

**Assistant Secretary of the Navy Meredith A. Berger
Energy, Installations, and Environment**

**Defense Writers Group
Project for Media and National Security
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Moderator: Good afternoon and welcome. I'm Thom Shanker. I'm the Director of the Project for Media and National Security at George Washington University. I welcome all of you to this Defense Writers Group. We're honored to have Meredith A. Berger who has just corrected me. She has one title now, not two. She is the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment. It sounds to me like more than enough to do during the day.

The ground rules are this is on the record, but nothing is for rebroadcast -- audio or video. Please record it for your own accuracy. I'll ask the first question, and then some of you emailed in advance to get on the questioners list. We'll go around the table. And others who aren't on the list, of course, there will be time for you, and then a few minutes before the hour I'll ask Ms. Berger to wrap up.

Thank you so much for being here. This topic is absolutely -- I don't want to say I'm obsessed with climate and national security but being a very traditional national security guy from 9/11 onward, I find this topic very, very important. So can you talk a little bit about how the Navy sees climate change as increasing risk globally? And the second part, how does climate change make executing on the Navy mission harder?

A/S Berger: Sure. Thank you for the kind invitation. It's nice to spend time with all of you. I think often it's voices, so it's nice to see faces.

One title I actually will add which I think is relevant to this group in conversation, is I am also the Chief Sustainability Officer for the Department of Navy. This is new. So I just wanted to note that as well as we get into this conversation. An important driver. As a traditional national security person I hope that climate very much becomes part of the traditional national security conversation. It's a driver. It's important.

The Department of the Navy is doing this, the Navy and Marine

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Corps, because it makes us better warfighters so that is the driver of everything that we do. This is no exception. It's a reinforcement.

When we talk about being better warfighters, we're talking about meeting mission, and one of the things that we're seeing as we look at the climate crisis, as we look at the impacts of climate change, is that the mission set that our naval forces are facing is increased because of the impact. So we're seeing a disruption in terms of stronger storms, the impacts there; access to resources because of saltwater intrusion. A lot of the things that are the generators of conflict around the world, and we're seeing those things happen.

As we see these impacts increasing the mission requirements, we're similarly seeing a converse effect in terms of our ability to be able to respond as we are spread out more broadly across this mission set. It's harder to [meet]. There's an increased need for it and it is more difficult for our naval forces to be able to respond across the spectrum and across all of these needs. So this is something that we're looking at across the conflict continuum because it matters at every point.

I'll note this is a readiness issue. So when we talk about readiness we are talking about the ability of our sailors, our Marines, and I'm just going to say the whole department, include our civilians, to be able to train, equip, prepare and execute for all that our nation asks them to do.

So for us, climate readiness is mission readiness. This is something that is a driver for how we do things and how we prepare for them. For that reason we're working on creating a climate-ready force. That is our driver at the Department of Navy. It's something that you'll see in the climate strategy that we just put out. This is a place that we are looking to reduce the climate threat and increasing our resilience. So those are our driving actions as we do this.

I'll address the second part of your question quickly as well. AS we look at how this impacts what we are doing and what we are trying to accomplish here, this is a place that we are seeing everyone call this an existential threat. This is something that we are hearing from the President all the way down to sailors and marines are talking about this. And we're hearing this from partners, too. This is something that everyone is

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calling an existential threat, and so we are reacting in kind.

This is a place that on the installation side we are seeing impacts in terms of sea level rise, saltwater encroachment, were seeing harder storms hit more often. The thing about Navy and Marine Corps is that we're right next to the ocean because that's where we operate. So we are really feeling those impacts. So we're thinking about natural and built infrastructure to increase that resilience and using partnerships to be able to do that. That's a great thing from resilience. Our installations and infrastructure to some of our energy resilience.

Then on what I'll call the sea and field side, this is about having the advantage when we are forward deployed. With alternative options in terms of energy and also with advanced technology which we are looking at, there's an opportunity to make sure that we can stay on station longer, that we are reducing that dependency. All going back to mission and warfighting.

