

## **Transcript of Lieutenant General Michael Maples' Interview with JJ Green, National Security Correspondent for WTOP on 8 February 2008**

**JJ Green, WTOP:** I was doing some reading and I was quite surprised to find out that your father created this place.

**LTG Maples:** My father was assigned to DIA when DIA was first created and was instrumental in setting up the production center of the Defense Intelligence Agency and trying to bring computer technology into defense intelligence back in the early 1960s.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** I read the whole story. That's one of the ultimate stories of like father like son.

**LTG Maples:** I never expected to follow him here to the Defense Intelligence Agency. And quite frankly, it came as some surprise to him when he got assigned to DIA when it stood up – even though, he had served in the intelligence field extensively before then. But it is kind of interesting to know that my father had been here – to see the Agency now.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Do you find any opportunities to draw on his experiences?

**LTG Maples:** Not really. I was too young at the time to really appreciate what he was doing. I knew that there were periods of time where there were crises in the nation when I saw very little of my father. And periods of time where his service took him away from the family. But the service to the nation is something that is a continuing matter of importance to me and to other members of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** General, it's been a long time coming to get this opportunity. This is an honor for me to be able to do this because I've worked my way through most of the intelligence agencies and this was a hard nut to crack. Having spoken with Admiral McConnell, General Hayden and other folks, there just did not seem to be much of an opportunity because as most of us know, you don't do a lot of talking to the media. But when this opportunity came up, I thought this is going to be great. I put some extra work into the questions because if this works I'm going to do a nice article for the webpage and post the interview in its whole and do some newscast pieces which will draw some attention to it because this is a really big deal for us.

**LTG Maples:** I appreciate you being here JJ. You know there are so many tremendous things the men and women of the Defense Intelligence Agency are doing every day and our real focus is on the service to the nation, particularly in this period of conflict. I want to focus on what our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen Marines and civilians who are forward deployed fighting our nation's war needs in terms of intelligence.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** You articulate that very well. Especially when you speak before SSCI or HPSCI, you have this very short window to make your comments. Usually there are four of you...

**LTG Maples:** We had five and expanded to six.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** What is really interesting is that you said it all in five minutes and forty-four seconds before the SSCI. It was that I thought was a good opportunity to get a bird's eye view of some of those things you talked about. So I wrote those specifically down and shifted them over to you so we could expound upon them in addition to what you do on a daily basis. Because the demystification of intelligence is really what my job is. Sources and methods we don't want to mess with because we can't. But there a lot of things that go on that can be shared if you want to.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** General Maples, before we begin, I'd like to find out from you, in your own words, what the Defense Intelligence Agency's mission is?

**LTG Maples:** Ultimately, our mission is to provide military intelligence to meet the needs of our commanders in the field, our combatant commanders and our defense decision makers. In addition to that, we have the responsibility – associated with the creation of a defense intelligence enterprise – to really manage defense intelligence resources in the most effective and efficient ways we can in order to support the accomplishment and production of intelligence.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** As you look at those elements that you outlined to me, is there one or a few that are more important to others?

**LTG Maples:** Within the Agency, our focus is in several key areas. First is the collection of intelligence. We do this with both human intelligence which we do globally in response to defense intelligence needs, and also in technical intelligence where we measure signatures and technical aspects of things that will help us identify them. We are also one of three agencies in the intelligence community that produces all-source analysis. We take the input from all of our collection means and produce analytic products for our defense decision makers

**JJ Green, WTOP:** It occurs to me that you talk about human intelligence and that appears to be one of the hardest nuts to crack in some parts of the world, specifically in Iran or North Korea. When you have scenarios where you are faced with difficulties in collecting human intelligence, simply by being limited from having people, do you make up the difference use other forms of intelligence to make up for that or do you deal with what you have?

**LTG Maples:** Certainly, we look for other forms of intelligence to provide the information we need. In the case of the hard targets you mentioned, we look across the community, develop strategies, address those issues, and continually try to develop the kinds of capabilities that will enable us to understand what is going on in areas of the world that we need to know about.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** What are the major challenges for the organization at this point?

**LTG Maples:** I think the biggest challenge for the organization is the fact that we are deeply engaged in conflict today, in the Global War on Terror. And our priority is that the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians who are conducting the efforts for our nation have the intelligence they need in order to be successful. At the same time, we are undergoing a transformation of the intelligence community. We are trying to develop the integrated approaches to intelligence both within our national intelligence community and defense intelligence and to create the integrated approaches that are going to make us successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Both of those efforts have to happen simultaneously. They focus on ongoing operations at the same time. We're changing our organization and our processes and both of them have to be successful.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Not to mention staying ahead of the enemy. Is that correct?

