ideals to the NYUs and Columbias, and what are some of the best practices?

James Jacobs:

I would like to take off the table, or at least question, the idea of students in Ivy League universities thinking only about themselves, and the supposed greed, “me-ism,” and self-importance found there. I teach here at NYU, an elite law school, and I have taught at Cornell and at Columbia. While this is anecdotal, an amazing number of students have served in the Peace Corps and in Teach for America. They have been all over the world working with human rights groups and NGOs, spending summers during law school working with disadvantaged people.

I would say that our students are more likely than not to have had this kind of experience, and many are interested in working for the public interest or for NGOs. It would be a terrible for an image to be out there that elite students are simply money-grubbing and personally focused, and that there is a romanticized group of morally superior, middle-class people who are the heart and soul of the country.

Frank Schaeffer:

The connection will have to be made from the top down. I think the divide is on two levels. We had a president who after 9/11 told America to go shopping and told a small group of people to go serve in the military. I think we are going to look back at President Bush’s statement, which was probably not meant as we now remember it, as the low-

point of consciousness of the military, as taking for granted that the military is always magically there while the rest of us get on with our lives. I think President Obama is already making a good start on reversing that. It has become part of the national discussion.

Second, I agree with Prof. Jacobs about the idealism of university students. When Ms. Roth-Douquet and I spoke at Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Dartmouth, and other places, we ran into many people who really did want to do something but had never been asked. The military had to some extent given up on the Ivy League, just as an example. They do not like the political aggravation and they don’t want to be involved in it when there is a better return from schools like Texas A&M. The political leadership comes to these institutions to give commencement addresses in which they talk about service, but, with few exceptions, they do not talk about the military in that mix.

From the top down, from our knowledge class, from our chattering class, from our political elites, consciousness of putting the military in the mix of altruistic service (and I am not talking about patriotism here, but altruistic service) has fallen out of fashion. If we are going to change the culture, it has to come from that group of people.

Iraq, Afghanistan, and the U.S. Military: How the Wars Have Shaped the Armed Services

Panelists:

Eric Greitens, Mark Jacobson, Fred Kaplan, John Nagl

Moderator:

George Packer

George Packer:

I would like to start the discussion by hearing from John Nagl.

John Nagl:

When the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, the U.S. military was unprepared to fight

counterinsurgency campaigns – a conscious decision that several military and government leaders made over a number of years in Vietnam’s wake. So much in U.S. military and political history goes back to Vietnam and our almost national revulsion towards what was in many ways a very unpleasant period in our history. We had decided that we simply were not going to fight that kind of war anymore. Unfortunately, we do not always get to choose.

My military career really

began in Operation Desert Storm. That was an extraordinary experience. It was in many ways an important moment for the United States that marked the national recovery from the post-Vietnam malaise. It also sent a message to any states or non-state actors in the world whose interests opposed our own: the American military that men like Generals Abizaid and Barno rebuilt in the wake of Vietnam was so good at the conventional tank-on-tank/fighter plane-on-fighter plane type of war that they simply had no chance of competing. If they were going to fight us, they would have to go towards either the high end of the conflict spectrum, such as through weapons of mass destruction like North Korea has and we thought Iraq had, or the low end, such as through insurgency and terrorism.



Eric Greitens, Mark Jacobson, George Packer, John Nagl, and Fred Kaplan. *Photo by Dan Creighton.*

Karen J. Greenberg:

Susan Eisenhower once recalled her father saying that we should pity the man who occupies the office of the president of the United States without knowing the U.S. military. It strikes me that we should also pity the citizen who does not understand the U.S. military, and that there is a connection between our president’s relationship to the military and our own.

Our military is constantly changing because we are engaged in two wars abroad in addition to the other areas around the world that have been mentioned already today. This panel is an attempt to understand what has happened to our military in the past few years of active engagement and what that means in a larger sense.

So when I reflected on the future of warfare after Desert Storm, I thought that future enemies of the United States would be at least as likely to try to fight us as insurgents and terrorists as they would tank-on-tank. Our military as a whole did not come to that conclusion. It continued to focus on something at which we were already the best in the world. We need to maintain the ability to be the best in the world at tank-on-tank warfare in order to deter our enemies, but we also have to be good at the low end. The experience of the past seven years has shown us the need for balance across the entire conflict spectrum and the ability to compete wherever our enemies use force to oppose our interests. Our adaptation and learning over the past seven years has been remarkable. We have become far better at low-intensity conflict and counterinsurgency warfare.

The military, which has an acronym for everything, has one that describes how we think of ourselves as an organization. It may be the worst acronym in history: DOTMLDPF, or Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leader Development, Personnel, and Facilities. We have adapted in each of those areas.

