

Pentagon Attack

Interview with Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr.
Part I - July 18, 2002

Cameron: This is an interview with Admiral Edmund Giambastiani, taking place in his office at the Pentagon on July 18, 2002. The interviewers are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Rebecca Cameron.

You had been in your job about three months prior to September 11th. Had you been briefed or discussed possible terrorist attacks against the Pentagon?

Giambastiani: Not specifically against the Pentagon. We had discussed surprises and terrorist events and had seen intelligence information that talked about potential terrorist attacks anywhere in the world. Had we talked about surprise events? Yes. Did we talk specifically about the Pentagon? Probably only generally, from the perspective of surprise events and terrorist attacks.

Cameron: Was there an evacuation or crisis plan for the senior staff?

Giambastiani: You have to remember that we have a continuity-of-government plan that already existed. I think, frankly, since the end of the Cold War it had not been exercised in the way that one would normally be. I don't have specific knowledge of the metrics on how many times per year it was exercised. I think it had fallen somewhat into a less thoughtful approach than we had before. But we have sites, all of these different locations. We did have plans. We did know about them. We knew what transportation capabilities were available. But frankly, in my short time as the Secretary's senior military assistant I had not exercised them in any way before that

particular day. And, I had never visited any of our alternative sites to see if they were prepared to receive us. That is in all honesty.

Goldberg: Had the Secretary visited any of them?

Giambastiani: No, at least not in this current tour since I have been the senior military assistant.

Goldberg: Nor had the Deputy Secretary?

Giambastiani: I don't know about the Deputy Secretary.

Goldberg: He was quite disappointed when he got there.

Giambastiani: Yes. I'm going to leap way ahead for a few minutes. What happened on September 11 when we sent the Deputy out, Larry Di Rita went with the Deputy Secretary; I stayed here with the Secretary. That's how we split the front office. If this occurred again, Larry would not go out with the Deputy. He would go out with his senior military assistant, his military assistant, and his special assistant, Jamie Durnan. He would not have done it otherwise.

Goldberg: Larry would go out with him?

Giambastiani: Larry would *not* go back out with him. The reason for that is that Larry and I work as a team. There is no chief of staff up here. I work more of the military side and he works more of the interagency. I work NSC, but he works other places and there are certain lanes that we follow and try to complement each other so we can get more done.

Cameron: Does that represent a change in the division of your duties?

Giambastiani: That has nothing to do with the 11th of September, other than we would not have done it again. That decision was made on the fly, because the Deputy wanted

to take Larry with him. The Secretary said, "I have Ed here, so that's okay." It isn't that Larry was missed, but it didn't make a lot of sense. There were things that we should have done that we could have done, with the two of us working together. He and I normally will sit down together and say, "here's what needs to be done. You take these and I'll take those."

Cameron: Who then picked up that role for Larry?

Giambastiani: I did. This is not important for your OSD History, but the way Larry and I work, and I can't speak for anybody else in the past or future who has done this particular job, but we work as a team, as a kind of organism here. The only time he gets to go on leave is when I'm here, and vice versa. I can cover his stuff and he can cover mine when I'm gone, as long as I've got my military assistant here if I'm on leave. What you need to know is that we train each other to do that. I make all the trips overseas with the Secretary, in general. The only one I haven't done was when my son got married and I stayed here for an important reason. We have evolved as a team. Larry and I both came into our jobs here within a couple of weeks of each other. We started together and have grown together in that fashion, we work extremely well as a team. He and I talked numerous times during the day with him out at site R with the Deputy, and me here. That's probably more than you needed to know.

Goldberg: No, it's significant.

Cameron: Run us through what happened on September 11.

Giambastiani: I pulled out these notebooks because when I was moving so fast I took notes in both. They aren't complete, but I have a lot of stuff in them.

Goldberg: Victoria Clarke did the same thing, she took notes, too.

Giambastiani: I take notes on everything every day.

Goldberg: I asked her about her good recall, and she said she took notes.

