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Annual Conference Transcript
Civil-Military Relations in the Trump Administration =

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Begin Transcript

PHILLIP CARTER: Hi and welcome. Welcome and thank you for coming to our discussion today of “Civil-Military Relations in the Era of Trump.” Please continue to eat. Our hope is that you all will eat while we’re talking and then we can get our portion of the panel complete before Q&A, when we’ll invite you all to join the conversation.

My name is Phil Carter. I lead the research program at CNAS focused on military personnel issues and also civ-mil relations and it’s a pleasure to have you all join us for lunch today. I’m thrilled to introduce this amazing panel of folks. Their full bios are available online and through the app.

But just to give capsule summaries of everyone, sitting to my right and your left, Rosa Brooks is a colleague at Georgetown Law School where she’s associate dean for graduate programs. She’s also a former colleague from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the author of “How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything,” terrific book on civil-military relations.

Bold.

Innovative.

Bipartisan.

To her left – I’m sorry. To your left and her right is Kori Schake, fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and author with James Mattis of “Warriors and Citizens,” a terrific book on civil-military relations.

To her right and your left is Mackenzie Eaglen, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, also a veteran of OSD, and the Hill, and many other places around town, and one of the city’s leading experts on defense budget issues and the intersection of Congress and the military.

And on the far left and their right is Lieutenant General retired Mark Hertling, who served 37 years in the U.S. Army, culminating with an assignment as commanding general U.S. Army Europe. It’s a thrill to have Mark on the stage. I worked for him briefly in the Army. He’s a terrific officer. But most importantly, I’m told that he can rap the entire lyrics to Hamilton.

MARK HERTLING: The entire play.

MR. CARTER: And will do so.

KORI SCHAKE: Please don’t.

MR. HERTLING: I’ll do so. In fact, I can take up a lot of time doing that. (Laughs.)

MR. CARTER: Which is terrific. That’s a great biography on civil-military relations. Hamilton, of course, sets the die for so many of those issues during his tenure. So I’ll start us off with a few questions to get a conversation going and then invite you to join.

And I guess probably start with the prologue, which was the 2016 election. This was a bruising fight between two bitter partisans on each side. And it involved a lot of civil-military clashes, too. We had one candidate who had her own long relationship with the military, another candidates who said the generals had been reduced to rubble at one point. What are the effects of that election that we feel now? How is that affecting today’s civil-military relation? I’ll just throw this out in order to each of you. What do you see as the after effects of the 2016 election?

ROSA BROOKS: Too early to say I think. I parted company with many of my friends by not being particularly alarmed by the number of generals and former generals in Trump’s cabinet and in senior positions. But my feeling was that we sort of make a little bit of a fetish about civilian control of the military and we – it’s become a rule of aesthetics rather than a rule of ethics of sort of people in uniforms can only do these things, people not wearing uniforms must do these other things, and we should be worrying.

I always think that we should be worrying about a very different set of issues, that the underlying issue – when we say we care about civilian control of the military, I think the underlying reason we should care is that we care about ensuring that power is constrained and that groups that are capable of capturing the state have mechanisms that prevent them from doing

so. I think that these days, as opposed to 1789, there are multiple organizations, not just the military, that have the ability to capture the state. And, frankly, some of them – I think it’s fair to say some of them have captured the state.

So I’m not particularly bothered by that. I’m more bothered by other things. I think that it is a little bit too early to say what will come of things like the president saying, I’m going to leave it to the Pentagon and the generals to make decisions about troop levels in Afghanistan and what we should do. We’ll see how it plays out. Will this have any enduring effect on civil-military relations of the United States? Who knows?

MS. SCHAKE: I share Rosa’s view that many people were perhaps too alarmed at the nature of civil-military relations in this administration. I think in particular, several of the people are being invested with a “you’re saving the republic” attitude, and I think that both overstates their influence and also understates the importance of the institutional restraints.

My sense, though, is that – so I’m only half kidding when I say that – wow, is the room taking off? Because it felt like a launch was imminent. So I am only half-joking when I say that I was really deeply believing that Mike Flynn was a terrific choice for civil-military relations because I thought he would be such a disaster that he would succeed in helping Americans take our military leaders down off of pedestals and actually look at them as genuine human beings, not either comic book heroes of outsized proportions or a pitiable example –

MS. BROOKS: Mark is a comic book hero of outsized proportions, but not all military personnel. (Laughter.)

MS. SCHAKE: My concern about civil-military relations in the United States is that so few Americans have experience not just of military service but of military life, military norms, what our military families deal with that there is both a distancing and an ennobling that I think in time where you have large-scale conscription, and it was everybody’s neighbors and a guy you went to high school with, there were a lot more reasonable expectations both of the strengths and weaknesses that our military brings into civic life.

MACKENZIE EAGLEN: Do you want to – (off mic)?

MR. CARTER: It’s up to you. I mean, we can –

MS. EAGLEN: I think one side effect, one offshoot of the election that we see is this sort of unspoken new agreement of sort of less micromanagement from the White House. So like take the MOAB dropping in Afghanistan. I know he didn’t apparently inform Secretary Mattis. It was commander discretion, but, you know, it reflects what I think is – and when I speak to people currently in uniform that they say, look, there’s no official change in the rules of engagement but they feel – commanders feel like they have a freer hand to be tougher and more kinetic, for a poor choice of term. So I think that’s one offshoot, and this president seems to think that – you know, revel in that, think that’s a good thing, think that’s helpful because it’s so different from what he perceives as the last president.

And then, later, I want to delve into some Kori and Rosa's points. I do think that the second one in this sort of – it's too soon to tell, but secondarily I think there is a – when you have so many (luminous ?) former military in current civilian positions, I do think that there is the potential for worry and concern about asking hard questions about – do we do right, pat on the back, but what are we doing wrong and how to fix that if we are.

MR. CARTER: Mark?

MR. HERTLING: Yeah. I'll say that I believe that this happened long before the 2016. It began to happen long before the 2016 election, that there was a deepening chasm between the civilian society and the military one. You could see it in the way we were on bases and isolated and doing things that other people didn't understand.

When you understand that there's less than 1 percent of the population that serves in the cloth of our country, it's hard to get the other 99 percent to understand what that 1 percent is doing, is being asked to do. It was recently shown in a survey – I think it was at Arizona State University, should we put troops on the ground in Syria? Yes we should by 63 percent. Do you want to be one of those? No by 0 percent.

