

39th IFPA-Fletcher Conference on National Security Strategy and Policy: The Marine Corps: America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness

April 14 – 15, 2011

**Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., USCG, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard
Panelist, Session 5, "Regional Challenges and Opportunities"**

Questions and Answers

DR. JACQUELYN K. DAVIS: Now, we have just a very few moments for questions. This was a very rich discussion and there was a lot of information. I want to perhaps take the prerogative of the chair to ask a question to General Jones and General Thiessen, if I might, and then a different question to Admiral Papp. Admiral Papp, how would you, or should you, be leveraging the Marine Corps CBIRF capabilities to a greater extent than we already are in the United States? I mean, we have one dedicated to the national capital area, but what more should we be doing if we think about WMD risks to the United States?

The two generals in the middle from the two AORs that face high end potential adversaries, in terms of Iran and China, given your respective AORs, if the budget emphasis of the Marine Corps especially in this budget environment as resources contract, is day to day activities and forward presence and engagement, what areas are the marines perhaps likely to take risks in with respect to that higher end adversary that we might have to face one day in a crisis situation?

And General Ayala, I wonder if I could ask you with respect to SOUTHCOM, on the COCOM's integrated priority list, your IPLs, what more do you want the marines to be doing, and what are the constraints as you see it as a marine as you look at the budget. So I wonder if you'd like to answer those questions first and then I'll go to the audience. General Pappas?

ADMIRAL ROBERT J. PAPP, JR: Sure. Maybe I can answer it a little bit more broadly and generally. CBIRF is certainly an interest to us, but so are a larger range of capabilities. And what I would say is that one of the challenges that I'm facing right now is that the Coast Guard experienced some tremendous growth since September 11, 2001, and I think we were like a

microcosm of the overall economy. We were leveraging increases in budget really sort of doing a lot of mission creep into a number of areas. One that I'll give you an example in is we have the responsibility for advanced interdiction of maritime threats, and right now I'm going back to basics which is starting off in a place which you all will probably think obvious, is developing the concept of operations. Rather than developing a concept of operations, we started developing resource proposals and it had grown to the point where we're coming up with-- I think it was close to a \$15 billion solution which required a fleet of 90 helicopters and 17 teams stationed around the country which in my previous job I didn't think the Coast Guard-- I knew the Coast Guard was never going to be able to afford, and I doubted whether the country was going to have the wherewithal to fund it.

Rather, we should have been taking our resources that we have, coming up with a concept of operations and how we employ those in a logical manner, identifying the gaps. And instead of the Coast Guard-- we can identify the gap and put forward a resource proposal, but we ought to be looking towards our partners as well to see where we can fill in those gaps.

My four principles, one of my four principles when I became commandant was strengthening our partnerships, which is a very simple phrase, but embedded within that is looking beyond what the Coast Guard has or doesn't have, and looking at other agencies and services that the taxpayers have already invested in and seeing how we might leverage each other.

For this advanced interdiction concept, rather than trying to build it organically within the Coast Guard, there are things that are out there. It might be a SEAL team, it may be the FBI's hostage rescue team, but I am looking broadly across government to see how we can fill those gaps. Because as we all know, we're not going to be able to afford a lot of new starts over the next few years. So I think that's sort of a broad response to what you're looking for. CBIRF is certainly a part of all that, and in fact is something-- for instance, we have the responsibility if, in fact, we discover a radiological threat on a ship where we do aborting, we don't have the organic capability right now to be able to deal with that other than to identify it, isolate it, step back and wait for the experts to come in. So I hope that sort of response--

DR. JACQUELYN K. DAVIS: I necessarily think, unfortunately, that's a mission we're going to have to think about more fully in the future, and that's a very instructive way of approaching it, thank you. General Thiessen?

LT. GENERAL DUANE D. THIESSEN: Just to add one thing to the Admiral's point, we have CBIRF in Japan right now, a team of 150. And we have several submarine [?] units that are over there and they're working with the Japanese in consequence management. So that is actually working fairly well right now.

Your question to me was with regard to high end threat and risk with regard to China. Look, if we start talking about phase II and III of an operational effort, that being to seize and dominate, as a nation we're taking-- this isn't a Marine Corps thing anymore at that point, this is a national thing. And we are taking a lot of risk if that's what you want to talk about. What we need to do is keep this in the phase 0 and 1, that being to shape and deter. And that's why I tried to dwell and stay and focus on the ability to be present to help those nations start establishing multilateral instead of multiple bilateral, and have a national and have a regional consensus that makes it untenable for anybody to try to come in there and be hegemonic, in this case China.

So, I would just say that if we do that, we're taking a lot less risk and it's a lot more important that we do so so we don't have to take the high end risk.

DR. JACQUELYN K. DAVIS: Thank you, that's exactly where I hoped you would go. Mike?

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL D. JONES: I hope I don't go exactly where you didn't want me to go. If I understood your question right, I think my response would be I don't think presence and engagement in what you call the low end are exclusive of our war fighting skills, quite frankly. In fact, I think that whether it's marine forces or army forces, our first job is to fight. But war fighting is the basis for the operation for any military force. So again, I don't think it's exclusive capable war fighters can not only do amphibious operations and assaults, and so forth, but they can do DOs and the other kind of things that we would call on low end.

The other thing is that the capable war fighting forces, I believe, are what our partner nations are looking for. That causes us to have value that makes them want to have our presence, have our partnership and to engage with us.

DR. JACQUELYN K. DAVIS: That's the other dimension of the question, and I'm very glad you went there. Thank you so much. And Juan?

MAJOR GENERAL JUAN G. AYALA: Yes, we want to fill that void and the void is through forward presence and through presence. And the void is, and I mentioned it before, Iran, China and Russia. And we see their influence growing in the AOR by a tremendous amount. You've got less capable governments that are very vulnerable right now, and I'll give you an example. We have certain criteria before we provide aid, as we know. The Chinese, they really don't. So, that and to respond to HADR because that's another form of presence, I think is very important.

You mentioned the IPL. General Frazier, we have in fact, or he has in fact, formally requested a company size MAGTF to be able to provide response at least during those six months of the year. But yes, through the GEF process and the IPL, we formally registered that requirement. We would certainly like more, but we understand that there's other things going on.

DR. JACQUELYN K. DAVIS: Well, thank you so much. Unfortunately, the time has caused us to cut this wonderful, rich dialogue off. It remains for me, and all of us, to thank this panel for their wonderful, wonderful contribution. [applause] And also, before I turn the microphone back to General Amos, I would like to thank General Flynn, in particular, but also Doug King, for all the work you did with us to help us put together such a successful meeting. Really, thank you. Invaluable contribution. And thank you to the whole IFPA Fletcher team, including the students who took times out of their exam schedules to come down here and help with registration and microphones and other support. So thank you very much. It is my pleasure now to say goodbye and turn this over to General Amos. [applause]