And as a second note, if we can create our own energy that independence is also an advantage. We've seen energy used as both a tool and a weapon. We need look no further than the headlines to see what that dependency can do to warfighting. Similarly, and in response and with cognizance, we are making sure that is not a vulnerability that we have.

Moving forward and thinking through all of these elements and pieces, this is something that's not new to the department, but this is refocused -- I almost said reenergized -- which is too cute a pun for breakfast time. So we are refocused, we are renewing our efforts, we are making sure that we are working with purpose here because we have constantly met challenges with innovation to make sure that we are the best warfighters.

So from wind and sail to coal to fuel, fuel to sometimes nuclear, this is how we have reacted as naval services, as a department to make sure that we are always becoming better warfighters.

A more recent example of this is Marine Corps Logistics Base who got the charge a little over a decade ago to meet ambitious energy goals through partnership and through innovation and through determination. They became the first net zero energy

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base in the Department of Defense.

We're doing the same thing with our energy strategy and making sure that with those ambitious goals we continue to innovate, we continue to drive forward, and we continue to make sure that we are the best warfighters.

[Phone interruption].

That's a sure-fire signal that I should give someone else a chance to talk too, but I wanted to make sure that I had framed our thinking for you as we go into the conversation.

Moderator: My follow-up goes to the installations part of your title. You mentioned rising sea levels. We've all been to Norfolk, we've all been to Coronado, Bremerton. Rising sea levels are not something you can debate, it is happening. So what do you do when these incredibly important vast installations are at risk of being flooded over even our lifetime, even from an old guy like me, it could be in my lifetime.

A/S Berger: They are flooding now. So whether you look at Norfolk as you mentioned, Paris Island, we're seeing flooding at Naval Base San Diego as well. As we see these sea levels rise we have to make sure that we are thinking about what we can do to mitigate and what we can do to adapt. So you're seeing things like lifting up places, whether it is roads or buildings, as we look at some of our shipyard optimization, we're building to higher flood plains, to contemplate exactly what you're talking about because it is not going away. It is impactful. It's everything from people being able to get to their office to be able to do their daily work, to much more consequential and costly impacts.

Moderator: Thank you.

The first of those who asked a question in advance is Audrey Decker of Inside Defense.

DWG: Hi, nice to see you in person.

When you first rolled out Climate Action 2030 in our call in May, you mentioned that the Navy is pursuing fuel alternative because the operational platforms, ships and aircraft, are kind

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of the biggest emitters there. So I was wondering is how is the fuel alternative effort going? And is that something that's feasible for the Navy to go to these fuel alternatives with the new [inaudible]?

A/S Berger: Feasible, yes. I don't have a timeline on it yet. So we are working hand in hand with industry to make sure that what they are thinking about -- and this is everything from fuel to technology -- is going to meet our requirements. Because first and foremost we need to make sure that we are meeting our warfighting requirements, our mission requirements. But there's opportunity there, especially with technology. And as we've seen advances in hybrid electric drives and other kind of mixed medium alternatives, technology and advanced technology, we're taking those steps to be able to make those advances, making sure that we are working in an informed and purposeful way, not sacrificing warfighting, not sacrificing mission. But recognizing that there is a real driving need to be able to do that.

Part of what we are doing with Climate Action 2030 is we are right now in the 90-day spring phase of making sure that we're attaching those purposeful marks and metrics to how we move forward. This is a cross-department effort so it's everyone from our RDA folks, so looking at that we start thinking about the new acquisitions, to Sergeant Major and MCPON are part of this to make sure that when we're getting things out to our sailors and marines that it's something that matches what we need operationally. Same with the CNO and Commandant. So we're making sure that we are taking a comprehensive and informed look.

DWG: Are fuel alternatives part of that 90 day sprint to figure out?

A/S Berger: Yes, it's part of our considerations.

Moderator: Next is Kate {McCree} of CIO.

