The Surge – Collective Memory Project

Interviewee: Lt. Gen. (ret) John Sattler

U.S. Marine Corps & Director of Strategy and Policy, Joint Staff, 2006-2008

Interviewer:

Paul Miller

Associate Director, Clements Center for National Security, University of Texas

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[Begin Transcription]

MILLER: This is Paul Miller from the University of Texas at Austin, and I'm here at the offices of Duke University in Washington, D.C. on September 28th, 2016.

SATTLER: I'm John Sattler, retired Lieutenant General, United States Marines. I'm here also to answer Paul's questions.

MILLER: Thanks for being with us, General. Appreciate your time.

SATTLER: Great to be here. Thanks, Paul.

MILLER: As you know, we're doing this project on the Iraq surge decision. We're seeking to interview people [00:01:00] who were involved in the decision over the course of 2006 to kind of understand how and why the decision was made, as a great case study of national security decision making and presidential decision making. So we're trying to interview the folks involved and get a good sense of what happened when, and who said what, and who believed what when. So thanks for being part of this.

SATTLER: I'm looking forward to the opportunity to answer the question, Paul, keeping in mind it was what, nine years ago? And I'll try to recall as best I can. It was a pretty important time in all our lives.

MILLER: Yes. OK. So, just for the record would you state what your position and job was in 2006?

SATTLER: In 2006 I was the J-5, the Director of Strategy and Policy on the Joint Staff. So I worked for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. I was at Camp Pendleton as the 1-F Commanding General, then I rolled back into D.C. probably in the August timeframe. [00:02:00] I think I started on the Joint Staff August/September of 2006. So I was relatively new in the job at the time.

MILLER: OK. As you know, we want to focus quite a lot of our time on the formal interagency review, chaired by J.D. Crouch. But before I get there, could you just say when you were first aware that there was an effort to reevaluate the strategy in Iraq, and when were you aware that a surge was an option under consideration?

SATTLER: If I could just back up a couple of years very quickly.

MILLER: Sure.

SATTLER: In 2003 and 2004 I was the Director for Operations for General Abizaid at Central Command, the J-3 at CENTCOM. So I spent a year on the ground fighting for General Abizaid, obviously, as his ops -- so both Afghanistan and Iraq and the Horn of Africa. We had all three at the time. So I left there and then I went into Iraq in 2004 and I had the opportunity to command all the forces in the Al Anbar Province [00:03:00] for another seven, seven and a half months. So I had a lot of experience in the surge of forces and what was required by all the services to meet the requirements for forces in the Central Command AOR. We're all victims of our experiences, so I knew how hard it was, I knew the stress it was putting on the force. Then General Pace brought me in and assigned me to be the J-5 on the Joint Staff about a year later. So that was my background. I knew we were constantly looking at the strategy because I -- when I came out of Iraq, I was still the Marine component to Central Command. So all the Marine forces that went in, I was the guy at the table for the Commandant of the Marine Corps at that point, working with the Central Command staff. And then when we started to discuss it very

seriously was probably, in my case, in October, where Chairman General Pace brought [00:04:00] Lieutenant General Doug Lute and myself in, gave us guidance that they were setting up a special element of the National Security Council under Dr. Crouch, and that we were going to take a hard look, top down, at where we were at on the strategy and where we thought we should go. Across the interagency, by the way.

MILLER: And tell me about the Council of Colonels that was also formed around the same time, or just prior to the Crouch review.

SATTLER: I was not involved, obviously, in the Council of Colonels. Chairman Pace brought in a number of really, really sharp colonels from all the services to go ahead and take a candid look from the colonel level, the brigade command level, as to what was the situation on the ground. And I think they were given a pretty wide open mandate: I want you to get in there, I want you to be creative, I want you to tear things apart, and I want you to give us your best advice from your level and where you sit on the battlefield, as to what we ought to be looking forward for the future. So I was not involved with the Council of Colonels [00:05:00] and I don't -- I won't speak for Doug Lute, but I don't think that Doug was involved either. The chairman, rightfully so, wanted to get an unbiased opinion from a more junior position.

MILLER: Did you have a role in briefing their product after they were all finished?

SATTLER: I did not. They briefed their product directly to the chairman, my understanding was. So no, I did not have a role in taking their product and morphing into anything else.

MILLER: Well, we understand that General Pace briefed the colonels' report to Steve Hadley in early November, and then later on, the joint chiefs presented a product representing their view in later November. Are you familiar with this?

SATTLER: I am, yes.

MILLER: Can you say, what's the relationship between those two briefings? Between the colonels' report and then the JCS report later on?

