

TRANSCRIPT

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Chair, House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee

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Q: Welcome to Representative Tauscher, Democrat of California. I'd like to get started this morning with the subject of the Reliable Replacement Warhead. We've had some action in the Congress; I think the appropriators have given it \$15 million this year. The authorization bill is still in conference but presumably moving in the same direction. Take a few minute here and bring us up to date on the status of that project in Congress, Congress' views of it, and how you think it's going to come out at the end of the day.

A: First of all, thank you all for being here. RRW is one of two potential weapon systems that I think that as we came in in November after winning the election and as I assumed the chairmanship of Strategic Forces. I think that we've done a lot of work on the subcommittee and in the House Armed Services Committee this year to make these two specific programs and frankly others much more congruent with everybody's vision of what the future should be.

Considering the fact that this is the first defense bill that Democrats have written in 13 years, I'd like to remind you that my bill passed out of the subcommittee on a bipartisan voice vote, and that that the full committee passed the House with some astronomical number like 397 to 22, which is pretty much the highest number that the defense bill has gotten in a very, very, very long time. So a little victory lap for Democrats that we were able to write a defense bill after 13 years in the desert and that we did one that was pretty much a bipartisan bill.

In my specific case, the Strategic Forces, we worked pretty closely from the beginning of last year with our counterpart in the Senate, Senator Nelson, to be sure that we had a bill that was fairly congruent. We have very dense and opaque issues, as you know. My portfolio in Strategic Forces is about 55 billion dollars and includes missile defense, all the nuclear weapons in the complex, classified military intelligence programs, and what we call the overhead architecture. So when we came in, I had been on the subcommittee for 11 years, but I had not been the ranking member. But because I had the two national nuclear labs in Livermore and I had spent a lot of time trying to understand these issues, I felt pretty ready to go forward.

So on RRW specifically, the key for RRW, I think, is how you look at it. And what we've done in the House is to say that there are some very compelling reasons as you dramatically draw down the arsenal to make sure that you can get rid of the hedge weapons. I think a lot of you know that we have a very large arsenal specific to the fact that we have an executive order saying no more nuclear testing, that we are obviously a signatory to the NPT and that our commitment to no nuclear testing is very significant.

In the previous congresses, as a member of the subcommittee I was able with other colleagues like John Spratt to put the fences around what we saw was the administrations plan, not only on RRW but on RNAP, which we were able to kill.

So the fences around RRW were very specific. First and foremost, nothing that we were looking at could trigger any new nuclear testing. So nothing to achieve a smaller number in the arsenal could trigger testing.

The second thing is that we wanted a more responsive complex. We wanted savings for the American people. We wanted to be able to take the hedge weapons down.

Right now, let me use this example. Suppose I had to go to work every day and I had to have a car that I knew worked every day. And it was so important that I had to have a car that worked every day that I had a couple of cars. I had my primary car, but I also had a couple of hedge cars. And if the first one didn't turn over okay, I went to the next one then I went to the next one. That's what our weapons stockpile is like right now. We have the stockpile, and then we have a bunch of what we call hedge weapons. And that's caused us to have thousands of weapons.

As you know in the Moscow Treaty we're coming down to someplace between seventeen and twenty-two hundred, but that's still a lot of weapons considering their lethality and the fact that we still believe that we have a very credible deterrence.

So the question is how do you shrink that number to a number knowing that you're not going to test and not trigger a sense that you're building new weapons, which is another

piece of this. And my concern over time had been that the Bush administration's rhetoric had been pretty reckless. That in RNAP we were allowing people to think that we were building a new weapon, and in RRW the first conversations of it made people believe that we were building new weapons, not replacement weapons, and that we were not at the same time effectively doing this to achieve very small numbers without hedge weapons, without testing, without triggering any other kinds of arms control issues.

So what we have done in the committee, and let me just tip my hat a little bit to the new Vice Chief of Staff, General Cartwright, who as STRATCOM commander, and this is a Marine by the way, but he is one of the most brilliant people I've ever met. [Laughter]. He and I worked very closely together.

Q: Just like you are. [Laughter].

A: Actually I know three very smart Marines.

Q: That's actually it. There's only three --- [Laughter].

A: One is Jim Jones, who is a close personal, his family and my family are very close, and I know some other very smart Marines. But if you haven't had exposure to General Cartwright, I hope you will because he is of a specific pedigree and the country is enormously blessed to have him, not only Admiral Mullen, but as Vice Chief he is a very different kind of guy.

So we've worked closely together for many years to look at this issue and how to get not only the opportunity right but the optics rights. Optics, tone, and pitch are important too because you can cause yourself to begin to look like you are creating new weapons and you can cause people to get their hair on fire. And you can pretty much nullify what you're trying to do, which is to dramatically bring down the number of weapons, have weapons that can be easily certified by the labs, have the President be able to certify them, have no testing, and have the client, the military, feel confident. And that's kind of what you're trying to do. You're trying to do all of those things at once.

So we've got Block 2A, which is where the RRW is standing now. We've had a significant number of studies, and we've said let's walk before we run. Let's really understand this. Part of the strategic pause is to get the language right. Part of it is to get the commitment right. Part of it is also that we have a new Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates, who I'm happy to say is very cooperative, very easy to deal with; very, very accessible. I'm much happier to have him talking about these issues than I was Secretary Rumsfeld and some of the other people that were in the administration who would have put nuclear tips on ice cream cones I think if we'd let them.

So what we've done is we've said, and the Senate has agreed with us, that we're going to make sure that we have everything in place. We've had a good [JASN's] report. We've had a number of reports out of the labs. So technically what we're trying to do is we really understand because the Congress has not really been involved. We have an old Nuclear Proliferation Review, Nuclear Posture Review. What we've done in the House is we've said we want a congressional blue-ribbon panel to do a study of exactly what our number of weapons should be. What is the strategic need and capability for the United States for nuclear weapons, and what the Senate asked for was an accelerated new Nuclear Posture Review for the new administration to do it pretty much when they walk in the door.

We've married those two together. We think that they are very congruent. We think that they complement each other, and so that's what we're doing. We're going forward with our congressional blue-ribbon panel. We think Congress has a reason to weigh in. We think we have a reason to have our own people take a look at this, and we've got the Senate side, which is going to do this accelerated NPR, which is going to come in in 2009.

