

THE CENTER FOR NATIONAL POLICY

“SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY”

FEATURED SPEAKER:

MAJOR FERNANDO LUJAN

ARMY SPECIAL FORCES OFFICER CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE
AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN HANDS PROGRAM. HE IS A VISITING FELLOW
AT THE CENTER FOR A NEW AMERICAN SECURITY.

COLONEL DAVID MAXWELL (RET.)

A RETIRED ARMY SPECIAL FORCES OFFICER, MAXWELL IS NOW THE
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES AND
THE SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOL OF FOREIGN
SERVICE AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY.

SEAN NAYLOR

MR. NAYLOR IS AN ARMY TIMES SENIOR WRITER AND HAS COVERED
IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, SOMALIA, HAITI & THE BALKANS. HE IS THE
AUTHOR OF *NOT A GOOD DAY TO DIE – THE UNTOLD STORY OF
OPERATION ANACONDA* AND CONTINUES TO WRITE ABOUT SPECIAL
OPERATIONS.

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MR. RYAN EVANS: Welcome, thank you all for coming and braving the humidity to join us here at the Center for National Policy. Welcome to our C-SPAN audience, Voice of America, as well.

We're very excited about today's event on Special Operations and the Future of American Foreign Policy. Welcome our speakers, David Maxwell, Major Fernando Lujan, and Sean Naylor. Special Operations Forces, SOF, have taken on an unprecedented level of prominence as a tool of power in foreign policy over the last 11 years.

The U.S. Special Operations Command, SOCOM has doubled in size and see its budget triple since 9/11. And while the administration has sought to cut the defense budget, SOCOM's budget was protected.

This is for a number of reasons, most of them are fairly obvious: 9/11, the toppling of the Taliban, two lengthy counterinsurgency campaigns that have required concerted efforts against clandestine networks, and the continued war against al Qaeda. And looking forward, our smaller future footprint in Afghanistan, which will raise the SOF profile in that mission.

In fact, there's a CNP report that I co-authored with Scott Bates that you can grab on the way out that – on Afghanistan, where we recommended that the entire mission be Special Operations led.

SOF's prominence recently culminated in the SEAL Team Six raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Pakistan, last year. Although it's worth noting that there are units out there that carry out raids like this every day, but it's also worth noting that SOF is not only and not even mostly composed of units that focus solely on direct action and surgical strikes.

Our increased reliance on SOF to achieve foreign policy objectives has had a mixed reception lately. Some critics see this as an extension of the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. The State Department has a bit – been a bit uneasy and has pushed back, for example, against SOCOM request for new authorities to train security forces in Africa. But regardless, we're not here to judge whether this is good or bad, this rising prominence of SOF as a tool of foreign policy. What we're here to discuss is how SOF fits into the toolbox of American power and American foreign policy, talk about that indirect versus direct capabilities, public affairs and future scenarios. And we have three amazing speakers here to discuss that.

David Maxwell, sitting to my far left, is the associate director of the Center for Security Studies and of Security Studies Program in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He's a 30-year veteran of the U.S. Army,

recently retiring as a Special Forces colonel, with his final assignment, serving on the military faculty, teaching national security strategy at the National War College. He spent the majority of his military service overseas, with nearly 25 years in Asia, primarily in Korea, Japan, and the Philippines, leading organizations from the 18 level, up to the Joint Special Operations Task Force level, and has served at theater staff level as well.

He has two masters in military arts and science degrees from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies and a Master of Science degree in national security studies from the War College.

He's the author of numerous works on Korea, Special Operations, foreign and internal defense, unconventional warfare, national security strategy. He's also pursuing a doctorate of liberal studies at Georgetown University.

Major Lujan is an Army Special Forces officer and foreign area specialist, currently serving as a fellow for the Center for a New American Security. His most recent operational assignment was leading a new program called the Afghan COIN Advisory and Assistance Team, which was a team of specially selected Afghan officers, civilians, and language-capable U.S. military officers who assist commanders at all levels in conducting full-spectrum counterinsurgency operations.

As a member of the AFPAK HANDS program, Fernando has been trained in Dari and will spend the next three years rotating between his position in theater and an Afghanistan policy job in Washington.

He is a 1998 West Point graduate, holds a master – masters in international security policy from Harvard. He previously served as an assistant professor of politics, policy, and strategy at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and has conducted counterinsurgency and counterterrorism missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, and the Tri-Border Area in South America, as the commander of the Special Operations Operation Detachment Alpha, ODA. And his writing has been published in the New York Times, the Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Small Wars Journal, and he's appeared on news outlets such as Fox News, BBC, NPR, and other radio shows.

And I've been asked to say that nothing he says represents the opinions or policies of any part of the U.S. government.

Sean Naylor, sitting to my right, is a senior writer for Army Times, where he has worked since 1990 and his principal beat is Special Operations Forces.

Sean received his bachelor's degree in journalism and his masters in international relations from Boston University. And my favorite part of his bio, in 1987, while as an undergrad, he traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan as a freelance report, covering the Afghan mujahedin and meeting and conversing with Jalaluddin Haqqani, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Hamid Karzai, all three giving us trouble in one way or another still.

Since joining Army Times, Mr. Naylor has covered military operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Albania, and Macedonia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, most recently spending a month with U.S. Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan, in 2010. His coverage of 2002 Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan earned him the White House Correspondents Association's 2003 Edgar A. Poe award for excellence in reporting an issue of regional or national importance and led to a best-selling book, which you probably have heard of, *Not a Good Day to Die – The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda*. Mr. Naylor is also the co-author, with Tom Donnelly, of *Clash of Chariots – The Great Tank Battles* and he's currently on leave from Army Times, working on a book about the role Joint Special Operations Command since the 9/11 attacks.

My name's Ryan Evans. I'm a fellow here at the Center for National Policy and I'm going to be the ruthless moderator. I was telling them earlier. My Ph.D. supervisor is German, so I've learned to be very strict when it comes to time. And so I'd like to ask Dave to start it off.

COLONEL DAVID MAXWELL (RET.): Jawohl. Well, thank you. Thank you to Ryan Evans and for the Center for National Policy for bringing us together, I and my fellow panelists here that – to be on this distinguished panel, so we could discuss, I think, an important aspect or facet of national security.

I've got five points I want to make and I'd like to start off with listed notes because I may not get to them in a lot of time before Ryan gives me the hook. So let me start off with these five points, and then I'll elaborate on them and we can address some in more detail in the Q&A.

Number one, I think when we look at the future threats, the future threats are unconventional. Unconventional warfare, and because they are unconventional, we've got to have the ability to counter unconventional warfare. I'd like to set up that – (inaudible) – there, unconventional warfare and countering unconventional warfare.