SATTLER: I truly think that the chairman, General Pace, he wanted to see what the NSC came up with [00:06:00] -- very interagency approach, as you well know -- then the Council of Colonels were all pretty much warriors who had been in the fight and were out of the fight and they knew they were going to go back. Then I believe there was also an effort going on at Central Command for CENTCOM to come forward with what they believed the forces required. Then of course General Casey -- as the multinational force Iraq -- General Casey had his team working on it. So you had General Casey looking at the strategy they were undergoing at the time, onward together, I think -- or there was a phrase. We had two phases of that. So General Casey was looking at that. The Council of Colonels wide open. And we went into the interagency with a little bit of guidance from General Pace, but he told us at the end, hey, I want you guys to get in there and mix it up, and I

want you to think and be resilient and malleable. So I think that General Pace was the recipient of all this coming in, and maybe General Lute and the ops guys [00:07:00] were involved in morphing it together, but the policy and strategy folks, I do not remember me being in the room when we kluged it together.

MILLER: So are you able to comment on the relationship -- what influence did the Council of Colonel's report have on the rest of the joint chief's thinking?

SATTLER: I know for a fact General Pace took it on board as a strong data point. I know the final outcome -- where we went with the surge -- was different, much different, than where we went into our first meeting with Dr. Crouch and the whole crew. I don't know where the Council of Colonels started out because General Pace really protected them, and rightfully so. He didn't want even any unintentional -- because a number of the folks in that room had worked for me before. I'm sure General Lute was in the same boat. And, the worst thing you would want is an old boss kind of listening in and trying to unintentionally possibly influence it. So I loved the way that General Pace kept [00:08:00] them aside and took briefings directly for them. Now, he may have given us touch-point guidance along the way based on what was coming out of the Council of Colonels so we would think about it and debate it in the interagency, but he never handed me personally -- never got a report or I never got any direct guidance from General Pace, "Go in there to the NSC and do the following." No.

MILLER: Do you recall at what point you first saw the Colonels' report?

SATTLER: I never saw or read the Colonels' report.

MILLER: You never -- OK.

SATTLER: I never saw or read the Colonels' report. Obviously, there was so much discussion about it, the wave tops, that I knew what they had come up with, and we were sort of morphing in the same direction. All these points -- my recollection is everyone started to sort of see that OK, maybe the stress on the force was bearable. Maybe we could come up with additional brigades. Going in though, [00:09:00] based on -- and I'll be totally candid -- when I went in, listening to the other service chiefs, especially the Army and the Marine Corps, and the stress on the force, and knowing where both of the service chiefs stood on it, and also understanding the stress on the force in combat. Some of those Army units -- the Marines were doing seven months and rotating. The Army was doing 12 to 13 extended to 15. I actually saw it in their eyes and how absolutely tired they were by the end of -- when it was time to come home, it was like a pitcher going 12 innings. Because we were rotating after seven with our Lieutenant Colonels, and we were doing 12 with our Colonel command. So the higher end staffs and above stayed 12 months, 13 because of right-seat, left-seat ride. And the young folks were doing seven. But the Army, just on their rotation and the bulk of the forces, they were doing 12 and then we kicked them up to 15. [00:10:00] So, maybe over sensitive to looking in eyes and folks who were worn out, still doing their job, no whining, no moaning. I don't want to paint that picture. But you could feel the fact that wow,

we are stressing the force. So I went into the NSC probably thinking surge was not a good idea.

MILLER: Was going to be a real stress on the force?

SATTLER: Yes. Yes. Maybe it was a good idea, but resourcing the good idea, there was a reality that was going to come to roost.

MILLER: So that actually is a great segue into where we're going to go next with this. The formal interagency review chaired by J.D. Crouch, it was commissioned right after the midterm election and kicked off a few days after that. Can you describe, what were your instructions, the position you were to advocate for in that review, what were your initial views at the beginning of that review? And then I want to ask how it evolved. But start by kind of describing kind of your going-in position? [00:11:00]

SATTLER: I recollect both General Lute and I going in, talking with General Pace when he told us. First of all, we were both like, Hey Boss, we both have fulltime jobs, as does everybody, and we were thinking, whoa. This is going to take a long period of time. It was our primary point of place of duty. So the chairman, he said, "When they ring the bell, you're going to be there. No substitutes. You two are going to be there." And we did. So there was a little bit of hey, we were both fairly knew to the J-3 and the J-5. Knew we had great people, as did the chairman. So first of all, that was it -- fully dedicated, you're in there every day. No missing. We got it. We did. And the second part was we talked about the stress. He, General Pace, talked

about the stress on the force, whether or not a great concept or idea has to also be -- we have to be able to resource it, to bring it to fruition. So he -- I believed anyway -- I walked out of that meeting thinking that our position was, hey, [00:12:00] the surge is a great idea, comma, but we just don't have the forces to do it. We're going to break the force, break the families, and we're going to break the tone that we told the young men and women coming in we're going to crush them. So I went in thinking: surge, bad idea.