DWG: Probably the 2016 timeframe, the Navy had been talking quite a bit about reducing fuel dependency as well. I'm kind of looking at technological changes they could make that might reduce fuel consumption by like one percent or two percent. I was thinking more about distributed operations and just sort of really tackling the logistics footprint that has to trail around

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[inaudible].

I just wonder if that's changed the mindset maybe and what technologies you're pursuing to reduce fuel dependency. Or if the operational needs have in any way changed the conversation and maybe influenced research dollars for those kinds of projects.

A/S Berger: Yes. As for research dollars, I'd have to go back and get you specifics, but more broadly in terms of conversation, absolutely logistics is a driver. The more that we can do to shorten that logistics tail, reduce that dependency, make sure that we are not creating a contested environment because we haven't explored those options is a driving force of that type of conversation.

DWG: There any key initiatives? Like obviously the ships that you have today are the ships you have today and you can't get the new propulsion systems or anything, but are there any kind of big ideas that you think might really get after that [inaudible] from having to constantly sail along with a boiler, anything like that? Any big projects you'd highlight?

A/S Berger: We are looking at the way that we distribute energy. I mentioned before hybridization, which allows us to be more efficient in how we're using that. We've seen up to 20 percent increased efficiency because of those hybrid engines.

The next piece is thinking about the little things that make a big difference. Everything from using the different paints that -- make sure that we're not having as much of the saltwater intrusion. LED lighting recues the overall energy that we're using. Stern flaps also make sure that we're being the most efficient in terms of how we're doing things.

So as we look across the spectrum it's how can we first be more efficient with what we have, and then what else do we need to make sure that we're maximizing that.

Moderator: Mallory Shelbourne, USNI News.

DWG: Thank you so much for being here.

You mentioned the buyout plan and I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about that. We've been hearing about

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that plan for a few years now and there's been a lot of back and forth in Congress about how much they want to invest. But how is it working on your end? How close are you working with them? How are you trying to weave in the climate piece into the actual work that's [inaudible]?

A/S Berger: This is the place, and I'll stick to the climate and energy pieces that I see. But SIOP is an opportunity for us to make sure that we are taking every opportunity to increase and include energy efficiency, climate resilience. So this is the place where we are, as I mentioned, building to higher flood plains because we recognize that this is some years down the line and we're not going to see a reduction that reduces sea level rise, to Thom's point. So that is one place, the electrification of some of the tools that are there. So things like forklifts, cranes, other heavy lift type things. There's an opportunity for electrification there that we are looking at.

Similarly there are innovations such as cooling pavement and other things that are going to reduce heat in some places that we're really seeing the impact of heat especially on workers, on health. The Pacific Northwest is coming up as a SIOP project.

So these are some examples of where we'll have the opportunity to anticipate what is coming, make sure that we are putting in our best thinking and solutions in terms of how to be more energy efficient, climate cognizant, and create overall the best investment that we can.

DWG: On another topic, the Navy has a couple of really big ticket programs in the future that they're starting to develop now. How are you working with the R&D folks to weave in the climate piece to see if they can make these platforms more efficient? That [inaudible] opportunity they really have to make [inaudible]. Things that aren't actually built.

A/S Berger: Yes. There's a good partnership with the RDA team, and this is a place where the Chief Sustainability Officer responsibilities come in to really make sure that as a department we are considering these aspects at all points.

One really good example, and it's a driver from the Department of Defense, is Secretary Hicks recently on Earth Day actually, put out a directed memo to include more purposeful capture and requirements for our energy consumption that [treks] across the

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industrial base. So that's a place where the RDA portfolio will be focused on that. And it's a place where we have a partnership so that I can take what we're talking about as a department from a climate perspective, from a Chief Sustainability Officer perspective, and make sure that there are some really opportunities to drive that focus, make sure that we're meeting or exceeding those objectives, and signaling to the market that this is the direction that we are going.

The department is a big market driver and this is an opportunity to signal what our requirements are so that we are meeting those climate objectives.

Moderator: Suzanne Smalley of CyberScoop.