For 225 years, the U.S. Army thought that all it needed to do was offense or defense. Only in the past year we published a field manual that says we have to be able to do stability operations as well, and that they are equally important. The irony is that we have been doing stability operations all along but had never accepted it as a core mission area. We had not put resources into training and equipping to do that. The

assumption was that if you can skin a cat you can skin a kitten, that if you can fight the big wars you can fight the little ones. As we have learned very painfully over the past seven years, that is not necessarily true. In fact, as many of us on this panel can testify, sometimes the small version of a cat isn't a kitten but an alligator. These small wars are in some ways far more difficult to fight than the big ones.

We are starting to develop organizations for missions such as training host-nation security forces. Our exit strategy in Afghanistan, as in Iraq, is going to be host-nation security forces securing the country so that we do not have to. We are starting to build organizations that can help them become more effective more rapidly than we have been able to so far. We have changed the way we train our soldiers. That training is not just for tank-on-tank warfare. We have built simulated Iraqi and Afghan villages and have forced our soldiers to learn how to interact with mayors, provincial leadership, and Iraqi or Afghan business and religious leaders.

Developing those relationships is incredibly important to finding out who the insurgents are in their midst. We have increasingly developed an emphasis on cultural knowledge and language skills like those that General Abizaid learned as a young scholar in Jordan. We are taking advantage of the incredible skill set we as Americans have in the form of people who speak

these languages. We have discovered that taking someone who speaks Arabic and teaching them to become a soldier is often better than taking a soldier and trying to teach them



“For 225 years, the U.S. Army thought that all it needed to do was offense or defense. ... [W]e have been doing stability operations all along but had never accepted it as a core mission area.”

John Nagl

Arabic, so we have developed programs to do that.

We have developed counterinsurgency centers at Fort Leavenworth and in Iraq and Afghanistan. Just yesterday I learned that the British army is now creating a counterinsurgency center to help it adapt. In my previous work I focused on why the British army was able to adapt more rapidly than the American Army. I am proud to say that the American military now leads the world in adapting to these challenges.

That is the good news. The bad news is that these are not purely or even mostly military fights. The best book on counterinsurgency is *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory & Practice*, written by David Galula, a Frenchman, in 1963. He says that counterinsurgency is only 20 percent military and 80 percent political. Unfortunately, we have not devoted the necessary resources to the civilian side of government.

As Thom Shanker reported in *The New York Times* on April 22, we are going to have to call again on uniformed reservists to fill the need for civilian development in agriculture, governance, and economics because we have not built the civilian capacity in Afghanistan that we need. Suzanne Nossel mentioned earlier today that the Department of Defense is 210 times bigger than the State Department and USAID combined. To put it differently, there are more members of military bands than there are foreign service officers in the entire State Department. I am a huge fan of a rousing John Philip Sousa march, but I am



“[T]here are legitimate, vibrant debates going on within the Army about whether we are putting too much into counterinsurgency ... but how they really come out depends less on the validity or the merits of the arguments than on how they get translated into the institution.”

Fred Kaplan

willing to give up some of that capacity in order to pay for more foreign service officers to do the non-military tasks that are essential to success in a counterinsurgency campaign.

The military, or at least parts of it, has become more like the State Department over the past seven years. We have developed people who understand cultures, politics, and economics. We have not built a State Department that understands how to work in some of these conflict environments to the same

extent. I would like to say that we have changed enough to make it through Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and that we will eventually return to the old ways of war in which the military could focus on fighting and diplomats could focus on rebuilding the peace afterwards. But I am afraid that, in the world we live in, the conflict zones are going to overlap. As General Barno mentioned earlier, it is not going to be a matter of post-conflict reconstruction but rather reconstruction in-conflict. We are going to need this skill set, these complicated, adept military and civilian instruments of national security that can continue to adapt. That adaptation will be the single-most important aspect of ensuring that we are never again as unprepared as we were for these fights early on.

George Packer:

Dr. Nagl, when we met in early 2006, Army and Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, was in its earliest draft

stages. There was a sense that it represented a dissident movement within the military that was thinking, talking, and beginning to write this way. It was not at all clear whether these ideas would take hold at senior levels where they would be institutionalized and have a chance to fundamentally reshape the thinking of the armed forces. Has that changed in the three years since that field manual began to be written? Beyond the military, do you think that has changed in our political world and in public opinion, which will be a crucial factor in whether the new wave of counterinsurgency thinking goes the same way the old wave did after Vietnam?

