

TRANSCRIPT

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THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT AND MAY CONTAIN ERRORS. USERS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAPES OR NOTES OF THE SESSION IF ABSOLUTE VERIFICATION OF WORDING IS NEEDED.

Q: Probably the best way to get started here this morning is just with bread and butter on the programs and budgets. All the services have problems fitting their programs in the budget sack you've been given. Talk to us about the most significant challenges you're facing right now.

A: I guess the wolf nearest the sleigh right now is the current impasse between the President and Congress over funding of the supplemental. The Marine Corps spends about 750 million dollars a month. About half of that goes to supporting the forces in Iraq and forward fighting the war, and the other half supports the operations going on within the United States and our other bases. We've got about five billion dollars in the bank that we're writing checks on now. That's out of the baseline that was passed already.

I graduated in a class of nine people back home in Tennessee; six girls and three boys. Not many people, but the ratio was pretty good [laughter]. But the math, even from there, says that we'll run out of money out of that checking account unless we get additional funded by 24 March.

Right now, if we were to see this impasse continue and not get the money then it would have dire consequences so we would have to get to a situation where we would furlough civilians and then ask the mission-critical ones to come back with a promise that we would pay you eventually, to carry on such things as Fire and Safety, et cetera. The

military, of course, would continue but we would have to use individuals to occupy civilian slots that we would have to furlough; people would be furloughed. So right now that is of great concern to us, and it's of great concern to the people involved, particularly to the civilians that conceivably could be furloughed.

What we would like to see right now, of course, is resolution of that and the supplemental passed so that we could go on with the business of defending the nation. So that's the nearest thing we've got.

Q: How many civilians are we talking about here?

A: I'll just say the Marine Corps is about 10,000; that's what we estimate. But our people will be doing a line-by-line review and so we'll have a better number later on.

Q: What about the basic program? Not the one that is dependent on the supplemental, the basic budget that's going to drop in February. Talk a little bit about what kind of problems you're having there.

A: With baseline we did pretty good in '08. When I started in this business--I came in in the middle '80s. And the baseline--with the Marine Corps you've got both green dollars, we call it, which supports our personnel, our infrastructure; green equipment--tanks, trucks, rifles, et cetera. And then we also have a blue dollar budget that is embedded within the Navy but we manage.

When I first started in the '80s, the total of the green and blue was about 15 billion dollars. I'm working on one today--and that was 10 years ago. I'm working on one today that is 45 billion. So in 10 years, from the mid-90s to now, it's grown to 45 billion dollars.

We also, as you look at our major programs on the ground side--Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, the EFV. We restructured the program recently but it remains the key to our--given a nation of forcible entry capability, so it is our number one ground program and we'll continue to push hard to get a successful program in place. We've reduced the numbers, and to make up for some of those numbers we're looking at our ground mobility and what we need to do with that.

The Joint Light Tactical Vehicle will be a significant role; that's a program we're developing with the Army. The Army is in the lead on that, and we'll continue to work closely with them. What we want is a vehicle that's in the 13,000-pound class. It's extremely important that we have an expeditionary type of vehicle so that we can put it on ships, and we can fly it; that it's light enough to fit into how we fight. So we will continue to press for that.

We've got a Marine Personnel Carrier, MPC, and we're just finishing analysis of alternatives for that, and that will help us make up the difference that we need to cover when we reduce the number of EFVs that we were going to purchase.

MRAPs; Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. We recently made a decision within the Marine Corps that we wanted to reduce our buy from 3,700 to 2,400. This is based on the experience that we're gaining. We've got about 550-600 over there operating now. What we see is that vehicle is good for convoy operations, route clearing, et cetera, but it has limited capability in extensive off-road operations so we still need to operate the armored Humvee.

What we're seeing is we continue as a mix of Humvees and LAVs and half tracks, solid amphibious vehicles, and tactical wheeled vehicles. We will continue to develop a ground mobility plan to support that and that's important. Right now we've got the money for R&D and all that we continue to develop those programs. That money's in the baseline to do that, except for the MRAP; the MRAP, of course, is funded in the supplemental.

And we've had great support from Congressman Taylor and others over on the Hill with the MRAP program. There's no doubt that the introduction of the vehicle will save lives and will continue to do so.