DWG: Hi, thanks for being here.

I'm focused on cyber, and I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about the next generation cyber threat. I think all of us were a little bit blind-sided by Colonial Pipeline. You mentioned it in some congressional testimony I found, and talked about your work on cyber. So I would love any specific examples of programs or ways that you're trying to counter the threat, given how kind of expansive it becomes.

A/S Berger: That is an example of something that we need to pay close attention to because resilience with climate as a driver, there's also resilience in terms of what you're talking about, that independence, that ability to operate. And whether it is a manmade or natural interruption, if we cannot go forward and meet mission, be able to execute what we need to do, then we are not prepared for the environment in which we need to fight.

So as you see things coming up, and a couple of examples are at Paris Island and also at Miramar and also at Marine Corps Logistics Space, Albany, you're starting to see microgrids and storage and the ability to island for up to 14 days in some cases, so that no matter what happens, the ability to have our energy, to be able to move forward is available and there. It's also, in the case of Paris Island, off the grid.

So it is totally independent, not connected to any external internet or any external systems. So it truly is independent and cannot be interfered with or interrupted, creating that ultimate resilience of both energy but also guarding against

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interference.

We need to be very, very careful in terms of our critical infrastructure. So as we think about what it means to guard against climate, it's also making sure that we are guarding against that interference which I know is what you're focused on.

DWG: Thanks. When you say islands, I see an island is totally cut off from the grid. In other cases does that mean they rely on generators or what does that mean?

A/S Berger: Generators. Storage. The ability to operate independently is that [inaudible].

DWG: And that's for 14 days you said?

A/S Berger: I need to double check if Paris Island is 14 days. Let me get back to you on that. But I know that there are other installations that can do it. I just want to make sure I've matched it correctly for you.

Moderator: Other questions from the floor?

DWG: Justin Katz with Breaking Defense.

COVID has taught a lot of folks, especially the federal government, that we don't need offices as much as we think we do. We don't need communal spaces as much as we think we do. So I guess I was wondering if there's any discussion in the Navy, particularly with respect to the climate issue and reducing the footprint, are there any discussions about we have this, I don't know, whatever 50-person office space at this installation and frankly, we don't need it. Maybe we can just get rid of it.

Are there any kinds of discussions about reducing the installation footprint as a means of tackling this issue because of the telework climate that we've kind of run into?

A/S Berger: There are multiple drivers that are arguing this is the opportunity to look at our footprint in terms of installations. So as we look at that certainly mission is the driver. So depending on the mission set, there are some places that we just need people to come into an office, of course. But

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also we're looking across our portfolio and making sure that we're making informed decisions in terms of the current state of the installation and the infrastructure. So where can we make improvements? Where is this a place that perhaps there's not a driving need and we won't need that space as much? This is a process that is informed and an ongoing consideration but constantly looking to make sure that the installation and the construction that we have is at a high quality, is going to be resilient against some of the threats that we are talking about, and then also is space that we need. So that's an ongoing evaluation that we're being thoughtful about.

DWG: Josh Keating from Grid News.

I was wondering when you look at other countries' militaries and how they're incorporating climate thinking or not into their planning, if there's anything that really stands out as exciting for you, and this could be other competitor countries or [inaudible]?

A/S Berger: Climate is one of the great convenors at this point. It's something that everyone is realizing is impacting them and giving a lot of opportunity for partnership which helps to drive goals even further forward.

There are a few places where I think we've seen that examples, the UK is one. They've put out a pretty ambitious climate toward strategy and also made it very consumable which is important to make sure that people understand why and what is happening. It's also a place where we are able to partner with people to create enhanced partnerships and equality and opportunity. We've recently seen that in the Blue Pacific there has been a move to offer climate as support and not in a way that is necessarily fair to those partners. So as we look at ways to make sure that we have continued and steady engagement with partners who are valued and who we want to continue to enhance our partnership with, we're seeing impacts from climate that are not matched with their contribution to it. There's a way to make sure that we are working as partners in different regions as well to enhance overall goals.