MILLER: And the grounds of that was not on doctrine, but it was on resourcing?

SATTLER: Yes. Absolutely not doctrine. So, there was some philosophy that, if you put more people on the ground, you put more targets, you create more antagonism and you throw gasoline on the fire, vice water when you think you're putting it out. I'll be honest. My own personal -- because we did the surge for the Battle of Fallujah, we didn't bring outside forces, but General Casey tightened his belt and gave us great Army battalions and an Army Cav regiment that showed up in our Army MB battalion, so for all intents and purposes we surged for the Battle of Fallujah. It was just internal with General Casey. [00:13:00] And in that case he tightened his belt in all those areas as we did in Al Ambar. We surged the Marines into Fallujah, we tightened our belt out towards the Syrian border. So that experience told me that -- I am a believer that if we have the resources, I believed it was a good idea, but I was convinced it would break the force going into the first meeting.

MILLER: And how did this position compare with MNF-I and other military elements? Was there any difference in opinions there?

SATTLER: Yes. I think my understanding was General Casey was of the school, more forces weren't going to do us any good, it was going to exacerbate the problem, vice provides the security that everybody wanted. I think General Casey -- who I love and respect the heck out of. We don't always agree, but I have tremendous respect for him -- in his heart of hearts, he believed that the surge would just take the situation and make it worse, because trying to get enough forces to put [00:14:00] that modicum of security in place was going to be extremely hard to do. And he had been the Vice Chief of the Army before he went over, and he knew the stress on the force before he ever got there, and that stress during his time had only been elevated due to extended deployments, etc. So I don't know where he stood on, is this a good tactical decision or strategic decision, but I think his underlying point was also the stress on the force. But I also believe -- which I disagree with -- that more forces would not be able to provide the security, because thanks to him, we did it in Fallujah; we doubled down, we provided the security. Then when we left -- we pounded it down to a point where they could take over.

MILLER: Yes. OK. So he kind of shared concerns about stress on the force, and maybe also had a doctrinal difference --

SATTLER: I believe that's correct, Paul.

MILLER: Do you recall the State Department's position during the Crouch review?

[00:15:00]

SATTLER: There was some really heated -- State Department had everything on the table, everything from status quo to precipitous withdrawal. I remember that with Philip and I going nose to nose on, "We'll order them out!" And I remember screaming, "That's an unlawful order. No Marine or soldier is going to -- we put our arms around these people. We told them we'd be there. We cannot withdraw next week. That is an unlawful order." We got really into it, which you should in a meeting like that.

MILLER: Sure.

SATTLER: Then the State Department also took a look at the surge. So they came in with all three options on the table, with the idea let's debate them, let's let the chips fall where they may. And I was very impressed. I think OSD did the same. We never collaborated with Dr. Cambone and the OSD team. When Doug Lute and I got our guidance later on, every time we went to an NSC to discuss big issues, Ambassador Eric Edelman and I would talk, or I'd go up to his office, and we'd make sure, [00:16:00] if there was a disagreement between the joint staff and OSD, at least we both knew where we were going to part, a little bit or slightly. But in this case, General Pace wanted all chips on the table and candid discussions, so Doug and I were not influenced by anything that OSD was coming in. I truly --

and I mean this 100% sincerely -- did not know OSD's position when we got in the room, and we were not handcuffed by having to tuck under it.

MILLER: Yes. I participated in something similar a couple of years later when we did the Afghanistan/Pakistan reduce and saw the freewheeling discussion. And it really seemed like, as you said, everything was on the table and people had the opportunity and the freedom and encouragement to kind of share ideas.

SATTLER: I agree with you, by the way, 100%. And I was influenced by that discussion over the course of the many meetings. I did listen to the facts. Very persuasive men and women, the articulation brought me off of the position I went in with. [00:17:00] I slowly morphed along the way to a more central position.

MILLER: Yes. So, tell me more about that. Was there any episode during the Crouch review that you recall as being especially noteworthy or influential in changing views around the table?