Q: On the warheads specifically, based on what you have said and the examinations that were done in Congress this year and all of the fences that you've put around the program to satisfy yourself and others, do you think the program's a go now?

Is it cleared to move into whatever the next step is? I guess that's EMD?

A: The key here is this. I used the analogy if I had to have a car that went to work every day, so I have all these hedge cars. So I've got this car. If somebody comes to me, General Cartwright comes to me or the labs come to me and say by the way, I think I can give you more reliability on that car so I'm going to take it and put it up on blocks and try to do things for it. And I sit there and I say, okay now, while you're doing that I need some other things that really will create not only assurances for me but the international community, for the American people, and for my client, the military. So why don't while you're doing this, while you're creating a more reliable one, I want one that's easily certified.

I also want some protections in there, so while you've got it up there and you're changing out the engine block to create an engine that's much more reliable for me, I want you to give me more security, so I want you to put better locks on the doors. And by the way, there's that nasty little business of the fact that there's a lot of stuff in there that will kill you, not only if it blows up but just by standing next to it. I want you to make it more environmentally sound, so while you've got it up on the blocks, I want you to take out the different things in there, beryllium for example, that we don't think we might need anymore -- because keep in mind when we made these weapons the

tolerances were very different than they are now and there's a lot of technology that we can apply.

So what I want you to do is not only make this more easy to certify and much more reliable, but I want you to add environmental soundness and I want you to add more protections to it in case somebody grabbed one and walked away with it.

And that's where the labs have done a significant amount of study where they have come to us with revolutionary, very significant opportunities.

One of the fences that we put around it that I think is the most important one that is congruent with this conversation is that the most important thing that I stressed over and over again until I made myself dizzy was you cannot change the mission of that weapon. If I'm going to say that this is the same weapon, not a new weapon, then you cannot change the context of the weapon, so no more yield; you're not going to change the platform. So effectively, from a distance, it still looks like what you think it is. Still a W80. I can still recognize it. I still know where it's going to go. I still know what it's going to come at me on. I still know everything about it.

But the things that you're going to do are going to change it enough, not so that it is a different weapon so you get more yield or you get something else that is going to set people's hair on fire, but that this is all about easy to certify, more reliable. I get to dramatically put down weapons. I get to get rid of the hedge weapons, and I get a more responsive complex. And when I say responsive, I don't necessarily mean responsive in the sense that there are whole lots of less people, but the complex itself.

You get to do a lot of environmental work in the complex because you don't have to keep things around that have been problems for a long time, so that you really are changing the innards but you're not changing the mission. You're not changing the yield. You're not changing the platform. It doesn't have to be tested. It's easy to certify. And those fences have actually not only worked, but they've held. And they've held as we've broadened the conversation outside of a few of us that were working on this. It's really now, I think the appropriators see the value of that and certainly our Senate colleagues see it too.

Q: One final thing and then we're going to go to Eric.

Do you think you have a handshake with the administration on all of these things now? You mentioned Cartwright. I presume you've been dealing with him. He has been putting forth DoD's views on this. Do you have a handshake there with DoD?

A: Yes. I not only have a handshake with DoD, I have a handshake with NNSA. Tom

D'Agostino, who you know came in as the administrator, was approved by the Senate; excellent, excellent guy, fabulous pedigree. We talk and meet all the time.

When I became Chairman, even before I became Chairman, if Simon -- I don't know if you know Simon -- Simon [inaudible] is my Deputy Chief of Staff; he's my MLA. He works with my contacts directly to my subcommittee. It was clear to me because I represented the only congressional district with two national labs in it that I could look like a lab girl, and I wasn't going to be the lab girl. My sense was I do represent the finest labs in the world. They are the jewels in the crown, but in order to represent my constituents the best thing for me was to have a complex that was healthy, that was relevant, that was funded, that was doing everything, and my labs could compete, and my labs could do well, and that was the context I took over about four or five years ago; not expecting ever to be the Chairman but because I thought that I could be more influential that way than just being lab girl.

And now that I'm Chairman, I think the good news is that people don't think that I have a peripheral point of view, that this is all about Livermore. But I spent a lot of time at Los Alamos, at Y12, at Savannah River, at Pantex. I'm actually taking a CoDel of some of my colleagues that have not seen the entire complex or haven't really been there recently the second week that we're of after Thanksgiving. We're taking a five-day tour with Tom D'Agostino. So that's where we are.

Q: I'm wondering if, as Chair of the Strategic Forces subcommittee, you've run into the latest Statute of American Assessment on Security with Pakistan. [Inaudible]?

A: Yeah, we had a briefing yesterday. I was actually presiding yesterday but I got a little view of it and let me say three things, Eric.

I think first and foremost that my biggest concern -- we've been watching this percolate for a long time and knowing that it was going in the wrong direction, going from simmer to boil for a long time. My concern is that the reason that the President has been getting involved is because we have, unfortunately, in Secretary Rice a Secretary that is so pinned down in the Middle East, either because of a rush to try to get something done with the Israel/Palestinian issue --- I'm for that by the way --- Iraq/Iran and with everything else that she doesn't have enough time in the day to be dealing with this.

Secondly, I think that this is one of the reasons why I voted against the India deal. I think that that's a bad deal, and I think happily that the Indian Congress is going to deal with it itself, but I don't think that region is a place where you're going to give people the ability to build more nuclear weapons.

And the third thing is I think that we need to --- this is a very clear signal of something

I've been advocating for a long time -- which is a much more robust and significant American commitment to international regimes for arms control. We need a lot more visibility on what is going on in Pakistan. Who does have that football? Who is next in line? What is going to happen should something untoward happen?

I know that during the crisis in Kashmir, I guess it must have been 2002, I know that we did have conversations about MPC&A material handling control with Pakistan and India to be sure that we had some idea of exactly who was in charge of the codes and where these weapons were and all that. But I think this is the crisis issue. I think it has been the crisis issue for months because of the fact that they have nuclear weapons and because it is in such a volatile part of the world.

Q: So what did you learn?

A: I've learned that we don't have as strong a handle on it as I think we do.

Q: -- command and control?