Giambastiani: It works pretty well. I had sold my personal residence as of August 1st and was living in the temporary housing on the Navy Yard in what they call visiting flag quarters. On Friday the 7th my wife accepted the first half of our household goods, and on Monday September 10th she received the second half of our household goods. Why am I telling you this? Because when I got home on Monday the 10th, I had boxes all over my house. I lived directly across from the State Department in the BuMed complex up there, the original Naval Observatory. There are three houses there: the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, I lived next door to him, and the third was the director of DIA, a Navy vice admiral. My wife was there with boxes everywhere and one TV set up on a box for her the next morning.

I came to work and we had a congressional breakfast from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. that we were hosting. We do this all the time, they are non-partisan, bipartisan breakfasts. The reason for them is to work more closely with the Hill and, most importantly, talk about national security issues and Defense Department issues with them so that they understand where we are coming from. On that particular morning, the attendees were the Secretary of Defense; the Deputy; the Secretary of the Army; Powell Moore, the legislative assistant; Pete Aldridge, our Under Secretary for AT&L; David Chu, our Under Secretary for P&R; Pete Geren, a former congressman working as a special assistant here; John Young from the Navy, who was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition; and the following congressional members:

Hayes, Shimkus, Wicker, Hostettler, Cox, Kirk, and Mica. At breakfast we had a general discussion.

Goldberg: They are mostly Armed Services Committee people?

Giambastiani: Yes, people in the House of Representatives who are either members of the Armed Services Committee or members of the Appropriations Committee, on the House or Senate side. We work four committees and deal with what we call the "big eight," four chairmen and four ranking members on both sides. We work with the Congress, that's how we deal with them, it's one of our outreach methods. Interestingly enough, in the discussion that morning the Secretary covered surprise events. If I know Paul Wolfowitz, he has given you chapter and verse so I don't need to repeat a lot of it.

Goldberg: No, he didn't go into that much detail.

Giambastiani: There is either a foreword or a prologue we can get you from a book that talks about the surprise at Pearl Harbor. Have you seen it?

Goldberg: There are several. The one that alleged the plot on the part of Roosevelt and Churchill?

Giambastiani: No, this talked about surprise and what to be and what not to be surprised by.

Goldberg: It sounds like Roberta Wohlstetter.

Giambastiani: That's what it is. She talked in a more generic sense about Pearl Harbor in the context of history and what we should and should not be surprised by. It's a very good piece. In the month of August the Secretary had been talking about this as we were working through the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The key thing leading up to 11 September, I think, is that we had started a group series of meetings called the

Senior Level Review Group, where we brought in the Secretary, the Deputy, the service secretaries, the under secretaries, John Stenbit once he got confirmed as C³I, the service chiefs, the chairman and vice chairman, Steve Cambone, myself, and a couple other staff people. The purpose was to work the Quadrennial Defense Review and do an iterative process where we would meet several times a week. We did this all of August, really going after the Quadrennial Defense Review. Even though it didn't have to be signed out until September 30, we worked it hard and put out draft after draft. In every one of these meetings we would spend several hours going through the text line by line. It was rocky in the beginning because these are rough documents, outlines, and the rest, and we had a series of important things we wanted to talk about—capabilities based planning versus threat based planning, and those types of things. What's fascinating is that we talked about risks and about surprise in the QDR. The Pearl Harbor introduction had come into our thinking about surprise and about the discussion that the world was truly different with so many asymmetric threats. We had had a series of studies over the last four or five years that continued to talk about asymmetric threats. The word asymmetric was on everyone's brain. I was working on this in 1996 back on the Navy staff. I went through a whole series of briefs working all kinds of staff and operational assignments from 1995-96 until now. This played very heavily in our QDR discussions. We had done a huge amount of work on it before the 11th of September. So in this breakfast we had a spirited discussion on surprise, about this article, and why it was important, the fact that we never would know when or what would occur. This was between 8:00 and 9:00 in the morning.

As we were breaking up, just before 9:00, I got a notification message, as I always do about events and send them to the Secretary, that one of the World Trade Center towers had been struck by an airliner. I mentioned it to him in the passageway outside the SecDef dining room. A couple of crew members heard it. We all proceeded back to our offices, the Secretary to his and me to mine. My TV was on; I saw the live video. My "quad" screen with CNN, CNN Int'l, MSNBC, and the Fox News channel, were all zeroed in on this. All of us were concerned and we talked for a few minutes about it with the Secretary and then all went back to work. We were watching the TV, answering phones and doing our regular work, and then the second building was struck. Then there was absolutely no doubt in anybody's mind that it was not a random event or an accident. There was absolutely no doubt in my mind.

