



DOCA Global Update Virtual Conference Notes

“Global Update” Post Conference Report from May 1, 2020 (All presentations were UNCLASSIFIED)

Shortly after DOCA's last conference, the world would face a situation that none would be able to adequately prepare for, or so we thought. Country by country and state by state, all persons and companies were encouraged and mandated to make important every day adaptations on behalf of worldwide health and economic survival. DOCA chose to adapt as well, allowing for members to be briefed, virtually, as to the current Global standing following the COVID-19 outbreak.

For the first time in DOCA's history, all speakers used a virtual conferencing software, Microsoft Teams. Understandably, the utilization of novel presentation techniques invited challenges. Despite these challenges, each speaker delivered diverse insights into our nation's leadership, National Security, and U.S. Government's actions surrounding 2020's pandemic.

Information shared during the conference has not been widely shared across mainstream media outlets, and listeners were able to see that our U.S. congress and combatant command stations were ready to protect the country.



Speaker 1 - Congressman Chris Stewart of Utah's Second Congressional District, Author, and Air Force Pilot

“COVID-19 Outbreak and the Impact to National Security”

Congressman Stewart began by praising the U.S. Air Force and all of those who have served and continue to serve the country. He knew he needed to run for Congress when he became aware that only 18% of Congress members have military experience, and he wanted to bring his



veteran knowledge to the table. Elected in 2012, and speaking on behalf of Utah's 2nd Congressional District, he has been serving in multiple congressional capacities: House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House Appropriations Committee, and the House Budget Committee. Actions and insights from all three committees give Stewart a unique position at the intersection of National Security, Intelligence and Appropriations.

For instance, Stewart travels all over the world to deal with "bad guys," because of his position on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. When the pandemic struck, and the nation saw a drastic change in work structure, Stewart and his colleagues were also asked to work virtually. Despite being able to be updated remotely, the Intelligence Committee was only able to act on some of the most pressing issues due to travel restrictions. He said, regrettably, that a lot of the work specific to the committee has been put on pause, even though the bad guys are not.

The work he does for the Appropriations and Budget committees are of equal importance and face this level of crisis for the first time in the history of the world. "We have never had a globally interconnected ... fragile community and economically dependent (problem) where we shut (everything) down in about ten days," he said. Many results of the shutdown shocked him and the members of these committees. There is an expectation that the country will face a five trillion dollar deficit or more by the end of 2020. He recognizes that our countrymen may understand the losses that families have faced because of the Coronavirus outbreak and residual lock down, but due to his position, he does not think that anyone has truly begun to comprehend the trillions of dollars of debt our country is responsible for. For perspective, he talked about when Congress was first considering a Coronavirus bill in February. At that time they were merely talking about the differences between 4 and 8 billion dollars...two weeks later that number jumped to 2.2 trillion. Congress never imagined resorting to those types of numbers. These committees Stewart is a part of appropriate the money and write the checks resulting from the Cares Act.

Under the work-from-home circumstances, Stewart is facing communication struggles just like the general population. Though he is grateful to have the capability to communicate, he told of the 33 million Americans that lost their jobs within the first four weeks of lock down. In contrast, he communicates with defense installations like those working on Hill Air Force Base, which is fortunately working at 80% capacity on site. He has taken phone calls ranging from Chevron CEO's claiming million dollar deficits to worried parents who put food on the table by washing windows. Stewart assured each concerned caller that the Stimulus Bill is intended to help the full range of financial distress without discrimination. Congress wanted all companies to be able to resurrect.

"Public health and saving American Lives is our priority," Stewart emphasized. However, balancing all the factors is delicate. The United Nations found through a study that 200 to 300 thousand children are predicted to starve to death as a direct result of food supply chain collapses. Additionally, as a Congressman, he is witnessing, first-hand, the growing demands on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health. Statistically, 20% of suicidal thoughts occur during unemployment, and due to the rapid increase of unemployment throughout the country, some call centers are seeing as much as an 8000% increase in call volume.



Stewart talked of the most encouraging phone call he had received in over seven weeks, following the Republican Conference. Eight CEO's from pharmaceutical, medical device, and health service companies declared that there has been remarkable progress in their fields. There was mention about the hundreds of companies achieving dramatic breakthroughs with vaccinations and specific medications and treatments that can bring back a sense of normalcy.

Weighing ALL of the costs of 2020's pandemic that reach into every part of American lives, Congress is focused on a macro-strategic method to helping the country battle its current and potential threats. He is confident that Congress can adjust its policies accordingly.

Q: How are you handling the balance between the lifesaving priorities (keeping soldiers and civilians alive) and the need for economic restart (accomplishing the mission)?