**LTG Maples:** Yes, everyday. As we say, the enemy always has a vote in what we are doing and how we are doing it. We have a global focus and we need to understand what is going on in the world. What kinds of capabilities are being developed? What kinds of technologies are being developed? What the military developments are in potential adversaries around the world? So we've got to look at an entire spectrum of threats that range all the way from the high end of weapons of mass destruction to the kinds of asymmetric conflict we see when engaging terrorists around the world. We have to deal with all of the threats on that spectrum. I think it is critically important to us that we understand what is going on and that we understand indicators and we understand warnings and that we are able to provide information in advance to ensure our nation is not surprised strategically.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** That was my next line of questioning - Those threats that you talk about – to hear from you which is the biggest or most dangerous threat to the nation and specifically to the military at this point of time.?

**LTG Maples:** First of all I think there are several global military trends that we have to pay attention to. The first is the threat of terrorism which is the greatest threat to our nation that the military has to deal with. The second is the proliferation of the knowledge and technology that is required to produce weapons of mass destruction. This information is more readily available to groups or individuals who would like to acquire that technology, and all they need to do is put the pieces together in order to have capabilities that could seriously threaten the security of our nation. Third is the development of longer range ballistic missiles around the world. There is quite a proliferation of ballistic missiles and capabilities such as directed energy weapons as well. And we are seeing these missile systems that are more mobile and thus harder to target and also more accurate at greater range. So we've got to watch the development of those – particularly those which could carry weapons of mass destruction as well. Along the irregular warfare line, the use of improvised devices and suicide weapons that threaten our forces both in missions today and in irregular warfare that could threaten our operations no matter where we are. IEDs seem to have become a weapon of choice for our adversaries. And then finally I would say, the

development and continued development of counter-space capabilities and cyber capabilities that threaten our information structures.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** General, would you talk to me a little about counter-space capabilities? What is that and what does it entail?

**LTG Maples:** Well, you know, the United States is very reliant on outer space for its communications and for information. About a year ago, The Chinese launched a direct ascent SS-19 anti-satellite system and destroyed their own weather satellite which left a debris field in space. This highlights the abilities of nations to target space capabilities. And there are other kinds of capabilities that are being developed whether they are jamming techniques or directed energy weapons that could seriously affect our overhead capabilities.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Does the U.S. have any real competition in that arena?

**LTG Maples:** I think in counter-space there are a number of nations that are developing capabilities that certainly threaten our ability to have freedom of action in space. And that is what we have to be attuned to.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** I spent some time out at Cheyenne Mountain a couple of years ago and got the obligatory briefing and discovered that there is an amazing amount of activity out there. They said the U.S. keeps a close eye on all the changes up there. One of the most important things that was impressed upon me by a very nice major was that if anything ever begins to make a return to the Earth the first phone call is to the Russians to make sure that the Russians understand what is going on. How important is that space relationship between the U.S. and the Russians now?

**LTG Maples:** I believe it continues to be an important relationship for us. Probably not at the same level as in previous years, but nonetheless important for each of us to understand what the other is doing with respect to space activity. And you mentioned, those items that we put in space do return to Earth at various points in time, and it has been reported we are facing one of those situations at the end of February or beginning of March where we will see a capability return to Earth.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** What kind of risk are we facing with reference to that satellite that will come down in March?

**LTG Maples:** Generally speaking the danger from that is not high but there is some concern because you don't have any control over re-entry or the location it is going to go. It is something we have to be concerned with.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Can you talk about what you might be doing to make sure no one gets a hold of any of that?

**LTG Maples:** No. We will continue to assess the status of the satellite, the orbit it is in, and the potential paths where it might return to Earth.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** What is that concern though just briefly?

**LTG Maples:** It is something to be concerned about and to track and to understand what is going on.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Moving on to another area, how would you assess DIA's interaction and cooperation with its foreign counterparts?

**LTG Maples:** I would assess it to be extremely good. In fact, we are reliant on our partnerships around the world. As we focus our efforts with other nations and we have common interests, the intelligence relationships we have developed with other intelligence agencies around the world are critically important to our ability to collect and provide information for the military and the defense establishment. It is critically important because, as you know, most of the operations we are conducting in the world we are conducting as coalitions. That means we have the militaries of many nations that are present on mission and ensuring the commanders of those missions from foreign nations – which are sharing the burden of responsibilities with us and putting their soldiers in harm's way – have intelligence that they need to be successful on mission is extremely important.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Talk to me a little on the war on terror. Admiral Scott Redd (Former Director of the National Counter-Terrorism Center) told me that forty years from now that when the history of what happened in the war on terror has been released there will be a lot of heartwarming things that we read about then that can't be talked about now. Talk to me about the war on terror now and some of the efforts that you know are underway or are necessary in this age in which we live.