A: No. I think about Musharraf. I think that the issue is that we cannot influence General Musharraf right now. And I think that to have the President of the United States have to call him and make the call public to have a sense that we are trying to influence him, that we've warned him that he'd better take that military uniform off and he'd better go become a civilian leader says to me that no one expects that to happen. It says to me that we're trying to use public diplomacy and trying to raise this in the public eye that we're covering ourselves, that we've warned him because we're afraid he's going to do exactly what we've told him not to do. And the fact that he called for martial law while Benazir Bhutto was out of the country is another example of the fact that we cannot influence him.

Q: I just want to specifically target the issue of nuclear weapons. Do you have a good feeling or do you understand how many there are ---

A: I don't.

Q: Are they disbursed around the country?

A: I don't know.

Q: So we don't know. Can you tell me ---

A: I don't know.

Q: Do we know who's in the chain of command ---

A: I don't know. I don't know.

Q: So American intelligence is just blank on this?

A: That may not be true, but I don't know, and I've asked the question a couple of different ways.

Q: I wanted to ask you about European missile defense. There's no money in the appropriations bill for the polish silos to raise money for the radar side of things. My impression is you would rather see us negotiate this with NATO rather than have bilateral agreements with Poland and the Czech Republic. This is a system that doesn't cover all of Europe. It's based on an untested interceptor. The Russians don't like it. I'm curious, what's the real motive here? Why are we pursuing this, and how do you think all this is going to work out?

A: Well this is complicated. Last year before we took the majority I made it clear that I believed. I sit as the Vice Chair of the American Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. I'm also the chair of their Future Capabilities and International Security Subcommittee of the Defense Committee that I sit on.

I believe that we should deal with current threats. That's why in missile defense in our portfolio at Strategic Forces we followed what the Republicans began to do last year which was to say to MDA you've got to pull back, stop doing so many things that are future projects, start delivering current capabilities and make the warfighter the centerpiece of what your deliverables are.

And I think that Democrats significantly influenced Chairman Everitt when he was chairman, and he has worked with me as ranking member to get MDA to pull backing. I believe that the 2004 deployment of the missile defense system at Fort Greeley and Vandenberg was a political statement. I don't believe that MDA has done enough operational testing, and for spending eight or nine billion dollars a year over the last seven or eight years, I don't think that we have achieved the one thing that we could have achieved and must achieve immediately, which is deterrence.

We don't have credible deterrence with this missile defense system. It certainly hasn't deterred the North Koreans. They have been put back in the box for other reasons, but it's not because they think our system's going to work, and we certainly haven't achieved credible deterrence with the Iranians and others who are developing these long-range missile systems. The problem we have is that the administration rushed ahead to deploy.

The reason it's called the third site is because we've got Greeley and Vandenberg; this would be the third site. This system is the ground-based missile defense system, and it is a long-range system, and it is meant to be installed in Poland with ten interceptors with a radar in the Czech Republic to protect the United States against a long-range system that will emerge from Iran sometime between 2012 and 2015.

Q: So it's not really to protect Europe?

A: No, and they now know that. But who has the most short- and medium-range missiles in the Middle East? Oh, the Iranians. They have 600. And who have they targeted now? Well obviously they're targeted at Europe and Russia and our forward-deployed troops there. What is the current threat? The current threat is 600 short- and medium-range missiles in Iran against Europe and our troops that are forward-deployed there and of course Israel. What should we be trying to defeat? Those systems.

So what I have insisted on is that we begin to first NATO-ize the system and then secondly deliver that system and have that system bolted on to our long-range system. And as you know, we have three short/medium-ranged systems; one is the PAC-3 which we already have installed in Europe. The second is Aegis BMD, which is on Navy ships, and we have a cooperative deal with Japan. The third system is THAAD, which I really like. That's the theater system, and those are all meant to really protect forward-deployed troops when they are deployed in operations or when they're in theater.

What we have suggested, what I suggested back in March at a speech at the Atlantic Council, was we needed to NATO-ize this. There is no reason to rush to deploy the third site while we have no agreement on how to deal with the current threat. And then we have worked very hard with Ambassador Edelman and others to NATO-ize this system.

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who is the Secretary General of NATO, has begun to use the term NATO-ize. When I was at the Munich Conference, I asked him specifically in a public for a, NATO-ize? Yes, NATO-ize. So I've taken two trips to Europe to meet with both the Poles and the Czechs, to be in Brussels to meet with the NATO developers of the system.

The system that NATO is looking at is called the ALT-BMD system. So what we want is and what I think we've gotten in agreement from the Pentagon is to hit the accelerator on the ALT-BMD system, get that system moved beyond just design and planning into a reality. Working with the French on the Santee system, there's a lot of opportunity there.

Q: What do you call BMD --

A: ALT-BMD is what they call the NATO system.

Q: Is that a short/medium-range or a short-range?

A: It's a short/medium-range system. Right. The problem is if we keep rushing to deploy and we keep developing, it's going to take a lot of money and a lot of time for the NATO system to catch up, and that's not in our best interest.

We also need to have a financial deal with them, and my suggestion is that we deliver the long-range system and they deliver the medium- and short-range system. Certainly Aegis BMD, THAAD and PAC-3 are part of it. The significant problem we have is that the publics and the parliaments in Europe, the parliaments specifically, are not exposed to intelligence like we are in the United States so they have absolutely no visibility on the threat out of Iran right now. They kind of understand it, but they don't really understand it. The French, interestingly, because of Totale and other relationships they have, longstanding relationships they have with Iran, have the best HUMINT on Iran, and they have significantly amped up their rhetoric about Iran's threat.

And also, frankly, the administration completely manhandled the opportunity to deploy the system in Poland and the Czech Republic, didn't understand what it meant to have Russia so crosswise with it, and so we're working to engage the Russians more significantly. I think that both the President, certainly Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates, have worked to engage President Putin.

We've had mil-to-mil exchanges. We've had offers of lots of transparency and visibility on the systems. The Russians should not be confused about the fact that they're in the line of fire for the short- and medium-range Iranian threat that is current. So what we've done, just like we did with RRW is to say look, let's bring these things forward; let's start looking at current threats; let's match capabilities with threats; let's make this about the warfighter; let's not run too far ahead; no more science projects; let's kind of dial it back a little bit; let's make sure that we're delivering things that are part of a system and to make these things congruent with our relationships.