The second point is that the United States has the greatest surgical strike capability in the world bar none. But we need to be able to prioritize and resource equally our special warfare capabilities. And I'm going to talk about – I'll touch on definition of surgical strike and special warfare and that – to give you a perspective on that.

The third point is that we need strategists and policymakers who have a deep understanding of – and value the strategic options of being able to conduct unconventional warfare for our nation, as well as, to be able to conduct operations to counter unconventional warfare.

The fourth point is that effective special warfare is counter-intuitively characterized by being slow and deliberate. It is long-duration actions and activities that really focus on establishing relationships, developing those relationships, sustaining those

relationships, and providing not only situational awareness, but situational understanding in many overseas locations.

And the fifth point that I want to make while we focus on terrorism, the war on terrorism and all the things that we read about, we have to remember that SOF also has a role in what some call hybrid conflict and major combat operations. Places like Korea, if hostilities occur there, there is still an important role for Special Operations supporting those operations. And so we cannot become myopically focused on – on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and the like.

The future, as I've said, is unconventional warfare and countering unconventional warfare. In the last 10 years, we have had a proliferation of terminology and trying to describe what we have – what we've seen in the future – or seen in the present, what we'll see in the future, and then how to – how to operate in this complex environment.

We're familiar with irregular warfare. We've invented the term "security force assistance." You'll hear building partner capacity, train, advise, and assist, organize, train, equip, rebuild, and advise. And then of course, we've rediscovered the old concepts, such as counterinsurgency and the like. And we see – when you really look at it, what we see going on around the world is unconventional warfare.

The Free Syrian Army, the rebellion in Libya, we see, of course, al Qaeda. You can really see that al Qaeda is conducting a form of unconventional warfare. And the definition of unconventional warfare in the Special Operations community is simply activities to enable a resistance to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or an occupying power through and with an underground auxiliary and a resistance or guerilla force in a denied area. That's the simple – the simple definition. But that ability to coerce, disrupt, or – the hard case – overthrow, that's being practiced by many – many of our enemies out there, and particularly coerce and disrupt, as well, for us, we've got to have the ability to do that. And in many cases, we do focus on being able to coerce and disrupt other elements, occupying powers, non-state actors, and the like, and that doesn't fall under the rubric of unconventional warfare.

Our military forces and all of our instruments of national power have to be able to operate in this complex environment, using all the instruments in a way that achieves our objectives. Unconventional warfare for us is one strategic option, an offensive strategic option rarely used, in many cases, but when you look at what the Department of Defense has termed irregular warfare and you look at the Irregular Warfare Directive, there are five activities: unconventional warfare being number one, foreign internal defense, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and stability operations. Unconventional warfare being offensive for our nation, but the other four are really defensive and they really focus on countering unconventional warfare.

And the forces that are really enabled to do that are – are really our special warfare forces. And we look in – particularly in Army Special Operations, two forces. We have our surgical strike forces, which are really designed to execute surgical strike,

which is the execution of activities in a precise manner that employs Special Operations in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments, to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets, or influence adversaries and threats.

While special warfare, which is the yin to the yang, is really the execution of activities that involve a combination of both lethal and non-lethal actions, taken by specially trained – a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language proficiency and small unit tactics and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.

And those are really the two essential elements of Special Operations, when you really look at it and you look at all the capabilities we have, they fall into those two categories and I would say that we have done a great job of resourcing and developing the world's finest surgical strike capability. And – but I would submit that we need to have – find the right balance between the two.

The difference is our surgical strike capability is centrally organized, centrally resourced, centrally planned, controlled, and while our special warfare capabilities are really dispersed around amongst various commands and, of course, around the globe. And while we have U.S. SOCOM and our SOF service components executing their Title 10 functions, there is a difference in priority and a difference in capability and I would argue that we need both of these capabilities – surgical strike and special warfare – to serve our nation on the way ahead.

The third point I want to make is that – is for policymakers and decision makers, strategists, we really need to have an understanding of unconventional warfare and countering unconventional warfare. And this understanding has to be deeper than a capabilities' exercise level of understanding.

We've really got to have people that have the theoretical education and hopefully some with the practical experience to be able to plan and conduct and support unconventional warfare and counter unconventional warfare operations.

And as an aside, I'd just like to mention, I think we've really reached the upper limits of our ability to develop Special Operations Forces. Whether it's our Special Mission units, Special Forces, Rangers, SEALs, Air Commandos, Marine Critical Skills Operators, our Army SOF Aviation, Civil Affairs, and PSYOP, or the new name, MISO, a Japanese soup, we – I think we've really reached the upper level and particularly as we draw down our regular forces we're not going to be really be able to grow the operation force, but we should keep in mind that what our Special Operations forces do need are combat enablers, intelligence, logistics, and the like there to support these complex operations.

Now, as I said, effective special warfare is counter-intuitively characterized by slow and deliberate employment. As Ryan said in his remarks, SOCOM has asked for

authorities for rapid deployment of Special Operations Forces. And while that's important for surgical strike, I would counter that special warfare is really characterized by having forces in place before things happen, being able to develop long-term relationships, and most importantly, helping to enable our friends, partners, and allies, so that they can defend themselves against lawlessness, subversion, insurgency, terrorism, and the like, or unconventional warfare conducted by their enemies, who may be our enemies.

We have seen many other examples of the employment of our special warfare capabilities in Colombia, in the Philippines, in the Horn of Africa, now in Central Africa, and the like. And these operations really provide a look at the way we can contribute to national security in the future.

Lastly, I said SOF has a role in hybrid conflict, major combat operations. Korea is one example, where SOF will have a major supporting role to Korean and U.S. forces there. You're going to have to execute the full range of special operations, including supporting national operations against North Korean weapons of mass destruction. But there will be a role and is a role for unconventional warfare in countering unconventional warfare, particularly following the regime collapse of North Korea, when it is very likely that there will be an insurgency, there will be an element that conducts unconventional warfare against the Republic of Korea as it tries to unify.

And my point is that we cannot forget those types of operations as we focus on terrorism and other unconventional and irregular conflicts around the world.

So I will conclude that SOF does have an important role to play in the future, but we should keep in mind that SOF by itself, they're not war winners. They do not provide a silver bullet, but they can provide effective strategic options in our national security policy toolkit that strategy makers and policymakers, if they know how to use them, can use them in ways that benefit.

They contribute to the means in the strategic framework, but in the end, strategy really has to be that equation that balances and finds coherency amongst ends, ways, and means. SOF is a part of that – that equation in the means category there, but there must be balance in between ends, ways, and means. We cannot over-rely on any one force or any one capability. And in the end, we must be able to apply the right force, whether it's SOF or regular forces, at the right time and the right capabilities to achieve the strategic effects that our nation requires.