So it's just one of these let someone else do it for us, number one, a lack of understanding of what the military is doing, number two, and, third, and I'll go with what's already been said, this glorification of people who wear a uniform and we support the troops when sometimes, that glorification should not be done, that there should be more investigation into some of the things that they're doing and that they should be less political than many of them have been during election season if you're wearing the uniform.

MR. CARTER: So, Mark, let me pick up a little bit on that. I mentioned something Kori brought up about the generals in the cabinet, that you've got General Kelly serving – we're going to hear from him later – General McMaster, active duty serving as national security adviser, General Mattis serving as Secretary of Defense. You have others in the cabinet with significant military experience like Director Pompeo.

Is that a problem? But I guess – put us in the shoes of H.R. McMaster. You've been a three-star general on active duty. What's it like, what are some of the forces acting upon him and how might that be affecting his performance or may be bleeding back in the institution, if at all?

MR. HERTLING: Yeah. That is a great question because it – you know, we've all heard everything you need to know you learn in kindergarten. Everything you need to know in the Army, you've learned at the war college. And one of the first things they teach you is personalities matter. So when you have a group of people who have a set of personalities that are grown up in terms – that grow up understanding transformational versus transactional leadership styles, selfless service versus win at any cost, building teams versus one-on-one relationships, it becomes problematic.

So I think when you take an active duty individual, and that's different from General Mattis, Secretary Mattis, Secretary Kelly, when you take an active duty member that's part of the cabal and bring them in, there are expectations from an active duty lieutenant general.

I'm concerned about what General McMaster is going through, you know, in terms of what he has learned growing up based on his outlook, his character and his approach and his view toward the world versus being involved with many who are ideologues or who don't have the understanding of government that they should. So he's not only trying to pull together the apparatus of the national security organization. He's trying to teach, coach, and mentor at the same time, and that's very difficult.

MR. CARTER: Teach, coach and mentor the president?

MR. HERTLING: And others. Not just the – I won't just say the president because there are others who come from the business arena who – they just don't know what this is like when you're trying to deal with alliances, when you're trying to put national security teams together, interagency directives. Again, you know, I know General McMaster very well actually and he's never been in a role like this before. So he's not only having to do that, he's trying to learn his job as well.

MR. CARTER: Kori.

MS. SCHAKE: It seems to me that one of the things people overlook when they are worried about senior military people being in broad policy jobs, they overlook the fact that just about the only policy players in Washington who have a rigorous education about strategy and not just the use of military force but the political and intelligence and economic elements that go into good strategy, the only people who are rigorously educated on that are the American military. And so I think it is sometimes unfair that people suggest, especially of these particular senior appointees, who are some of the more thoughtful of the tribe, that they don't understand non-military elements of power or they're not going to bring that perspective.

My experience, both in the Pentagon and in the White House and in the State Department was that, actually, the military folks almost always bring a broader perspective. They are the ones who almost always are most hesitant about what military power can actually achieve for you. And almost always, the ones who are saying, please don't do anything unless you can tell me how you want this to end. Give me the end state and let's build a strategy that's consistent with that.

The other thing I would say though is about perspectives on the military because I am uncomfortable about General McMaster being an active duty general serving as national security advisor. And not because of him personally or any choices he's going to make, but what we found in the surveys that we did for the book "Warriors and Citizens" – UGOV (ph) did the largest set of surveys that had been done in almost 20 years on public attitudes about the military,

one of the things you see in the data is that the American public is outsourcing their judgment on military issues to the military itself.

A second thing you see is that they are enthusiastic about the military having much more politicized roles, right? Like the American public basically favors the kinds of things you saw John Allen and Mike Flynn do during the election cycle. And the third thing is that that more politicized role, even though it's popular and even though presidents choose active duty military folks for these roles, as Ronald Reagan did after Iran Contra and putting Colin Powell in as national security adviser, as President Trump did putting General McMaster in, they are hiding behind the military's institutional credibility. And even though the public is in favor of more politicized roles for the military, the good work of Peter Feaver and Jim Golby shows that even though the public is in favor of it, it does diminish the public's respect for the military.

So the military has a long-term institutional concern about this and General McMaster serving in so political a role is actually going to be bad for the military as an institution because it will cause the public to believe that politicized roles are okay for our military when, in fact, public support for the military comes from them being rigorously apolitical.

MR. CARTER: And so – you want to jump in –

MS. EAGLEN: I can wait.

MR. CARTER: You can wait. So –

MS. BROOKS: Can I just comment on one thing that came up earlier? Mackenzie noted that this administration is not micromanaging the military. And I think we'd probably all agree that the Obama administration erred on the side of a little too much micromanagement at times. But I would argue though that the Trump administration, it is a sort of – the pendulum has swung too far, that what we're now seeing is a kind of a wholesale abdication of any responsibility to exercise responsible political oversight whatsoever.

And I do worry about that, not least because I think it puts Secretary Mattis and the Pentagon in a really untenable position where they're being told, go figure it out, I don't care, don't bother me with the boring details. And something as important as who our nation kills and when our nation sends our own service members out at risk of their own deaths, you know, that's something that I really want the president of the United States to care about and not simply outsource.

I also worry that if things go wrong, it's now been set up in such a way that it's easy for the White House to say, oh, it wasn't our fault. It was those darn generals. You know, we knew that they would –

MS. SCHAKE: And, in fact, they have already started doing that.

MS. BROOKS: Indeed.

MR. CARTER: And so I'm going to stop letting you see my notes because that was the next question. So we in fact have –

MR. HERTLING: Wait a minute. Can I add something to that first, though?

MR. CARTER: Absolutely.

MS. SCHAKE: I want to pile on that one too.

MR. HERTLING: You know, Rosa brings up a great point because the president is called the commander-in-chief for a reason. He's not only in command and should show the modeling for the military forces, but he's also responsible for synchronizing the other elements of national power. And if you just say, let the military handle it, I'm sure Secretary Mattis has a great education in terms of what the other elements of national power are because that's the second thing they teach all the colonels at the war college, but how do you bring those together when there might be in-fighting within the government. Thank goodness he's got a great relationship with Secretary Tillerson or so it would appear, but what about justice? What about the economy? What about information? What about – you know, so I'm just very concerned that there should be someone as the commander in charge to synchronize all elements.

MS. SCHAKE: And I have one more objection to add to the objections that Rosa and Mark already put on the table, which is that nobody but the president of the United States can talk to the American people about what we need to do in the world, what we are going to expend of our blood and treasure to do it, and build the sustained public support for it.