**LTG Maples:** Well, I would have to agree with Admiral Redd's assessment. There are many things that are going on that the public doesn't see and isn't aware of now and ultimately they will be. But it is the actions of young Americans all over the world who are doing their very best to understand this very different threat that we face from terrorism. Understanding the basis for it, understanding the ideological differences with it, and understanding how we can influence others in the war of ideas is extremely important to us as well. The terrorists operate in the seams that we are not used to fighting in. They try to hide in areas where we have difficulty accessing them, where perhaps government control has not been extended. They are even in the ungoverned areas of the internet. As we start to see today, they can operate where there is very little control. You have to understand who they are and start to piece together individual knowledge and how networks operate and are financed, how people move and what their intentions are. And those are all very difficult things to ascertain which takes a huge amount of dedicated effort by the great men and women of our intelligence community.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Most have referred to al Qaida as the preeminent threat to the nation. I was talking to General David Petraeus a few days ago and he talked about the seemingly limitless depravity of that organization as something that has to be watched and carefully countered. How does your organization view al Qaida?

**LTG Maples:** I agree with that assessment. They are the greatest danger to the security of our nation. And we understand that through the actions they have already taken to attack our nation but also to their announced intentions in how they are focused on attacking the United States and in attacking our national security interests and their employment of methods we would find repulsive that violate all known norms of warfare. We've got to understand that is the adversary we are facing. Recently we saw the videotapes of al Qaida training youngsters and that gives you the feeling of the depths that al Qaida goes to. We all remember the photographs of members of al Qaida beheading both Americans and others and we need to understand what a difficult threat this is.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** General, would it be fair to say that one of the U.S.'s advantages is the fact that al Qaida has been so brutal to the people in Iraq and other places around the world. That seems to be a great turn off to a lot of people in a lot of communities and in some situations grown some support for the U.S. Would you say that is an advantage for the U.S.?

**LTG Maples:** I think it is certainly becoming a disadvantage to al Qaida. Their methods have had a very negative effect on many in Iraq, particularly with the Sunni population, the awakening movement in al Anbar. I'm sure General Petraeus talked to you about concerned local citizens groups that want to protect their neighborhoods, their areas, who have clearly been affected by the brutality of al Qaida. And does that work to the advantage of the United States – Yes. Does that same impact start to have a greater reach other places in the globe – I believe that it does. And I think it is important for others to understand exactly what kind of an organization al Qaida is and how brutal they can be.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** You said in testimony on the hill this week that despite cooperation the Pakistani military has been unable to disrupt al Qaida terrorists operating in the tribal/border regions. What options does that leave the U.S.?

**LTG Maples:** The area of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan has been referred to as a de facto safe haven for al Qaida. And there are many areas in Pakistan that also serve as a base for the Taliban in Afghanistan. If we intend to be successful in our war on al Qaida, if we intend to be successful against the Taliban which we intend to do then we have to resolve how we go against that de facto safe haven and remove it. We cannot continue to allow al Qaida to operate in an area and to train and develop capabilities and then project their terrorist activities from that area. We have to work very closely with Pakistan who's been a tremendous ally in the Global War on Terror. To develop means and capabilities in order to remove that safe haven capability from al Qaida.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** It was most obvious when General Michael Hayden and Admiral Mike McConnell visited together Pakistan's President and requested the opportunity to employ a

greater presence there. They've been reluctant to go along with that, at least on the outset. Is that something that is still critical? Is there a way around that?

**LTG Maples:** I think the support from Pakistan is critical to us and will be critical to us in the future and that the United States Government will continue to work with President Musharraf and the government of Pakistan and the Pakistan military to develop capabilities that will help enable in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. I think there is certainly a willingness on the part of the Pakistan military to take on a greater effort in that area. I think there is a desire on the part of our nation to support them in doing so.

**20:02 JJ Green, WTOP:** You said also on the hill that Pakistan recognizes that it is short-handed and needs effective counter-insurgency capability. I'm wondering how can they do that and can they do that on their own?