I'll turn it over to Fernando.

MAJOR FERNANDO LUJAN: Okay, thank you very much. Good afternoon. Good to be here. I got to tell you off the bat, Ryan, thank you. But Ryan's lying here, right. There are two, not three amazing speakers sitting in front of you today. I have nowhere near the credentials of my peers. But I hope that you will bear with me for just a few minutes because what I'd like to do is share from recent experience and what might

that mean for future of Special Operations, future of military interventions and things like that. But I am going to be a little bit limited and what I can directly talk about is just that – I’m going to limit myself to what I’ve seen firsthand, right, and what my personal experience has been.

So first off, I’ll just tell you a little bit about what my most recent operational assignment was. We were basically an experiment within an experiment within an experiment in Afghanistan, right, and each of these experiments was devised in order to fix something that was wrong with the intervention or with our campaign on the ground, right, big problems that we’d been identifying.

The first one was a program called the AFPAK HANDS. I’m not sure if you’ve heard of that program or not, but the idea was, hey, look, we have a big problem here. This is not a 10-year war is a one-year war fought 10 times. What we really need is a small cadre of people that speak the language, that know the culture better, that will – are willing to rotate back and forth and back and forth and back and forth into the country and build long-term relationships, rather than just, in a nine months in and then out, never to return again, or at least never to return again to the same units and the same jobs.

And so started a program and served in that. And then experiment number two was something started by General McChrystal and then expanded by General Petraeus, which is the Counterinsurgency Advisory and Assistance Team, idea here being the problem that we’ve got is layers of bureaucracy that exist from the tactical level to Kabul, right.

Everyone’s heard the bubble in Kabul, the lack of situational awareness, you know, sometimes at the very senior levels. The idea was let’s pull together some primarily former special operators, civilian and military, and a lot of civilian side 30-plus year retirees that have spent time and all sorts of communities in SOCOM, have them go and embed on the tactical level with units in the field, and really spend the time with these 19, 20-year-old kids that are trying to do counterinsurgency for two real reasons, one, to coach and advise and assist them in the field. You know, it’s one thing to see a best practices manual and another to have a 30-year Special Operations veteran sitting next to you and say, hey, look, I just saw the guys down the road doing this. You might want to consider this. Or back in an operation I was doing, you know, we used this.

That was that piece of it and then the other piece is to skip over the layers of bureaucracy and report back directly to COMISAF, right, and let him know, hey, sir, not to be – not to say – Lieutenant – (inaudible) – got it wrong, you know, he needs to get in trouble, but to say, sir, at your level, there’re some things that might affecting top level units ability to conduct counterinsurgency, right? And then so, maybe we should think about changing some of these rules or changing the procedures, or, hey, there’s this fantastic thing that’s going on in the field, why don’t we export that to everyone else around theater so they can understand it.

So – and then the final experiment was just this was originally designed as a unit to support coalition forces, but we decided, hey, you speak Dari and these other guys that are coming in now AFPAK HANDS, their real sustainability here is with the Afghans. How about taking this model and seeing if you can do something on the Afghan side?

So we did. So we put on Afghan uniforms, grew the beards, and started betting an Afghan unit to see what they thought about their counterparts, spent the time on their bases, rode around in their vehicles, and trying to get some insight about really what that means, the way they see us, and learned a tremendous amount.

Okay, so that – that was really a unique experience and so I hope to shed some light on some of these big topics by the unique examples that we saw in the field.

So I've three big points, three macro points that I'm going to bring up for you guys and happy to talk about other stuff in the Q&A section, but I don't want to go too long.

The first thing we learned out there is that small can be beautiful, right, and that is – that's – for all the stuff that the surges accomplished, right, I mean, putting all the resources on the ground, allowing us to move into areas that we could not operate in before, there is also a downside to a very large footprint operation, right, and they're having very large resources, both on the boots on the ground military side, and also on the development – aid and development side, right. And that's all been pretty well documented, but the piece that is not so well-known is the military side, right? And it takes a little bit to consider the position of some of these small unit commanders, right? If you are a battalion commander on the ground and clearly we're in a surge mentality, well, let's accomplish results right now. We have a finite period, a couple of years to really do it, so let's put some people on the problem and make some results happen. So if there is that top pressure of let's demonstrate results in a timely manner and you have two choices. One is to use your considerable resources, which you now have, right, a large troop presence, your technology, equipment, and move the needle so far, right, there in your very limited time period. You're there on the spring. You're there for nine months really. Or to insist on going through the Afghans for everything, right, and knowing that, well, they're not – they don't look as professional as we are. They're not as well trained. It's going to take three times as long. We're going to be really frustrating and pull our hair out. You know, many times, leaders at the lower level will, and understandably so, will opt for thinking to themselves this is some of the downside of that. And it is – it's just something that comes with the nature of large, large scale interventions.

And so – and the bigger point, too, is that there's a certain amount of friction that also is generated as a byproduct of having such a large footprint on the ground as well, right. And everyone's really talking about a green-on-blue right now. That's kind of the topic that's been circulating a while. But that is something that we have a lot of very direct experience with in the field, right. It's just when you have a force ratio of say 100 Americans sitting on a base with 20 Afghans, right, and they've got – and on the Afghan side, they're living in these, you know, straw huts, you know, really run down facilities

and they've been living there many times – and we forget this – for six or seven years, with very few opportunities to see their families. And we're on the other side with all of our advantages that we have.

It gets very easy to forget about what they think and really consider their opinion and to bring them onboard for the planning. And it becomes a dynamic of, hey, give me six Afghans, let's go out in the patrol. I needed you to be here at this. Why were you not there? And then also add to that the propensity to take some real Western models for basic training, right, and everyone knows what a basic training, right, I mean – so you know, needs you right here, lots of direct order, right, a lot of, you know, physical punishment and yelling and screaming. That doesn't translate so well, right, in Afghanistan for the guys that are over there, right. This is a shame and honor-based society, right. It's not like – we live in the coziness of a rule of law society, right, where in Manhattan I can get away with pulling a guy off the street and yelling at him and calling him every name in the book, but knowing that he's probably not going to try to kill me, right. He's probably not even going to punch me or things because he knows there's going to be a police officer that's going to come in and do – well, that doesn't play well in Afghanistan, right. We got people that come from a very different environment. And those sorts of insults to their perception of their own honor can be very serious, right.

So again, all these different risk factors add up when you have those kinds of ratio and it adds that friction, right. So again, back to the central point is there is an argument about operating under much smaller footprints, right, and it's something that I personally saw in Colombia, where we could have 400 people on the ground, but, you know, and the Colonel here experience in the Philippines, our predecessors' experience in El Salvador with the 55 advisors cap. There is something about that the forces – it drives it – it drives cooperation because you can't be arrogant and say, well, I'm going to do this myself because I have the resources. You have to work through the host nation. And it drives creativity, right, to think about really how can I leverage this, what can I do to be more effective and to influence without authority and without being able to bully myself around.