I believe that NATO is the finest defense alliance in the world and our most significant relationship. Let's face it. If the Iranians decided to pop one off into southern Europe, Article 5 says that we're in. It's very easy for us to understand that this is a prerogative of the Iranians to do this, and it certainly is an imperative for us to protect ourselves so I think we've got to work hard to get this idea of a NATO-ized system up and going.

Q: I just want to follow up on [inaudible]. So are [inaudible] looking at options or have they made any decisions to try and fence off some of the money for the radar site?

A: What we have done is we've told the administration. The administration very much

wanted us to not close the door, and what I said was you don't have a deal. You have to have deals that get ratified, and you're not close to a deal. Plus, two steps forward, three steps back. Every time something happens there are political problems in these two countries. Well over 60 percent of the populations in both countries, Poland and the Czech Republic, don't want this. So I said let's just take a strategic pause; let's figure out how to get the rhetoric right and let's understand how to get this NATO-ized.

What we have is a commitment out of the administration that both at the defense ministerial that just happened, that Secretary Gates would elevate this. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has agreed, and in the mean time he is doing public comments to elevate the idea of a NATO-ized missile defense system, and that the coming NATO head of state meeting that this would be an agenda item and that we would begin to begin very significant American engagement on having NATO begin to create this system that our offer would be we're going to bring to the table the third leg of the system, the long-range leg, and that we're going to work with you on the other two legs, but we want all populations covered, we want indivisibility inside of NATO.

You can't pick winners and losers, you know -- because you're down-range, you don't get to have protection --- and that we begin to speak clearly about what these systems capabilities are. That the third site is a long-range system that is meant to protect the United States. Now can it protect Europe? Yes, but not southern Europe and only against long-range systems.

Q: Will the administration be able to go forward though with the appropriate ---

A: We have put a trap door in our agreement with them on the authorizing side, and what we have said is that they can come back for reprogramming money if they have signed and ratified by the parliaments the agreements. I don't expect that to happen.

Q: I'm sorry. You don't expect which part of that to happen?

A: I don't expect them to get the agreements and have them ratified before we're going into the next cycle.

Q: Is this for all of the money for the third site or just for a fraction of it?

A: It's for all of it.

Q: I would really like to go back to nuclear-test ice cream cones. [Laughter]. You sort of sound delighted when you talk about General Cartwright and Secretary Gates. You've told us that. Show us how the national security team has changed over the last year and to what degree is it a function of Gates as the new top dog bringing in a different cadre

of generals than perhaps Secretary Rumsfeld would have brought in.

A: I think you've answered your own question. I had, I thought, some visibility to Secretary Rumsfeld, even though I was technically in the minority and technically a junior member. Going over there for breakfast, I can remember sitting right across from him and demanding in 2003 that we lift end-strength, and had the bill to do it for both the Army and the Marines, and having him tell me in his deprecating tone how it wasn't really about people, honey, which wasn't what he said -- [laughter] -- but that was the tone. The only thing missing was the little pat on the head. And just being stunned that we were offering to increase end-strength for the Army and the Marines by 35-25, and have him no, it's not about that, honey. I mean it was just amazing. And of course my bill just sat there, and it sat there in 2004, and it wasn't really until my Republican colleagues in the House started to see that this was an unsustainable policy of the administration that we added a few numbers in 2006.

But I think my relationship; I've talked to Secretary Gates quite a few times. He has called me after my trip to Europe. I see Undersecretary Edelman every week, on whether it's third site or other issues. And I think that there's a sense that with the elevation of Admiral Mullen and Secretary Cartwright that you're going to have people that are going to tell you exactly what they're thinking.

Q: The implication being?

A: I was very disappointed in General Pace. Enormously.

Q: Because?

A: Because I've been enormously concerned about the senior military leadership not telling the civilian managers how desperately bad our readiness is, how significantly we are unable to deal with any other contingencies. We have no C1-rated ground force unit in this country. We have broken the Guard and Reserve. We are allowing criminals into the military. We've degraded our ability to recruit and retain. We have broken families. We have a military medical system that is a scandal. A heartbreaking scandal. And this administration is responsible for all of that. And I do think that Admiral Mullen's public comments, but even private comments, are changing my sense that we are still in the same position.

Q: But it's your sense that if Secretary Rumsfeld were still there, Admiral Mullen would not be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs?

A: Probably not. Probably not, because I think we all have heard rumors that there were many people that were offered different jobs in the administration while Secretary

Rumsfeld was there and some of them turned them down. And in my mind we didn't get the best people because they knew that they could not sustain a conversation with Secretary Rumsfeld and get their views actually heard in a respectful way and have any impact at all.

Q: I feel a little obligation to give you an opportunity to elaborate a little bit on the criminals in the military statement. [Laughter]. I think that came off maybe not the way you wanted it to come off. Can you develop that a little bit more?

A: I think we have all seen that there are a number of mostly young men, I would assume, that have been allowed to come into the military with criminal records, which was not true just even two years ago, two and a half, three years ago. Now I'm all for rehabilitation, and I'm all for people getting a second chance. That's not why we're doing this. We haven't decided that there is a cadre of folks that have been rehabilitated and now they can come into the military. This is about the fact that we need people with pulses that are willing to come into the military. And I find that to be startling, considering the fact that I have a significant commitment to an all-volunteer professional force.

This is a time where technology, trainability, just willingness to be trained is a significant component to being good in this military. And if you have, as the nuns used to say, comportment issues -- [laughter]. If you can't sit quietly and listen and you can't be trained and you have predilections to doing little things, whether it's just pilfering or if it's bigger things, you're going to be a detriment in that unit. You're going to be a detriment to the military. But we're going to be spending money every day trying to get you to be what we want you to be, all that you can be. But you're not perhaps going to be that, and I think it not only has issues of whether you're going to actually come out the other side as a wise investment for the American people, but I think there's also concern inside those units and on those bases that those people are there.

And I think that we do have the finest military in the world, and I think it is a pox on our house that because of decisions by this administration, Secretary Rumsfeld, and the Pentagon over the last five years, that we cannot continue to rely on the fact that we can recruit and retain the best people in the world and that we have to lower our standards.

