

TRANSCRIPT

Defense Writers Group

A Project of the Center for Media & Security
New York and Washington, D.C.

General Daniel B. Allyn
Vice Chief of Staff, US Army

June 21, 2016

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.

DWG: Good morning everybody. Thank you for joining us for our Defense Writers Group with General Daniel B. Allyn. General Allyn is the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and this is his first visit with us at the Defense Writers Group, so sir, thank you for making the time. You were commenting at Heritage recently that when you include civilian personnel, the Army is now spending 60 percent of its budget on personnel. At the same time, you're still drawing down the force while the demands for soldiers that you're seeing from all the combatant commands are increasing.

So number one, what do you do about this? And number two, is this just a risk that you have to take? Or is there a solution out there in the next two or three years that you can actually get to?

General Allyn: Thanks. We are a very busy Army. We've got about 187,700 soldiers supporting our combatant commanders in 140 countries as we speak, and indeed, that demand has actually not declined as predicted. We got set on the path to draw the force down to the levels that we're headed toward and it has placed a significant balancing act on the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Secretary of the Army.

As a result of that, the Chief has prioritized readiness because we must deliver trained and ready forces to support both the known demands of our combatant commanders, of which the Army delivers 46 percent of the scheduled demand. And we also have to provide capabilities that respond to emerging situations, and the Army delivers 64 percent of that. So the net result of that is forces that are trained and ready, are in high demand, and the readiness required to produce them places us in a situation where we're consuming readiness as rapidly as we're generating it, which us the risk factor you speak to in terms of responding to the unexpected contingency.

The second risk factor is that we are in many respects mortgaging mid and long-term modernization in the pursuit of ready forces for today's missions and current operations, and that is a balancing task and a risk factor that the Chief and the Secretary take very very seriously and that we've got to keep our eye on because we cannot allow emerging capabilities, particularly in places like Eastern Europe, to go unanswered, and we must prioritize and develop the capabilities needed to close those gaps.

DWG: Is there a way out or do you just manage it the best you can?

General Allyn: The way out obviously is increased top line and there's not a likelihood of receiving that. And given that, we must balance and deliver the most capable, best balanced force we can within the budget we have and that's what we've done with the President's budget for '17. And obviously it would be really really good if Congress would pass the budget so that we at least have predictable, sustained funding to deliver the best capability that we can.

DWG: Jen [inaudible] with Defense News.

I have Poland on my mind right now, so I wanted to ask what you're hoping to see come out of the Warsaw Summit this summer that could help the U.S. Army do its very big job in Europe.

General Allyn: Well I think what's encouraging, and I know you spent some time over there recently and you know the level of participation in the recent series of exercise, that we have also provided forces for, what's very encouraging is the commitment of our allies and partners to work together to provide a deterrent presence in Eastern Europe.

I think continued progress in nations providing the two percent of their GDP toward the defense would be obviously something that we would like to see happen. You, I think, are well aware of some of the capability gaps that continue to exist and our belief is there's opportunities here for us to come together to deliver on those capabilities so that in the near term we begin to close the gaps that exist and we provide a resilient and sustained deterrent presence that will prevent any further aggressive action by --

DWG: In your mind, what is the biggest capability gap?

General Allyn: Well, I think since we have drawn down our presence there, there is a significant lack of maneuver forces in Eastern Europe. That's something that we are helping address with our rotational presence that will be a sustained presence starting on the first of January of this coming year. I think for our NATO partners' contributions in short range air defense and in artillery would be very very helpful.

DWG: Do you have a sense yet of any specifics on how the heavy brigade will be disbursed around [inaudible]?

General Allyn: It will be disbursed the way the European Combatant Commander wants it to be disbursed. So particulars, no, but I have a lot of confidence in General Scaparotti's ability to set the conditions for that in the coming months.