The last point I'll leave you with on that is that the Afghans – you know – we were running around like this for a very long period of time with Afghans, very, very exposed, right, very, very – in small – (inaudible) – but they took care of us. And you know, I tried to understand this overtime and the biggest piece of it was that they really value the notion of sanctuary, right, and the hospitality. And so if you appear as a guest or if you were there and you convince them that I'm here at your mercy to work with you, for your country, through you, that is a completely different dynamic than the way that they see slave and master, and the way that they see occupation.

And if you start to appear as an occupier, right, if you go around and use your – and throw your weight around and bully them, they react completely different to that, right, and that is – that is sort of the unseen danger that not a lot of people really talking about in great depth.

So one big lesson there. Number two – how much time I got?

MR. EVANS: A few minutes.

MAJ. LUJAN: Okay. Number two, small is beautiful, right, so – but even if we're small doesn't necessarily mean we're going to be successful, right, because we have to have the right people on the ground to do that. And this isn't a pure Special Operations versus conventional force mix. I've talked about this before in other events, but I just – I think it's worth bringing up here the old OSS quote that "the wrong man can do more harm than the right man can do good." It really applies for us here, right. And so in many ways, there's probably going to be serious discussion about how our personnel system can inhibit us, right, and that we are generally – we can't be talent blind in the way that we assign people some of these assignments. And that's something that we saw when we're floating around, watching embedded advisor teams, right, in Afghanistan. Is that some – some of them were great. Some of them were – you know – the hand reached into the hopper and pulled out a name and it was a great person. And that person's really doing a great job and the team has come together, but sometimes, you know, you could not help but think at the end of this guy's tour, we're going to, again, reach in and get somebody and if we're lucky, he'll be fantastic and he'll carry on the work. And if we're not, he's going to be terrible and he's going to undermine everything that the previous person did, right.

And so there is something to be said for the OSS's – they would just not accept the mission if they didn't have the right person to do it, right. They would say, hey, we can't do that because we know that if we put the wrong guy in there, he's going to fail, it's going to be embarrassing for us and we're not going to achieve the kind of results we do.

That is completely opposite in many ways to the way that we view manning (bullets?). And I understand the rationale, right, I mean, fill the slot, have the person there, but there's something to be set for really starting to account for how do we select for people that enjoy the advisory mission and even more importantly, people that have some experience in Afghanistan already, right. Very important question, especially down at the tactical operational level, guys that have that sort of two tours, three tours, and who understand already bureaucratically the things they're going to be fighting against. And the reason this is going to be very difficult and even in the future in other arenas to do is that, of course, bureaucratically, personnel managers are going to look at who were sliding into positions in Afghanistan. And when you're looking at files, you can just see the sort of deliberations that go on there. On one hand, you know, I really need people with a lot of tours that love the advisor mission that do this, but on the other hand, we're running out of warriors, right, and there's a lot of guys that have not been through a combat deployment that need to get in there. And we're always saying that, you know, there are a lot of really tired Afghanistan veterans that have been on multiple tours that need to be rested and need to have time with the families. You see the different – the

tensions that don't exist there yet, you know, that is in some ways the opposite we see on the ground, when you really need talent in these places.

So that's something to think about, again. Okay, and the third point – I wasn't depressing enough – so you know, small is beautiful, you need the right people to be – to operate under that model, but even if you have the right people and you're operating in a force constrained model, you still may not succeed because you need to have the right organization, right.

This is something I'll be getting to into – two minutes, all right. So I'll call it off really quick, but – but on the organization – organizational side, there are also a lot of impediments to cooperation that exist there. You may have an organization full of fantastic, energetic people, but because of the relationships and the way we label them – this is something – applies to Special Operations that we've seen over the past decade. And I absolutely agree with the Colonel about the rebalancing of capabilities, but in some ways, labeling elements of SOF as Black SOF and elements of SOF as white or vanilla SOF can be an impediment for us.

And we are now seeing in Afghanistan the first real experiment to bring together all the different tribes and operate under one chain of command. I think there's going to be invaluable lessons that are going to be learned from that, right? But that is also something that will be useful for the future, right. How do we operate – how are we going to organize these different forces when it comes to – and this is all – this is conventional. This is different flavors of SOF, all operating under small models, you know, to do these things over a very long time period.

Well, it's not going to be something we can surge into, right. It's not 100,000 troops for a year, it may be 100 troops, right, for 10 years or for 15 years. That's the model that we have to start to be comfortable operating in, and it's not just a SOF equation. Conventional force and interagency is going to play a huge piece of that and we've all got to be really serious about fixing that if we want to be effective.

Thanks.

MR. SEAN NAYLOR: All right. Well, thanks, Ryan, for inviting me here and for allowing me to appear beside two actual distinguished special operators. I mean, I disagree with my predecessor here. I feel like I'm the piker of this event.

I should state at the outset that I'm on unpaid leave from Army Times and that I'm speaking for myself, not in any official capacity, representing Army Times or the Gannett Company.

Now, we're here to discuss the future of Special Operations Forces, but it's not my place as a reporter to offer specific policy recommendations about where and how Special Ops Forces should be used in the future. But there is one particular policy area in which I think U.S. Special Operations Command ought to rethink its approach. And it

happens to be an area in which I have a lot of firsthand experience, and that's the commands', indeed the whole U.S. Special Operations community's approach to information management and public affairs.

In case you hadn't noticed, U.S. Special Operations Forces are not exactly the most forthcoming element of the U.S. national security structure. A few examples of this from a reporter's point of view, there are very, very few embeds made available with U.S. Special Operations Forces and none whatsoever in the task forces that belong to Joint Special Operations Command, which is the central and most powerful piece of U.S. Special Operations Command. When you do get an embed with these forces or otherwise roll in to interview some of them, you're not allowed to typically name anybody below the position of battalion commander, which would be – or squadron commander, which would be sort of an Army or Air Force lieutenant colonel, a Marine Corps lieutenant colonel, and Navy commander.

You – you know – unless you've been on a honeymoon for the last two weeks with no internet access, you probably noticed that the issue of who gets to talk about Special Operations missions and how has been at the top or close to the top of discussions and – (inaudible) – discussions, at least in this town and across the country, as a result of the publication today of No Easy Day by one of the SEALs who took part in the bin Laden Raid. And there's now, I understand, an eBook that's being published by some other Special Operations veterans called No Easy Op. So this has become – this has become a very timely issue. I didn't plan it that way when I decided what I was going to talk about.