Cameron: You were here by yourself?

Giambastiani: Yes, but my doors were open as usual and there were people walking in and out. I only shut my doors if I have a meeting. You have to be the hub and figure out what's going on. I am not the gate guard, Arlene is, but I also act as one. Dr. Steve Cambone came down and we discussed whether the Pentagon might be struck and what the evacuation plan should be for the Secretary. This is after the second tower had been hit. We didn't talk about the plan itself, just the idea that the Pentagon could be a target.

Goldberg: You certainly had surprise in your mind.

Giambastiani: Yes, but in retrospect we also did not. We were not prepared in the way we should have been. I went in and informed the Secretary. Normally he doesn't put the volume on his TV, but he was watching it, and we knew there was a problem here.

I'm now going to leap ahead to when the Pentagon got struck. My door was open; his is normally shut. I heard a loud noise, like an explosion, and I could even feel the ground move. I knew something went on with this Building. I was standing here, starting to walk toward him, when the Secretary opened his door and ran over and asked me "what the hell was happening." I said it sounded like an explosion, and it sounded like it was in the Building and he needed to get out right then. He went out and went right to the crash site.

Goldberg: Out the River Entrance?

Giambastiani: Yes, I think he went this way around. Normally I would stay with him, but we had all our security people go with him and I stayed here to set up the command center. I went back into the Executive Support Center (ESC) and into OSD Cables. I also met the Deputy and told him he ought to get out of the Building. Normally the military people would go down and set up the center and then bring the Secretary or the Deputy back in after we were set up.

Goldberg: Who went with the Secretary?

Giambastiani: You need to talk to MSgt. Pete Judd, his enlisted aide. He had a group of people go with him. Security always goes with him. Normally, I send the military assistant with him around the Washington area. The Secretary does not go with a large party; he does not like a lot of straphangers and the rest of it. He keeps a very low profile. We have a couple of media people who take care of him, that's the staff. But he went to the crash site and was helping people. He was in the middle of it. He brought a piece of the aircraft back with him; it is on his desk. There was a lot of smoke and explosions. I did not see any of it; I was down here in headquarters.

Pentagon Attack

Interview with Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr.
Part II - August 1, 2002

Cameron: This is the second interview with Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, taking place in his office in the Pentagon on August 1, 2002. The interviewers are Drs. Alfred Goldberg and Rebecca Cameron.

We left with a cliffhanger last time, in which you had gotten to the point where the Secretary had gone outside with his Security detail and you had gone to the Executive Support Center (ESC). You were telling us how the day progressed from the point when the Secretary came back into the Building.

Giambastiani: No one else wanted to talk to you, so you are getting all this good stuff from me.

Goldberg: We got a lot from Victoria Clarke, and some from Stephen Cambone and Larry Di Rita.

Giambastiani: I will get back to my notes to see where we left off and I will give you the pieces that I know. The Secretary went to the site and was back here at 10:10 in the morning. When did the plane hit?

Cameron: About 9:39 a.m.

Giambastiani: I have a note here that the Secretary was in a secure video-teleconference at 10:10, he was here in the ESC by that time. So he was gone for thirty minutes or so. We went into the ESC and started to set up video-teleconferences, hookups with the National Security Council, and the Vice President was over in the White House. Mr. Frank Miller, whom I talked with frequently, was my point-of-contact.

He is the national security head in that section of the NSC. Condi Rice was there, and Steve Hadley. The Secretary came back in; I don't remember exactly when the Deputy Secretary came in. I had seen him and said he should get out of the Building. We wound up establishing communications to talk with various folks over a period of time. Almost exactly an hour after the Pentagon was struck, a civilian airliner was reported to have gone down north of Camp David. This was the civilian aircraft that went down where the folks on board found out that something was up and attacked the cockpit, broke down the door, the plane lost control and they wound up going into the ground. The Secretary was doing a number of things, such as updating the Vice President. We were video tele-conferencing and talking.