Just a bit on the [ELF] and let me talk about 202,000; what that really means to us is the ability to have three robust balanced Marine expeditionary forces. Those are our large formations from which we pull all our other units; the Marine expeditionary brigades and the Marine expeditionary units. We can either fight in its entirety, which could be up to 30,000, or we can pull various units out of that.

What we are doing with our increase, and Congress has given us about 30 billion dollars over the FYDP to do this, is increase the number of battalions, increase the number of squadrons that support those battalions, and increase the combat service support that underpins all of that.

So we have been very successful in recruiting this year. We're ahead of the curve in terms of recruiting, and we've been able to do that without any compromise of the quality of those individuals. And our reenlistment rates continue to rise, so we are having great success in growing the force to 202,000.

On the blue side, the V-22 is in combat. We deployed a squadron earlier this year. We continue to develop the H-1s replacement. We've got a situation where we're still flying UH-1 Novembers that came in in the early '70s. During that time we've loaded them up

with guns and defensive systems but at the same time they've got pretty much the same engine and dynamic components. So we need to replace that ship with a much more capable one, the four-bladed UH-1 Yankee. That program is continuing to move on. We've had some [verbals] in it, but we've been working closely with Bell to get them back on track. Congress recently, in the baseline, funded the program but they took five aircraft out we want to see--Again, we'll keep pushing to get the numbers back up because the introduction of that aircraft is extremely important.

On down the line is the replacement for the 53 Echo, which has been a tremendous helicopter, but it's getting too expensive to operate. It's getting old in the tooth, and so we're going to bring the CH-53K on line. That program is running strong. Sikorsky is going to build it. We can see the IOC of that about FY15, and so far the funding in the baseline has been good for that program.

On our TacAir side, the F-35 Bravo is a fifth generation strike fighter, and we're going to replace all our existing TacAir with that aircraft. I'm talking about the F-18s, both As, Cs, and Ds, our EA-6B, and our workhorse Av-8B. The first STOVAL will fly in May of next year; that aircraft has tremendous capability.

We have a strike fighter shortfall now. We are cadreing two active squadrons and two reserves squadrons in order to reinvest the airplanes and people and other squadrons. In the Marine Corps you've only got really three types of squadrons. The ones that are gone, the ones that are just getting back, and the ones that are just getting ready to go. And we want all our squadrons to be healthy, ready to go, to respond not only to Iraq and Afghanistan but any other place, so we've made that decision to temporarily cadre those squadrons and keep the other squadrons healthy until we bring the F-35 on.

We have no interest in legacy aircraft. What we want is what the fifth generation brings us. It is not a [bound truck]. It is a key element in our net centric warfare. The capabilities to link ISR, electronic warfare are going to be significant for that aircraft and when we get it, it will really be a bird dog.

Q: Do you still expect to make 2012 on IOC for that airplane.

A: We are still on track right now. We will fly it next year, as I indicated, and as long as we get the numbers. We got six this year and should have next year, and then the numbers will go up and we expect the aircraft to come in on time. The engine's doing okay. Congress is helping us out with that with the alternative, which is how that goes. UASes, ground, the micro UAS is extremely successful.

We've also been using the ScanEagle, which we've been getting on contract. You know, the ScanEagle is one of those commercial off-the-shelf. It started out spotting schools of

tuna off the West Coast, and we've been able to adapt that to the situation in Iraq. It has really done a great job over there doing that.

And we are now transitioning from the Pioneer, which is an older UAV, to the Shadow. That gives us commonality with the Army in particular. And you've got to pass kudos to the Army because they have allowed us to dip into their line so that we could get those Shadows, and so we've got our first Shadow outfit deployed right now in Iraq.

So again, the baseline is doing good for these programs. The supplementals are fleshing them out, and we'll get them. And so right now we continue to get in a position where we can keep the current gunfight going, transition to new platforms, and prepare for the long war.

Q: General, with your buildup of the Corps to 202, Pendleton and Lejeune have both been fairly cramped and you've been trying to update your barracks and other housing. How's the budget fixing you for adding accommodations for your additional Marines?