**LTG Maples:** I believe that they can but that it will take time for them to develop the counter-insurgency capabilities that they will require for the long term. Pakistan has realized the threat not just to the world but to operations in Afghanistan and to Pakistan that is emanating from the tribal areas. They will use the capabilities that they have within their military in order to address those threats in the best way that they can. Currently the Pakistani military is largely built around conventional capabilities that they have had for quite some time. Developing the kind of counter-insurgency capabilities that our military is more adept at will take them time to transform or develop within their military. What I see is that the Pakistan military will use the capabilities that they have to the best of their advantage to engage the threats in the tribal areas.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Abu Laith al-Libi was killed recently by a Predator drone strike and there have been others in the past. There's always the question of what kind of participation that the U.S. has or had in activity like that. I know obviously that there's very little you can say about that. Most folks know that the Predator drone is a U.S. asset. How important would you say that asset is in the war on terror – specifically in that area of the world considering that the U.S. is prohibited by Pakistan from following the Taliban or al Qaida across the border to conduct attacks?

**LTG Maples:** I think that intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to include the Predator are important to us in operations all around the world. The closer that we can get to being able to achieve a persistent stare at the areas we need to look at – from the sky, through human sources, through whatever capabilities that we have – the better off we are going to be, the better off our intelligence is going to be. So ISR, our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, are critically important to us and our operations all over the world today. Effectively using those capabilities is one of the missions Defense Intelligence Agency has been given. I have additional responsibility as Joint Functional Component Commander - Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance for U.S. Strategic Command. The whole plot there is to understand what our real intelligence priorities are and develop the kind of collection strategies and using our ISR resources in the most effective manner to ensure that our priorities are being addressed. That is one of the things we are doing within the Agency today.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** How far away are we from getting that persistent look at the entire world?

**LTG Maples:** I don't have a date-time group on that one JJ, but there are a number of technologies that are under development that I think will give us great advantage. We are looking for ways that we can make our sensor platforms independent so that we will have a greater abundance of sensors in various parts of the world where we are operating and I think that is critically important for us as a path to continue on.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** I spent some time with the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and they talked about that operation to develop that persistent view and its importance as well. Moving on to our last few questions, you talked in your Senate testimony about changes in military capabilities. And you said there are several general global changes of concern. Can you outline them for us and give us a little idea of what they are about?

**LTG Maples:** I mentioned those a little bit earlier in the interview in terms of the general military threats that we see. Certainly one of those is the focus on irregular warfare – how we deal with terrorism and asymmetric threat, an adaptable enemy. How do we deal with networks? How do we deal with those who are not conventional militaries that we have experienced in the past? The whole issue of counter-insurgency capabilities is something that we have to deal with. I talked about the proliferation of the knowledge and technology that is available to create weapons of mass destruction. That includes chemical capabilities, biological capabilities, and even nuclear capabilities. With the internet today, information is readily available and the parts and capabilities that can be easily accessed –it makes the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction an even greater concern to us. We've talked a lot about ballistic missiles. The proliferation of ballistic missiles is something we should absolutely be concerned about. There are a number of countries that are investing very heavily in the development of long-range ballistic missiles that launched from mobile platforms, which means they're very difficult to locate pre-launch, but they have longer range, greater accuracy and certainly there are capabilities being developed that would enable nations to deliver weapons of mass destruction at longer ranges. That got to be a concern to us. We talked a little bit also about counter-space capabilities, the development of directed-energy weapons, jamming capabilities, along with kinetic kill capabilities that would affect our space capabilities. Another major area is the area of cyber. We are increasingly reliant on our information technology and information systems to enable our operations globally. There are a number of nations that are developing cyber capabilities to cause us to lose that information advantage that we currently have. The Defense Department networks rely on our ability to protect the advantages that we have with our information technologies that affect our ability to conduct warfare.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** You mentioned missiles in everything you talked about. Iran has one weapon called a C-802. Not to get to inside baseball, but Iran has postured itself in a very aggressive manner on occasion, including the Straits of Hormuz not too long ago. There was concern that they could use something like the C-802 against U.S. assets? It has been rumored that they used them against Israel during the 2006 war. How much of a threat is Iran's military?