A: Stewart agreed with the presented analogy about the decisions made in war - Do we focus solely on the lives of our soldiers/civilians or do we focus on mission completion? - He encouraged listeners by explaining that he and his colleagues are trying to balance the line. The battle against Coronavirus has been global. All of the global players have different priorities. He truly understands the value of protecting human life, but said that saving EVERY life is an impossible standard. The challenge is coming up with the mission that can save the most lives.

He compared, for instance, the numerous deaths from car accidents each year. If the U.S. were to eliminate personal travel, making it illegal to drive a car, and leave everything up to public transportation, then we might be able to completely eliminate motor vehicle fatalities. Picturing this scenario, Stewart explained that making cars illegal would have much less of an economic impact than what the country faces because of the actions to save lives amid the Coronavirus. Nationwide lockdowns have impacted all systems, including necessary health treatments for reasons other than the virus, education, etc. National leaders are responding the best they can to balance lives and mission.

Stewart then mentioned some facts that are under-reported in the mainstream media, such as China reasserting itself in the South China Sea, using the Coronavirus as a reason to eliminate, jail, remove, and even decapitate leading protestors. He finds that around the world, leaders are using the Coronavirus to shield actions they would not normally get away with. "The enormous challenge the president has is to find that balance between protecting Americans health and lives but not to the detriment of every other concern. And not to the detriment of others who will have their lives, in some cases, lost (for other preventable reasons)."

Q: When mentioning the 5 trillion-dollar deficit this year, what do you do or look for to solve this number?

A: Stewart responded, "I can lie to you or tell you the truth. And I am going to tell you the truth...I don't know." In 2012, when he ran for Congress, they were "freaked out" about a 1.4 trillion dollar deficit. At this time in 2020, no one seems to be speaking up about money spent in response to the pandemic being a problem. The brightest economists that Stewart has communicated with have nothing to compare this crisis to or to model it after. His hopeful outcome is that maybe people will start to look at our debt in a fundamental and



structural way and do something to reduce it. Fundamental reform in Social Security/Medicaid/Medicare might be something that needs to be looked into.

Q: What was your most valuable experience you had during your Air Force career that helped you to prepare to be a successful congressman?

A: Reflecting on his life and career, he wanted to explain that the experience he had in the Air Force is very different than the one he has in Congress. The military is entirely mission-focused and vertical (meaning you have your commander one way and your troops the other). With Congress, he finds that he is the dot in the middle with more than a dozen arrows going out. However, two of his Air Force experiences came to mind.

1. In a diverted aircraft landing in the Philippines, he ended up in a fancy hotel in Manila. While looking out the window he saw an Aqueduct that thousands of people called home. A mother was washing the hair of her child in dirty brown water. He realized then that he really had been given the greatest nation known to man, and that it would always be something worth defending.
2. While serving he witnessed the effect of continuous resolutions versus a dysfunctional budget. He saw firsthand how the military was affected by budget faults.

These experiences gave him the drive and the empathy to serve Utah and the United States in Congress.



Speaker 2 - Lieutenant General Mike Minihan, USAF, Deputy Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

“Impacts of the DoD Stop Move & Budget Process”

“Coordination with Allies and Partners”

“Lessons Learned for the Business/Civic Community, etc.”

Grateful to be able to address DOCA members, Lt. Gen. Minihan wanted to clarify that most of his operational flying was in the sand of Iraq and Afghanistan, and that all of his staff experience has been in the Pacific Air Force region. The COVID-19 crisis has not been lost on him and those around him, and he recognizes that the nation is in this together. He spoke from the Indo-Pacific Command (PACOM) headquarters in Oahu, Hawaii. Within PACOM’s mission set, they are responsible for 52% of the globe, “from Hollywood to Bollywood, and from polar bears to



penguins.” Five of the seven treaties that the U.S. has are in their area of responsibility (AOR). Their structure is not a NATO-type structure but rather multiple bi-lateral structures that give them defense obligations. Also, five of the eight nuclearized nations exist in PACOM’s AOR, and indirectly they are involved with all eight. Broadening their total responsibility, Minihan explained how four of the five challenges that National Security Strategy lays out are also directly a part of their AOR. On top of “owning” 52% of the global responsibilities, they also face the highest number of battles with Mother Nature, known as the “Ring of Fire.” The Ring of Fire includes a disproportionate number of hurricanes, typhoons, and, more commonly, earthquakes.

Q: In regards to military preparedness throughout your AOR, how is PACOM’s military preparedness amid the pandemic? And what is the military preparedness like on the other side (North Korea, etc.)?