DWG: Thank you, sir. You mentioned I guess a week or two ago that having an 11th combat aviation brigade to put in South Korea and then adding four more attack battalions in aviation was something you were going to try and do with the 2018 POM. AS you just said this morning, it's unlikely that the top line for the Army is going to go up any time soon, so what are the tradeoffs that you're going to have to make to make that happen? That's something you guys had taken out of the budget.

General Allyn: Yes, and the bottom line is, those are both recommendations that came forward with the National Commission on the Future of the Army. They are, from our perspective, high priority recommendations because they directly contribute to readiness. The retention of an 11th Combat Aviation Brigade in Korea reduces stress on an already highly stressed aviation fleet. They're one of the most high demand capabilities that we have in the Army, so by retaining that 11th Cav in Korea we reduce the rotational pressure on combat aviation brigades.

In terms of the Apache battalions, clearly the additional battalions again build a bit of depth strategically for surge capacity, and so we have worked to strike a balance inside the future POM in the event that some of the proposals that are currently going to conference on the Hill you know, do not come to fruition. So it's a matter of balancing modernization and making some very hard calls on time lines for modernizing the rest of our aviation fleet is the primary driver on how we balance that. In other words, there's no free chicken.

DWG: Sir if I heard you right at Heritage, you were pointing out that 10 percent of your forces are not deployable, and that 80 percent of that number is medically not deployable. Are those numbers different than history? Where should they be, and what can be done to get them where you want to go?

General Allyn: I would say in recent history they're not significantly different. What's different is we no longer have the higher end strength to absorb those kind of levels of unreadiness.

DWG: Let me interject and say, you say recent history. You're talking post 9/11?

General Allyn: Yes.

DWG: So do we know historically what it's been? It used to be 5 percent, it used to be 15 percent? Is 10 percent a new number post 9/11?

General Allyn: It's actually a low number for the last five years at least, so we've been driving this number down over the last several years with concerted efforts from our commanders, with better transparency on where the clogs in the system are creating unreadiness. But we had a temporary end strength increase during the surge period of

the war that enabled us to have additional personnel so we could man our formations that we're deploying at 110 to 115 percent. We can't do that anymore. When you're at 115 percent and you have 10 percent on ready, you can still get out the door in a very high personnel readiness posture. Now we're manning most of our units at 95 percent and so you see the struggle, right? The math problem is --

DWG: Even journalists can see that.

General Allyn: Well, even a guy whose transcript from West Point will tell you I'm not very good at math and I try not to do it publicly. But this math doesn't work well, and so we've got to first and foremost address the unreadiness issues. And the biggest area we're focused on is our temporary profiles. That's about 75 percent of our medical non-ready is people that have a temporary injury or setback. So we're trying to ensure we address those, and we train better to not break soldiers as we put them through the rigorous preparation to ensure they're ready to deploy. And then that we get them back to the formation as rapidly as we can. So --

DWG: But what's the optimal number? If 10 percent is too high, where is the sweet spot, do you think?

General Allyn: Well the Chief has said we need to get it down somewhere around 5 percent. That's, frankly, for somebody that's been wrestling with this for a couple of years, that's a leap that will be difficult in the near term, but you've got to set a high bar and go after it and that's what our commanders in the field are trying to do.

We actually have some brigades that are down in the 7 percent range, so there are some that are figuring it out and we're trying to make sure we share best practices to --

DWG: And what share of those not deployed will come back to the force?

General Allyn: On the temporary profiles it's a pretty high number, but for instance about 15 percent or so are in the disability evaluation system and about 85 percent of those do not. So right now that number is sitting at about 13,000 or change that are in that process, and we expect that you know, 10,000 to 12,000 of those will not come back to the formation. So we're working with the VA to make sure that transition process, that we're moving those folks forward as quickly as we can and ensuring they get the care they need.