SATTLER: Well we started talking about really how many brigades were really available. I just remember so many brigades getting smaller and smaller dwell time when they went home to be with their families, to retrain, to change personnel out, because you and I both know, Paul, that when a brigade goes back home, the amount of people who transfer in and out before they come back again is pretty high. Some of the leaders may stabilize and stay, but there's even change of commands at the colonel level for the brigade, the battalion. So, when they come back, normally it's the solider or the Marine who enlisted for four years who shows up doing the

double pump. Some of the officers do and some of the senior NCOs do, [00:18:00] but I think that the realization that there were enough brigades, army brigades -- there was one Marine regiment we could surge on in, too -- but there were enough army brigades, if the surge would work in a certain timeline. It wasn't in perpetuity, but if we can surge over this period of time, we won't break the force and we can go up two, four or five brigades. And that's when I started to be a little more open minded, and I went in thinking the cupboard was bare. And as a matter of fact, if you found something on the cupboard, whether it was a Marine unit or an Army unit, it was worn out, it needed more time to rearm, refit and recuperate, and then get back into the game again. So, as we started to discuss what's available, what was their dwell time, how long would we use them for, I think the facts and the very persuasive presentations by others, changed me over time. [00:19:00]

MILLER: And do you recall who it was that dug up that information about the available brigades and the Marine regiments and at what point in review was that presentation made?

SATTLER: Well Doug Lute, the forces for are run by the J-3, so I don't think it came initially from Doug because Doug was so much in the morass of filling the request for forces, etc., that the CENTCOM commander came in, doing the dwell time, doing the rotation, and briefing the SecDef on. It got down to, Paul, can we cut them short two days on their right-seat, left-seat ride, to give them the right dwell,

or we have got to get this unit out. SecDef didn't want to break faith with them; we told them they'd be out by this time. You're trying to give this one their dwell, but get this one out on a timeline, and those two forces were clashing. So, General Lute was involved heavily, heavily in that. I believe, if I remember correctly, it might have been Meghan O'Sullivan or Peter Feaver that actually brought forth the [00:20:00] -- and I'm not even sure where it came from -- an outside assessment as to where some of the brigades were. It was called the quilt or the blanket that showed every Army unit, when they went in, when they came back out. Every brigade listed. And you could track it through, and Doug Lute was the master at it, to find out dwell time, when they should come back, etc. But for some reason I remember it came outside of that, but then I think Doug went back and took a hard look at it with his team, and came out and said, "This period of time, we can have five brigades who will have dwell, who won't break dwell if we go in and surge and we accomplish the mission in accordance with this timeline." So everything had to kind of line up. It wasn't we were betting on luck or betting on hope, but if we surged in, General Petraeus could get the mission accomplished, we could get them in and get them back out and the force would be sustainable without breaking faith, [00:21:00] breaking trust, or breaking their backs.

MILLER: Yes. So the information there came, you think, from an outside source, through the NSC staff, but then Doug Lute was able to corroborate it?

SATTLER: I believe. That's my take on it, yes. And then that's when I started -- you're always a little skeptical, where did this come from? Because I'm sitting next to I think a national treasure, Doug Lute in all the work he was doing. But I think that they did point some stuff out. I wish Doug was here so we could have this conversation, but I believe Doug went back in and really dug hard and they tightened the belt, did a couple of those little "this is going to be painful and tough but doable." And I think at that point in time, the not breaking the back of the force and doing the surge became a viable option to me personally.

MILLER: We have interviewed Doug separately, so we've got his recollections on camera. [00:22:00] So there was some discussion then about the availability of the resources which was persuasive to you.

SATTLER: Correct.

MILLER: But you previously noted that there's also MNF-I maybe objected to the surge on doctrinal grounds, maybe not doubting that the strategy would work. Was there discussion in the Crouch review about that subject?

SATTLER: Yes. I mean, obviously it was status quo, which we all thought, no, status quo is not going to cut it. Doug had been involved in it, I'd been involved in it. I'd been on the ground. Others had been over working inside of Baghdad as ambassadors, working under the ambassador, etc. A lot of experience on the ground, of people who had been and came back, and we all knew the way it was going down. General Casey made two attempts to change the strategy on the

margins, but it was one of those, we have to come up with another strategy. We need to either put them in charge and save yourselves. We've done all we can do, now it's on your back. We're not going to do your fighting for you. [00:23:00] We're not going to do your political piece, or your governance for you. Or the other side was, or else we need to go on in, crush this thing, beat it down to the point where they have an opportunity to then put their security forces in place.

But also, remember, General Petraeus had been working very hard building the Iraqi security forces, both the police and the army, and we fought beside some of those Iraqi army units. They fought very well in combat. They did. During the Battle of Fallujah, we had seven battalions come down. General Petraeus sent us and it worked really, really well.