But one of the things everybody has to remember is that we lost air conditioning in the Building soon afterward. We had power, but lost the air conditioning. The Executive Support Center has a separate air conditioning system and the rest of it, but many parts of the Pentagon had to be evacuated. The National Military Command Center (NMCC) was up and operating, and we had power but lost the air. So there were high heat levels in the Building as a result of the computerized equipment and people. There were no circulating fans running, so there was no air coming in. During the day we were making determinations at different times on what parts of the Building we were going to evacuate and when we were going to leave the ESC, if necessary. For a variety of reasons, because of the communications and the number of additional phones operating up here in our Executive Support Center, in that little video tele-conferencing room there aren't sufficient numbers of telephones, desks, and other things for people to make reports and the rest of it. Plus, the screens aren't big enough.

It's just for video-teleconference in there. Down in the National Military Command Center (NMCC) we could go where the watch officers (called the DDO) and the assistant DDO, are—essentially the daily duty officers. We moved from the ESC down into the main watch center at the NMCC.

Goldberg: When was that?

Giambastiani: Probably about 10:30 or 10:45.

Goldberg: People had evacuated the Building immediately, hadn't they?

Giambastiani: Yes, most of the Building was evacuated, but all of us in the NMCC and at the senior levels here moved down. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was going to Europe and was out of town, but the Vice Chairman was here. He was originally up with us in the ESC and moved with us to the NMCC. The main people who went down were the Secretary, the Vice Chairman, Tori Clarke, Larry Di Rita, and myself; Steve Cambone remained up here in the Executive Support Center.

Cameron: And the Deputy?

Giambastiani: The Deputy went to Site R. This is interesting. In my notes, before 10:20, within 40 minutes, the issues that we had were continuity of government, and relocating to site R. By 10:10 we had the Secretary on a secure tele-conference with the Vice President and his folks. We were thinking about two main things: continuity of government and how and who were going to Site R.

Goldberg: What will you do with these notes?

Giambastiani: There are a lot of classified things in these, and some of it is top secret. We made a decision to send the Deputy to Site R. That decision was made some time after 10:37.

Goldberg: That was the Secretary's decision.

Giambastiani: Yes. Actually, everyone wanted to move the Secretary to Site R and keep the Deputy here, but the Secretary said he would stay instead. We had helos come in from Andrews Air Force Base, which are assigned for continuity of government, and they moved the Deputy. The Deputy said he would like to take Larry Di Rita or me, and we decided that I would stay with the Secretary. The Deputy took Di Rita, Durnan, and Brig. Gen. John Batiste, his senior military assistant at the time. They flew out with the party, plus the Joint Staff had relocated a group of watch standers out there so that we would have an alternate command center in the event that something else happened to the Pentagon or that we had to shift. So we had a watch stood up. The Deputy brought additional folks out with him so that he would be able to take over in the event it was necessary.

Goldberg: He wasn't happy.

Giambastiani: No, he didn't want to leave. At 10:52 a.m. we declared Defcon 3 from Defcon 5 and shortly thereafter the Russians were running a big exercise and we asked them to stand down. It was a global command and control kind of thing and they were very cooperative, there was no problem at all. Once we got down to the NMCC we did a secure video tele-conference (SVTC) so we moved next door inside the NMCC to do SVTC and go into the center itself where all the slides were and we could keep up to date. From the very beginning we started worrying about what Defcon conditions were, what combat air patrols we should put up and where, how we should deal with combat air patrols, what force protection levels we should have nationwide. We talked with the President, at first from the aircraft, and then at Offutt Air Force Base later in the

morning. We talked with him on a SVTC. He was there with Admiral Rich Meese, Commander of the Strategic Command at that time. The Secretary talked with him, and we started tracking a huge number of aircraft. All the civilian airliners were being grounded and all the civilian traffic in the United States was being grounded. We were tracking everything. There was an aircraft coming in across the Atlantic reported to have potential terrorists on board, and some IFF on the aircraft was squawking as if there was a problem. There was one on the West Coast that we thought was coming in and we couldn't divert them and told them to go to Alaska.

Goldberg: Were you making these decisions?

Giambastiani: We were tracking all of it. We were dealing with what to do with the Mexican border. At 11:47 a.m. there were only two hundred aircraft still airborne across the United States. It was pretty amazing. We got a distress signal from an aircraft going towards Canada, the one we told to go to Alaska, an Air Canada flight. We had another Continental diverted to Gander. At 12:18 there were fifty aircraft in the air.