President Trump has abdicated his responsibility to explain to my mother and the rest of the American people what we are doing as we accelerate our operations in Syria, as we consider deploying more forces to Afghanistan. I think there are very good arguments to make for those changes, but nobody but the president can make the case to the American public because nobody but the president aggregates all of our societal preferences across domestic and international and national security issues. And there he is not only failing us, but he is making his own policies dangerously brittle by doing so.

MR. CARTER: And so we have a few data points now to look at to sort of see the broad outlines of how this White House approaches decision-making: the first raid into Yemen conducted by Special Operations in late January, the Syria missile strikes, the delegation of Afghanistan troop levels – reportedly the delegation to the Pentagon, the announcement this week of a red line on the Syria chemical weapons and the warning shot that was not coordinated with CENTCOM or the Pentagon, and even things like the immigration orders that were not coordinated across a broad interagency.

The die seems cast to decide things with a small circle and not necessarily rely on his broader team, but, you know, having been in these people's shoes, being the veterans of these

very difficult processes, what would you tell the Trump White House? What ought they be doing better, smarter?

MR. HERTLING: Well, if I can, all those things, Phil, you just mentioned are all things. They are – I mean, I hate to put it this way, they may seem strategic in nature, but they are tactical issues which can be decided very quickly. Increased troop size. Yes, do it. You know, do the strike. Yes, do it. What I'm concerned about and it's been stated a couple of times in previous presentations is what happens – and it will happen – when the crisis comes when you do actually have to pull together all elements of national power and determine how you're going to react, not act. There's a difference in terms of reaction versus action.

The closest we've come to that so far is the Syria red line of yesterday or the day before. Okay. Great. There's a red line. What happens if? What are we going to do? Or, you know, a nuclear strike by North Korea or even a missile launch into South Korea by North Korea. Okay. What are we going to do now?

MS. SCHAKE: So I disagree with your description. In fact, I think it's making me intensely nostalgic because it's so sweet and optimistic that you think there is a process that has a small group of people making decisions on these issues, because what it looks like to me is that the president's management style is to create a whole lot of uncertainty and turmoil so that nobody has a sense of security and the president can maximize his latitude to choose one tribe or another tribe or this perspective or that.

MR. CARTER: Has that ever worked before?

MS. SCHAKE: It's a terrible way to run a large, sprawling executive endeavor, and it's especially a bad way to run, you know, an international order.

MS. BROOKS: A country?

MS. SCHAKE: Yeah. Because – so predictability actually really matters on the part of the American government. It matters to get everybody else aligned. It matters to help allies take actions that reinforce what you want to do. It helps prevent adversaries from stumbling into crossing red lines. And I don't actually think the chaotic nature of the administration that we're seeing is going to smooth out. I think this is actually how the president wants it, and that means it's how it's going to be.

MS. BROOKS: So Kori and I do a podcast together which we hope you'll all subscribe to. It's called Deep State Radio. And we were –

MR. HERTLING: That's shameless promotion. Okay.

MS. BROOKS: Shameless promotion. We found ourselves having a discussion on a recent episode of our podcast where we were busily lambasting the Trump administration for its lack of a coherent strategy, lack of a coherent national security strategy. And we thought, well,

gee, come to think of it, we used to spend a lot of time on our podcasting lambasting the Obama administration for its lack of a coherent national security strategy. What's the difference?

We decided that the difference was that the Obama administration put out there the idea that don't do stupid stuff – I think they used a different word, but don't do stupid stuff was the sort of strategic approach to the world. And that was roundly criticized included by Hillary Clinton as a presidential candidate as don't do stupid stuff is not a strategy. That's – you know, it's necessary but not sufficient – that you need something more.

I think our conclusion about the Trump administration is that same lack of strategy, except they have abandoned the don't do stupid stuff proviso. (Laughter.)

MR. CARTER: Mackenzie, do you want to weigh in?

MS. EAGLEN: I do. So Washington as a card carrying, you know, establishment member, swamp, whatever –

MS. BROOKS: Part of the deep state.

MS. EAGLEN: The blob. Yeah. Right. Okay. I can say this I guess.

MR. CARTER: We'll come back to the deep state.

MS. EAGLEN: Washington loves to focus on inputs, and I would say that sort of reflects these points. The same thing with the president thinking these tactical things are having a bigger impact I think than they are. But when I look at defense budgets, I like to say not what's the dollar amount but what's it buying you? What are you getting for that money, about \$700 billion a year or whatever?

Same thing I would tell the Trump White House the same question should apply, what effects are you trying to achieve with each one of these actions, you know. Is it just ISIS or what about Assad? You know, are you going to keep him in power or you're not? If you're keeping him in power, are you going to work with him? If you're not, what about the chess board with Russia, and, you know, all the issues that – Qatar and everywhere else.

So it's too easy to turn the telescope and just focus on the very small daily issue.

MR. CARTER: So I'm glad you mentioned budgets because I've wanted to talk about that a bit. Today is NDAA markup for the House Armed Services Committee I think or Senate.

MS. EAGLEN: Yes. Yes. Both.

MR. CARTER: In both? And nothing makes civil-military tensions or even mil-mil tensions more clear than the budget and the markup of the NDAA. We're beginning to see the puts and takes between the services, between the services and OSD, between OSD and the White

House. Where are some of those biggest fissures now? You know, where does the military disagree with itself, because it's not a monolith. I mean, the tribes even within the Army disagree over what they want. And then where is the biggest civil-military gap I think between the White House and the Pentagon right now?

MS. EAGLEN: It's a great set of questions. I'll keep thinking on the first one. So let's go back a little bit to the last two administrations and get away from President Trump because he is easy to pick on. I was going to blame Admiral Mullen and I'll bring him up in a moment, but it actually goes back to I think when the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were not going well, brink of civil war in Iraq. And that's when you started to see the dramatic increase in the uniformed service members on the Sunday talk shows, right, because they're more credible. It's hard to push back. They have – you know, they can talk about what they know and it gives the administration – but there was a political tint to that. And George Bush's administration rapidly embraced that and the generals let him, however. I'm going to pick on them as well.

Let's fast-forward a little bit in time to the Secretary Gates era. And there was a lot of challenging civ-mil issues at that time because – between the two presidents, Bush and Obama, Secretary Gates had a clear agenda in mind. He was going to prosecute in the Obama administration and, you know, starting with the non-disclosure agreements and all of that happening, the Air Force can tell you personally – Air Force leadership – how devastating an experience it was from the BRAC forward to the NDAA and the family feud among their components that turned public.