So I just believe General Casey really believed more people creates more targets, more IEDs, there'll be more American deaths and there'll be no positive outcome of it. But on the other hand, my experience from what General Casey gave us, those extra forces for a period of time -- we had them for three weeks -- and we went in and those army units fought side by side with the Marines, the sailors, [00:24:00] the Air Force, all the air power, all came together in a surge in November of '04 that worked. And then we saw once we tamped down the thugs and the brutality and we let the Iraqi people know that security was here, markets everything started to flourish, just like you would think it would do. So, once I knew the surge wouldn't break the back of the force, I personally believed, and I

think we discussed it in the room, that we could drive security in, and then we could turn it over, over a period of time. It wouldn't be one lap and a hand-off. It might be a mile run, but eventually we could pass the baton.

MILLER: Was there anybody else present in the Crouch review who took that side of things? Who agreed with General Casey about the viability of that strategy?

SATTLER: I think early on, I think the OSD team, and I think probably even some of the State Department folks figured this is just a morass, [00:25:00] we're just throwing more in it. We're sending more Americans over with a target on their back. But I think the more we discussed it -- and again, this morphed also. Maybe some of it came out of the Council of Colonels, and then obviously Doug, in my personal experience over a couple of years being involved in it, we started to look towards "if we can." And that was it: is it possible to go drive that security? Baghdad, totally different fight than Fallujah. Much, much different. Sectarian violence inside the city, Fallujah was pretty much all Sunni. It was just the Al-Qaeda thugs. So we had a common enemy there. So I wasn't pollyannaish enough to believe -- you couldn't take the Fallujah model and throw it into Baghdad. So I think the folks in Baghdad did a phenomenal job, and I think General Petraeus did. But that was the question: can you accomplish it in this timeline where we don't break the force, but if it starts to go off [00:26:00] in perpetuity, then we're in that morass I believe General Casey was afraid would happen.

MILLER: So if there's a few folks -- MNF-I, maybe OSD and a few folks at State. Do you know what persuaded them? What helped them? Or were they persuaded? Did they ever come to an agreement with the eventual surge and counter-insurgency strategy? Were they persuaded and if so, what helped them get on board with it?

SATTLER: You mean inside our little working group, or each one of the little groups that the chairman had set up?

MILLER: Inside the Crouch review.

SATTLER: Inside the Crouch group, we went from precipitous withdrawal, head bang, no way in hell that's an option, to de-military. I don't think State Department wanted to sign up for it, but I just think it was healthy debate. As you said, if you don't have great discourse and you don't [interviewee exhales] at the end of it, you're not emotionally drained, then maybe you didn't discuss it well enough. But that got real hot and heavy at the beginning, and then that one kind of -- precipitous withdrawal, just pull out, [00:27:00] head to Kuwait, load up the trucks, go to the airfield, it's all yours -- discussed in detail but I think we moved away from that as not being what we stood for as a country when we put our arm around somebody.

And then I think we started to take a look at -- once we knew the brigades were available -- was it viable to think we could provide security. And we'd done it in the past. It was just whether or not we could do it in Baghdad. Then the other big thing, big key point, was General Petraeus, Fallujah one, the security forces failed miserably. Then General Petraeus went in and re-honed the model, more

leadership inside the Iraqi units. Fallujah two, the Iraqi units fought extremely well and all the Iraqi units were proud of that and they started coming up on ramp. So the unknown was, are we going to get Maliki to sign up for there are no safety groups; i.e., everybody who is against us is a target regardless of Sunni, Shia, Muqtada al-Sadr or whomever. [00:28:00] So, once they got the governance side where Maliki said, "Bad people are bad people and we're going to go after them," that was critical. And then the second part was, as these Iraqi brigades were partnering inside of Baghdad, I think General Petraeus did a marvelous job picking the right brigades, the right generals to be in charge, and an overarching Iraqi general that had the authority and freedom, regardless of Sunni or Shia or -- Kurds weren't a problem, so it was mainly Sunni or Shia -- to go after them, then I think everybody started to see, hey, there's more sunlight coming through this aperture. But there were a lot of, that's got to come together, the Iraqis have to come prepared to fight as they did in Fallujah two, not Fallujah one.

Then the third part is that there has to be a transition. I believe it was not only clear, hold, build, but it was transition at the end. If we couldn't transition all the security to a viable Iraqi security [00:29:00] element -- be that the army, police or a combination of the two -- then we were fooling ourselves. We were going to be there a long time. And because of the dwell time and breaking the force, everybody knew that we did not have a long time. There was a sunset clause to make this work.

MILLER: Yes. I want to make sure I understood. Those three things you identified: the leadership of Iraqi forces, the political forum (the new government's willingness to go after bad actors), and then the transition time. Were those things actively discussed in the Crouch review?

SATTLER:Yes.

MILLER: Yes. OK. And so, OSD, MNF-I and maybe State Department, these were things they were concerned about and why they were worried the surge in COIN might not work?

SATTLER:Correct.