Q: Prompt Global Strike is a necessity that General Cartwright testified repeatedly to you and both your committee and the Senate side have seemed to be moving to allocate and authorize funds for it, but lawmakers have also passed that the DoD consolidate for a centralized, the drive toward this capability. Can you describe a little better what exactly you want the DoD to do? Do you want it all in one office? If so, who's running that office? What service? And what technologies do you want them to ---

A: You're talking about the Trident modification?

Q: All of the above. Any Prompt Global Strike capability.

A: I'm for Prompt Global Strike. I think that the case that General Cartwright has made in the public fora is the right case, and the trick here is I think that part of the --- let's just take MDA as an example of an agency that needs to be brought more closely to the services.

Because MDA has kind of been over here with all the money it has wanted and really not a lot of oversight over the years, none of the services feel that this is a system that's theirs. They feel it's MDA's system. So when you try to get any of the services to try to embrace it and deal with it and allocate it and spend money for it inside the service, everybody kind of puts their hands up and says well that's MDA; we don't have to do that.

For Prompt Global Strike, we want the JROC to be much more involved like we do for MDA, and I think there is a significant body of opinion on the Senate side that Trident modification is not something that they're for. So right now we are not going to agree, I believe, to do the Trident modification. I think the ambiguousness of these systems is a problem, and you can't have people unclear as to what exactly is coming out of F-2.

But I think you're going to see the defense bill in the next few days. I expect we're going to come out of conference if not by the end of this week, by the beginning of next week, and I think you'll see that what we're trying to do is support what General Cartwright has asked for. At the same time, we're insisting that the military and the Pentagon planners come up with a better way for us to make sure that we have the right requirements coming out of the JROC and that we have the right sense that we have tasked to the different services exactly how this is meant to work.

Q: Getting back to third site issues. How do you [inaudible] a couple of things the Pentagon has been saying about congressional Democrats, which I read you since you are clearly the most visible and vocal person on this issue.

One is on this issue of the trap door that you discussed. General Obering was asked at an event I was at about a month ago how much is congressional effort going to slow you down. And he was, quite frankly, dismissive and said, ah, six months, something along those lines. You've mentioned how you don't think that the Poles and the Czechs are going to approve, and that's the biggest issue there. If I remember correctly though, there was some language in your bill as well on testing, on getting independent [inaudible] to look at it. Can you talk about how far do you think that is a hurdle to clear, whether it's going to survive in the conference and whether there is language in the

appropriations bill that just came out of conference that will match up with that?

The other issue is, and this is one that comes from Ambassador Edelman. When you ask about Democratic opposition, he says, well I get the sense that they're coming on board on this one, and they cite the NATO-ization, this kind of thing, now they understand. They seem to think that you have changed your minds. Because you talk in the past about Aegis and how you see that as a defective system, the mobile system. Can you just give us your sense of whether there is any change in the [inaudible] view of [inaudible] missile defense?

A: No, I think what's interesting is as they have quoted me consistently in the last six months, I guess they've considered that I've changed because they're now quoting me.

They never said NATO. Let's face it; they went right past NATO to do bilateral agreements. Now all of a sudden it's NATO, NATO, NATO, NATO. I think we pushed them into that. I think we made it very clear that we were not going to allow them to go over to Europe and sell a long-range system to protect the United States as a system that was actually meant to protect Europe against short- and medium-range systems out of Iran. We're not going to back you up on that one.

And as far as General Oering is concerned, I think General Oering needs to make sure that the system achieves the first thing it should have in the first ten billion dollars, not the last hundred billion dollars, which is credible deterrence. We need more testing. Both the House and the Senate and the appropriators agree on that. We need not only more testing on the ground base system, which they've rushed to deploy, but generally across the platform they have not done enough credible testing and we have made a very strong case that they need to do that.

They've got a couple of test failures that were due to targets; they need to be looking at that issue. I think that we have a lot of important language you'll see in the bill when we roll it out in the next few days. It is very prescriptive as to what they're meant to do. And I believe that MDA is an agency that needs some adult supervision.

Q: Can you give us a sense of whether that language is going to hinder the ability of the administration to get that back door open, the trap door? Is that how prescriptive it is?

A: Nothing is going to hinder the ability of the administration to do that other than the administration's inability to stay focused on what it's meant to do, which is NATO-ize the system, get NATO up and running for a short- and medium-range system, deliver on current threats, deliver for the warfighter, and to have a system that reaches credible deterrence. And that means more testing.

This has been a system that has not been tested enough to be deployed, and it is deployed, and now we have a situation where we've got saber rattling by the Russians that have caused former Warsaw Pact countries who we have publicly embraced in a deal that now their own publics now understand doesn't protect them against a short- and medium-range current threat, that many people in those countries have justifiable PTSD about what happens when the Russians saber rattle to the point where we have even said things like well, you know we're going to allow the Russians to come in and visit.

I don't really think they want Russians coming back, so they don't have a marketing plan for this, and part of the reason they don't have a good marketing plan for it is because they don't have a system that they can really sell because it hasn't achieved the things that we've said.

Q: And just one last point. Just to get back to your preference to Aegis over GMD. Is that still something that you ---

A: That argument was really about the fact that until we made them stop saying it, they were selling the third site as a system that was going to protect Europe. And when we said hold it, you need a theater system or you need a system that is going to protect populations and territory and you need to look at the theater system a little differently, which was meant to be for deployed troops. And we need a short- and medium-range system like Aegis [inaudible].

Q: I wanted to follow up on Ashley's question. Your response to that, it sounded as though conference on the acquisition bill seemed to have gone largely with the House language in terms of restrictions on funding for the third site. I'm wondering if you could elaborate a little bit more, because the House is putting in some different language there on any type of agreement that you've come to over [inaudible].

A: I was gratified to hear both appropriators and our colleagues on the Senate side effectively say that they supported what we had been saying on the House side, which was that first and foremost we need more testing, that the third site system needed to be NATO-ized in the sense that it was a component of a system of systems, that it is the long-range system but you still need to deal with the current threats, with current capabilities, and that means you need to have a NATO system that includes a short- and medium-range deterrence and that we wanted those systems bolted together with common command and control and that we wanted cooperation with the Russians, and we didn't think that this was something that the Russians should have their hair afire about, that we were willing to have a lot of visibility, that we were willing to have a cooperative system, we were willing to extend it to them.