Goldberg: The big concern was whether there would be any more attacks.

Giambastiani: We just didn't know and didn't want to take any chances. We were putting everybody on the ground. It's a lot easier to pick the targets out when there is nothing else out there.

Cameron: What about the possibility that this was only the first wave and there might be other forms of attack to follow?

Giambastiani: When you are in a situation like that, you think about every possibility. We had established additional security here in the Pentagon and closed off areas, but everyone was more worried about air threats. We thought that it might be a continued

wave because of the simultaneity of the attacks. About two and one half-hours after the Pentagon was hit, there were only fifty aircraft flying in the U.S., out of the forty-five thousand, whatever it was.

Goldberg: You were in touch with the FAA on this?

Giambastiani: We had them up on the circuit and were working with them.

To tell you about the NMCC—I'm a submariner, so I'm used to living in an enclosed environment, we measure the atmospheres all the time. One of the things where we were in sad shape was the inability to have portable monitors for carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, sulfur oxides, nitrogen, hydrocarbons, and the rest. We couldn't do any of that. It started to get really hot and the air got bad, so at 12:19 we moved back up to the Executive Support Center. I was looking for a route to get back up, there was smoke coming up all the passageways from all over the Building. We had no fans to remove the smoke, and we couldn't see anything. So finally we moved back up to the ESC.

Cameron: Did you have troops who were guarding the hallways?

Giambastiani: I had MSgt. Judd, the enlisted assistant, and before I took the Secretary anywhere we walked the routes before making a judgment on how to move.

Goldberg: It was better up here than down there?

Giambastiani: Yes, it was, at that time of the day. That was probably the worst, because we were getting concerned that we would have to abandon the Pentagon. The water being used to fight the fires was getting into the phone switches and everything else, creating a worry that we might lose communications. The most important thing was the power and coms, computers and the rest of it. If we had those, we were in

good shape. Maj. Lincoln Leibner was one honored with the soldier's medal. When he heard on the news that the World Trade Center had been hit, he started driving to the Pentagon, and he was in the parking lot, watching, when the plane hit here. He came in to help and worked outside for two or three hours. He went in and out, he was bloodied, his uniform was halfway destroyed. He eventually came back up to the ESC to report to his duty station after helping to drag people out of the crash site. He was one of our cables crew, a duty officer over there.

Then we were reporting intercepts of aircraft. We established communications with Site R and kept them up to date. We found that Site R was woefully inadequate in regard to communications. We have made major improvements since then, but the Deputy and Di Rita and the rest of them found out that other than being at the end of a telephone line there was nothing out there.

Goldberg: So they moved to the JCS part of it and found that pretty good.

Giambastiani: Here at 12:40 we had five inbound aircraft, one KAL flight squawking hijacker code.

Goldberg: What about alerts to the field?

Giambastiani: We alerted them to Defcon 3.

Goldberg: Right off the bat.

Giambastiani: Yes. At 12:40 we still had five aircraft coming in from Asia. We were tracking every one.

Cameron: What does it mean to squawk a terrorist threat?

Giambastiani: There is an alert transponder on board with code that tells their status.

Cameron: Did those turn out to be mistakes on the part of the pilot?

Giambastiani: There was some type of problem, but not a hijacking. We had some of those happen later on. We were working on where our aircraft carriers were off the coast, so if we had to use aircraft besides the North American Air Defense Command Air Force aircraft, there would be planes on board carriers to do intercepts of aircraft. How many times do you worry about the defense of the United States that quickly, when you have aircraft attacking? The Secretary talked to the President a number of times, one time around 1:00. We were getting reports on whether there were cyber attacks, checking to make sure what the status was. We had no indication of those types of things.

Goldberg: Different people making different suggestions?

Giambastiani: Yes, and what is important is that we were working out strategies on how to deal with things, on that first day. How to fight terrorism, how to keep the pressure on them. You can't defend everywhere. The attacker always had the advantage, so you take the fight to them. We were talking about that from minute one.

We thought of having a press conference here in the Building. We wanted to send the right message to the rest of the country and do a press conference in this Building that night. At 6:00 p.m. we did it, even though it was still smoky in the passageways. The Secretary was magnificent. Carl Levin and John Warner came over to show support. They were up on the podium with him. I think that set the tone for America that first evening. That press conference speaks for itself.