John Nagl:

For those of you in the audience, Mr. Packer was invited to sit in on a vetting conference that General Petraeus and Sarah Sewall – who at the time ran Harvard’s Carr Center for Human Rights Policy – held at Fort Leavenworth in February 2006. The Carr Center vetted a U.S. Army/Marine Corps manual, which I am certain was unprecedented. Dr. Sewall and her team greatly improved the manual. They helped bring a skill set and a perspective to American military thinking that we very much needed at that time, that we continue to need, and that I hope we will continue to draw upon.

That manual has since been followed by Field Manual 3-07, *Stability Operations*, and Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, the Army’s capstone document. All of these documents reflect a move towards the understanding that in the future we are at least as likely to be fighting these kinds of wars as we are conventional tank-on-tank conflict. We have now published the interagency *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide* under the State Department’s leadership. That is incredibly important. After years when we were not allowed to use the word “insurgency” to

describe what was going on in Iraq, we now have not only Army and Marine Corps doctrine on counterinsurgency but the closest thing the State Department has to doctrine as well. The U.S. government increasingly understands that this is an enduring problem.

I am still concerned that the American people do not fully understand the extent to which threats like the Taliban and al Qaeda necessitate long-term investments in building American security largely by strengthening our partners.

I was honored to be in the White House when the president announced his Afghanistan strategy. Although his comments were very perceptive, I was even more impressed by the fact that he had his entire national security team standing shoulder-to-shoulder behind him (including my previous boss), demonstrating the administration’s commitment to success in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is my conviction that the United States will have to show progress by next year’s midterm elections, at least in Afghanistan, in order to maintain public support for this important fight.

Fred Kaplan:

One way to look at a military force or service is as a large organization. In the old days, there was a certain kind of “IBM man,” a certain kind of “Time man” or “Ford man.” They rose to the top because they were recruited and promoted by people at the top to fit the image of what they thought their successors should be. That is even more the case in the military. This is why practically every Air Force general believes in his heart that the F-22 fighter jet is the most important weapon system in the budget, even though it has not been used in any war that we are currently fighting. That is why there are Navy admirals who think that aircraft carriers are absolutely supreme and why there are Army officers who are apoplectic at the thought that they are not

going to get their Future Combat Systems.

H. R. McMaster, who is now a brigadier general, spent what many people believe to be too many years as a colonel. He was twice passed over by the board that promotes colonels to brigadier generals. This became a scandal. People look at these promotion lists as tea leaves, as the signal from the top about what kind of officer gets ahead in the Army. If an artillery officer becomes a general, people think they should go into artillery. If a creative officer doing counterinsurgency operations in Tal Afar does not get promoted, people think there is not much incentive to push for these sorts of things. If people interested in civil affairs and the military police see that nobody in those fields was promoted, they think, “Maybe it’s a lot of fun and it is useful, but I am not going to get anywhere by being a military police guy.”

What happened in the fall of 2007 – a crucial moment in the Iraq war – was that the Secretary of the Army and Defense Secretary Gates were so determined to change this that they brought Gen. Petraeus back from combat. They also brought in a bunch of other people who do not usually sit in on these kinds of conferences. It was being called the “McMaster Promotion Board.” The point seemed to be to get Col. McMaster promoted, but it actually turned out to be more than that. A woman who was in charge of military police actually became a brigadier general. Of the 38 colonels promoted to brigadier general the year before, nine had been executive officers to generals, mostly generals without combatant commands. In this particular conference, only four of them had been executive officers to generals, and all of the generals were combatant commanders. Many of the 38 came to the promotion straight from combatant positions, which just had not happened before. The good side is that there does seem to be some change within the institution. The

bad side is all that had to be done for it happen. People like General Petraeus and General Odierno are not going to be called back year after year in order to set a promotion board.

It is unclear whether this trend has been institutionalized. The speeches that Secretary Gates gave during the Bush administration seemed to be giving guidance to his successor. Now that he has become his own successor, the test is whether he is going to follow that advice himself. Based on the budget that he has put forth, he largely has. The weapons that he cut or killed are weapons that you would have expected him to cut based on his speeches, but he did not go all the way. For example, he put a halt to the F-22 but vastly increased the budget for the F-35, a smaller, cheaper, although still completely untested version of it. He was able to get enough political clout to recommend killing the F-22, but he was not going to change the culture of the Air Force just yet. The Air Force is still going to be run mainly by fighter pilots, even though it is unlikely that too many wars in the near future will emphasize air-to-air combat as the principal focus of operations. Secretary Gates probably was able to get as much as he did with the F-22 because the current Air Force chief of staff is, I believe, the first who has been neither a fighter pilot nor a bomber pilot. That probably paved the way to some degree for what Secretary Gates was able to do with respect to the Air Force. Perhaps some of what he is doing with the Army is because the Army vice chief of staff is Gen. Peter Chiarelli, who is also a big part of Gen. Petraeus’s team doing counterinsurgency planning in Iraq.