But, basically, that became a budget fight, and so just to quickly give everyone a history. So Secretary Gates said, I'm going to cut, kill or cancel these weapons programs because we basically need more budget headroom, \$400 billion was the number. And he said, you know, we're going to get in front of Congress and the White House to do it.

And he had the chairman of the Joint Chiefs at the time saying that debt was the greatest threat to the national security, which I think is a debatable point and I think it's above his pay grade. I think it's something that he may not have been qualified to make that case. And the president came in and said, we'll take your 400 to Congress, too, and we're going to double it. And then we basically get the Budget Control Act after that.

And now, in the post BCA era, which is what we're living in, Congress and the executive – I want to focus on the two branches for a moment. The relations are terrible between Congress and the executive branch, particularly defense uniformed leadership. It's not entirely their fault, I will say, since I picked on everyone else.

You know, leading up to sequestration, build the budget that it could happen, build the budget it won't happen, submit one that's above the caps and then, you know – but then tell everyone how bad it will be. It just confused Congress but they really believed that pretty much everyone above a two-star is the boy that cried wolf. And I hear it all the time, directly from their mouths, from politicians' mouths, but the sky didn't fall and everything was fine and

Congress. Actually appropriators helped a lot to mitigate some of the really bad effects from sequestration.

And now fast-forward to here we are. And you don't just have I would argue a large number of – I'm not as comfortable as these two brilliant panelists, but it's not just a large number of uniformed in civilian positions now, but it's also two services in particular, the Army and the Marine Corps – we left out General Dunford running the joint staff but also General McMaster's number two and his chief of staff are also Army generals. I'm concerned about the Navy and Air Force representation.

So some of those issues are coming out and so when you look at some of the things that Congress is proposing in the NDAA, at least in the marks that we've seen public, the Air Force is often the – (inaudible) – because they don't have a seat at the table, so some things are going to happen as they're taking money from Air Force to pay for it, and I think that reflects their lack of influence in general around Washington.

But some of the other issues are really about this topline fight – what's the number? Is it 640, is it 603, and Secretary Mattis is trying to thread the needle, but I worry he's already behind the eight ball, and I'll stop talking. If you want me to go deeper on that one, I will.

MR. CARTER: No. I mean, it's terrific. It does seem that there's already a civ-mil tension here between the president and his military leadership where, you know, it comes in pledging to do right by the military to make the military and America great again but the budget is somewhat paltry and it's far below what the Pentagon would like just to buy themselves out of the sequester hole, let alone get to the place they want to be.

MS. SCHAKE: So it's actually worse than that. I basically always think there's too much money in the defense budget, like I think good, solid conservatives like me ought to be really cheap. And with apologies to Charlie, I basically think as long as there are two-man fighter programs of record, there is too much money in the defense budget.

That said, even I am now – even I now think we are underfunding defense for a couple of reasons. First, because the Trump administration clearly intends to expand our operational responsibilities, the plus-up in Syria, the plus-up in Afghanistan moving aggressively against terrorist cells in other places, the increase of operational commitments because of North Korea. So requirements are going up.

The second thing is the international order is objectively becoming more dangerous. So there are going to be more demands on us. And the third, the budget – I defer to Mackenzie on all things budgetary, but it looks to me like what this budget does is what it gives in budget authority, it takes away by shrinking OCO over the course of the timeline.

MS. EAGLEN: Yes.

MS. SCHAKE: So it's a wash as near as I can tell. But, again, I would defer to Mackenzie.

MS. EAGLEN: Absolutely.

MR. CARTER: So what's – you know, what's a general –

MR. HERTLING: There's a fourth point – if I can add a fourth point to what Kori just said it too. There's fourth point and that's the shredding of our alliances. That concerns me greatly because all the time where we've had the increase in operational tempo, the other three areas, reduction in the budget, the mission expansion, you also have not playing with alliances as part of – it seems to be the messaging, which concerns me having spent the last 10 years of my life playing with alliances.

MR. CARTER: What's – and I want to draw you into this too because you wrote that brilliant piece a year ago on, you know, sort of when the military ought to dissent or when we can expect them to. Sort of what's a general to do in a situation? What would be the way for General Dunford to step up, or the service chief to step up, to register their discontent with this budget, to signal to the Hill that they're discontented, or do they let this play out above their pay grade between the president and Congress? What's the right answer?

MS. SCHAKE: So one of the most interesting things about the budget process has been, as Mackenzie pointed out, that for at least the last six years and probably longer, every single one of the service chiefs has said, this will be the end of the world as we know it, and it did not change a single vote on Capitol Hill. So they can dissent all they want on the budget, nobody cares, which makes it more difficult because the challenge then becomes how do you make clear that the Budget Control Act is requiring increasing levels of risk to accrue to our ability to carry out our national security obligations.

I personally would favor DOD writing a defense strategy that is – that looks at three significantly different budget levels, right, \$50 billion plus, \$100 billion plus, \$150 billion plus. And then ask – force Congress to decide what are we not going to be able to do if you don't fund this budget, this strategy? So that they choose a strategy by the budget that they choose instead of us just corrosively incorporating more and more risk into the existing strategy.

MR. CARTER: When do you think the military screams and says uncle, Rosa?

MS. BROOKS: On the budget, I don't know, Phil, but I think on your broader question about dissent, you know, the military views itself as a profession not just as a bunch of people with a bunch of different jobs. And part of what it means to be a profession is that you have a code of ethics and you have a code of professional behavior, and you have a loyalty to something beyond the immediate short-term task. You know, I'm a law professor. Lawyers are supposed to pursue justice. I suppose if they were all that good at it, there wouldn't be quite so many lawyer jokes around.

But it's the same concept that military professionals swear an oath to the Constitution of the United States, not to a particular president, not to a particular political party. And, obviously, military – active duty military personnel, like all citizens, have a duty to obey the law, have a duty to disobey orders that are unlawful and have a duty, if they truly believe that orders that they're being given would undermine the Constitution to at a minimum say so.

And I think that there's a lively debate that's occurring right now that's a really healthy debate that's occurring within the military itself about what more does that duty extent to? Does that duty extend to not only saying so but resigning? Does that duty extend to disobeying or is the appropriate role to register your dissent, put it on record and then follow orders? You know, I think that that's a really great and important and healthy discussion to be going on within the military and the rest of us should be part of that debate as well because it's – you know, it's a conversation about what role do we want our military to play? And I think that all of us would agree that we want our military not to be politicized – that we want our military to not be captured by any one ideology or political party.