A: If you look at how we've spent in '07 and '08 and a little bit in '09, we had a big plug in there for equipment. When you get down to '10, '11, '12, and '13, that's when the MILCON is coming in. Of course the reason for that is it's because what we had to do was do DIS studies, get the plans done, et cetera. So I have got a very robust plan and money behind it right now in the FYDP to build that stuff. And we've got a program, a fairly robust one, going now.

This year, in '08, it's about two billion dollars in MILCON, and that's a pretty good hit for us in terms of being able to get that amount of money. So we'll continue to expand our MILCON and to provide those facilities that we need.

Also, we've got a very successful public/private venture program where we're building family housing, the industry is. You only have to go down to Quantico to see the success of that, but it's all around the Marine Corps now in terms of family housing. So MILCON, you know you never have enough but right now we're doing well.

Q: Back on TacAir. You're planning on using the F-35s to replace the Prowlers. [Inaudible] electronic [inaudible] radars. Explain how you're going to substitute dedicated EW for a fighter and how you're going to train. Are you going to, is every fighter jock going to be trained to do EW?

A: Well you know, I'll answer the last question first. When we got the V-22, people started saying, hey, you've got helicopter guys and they're going to be flying this airplane that's going to be going 240 knots and how are you going to be able to do that. They're going to be flying in an airplane mode as well as the helicopter mode. Well I flew that

thing for a year and a half, and I'm a helicopter guy, CH-46s, and how you control it is you've got your power here and then you've got a finger that controls [in the cells]. Well for an old guy like me, you get down there and you introduce while you're down low and doing, this is a significant and emotional event one time and after that your learning curve goes up.

So we had the same arguments when we brought the F-18Bs in. We used the Ds for tactical reconnaissance. We used them for FAC, Forward Air Control or Airborne, and we used them for some other things. Again, the argument was hey, you know. But I've got to tell you I flew the simulator in Texas, and the cockpit setup is one that has been well thought out. The ability to put everything on the throttle is there. A lot of automatic stuff is in there.

I've flown a Harrier, too. You know in a Harrier you do the throttle and then you have to move your hand to do the nozzles. Well in an F-35, you punch a little button and there you go.

In terms of the mission suite, you've got the AESA radar that you talked about, that AESA radar. You've got some great capabilities in terms of electronic warfare. Also, when we talk about--and what we're pushing Lockheed Martin to do, and its subcontractors--is to develop sensors. What we're seeing is a tremendous reduction in the size of sensors but at the same time a tremendous increase in the capabilities. Let's have the ability, and they're working on this, to put sensors on these airplanes that do not impact the stealth characteristics.

And since we have a link between the airplanes, you can go out in a four-ship, and this particular ship will have sensors on it that are for a particular band. This other ship will have sensors on it for another particular threat, and then with the airplane you've got the link between all of them and you've got a common picture. So the sensors don't have to be on one airplane. The jamming capability doesn't have to be on one airplane anymore; we can use it. Plus, we want to integrate UASes into it, and we're putting some programmable software packages in the experimental mode right now for UASes that will give us capability.

We're not looking to jam the world. We don't want to put a B-52 up there for us and jam the continental United States. What we're looking for is more of a precision capability, and that's the direction that we're going with this type of concept.

Q: You talked a little bit about MRAP, and you recently decided to cut back on your buy. The Army officials say they're concerned about MRAP eating into the future JLTV program. What concerns do you have with that right now? How is the Army's concerns about JLTV impacting you?

A: First of all, the Marine Corps has never looked at MRAP as being the replacement for JLTV. We've always seen MRAP as being a niche player for the particular threat that's in Iraq. And as the situation in Iraq has stabilized more, as we've seen the success and we've been able to see how we can use the vehicle and we do a prudent review and we've pulled the numbers down. But for us, it has no impact on JLTV, what we intend to do with it.

And we've got money in R&D right now all they way through the FYDP, and then towards the end we've got procurement money in there. And we intend to press ahead with it, and so far the Army has indicated the same commitment to developing the JLTV. They need it too.

Q: It sounds like you're still developing the road map for the vehicles at this point. What do you see happening with MRAP? Some of the generals have been on the Hill talking [inaudible]. So how does that decision shape--

A: Well you know when I first came in the Marine Corps we still had a few Shermans operating. The Marine Corps rarely ever leaves anything behind or junks it. We do not intend to junk these.