It will come as a surprise to nobody that I think U.S. SOCOM and its subordinate commands need to be far more open with the American people about their forces and their missions and their role post-9/11.

Now, this isn't intended as an indictment, just in case anybody's thinking of the SOCOM Public Affairs Office or any of the Special Operations public affairs personnel, who are typically very professional folks and who, in any case, don't make the policy, but rather are handed the policy to execute.

If my comments were an indictment of anything, they are an indictment of the mindset, perhaps even the culture that dates back more than 30 years and permeates much of the Special Operations community.

That culture has its roots in the special mission units, particularly Delta Force and SEAL Team Six, as well as the Joint Special Operations Command, which was established to run their operations.

Joint Special Operations Command or JSOC is the most secretive and secret of SOCOM subordinate elements, but it is also, by far, the most powerful. SOCOM is run by JSOC alumni and its culture, particularly with regard to information control is drawn from that of JSOC and the special mission units. JSOC was formed in 1980 and therefore

pre-dates U.S. Special Operations Command by more than six years. Thus its tight lipped culture became SOCOM's culture when the higher headquarters stood up.

JSOC's culture itself grew out of the special mission units, the two most famous of which, Delta Force in the Army and SEAL Team Six in the Navy, were formed in the late 1970s and 1980 respectively.

My argument should be read as more than the self-serving pleading of a reporter looking for SOCOM to make this job easier. It's an observation that the Special Ops community at large, and in particular Joint Special Operations Command, sometimes known as the National Mission Force, has yet to come to terms with three facets of the Special Ops world in the 21st century. The first facet is that the number of people with firsthand experience of JSOC is now in the tens of thousands. That includes folks who've spent time in any one of the JSOC component units, including Delta, SEAL Team Six, 75th Ranger Regiment, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, as well as those who've served in some part of the command's headquarters, including contractors, liaisons from other units and organizations, and individual augmentees.

This is a big change from the dates of the early 1980s, when the number of folks familiar with work of those units was in the hundreds.

This brings me to the second element with which SOCOM has yet to come to terms. The new information dynamic brought about by the digital age.

Not only are there now tens of thousands of folks with some familiarity firsthand with JSOC missions, but they can now share that information via cell phones, text, email, and critically, the internet.

A quick Google search, for instance, in the last 24 hours of the term SEAL Team Six, will turn up a list of all the units commanders through 2010 on WikiLeaks – I'm sorry, on Wikipedia. And yet – probably on WikiLeaks as well. And yet, despite that, SOCOM persists with a policy that renders secret just about everything about these units and their higher headquarters.

As I've said, this is an approach that dates back to the early 1980s, when the most high-speed, you know, info device or one of the most high-speed information devices that these operators were equipped with was a cool little gadget called beeper so that headquarters could reach them, you know, if they were in the mall in Fayetteville or something and they needed to get back on to a post quickly for a no-notice mission.

So think about this, you know. What other organizations can we think of that have the same information policy in the internet age that they were using in the beeper age? To put this in context, compare it with what the U.S. government makes public about the nuclear weapons.

Again, a quick Google search of the phrase "U.S. nuclear arsenal" told me that the United States currently fields 5,113 nuclear warheads. That's the information that the

U.S. government puts out there. These are the most powerful weapons the world has ever seen, and yet, other than their exact design and the location of some missile submarines, there doesn't seem to be an awful lot that the United States doesn't discuss about its nuclear arsenal.

If the U.S. government adopted SOCOM's approach to discussing JSOC, its highest priority effort, when discussing the American nuclear arsenal, we'd still be operating under the blanket of secrecy in which the Manhattan Project was shrouded.

So why does all this matter? Well, this gets to the third facet of the modern era, with which I would argue that SOCOM's information management policy is out of synch. Since the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks, SOCOM, and again, JSOC in particular, has been at the forefront of the U.S. military response. Indeed, it could be argued that JSOC has been the country's main effort in that regard, certainly the military's main effort.

Now, there are plenty of folks in the conventional military world would dispute that contention, pointing for instance at the preponderance of casualties taken by the conventional forces. But I think when one looks at who has priority in terms of resources and authorities, one can make a strong case that JSOC has been a supported effort.

U.S. special operators are no longer a force that conducts niche missions off on the fringes of a larger conflict. For more than a decade, they have been at the very center of the conflict, conducting arguably the most important missions.

I've been told, for instance, by informed sources that about 70 percent of the daily ISAF public affairs roundup of significant actions in Afghanistan are in fact Special Operations Task Force missions. These are discussed in the press releases in very vague terms, you know, with the Special Operations Task Force referred to invariably as coalition forces. You know, a lack of detail that makes it unlikely that these missions that are usually successes will ever rate more than a paragraph very deep in a newspaper somewhere.

But to hang on my point home again, the U.S. public sees or hears very, very little about these missions, even after the facts.

There are no reporters embedded with JSOC task forces and precious few with other Special Operations forces. So for all the billions of dollars that the American people are spending on the force that is waging a global war in their name, they are told almost nothing in return.

I think it's at least worth asking the questions and not only whether this is appropriate in a democracy, but also whether it's somewhat self-defeating.

As an example, let me take you back to the most violent period of the war in Iraq, in 2006-2007, when the headlines in this country were filled with reports of suicide

bombings and American casualties. At the same time that all of that carnage was occurring, the JSOC task force in Iraq was waging a campaign that was steadily eviscerating Zarqawi's al Qaeda in Iraq network, ending up killing Zarqawi. But rather than give the American people regular reports about the force that was taking it to the enemy on the nightly basis, the old, what I call "fight club rules" about JSOC held sway. And if you've seen the Brad Pitt movie, "Fight Club," you'll know that the first rule of Fight Club is you don't talk about Fight Club. And the second rule of Fight Club is you don't talk about Fight Club.

So I would argue that, particularly when the American people, whose will is the center of gravity for the U.S. war effort, we're often told, are let with a misleadingly bad impression of how the war is going, this represents a failure to see the wood for the trees.

I am confident that these missions can be discussed in ways that do not reveal intelligence sources and methods, sensitive technologies, or tactics, techniques, and procedures that the enemy hasn't already figured out on his own.

Now, I know there are lots of special operators who disagree with me on those points, but I also know quite a few who share my views.

With U.S. forces out of Iraq and beginning to draw down in Afghanistan, this issue is going to become more, not less important in my view. This is because Special Operations Forces will assume an even larger role relative to the rest of the military in Afghanistan and because the shadow war against Islamic extremists conducted by JSOC and the CIA will probably continue to metastasize across the globe, with operations in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, Yemen, and the Levant.

There is even talk – and you know, I have no inside knowledge on this, but I know there's talk of JSOC becoming involved at some point in the future in the campaign against the drug cartels in Mexico.