DWG: You've spent a lot of time in Iraq and you were Chief of Staff of Multinational Forces in Iraq at one time. I want to ask you about your opinion on the current progress in the mission to fight the Islamic State in Iraq. But a little bit more specifically, I want to ask you, first of all, how do you think it's going, how do you see it? And what progress has been made, what progress hasn't been made. But specifically, what resources might be helpful in speeding up the progress? There's a lot of discussion here in Washington, that we just did this or we just added this or we put in more of this or reduced some of

this. What's your view on that? How could we tweak the mission and the parameters and the resources in order to make this work a little better?

General Allyn: I was just in Iraq over Memorial Day weekend, so I was able to meet with senior commanders there and get a pretty good assessment of where they're at. The bottom line is they're making steady progress, as you've heard, both in Anbar Province as well as the shaping efforts towards Mosul, and from what I'm seeing play out, I would say they're probably still on plan. So I think the capability questions about what they need and what would be you know, best, I would say given that this is an Iraqi-led effort, sustained commitment to putting the right leaders in the right places, to sustain the capabilities that we're helping to train and advise and assist would be a critical component. Frankly, that's what contributed to the demise after 2010. There's no variable that is more consequential than effective leadership in an organization. So that's an area that they've got to remain committed to.

I think the second variable that is really the 500-pound gorilla is the political situation in Iraq. That is going to be far more decisive than any military capability that could have a battle consequence but not necessarily change the outcome in Iraq. So that I think is something that all of us are watchful for and often asking the question, so how does this end?

DWG: What do you think about, when you talk to those commanders and they think about the next stage after Fallujah, whether that's a circling of Mosul or a national mission in Mosul? Do you get a sense that they're going to need more resources from Washington, from the Pentagon in order to prepare that battlefield and support the Iraqis who will be in the lead on that?

General Allyn: My sensing is that they have a good feel for what they need and the sequencing of what they need and that that is working apace at the present.

DWG: So you're expecting more requests for resources to come in the next --

General Allyn: Josh, I didn't say that. [Laughter].

DWG: You're not saying that.

General Allyn: That would be a great question for General McFarland. But I have no position whatsoever on the sequencing of additional capabilities.

DWG: So is it your opinion that the capabilities they have right now are sufficient? They have enough --

General Allyn: I think that General McFarland's sensing when I was with him that what he needed was in the works.

DWG: Okay. And when you think about the level of troops that are in, U.S. troops that are in Iraq, do you anticipate that that number will go up in time?

General Allyn: I can't answer that question. I don't know that.

DWG: Would you be supportive of that idea in your position as --

General Allyn: That's a great question for the people that make those decisions.

DWG: On Afghanistan. [Inaudible] the weakest link [inaudible]. How do you plan to strengthen it? Are you [inaudible]?

And secondly, [inaudible] earlier this month and a joint statement that was issued said U.S. has recognized [inaudible] major defense partner.

In terms of Air Force to Air Force [inaudible], what does this mean?

General Allyn: Well, first of all, I don't think we have a desire for any aspect of the Afghan Security Forces to be characterized as weak. So we've had a fairly sustained partnership with all components of the Afghan Security Forces, and we're committed to sustaining that partnership, and to strengthening sustainable Afghan Security Force capability that can secure their nation for the long haul.

In terms of the relationship between our Air Force and the Indian Air Force, I really, I can't help you with that. That's a little bit out of my sphere, and I'll be sure to let my counterpart in the Air Force, General Goldfein, know that that's an area of interest, but I really can't speak to that.

DWG: Courtney then Sidney.

DWG: Dr. Roper, the Strategic Capabilities Office, mentioned at the Senate Armed Services Committee that the follow-on to the ATACMS is an area where the SCO and Army are collaborating. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about the need for [inaudible] any other system [inaudible].

General Allyn: Well, we've had a very strong relationship and great collaboration with Dr. Roper and his team over the past year, and long range precision fires is certainly one of the areas where we are ready to accept any help that others can provide, because the bottom line is that in multiple theaters, that's an area of significant stress and it's a gap that we need to close as rapidly as we can. Dr. Roper has brought together a team pursuing some pretty significant innovation in that arena and we are partnered with him in that effort.

