

Interviewer: [REDACTED]

Hi. So let's begin by just asking you about the "well we have a paper unemployment I think that you've read and have some reactions to it. And I just am going to ask you very generally to tell me what your thoughts are about it and we'll get to some specifics afterwards.

LTG T. Bostick:

[REDACTED] Well, in general I think the whole concept of talent management is a good one for our Army. I think it's been very challenging for the Army during this period of time where we're fighting two wars to really look at the professional development of our officers across a broad range of skillsets while also meeting the demands of our war fighting force. So it's really time for the senior leaders of the Army and all of those that we lead to think through where it is we want to take the leaders of the 21st Century and what types of skills "what types of talents" are going to be required for them to be successful in the years ahead.

Interviewer: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The paper makes a number of recommendations specifically to look more to a kind of free market approach to having officers choose in a sense their own assignments and those in need of the Army show where those needs are "matching them up. Does that sound like a productive use of a strategic approach? Before you answer that let me ask Sergeant Cookie "just move the microphone over a tad so it's closer. I will let you know if it's not in the frame. That's good. Make sure it doesn't have to get a balance. We're fine. That's good. Good, terrific.

Sergeant Cookie:

This is fine up there?

0:01:51

Interviewer: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] No. As long as second voice it's fine.

LTG T. Bostick:

[REDACTED]

I think the concept of young officers identifying their special talents and skills and being able to express those in a medium where supervisors could then match those skills and talents with the jobs that are directly related to them. I think that idea is a good concept and it's executing that in this environment that we need to sort out how do we do that? How do we slow the tempo of the Army down enough and give opportunities to our young officers to really move into those jobs that are really suited to them. But I think the concept is a good one.

Interviewer: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The concept is built of course around the whole notion of strategy and looking forward and I'm curious how you feel about this notion of a talent base strategy. This was defined in the paper "I suppose I could define it again for you if you want. But whatever your reactions to a talent-based officer core strategy.

LTG T. Bostick:

[REDACTED]

Well, I think in some areas and with some leaders the notion of talent has a negative connotations. If you look at "I was reading one of the articles on Enron and they talked about talent management in McKinsey's involvement in that. And I don't know that that's the issue with some of the officers but there's also a concern of treating people in a way that's special for one group and not for the masses. And we're often in the military feeling that we should treat everyone equally. But at the end of the day each officer has special talents and they come to the table with different skills that they've developed growing up. They have different experiences through education and assignments and we all have values that we've developed throughout the Army. So when you combine that into the talent of the individual, it's very different for each officer. So fundamentally I would agree that we ought to look for that talent and that officers who have that have not been able to express the specific talents that they have. It would be useful for us to have a medium in which we could identify that and frankly I think it would be a win-win situation for both the organization "to identify the right person for the right job at the right time" and for the individual "to feel that they're contributing to the team in a very special way that they uniquely have capabilities.

Interviewer: A A A

So it sounds like generally you’re endorsing the paper and the thrust of its argument.
Is that right?

LTG T. Bostick:

I’m not sure I would say that I was endorsing the entire paper. What I want to ensure is that for those that are involved in the management of careers and officers at this time, the demands on the Army are significant. And I would say that for the Army Human Resources Command for our leaders that are managing officers in very short supply that they are doing a wonderful job in trying to do that. And if you then try to ask, “Are they managing talent in a way that they should be?” In this environment the answer would be, “Probably not.” Because the demands are so great that just meeting the demands in an environment where we’re short significantly for example in Majors we’re probably short just under 3000 Majors. And given that, the ability of those that are in the career assignment business are doing miraculous work just to try to get the job done.

I think the argument is not that they’re not doing miraculous work. I think that in general the authors believe that the work that is being done by HRC is very strong. The question is whether the strategic leadership has been adequate to the task, whether we are now looking at the kinds of shortages and the shortage of kinds of talent that we may need going forward. I take your point that the past 10 years have been an anomaly really. We’ve been involved in a perpetual war, really, from 2001 forward. That skews our understanding of how the assignment of officers may proceed from that. But I’m wondering if you have thoughts looking forward not with respect to a critique of HRC but with respect to how a strategy might be employed to get the best things down the road – “the best officers down the road.”

Interviewer: A A A

I’m a firm believer that officers should have a wide breadth of assignments and experiences because that adds to their talent and their ability to serve at the very senior levels. And what that might include are assignments outside the army – in Department of Defense, Joint Interagency, working in Congress, engagement with media, education. I believe all those types of assignments make a better officer. I also believe that officers should be in the trenches working in operational assignments. And they should be here in the Pentagon. It’s that the strategic level and everywhere in between are challenged now – rightly so – the focus is on the fight. And those that are in the fight tend to stay engaged in the fight and what we as senior leaders need to determine is when is it appropriate and right for the individual to pull that officer out, put them into another environment which in the long run is going to help that individual and it’s going to help the Army.