I think that's pretty much what we should have been saying from the very beginning, which is vastly different from what they were saying, which is now what they are saying, but I guess apparently it's their idea that they're saying it and I guess I'm parroting them. [Laughter].

Q: So in terms of the Congress, you predict that we'll see all that type of language --

A: I think you will.

Q: I wanted to follow up on, you're now suggesting that the administration has changed its position. Is that a reflection on what you were describing before, the changes in personnel or change at the top?

A: Yes, I think so.

Q: And I wanted to be clear on what you mean when you say NATO-ize.

A: We have 26 nations that are members of the finest most significant defense alliance that the United States has, and we have an agreement among ourselves, including Article 5, for mutual defense. They are down-range toward Iran, and Iran's current capabilities of 600 short- and medium-range missiles puts them in danger. Anything that happens in Iran toward any of our allies brings us in.

I think that we should be wise to deliver with them a competent system. What instead we've done is protected ourselves against a future threat and, not surprising, that was a little selfish of us but they've now figured it out. And we've now got to ramp up, delivering against the current threat with current capabilities on a short- and medium-range system, and what we want is to NATO-ize the system. Take our third site, our capability for long-range, deliver that into NATO, and have NATO develop the short- and medium-range system bolted together, common command and control, extend it to the Russians.

Certainly the Russians have territorial issues. When it comes to radar, they can be very helpful. We think that they're exposed to the same threat that many of our European colleagues are. We think it's a good idea to work with them.

Q: I want to go back to your comments about RRW. [Inaudible] proposal came out recently, it suggested that the current manufacturing techniques be maintained as a hedge even as we perfect RRW, and the ceiling hasn't quite [inaudible] both systems. It also seems to me like the timeline for replacing the current hedge weapons with the RRW was also quite long. And I'm curious if it seems to you as if the original goal of the streamlined complex [inaudible] cheaper. It's kind of gone out the window [inaudible]

RRW and the current weapons in the new complex plus the old complex for quite some time.

A: Keep in mind that we were going to have [inaudible] stewardship in the life extension programs forever. So what we're basically saying now is we think that we have a way of, we are going to have to have duplication. We're going to have to have [inaudible] stewardship life extension programs as a hedge and hedge weapons as we prove out RRW. And the question is how long will that be, but it will certainly be less than forever. And the key is where is that sweet spot and how do we get everybody to agree.

We have the client, we have the military, who is going to insist that we have a weapon that is not only certifiable but they have absolute confidence in and that it is a credible deterrent. We've got the labs and others. We've got to make sure that they have the manufacturing dates, the intellectual capital to be able to stay relevant in these things, stay ahead of the curve, do all that stuff. We have all the arms control issues to deal with. But I do believe that we will find that sweet spot, and that's why we have said let's walk before we run. Let's really understand. The idea of look, I'm trying to eliminate these weapons, so how do you get there? It's very interesting for me to figure out how to do that, especially if I can get rid of the hedge weapons and I can do the things I want to do to modernize the complex and make it more responsive, but I can't do that if I can't certify the weapons. I can't do that if I don't maintain credible deterrence.

So that's why all of these different studies are very, very important. Walking before we run is very, very important. There is no reason to expend the money that we are expending on RRW if it doesn't achieve for us the end game, which is to effectively take our foot off life extension programs and transit over to here and know that we can do that and achieve all the things we have to have.

Q: [Inaudible], the question is how long is it going to be before [inaudible]? Has that changed, when you first started looking at it, it was like okay, [inaudible]. Now it's maybe in 25 years we'll be able to take this off the [inaudible]. Is that --

A: John, I think what's changed is even in the arms control community where RRW was dismissed because the rhetoric of this administration, because they were not smart about how they presented this and who they presented it to. We've had to do a lot of retrofitting of the argument and kind of working it, just like we have for missile defense, and it is about confidence building. It's not going to matter if the client doesn't think it's going to work. It doesn't matter if the JASN's and other very prestigious groups out there, the National Academy of Science, if they still go forget it, it's too risky, or you can't do it.

So that's why we think that these confidence-building measures, but I will tell you that

over the last three years that we've talked about RRW the foes have diminished and the fans have increased. We're still not sold on it, and we're taking I think a very cautionary investment strategy to do it. But at the same time, I think that many of us are hopeful that it is a path to get to where we want to go.

Q: I want to go back to missile defense for a second. You were talking about focusing on near-term capabilities, aborting science projects. Your mark definitely reflected that, but my understanding is that one of the programs, Airborne Laser, a lot of the money is going to be restored when the conference report comes out.

A: Yes.

Q: I'm wondering if your thinking changed or was there something that happened to the program, or was it just a matter of negotiations? What's your current take on that?

A: It was all of that. [Laughter].

Q: Would you like to expand on that?

A: Sure. It was effectively three things. First is that I have a predilection toward KEI, others do. We're not there yet. It is still a competition between ABL and KEI. The folks that wanted ABL were very persuasive as appropriators. We started to understand that we were not at a place where we had to actually make the decision. We basically said, okay, you're going to get one more year. But ABL has been riddled with four or five major delays in proving out its capabilities and testing and slipping of this and slipping of that, but it was a pragmatic decision. I'm satisfied that we made the right decision, but I think we will see how ABL does.

Q: I just have a quick follow-up. You talked about adult supervision for MDA. And one of the things as an outside observer that strikes me is that they're not bound by a lot of the acquisitions rules and processes that govern other large programs.

A: Josh, are you working for the committee? [Laughter].

Q: And I've asked MDA about this and they say well show us the acquisitions program that works well and then we'll do that. They're sort of flippant and sarcastic about that.

A: Oh, that's shocking. [Laughter].

Q: So I'm wondering too if you think that they should fall under these processes and if you're doing anything to further that.

A: Yes. Yes, I am.

Q: Do you want to expand on that?

A: No. [Laughter]. I don't want to be flippant and sarcastic. [Laughter].

Q: To break you out of your comfortable niche on your subcommittee, Navy shipbuilding is a big issue for the whole --

A: I'm all for Gene Taylor. [Laughter].

Q: The LCS, the Navy canceled all the follow-on systems but it was the heart of [inaudible] to get the 313 ships. What's your take on how, is a 313 ship fleet dead, or no? What's your take on that whole issue?