The point is that in the military, as in every walk of life, there are finely tuned intellectual battles and debates about how much you should emphasize this or devote to that. In this case, the debate is about the balance between high-intensity conflict and counterin-



Fred Kaplan. Photo by Dan Creighton.

surgency. It is partly based on self interest, but there are legitimate, vibrant debates going on within the Army about whether we are putting too much into counterinsurgency; whether the fact that nobody is doing artillery right now is a good or bad thing. Are we losing a knowledge base? There are genuine intellectual debates going on, which you can read about in magazines like *Armed Forces Journal*, *Small Wars Journal*, and *Military Review*, but how they really come out depends less on the validity or the merits of the arguments than on how they get translated into the institution. Who is at the top? Who is chairing the promotion board? What kinds of signals are being sent to junior officers about the specialties they should go into if they want to become generals some day?

Gen. Abizaid talked about a professional advisory corps earlier, and said that he preferred to have a versatile military. But individuals within the Army cannot do everything. A captain once told me, "You know, I wish that I could do more than one thing. I would like to go off and become a foreign area officer for a few years and then come back and do combat. But I am at the point where if I decide to become a foreign area officer, I'd be stuck there forever. I couldn't come back." It is a bit of a red herring to say we cannot have an advisory corps because soldiers and officers

should be able to do many different things. In fact, they don't. They are specialized, whether they want to be or not.

To see how the Army is progressing, you need to look at who is running it and what kind of people are being promoted. Although he might dispute it, Dr. Nagl is one of the people who left the Army in part because it seemed that there wasn't any room for people like them. He was a lieutenant colonel in charge of a unit in Kansas training soldiers to become trainers. To my mind, given what the Secretary of Defense has said and the realities of the world, somebody running a unit like that should at least be a full colonel, and perhaps a brigadier general. That would send the signal that this is something we are really serious about. If it is run by a lieutenant colonel, then people think they do not have to pay much attention to it.

George Packer:

Secretary Gates was not known as a huge supporter of the surge or of the counterinsurgency emphasis that went along with it. Certainly President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, and most everyone at the top levels of the administration opposed it. Mr. Kaplan, do you think that the relative success of the strategy in Iraq and the perceived necessity to pursue something like it in Afghanistan has eroded their opposition of two or three years ago? Or is there still some resistance in the new administration? Maybe the Army has gotten the gospel, but have the civilians?

Fred Kaplan:

One thing that happened to Secretary Gates is that he and the other members of the Iraq Study Group went to Iraq and met with Gen. Chiarelli, who was corps commander at the time. That was when he became convinced that some kind of surge, which I think he saw as short term, might make a difference, and he

became a moderate supporter. There are two points that I would like to make about the surge. First, almost no senior officer supported it at the time. Second, I would argue that it is by no means certain that it has been the success that it has often been depicted to be. The strategic goal of the war in Iraq is not to reduce casualties but rather it was to create a security space so that the Iraqi political elites could get their act together. If they are not going to do that, then the whole thing has been for naught. There is very little that we can do at this point.

President Obama plans to withdraw all troops from Iraq – not because he wants to, although he might, but because the Iraqis want us out. That we will be out completely by 2011 is a condition of the Status of Forces Agreement, of our continuing to be there for the next two or three years. I think the fact that we are getting out is one reason why there is not much focus on Iraq now.

Even Gen. Petraeus has said there is only limited applicability of something like the surge to Afghanistan, which is a completely different situation. I am worried about Afghanistan because I do not think anybody really knows what it takes to win there, or what “winning” even means. If Pakistan were to start to fall apart, it would not really matter what happens in Afghanistan – it would become a sideshow. Or, if the Pakistani military, which is now concentrated on the Indian border and therefore does not come west to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, focuses on India and defending Islamabad, then the Pakistan/Afghanistan border region will become even more porous. Even if we were to

do everything correctly in Afghanistan, I do not think it would matter.

Mark Jacobson:

I wonder whether we on this panel are all brilliant in concluding that counterinsurgency is the future, or rather that we are just not that creative and have given in to the idea of counterinsurgency being the way forward. What occurs to me is that for each of our experiences the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have truly shaped our outlook. I had the privilege of serving as a Navy officer with an Army unit supporting German special operations.

There are 14,000 sailors and Navy officers on

the ground in the Central Command theater today; the high a few years ago may have been closer to double that. Truly, parts of our armed forces have been reshaped by the experiences and more importantly the requirements of the last eight years of combat.