If it comes to the point where we are not using them any more for whatever reason, then we'll bring them back and put them in Barstow, put them out in the desert, with the expectation that if we need them again we'll be able to pull them out. Exactly how many will do that, to be determined. It would be based on how many we've got left after Iraq and how many we may transfer to the Iraqis or other people.

Q: Just to clarify real quick; leaving them in Iraq, off the table now?

A: There may be some that we will want to transfer to the Iraqis. I'm not saying that we won't leave some there, but we're not going to--

One of the things, I had a lot of time in the Pacific and I went down to the Southwest Pacific where we were in the early part of World War II, and one of the things that happened is they dug holes with bulldozers and pushed brand new stuff in there. We're not going to do that. So if we leave them it will be because we transfer them to the Army or transfer them to the Iraqis because they need them to continue.

Q: Thank you. The impression I'm getting from the services, including the Marine Corps, is that the MRAP has kind of fallen out of favor. Is that your take as well?

A: No. I tell you what, you look at the look on some of the faces of the guys that are over

there having to go down through some of those terrains when a particular threat, when it calls for it to be in one of the vehicles. No. There hasn't been a dime wasted on the MRAP, and it will continue to be used over there. But as we learn more about them and as the threat and the ground situation continues to change, then we adapt to it. And so what we're finding now is we don't need as many as we used to. That's not saying we don't need the MRAPs; we do. It's just that we're using them in a manner that may be a little different than originally thought. We're not using them one-for-one for replacement for the Humvee.

Q: And a quick manpower question. I understand this year the Marine Corps is trying to retain more first-term Marines, about 40 percent; but I don't think there have been any new retention initiatives since last fiscal year. Can you talk about how you're going to meet the higher goal?

A: We're putting money into it. A sergeant in the infantry gets a lot of bucks. He gets more than I did when I got my aviator retention bonus. So I think we're putting a lot of stuff out there encourages them to reenlist and keep them. So we've got some additional stuff in the '09. We've got some stuff in the '08 supplemental that will enhance our ability to retain people. We're paying a lot of attention to that, and it's costing more.

Q: General, last Thursday was the deadline for the commanders to send in the assessments of the impact of furloughs. Did you say that you're looking at laying off or furloughing 10,000 civilians? And can you talk about what percentage of civilians are from Marine bases, and can you elaborate at all on what you have learned about what the numbers and impact of the furloughs might be?

A: First of all, we're still going to assess line by line, and the information will go out. OSD right now is harmonizing both the Marines' approach and the Army's approach to this, so there is guidance that will go out that will provide specific directions into how you identify and how you execute from notices to furlough.

And again, there is no decision to do furloughs yet. All this is in prudent preparation if the supplemental would not be passed. Right now we think the number is about 10,000 in terms of Marine civilians that would be impacted, and the ones that you have that would continue are the ones who would do things such as man the fire houses, do safety-oriented stuff, work the facilities that provide water and, for instance, sewage support, those type of things. Most other activities will come to a halt because there is no money. And these people are going to be furloughed and then they'll be asked to come back in certain cases voluntarily to do those particular things with the expectation that eventually they'll get paid. So that's the type of situation that we're running into.

Q: Beyond the 10,000 civilians you're looking at furloughing, [inaudible] contractors?

A: You don't furlough contractors, you cancel the contract. That particular situation would call for that type of action, canceling the contract. And I'm personally concerned about it because my wife is a contractor for the Army. [Laughter].

Q: Thanks for coming to speak to us today. I want to follow up, and maybe you can give us some more detail about exactly how much leeway or authority you have to reprogram money from one account to another. In other words, where is the money coming from now while you wait for the supplemental funding, and what do you see as the consequences of the [inaudible] costs of doing this, even if you were to get supplemental funding next weekend.

A: The money that we're operating on right now comes from the operations and maintenance account, O&M. There's about 4.9 billion dollars in that account. The general transfer authority that Congress had passed was about 3.7 billion dollars, and then there was another, I don't know, somewhere around, if I can recall right, 400 to 600 million more that was transferred to [JAIDO]. That 3.7, the darn Army got all of it, and it was transferred out of the Air Force and Navy personnel accounts and subject to approval by Congress. We did not get any of it. And the reason is, is right now we're projected to run out of money after the Army and so that money went to the Army. And right now, the money that we're living on in our checking account is that original 4.9 billion dollars that was in the O&M account passed in the base budget.