MILLER: OK. And, again, was there any particular discussion or argument that helped persuade the State, OSD and MNF-I that this stuff could actually change for the better? [00:30:00]

SATTLER:I think some of the heated discussion on some of the other options that actually, by great discourse, we believed they were options but not the best options, or I'd even use the word -- I believe they weren't viable -- but, they probably were viable but not through my eyes and maybe through Doug's. But as we moved forward, the other part of it became the civilian surge, which meant, OK State Department. One day we just started saying, "We're your forces here. The provincial reconstruction teams are critical and we don't have enough of them, and they're not manned, the ones that we have. And the ones we do have can't operate. They stay pretty much in the Baghdad area." So the PRTs and State

Department or the interagency filling those billets, Doug Lute and I started to bang that one really hard back at them. OK, we're comfortable. We believe the facts prove we have enough military forces to surge for a window, but comma, it doesn't do any good if the governance piece [00:31:00](the provincial reconstruction teams) don't come in behind and start to -- you can do the clear, you can do the hold, but you can't do the build without a very viable, robust, provincial reconstruction team.

So that became very heated. I remember one time with Phil Zelikow and I going at it where I said, "Well then they can then work for the commander on the ground." And it was like hitting a nine iron in a towel bathrobe. He said, "State Department will never subordinate themselves to the Department of Defense." And I went, whoa. It was a vein popper. We were going at it. And I said, "I didn't ask for that. I was just trying to use a pragmatic approach that we've got to work together, live on the bases, ride in our Humvees, fly in our helicopters." "That doesn't mean you won't," and so on. So that got a little onerous.

And then it came down to, it would take a year. I remember the day they said it'll take one year to train State Department folks [00:32:00] in all the force protection issues and their job to get them prepared to be able. Interagency folks, because we needed justice, possibly agriculture. We were trying, in that room, to think of what would a world class provincial reconstruction team look like. And then General Lute and I went back and we talked to the chairman and later SecDef

about would we be able to mobilize reservists. I know this sounds crazy, but this is the way the thinking was going. "Well, maybe we could take an Army mortarman from Nebraska who is an agricultural major and works, but we can mobilize him if it was a reserve position, but not make him a mortarman. Bring him in and make him part of a provincial reconstruction team." So, our men and women were trained in force protection and prepared to go into combat, while State Department took the year that was very clear and rightfully so they needed, to get folks ready to do this out-of-normal mission, then we would be able to step in. Because [00:33:00] if we did the clear and the hold, and the build was going to be left to us like it was in the Battle of Fallujah, we didn't know what we were doing. It was amateur hour. I remember asking was anybody in student government in college or high school, because we were trying to set up a town council. And everybody looked at me like -- and I said, "I'm absolutely dead serious. Anybody?" "Well sir, in college I was." "OK, you're going to be on the special team as we try to build the town council and give it life inside the city of Fallujah." And I remember going to bed that night going, this is the most powerful country in the world and we're asking people, has anybody been junior high president of their class to try to get some experience in there. So that was on my mind, too, when we sat there in the room: we need to have the best and the brightest.

I remember when -- after the Battle of Fallujah when the Congressman came through, they said, "What do you need?" And I said, "I'd like to have a team

from FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, because this looks like a disaster and we have to rebuild this town." [00:34:00] I don't have a clue how to do it, but hopefully maybe we could get -- and of course they looked at me and smiled and laughed. FEMA's not trained to go into combat either. So all of that was on my mind and Doug's when we were pounding back on them, where's your surge, was basically that day at the meeting. And then we started to figure out how we were going to make it work.

And because we're all in this together, the interagency solution was we would step in the breach, the men and women in uniform looking at reservists, both Guard and Reserve, and we would build these teams. State Department raised their hand and said, "One year." And I remember a year later when Doug Lute was saying, "The clock's running out, folks. Where are your people? Justice, where are your lawyers to be on the legal piece of the PRT," right down through ag, right down especially the State Department crew, and we were always on the hook -- as we should be -- to provide the security for the provincial reconstruction teams. So, that started to get into, OK, we could do the surge, but [00:35:00] comma, that's not enough just to surge the military. We've got to surge the interagency, too.

MILLER: To address the political --

SATTLER:Yes. Yes.

MILLER: You sort of answered this already, but can you say more about how the State Department and the other civilians responded to this question, to this pressure? We need certain civilians. How did State respond, how did NSC respond back?

SATTLER: Well, we're not resourced to do this. That was the original. You in the military have reservists, you have guardsman that can come in behind your active duty. Also -- and they're right -- we have an overage in every rank because we send a thousand lieutenant colonels and Navy commanders are at school each year. They come out of school and go back in and another thousand come out. So we have built in this overhead for all the right reasons so we can train people, give them a year out to get smarter, then bring them back.