The points raised by Dr. Nagl and Mr. Kaplan lead me to conclude that

we are talking not only about how the wars have shaped individuals and their thinking, but also about how they reflect the inability of large organizations, particularly the U.S. military, to change and adapt, even in the face of the obvious. I would like to mention a few examples. It is clear that the experience of combat has changed our leaders and senior noncommissioned officers in each of the services. We have become a leaner and meaner military, for lack of a better phrase. An incredibly high proportion of individuals have gone through at least one deployment in either combat or combat support units. We have experienced personnel who understand that they



“I worry that areas without constituencies either in the services or on Capitol Hill are going to be short-shrifted, which is a potential point of failure for new concepts.”

Mark Jacobson

need to be open to changing situations. They understand that they may see a counterinsurgency environment on one block but a classic force-on-force situation on the next. The term used today is a “hybrid war.” That is going to be exceedingly complicated for our men and women in uniform. It is not that they could be involved in peacekeeping in one country, then deploy to a more conventional conflict, and then face counterinsurgency on their third deployment, but rather they will be facing all three at once.

There has been much discussion about how the U.S. needs to look at the Israeli experience in Lebanon in 2006, in which an irregular force, Hezbollah, a terrorist organization, engaged in conventional force-on-force struggles with the Israeli army. That is the reverse of what we are seeing. We are thinking about conflicts with states such as Iraq that then devolve into situations with irregulars and insurgents. I think we have done a great job adapting to that environment at the individual level. I worry a bit about the services. Despite Secretary Gates issuing a Department of Defense instruction on irregular warfare, I am not quite sure that each of the military services is going to stick with it (although I do give a little more credit to the Marine Corps).

As Dr. Nagl mentioned, after the Vietnam War the Army ran away from insurgency and back to what Andrew Krepinevich described in his book *The Army and Vietnam* as “the Army Concept.” We want to fight large, tank-on-tank battles against the Soviets on the plains of northwest Europe. We could then buy many more tanks. I am on shaky ground here, but members of Congress would be happy because their constituents would get lots of money for factories. Jobs would be created and we could build more tanks, ships, and aircraft. The problem is that the services are still focused on this idea. What is an army without tanks, a navy without ships, or an air

force without fighter aircraft?

I worry that areas without constituencies either in the services or on Capitol Hill are going to be short-shrifted, which is a potential point of failure for new concepts, including counterinsurgency or conventional forces training foreign militaries. We do not have the personnel, training or educational systems designed to support their professionalization and institutionalization in the military. As pointed out earlier, people who are experts as foreign affairs officers, Special Forces officers, and irregular warfare fighters are not making it to the top as easily as they should be. It is an exception when a three-star general like Karl Eikenberry, a fluent Mandarin speaker who spent most of his career as a foreign area officer, rises above the personnel system and the Army bureaucracy to obtain a position of high rank. We need to have systems in the military that reward that type of experience, but we just do not have them yet.

The National Guard and Reserves have already been mentioned today. They are no longer a strategic force designed to be thrown into battle when the balloon goes up but rather an operational force. More importantly, they are an integral component of everything we do out there. You know the old saying, “one weekend a month”? That is no longer true. If you are in the Reserves or the Guard, you are going overseas. If things keep getting worse on the southern border, you may be deployed there as well. It is important to understand that the expertise that lies within the Guard and Reserve is absolutely critical to what’s going on in places like Afghanistan. Someone mentioned agricultural expertise earlier. The National Guard has done a wonderful job in Afghanistan. Missouri in particular, and I believe one other state too, has made sure that Guardsmen and Guardswomen who are experts in agricultural extension and similar programs are working with their Afghan coun-

terparts to help on these issues. It would be wonderful if the State Department or the Department of Agriculture could provide those sorts of civilian experts, but there is value in our military forces engaging with the population in this regard. While this is an oversimplification, it is about winning hearts and minds; it is about the reconstruction and development that goes hand in hand with improving the security situation.

I would also like to discuss acquisition and personnel. On the acquisition front, there is good news and bad news. We have seen some incredible initiatives from the U.S. Army in terms of rapidly fielding equipment to our soldiers on the ground. Body armor is a good example. We have gone through three or four generations of body armor. There are still some problems getting it out there as quickly as some of us would like, but progress is being made in what we know is a completely byzantine acquisition system.