DWG: General --

General Allyn: I think it's like two questions in a week, isn't it Sidney?

DWG: We could just sit down for the next hour.

General Allyn: Maybe you can. I don't think I can.

DWG: But you've been visiting the troops and leaders throughout the force around the world, and you've mentioned you're getting a lot of feedback from them. You mentioned you urged Congress to at least pass the budget. Based on all the needs you've seen out there, what message would you convey to Congress from the troops, about what they need to do in terms of budget, Budget Control Act sequester, and for that matter, what message would you try to convey from them to the next President, whoever he or she may be?

General Allyn: I think our soldiers deserve predictable funding. Our soldiers deserve a commitment to sustained readiness, sustained readiness requires sustained and predictable funding, and I think our soldiers deserve a level of commitment commensurate with the commitment they make to lay it all on the line every day for the nation. I think that would place a premium on let's get a budget that's approved, that enables the armed forces to continue to deliver the capabilities our combatant commanders need, and certainly the global environment that we face today places a premium on our ability to deliver those capabilities for the joint force. I know our soldiers are certainly ready to do what's needed, but it can't be done without predictable resourcing.

DWG: General, [inaudible] developing a tactical light operating system [inaudible] [Ironman] for special operators. Do you think the Army needs to acquire the kind of exoskeletal technology for conventional forces? And to what extent is the service pursuing this technology?

General Allyn: Fortunately we have a very close working relationship with Special Operations Command and we're always excited about some of their successes in terms of capabilities that they develop. The Ground Mobility Vehicle that we currently are piloting with the Global Response Force, the 82nd Airborne Division, is a capability that Special Operations Command had been using for the last few years, and that's how we got it. So those types of capabilities that they develop, that we see applications for, you know, we work pretty close together to try to enable a shared pursuit.

Now in terms of where we are in the maturation of exoskeletal, do I see widespread application of that currently in the conventional force? I doubt we could afford it in the near term, but that's not to say there wouldn't be some situations where that application might have worked.

DWG: So it's something you're interested in.

General Allyn: I wouldn't say as yet I'm interested, because I try not to get interested in things I can't afford. [Laughter]. So I don't go to the Jaguar and Mercedes dealerships when I'm, you know.

DWG: Thank you.

DWG: General, thanks for your time this morning. I wanted to take you back to Afghanistan. We're kind of at an inflection point soon I think in most people's mind on what the numbers need to be next year, and a good portion of those forces are Army.

In terms of pre-deployment, in terms of readiness and preparing for whatever decision may come, where is the service at this point in terms of making that right for next year? Is it a matter of, you know, if the number continues to draw down once the President makes whatever decision he makes we just cancel deployments?

And a second piece, recently the rules were loosened a bit so that the U.S. forces can go back after the Taliban a bit more directly. Have you seen any early returns on that?

General Allyn: To your first question, the Army learned quite a long time ago in this 15-year effort that we had to have a sustained and predictable flow of forces for combatant commanders, not only for what is scheduled but for things that could emerge, and we've delivered in Afghanistan as recently as last year plus-ups in certain capabilities to meet emergent demands in a security environment.

So we have the forces trained and ready. We'll be able to deliver if the decision is made to sustain our presence, and that coordination goes on on a daily to weekly basis between commanders and staffs forward and the Army staff back here. That's what we exist to do is respond to their needs. So I'm confident we'll be able to do that if that, if the President makes the decision to do so.