The question becomes, well, how do you do that in this intensely divided and politicized environment? You know, what is the – how does a military official do that? I think it's actually really hard, by the way, and I don't to suggest when I say, oh, well, military officers and military personnel have a duty to the Constitution, they have a duty to obey the law.

That's easy to say, hard to do in practice because the kinds of examples that tend to come up when people also try to test this proposition are, well, what if you are ordered to commit war crimes, and I've always thought, well, that's easy, right? Somebody says, I order you to commit war crimes, you say, no, sir. Can't do that. Against the law. Easy.

You know, the harder challenge is when somebody says, as happens more often in the real world, do this thing, and you think, boy, I think that would be deeply destructive of our democratic order in subtle ways, or, well, I think waterboarding is torture, even though you found a bunch of lawyers to say, no, it isn't. You know, that the in the real world, people are rarely presented with a nice black and white, I order you to violate the law. Oh, okay, no, I can't do that. And, you know, I think to some extent, it's a matter of personal conscience how you choose to respond.

MS. SCHAKE: Mark, I feel like you're looking away.

MR. HERTLING: They're looking at me, right? You can't see this but I'm levitating off my seat right now. Yeah. I would agree exactly with that, that the distinction between illegal, unethical, immoral orders, it's easy to do. Although we've gone up to that line in the last couple of months, so luckily there have been people that have talked leaders off the edge of doing unethical, illegal or immoral acts.

But to use the example of sequestration, having been a commander when sequestration was put into effect, I will tell you, you look at it from the standpoint of being a military dude or dudette (sp) and you say, I can make this happen, and nobody can do it as well as I can, so I'll

keep fighting it and do the best I can. You don't resign but it's an insidious reduction in military capability. And it doesn't come up and smack you in the face, saying, hey, you're unethical in your approach because you're allowing this to happen. You do the best you can and it's hard. But it never crosses that line to where you say I'm going to resign. I don't know. That's a hard call to make.

MR. CARTER: So one of the things that's sort of raised by your comments, and it's been raised a lot by the White House, it's this idea of the deep state. And the extent to which there is a massive – you guys even have a radio show called the Deep State Radio. You know, that there is an institutional presence within the defense community, in the intelligence community, and that this block of the blob is actually running America, running its national security.

MS. SCHAKE: If only that. (Laughter.)

MR. CARTER: And that – if only. That also appears to be a kind of civil-military skirmish that we're now fighting and the White House appears to be continuing to wage a war on the deep state. What should we make of that?

MS. SCHAKE: I have really strong views about this, which is that there is – there is a deep state in societies that are unfree, right? Shadowy forces who prevent elections or properly constituted leaders from doing what they want. That the Egyptian military controls 30 percent of the Egyptian economy is the deep state.

What people in our current febrile political environment in our own dear country are doing is characterizing political disagreement as though it were insidious. When the White House talks about the deep state, what they mean is the rule of law, right? (Laughter, applause.) There are institutional and legal and normative boundaries on what a president can do, and that is not an insidious force in the United States. That is the rule of law.

MS. BROOKS: And it is not only the rule of law, it's the notion that there does exist these things called facts that are real and saying, oh, they're fake doesn't make them less real. And I think that when we see – when we see career civil servants, scientists, for instance, in the Environmental Protection Agency saying climate change is happening, you know, to be able to say they're not making that up for fun or because they're Democrats or something, that they're saying this is what I see based on the evidence and you can argue about the nature of the evidence if you want to, but you can't just get up and say, aha, it's the deep state trying to dismiss me.

And I do. I am not currently a U.S. government employee, which is why, of course, I get to sit up here and say whatever the heck I want. But having been one and having many, many friends who remain U.S. government employees, I get very angry on their behalf at the degree to which their dedicated service and loyalty to principles of professional behavior is dismissed for political reasons. And I think it's something that we all need to really push back against.

MR. HERTLING: I was having a couple of adult beverages with some younger members of our Army last week. And one of them was making an argument that we are in the throes of a potential insurgency – our government is conducting an insurgency. So there are some that believe in the rule of law as a requirement to conduct a counterinsurgency to that. I never thought we would get to that place, knowing our institutions.

MR. CARTER: So we'll go for questions in a minute, but I want to actually ask you for a sign of hope. So what in the last six months do you see as a positive?

MS. BROOKS: That's Kori's job.

MS. SCHAKE: Yeah. That's my wheelhouse.

MR. CARTER: What's something that we should see as a glimmer of hope?

MS. BROOKS: I do signs of the apocalypse. She does signs of hope.

MR. HERTLING: Is this the canary in the coal mine again?

MR. CARTER: If you take it so.

MR. HERTLING: Okay. All right. Good.

MR. CARTER: But what's been going well? (Laughter.) Not all at once.

MS. EAGLEN: Okay. And I usually am more in Rosa's schoolhouse on this one. So there is a consensus. It's a bipartisan one. There's a center and a plurality, and, actually, I think even the Republican Party but also bipartisan that the defense is underfunded. We've even got Kori on board now. And, look, if you can build it from scratch, you know, it might be enough money, but that's not how budgeting works. That's how politicians spend money, et cetera. So there's a consensus that you have to spend more based on what we're asking to get done and what we want the military to do and achieve and stay busy.

It now includes members of Congress who don't care about defense all the time, like the ones who actually choose to sit on the committees with jurisdictions that think about defense and national security because they want to be there, so you have a budget committee and they're pretty BCA friendly types, if you will, fiscal hawks. Appropriators – they just love all money and spending more on everything. But also leadership in the House in particular.

So this is a good sign. I think Congress is going to go above President Trump's request, which I think is what Secretary Mattis and General Dunford were signaling with their smoke signals and other ways of saying, we support the president's request, but, you know, really, throw us more money if you want to and we'll take it.

MS. BROOKS: Here, take it.

MS. SCHAKE: Here are my \$33 billion of unfunded requirements.

MS. EAGLEN: Yes. Correct. Yeah, exactly. And we'll take every penny of that if you can give it to us. And Congress is poised to throw out the Mulvaney-Trump budget and do what they want and give DOD more. And that's actually very positive.