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So I guess your argument in some ways is with the practicality of the strategy. Whether it can be employed given the nature of our world. Is that right?

LTG T. Bostick:

We have to employ. We have to find a strategy that allows us to broaden our officers and that’s going to involve some short term pain probably in the near term in order to develop very broadened officers in the future. And I’m dealing with that every day where I work with different subordinate commanders and different functional areas and branches where we identify officers which we believe it’s time for them to come out of the operational fight and go into an assignment that may be very different than what they’re currently involved in. But in the long term it’s going to pay big dividends. The leader in the fight is looking at taking that officer and bumping him up to the next operational assignment that would help them in the current fight. And we have to have a near term focus but we – even more importantly – need a longer term focus. And from an Army view I’m concerned that we’re not focused enough on the longer term broadening and developing of our officers.

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A Do you see this as material that the Army can use in terms of employment to enhance the picture of those that they're trying to assign by virtue of these social media kind of techniques?

LTG T. Bostick: ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

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I think the social media is absolutely an area that we need to look at in the future and now in order to take advantage of that because that's what our youngsters are using and whether we use it or not that's the environment that young people operate in and I saw it first hand in recruiting command I was in recruiting command for three and a half years and initially we weren't using the social media and then we thought we ought to. And we asked and were directed that we couldn't. And now you'll see that Facebook is out with recruiting command. We've got a capability now when young people want to come in the Army and they want to be a mechanic they can talk to a mechanic from their home town that's deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan. We're operating in ways that we never thought we would. So I do believe that as we look to the future and we want to determine how we assign officers, how we assess their abilities, how we engage with their assignments officers, I think it's important to take advantage of social media to the greatest extent possible.

Interviewer: ^ ^ ^

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But you know in the paper we also make the argument for something called green ages which would be an opportunity to match up an employer with an employee within the Army structure, transferring precisely that kind of information and the kind of social media sort of way. Would you read the paper or that part of it. Is that something you would endorse?

LTG T. Bostick: ^

Absolutely. I think " "

Interviewer: ^ ^ ^

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Can you use the word green pages?

LTG T. Bostick:

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Right. I've read the green pages. I've read about them. I've been online to take a look at it. I think it's a very strong concept and I think we ought to look very closely at how we could employ it in the future. Being an engineer and having a technical background and having graduated from West Point, taught at West Point, and now sit on a couple of the boards for the systems department and the engineering department I know there are talents uniquely suited for certain jobs that are out in either the Corps of Engineers Signal and other branches that the branch managers would certainly like a graduate of the academy or ROTC or OCS for that matter that has a skill set that they can match up. I think they would be very interested in that. When I was in Iraq among the many number of projects that we had to do, power plants was one area that we didn't have a lot of resident expertise. And if I knew someone had ability " even non-experience but had the academic ability " to understand how to operate and design power plants I could put that to use as a second lieutenant. So I do think it's important. And then there are broadening skills that are important that I think we ought to take advantage of. I've often talked about the Olmsted Scholarship Program and I wasn't an Olmsted Scholar but I know folks that have gone through that program and have had very unique skills in different countries and in different languages. And how we track the utilization of those officers, I'm not so sure. But I think we can do better in terms of how we broaden officers and then once broadened how do we utilize them throughout their career in assignments that will make a difference for them and for the organization that they're assigned in

Sergeant Cookie: ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

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So last week we talked a little bit about some changes to an officer's requirements over their career. And so we looked at company grade ranks and you might recall 80% of those company grade billets are in operational type jobs. But as you move to the senior ranks " the colonels and the general officers " 80% of them are non-operation. So it almost flips. How do officers " young officers " think about their current job and being really good in the operational task whereas the different talent requirements needed in the operational world in those younger ranks as compared to how they get ready for what they're going to need to do in the senior ranks through employment and through the type of jobs they would get as they progress through a normal career timeline?

LTG T. Bostick:

development which I think General Dempsey is helping the chief to lead and I'm working General Dempsey and Mr. Lamont that that's a big part of the future of our Army. We need to focus on it and we need to do that now. The other thing I would say is we're taking a hard look at how we support the Army Force Generation model. Which is a different model that doesn't align well with graduations from high school, graduations from college, and our own military education system like the Intermediate Level Education, our company commander's course in the Senior Service College. So that's a major change in how we fight and how we prepare for the fight but it's essential to the future of the Army that we look at how do we adjust the policies and the procedures so that soldiers coming out of the training base and coming out of the schools and into the Army Force Generation model can deploy, fight, win, redeploy and still go back to my earlier point with education, broaden their education and have the opportunities that they need to.