We talked about an existential threat. This is something that everyone has recognized there is a driver to work together. And I think that's true, whether we're talking about close partners or the broader ecosystem. It's important to note that this is

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an ecosystem and so everybody's contributions and the way that everybody works together is a driver.

We were talking about cyber and we often talk about system of systems, and this is kind of an ecosystem like ecosystems where we've got these interdependencies and these independent actions that have impact on others. It's something that we're very cognizant of so we learn from others and then also we contribute.

DWG: You kind of anticipated my follow-up question, if you look at countries like the Solomon Islands recently, and [inaudible], some of the most climate-threatened countries on earth. With the sort of emphasis on basing and geostrategic competition in the Pacific, how do you see climate as playing a role in that in this US-China competition for influence basing in the Pacific region?

A/S Berger: It's a place where as there's increased impact and increased consequences that the Navy and Marine Corps are going to be the first responders to some of these HADR events and others, and so it's certainly a mission driver and one that we are committed to and will always respond to. But we're going to see increases there and we will see others who are going to try and compete in that space by offering assistance and trying to create that presence there, which is not the way that we do things.

So continued partnership, continued response, continued innovation. There are initiatives like Local 2030 where those island nations are getting the opportunity to contribute to the way forward. We have academic partnerships creating consortiums across that region to make sure that we're learning from each other. Some of these most impacted nations have some of the best lessons that we can learn. We have some of our lessons that we can share. So as we continue to build purposely around that ecosystem place and a real opportunity for partnership.

DWG: Nuray Taylor, Signal Media [inaudible].

What would you say to an [inaudible] initiative?

A/S Berger: That's a big question. I think it's layered for both. Best case scenario is a global ecosystem that has greater cognizance of and commitment to what it means to be actively

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combating the climate crisis, and so I think there is a real culture mindset opportunity that if we seize it, the rest follows.

The next step in the best case scenario, I see that we have not seen advance in temperature. We have found a place where we can at the very least halt if not step back or excuse me, be on a path to step back from some of the advances that we're seeing right now because we haven't taken action.

We're in a place where we have advanced technology, where we have more diverse and reliable energy sources, and this is for the Navy and Marine Corps, but this is something that's important for partners and communities as well. We see this where we have bases and we see this for all of our impacted partners, allies and everybody, that if we have that in place as well all these things together are going to mean that in this best case scenario we have taken action and seen results. So that is a scoping of what I think a best case scenario is.

On the other end of the spectrum, this is the decisive decade, so if we do not take those actions then we are in a place where we are not going to be able to make a difference anymore.

There are so many consequences of that from disease, mental health, not having a lot of our infrastructure and shorelines that we count on for today. Increased storms, depleted energy resources. We're talking about a real difference in our existence and if that isn't consequential, [inaudible] drive an action, then I don't know what is.

There's a long list of what the worst case scenario is, and so as we operate in a decisive decade as a military, as a community around the globe, then that means taking action and not setting ourselves up for the alternative.

DWG: Stephen Lee with Bloomberg. Thanks for doing this.

We know that in the private sector one of the real challenges to the climate crisis is environmental permitting, and that if you want to build anything in this country you have to go through this very lengthy permitting process under NEPA, State laws, and that can take really long time and can cause litigation, it can cause in the private sector financial backers to just walk away because they're not going to wait seven years to get

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something built.

When I hear you talk about some of the sort of changes to the kind of basics, for instance raising roads, building [inaudible] infrastructure, that type of thing. Is permitting an issue for the military as well?

A/S Berger: Yes. We go through the same processes in terms of environmental permitting and we look at all of the environmental considerations that we have to make sure that we're matching them with mission readiness.

It takes some time sometimes but eliminates all of the considerations that we need to have to make sure that we are responsible actors within the environment. This is everything from endangered species, considering the myriad of things that I know you're familiar with in terms of the environmental permitting process. But it is a consideration, it's an important part of the process and it's one that helps us to be better community members.