MS. SCHAKE: I see a whole bunch of positive signs actually. The first and most beautiful is actually that the checks and balances built into the American political system really work. We're giving them a tough road test right now, but they really work, right? Journalists are intimidated by White House trying to intimidate them, Congress is throwing out the president's budget. The courts are having their say one way and another on everything the president does. We are seeing a heightened scrutiny of government activity in a way that I actually think it's really healthy for us as a republic. So, you know, I wouldn't have chosen to test the system this way, but we are testing the system at its passing, and that's a really beautiful thing.

The second thing that's going right, and this is a strict foreign policy point, is that I do believe the Trump administration is going to win the war in Iraq. And we are overdue to do that. It's important to do it. And the way they are –

MR. HERTLING: They're going to claim that they single-handedly won the war in Iraq.

MS. SCHAKE: Okay. What politician fails to claim they single-handedly changed the world, Mark? And they are actually – they have actually reversed a set of policies that will consolidate the military gains made in Iraq and that will link them up much more tightly to political progress in Iraq. And I think that's a really wonderful thing and really important for our foreign policy.

A third thing is that President Trump is ruder than any other president has been on alliance issues, but he's also not wrong that many of – that the United States has allowed to accrue to us over time more and more responsibility for other people's security outcomes and that has in some really important cases, like Western Europe, caused our allies to allow us to have more responsibility for their outcomes than they do, right? Gates said it. Obama said it in the "Atlantic" interviews. I think there's a wide public consensus in the United States that we shouldn't do it this way, but we should rebalance the set of responsibilities that we and our allies take on security things. And I do believe that's going to happen. I hope it doesn't happen in a way that causes the United States to be the destruction of a liberal international order that has served us extraordinarily well, but I do think they're right that we do need a rebalancing of alliance relationships.

What else do I think is going right? That's three, right? That's a good, healthy –

MR. CARTER: I'm going to get Rosa and Mark and then go to questions.

MS. SCHAKE: Yeah. That's a good, healthy – Rosa's not going to have any.

MS. BROOKS: Well, I think your optimism is premature, Kori. I mean, on the sort of what does not kill us makes us strong theory, if we all survive the next four years, then, yes, I think then we can sit here and say, see, the rule of law prevailed, see, you know, it was just enough pressure on our allies to get them to step up and do more burden sharing, see, et cetera. We won in Iraq. That would be awesome.

But I don't think we're there yet and I'm not entirely sure that we're going to get there. I wish I had more confidence that we're going to get there but I think that the possibilities of fairly catastrophic collapse both domestically and in terms of the international order remain pretty significant.

So we'll see. And I truly hope that in four years we're sitting here saying, it worked. Hurray. We're all stronger. But I'm not yet confident about that and I don't think we – and I say that particularly because, you know, it's the old song lawyers love to quote Learned Hand, famous jurist – I don't know how we got this revered name.

MS. SCHAKE: Best judge name ever.

MS. BROOKS: Best judge name ever, Learned Hand, with something – I won't get this exactly right but he said, you know, liberty lies in the hearts of men and women. When it dies there, no court, no constitution, no law can save it. No court, no constitution, no law can even help it.

MR. CARTER: It's like the ranger creed for lawyers.

MS. BROOKS: It is absolute – and it's true. I think this is not the moment to go, oh, good. The system can self-correct. Yay. The system – if the system is going to self-correct, it's going to be because every single one of you over the next three and a half, four years makes darn sure it self-corrects by doing your jobs, by speaking out as citizens, as public servants, et cetera. It's not going to happen by itself.

MS. SCHAKE: Here, here.

MR. HERTLING: Anybody ever work for a boss that you hated and how everybody had to work systems around that boss to get things done? That's what I think is happening right now. It would have been – had the other party won the election I think there would have been the continued divisiveness that we've experienced over the last 20 years, so maybe this is bringing us together.

And if Phil would allow me to wrap the second act of the play, we've been through this before, and we are a great country and we will survive. But it's going to be hard and it shouldn't have to be this way. But I think we're going to pull some things together.

What I'm concerned about still is that existential crisis that is potentially out there in a variety of ways that could affect our country and take us beyond what we're talking about in getting our act together. And there are many things that could cause that to happen. And when they do, we'd better be ready for it.

MR. CARTER: I think we'll hear about that this afternoon from General McMaster and Secretary Kelly. So I want to invite everyone now to join the conversation. Raise your hand and then I think we have a microphone coming around. And I think I saw your hand first, Alice.

MS. SCHAKE: Alice.

Q: Hi. I'm Alice Friend. I'm an adjunct fellow here at CNAS and also with CSIS across the street, and I'm a friend of the show. And my question is pursuant to what you all were just talking about, let us say we survive the next four years, are the patterns of civil-military relations that we're setting today, are they going to endure? What's going to be the long-term civil-military legacy of this president given what we know today? Or are we going to revert back to status quo anti-bellum?

MS. SCHAKE: So I actually don't think this president's choices so far are all that important on civil-military relations, but I do think there are a much longer trend line towards greater politicization of the military, towards public support for that greater politicization, and the resultant diminution of public respect for the military.

We see that in the data that we collected for the book "Warriors and Citizens," that all three of them are very strong trends. Politicians have such strong short-term incentives to have the suits hide behind the uniforms, and that only further diminishes public confidence in the suits and increases public support for the uniforms.

And, as Mackenzie said, President Trump's not the first to do that. President Obama wasn't the first to do it. President Bush did it in rebuilding support for the surge in Iraq.

So I think all of those things are happening in a way that are taking us, as Rosa has argued, the model of civil-military relations that all of us are operating in is fundamentally being recalibrated before our eyes, and it has very little to do with President Trump.

MR. CARTER: Yes, sir, in the brown jacket in the middle table.

MS. SCHAKE: Charlie.

Q: Charlie Stevenson, I teach at SAIS. I want the panel to discuss one of the civilian arms of our government we haven't mentioned yet, though Kori even wrote a book about the State Department. I'm truly worried that Secretary Tillerson is destroying the State Department, both by his budgetary choices and his management style.

Now, then General Mattis said we should – if you don't do enough of the civilian arm, we need more bullets. Well, they're getting more bullets. What can the military, what can the leadership do to strengthen the State Department, the Foreign Service?

MR. HERTLING: I'm going to start as the military guy on that one. I'll jump on that grenade real fast. And having seen in the last 10 years of my life the criticality of the State Department and USAID in conflict and the connection with diplomacy around the world, you know, there have been other secretaries of defense who have said, take money from me and give it to State. I don't know if that's going to happen. But I think the destruction of the State Department, even if there is a constraint of this State Department or a diminishment of the State Department, it would be criminal.