We don't have any authority, and we're not pulling any money out of the procurement accounts. We're not pulling any money out of the other personnel accounts. It's all coming out of O&M. We're spending about 750 million a month as I indicated, and to do anything other than that right now is unwise.

We've been through this before. We know what damage that we start doing when we start skimping. It takes us months and sometimes years to recover. So right now we're continuing with our spend plan with expectations that this will eventually be solved. If it's not, then we're also planning to continue essential operations for the safety and protection of our marines and sailors and family members should that occur.

Q: Thanks, and you mentioned that contracts have to be canceled. Do you have an estimate or an idea of how much it costs to then restart all these contracts? What the delays add to the overall--

A: That's part of what we're compiling now. He was talking about, I think, the Army. The Army had a requirement to get that information in a little earlier than us. We're working on our information right now.

Q: Following up again on that issue, did some [analysts] and lawmakers decide there's more wiggle room in the defense budget than [inaudible] letting on? You can take money from [inaudible] funds for the Air Force and the Navy just to kind of pay for some operations and make some moderate adjustments here and there. Do you see that as a possibility? Is that anything that the Marine Corps has looked at? And could that be a potential alternative to for example furloughs?

A: Well again, I'll go back to my education. I went to the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy; a great place, but it was never known for its academic integrity or credibility. I had two types of reading--suggested and recommended. [Laughter]. I did one paper, and it was 15 pages long and we all did it. In my seminar there was a Turkish fighter pilot, a British fighter pilot, and a Greek fighter pilot, and a Dutch diplomat, and that's where I learned about coalition building. [Laughter]. Because I never had as tough a time in my life in doing anything as putting together that 15-page paper.

But my understanding and, again, pulled out and looked at it is that we've got just that link to General Transfer Authority, that GTA. And there is no other authority to transfer money right now. So until something is enacted, we have moved all the money that we can move.

Q: I just had a follow-up, Sir.

A: But we do that, okay. Where am I going to take it? Am I going to take it out of some of the programs that right now are critical to us being able to fight the long war? I mean, what kind of damage do we accommodate in order to ask for money to be moved? That's hard to figure that one out.

Q: Just another question on the EFV. There have been some moves to make it more mine-resistant essentially, per some urging from Capitol Hill to do so. Where does that stand right now, and is there any estimation on how much that's going to cost and the effect that would have on the program?

A: Every bit of equipment that we operate, airplanes and everything else, the new term is spiral development. So we're looking at how we can do spiral development to put additional protection on the MRAPs. Industry is working it now along with our R&D people, and as we continue to do that then we'll implement that. But, you know, I'm not going to talk any more about it because what we do is counter what the bad guys do, and so I think it's good enough to say that we've got a robust effort to continue to improve the protection of the vehicles.

Q: Was that EFV?

Q: She was talking about EFV?

A: I'm sorry; I thought you were talking about MRAP.

Q: No, and the EFV has got a weight problem to get up on the steps to get the speed.  
[Laughter].

A: Okay, get back on reset. [Laughter]. We're in the process now of redesigning the EFV. Okay, and what we're looking at is how we can get the weight down on it plus improve the readiness of the vehicle. And so we are working with GD to figure that one out. Right now, I've seen some of the preliminary stuff about how we're going to fix the weight problem that you talked about, about getting up on the things, so that process is continuing.

Q: [Inaudible] there's talk of making, when it's on land, making it more mine resistant.

A: Oh, okay. What we did is, of course, with the MRAP, you've got a V hull. So what we looked at, and again with some significant interest from Mr. Taylor and others over on the Hill on doing this, is can you put a V hull on the EFV. We looked at that hard, and right now it looks like no.

And again, what you have to do is you have to push the body up to get enough room to do that, plus if you didn't do that and you tried to put inside the body, you know they have the flat under and then you put another hull in there, then you increase the weight as well. With how we tactically employ the vehicle and other measures that we use to reduce the vulnerability; right now it's our view that V hull is not appropriate for this vehicle. And that doesn't mean that it's more vulnerable or anything else because of other things we do, but it's just not right now appears to be viable.