Admiral McRaven, the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, is currently pushing what is being termed as soft globalization initiative. I'm not going to attempt to summarize into four easy sentences for you, but it at least in part deals with giving SOCOM and the SOCOM commander greater flexibility in moving his forces from one part of the globe to the other and having more control over those forces.

It is running into some resistance inside the beltway and the discussion of – you know – of whether – of how much it's going to – it's actually going to achieve is – that question is up in the air at the moment. Admiral McRaven has an enormous amount of political capital in this town. My understanding is he's expanding a significant amount of it to try to make this a reality.

Where I think this gets very interesting is that Admiral McRaven has talked about – and others have talked about the future of SOF, and we've heard a little bit of this from the other speakers, of a rebalancing of the sort of the kinetic or the so-called Black SOF,

the Joint Special Operations Command, Special Operations Forces, and what you sometimes now call the theater Special Operations Forces, JSOC being the national Special Operations Forces and the sort of White SOF being the theater Special Operations Forces.

We're seeing this in Afghanistan, where they're all coming under one command now. And you know, we might see it in other places as well.

This is often portrayed as a rebalancing with the theater Special Operations commands and forces being more empowered. I would – I'm not going to say that that's not going to happen, but I would caution folks to wait and see who's placed in charge of all of these task forces.

In Afghanistan, the two-star general who's been placed in charge is Major General Tony Thomas, a man with an absolutely terrific professional reputation, but a made man in the JSOC community, former deputy commander of JSOC, Delta Force squadron commander, Ranger battalion commander. I think it's – it will be very interesting to see whether the future of Special Operations Forces is actually a rebalancing of the force with a greater empowerment of theater Special Operations Forces and Army Special Operations Forces, or whether it will be just one more opportunity for the most secret force in the military to assert its predominance.

Whichever it's the case, I'm – guess I'm going to tell you that I think the American people deserve to have the facts so that they can make an informed choice.

MR. EVANS: Thank you all very much.

We're going to open up to questions for the next 15-20 minutes. I'm just going to kick it off.

Dave, I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about this pivot to Asia. We've heard a lot about a diplomatic and military pivot to or rebalancing to Asia, depending on who you hear it from, and maybe you could speak a little bit about how Special Operations could or might fit into this larger picture.

COL. MAXWELL: Yes, I think that's obviously in the news and very controversial and I think, you know, many in Asia would say America never left Asia, but I think some of our leaders have said that. There is a focus on Asia, particularly in some of our naval and air capabilities and area denial and area access, area denial capabilities there. But SOF has a – has had a continuous presence in Asia. I am not aware of any plans that will change the global force structure to more weight in Asia. And in fact, I think, personally, I think that – this is my – of course, my personal opinion here – I think we – in a globalized world that is becoming more – smaller and smaller every day, it's difficult and sometimes potentially counterproductive to try to weigh an effort anywhere, and particularly, as the United States, we have interests globally and so

we need to be – we need to be careful not to – not to prioritize one area at the expense of others, because there's a lot going on around the world.

From a Special Operations perspective, I think we are seeing – continue to – you know – our regionally oriented forces across all of our special warfare forces, special forces, civil affairs, psychological operations, or military information, support operations. Those forces that are apportioned to Asia will continue to do that and continue to build the relationships that we've established for decades in Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, you know – of course, a time that – years we've suspended from Indonesia and hope to reestablish those relationships and the like throughout.

But I don't see a big change from what Special Operations has been doing in the past, but Special Operations will make an important contribution to our national security operations in Asia.

MR. EVANS: Great, thank you. And before I take one from – the rest from the audience, I just want to know if Fernando might like to respond maybe from the other perspective on the reasons for some of the secrecy.

MAJ. LUJAN: Oh, okay. Sure. That is – well, that's way above my pay grade, right, so I'm not going to talk specifically about – about particular books or anything like that. I will just say that I would push back a little bit on Sean about the way that SOCOM has, you know, allowed special operators to do certain things. They – SOCOM and USASOC know that I am here on this panel on C-SPAN, having this thing, and supports that, right.

So I mean, there is a certain – there is a discussion, I think, about what it really means to be a quite professional. Does that mean just absolutely tight lipped, no interaction whatsoever, or should we be as real true professionals with experience in the field? Should it be more people that can bring that experience and write about it or speak about it in a way that informs and advises?

We're not here to try to advocate certain policies or doing like that. That is above our level, but to provide insights about the things that we've seen in the field. I think that is something that's valuable that Special Operations community can contribute there. As far as the need for secrecy, I think you're also torn between different imperatives there. I think – I mean, one of the reasons that I signed up to be a Green Beret was that I read *The Green Berets*, right, that's a story about Special Forces in Vietnam, right, and so I mean, there's something to be set for the historical record and for the inspiration and the recruitment. But I think, again, you know, SOCOM has been pretty permissive about a lot of these accounts that come out, provided that they did not give away tactics, techniques, procedures. And that sort of the million dollar question is, you know, where you draw the line between what is public knowledge what is in and what is harmful and what's dangerous. And that is something that really is tough to answer.

MR. EVANS: Great thanks.

COL. MAXWELL: I just –

MR. EVANS: Sure.

COL. MAXWELL: I have to say, as a retired Special Forces officer, it concerns me that there is a – there're elements in the retired Special Operations community who claim to speak for retired Special Operations. And I would disassociate myself from those organizations. While I absolutely believe everybody has the right to organize and to speak their mind and engage in the political process, my concern is that some will hijack the name of Special Operations and use it for political purposes.

And I respect everybody who exercises their First Amendment rights. I support it. And that we've all taken an oath to support and defend it, but I would ask that those who speak in the name of Special Operations to remember that not all former Special Operations personnel sign up to the way that they're conducting themselves.

MR. EVANS: Great. And when you speak, if you could state your name and your affiliation, sir.

Q: Wait for microphone.

MR. EVANS: There's no microphone, just please –

Q: George Michelson (sp), with (Stratford ?). Dave, a question about re-pivoting. We used to have five MH-53 helicopters in Korea. They're pulled back to be replaced by five 47 Echo helicopters – (inaudible) – those are pulled back. You talk about increasing of forces. General Fiel, the commander of AFSOC, has announced they will be moving, starting next year, about 10 CV-22 and putting them in theater. He also says he plans on putting additional AC-130 gunships in theater and U-28. So I think that's a clear indication of advancing the capability in the theater. And one of Admiral McRaven's highest priorities is he talks about the enhancement of the TSOCs, not to go ahead and usurp the theater geographic combatant commander and to give more qualified people, more numbers of people, and more capability. So if you can talk about the initiative of enhancing the capabilities of the TSOCs.

COL. MAXWELL: Well, I think that is – the TSOCs have been –

MR. EVANS: Could you tell the audience what some of those acronyms are?