In terms of impact of the increase in authorities that the President authorized, you know, I had the opportunity to meet with commanders, the Afghan commanders that I had worked with when I was in Afghanistan in 2011, 2012, who are now more senior leaders in the Afghan Security Force and Ministry of Defense, and the greatest attribute was their thanks, their confidence in their ability to sustain the tough fight that they're in through the summer. So the knowledge that our capabilities would be there when they get into a tough fight inspires their soldiers, their leaders, to continue to fight hard against a very tough and determined insurgent threat. So to me that was the greatest contribution that it made. Because it's tough when you're working with your partners and they know you have capability and you're not using it. That's tough when you're there as an advise and assist capability. So the leaders that I met with on my recent trip were effusive in their appreciation for sustaining their efforts in the tough fight that they're in.

DWG: Was that that same Memorial Day weekend trip?

General Allyn: Yes.

DWG: A program question for you on Distributed Common Ground System. The company Palantir this week told the Justice Department and the Army that it's going to sue to try to block the increment two contract. Both the House and the Senate appear to

be taking Palantir's side in the language in their Defense Authorization Bill, saying the Army should favor commercial technology.

Given all this, is the Army going to rethink its increment two acquisition strategy?

General Allyn: The bottom line is, we want to deliver the best capability that we can to our forces that are in the fight. I was at our Network Integration Evaluation Exercise a few weeks back and our D6 capability continues to deliver very very effective solutions for our commanders in the field, and increment two is designed to tailor that specifically to the needs of our tactical units in a more agile way than present. So we believe in that system, we believe in continuing to deliver capabilities in a responsive manner to our forces, and we are communicating with leaders in Congress about the impacts of some of the proposed legislation and some of the proposed marks and what it will do to our ability to continue to deliver this capability when we're in the midst of a war.

DWG: Will the Army hold off on awarding the increment two contract until it finds out what the FY17 language and authorization bill is going to be?

General Allyn: I don't know exactly where we are in that contract award at the present, so I can't, I'm not going to speak to that.

DWG: Yes, sir. I'm not sure how involved, if at all, your office is in some of Secretary Carter's course for the future initiatives. But I am curious to know --

General Allyn: Very.

DWG: On the lateral entry proposal that he's bringing forward, could you talk at all about what the Army views, you know, lateral entry into the officer corps for specific jobs or places where that would be particularly beneficial?

General Allyn: I think lateral entry into the Army is not a new concept. We've leveraged this capability in specialty fields for years and years and years. Chaplains, doctors, scientists. So what we recognize is this is an effective program for certain capabilities, and certainly as we continue to grow our cyber formation in the United States Army, we see potential for some opportunities there, and we keep our eyes open as emerging developments occur in the security sphere and we are appreciative of the potential for increased authorities to be able to leverage this capability as we go forward.

DWG: Some of the criticism of it has been issues with kind of a military culture, climate, and obviously [inaudible] doctors and others have come into it. Do you see any issues there at all?

General Allyn: I think all of us have cultures in our profession, right? I suspect you might even have one.

DWG: We have no culture in our profession. [Laughter].

General Allyn: I always feel like my culture elevates when I come into a room surrounded by you guys, so --

I mean it is a variable, but I don't think it's any different than any time Army kids move from one place in the Army to another. They adapt, they assess, they adjust and they fit in. So I think we are a very inclusive organization. We want talented people to want to serve in our profession. We try to ensure that they feel welcome when that door is open to them.

DWG: I wanted to go back to kind of the NATO Summit question. Do you think that the measures [inaudible] initiative are sufficient to or [inaudible] an attack by Russia, if something like that were to happen? There's been a lot of discussion about [inaudible] unprepared, even with those new measures having the agility [inaudible] unprepared for a conventional attack, if they were attacked [inaudible]. What in addition to, if you don't believe [inaudible], what in addition to that do you think we need to have a credible deterrence there?

General Allyn: First of all, I think they are a step in the right direction. The bottom line is that when we drew down our presence in Europe, the expectation was that Russia was going to be a team mate, right? Not an aggressor. So that truth has changed, or appears to today to have changed, so I think the measures that have been put forth by the Secretary of Defense take a significant step in the right direction, particularly in a constrained budget environment. It's a fairly significant resource investment in deterrence.