A: “We knew, coming out of the New Year, with the newest reporting’s of ... what China was reporting ... that there were enormous implications for us,” Minihan responded. He stated that the first thing he did when he saw the reports of the Wuhan Virus was google “SARS Impact Map,” because there was no model for the Coronavirus at that point. Everyone in the command took it seriously, working to protect all the servicemen and our defense force, along with fulfilling the mission of protecting a free and open Indo-Pacific. PACOM’s mission set was expecting tension. Even without official guidance, Minihan felt that they “set the theatre” early. They started with “work from home” and quickly turned into “precision manning,” where they had the exact numbers of personnel to fulfill duties and minimize face-to-face contact.

The earliest “full-on fight” was in the Republic of South Korea, and PACOM reacted quickly. One of our first reactions to help Korea was making sure they had everything they needed as they faced the initial impact of the virus. Despite the pandemic, the command’s responsibilities never changed. Even being “ahead” of the fight, they met with murkiness on some fronts. They had a goal to turn the flattening of the curve into a far push of the curve to the right, never to be seen. Minihan witnessed incredible leadership from all of the countries in the AOR. In May, 2020, their Foreign Humanitarian Assistance eyes were focusing on the bases in Japan as they were about to see their peak wave. Their assistance utilizes teams to take on planning in three categories:

1. Direct Support
2. Support to Civil Authorities
3. Foreign Humanitarian Assistance

Minihan knocked on wood when he said, “the trends are in the right direction.”

Q: What role does the demographic of the military play into reactions, thoughts, plans to mitigate the virus?

A: He said that, “the health demographics of the military are showing a durability against the virus.” There are no secret potions or tests for the military, but they understand that only under 1% can get into a really bad place, so they press on. One bad outcome of COVID-19 is tragic, which means the risk is there. But Minihan spoke about the reality that no matter what news the nation is watching, PACOM has not let down any of their mission set.



He hypothetically asked, how do we know we are really in a crisis? Multiple data points can confuse the masses. "Here we are, though," he shrugged. Minihan applauded the preparedness of his teams while facing other crises, making it easier to enter this one. The time in-between crises becomes crucial. Learn how to fly through the storm that has not hit shore. He quoted, "He who adapts the quickest, wins." This pandemic has tested and challenged PACOM to become better.

There was mention of some of the challenges PACOM is facing that come directly from adversaries that did not take a pause. He said that, as a nation, we have come to understand that the republic of China has their eyes set on replacing us as the world leader. China (and others) are taking advantage of the Coronavirus to accelerate their ways.

Another reality important to Minihan is that the environment has changed. "There is no back-to-normal. Assume the new normal," he encouraged. New relationships have been formed, and old relationships have grown in new ways. Minihan does not intend to lose out on the opportunity to better himself and his AOR from this new environment.

Q: What is the greater effect of the virus on our adversaries?

A: The risk calculus is different for every nation, Minihan said. PACOM weighs risks one way while our enemies have other priorities. North Korea seems to be perfectly fine in letting their people starve to death, eating grass with sub-standard healthcare. He believes the virus is "kicking their butt." China is not shy about accepting a higher risk factor. But this does not mean that their leaders are dumb, they are simply weighing the risk and their opportunities to do what is best for their interests.

Q: What is the larger and longer term perspective on where we are as a global military leader?

A: He said that with China wanting to be the world leader, we see them bypass the typical process of acquisition of military capabilities by stealing them. If unchecked, their capabilities are ready to meet us and even exceed us. The U.S. cannot "spend" our way out, but rather has to utilize intellect. The prosperity of America is going to be based on deterring China from their goals. PACOM is working to keep things in check.

Q: What are you most proud of?

A: After 30 years of service, a lot of people have made it their mission to lift Minihan up to where he is. He has been a part of many humanitarian efforts heading into Nepal and the Philippines. He was the commander that flew into North Korea in 2018 to retrieve the 55 sets of American Service Members remains that had been missing in action for years.



Speaker 3 - Major General Rafael A. Ribas
"SOUTHCOM Command Brief"

Threats to the SOUTHCOM hemisphere are consistent, but we are blessed to predominately have democracies in these nations. Through the partner nations (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, United Kingdom), other U.S. agencies, and the efforts of all the components in the DOD, we are able to help them maintain their democracies and professionalize their security forces.

Lieutenant Commander Mike White to give the Brief:

Commander White chose to use a power point presentation throughout his briefing. He is a Foreign Area Officer throughout SOUTHCOM's area of responsibility (AOR). Their AOR is all of Central America except Mexico, all of South America, the Panama Canal, and the Caribbean. White said that they are connected to their partner nations, they consider them family and SOUTHCOM does their best to protect these dotted line borders. To do so, they work together with other U.S. entities and other hemispheres.