**LTG Maples:** Let me start with what we believe Iran to be developing. First of all their ground forces really take on an asymmetric approach. They are in a defensive posture with respect to their ground forces. However, they possess a couple of very significant offensive capabilities that we need to be attuned to. The first is an anti-access strategy for the Straits of Hormuz. Their ability to close off the Straits and the ability to maintain a closure is something they are developing. We are seeing the development of fast missile-capable patrol boats, advanced mining capabilities, anti-ship cruise missiles that would threaten traffic in the Straits of Hormuz. The second is their missile systems. They are also investing very heavily in ballistic missiles and delivery systems. We have seen their development of the Shahab-3 missile. They are developing a new Asura missile with a range of more than 2000 km. Their development of missile capabilities gives them extended range that could focus into Central Europe and beyond.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Jumping topics and winding down, give me some thoughts on Russia, China and North Korea.

**LTG Maples:** Russia has been investing in its military, trying to bring it back from a decline we saw after the fall of the Soviet Union. They are investing in their permanently ready forces, their ground force capability – not a large force but increased capabilities there. They are beginning to demonstrate more of a global reach of their armed forces. We have seen that recently in long-range bomber flights in both the Atlantic and Pacific sides. We have recently seen a carrier strike group that made an extended deployment. And we have seen joint training exercises that have probably been the most complex that they have done in some time that involve both air and sea capabilities. So it appears the Russians are investing in their military and they are becoming more proficient. They are not back at the same level as they were in the days of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless with their economic status and their increased political status to date, they are developing a military to represent the nation that they have become.

China is investing very heavily in the modernization of its military and we are seeing that in many dimensions. Both in high technology that is being applied in China and we see those capabilities being developed in their cyber capabilities and counter-space capabilities. We mentioned the SC-19 ASAT launch of a year ago. We see that in terms of their surface-to-air missile systems that they have developed and deployed. A whole range of ballistic missiles – short-range, medium-range, long-range and ICBMs, that they have developed that give them many layered opportunities in terms of ballistic missiles. They are focusing on leveraging their command and control capabilities and taking satellite capabilities and linking them to their missile systems to create counter-access capabilities. And we see investment in increased training capabilities as well. Modernization of the military for China will establish them as a regional power but is also planned to counter U.S. advantages.

North Korea has a 1.1 million-man army forward deployed to the peninsula – not well-trained or well-equipped, but nevertheless 1.1 million men in uniform. They have very robust artillery systems, and very robust missile systems that give them an ability to cover the Korean peninsula to reach into Japan, reach beyond Japan, and reach into those areas where U.S. basing would occur. And they have a multi-range capability which we believe could carry weapons of mass destruction. We have seen the testing of the Taepo-Dong 2. It was not a successful test, but

nevertheless they continue to develop the Taepo-Dong 2 which has a range capability that could reach the United States. Still, it is a significant military capability that we see in North Korea.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** To wrap this up, I'd like to know what a typical day for General Michael Maples looks like. When does it start, when does it finish and what does it entail?

**LTG Maples:** JJ, to be honest, I don't have a typical day. Because everyday is different and there is always something occurring somewhere in the world that requires the attention of the Defense Intelligence Agency. I think as I mentioned to you, we have members of this Agency deployed in more than 140 countries around the world and there is always something happening someplace in the world. So we operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with the full knowledge that there are threats to our national security, and that there is information and intelligence that we need to collect, develop and provide for the benefit of our armed forces and for the benefit of the nation. There isn't a routine or a pattern to it. It is a constant focus on doing what needs to be done for the nation and at the same time focusing on the management of a global organization and intelligence enterprise and trying to bring about the changes in support of the Director of National Intelligence, the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, and the changes that we need in our intelligence community and within defense intelligence that will enable us for the future.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** My last formal question is whether there is anything you'd like to add to this conversation that I haven't asked you about that you feel is important to share?

**LTG Maples:** JJ, the one thing I would share with you is how impressed I am with the dedication of the men and women who serve in the Defense Intelligence Agency. They are motivated by their love of our nation and the service to the United States of America. Everyday, they come to work, wherever they may be – forward-deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world in support of the Global War on Terrorism or in areas of the globe where we know we need to focus on developing information that may not be at the top of the headlines today, but may be someday in the future. They are motivated by a great service to our nation and I admire them greatly and it is my honor to have the opportunity to serve with them.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Just one more think, if you like, I would and it wasn't on the list, but if I were to ask you to create a headline for this conversation that would sum up everything that affects DIA, everything DIA is engaged in, what's at stake here for DIA, for the nation and the world –if you could come up with a few words that would summarize that what would those words be?

**LTG Maples:** Excellence in Defense of the Nation. This is the motto of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Excellence because we hold ourselves to a high standard everyday in what we do and how we do it. Our focus is the defense of the United States of America.

**JJ Green, WTOP:** Well done sir. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.

**LTG Maples:** Delighted JJ.