I think General Scaparrotti is in the midst of reviewing what has been offered, what he needs, and I expect that in the coming weeks we'll probably hear from him on what isn't in there that he needs. I think in terms of you know, am I comfortable that once we deliver on those capabilities all will be well? I would say let's stay tuned.

DWG: One of the things people have said about NATO's ability to [inaudible] is that it's actually somewhat of [inaudible] beyond the nuclear. Do you think that's the case? [Inaudible] to Russia [inaudible] may have to come to the rescue. [Inaudible] small capabilities. So for additional forces, is it actually really just [inaudible] protect those countries? Or is there a [inaudible] conventional forces [inaudible]?

General Allyn: I think if you look at the exercise series that Army Europe has been participating in as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, many of you have traveled in the past few months to Europe. Anaconda 16 being the latest increment, but Sabre Strike and the series of exercise have demonstrated the commitment that I think the count for Anaconda 16 was 24 nations. That's pretty significant. And the idea here is to exercise those muscles from national to multinational to identify the interoperability gaps that still exist and then to work toward a more realistic deterrent posture.

So are we where we need to be? No. Are they working toward that aggressively? I believe they are and I think the results speak for themselves.

DWG: I've got a couple of tech questions for you.

General Allyn: Given my high tech background, obviously. You're coming after it.

DWG: There's been a huge development, so has your office been briefed on the outcome of requirements for review for each [inaudible]? And have you got any thoughts on the way forward for that program as a modernization issue [inaudible]?

General Allyn: The future of the air vertical lift program is one of our top priorities going forward for aviation, and we are optimistic with the progress that's been made so far. We look forward to the demonstrators that are in development now. And we're confident that we're going to have a much better aviation capability at the end of the day.

Now what we're wrestling with is how can we prioritize sufficient resources to enable this capability to, you know, come into the force in my lifetime? Which is the inherent challenge with just about all of our programs, but it is about prioritization, and future vertical lift is one of our priorities.

DWG: Also on technology, the Air Force has recently embarked on an effort to create smaller drones specifically to go after highly protected forces like say the U.S. Army, if it was to go up against China or Russia or something like this. With the threat of other nations developing smaller drones, loitering issues, things like that. What is the Army doing to prepare for force protection in an environment like that? Not just single spying drones, but all sorts of [inaudible]?

General Allyn: I think counter-UAS is going to be a critical capability. Initially we've got to be able to deny single ISR platforms, but in the long term the ability to deny swarming attacks is critical. For how the Army operates, we expect we're going to have to be very very effective at distributed operations in small units as we move forward. The idea that you don't present a welcoming target to an adversary is something that has served us well from the early days in warfare and will remain critical. The ability to leverage denial deception and effective maneuver is going to be equally as important as any technological advances that we come up with.

DWG: Do you think the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and now Syria have prepared your force for these sorts of operations in the future against conventional forces?

General Allyn: I think we recognize they are not necessarily the pacing threat against which we measure our readiness. So we are learning important lessons as we do every day. You know, specifically to the question about counter-UAS, that is an emerging requirement in those operations. So we'll definitely leverage that, but in terms of how we, focusing our combat training center rotations to prepare our forces from a full spectrum readiness capability, we're not using Iraq and Afghanistan as that pacing threat.

DWG: Earlier this month my Washington Post colleagues Thomas [Givens] wrote an article about how combat air brigades in Afghanistan have been forced to use lots of contractors because of the troop limit. And this stop-gap measure has negative side effects. It costs a lot of money, the maintenance people who are contractors necessarily can't stay with the brigades, so the point of the article was that the troop cap levels were causing the Army to adjust in ways that have positive and negative effects. I'm wondering if you see that still playing out in Iraq, because we have troop levels capped there. How has the Army had to adjust to those cap levels? Is it the same thing, with the contractors? Are there the same sort of costs and tradeoffs?