We also find efficiencies that are places that we can be better partners in terms of sharing these responsibilities with communities as we well.

So programs like DSIP and REPI, the second of which is focusing more on that readiness portion and the DSIP with partnerships across the fence lines, help us make sure that as we make these improvements going through processes, we're still doing it in a way that benefits the community and maintains our mission readiness.

DWG: But it doesn't sound like it's a problem. I mean we know that it's a huge problem in the private sector, but it doesn't sound like that's the case here.

A/S Berger: I think, everyone always wishes that things could happen faster. This is true on so many things, whether we could, if we could accelerate advanced technologies, if we could accelerate fuel options, if we could accelerate the good benefits of all the actions that we're talking about, we would. And this is a process that takes some time but we are also making sure that we're doing it right.

Moderator: We'll go to round two of questions, and I'll start.

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The strategic level about the tyranny of time and the tyranny of dollars. Inside the building there's always a debate about investing in today's wars versus future wars, I'm sure you'd say that the climate challenge is both, but how do you see the balance right now? Do you think the leadership understands that this is not something for tomorrow? It has to be invested in today.

A/S Berger: I do think so. And we're seeing that from President Biden, we're seeing that from the Department of Defense leadership. I think a lot of us have spent some time around budget at this point and resourcing is the best indication of intent. And so I agree with you that it is both. And this is something that in terms of resourcing we're being purposeful about within the budget system we are tagging our climate investments to make sure that we know what's here now and what is intended across the FYDP.

Also planning for things in the out years, so making sure there are near term impacts that we can do close in time, and then going out longer, understanding what the aggregate is because there are time factors, there are dollar factors, and so making sure that we're placing those purposely across the continuum there.

Moderator: Thank you.

Meghann, you had a follow-up?

DWG: Thank you. I wondered if you could follow up on the Red Hill fuel storage situation. Obviously in the FY23 spending plan that's going through Congress now, there's still money in there for cleanup and sort of the immediate aftermath, but I wonder if you looked at FY24 and beyond. Are there additional costs specifically there? But then what does that mean for other fuel storage facilities? Is there a deinvestment in that? Is there needing more momentum for things like the next generation budget [inaudible]? I just wondered kind of budgetarily what the [inaudible]?

A/S Berger: I think this is a good example of your earlier question. IF we think about reducing that logistics tail and where we're thinking about following efficiencies and reducing that dependency and everything else, the more that we have those

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advanced technologies the more that we have fuel that's going to allow us to stay on station longer, the more that we are going to be able to reduce our dependency on places like a Red Hill.

So that's one of the greatest things that's coming out of what we are looking towards in going forward.

DWG: So any -- I guess you look to '24 for example. Are there any like big looming costs that you see or you know, I'm curious how you have to look at the near term spending.

A/S Berger: Looming costs for?

DWG: You know the latest for Red Hill or just anything that may have sparked any changes?

A/S Berger: The redistribution is really a question for Department of Defense and Defense Logistics Agency since they are the ones that do fuel distribution and allocation, so they would be the best ones to answer you on costs associated there.

DWG: Thank you.

DWG: I just wanted to follow-up on the Chief Sustainability Officer at [Inaudible]. Can you talk about when that happened and what your actions are, what is next [inaudible] the job? Just give us information.

A/S Berger: This is a new thing and it's something that the Department of Defense has done in all the other service -- Service Secretaries in my position are also the Chief Sustainability Officers for their services.

So from the President's sustainability EO, he asked that each of the departments have a Chief Sustainability Officer and so as we work together to execute, that is the opportunity to make sure that we are meeting objectives like the ones we talked about earlier in terms of research development and acquisition, making sure that we're putting in those requirements in signaling what it needs. It's also a lot of things that traditionally fall under the climate portfolio as I'll call it, so making sure that we have resilience built into the structure, both in the cyber defense and in the climate defense realms. And making sure that we have a department-wide approach to what it means to incorporate that resilience, that sustainability, in everything

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that we are doing.