We were also doing musters of all our folks to find out how many people were actually lost in the Pentagon. The Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps were

relocating to their alternate command centers outside the Pentagon. We were doing musters until about 2:30 in the afternoon.

Cameron: Did you usually divide up civilian and military duties, with you and Gen. Myers talking to the chiefs and the commands?

Giambastiani: No, we don't do that. My role is the senior military assistant; the Chairman's role is the senior military advisor. The Chairman and Vice Chairman are the number one and two military people in the United States. They provide advice. As the Secretary and Vice Chairman were working, they were making decisions, and the Vice Chairman was advising them as the acting Chairman. We were providing additional information, discussing situations with them, but the primary advice to the Secretary of Defense was coming from the Vice Chairman, which is where it should come from.

Goldberg: Did you have a lot of support people in both the executive center and command center?

Giambastiani: We were manned with a full boat of people. We were in communication with the FBI director, who was fairly new, only in the job a few weeks. We were talking to lots of people during the day.

Goldberg: Who was doing most of the talking, the Secretary?

Giambastiani: No, people would come in and give us status reports.

Goldberg: I mean outside, to the FBI, and the President.

Giambastiani: Everybody was talking about anything they had done or knew. We had a telecon with the Russians that day. It was interesting. The general staff had an NSC meeting later. We kept working.

Goldberg: Did you get to eat any time during the day?

Giambastiani: Somebody brought in sandwiches, I think.

Cameron: The Secretary went over to the White House.

Giambastiani: The Vice President was over there, the President was in Florida—went to Offutt AFB, and came back to D.C.

Cameron: Were you here until the Secretary left to go there that evening?

Giambastiani: It was about midnight when I went home. I got a couple hours of sleep and came back in. I live across the street from the State Department on the BuMed compound, next to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations. My wife had moved half of our household goods in on the 7th of September and the rest came in on the 10th of September. She was doing that all by herself, with the help of an enlisted aide. When I went home on the night of the 10th, I set up a television for her. She watched all the happenings with the Vice Chief's wife who came over to our house. There was a reported bomb explosion outside the State Department, and of course I wanted to check on my wife. But I went home very late. I got up very early and came back; she was there doing her thing. It was worrisome to her because the entire BuMed compound evacuated. My wife and Mary Fallon, other than a couple of guards, were the only people there. There was a large noise over there, which I guess was a sonic boom but was reported as an explosion, across the street from my house. So there was a backdrop of concern about what was going on with my wife.

Goldberg: Were any other buildings evacuated?

Giambastiani: There were, but I can't remember. The traffic was unbelievable all day. Those are the general recollections I have.

Cameron: In our last interview you asked us to remind you to comment on the QDR.

Giambastiani: I wanted to tell you that it's a good thing, typical of Secretary Rumsfeld, that he's a very thorough guy. He gets into meaty subjects. We knew we had to work the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and to do it right we had to hammer away on it. We had about two meetings a week on the QDR with our senior level review group, consisting of the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy, the under secretaries, service secretaries, service chiefs, Vice Chairman, and the Chairman. We were working the Quadrennial Defense Review and had some folks on the staff, like Steve Cambone, who provided drafts, and we would have them work them with Lt. Gen. Carlson, the J-8 on the joint staff. They would go out with the services, work the drafts, and bring them back. We would distribute them to everybody and go through and work the QDR literally line by line, paragraph by paragraph, section by section. By the time September 11th happened, the vast majority of work was done but we had no more time to focus on it. We had to discuss whether to issue the QDR or to delay it. The Secretary decided to issue it and have it out by the end of September. The reason is—I talked to you about surprise—that so much of the QDR addressed this type of stuff. All of these concerns about asymmetric threats, unexpected attacks, etc., are in there. They don't want to fight your Army, they don't want to fight your Navy, they don't want to fight your Marine Corps, your Air Force. They want to attack you in a different way.

Cameron: Now that you had empirical data, did that change or affect the final document?

Giambastiani: When you put a document out like that, about unexpected attacks going after weaknesses, to exploit democracy and freedom, and an event like September 11th happens, it brings reality to what is already written that may have seemed remote and

incomprehensible to the average person before. Now there is complete comprehension and awe.