General Allyn: Yeah. We've had to make hard calls for several years now in terms of force manning levels, and any time that you're forced to break apart a coherent organization, it has second and third order effects. It is particularly substantial in capabilities like maintenance and sustainment. When you begin to rely on a persistent basis on outsourced sustainment of your capability you develop very bad habits, and we're in the process of trying to break those habits now and restore self-sustaining capability inside our Army. So from my perspective, from a leadership, from a train the way you fight, and from a cost perspective, there are significant adverse effects that we are dealing with.

DWG: In Iraq.

General Allyn: Both Iraq and Afghanistan.

DWG: Can you give me an Iraq-specific example?

General Allyn: Well, I think when you look at the deployment of our advise and assist formations, they are very leader heavy, right? And they bring together a very seasoned team to help develop our partners and allies. What we leave back is the rest of that formation which often limits what we can do with that force that sustains readiness. So that's a clear example. In the future program one of the Chief's priorities has been to develop advise and assist brigades so that we can provide this capability without tearing apart brigade combat teams. And also have some regeneration capability with a cadre of seasoned leaders who could be grown into a full formation should the nation need it.

DWG: I just want to make sure I'm understanding you correctly. If the troop cap levels are one of the main drivers of this need to sort of make all of these adjustments and changes and supplement [inaudible]?

General Allyn: Well, I gave you a specific example in what we're doing to address that going forward, because this is not a new emerging problem, it's one we've been, you know, for the last six or seven years providing capabilities to address.

But certainly the continued requirement to deploy formations without all their organic capability and outsourcing that through contractors has significant downside risk for the Army.

DWG: Sir, the gutless wonders on [half built] hill haven't seen fit to give the military a new [inaudible] or the fight against ISIS. And in the same way, sequestration, as you suggest, is going to continue, at least for the foreseeable future. It's almost like Norman Cliff on Cheers. Less filling, tastes great. You guys go to the Hill every time, you talk about you're on the ragged edge of readiness and you say give us more money. You never say we should be doing less. Is it blasphemy for Title 10 guys like yourself to say Congress, let's concentrate our minds. If you're not going to give us the money to be at 100 percent for what we need to do for this country, we need to do less and here's our recommendations?

General Allyn: Well that's an interesting proposal. I don't think in the current global environment that it's one that is viable. With most of our partners and allies having reduced their capabilities long before we began the process I believe our nation has a leadership prole to play and particularly in an unpredictable and very unsteady global environment.

So I don't see myself having that conversation with members of the Hill. And secondly, I believe that our combatant commanders are responding to their environment. They're trying to prevent conflict. They're trying to shape a stable security environment, and they ask for what they need to do that. And that's what we try to ensure we have trained and ready forces to deliver when they need it.

So we have worked to identify specific areas where we think maybe there's redundant capability somewhere, and we work through the process to do that. But on the scale that you're speaking of, I certainly don't expect to have that conversation.

DWG: Should that conversation be had?

General Allyn: It won't be had by Dan Allyn.

DWG: Hello again. We asked you about drones and the Ironman suit, about long range [inaudible] strike, and you [asserted] not all the new ideas are necessarily technological. Some of them are tactical, organizational, that are [inaudible]. So from your perspective as not a super techy, but [inaudible], when you look at new things going up across Europe, be it technology, the stuff you get from Roper and company or stuff you get from the Army be it technology or be it a new concept of operations, what makes you go okay, that is something that's really promising? That's something that meets a gap. That's something that we can afford. What personally makes you sit up and take notice?

General Allyn: First of all, our Army is committed to working both sides of this dilemma and that is developing new operational concepts that are augmented by emerging capabilities. That's what our Army warfighting assessment exercise series is about. We alternate network integration and evaluation exercises with our Army warfighting assessments, one each year of each type exercise down at Fort Bliss. And that has enabled us to have industry bring capabilities out for our soldiers to work with,

doing real operational maneuvers and getting feedback to industry on okay, this one doesn't work. This one has great potential.