COL. MAXWELL: TSOC is a Theater Special Operations Command is a sub-unified command assigned to the geographic combatant commander, made up of Special Operations personnel, but they do not technically belong to U.S. SOCOM. They belong to the geographic combatant commander. And they – command and control Special Operations in theater, thus you have Theater Special Operations forces and they advise

the geographic combatant commander and the staff on the – (inaudible) – of Special Operations.

I think that is surely needed. I think that our – when I talk about the rebalancing of priorities, the Theater Special Operations Commands are clearly a – organizations that need to have the right priority, so that they can serve the geographic combatant commanders in ways that will support our strategic priorities.

I'm – I've heard that some of the Air Force – and I know long plans for replacing those capabilities. I think we should keep in mind, though, those MH-47s that were in Korea that returned to Fort Lewis, they were to establish the fourth battalion of the 160th, which has a regional focus for Asia. So there is – although it's not in theater, there is an Army Special Operations capability at Fort Lewis that is apportioned to the Pacific theater as well. So – so those – there are – I mean, that has been growing since before these initiatives, you know, going back a number of years.

MR. EVANS: Right.

Q: Hi. Eli Lake with Newsweek Daily Beast. This is a question for you, Colonel, and also for you, Major. Is there a sense that because this book that's just come out today is the first that did not go through the pre-publication review that there needs to be an example made out of the author or else you will see potentially a cascade of former Special Operations operators writing unauthorized accounts of their service?

COL. MAXWELL: I'll take that for Fernando.

MAJ. LUJAN: Excellent. (Laughter.)

COL. MAXWELL: You know, first of all, I'm not – I don't know the history of all books that have been published, whether they've all gone through reviews or not. I would tend to think that there have been books published that haven't gone through review in the past, but I don't know that for a fact. But let me be clear. We sign non-disclosure statements. You know, we have to – Sean point's notwithstanding well taken. We sign an agreement and even in retirement, you know, I'm bound by that agreement. So I respect that agreement. That is part of being, you know, not only a good member of our military, but being a good American citizen.

So I haven't read the book. I don't know what's in it. I don't know what will be revealed. But again, notwithstanding Sean's very passionate and articulate testimony on how SOCOM should – you know, there are procedures in place and we should follow those. So whether an example is going to be made, I don't know. But we have a responsibility as military and former military to follow the proper procedures. And what happens is what will happen.

Q: Can you address the flipside of that, which is do you fear that there could be more if, you know, if Mr. Bissonnette is seen to profit from this, or any other consequences.

COL. MAXWELL: You know it's – you know, it's hard to predict human nature. Some, you know, people profit from or try to profit from many different things. I do – I have heard that this author is contributing all the proceeds to charity. I don't know if that's a fact or not, but I've read that in the press. So – but others may, but I would stand by the fact that until the rules are changed, we have to follow the rules.

Q: Okay. So my name is Irina Gelevska. I'm correspondent for Macedonian television in Washington, D.C. I was twice in Afghanistan, in 2002 and 2007. It seems to me that the situation now is much worse than when I was in Afghanistan, because you have your soldiers being killed by the Afghans they train. Just in the beginning of this year, for (eastern ?) in Macedonia, in a country in Europe, we had a terroristic attack with civilian casualties because of our involvement in Afghanistan. How do you explain this, because, should the situation be more stable now, after 10 years, and what will happen after 2014?

MR. EVANS: I'm not sure we're going to talk too much about the trajectory of the Afghan campaign, but maybe Fernando can speak of it.

MAJ. LUJAN: Sure. Yes, just a couple of words, yes. No, I – yes, it's extraordinarily challenging – what I can really speak to is the past, you know, tour that I went on and what I saw as far as where the trajectory went, what was going on. And it goes back to that dynamic that I saw, where – where there are some gains that we have seen. We've seen, you know, increase in stability through the areas where the surge forces were applied, right, and that is RC – Regional Command South, you know, in Kandahar, and then in southwest, where the Marines are, in Helmand. We've seen those things, but the downside of that, again, is that there have been some real frictions that are starting to grow between our forces and the Afghans. And I think that you – that is something that we have to figure out next year – this year, next year, and even more importantly, post-2014. That is sort of the – in my opinion, that is sort of the 10-million question, right, is – does that undermine the strategy? Can we find a way to successfully fix those issues, especially the green-on-blue issues that are there? And I think there are – there's a lot of ideas out there, but I think it can't just be us saying that this is a pure infiltration. That is something – there's something to that in the vetting and the re-vetting that can occur. That's a part of the equation. We've also got to really think about who we're putting in there, who are going to be those residual forces that are going to stay there, how are they going to be prepared to be there, are they going to have the experience, are they going to have the aptitude, you know, and how are they going to interact with the Afghans? I see that as a critical piece.

MR. EVANS: Sir.

Q: I'm Colonel Van Adder (sp). I'm also a retired Special Forces guy. I commanded a Special Forces team back in the '70s and a Special Forces company in the '80s. And recently, I was a program manager of the (CAT ?) that Major Lujan talked about. I've got a couple of comments that are based on – I watched Special Forces for a long time. And the thing that bothers me about it now, and you alluded to it in some respects when you talked about those folks from JSOC that are now running everything, is the role of what I call the Ranger mafia.

If you go to a Special Forces group, I will bet your paycheck there's not a single Special Forces group commander who's not a Ranger. And I'm just worried about the mindset, the trigger puller mindset that – a friend of mine was a corps commander in Iraq. And he called in the JSOC commander to ask him to – not JSOC, JSOTF commander to ask him to help him put together a training program for the Iraqis. He said, we're not interested. If it's not trigger pulling, we don't want anything to do with it. That bothers me because there's a good portion that you alluded to that what we do is not trigger pulling. The openness versus the op (sake ?). I think you're right on the mark. I think this needs to have a policy review internal to SOCOM, what they can share. They need really strong public affairs officers that can deal with the things that we do because, for one thing, this staying totally black, smacks of doing things that might be just outside of what the American people would really go along with.

One of the points that you made that's really interesting and that is you can bring in guys with a cultural understanding. You can bring in guys with a language, but they have to fit in with the personalities. One of the things that they do at Delta that I think is fantastic and we ought to think about doing it, just – they have psychiatrists on their staff. And people are interviewed. And if they don't have what's considered to be the mindset to do the job that needs to be done there, they're not – it doesn't make a difference if they graduated first in Ranger School or Airborne School, whatever, they don't take them.

We almost sort of do something like that for the kind of folks that you're proposing to get into the Afghan hands. They need to have that right mindset, it seems to me. So across the board, I really appreciate listening to all of you. So thank you.