Goldberg: When did the Secretary decide to go ahead with the Quadrennial Review?

Giambastiani: About a week later. We discussed it at roundtables in the morning with the Vice Chairman and the Chairman and Deputy. We hashed over all the different options.

Goldberg: What do you think were the immediate effects on the Department of this event? What decisions were made very quickly, to do things like homeland security, for instance?

Giambastiani: We started planning on the 12th of September and knew we would get into some kind of global war on terrorism. We knew we were going to go after them everywhere. We started talking on the 11th about going after terrorists no matter where they were, and that we were in a war. We may not have had Congress declare a war, but it was a war, nonetheless. At that time the casualty estimates coming in from New York City were that we had lost six thousand people in the World Trade Center. That was more than we lost anywhere at any time in the history of this country on any one day. You may remember that we were very specific that day about not using large casualty figures. The news was reporting seven or eight hundred people killed in the Pentagon. The Secretary was very specific about not quoting numbers until we had correct numbers. The reason he did that was that he knows that the first report, especially a verbal report, is always wrong. There is some truth to them, but in general they are immediate action reports and it takes a while to get the facts. The casualty reports on the Building and New York were bogus, so we told the press that we would

not go into it until it was checked out. There was a lot of discussion on this throughout the day. It turns out we were right, the numbers were much lower here in the Pentagon. It took us a couple of days to come out with the official casualty figures. In New York, if the federal government had been estimating the casualties, we would have been under tremendous scrutiny. Their numbers have come down by about half. I'm not casting any aspersions on New York and their ability to estimate. But it's important in the early stage of a casualty not to come out with an estimate until you know the facts.

Cameron: Back to war planning, you didn't change the QDR strategic picture?

Giambastiani: We thought we would have to fight terrorists, but we never thought we would have to fight them this fast and in this many places. We knew that terrorism would be significant, but not this big.

Goldberg: It took time to get your bearings.

Giambastiani: It did, but we were figuring out every way to take the fight to these folks. We knew it was more than likely bin Laden's outfit. There had been many bland terror warnings over the summer. Many reviews have been done, but nothing has come of them. We knew there was a higher threat level, but not where, when, or how.

Goldberg: We still don't.

Giambastiani: There have been a lot of things that people can't know about. You can't prove a negative. We started creating our strategy and a lot of what came about later on, how we were going to conduct the war, was done on September 11th and 12th.

Cameron: You were even thinking about force structure and weapon systems then?

Giambastiani: Yes. We started official planning on the 12th. Hostilities began on the 7th of October. We were up and going on the 7th of October. That's pretty amazing.

Goldberg: Even in the age of electronics.

Cameron: What about the DoD version of homeland security?

Giambastiani: Homeland security was already being discussed in great detail before 11 September. The Secretary and the service chiefs knew it was a big issue. We had already worked it into the QDR, it wasn't like we just dreamed it up. As I say, that's why the document was quite remarkable in being fairly prescient about what was going to happen.

Goldberg: You had given it a lot of thought for some time, so your reactions on September 11 were conditioned by all that had gone before.

Giambastiani: They were conditioned in a way more strategically and globally than tactically or operationally. They were couched in overall understanding. But we just didn't get there, not to envisioning what actually happened. In August 2001 we had done a complete review of all contingency plans, op plans, war plans, everything. We had looked at every one. We had sessions with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, his staff, and the Secretary. We had looked at all the assumptions of the war plans, what was available, why they were available, why they were adequate or inadequate, what we needed to add or remove. This is what the Secretary of Defense and all of us here in DoD get paid for, and we were doing it.

Cameron: When did Joint Forces Command first come about as an approach to reorganization?

Giambastiani: I had no idea that I was going to be doing Joint Forces Command when I came to this job. I hadn't thought about it. The Joint Forces Command was already established. It had been U.S. Atlantic Command initially, and then in 1999 it became

the U.S. Joint Forces Command. The mission has evolved over a period of time. It used to be just a Navy and a NATO command.

Goldberg: It's still changing.

Giambastiani: It's changing every day. I hope this was helpful.

Cameron: You've been very thorough. Thank you.