On my most recent trip out to Fort Bliss a couple of months ago, the way that we were leveraging existing capability along with some emerging capability in the counter-UAS spectrum was very very encouraging. So given that that is a critical gap that we have, I was impressed with, again, you put capability in the hands of soldiers and they're going to make it sing in ways that we cannot envision from up here at the Department of the Army, and that's why we leverage those opportunities as best we can.

I am cautiously optimistic in some of the long range precision fires, innovations that are under development. But I say cautiously because new capability never seems to arrive as fast as you need it, so we'll remain attentive.

Then we're going to continue to communicate with our soldiers that are forward in the fight as they identify the gaps that they have and then we're going to work to close those gaps as quickly as we can.

DWG: Can you give any more detail about the [inaudible] UAS? Not with classification, but if there's any kinetic [inaudible] warfare type [inaudible] or --

General Allyn: Yes. I mean seriously, it brings together all of that.

DWG: General, I spent a good portion of time last year down at Ranger School as you were integrating and bringing in women for the first time. You're a Ranger, so I think that's probably of interest to you on that level. But aside from that and since then, where is it going well with gender integration, and where are there still growing pains and things that you're sorting through as a service?

General Allyn: First of all, thanks for highlighting that. We're very proud of the fact that we had three women graduate Ranger School as a result of our pilot training, and it validated what it expected it would validate. That given the opportunity and focused preparation, soldiers are going to do well at Ranger School and they'll continue to do so.

So by and large, our integration efforts continue to go very well. I think the focus area of concern for us is that it's our intent to populate our newly opened formations with leaders first. We've had a very good response in the officer corps. We're going to have about 23 women who have chosen Infantry and Armor from a combination of ROTC and West Point graduates, and they'll start populating the school system here this summer and fall. So we feel like we've got a good flow of officers coming in. I think the SMAs count that I heard last week was we've got 50-some in the pipeline for Basic soldier training. So initial entry soldiers that are signing up as new recruits. That's very very positive.

I think the area that we're lagging right now is in the NCOs. We've not had a significant number of NCOs raise their hand and want to branch transfer, and that will be a gap for us in our leader first efforts. So we'll be relying on female NCOs of other branches in

these formations to help close that gap in the near term. Because as you know, it takes two to three years to grow a non-commissioned officer.

But this is going to be a long process. It took us 20 years to grow the first female Apache battalion commander after we opened up combat aviation. So we've done this effectively in the past and I'm absolutely confident that we'll get it right, albeit we'll have some bumps along the way undoubtedly, as we often do. But we've got the leaders focused on it and I'm confident that given an opportunity, our soldiers are going to do great things.

DWG: Given the shortfall, do you see that as a cultural issue? Or do you see that more as just a pragmatic situation you have to deal with in terms of there's no real incentive necessarily to swap other than being a pioneer.

General Allyn: Well, I think it's a risk assessment that non-commissioned officers are making. Frankly, promotion in the Infantry and Armor is very very competitive. We are promoting a very small number of Infantry and Armor non-commissioned officers. So if their promotion opportunities are better in their current branch, you can imagine that okay, do I really want to take that chance? So we're trying to look at ways to reduce that risk for them, the downside risk, and as you say, try to incentivize it. But my expectation is we'll have one or two that are courageous enough to do it and then that will be the mark that will set the path.

I can tell you, the impact of Ranger School graduates going back to West Point and inspiring other women to want to pursue it, you know, was very impactful. So the idea is get the first and then you know, proceed from there, and I'm confident we'll do that.

DWG: General, we are out of time so I want to say thank you. Thank you for coming in, thank you for your thoughts. We all appreciate it, and look to have you back again next year.

General Allyn: All right. Thank you. Thanks to all of you.

#