Interviewer: [Redacted]

Sir, when the earthquake happened in Haiti I understand you had a story of wanting to step forward and being an engineer yourself and offer your own assistance. Is that right?

Can you speak to that story?

LTG T. Bostick:

[Redacted]

I think any leader that is in our military, when there's a tragedy that strikes is going to want to be there to help, to do the best that they can as a soldier, to be a part of ongoing operations to help. My best buddies are deployed right now and they're serving and we're back here and we're doing very important work to ensure that they have the forces that they need. And when the earthquake struck, being an engineer and having operated in Bosnia and pushing troops our engineers to Kosovo and deploying into Iraq and having worked with the Corps of Engineers in an assignment there, there were certainly skills that I have that I thought I could offer. But there were other requirements back here in the building that were equally important. So I worked on those. And the troops down there did a really great job and I'm proud of them.

Interviewer: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Could you repeat that one more time only using the word Haiti in your answer because listening to your answer I realize we never referenced the actual location. I was just hoping that you could say that again.

LTG T. Bostick:

[Redacted]

Yeah. What I was saying when I saw what was happening in Haiti, I did immediately offer my assistance to go down and see because of my background in those kind of operations. When you go to a place like Bosnia or Iraq during and after a conflict, it is somewhat of a disaster situation. And engineers among other different branches have skillsets that they can offer and make a difference and I certainly like any soldier, I think, when there's a difficult time in the nation or in our army, you want to be answering the sounds of the guns so to speak. And that's what I offered to do. I had other pressing matters here in the Pentagon that I had to attend to and we have great soldiers that were down in Haiti that did a wonderful job.

Sergeant Cookie: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

So you talked to make a really strong connection between development and employment in discussion, you know how we employ our officers and the jobs we give them in assignments we give them broadening opportunities and really develop them as well so that linkage is really strong. Could you maybe talk a little bit to a linkage between our assignments and retention? Our assignments and accessions and the importance of how we bring people into the Army, how we sort of maybe set the marketing or the value of being an Army officer and what that really does for their development and their ability to stay with the Army retention. How they attract that talent as well through good employment opportunities

LTG T. Bostick:

[Redacted]

Yeah. Well first I would say that I have throughout my career I have never asked for a job and I would joke with my wife because I've been assigned to a number of jobs and I've gone there wondering why I was being assigned to this and then it turned out to be great. So my point is someone was looking out for me and I was very, very fortunate.

And maybe they weren't looking out for me and I was just lucky. But I never asked for a job except in battalion and brigade command where the HRC said, "Tell us what

What would you see this “handling some of these issues that we discussed today with respect to the officer corps” as a hallmark of your time here and if so what would you like to see accomplished under your term?

LTG T. Bostick:

Okay, let me think. You mean long term?

Interviewer:

Long term, yes. What is success to you in this position? What does it look like?

LTG T. Bostick:

You know, I was having a conversation with an officer another general officer about this topic of broadening officers and developing them. And having been in Washington for a number of years, it is very difficult to move large concepts over a short period of time. But you can make a lot of progress in different areas. And we happened to be speaking about Olmsted Scholars. And I said, “Don’t wait for us to develop an overarching program that’s going to work for the whole Army. We’re going to do that and we will work on that. But it’s going to take years to develop. But if we can find areas where we can make success and make progress in certain key areas that we know we can by example show the importance of broadened officers with this particular skillset, then we’ve made some success.” So part of what I would like to see us do is take a look at how we’ve invested in certain officers and how do we track that talent in the Army and how do we further develop it? I think we do a pretty good job in an area I’ll give you an example “the School of Advanced Military Studies. So for the SAMS or the Jedi Knights, we know who those graduates are. We know what their first assignment is and then we track them pretty well throughout their career in terms of the assignments that we need them working. But they’re generally operational type assignments from the tactical to the strategic. But we have other programs where we have invested “whether in public affairs, legislative liaison, scholarships and fellowships and education” where those officers also have very unique talents that can contribute in a significant way. Some have a Master’s in business administration for example. In this town, money is king. In just about everything we do there is a money and a people component to it. How do we manage those with that special skill in education that we have invested? Where do we assign them? And where do we see that several years down the roads that we can build the future budget officers of the Army because we’ve broadened enough officers with the tactical, the operational, and the strategic capabilities to serve in that position. So I would like to take a look at it in small groups “in key areas we can make some progress in. And then I think an umbrella strategy that says, “This is where the Army needs to be in five or ten years to develop the officers that are going to sit in this chair years from now.”

Interviewer:

Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

LTG T. Bostick:

Thank you. End of Audio