Q: General, I'd just like to ask you about the Marine One program. There is some talk about delay of it or different requirements [inaudible]. Do you think requiring these changes are valid? And when do you think you need to actually have that [inaudible]?

A: Marine One. You had me going there. I said, goodness gracious, what's that?  
[Laughter]. VH-71?

Q: Yes.

A: Okay. We're continually looking at that program, working with Lockheed and the other subcontractor, Bell, which has got a piece of that, so we'll see again what we need to do to keep that thing on line. Right now, there have been no significant changes yet.

Q: But there are some under consideration?

A: Of course. We consider changes to everything.

Q: So do you the requirements changes that have brought on this discussion were valid requirement changes?

A: Flying the President of the United States requires certain things, and so I think there has been a process that has been fairly rigorous in terms of determining what those requirements are. So I don't think we've been in the business of trying to wring it all out in terms of challenging what we need in order to fly the President.

Q: I guess what I don't understand is do you see a need for a fielding date to change?

A: The H-3s that we're flying now, we've looked at them recently. They're tremendously reliable aircraft. We're going to do some stuff to them to continue that reliability in terms of putting what's known as Carson blades on them to give them a little bit greater blade efficiency, which translates into additional weight capability, weight-lifting capability, so we'll look at the H-60 and see what we can continue to do to keep that reliability and all that. So there remains a fleet of aircraft, a legacy fleet of aircraft that can fly the President and the others that require executive lift in a safe and expeditious manner. When we bring in a replacement aircraft, it will not be time generated; it will be based on hey, we've got it right in terms of building an airplane.

Q: Sir, you've mentioned your discussion with Congressman Taylor about the EFVs, and certainly the MRAP discussion has been very strongly influenced by congressional [inaudible]. Do you think that on those programs that lawmakers are pushing you to buy things that you don't need? There was some reluctance initially to get as many MRAPs as you later committed to; now the services are backing off of those. Can you address this exchange, this interplay with Congress on whether, it seems somehow out of balance, or whether that's just the price you pay.

A: I think Congress has really been very supportive. Obviously, people like Congressman Taylor and others have had foremost the wellbeing and the protection and the ability to accomplish the mission; the American serviceman foremost in their minds and their thoughts and their actions. And they showed that with the money that they put behind this.

So I think we'll continue to look at what the numbers should be. The Marine Corps has been real constant from the beginning in terms of 3,700. That was our number and we stuck with it and we did a series of reviews. And then this last review that we did said hey, this is what the changed situation is. This is the numbers that we believe we need

now--more of a mixture not a one-for-one replacement. And, oh by the way, Congress and the American people have been tremendous to us in terms of providing us with what we need. So if we truly believe that without compromising the safety or ability to accomplish the mission of marines and the sailors who serve with us, and we can save 1.7 billion dollars or so by not buying these additional vehicles. So the Commandant I think has been pretty clear about that and that's a decision that we made.

Now that decision has to be validated by the JROC, and I think when the Army gets through doing their review I think we'll have an MRAP review at the JROC and then that will be where the decision will be made on what the numbers change to.

Q: So when do you anticipate that that JROC meeting will be? And also, if you could just give us a time table for the VH-71, [inaudible] decision [inaudible].

A: On the JROC, right now there is not a date that has been set. I don't know when it's going to be. The Joint Staff will be the ones who will make the decision when JROC is scheduled. I think that everybody that needs to know knows what our numbers are and that even prior to the formal decision of the JROC I think that's being accommodated, so we'll see how that works out.

We'll have to get back to you on the VH-71 decision process. Right now any information I give you on that is old; I haven't been refreshed on VH-71, so we'll take a note and get back to you on that.

Q: General, I'm wondering. I didn't realize stealth is a requirement for the V-22, but since we went over to Iraq it seems to have disappeared. [Laughter]. Can you sort of give us an update on how it's doing?

A: I guess if you were a Marine infantryman riding around in it in Western Iraq, you might not think that stealth was a bad thing. It continues to do well.

Q: What does that mean?