MR. EVANS: Sean, do you want to –

MS. NAYLOR: Yes. I mean, I just want to pick up on one point that you made there, Colonel, which was the sort of the trigger puller mentality in Special Forces, and I mean, that's been an area of tension. I mean, and these two guys can talk to it from firsthand experience. But I, as somebody who knows many people in the SF community and active duty Special Forces now, have seen it. There has been a tremendous tension since 9/11 in the SF community between the traditional, unique skill sets of SF, foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare, and a more of a direct action mentality to which you're referring. And in fact, some folks in Special Forces will tell you that this goes group by group. Certain groups are – and certain group commanders have had more of a direct action mentality and others have had, you know, more of a UW foreign internal defense mentality.

It's not for me to say which is right and which is wrong, but the tension is certainly there and certainly I think it is accurate to say that Special Forces is, you know, at least prior to the establishment of the Marine Special Operations Command, the only force that the U.S. military has that specializes in unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense. Whether, you know, it's worth asking the question whether direct action and standing up specialized units in host nation countries that only conduct direct action is the best use of Special Forces.

Q: The first thing that was said to me when I went in Special Forces is, you got to understand something, young man, you're a teacher. That's why you're here. You're teaching.

COL. MAXWELL: Yes, I think – I mean, those are great points. First, I'd say that broadly there's a lot more Special Operations and Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations forces out there that get it. Sean's points and your points, sir, are well-taken. You know, we don't see a lot of – you know, the foreign internal defense, the unconventional warfare, as my command sergeant major used to say, the house that is not burning does not make the news. We see a lot of the direct action. We see a lot of those – those types of operations that make the news that reporters – they're easy to talk about. Much of what I'm talking about in terms of special warfare is very difficult to articulate in a news article and particularly things that take a long time to achieve effects – building relationships, they are not newsworthy. So we don't hear about them.

I agree with Sean, there's been a lot of emphasis on direct action, but I'd also remind everyone that Special Operations community is not out there on its own, acting on its own. You know, there are – they're working for a commander and like any military force, they're executing the missions that they're given from higher headquarters. And we should keep that in mind.

MAJ. LUJAN: Just to chip in really quick on that. Yes, and I absolutely agree with that, that we've evolved over the past 10 years this incredible man hunting capability, right. I mean, we can find and take out anybody, anywhere in the world. We know that, right. But the thing that needs to also be brought up to the same level, right, that we need to be just as effective at, is what General Cleveland, the USASOC commander says, waiting into uncertainty, right, that special warfare piece, where I need to be able to put a small footprint of guys on the ground and have them go in in a very ambiguous environment, seek to understand it and then figure out how to influence it best. And then do that – do that mission. Influence without authority to achieve national objectives. And that's what we need to work on.

MR. EVANS: I think we have time for one more question, maybe two.

Q: Peter Kovler, chairman of the board at CNP. I'd like to thank you all for coming particularly at a moment when the number one best-seller, as I've heard the news

this morning, is on this topic and where clearly your field will be changing quite dramatically for – because of the topicality.

Two months ago, I'm proud to say, my predecessor here, Leon Panetta, spoke and Secretary Panetta chose to speak about sequestration, though I know you guys haven't spoken about it today. Is there any concern that you all have about impact of sequestration, sever budget cuts, or, as you've said before, is that above my pay grade?

MAJ. LUJAN: Definitely above my pay grade, so I'll leave for –

MR. EVANS: Sean, do you want to –

MS. NAYLOR: I mean, it's – I've been focused for the last nine months on events, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 years ago, in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere, so I don't have my finger on the sequestration policy.

MR. EVANS: Dave?

COL. MAXWELL: Oh, I'll make a statement, sir, and thanks for that question. The – I'm concerned with it. I'm concerned with anything that interrupts, you know, our processes, our ability to plan for the future, the – I think we're going to face cuts, already facing cuts outside of sequestration, which, you know, are obviously debatable. What I do fear, though, is that as – if sequestration happens, what I think is going to suffer the most are our people. And in the times of, you know, uncertainty and fiscal constraint, our number one resources are people. We've got to obviously protect our military equipment, our programs, you know, ensuring that we are cutting edge, technologically wise, and have better capabilities than anybody in the world, but we've got to make sure that we don't neglect our people, and that's, of course, education and training, and ensuring that our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines are well-trained in addition to being well-equipped.

But I just – my fear in sequestration is that the individual soldier will suffer perhaps at the expense of equipment. And you know, it's all about the people. And I think that's our most important asset.

Q: Thank you.

MR. EVANS: Great. Last question. Keep it brief, please.

Q: I'm Jamal (ph) – (inaudible) – from Voice of America, Afghanistan Service. My question is to both Major Lujan, as well as Dr. Maxwell. How do you see the footprint of Special Forces in Afghanistan post-2014, in context of what's happening now?

COL. MAXWELL: Well, I'm not privy to that information. I would just say that that's a strategic decision on our way ahead based on our two countries, Afghanistan and

the United States, and what we agree to the way ahead, and again, it comes down to the strategic construct of ends, ways, and means. What are the ends we're trying to achieve and what are the ways that we're going to do it, the methods, and the means, and the SOF's part of that means, but it's going to have to be a result of the agreements between our two countries on the way ahead and what meets our national interests, as well as Afghanistan's. So I can't predict what it will look like.

MAJ. LUJAN: Yes and I also agree with that. Just clearly this is a decision that's being carefully considered by our civilian leadership and they're going to make a call on that. And we just – as military professionals, we're just going to have to decide, you know, what is the best way to empower the Afghans that we have seen out there. And that's one thing I can attest is that the Afghans that I did spend those 14 months working with, really, really impressed me. They're amazing, especially at the junior levels, where we have these young guys that have been working with us now for seven, eight, nine years. And what I expected to see from them – you know, I'll be – totally awesome – when I went in, I didn't really know what I was going to find, you know, in those units, whether they were just going to be split along pure ethnic lines, you know, out for their own agendas, but it just wasn't the reality. You would find occasional, you know – especially at some of the senior levels corrupt officials that were there that had been there and been holding on to positions, but for every one of them, there was four or five or six really enthusiastic guys from the younger generations.

So I think the biggest question for a Special Operations command is how do we, given what our civilian leadership decides about the footprint, how do we best empower these Afghans that we're leaving on the ground that really are going to determine what happens to this whole campaign.

Q: Do you guys see –

MR. EVANS: I'm sorry. We have to end it. But we do what we did, just to end it on the shameless plug, we did write a report recently that answers your exact question and it's available right outside. But I'd really like to thank our panel for coming. This was really great discussion and I hope it's one we can continue getting the point of view of the State Department, Foreign Service, and USAID as well to see how these interagency relationships will move forward on foreign policy into the future. And thank you all for coming very much. (Applause.)

(END)