A: You know, Otto, I would be stretching my capabilities to tell you that I have actually, I don't sit on that subcommittee, and I really do -- The way you cheat as a member is you find somebody that you think is really drilled down on this stuff and you are a nice little pile of fish floating right next to his shark -- [laughter] -- and I follow Gene Taylor on these issues and I really cannot amplify what the situation is other than to say that I think that his thesis that we are not only hollowing out our capabilities on the water but that we are also losing an industrial base that is very necessary for our national security. That argument makes a lot of sense to me.

Q: Let me then come back to an issue that's a personal one for you, C-5 versus C-17. You are insisting on following the mod program on the C-5As rather than [inaudible].

A: We have a bill that we've just dropped with Mike Hassel. Mike Hassel, who has got Delaware on [inaudible]. We've got a bill basically saying we need to look at exactly what the capabilities are necessary for the C-5/C-17 situation. What I have done, and what I've been very happy to do, is to help keep the C-17 line warm. I'm disappointed that as the Pentagon and the President have not asked for one C-17 for the last, I think, three years, and we've increased them by 36 over the last three years, that we haven't gotten a farthing of savings out of Boeing, considering the fact that there's all this hue and cry about whoa, we're going to close it, we're going to close it.

So there you go. You keep it warm and that's it. You don't get any savings. This is my concern. My concern that we've got all these models of the C-5, and some of them are dogs and some of them are better than others. The problem I've got is that the C-17 and the C-5 have similar missions but not the same capabilities. And I don't want to go to just one model too fast, and I think that we have every reason to believe that we need to have both of them right now since we're renting Russian planes to go around the world

and do things.

So our RRRP program is, and the mod program. We're supporting it. We've got both C-5s and C-17s at Travis, which is the Air Mobility Command western headquarters, in my district. But this is a problem. You've got the Air Force effectively as the red-headed stepchild, just like the Navy is, and the Pentagon, they're just being completely constricted on their capabilities in order to deal with what you have to do for ground forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and everything, and how long are we going to do this.

You need to have a healthy vibrant robust airlift capability in order to do anything that we're doing anyhow. So it doesn't make any sense to me. Why aren't they asking for C-17s in the budget? And why are they depending on the Congress to add them in? And why do we have to make choices between C-5s and C-17s? Isn't that their job? So we've got this --

By the way, I think we're very lucky to have somebody like Secretary Wynne who has got a tremendous pedigree in acquisition in that job right now. I just wish we were giving him more money to do more. But that's my take on C-5s and C-17s.

Q: [Inaudible] red-headed stepchild. [Laughter]. A different question. Back to end-strength real quick. Obviously it's important to grow the Army and Marine Corps. The Army has suggested that we increase their recruiting goal to reflect the growth they need to do. Obviously General Casey wants to make it faster. They seem to be taking it seriously. Given the problem that you talked about [inaudible], are you confident that he's going to get that?

A: No, I'm not. I just think that moms and dads and spouses have voted with their feet when it comes to not only extending the careers of people that are already in but of not young men and young women going into the military. We're giving \$40,000 bonuses for this and that and the other thing, and it's just amazing to me that when we know what the success of the volunteer professional force is, when we know the requirements of it, when we know that's it's a have-to-have, not a nice-to-have, that we went for so long breaking it and then we expect to be able to turn around on a dime and have people just forget about what's going on today.

It's not like we're out of Iraq, it's not like we're finished with Afghanistan, it's not like we're coming home to rest and recuperate. We've got a long way to go. Plus we have this; when it comes to money for the Pentagon, we've got to replace everything with a wheel and a wing on it that is currently in theater. What's that going to cost us? Eight hundred billion, a trillion dollars?

One of my concerns, and I know Chairman Skelton and other of my colleagues share

this; we've got a military that's at war and a country that's not at war. We don't have an industrial base that's at war either. If you saw what it took for us to run around and try to figure out how to up-armor these Humvees. We're basically throwing refrigerator doors on the sides of them. So what happens when you do that? When you harden a vehicle that isn't meant to be a thousand pounds more in weight, the suspension goes in the first 40 miles and you need a new one.

So I don't think we've got an industrial base that's at war either. It's taking too long to procure. I don't think we're spending wisely. I don't think that we're incenting in the appropriate ways. So I think there's a lot of Pentagon reform that a new president in 2009 is going to have to do.

Q: I'd like to turn back to Russia. Yesterday the Duma approved [inaudible]. That's just the latest in a lot of aggressive moves that we've all watched. First, what do you think [inaudible] or just rhetoric, or is there really something there connected [inaudible] on? Secondly, you keep referring to this need to help Russia cooperate [inaudible] missile defense program. Do you think that they will ever cooperate under missile defense or is it just [inaudible]?

A: I don't know if any of you saw Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates get thrashed by President Putin in that press conference a few weeks ago, but I was basically mortally embarrassed for them and thought to myself, oh my god, that's pretty bad. I think a lot of it hedges on what Putin's ambitions are and if it's true that he's effectively going to just change titles and effectively still maintain control.

A Russia that has such a significant petrochemical windfall, that isn't spending that money on securing their nuclear weapons, that isn't doing the things that we think that they should do, whose agenda and whose investment strategy doesn't match what ours for them has been for a long time, when we had them on scholarship after they ended the Soviet Union, when we were doing all kinds of things to do the right thing, they've not now said okay, now we have our own money, we should be doing this. They're not doing it. So you have to be wary of a country whose leader has figured out how to maintain control even though he has got term limits. And where personal freedoms, press freedoms, and other things have diminished over time, I think the trend lines on Russia are not good. And they still obviously have a tremendous amount of capabilities.

Now, having said that, I think that my personal take on this is that when you have that kind of situation, that is not somebody that you stiff-arm; that is somebody that you grab by the collar and bring as close to you as you can.

And I would say that it would be wise, if this was a Democratic administration, I would be on the phone telling my President that she would need to move -- [laughter] --

somebody very significant onto a couch in a hotel in Moscow and do everything we could to be persuasive. And I believe that what Secretary Albright said about engagement not being endorsement is significant. And I think that you bring people very, very, very, very close if you're worried about them.

Now of course you always have military options and you never negate them, and Russia certainly has no veto over anything we do, including third site issues and others. I've never said that Russia has legitimate reasons to be concerned about the third site; they don't. They have none. In fact, they should be working with us because they have the same kinds of threats that most of southern Europe has. But I think that in this case there's a lot more that we can and should be doing. I think we will do it on January 21, 2009.