The bad news is that we still have situations in which things do not move as quickly as they should. Several years ago in eastern Afghanistan, a Special Forces team was assisting an Afghan radio station. We all understand the value of information and how effective the Taliban have been at propaganda. This radio station needed a cable to connect a power source to their transmitter booster in order to get more range for its broadcasts. The Special Forces team tried to get the cable through the normal Army acquisition system. That did not work. It was taking forever, and some people told them that such a cable did not even exist. They searched the Internet, but when they finally found the right cable they had no way to pay for it. They collected money by passing around a hat, and an officer put it on his credit card and had it shipped over. Unfortunately, it was stopped in transit because cables and wires shipped to Afghanistan are often mistaken for components of improvised explosive

devices (or “IEDs”). There is no reason something like that should happen. That is just ludicrous, and we are still having these problems that must be fixed. Hopefully, the initiatives that the administration is trying to take, as well as those supported by Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin and ranking member John McCain, are going to have some impact.

Finally, two words about personnel: “blogging” and “Facebook.” Our leaders are going to have to start coping with the fact – and I am borrowing this from Gen. Chiarelli – that it is an iPhone 3G world out there. Our soldiers are going to blog; they are going to be on Facebook. I am not talking about this as a matter of operational security, but this is literally bringing friends and family into the war. Many of you may have heard about the soldier who accidentally pushed a button on his cell phone during a firefight. That call was later put on YouTube. What a message – “I’m out of ammo, bring more ammo!” and sounds of rounds whizzing past – for concerned parents to get on their home phone! It is something to think about in terms of the way the nation is going to look at our men and women in uniform in combat. Our leaders are going to have to understand this because when a sergeant posts a new Facebook group saying, “I haven’t gotten any food in a week and the armor on my Humvee isn’t good enough,” he is going to have a million supporters in a few days and that message is going to be on CNN and in Congress before the chain of command has had a chance to do anything with it. It is not a matter of stopping that sort of information flow; it is a matter of adapting to it and coping with it.

Finally, one of the most important ways in which these wars have shaped the military concerns the role of women in combat. Women are in combat and remain in combat. After Specialist Monica Brown heroically

helped save the lives of her colleagues, the Army pulled medics from company-level organizations because they thought that women were getting too close to combat situations. They need to take a much harder look at the issue. The administration is going to have to decide whether and how to make changes so that the role of women – whether in combat organizations or in combat arms assignments – is institutionalized.

George Packer:

Dr. Jacobson, you mentioned the necessity for men and women in uniform to explain to people in their lives what they are doing. This struck me each time I went to Iraq and then came back. I felt that this very small group of American men and women were undergoing the most important experience of their lives and being changed by it. The Army was adapting better and more quickly than any other institution in the government or in the country. Yet they would come home and feel as if no one knew or cared, other than those few people who are their Facebook friends, and maybe not even them. This is a truism of the all-volunteer Army and of any war: those who fight it come home and find that no one really cares all that much. They are thanked, they are congratulated, they are admired, and then it is all sort of forgotten.

Is that happening now? Are men and women coming back from these two war zones and getting across to people other than their wives, husbands, and parents what we are doing over there, why it is taking so long, why no articles of surrender are going to be signed, and what this is all about? My sense is that the broad public is more and more checked out. There was maybe a three-year period when Iraq seized public attention, but that began to fade just as things started improving a little over there. What is your sense?

Mark Jacobson:

That has not been my experience at all. Granted, I do live inside the bubble of the Beltway. Things are a bit different there because people are more likely to have contact with the military. But I also spent some time in Columbus, Ohio, between 2003 and 2005, and had a little better sense of it there. I do not think we are seeing that sort of reaction. I think people understand what our troops are over there doing. Certainly, 9/11 is the most important factor in that. I have heard stories over and over again of men and women in airports standing and cheering for our troops coming home.

There is also something to the social dynamic. Web 2.0 social networking really is critical to the men and women in the service between the ages of 18 and 24 or so. People are getting involved in that sense. I think those of us on the cusp of that may not see it that way.

Your second question leads to the issue of war weariness, which does exist. That makes it even more important that the administration explain why, even after eight years, it will be important not only to maintain but clearly to increase the number of troops devoted to Afghanistan, and as we draw down in Iraq not to take our eye off the ball there as I believe we did in Afghanistan after March 2003.

George Packer:

I think the president's explanation was two words: "al Qaeda." That explanation begged question of why we need tens of thousands more troops and a ramping up of what is obviously a nation-building effort simply to eliminate the threat of al Qaeda. The people on this panel understand that connection, but it may become increasingly hard to explain to the broader public.

Mark Jacobson:

That is why it is imperative that the key communicators in our society clearly explain to the public the concept that failed states become sanctuaries where groups such as al Qaeda can flourish. I think the American people have historically supported operations, even long-term ones, for which the objectives and goals have been clearly laid out. I am even more confident that administrations that have not clearly explained those objectives have lacked support for continued engagement.