DWG: [Inaudible]?

A/S Berger: I need to get you the exact date, but it was a few months ago.

DWG: Can we actually, at the risk of not being terribly sensitive, just get your communication person's email or something so I can follow up on the 14 days --

A/S Berger: Yep.

Voice: I'll get it to you.

Moderator: I can vouch, he's very responsive and very helpful.

Any other questions, follow-ups?

(No response)

I'll ask the last one then before we invite you for any closing comments.

There's journalistic phrases, a eureka moment, an aha moment, what was yours?

A/S Berger: With respect to climate?

Moderator: Yes, ma'am. You said, you know what? This is important. I'm a career professional. This is what I want to do.

A/S Berger: I think it comes from very early in life, in that I grew up in South Florida. We're about to hit the 75 year mark of when the first hurricane hit Fort Lauderdale actually, which is right near where I grew up. I saw that mangroves were the protectors of the shoreline, and that when storms hit you lost your power, and you had to figure out what to do about it. And the roads flooded when it was torrentially downpouring and wind and everything else that comes with these hurricanes, knocking down houses and they're not standing up against it and it's impacting the way that we work and live.

So we talked a little about cyber, so we talk a lot about

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digital natives. I think I'm a climate native. I'm part of that generation. We are the first climate natives where we are informed in the environment, we grew up with it, we understand adaptation and mitigation and resilience and implement it and have been. I grew up recycling. I grew up turning out the lights to make sure we weren't wasting energy.

I didn't realize it as a eureka moment, but it's something I think about a lot now. And it's something that has been with me throughout my career. So I think it was that start and that's the thing that I can always go back to and that is the thing that I innately understand and I know that there are more people like that and that's who are sellers of marine [inaudible], and that's where it all comes together, and we are seeing people everywhere talking about this because I think it's the people who grew up in it who are now seeing some real changes from when they were little. That is the driver.

So I don't know if it's a single moment, but I think that is the thing that drives me.

Moderator: That's a terrific answer.

For you and for those who are here for the first time, the Defense Writers Group, the Project for Media and National Security, our mission, our funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York is to convene very smart senior-level officials with the best reporters in town for a calm, substantive discussion which today has been. And we thank you so much.

Do you have any final thoughts to share? If not, we'll thank you and your staff for your time today.

A/S Berger: A quick thank you, and then just something I wanted to share with you all that we have coming up in the next week. And we can talk more about partnership and making sure that people understand and work together. So in something that is a little bit non-traditional, but I think will be a really great learning experience.

We are bringing together for a half-day tabletop exercise and it's more of an immersive educational experience, [hooks] from the Hill, hooks from industry, folks from the Pentagon and folks from think tanks and academia to come together and really think about an experience, what it means to operate in a climate

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impacted environment.

So we're excited to bring these people together . we're going to create the right level of stress in a very responsible way to see that it is hard to make these choices and there are unanticipated consequences and there are costs and impacts and all sorts of intervening circumstances that we need to think about from each others' perspectives.

So we will be doing that in the next week and I would love to tell anyone who is interested in more about it, but it's a way that I think we can involve more people and help people understand too what it means for the Navy and Marine Corps, for the military to be operating in this climate impacted environment.

So I'm available to all of you too, if you have any other questions or would like to talk about this more. It's something that I, we, the entire department is excited about and dedicated to. So available as you'd be interested, and just grateful for the time.

Moderator: Will there be an after-action report on that? How will people like us be able to understand what you learned from this tabletop?

A/S Berger: Androids are a good point of contact there to be involved, but we'll definitely be letting you know what happens.

DWG: Is it open source? Like is there classification --

A/S Berger: No, it will not be classified.

DWG: So we could probably learn a lot from [inaudible]?

A/S Berger: That is my hope and intention.

DWG: Great.

Moderator: Thank you all for coming. Thank you for joining us today. It's been a thoughtful and informative discussion.

A/S Berger: Thank you so much.

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