MS. BROOKS: I'm going to be an outlier here and say that it's too late. It's all over. The State Department is basically dead and that that's not going to be reversed. Nobody is going to take money from DOD and give it to the State Department in our political lifetimes. And that what that means is going to be that the military, as the last institution left standing, is going to have to stop being in denial about the need to develop within the defense establishment the capabilities that have been done traditionally by State and USAID – stop thinking, oh, any day now, Congress is going to, you know, restore the fabled capabilities of the civilian agencies and so we don't really have to develop them or get good at it because any day now, this will get fixed. It's not going to get fixed. I wish it were otherwise.

But I think that being in denial is sort of the worst of all worlds. We might as well admit it. We might as well get serious about saying, what do we have to change about military recruitment, military training, education, et cetera, in order to make sure that we have somebody in the United States who can actually do those things that the State Department and AID used to do.

And I will go further than that and say that before everybody goes, oh, but, but, but that's wrong, you know, that should be civilians. That shouldn't be the Defense Department, I would again say – and this sort of goes back to my earlier comments, I'd say, why? You know, what law, what divine ordinance decreed that certain things should be done by people not wearing uniforms and certain things should be done by people in uniforms?

You know, I think that more important to say what does the United States need to get done. How do we make sure somebody can do it? I don't really care all that much who does it and I think that the traditional reasons to care, and which were significant, including things like worry about the shrinkage of humanitarian space, you know, and the militarization of foreign assistance, you know, the train has left the station. I don't like it, but I don't see how we get it back.

MR. CARTER: Mackenzie, do you have a dissenting view? I mean, is there even room for an efficient argument here to say, an embassy is cheaper than a garrison abroad or diplomacy can be an economy of force measure?

MS. EAGLEN: I was thinking actually in this case there's some sympathy on Capitol Hill to the dramatic level of cuts. There's obviously anger, across the board at the White House for the lack of personnel who help make policy, everywhere, including the State Department, but in particular the State Department. I mean, I think there's five assistant secretaries, the amount of State personnel, and all of those, no names have been sent over and it's just – there's a great concern.

I think there might be some glimmer of hope that Congress can help, which I'm surprised that I'm saying that. It just shows how draconian the president's budget is to raise defense at the expense of these other national security priorities, which is interesting. It takes a unified secretary of defense and secretary of state. My understanding is they're very close. And, in fact, because Secretary Tillerson's a geographical bachelor, Secretary Mattis is unmarried and, until recently, President Trump was a geographical bachelor, I hear they have dinner weekly, all of the time, the three guys. But if Secretary Tillerson doesn't want the money –

MR. CARTER: To be a fly on the wall at these discussions.

MS. EAGLEN: Right. I don't know. So anyway. There may be some hope but –

MR. HERTLING: If I can just go back – and this is always a difficult thing to do is to argue with someone who's written a book about it so, Rosa, please excuse me for doing this, but I just find that anathema. If you tell me today, hey, you're now the ambassador to name that country, I'd say, great. I've got this whole new set of wardrobe. I can go do that. I've done the kinds of things that ambassadors and diplomats do, both in combat and in peacetime so I sort of know that.

But here's my concern. When you're wearing the uniform, you are concerned primarily about the armed security of the state. That is what the military does. It's very hard to shake hands in the morning and be prepared to kill in the afternoon. So I don't want to see the military and the State Department come together. I think they both have different charters and we should ensure they're like that.

MS. SCHAKE: So for about the last 15 years, all of us good government types have been wringing our hands and talking about the essential nature of whole-of-government operations. And for the last 15 years, our government has proved incapable of it, irrespective of funding levels.

MS. EAGLEN: Yes.

MS. SCHAKE: And what we have seen is an enormous shift of what should be inherently civilian activity into military channels. It's actually not true, Mark, that secretaries of defense have offered their own money to the State Department. They all traipsed up to Capitol Hill and said, you need to give them more money. None of them said, and in my budget, here's \$50 billion because I actually need diplomats who can shoulder their share of the burden.

Who is talking about Asia policy? It's the PACOM commander. And not just – certainly because nobody's been appointed in State, but also because that is where the center of gravity of American foreign policy now is.

And I think it's tragic. It's partly the result of funding cuts. My bet is that we'll end up with about a 15 percent cut in State and USAID. Secretary Tillerson testified in his budget hearings that he's not going to make senior appointments until he finishes his reorganization plan, and that will not happen until January of 2017. So it's going to be mid-2018 before you have a senior leadership, by which I mean to say they have abdicated responsibility for American diplomacy.

And that means Harry Harris is going to be our major diplomat in the Pacific and the CENTCOM commander is going to be the major diplomat in the Middle East. And that's actually really bad for the United States.

MS. BROOKS: I just – I want to raise – push back by raising a question that we don't have time to talk about here, but I think it's a really important one. And I too – you know, I like the old world. I thought it was better. You know, part of what is motivating my comments is just saying, you know, we need to distinguish between what we would prefer and what is realistically likely to happen, and if what we'd prefer has no realistic likelihood of coming about, then we need to deal with where we are.

But I'd also ask a broader question. You know, Kori, you said there are some tests that are inherently civilian. I guess the question I would raise is what does that mean and why? And in today's world, when the possibility of massive disruption and even lethal disruption can come from cyber activity, could come from bioengineered viruses, could come from financial manipulation, what do we even mean by saying some things are inherently civilian? And why do we feel that way?

That's a longer discussion, but I think that – it's not clear to me when we say that that we really have a – today as opposed to 200 years ago have a coherent political theory of why that should be so, I guess. Kori may have a coherent point of view.

MS. SCHAKE: Do you want me to answer it or do you want us to fight about this another time?

MR. CARTER: Let's put a pin in that and then do a couple more questions. (Laughter.)

MS. BROOKS: I accept the possibility that Kori does have a coherent political theory for – (inaudible).

MS. SCHAKE: We'll spare you it, though.

MR. CARTER: So, Alex.

Q: Alex Wagner, formerly with the Department of the Army. Rosa, this August, you're going to have 600 new law students show up at Georgetown Law. And the dean will say, you guys are the best of the brightest and this is the best class ever. But I think if you took out those of those students who are veterans and those who come from military families, the number that would say that 15, 16 now years after 9/11 we're at war would probably be close to zero.

MS. BROOKS: I'm sorry, the number who would say –

Q: Who would say we're at war would probably be close to zero.

MS. BROOKS: Who know that we're at war would be zero.