Eric Greitens:

I would like to start by telling you about Sonia Meneses. She is an Army sergeant who was hit by an IED while she was serving in Iraq. She came home and has lost 100 percent of her hearing in both ears as a result of her service. If she were here, she would tell you herself that she had a difficult time when she came back. She spent close to two years in and around her house before she started to venture out. Through a program that I work with, we challenged her to continue to serve her community and her country. She said that she was really interested in working with children. We set up a fellowship for her through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization, where she worked as a fellow for six months. She recently wrote an Op-Ed in support of the Serve America Act, specifically the veterans' corps component of it.

I mention her story as just one example of the fact that when thinking about how the wars have shaped the armed services, we also need to think about how this group of veterans is going to shape the country. There are 1.76 million veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom alone. They are going to have an outsized impact on how this generation thinks about military conflict in the future. Mark Jacobson

and John Nagl are just two examples of the fact that there are many smart, committed veterans everywhere you turn in Washington, D.C., and in universities and in think tanks. Some of them are only in their late 20s, and they have had incredible experiences and tests very early in life. We have to keep in mind that we now have an incredible experiment in American life. All of these veterans from an all-volunteer force are going to come home and play a vital role in leading the country over the next generations, not only in the military but throughout all of our lives. One of the things that almost every veteran who has served in the field recognizes is the importance of developing the soft skills and cultural understanding that Mark and John mentioned.

In 2005, I was on my way to a U.S. Navy base near Lamu, Kenya. I was going to be the commander of a very small base in a Special Operations task unit. As I was driving up with our forces, one of the guys turned to me and said, "Watch out, they don't like us in this village. You'll get the stink eye when we drive through." He was right. Every person there looked at us as though we were absolutely not welcome. We got to our base and he said to me, "Did you see how they don't like us?"

I said, "Well look, I don't know. You guys have been here longer than I have, but we – a bunch of white guys with sunglasses on, our windows rolled up, and guns in our laps – were driving at high speed through a village that has goats and kids running around. I know that I wouldn't want somebody driving through my village that way."

We went back to the village the next day to buy some fruit. All of the people there wanted to talk to us and to find out who we were. They didn't have any inherent animosity towards us, they just didn't understand what we were doing there. We explained that we were working with the Kenyan navy, that we were Americans, and that we would be happy

to come out and to meet their mayor.

Thousands of U.S. troops have learned those sorts of lessons. But the key question, which Fred Kaplan and John Nagl raised, is whether we are going to be able to institutionalize this knowledge. Are we going to be able to institutionalize a process for making sure we build officers with this skill set? These skills are difficult to quantify, but the military promotion process is all about quantification – how many operations did you

run? How many people did you manage? How large was your budget? Those are the sort of indicators that are examined when you are being considered for promotion. But how do you measure whether someone can talk to the mayor of a Kenyan village or have the sort of a discussion with a Fallujah shop owner that would give him a better understanding of the battlefield? Those are qualitative skills, based on judgments. We need to figure out how to promote and work with people who demonstrate those kinds of skills.

When I came back from my last tour in Iraq in 2007 (I had been serving in Fallujah as commander of an al Qaeda-targeting cell), somebody asked me, “Well, what’s the future going to be for the American military? What’s going to happen in Iraq? What’s going to happen in Afghanistan? What will be the role of the military in the world?” I did not know what to say at the time, but I now know how I would answer. If someone in 1987 had predicted that the Soviet Union would collapse by 1997 and that the U.S. government would have to think about how to deploy troops to



“[T]he military promotion process is all about quantification. ... How do you measure whether someone can talk to the mayor of a Kenyan village or have the sort of a discussion with a Fallujah shop owner that would give him a better understanding of the battlefield?”

Eric Greitens

places like Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia, it would have seemed far-fetched. If someone had said in 1997 that by 2007 the United States was going to be attacked on its own soil, that we would be at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, that we would have launched a campaign called the “Global War on Terrorism,” and be engaged in places like the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia, it would also have seemed far-fetched.

So, when we think about how the military has to transform, one of the things that we need to recognize, which echoes Dr. Nagl’s point, is that we need to be humble about our ability to predict the future. We need to build a balanced military with the right kind of leadership that can be responsive to a number of emerging challenges. The truth is that we do not know what the world will look like in 2017. The one resource that we do have is an incredibly talented pool of veterans who have come back from the Global War on Terrorism. If we can use them as a foundation in civilian life as well as in the military, I think we will be in a very good place.

EXCERPTS FROM THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Question (*from the audience*):

There has been much discussion today of cultural awareness and understanding local populations. How much emphasis has there been on understanding the other militaries that we work with?