State Department was a hand to mouth organization, and they were already stressed getting people inside the green zone. The green zone was great, [00:36:00] but now we're asking them to take another step: come out of the green zone and go out into the hinterland, which they're not trained to do nor did they sign up to do when they took their oath. So this all came out during that debate and discussion, and maybe at the beginning I was a little bit hard on them. Can't you just direct them to do it? Well, directing someone but not giving them the proper training, I was wrong by pushing it that way.

So we all got smart, but it was some pretty candid discussion. Then we agreed that OK, we will figure out a way. We went back with the chairman up to SecDef to go ahead and cover down on the necessary provincial reconstruction

team skills with men and women who did take an oath to go forward, and would not have to stay in the green zone. Because, like our whole time out in Al Anbar, we never had a provincial reconstruction team come out of the green zone because it was too dangerous. And, the danger factor was just as bad, if not worse, in Baghdad [00:37:00] or in Ramadi or in other places.

MILLER: So, it sounds like that conversation and the compromise about the military covering down some of those necessary skills while the State Department took the year to get up to speed, that compromise helped bring State on board with the whole idea of surge in COIN?

SATTLER: Yes.

MILLER: OK.

SATTLER: I believe there are great people in there from the State Department. They weren't just, we're here to protect our interest and bleed you dry. They had some concerns. I think they were valid concerns. We had some concerns and they were valid concerns. But as we started to each kind of, hey -- and this isn't a negotiation where we're trying to get the biggest price to make the most money. We're trying to negotiate the best deal for America and the warriors and the interagency. I think we all started to come off whatever positions we came in with that we were kind of dug in.

And Dr. Crouch did a marvelous job, and Meghan O'Sullivan and Peter did a marvelous job. [00:38:00] After we finished the day they would morph together,

what we heard yesterday was. And I'm not an idiot -- they were kind of pushing us in a little bit of a direction -- but when they threw that out you had to debate it and find fault in it. You may not have given birth to it yourself, but I think that Dr. Crouch and the whole team, they didn't force us in a direction. They didn't even hand guide us in a direction. But they listened to the whole discussion and then at the end they recapped all that, Paul, and put it back at us. And I think slowly but surely we may have -- it wasn't like, "whew," right to here -- we may have been doing a little bit of this -- but that was all healthy during the debate piece.

MILLER: Can you recall what brought OSD on board? It sounds like they came into the review a little bit skeptical about surge in COIN. What helped to bring them on board?

SATTLER: I remember Dr. Cambone being very vociferous on the front side as we all were, but I think even he, over the period of time, [00:39:00] he started to see, you know what? I don't think anybody in the room really said, "This is the best thing since snap-top cans," but everybody started to see more light coming in the more we debated it and discussed it, on the what-ifs and how it might. I think once we started to say there's a sunset clause that we could get the surge, but right here, whether it's successful or not, we're going to hit a point where we're not going to be able to sustain the surge. And I think everybody sort of agreed and saw that.

But then it looked like if they went in and the tactics of how General Petraeus would use the forces and what he'd do with them -- started to make a lot

more sense. And, when we also saw where the Iraqis were going to be able to put these generals in charge and good Iraqi units were going to be in there, and the political -- at the beginning it was, why even try, because Malaki has protected [00:40:00] organizations that we can't go after, and until we can go after any malign actor, it's never going to work. I think we were all in consensus on that.

So, getting that from the embassy, coming back saying hey, Malaki's ready, or President Bush talking to him, Malaki's ready to declare bad guys are bad guys regardless of religious affiliation, then I think we all started to move more in that direction. I don't know if they were going back and seeing the secretary and getting guidance or Secretary Rumsfeld started to kind of lighten up. I'm not even sure I know what his position was going in, but I knew they were coming in as we came in. We're going to break the force, was sort of the mantra.

MILLER: So, at some point during the Crouch review, the embassy came in and communicated a new assessment about Malaki's political willingness to crack down on all groups, and that was helpful in persuading some of the skeptics to come on board?

SATTLER:Yes.

MILLER: Yes.

SATTLER:I don't know when that happened, because my memory is a little cloudy, [00:41:00] because it all kind of compresses together. Because I remember some people were, "Well, we'll see," because he's made promises before. But this one

really seemed like whoever got to him -- General Petraeus, the ambassador, I'm not sure -- but it seemed like basically -- or the President -- that hey, if you don't declare all bad people bad people, we're not doing any of this, and then you're going to be on your own. Maybe the precipitous withdrawal would have come back on the table. Maybe.

MILLER: If I might go back to the State Department for a moment. I asked at the outset if you could recall what the State Department's position was. I think you said that they kind of came in with a variety of options.