A: It means it does well. It does the mission it was sent to do. It carries troops, it carries things, it goes where it needs to go, and it does with a readiness rate that allows it to sustain those operations.

Q: And what number is that?

A: Around 70-80 percent.

Q: And what's the cost per flight hour over there?

A: I don't know. I don't have the data on that. We'll make a note and see if we can get it for you.

Q: Thank you.

Q: Sir, earlier this year, prior to December, the Marine Corps and the Navy were discussing amphibious ships trying to come up with a number requirement. One, has that been resolved? And number two, is there a concern in the Marine Corps that some of your ships might get sacrificed if the cost of CBN-78 goes up, DDG-1000 goes up?

A: The Marine Corps Commandant has been very clear. What we think is we need 33 total amphibs; 11, 11, and 11. I think the CNO agrees that that's the number. The issue at hand is affordability of ships, and he not only has to deal with amphibs but he has to deal with the LCS, DDGs and so forth. So I think that we will press for a shipbuilding plan that includes the number of amphibs that we need and the issue will be how do we afford them.

Q: Has there been any discussion of taking some of the funding from LCS and using that to make some down payments on additional LPDs?

A: The requirement is ours. How you pay for them is the Navy's, and I don't know whether those discussions have occurred or not within the Navy.

Q: You laid out various programs. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about reset. For so long we've talked about reset in terms of getting the Army and the Marine Corps to come back to where they've been. It seems like it's increasingly more of an opportunity for the services to modernize and [inaudible] legacy programs.

Talk a little bit about how long you see that it will take to get back to where you were but also generally the Congress has been supportive, but are they being particularly supportive now as some of the needs, say from the Air Force and some of the other services are starting to emerge [inaudible].

A: The Marine Corps has said about 16 billion bucks is where we are in terms of what we think the reset requirement is. We also see that right now if you take a snapshot now, is that we would need to spend about 1.8 billion dollars over two years to get us where we need to be in terms of reset. Now as we get greater fidelity and as the war continues then that amount will change. So we will continue to review and see where we are on that and what it's going to take to reset us.

I only know one way right now is up, because the usage of the equipment and material

and all continues at a high rate. You know, a LAV we usually program to drive about 2,000 miles a year. We're driving it about 8,000 or 9,000 so just about everything we've got over there is going four to five times what the program usage is, and so, again, even a country boy like me can figure out that it's going to go up and not down.

Q: Is Congress hearing this, or do you sense at all that they're starting to become wary that this has become more of an opportunity for the services to modernize, and it is beyond this reset.

A: When you talk about aircraft for instance, if we've got old aircraft and a new one is being produced it makes sense to buy the new one rather than the old one. As the 46s are attrited and the V-22 is the only thing to replace it, so that's the type of what we think smart decisions will continue to be made.

Q: Sir, back on the V-22. Is there any talk right now about adding defensive armament? Is there any money to spend on this? Is that a subject that has been discussed?

A: Yes, and of course it has defensive armament on it now. It's equipped with an aviation survivability equipment suite and it has a [inaudible], and it has a few other things like speed and ability to fly outside the envelope.

As I said, I've flown the V-22. You come up into a hover and the cell is at about 87 degrees and then you [beep] it forward and in 18 seconds you're 200-plus knots and climbing out at 6,000 feet per minute rate of descent or greater. And you can fly ground troops around at about 13,000 feet for about three hours, which is outside the range of the AAA and most missiles. So if you take a 46 you're never outside the envelope. And the 46 doesn't have a forward-firing gun, which people have noted. In fact, there is no assault helicopter that has a forward-firing weapon.

Now what we intend to do, and we've got money against it, is to put an all-aspects gun on it as we can get it developed. One of the options would be to install it within what we call the hellhole, but that's where the cargo hook is, a gun in there that would have the ability to shoot 360.

The V-22, like most of our assault aircraft, all of them in fact, we plan tactics to escort them. With a V-22 en route, you can escort them if you need to with a fixed wing because of the speed and altitude they're flying at. When they come into the zone when you plan an ingress that allows you to use your speed and ability to descend at a rapid rate, first of all to get you to the zone and then we can pre-position Cobras, other gunships, other supporting arms around the zone for that suppressive fire.