Q: Yeah. And that's my premise and feel free to dispute that. You know, in D.C. we've been talking about renewal of the Authorization for Use of Military Force for some time. What impact do you think it has on the country, on civilians in particular who are not associated with the military, who haven't served, who don't come from military families, who don't live near military installations to have 16 years of a war that's been paid largely off the books, where they're not fighting, they're not dying, they're not coming home and encountering people who have and the impact on the divide between those who serve and those who are being protected.

MS. BROOKS: Yeah. That's a great question, Alex. And Alex is also a colleague teaching at Georgetown as an adjunct professor. I think you're right that the majority of American civilians do not in a sort of day-to-day sense feel the impact of our ongoing wars. And I think they don't – there's a short-term, long-term thing. They don't feel it. They don't see it. They don't know anybody who feels it or sees it. That doesn't mean it doesn't affect them. You know, it's sort of much like a – you know, slow-acting cancer. It will hurt them later. They just don't know it yet because, obviously, the decisions that we make both in terms of budgetary decisions will affect us all ultimately.

But also I think the impact on American society of having such a large number of people fighting our wars, coming back in many cases injured or in other cases with post-traumatic issues, the impact on families, the impact on children is enormous and it will have ripple effects through the whole society in the long run that will eventually come back to all those who are happily oblivious.

But, I mean, I think you're right. I think that the – I read an interesting book and a somewhat depressing book a few months back that I was reviewing. It was a book called "Forged by Fire" by Frances McCall Rosenbluth and John Ferejohn, political scientists. And it was making an argument that I've seen before but it was extremely well researched and persuasive, which was that, historically, when you look across multiple human societies for thousands of years, there has been a real tight correlation between manpower-intensive forms of warfare and the advance of democracy, the expansion of suffrage, the expansion of government protection of basic individual rights.

And the reasoning to somewhat oversimplify a complicated and very serious book is that when elites need large numbers of people from the masses because they need to throw their bodies at other bodies in order to defend their society, that they make concessions. They say, okay, fine. You can vote. Okay, fine, you know, we'll respect your rights. And that during periods of time and in societies in which forms of war power were less manpower intensive, where you didn't need mass armies, that there tended to be retrenchment in terms of respect for rights and in terms of the suffrage.

That doesn't bode particularly well for American democracy if that is accurate. You know, as we shift towards more high-tech forms of warfare, as we shift towards semi-autonomous and autonomous weapon systems, towards unmanned aerial vehicles, et cetera, and we are able to prosecute our nation's wars with fewer and fewer people and a smaller and smaller slice of our population, that basic tension and that basic sort of governance bargain I think does become jeopardized.

Now, I don't think that the solution to this is, hey, I've got a great idea. Let's have a new world war, you know, although, historically our major wars have led in this country as well to major civil rights advances, for instance. But I do think that it poses a real conundrum for all of us. You know, if that is in fact the case, that historically advances in civil and human rights and advances in democracy have very much been driven by technologies of warfare, then that suggests that we're in bad moment and that things aren't likely to change soon and that we may see associated with current trends in warfare a real assault on some of the hard-won gains when it comes to democracy and rights. As I said, I do apocalypse.

MS. SCHAKE: Yeah.

MR. CARTER: Wow. (Laughter.) Charlie.

MS. BROOKS: Any other questions?

MR. CARTER: You know, the Bombshell – they're drinking at their panel.

MS. BROOKS: Yeah. They're drinking in the other room. Are you kidding me? We're in the wrong panel, guys.

MS. SCHAKE: We are in the wrong panel.

MS. BROOKS: Charlie.

Q: Charlie Dunlap, legend in my own mind. So yesterday, Gallup came out with its poll again and it found that the military was, once again, the most trusted institution in society. It was down a tick, but within the parameters. I was a little surprised at that given all the controversy about General Flynn and the role of generals and so forth. What's the take of the panel on that? Does that fit with your theory, Kori?

MS. SCHAKE: Yeah. I think it does fit. The public – there is so little – so what you see in the data across 20 years’ time is that public respect for the military has remained roughly stable and high. What has changed is the public respect for elected officials has fallen through the floorboards. So it’s not that there is increased respect for the military. It’s that the enormity of the gap between who we trust in our society has changed because we don’t trust anybody else.

So it has policy implications in that it encourages suits to hide behind the uniforms when something hard needs to be done, right, because they’re validating in a way that political leaders in the near term fear that they can’t get their policies achieved otherwise. But, of course, it has a terrible long-term consequence of further emasculating political leaders who actually get elected by us to aggregate our societal preferences. And the military cannot substitute for that. But we see the public becoming more and more comfortable with a politicized role for veterans and a politicized role for active duty folks because they don’t trust the political leaders.

MR. CARTER: Can I sharpen that question a bit and maybe look at it through the lens of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which I think at best have been mixed outcomes? To what extent should that be affected? Should the military’s position in society be affected by the outcomes in these wars? And why or why not the society allocate blame according to these mixed outcomes?

MS. SCHAKE: So I wish Tom Ricks were here to dust this up because he believes that the military doesn’t get nearly enough criticism for losing our last several wars. I personally, as somebody who was the director for defense strategy in the Bush White House am richly aware of the fact that the major mistakes of the Iraq war were not military, although there were definitely military mistakes. They were mistakes by the political leadership. And I think the reason you don’t see the public much more critical of the military is that the public basically has the same sensibilities.

MR. CARTER: They see that too. Mark, you probably saw close-up – I mean, there are some decisions, you know, and maybe things in Iraq like the swapping out of CJTF 7 or certain force structure decisions, purely military or mostly military, and then there are larger decisions that belong in the White House. Where do you see that balance playing out?

MR. HERTLING: I am somewhere between Dr. Schake and Mr. Ricks in terms of – I think we do – the military does a pretty good job of actually investigating themselves and continuously trying to fix or improve. The challenge has been partly because of a changing political landscape or political strategic direction. The other one has been insurgencies are just hard. And this is the first time we faced one of this kind of level, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. And you’re dealing with a battlefield that is affected not just by who you’re fighting, but who their leaders are as well. We saw a little bit of that in Vietnam. We’re seeing a lot of that in both Iraq and Afghanistan and that’s certainly caused the (effect ?).

But here’s the other thing. The American people don’t like to put people on the spot who they know are the only ones fighting.

MR. CARTER: That's fair. I think – I had gotten the signal to wrap up as you were talking. So I'm going to close us here and thank the four of you for joining us today and thank everyone for joining us in this conversation. (Applause.)

End Transcript