Q: Do you think they have a real difference with the United States on their assessment of the threat from Iran? Publicly they do.

A: They do, and they cannot sustain that in any way with credible information. I think for their Duma it may be just lack of exposure to current intel, but I think it's just their story. I think a lot of it is a throwback to the old relationship when they were the Soviet Union and their sense of prominence and their sense of ability to be a superpower. I think that they're trying to act like a superpower again, and we've got a lot of reason to think that they might be recategorized, a different kind of superpower. Certainly this windfall, this money that they've got certainly changes things.

Q: On the Iranian trip, your constituents, [inaudible] comes up to me and says why should we believe in the administration and its intelligence estimates [inaudible]?

A: You shouldn't. You should believe the French. [Laughter].

Q: Give us a sense as to why you feel these estimates are more credible [inaudible] war. Why should we believe it? And now Secretary Gates and he said well this is a test flight type issue. What's your take?

A: Look, we're in the worst of all situations. It's like a situation where somebody is innocent but they can't prove it because they've got such a bad record. They actually, there are people who actually didn't do it the last time but so what? They've done it seven times beforehand and they're going to get whacked for this one. Al Capone going to jail for tax evasion.

There's a lot of reasons for us to be concerned about what this administration, this President, pushed. Saber rattles, and when Dick Cheney starts to use the same rhetoric he used in 2002, a lot of reason to be concerned. On the other hand, just because we

have an administration who has misused and cherry picked information to create a cause [inaudible] for Iraq doesn't mean that Iran isn't dangerous. Iran is deadly dangerous. And they have been isolated from us for a very, very long time.

We don't have very good intelligence. I'm glad that we are using a lot of international intelligence, specifically French and MISIT, and I think that's all very good because I think that we need to have people that have people on the ground telling us what's going on.

But if you heard the fabulous speech by President Sarkozy yesterday, he was totally unambiguous about Iran. Not only can they not have a nuclear weapon, but he was very clear that he thinks that there are reasons to be concerned about the ambitions of the mullahs and of the mullahs' handlers, which include currently Ahmadinejad.

Q: [Inaudible] 2012-2015, do you feel those are [inaudible] incredible given what they know today?

A: I think that there are two pieces to this. I always think that there are two pieces of this. It's not only what people are saying, it's what they're doing. And I think that it's very clear, not only with the thousands of centrifuges that they're operating and currently trying to build capability on that we have exposure and intel on, I think it's what they have said for a very long time.

And I think that part of what we don't really understand and apparently cannot appreciate, maybe because we've been isolated from them for a long time or because they are somewhat different than we are, is the kind of sense of prestige that the Iranians believe they have historically had in the region that they want to reassert, that that is part of their national identity, that this is a compact between and the mullahs and the Iranian people that they are going to restore them to where they had been historically and that they consider having nuclear power to be a way to secure their country, to almost be without having to depend on other people. If you're going to isolate me, fine, I'm going to figure out how to exist in isolation. But that also nuclear weapons, joining that club, that they consider that the most prestigious club to join.

Q: The missile issue, don't they need North Korea to help with propulsion and all the puts and takes that a long-range missile requires?

A: Apparently, they have it. Apparently they have.

Q: They have what?

A: North Korean help. And also you've got two issues. We've never gotten an accounting

of AQ Kahn's activities, so we don't really know what AQ Kahn did. Big mistake. We never should have made that deal. We should have absolutely had an accounting for where he had gone, what he did, who he talked to, all that stuff. And I think that the connection between North Korea, Pakistan, and Iran on missile technology, Syria, is one that is concerning. I don't know the current intel on it to the extent that I could even talk about it, but I think once again I'm not saber rattling about Iran. I think generally we know that they have the largest cache of short- and medium-range missiles in the Middle East. We certainly know that they have made their feelings clear about Israel. We certainly know that they have saber rattled continuously about a lot of other things.

So I think that this is a very dangerous situation. And the fact that they want to have nuclear weapons and they have the capability of delivering nuclear weapons not only to Israel and Europe but potentially the United States is something that we cannot ignore. It would be irresponsible.

Q: A missile defense question. What's your read on [inaudible] authorization countries are going to be doing [inaudible] multiple kill vehicle? [Inaudible] talk about zeroing out about 63 million dollars towards something called a multiple engagement field, [inaudible] secondary thing. I'm wondering as it were what's your read on this as far as the ---

A: Yeah, we took out 42. The President's request was 271. The Senate provided their number too, so I think that's pretty much where we are. We're more toward the Senate. I think we are going to recede to the Senate some place near where the President wants to be.

Q: And a really quick sort of overall question. We're already well over a month into the fiscal year 2008, and it's still being, the [inaudible] just came out right now. Obviously the opposition coming out, as you say later this week or early next week. What else can be done to try to get, given the fact that we're at war, what else can be done to those bills done preferably before the start of the actual fiscal year? I'll give --

A: I hope one of the considerations is not working harder. [Laughter]. Because I can't work much harder. Look, the Republicans didn't do any of their bills last year. We won in November; they folded their tent. We came in in November and figured out that we were stuck with everything. We wisely made a decision to do a CR. Nobody wanted to do that, but that was the only way we could start to get to work. The House finished all of our bills. We did our appropriation bills before we left on August 2nd. We've had a problem with the other body; they don't have the votes to do a lot of things. The President has continued to balk on a number of different issues. Every day that we have to take two hours to do an S-CHIP veto override is one less day we have to do something else. So I think for the first time in 12 years that we're in the majority getting our

appropriation bills done by August 2nd when Steny Hoyer wanted them done by June 30th wasn't that bad. I think we're going to get a lot better on it, but I think that we're very aware that we're at war and we would like to something about it. We just don't have any cooperation right now.

Q: Do we still need the nuclear triad?

A: That's a good question. That's one of the reasons why we have the commission that the Congress is going to put together. I think that we need a fresh look at everything, and I'm not saying that we don't but I think we need to take a look at everything.

Q: And is this commission study going to unfold all next year? Is that the idea?

A: Yes.

Q: And be ready for a new administration?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, very good. We're out of time. Thank you so much.

END TEXT