Again, I told you I'm a 46 pilot. You know the main reason I got 50 cal that are on

either side is when I go in a zone because I'm so slow and my acceleration rate is just a little bit better than a Volkswagen, that I want something that is going to keep their heads down until I can get enough speed and get away from there.

With a V-22, if you get shot at and you elect not to continue the zone for whatever reason, then you use speed to get away. Plus the aircraft has been built to take hits. So as a 46 pilot, which one would I rather fly in? And as a grunt, which one would I most want to take; our most valuable and precision weapon, which as a Marine infantryman, it would be in the V-22. So we'll continue to spiral develop other capabilities for that aircraft, just like we have with [inaudible].

Q: Sir, just to follow. You've seen I think that one of the contractors developed that remote weapons station that would go in the hellhole. Have you seen this, and do you have any feedback on that?

A: Before I left aviation I specifically worked with some of the companies on what we would like to see in that capability. And General Troutman, who's replaced me, a much smarter man than I, and he is working hard on that as well.

Q: General, you mentioned a desire to integrate UAS [inaudible]. I'm wondering if you have looked at particular systems and what types of capabilities [inaudible] the Marine Corps.

A: Not only the F-35 but everything else we've got. I think on the battlefield, when I was still ECS Air, I visited a Harrier unit that just got back from Iraq in Yuma, Arizona; and the young captain was briefing me on what the squadron did. He said, hey, General, when we were in Iraq we found 50 IEDs, and this is how we did it. He said we were above a convoy, and of course the guys on the ground have the best intelligence so they would say, hey, we usually get hit just around the bend over the bridge. Can you check that out? So the Harrier has got a LITENING pod on it, and it has a downlink capability with the LITENING pod. So the guy in the convoy has got a Rover 3 laptop and he gets the picture and he said hey, you can guide the guy in the air, hey, look over there, hey, something there, found an ambush, found an IED emplacement.

That is just crawling on what we want to do. We want to have the capability to link the guy on the ground, the UASes, the airplanes, and we want to have archival capability. We want to be able to take the information, whether it's from the UAS, from the F-35, or whatever, and archive it and the people on the net have the capability of pulling it back and recovering it saying hey, oh this is what I need to see and this is what we have on it. So it's not just F-35. It's not just linking between UASes; it's linking between everybody with data and full motion video is where we'll be going.

Q: And you're not looking at particular [inaudible] systems in general?

A: As we bring new systems on, that's what we want to see.

Q: In the authorization bill that was just passed out of the conference, there was a requirement for another roles and missions assessment of the services. Some of us have been through a number of these in the past and you can anticipate the four air forces, the two light infantries, and everybody's in space along with other alleged nefarious actions.

Is anybody in the Marine Corps worried about this new roles and missions assessment? That somebody might actually, because of the budget situation or some other situation, come after Marine Corps air or try to do something to reduce either the Army or the Marine Corps in the field of infantry? Anybody worried about that?

A: I've got some good friends in the Navy, and one of them has always said that one of the foremost characteristics of a Marine was that he is always paranoid. [Laughter].

Q: But they are out to get us. [Laughter]

A: Yeah, that's right. And so of course whenever we go into any review like this there's always concerns. But when you look at what the Marine Corps has offered the nation over our existence, and just look what has happened now in Anbar Province. We put together a combined arms team that is ground, it's air, it's combat service support, and we have a robust command and control network that puts it all together. And we think that our way of fighting within the joint environment. We plug in with everybody and we have Army brigades that are fighting alongside Marine regiments, and we've got F-18s that are flying alongside F-16s.

We're not saying we'll do it all and we are not committed to the joint fight, but we bring a certain capability with being able to pull it all together that has stood the test of time. When we go into this, we will continue to press our particular way of putting these things together and fighting, and we think that we've got a pretty good track record, plus we think we've got a pretty good vision of what the future is and how we can continue to provide a relative force. So bring it on.

Q: Do you think it's a big waste of time?

A: No, I don't think a periodic review of roles and missions is a waste of time. I think that this is a good way to review where we are. A lot of times it was sort of maybe in the direction of being more of a money gain, but I think that once again we will try to keep that focus where it should be.

Q: Okay, we're out of time. Thank you very much. We appreciate you coming in.

A: It was good to be here.

END TEXT