There are 8 Task Forces plus US Coast Guard District 7 and District 11 involved with SOUTHCOM. He mentioned these teams and districts to reiterate that SOUTHCOM is not a law enforcement entity, but rather supports law enforcement. White also pointed out that there are 22 Security Cooperation Offices lead by Senior Defense Officials who do the actual communication with headquarters.

- JIATF-South executes detection and monitoring of illicit drug trafficking across the aerial and maritime domains.
- JTF-GTMO conducts safe, humane and legal care and custody of detainees, including those convicted by military commission. (Including some responsible for efforts contributing to 9-11)
- JTF-Bravo conducts and supports joint operations, actions, and activities, maintaining a forward presence to enhance regional security, stability, and cooperation. (Getting Personal Protective Equipment into partner nations and supporting them after natural disasters.)



SOUTHCOM is the only combatant command that has a full-time human rights office. The Western Hemisphere is full of living history of fighting for human rights, and White finds this office key in supporting partner nations' visions. Additionally, SOUTHCOM is the only combatant command that has a foreign officer as a director. They also like to utilize academia, partnering with universities, to challenge the way they are thinking and to make sure that their perspectives are not too myopic.

White expects that the U.S. 2020 census will reveal that the United States has become the 3rd largest nation of native Spanish speakers, only behind Mexico and Spain.

There was reference to the "Vicious Circle of Threats." This circle includes Young Democracies-Corruption-Transnational Criminal Organizations-Malign Actors (like Russia/China)-Violent Extremist Organizations. Because Russia has openly wanted to undermine the democracy of America, they play out some extreme acts by puppeteering smaller democracies. As of 2020, Russia is an ally of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, etc. Interestingly, 19 out of the 31 countries that SOUTHCOM looks after are countries joined with China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative.

Understanding the "vicious circle," SOUTHCOM focuses on Strengthening Partnerships, Countering Threats, and Building their team in order to support the U.S. and the Partner Nation National Security Objectives.

Major General Rafael A. Ribas handled the Q&A:

Q: Do you commonly get inputs from the Universities mentioned? In what ways do you get support from academia?

A: In the DoD there are certain ways that commanders get their information about how to proceed. For example, they can get information from analysts. As another source, academia allows SOUTHCOM leaders to look at information they may not have had before. Panel members and groups from the universities will come and talk to SOUTHCOM directors/commanders about research they have performed. University efforts can help in policy decisions.

Q: Could you explain more about how you work together with all of the other agencies to facilitate mission objectives?

A: Because these partner nations have similar values to the United States, there are unique ways that our deputy commanders, ambassadors, etc. work well TOGETHER within the countries. The leaders will have conferences on a regular basis. Lt. Com. White jumped back into the conversation to give an example of how State Department helped out the Civilian Deputy Commander during a conference in the region. SOUTHCOM wants to ensure (financial) alignment from all of the ambassadors.

Q: What are your perspectives on China's strategy and their threat?

A: Stability for China in South America is not strong, but their presence is problematic because countries have been signing onto China's initiative, and later regretting it. Territorial agreements seem to be ignored by China's predatory acts. For example, they will illegally fish AOR waters. Weapon sales between the 31 countries and China continue to increase.



Yes, it is a growing problem. But what SOUTHCOM and their task forces can do is continue to build trust and expose China for what they are trying to do.

Q: How many military members do you have assigned in the AOR, compared to the other commands?

A: SOUTHCOM is not set up like the other commands with heavily assigned forces. SOUTHCOM runs regular simulations/exercises along with the Colombian army to see how they could react to an unforeseen emergency. The assigned military that they DO have is precise and ready to respond as needed.

Q: What are some of your unique perspectives on COVID-19 affecting your AOR? Are your partner nations seeing degraded forces because of the virus?

A: SOUTHCOM has the same basic information, they do not track the situation much differently than PACOM. No, they are not degraded. Simply put, everyone is adapting and learning and keeping the standards and missions of the AOR.

Overall, DOCA members, our speakers, our country, and the world are eager to bring back a sense of normalcy. Re-connecting our families and economies will take time. Thanks to the encouragement of Congressman Stewart that Congress is working to find the best solutions, the clarity from Lt. Gen. Minihan that PACOM's mission set is intact and precise, and the trust that Major General Ribas has with his partner nations and team, we can know that our leaders are fighting for that moment of solidarity and the "new normal."