Mark Jacobson:

In terms of working with our NATO allies, the wars in Iraq and particularly in Afghanistan have helped us a great deal. We have trained with these forces before, and we have now worked operationally with them for eight years, which has moved us far forward in terms of our ability to understand their operational concepts and how they look at the world, although we do not always agree. This has been a huge part of American military activity, whether through exchange programs or through what is called “IMET,” or International Military Education and Training. The administration seems to want to ensure that this is robustly resourced.

John Nagl:

The best money the Department of Defense spends is on bringing foreign militaries to our schools. We are particularly suffering in Pakistan because we do not have the long-term relationships with all of the mid-grade, now senior, officers who were shut out of that program. We stopped it for about 15 years after the Pakistani nuclear tests. I understand the reason for it, but I think it was a short-term answer that is going to have long-term costs. I believe we should dramatically expand that program to build those relationships with our friends around the world.

Question (*from the audience*):

Is it possible that we shouldn't do counterinsurgency in the first place? Dr. Nagl mentioned that we need to better explain to the people why we need to do it. I would argue that the people already understand, and don't support it. Perhaps the lesson should be that of Vietnam – that these types of long, drawn-out operations are not in our best interest or to our advantage.

John Nagl:

I have fought in both kinds of wars, and I far prefer the tank-on-tank sort. It plays to our strengths. It appears to have a satisfying conclusion, and it keeps me away from my family for a far shorter period of time. I wish we could mandate that that would be the sort of wars we fight. Unfortunately, the enemy gets a vote.

The way I see it, Pakistan is the single gravest threat to U.S. security today. We cannot conduct counterinsurgency inside Pakistan. We can help the Pakistani military do it. We need to expand our ability to do that and I think that the Obama strategy is moving us in that direction. Perhaps the most telling reason that Afghanistan matters to us is that if we do not succeed there, then we further destabilize Pakistan. That is a risk that I am not willing to take, and I believe that it is worth appreciable investments of American lives and treasure to try to stabilize that region in order to prevent truly horrible things from happening. The chance of catastrophic nuclear terrorism is low, but the consequences are so high that it is worth a substantial investment to make it even less likely.

Fred Kaplan:

I think you have a point. The Petraeus counterinsurgency manual says that the requirements include an electorate that can be patient for five or 10 years, and perhaps even longer,

and soldiers and Marines who are capable of doing a list of a dozen different things at every level of command. Where are we going to get this kind of army and this kind of electorate? They don't really exist.

To the extent that counterinsurgency has been successful in Iraq, it has been because we occupied the country and installed a new government. In how many places are we going to be able to do that? One reason that counterinsurgency might not work as well in Afghanistan is that the government is corrupt and beyond our control. Dr. Nagl mentioned that we need to help Pakistan do counterinsurgency themselves. To the extent that it can be a successful approach, that is the way to do it – by sending advisors, but not by getting involved ourselves. That just would not wash. This was the real distinction between President Kennedy and President Johnson in Vietnam, and it is not very well understood. Kennedy never sent combat soldiers. It is true that advisors were getting involved in combat, but not to a large extent. It is getting involved that gets you in trouble. I think there are very good ideas about counterinsurgency, but I do not know if that is something we are cut out to do directly.

Question (*from the audience*):

How could the Defense Department work better with other U.S. organizations in order to help bridge the culture gap between them, so that they can coordinate better here and in the field?

Eric Greitens:

I spent a lot of time doing humanitarian work overseas before I joined the military. Different organizations have different cultures, but they are not that difficult to bridge. I worked with Rwandan refugees in Zaire. The kind of people working in humanitarian organizations willing to go to a place like Zaire often have

the same sort of personality characteristics as people willing to join the Marine Corps and serve overseas. But there are very different ways of thinking, talking, and organizing.

One simple thing that could be done is to have military officers spend more of their careers outside the military. Especially at a junior level, it is extraordinarily valuable to have people who spend tours, even short ones, with the State Department or USAID, or working alongside a nonprofit organization. There are structural impediments that can make that difficult in the military, but that is one thing we could do.

The military can also try to make it easier for nonprofit or humanitarian organizations to interact with them. It is difficult for anybody to engage the Department of Defense because it is a tremendous bureaucracy. We could do a much better job of thinking through how to do it at a combatant commander level. There are promising things happening now. Admiral Joseph Kernan of the Fourth Fleet has brought on a director of strategic partnerships to think through how the Navy is going to engage in South America. They have a new Office of Strategic Partnerships to think about how to engage the media, universities, think tanks, and embassy cultural attaches throughout the region. There are hopeful signs, but that is another thing we could certainly do better.

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