SATTLER: Yes.

MILLER: So, did you get the sense that there was a State Department position? That they came in advocating a certain view?

SATTLER: I think precipitous withdrawal may have been -- at least from my memory because of Philip Zelikow and I going at it there, and it's an illegal order. I just don't know if it was an option [00:42:00] that they wanted to get out there, but maybe it's because I dug in that he dug in. But I remember that, hey, we've tried this, it's not working. Throwing more forces at it, creating more casualties, the government's not getting on board, it's fractured, we've done all we possibly can, let's -- the old, take our hands off the bicycle -- I remember that being said. Time to let them go. And we've all used that analogy throughout our lives, and it was one of those, let's find out because right now we're all running alongside and we're, one more month, two more months. And I was guilty of that myself. I

believe, anyway, from my perception, that was where they were. We've done all we can. We'll be kind about it, but we're taking our hands off the bike and we're bringing our people home, and we're going to force them to take action for their own people and their own government.

MILLER: If I understand right, that might have been a view the State Department [00:43:00] put forward almost just for the sake of having the debate?

SATTLER: Possibly.

MILLER: Possibly. So OK, we don't really know.

SATTLER: Yes, but I rose to the bait. I rose to it and got in some pretty heated discussion on that one, emotionally drained, thinking about all the Iraqis. We'd been in their towns, worked with them, trusted us, we're going to be here for you.

So that one is a very -- that particular encounter is very vivid in my memory.

MILLER: I think there's some value there in forcing a debate on stark options.

SATTLER: I absolutely agree.

MILLER: To clarify mindset. Absolutely. You earlier highlighted the importance of learning that some brigades actually were available. Do you recall about at what point from early November through early January when the president made his speech, about when that became clear, that the brigades were available?

SATTLER: I'm going to take a swag [00:44:00] at it. I think we may have been going for three plus weeks before it came up, and then I'm almost -- and again, General Lute's not here -- but I think he went back and had a great team obviously back

there in the J-3, and he was sourcing forces all over the world, and he knew all the dwells. I believe it was late November, sometime in early December when we started to say, you know what? We were briefing the chairman. I think the Council of Colonels was briefing the chairman. I think he was tied in with General Petraeus. The only wild card that I didn't even know about was General Keane. I didn't even know that piece was out there at all. I found out about that later on.

So, each one of these -- you would say, why were they so stove piped? I think they were probably stove piped to get candid. If we all came up with the same solution stove piped and the chairman had something to go with. If we came up with variations, then he could morph it, as you mention. I'm not sure who was the one who sat down and wove the blanket [00:45:00] together for the chairman, but I know that we moved quite a bit away from, we don't have anybody, "that's all the juice that's in the can, boys," to "wow, I think we could make this happen in this timeline."

MILLER: And so that was late November, early December?

SATTLER: I think so. I'd throw that mark down but somebody could convince me otherwise.

MILLER: Similar question regarding when the embassy communicated about Malaki's renewed political --

SATTLER: I think that started to come even a little bit later than that. I think the political will of Malaki was also -- We were in the room a number of times when President

Bush was working with Malaki at National Command, at the NCA level, and I'd be on the back wall. So I'm probably blurring some of these together. When he barks at us, we said he needs to show some will and some spurs, if he was a bantam rooster. [00:46:00] Now he's barking at me and now you're all mad at him. And the president said, "Actually, I kind of like what I've got here. He's standing up for what he believes in." I think that happened later on, probably. I'd say mid to late December when the president needed that commitment, or else.

That was sort of the one cloud hanging over. If we do the surge and the Shia are protected when we go in -- no, no. You're only allowed to arrest or bring to justice the Sunni malign actors -- we knew it would fail. Absolutely fail. And I'm not sure who brokered the deal or who got the commitment from Malaki, but I think that came in December. Probably latter part.

MILLER: And then, similar question about the discussions with the State Department about a civilian surge and the compromise you worked out there. Rough timeline?

SATTLER: I think that happened right around Thanksgiving time. I think that's when we started airing that one out, [00:47:00] that hey, this isn't just us. If this is really a counterinsurgency op, and if we're going to do clear-hold-build, we only have so many CBs and construction engineers. We need the State Department to bring in all that expertise. And that got heavy at that point. And then when we realized, for all the right reasons State wouldn't be able to just pluck people out and throw them over there with a helmet and a flak jacket, that's when Doug and I started

talking about, "what do you think about a creative way to use the Guard and the Reserve?

MILLER: So it sounds like it took a couple of weeks of the Crouch review just to kind of clear the air, get some options on the table, establish positions. And then once you get into the third or fourth week, that's when you really start to tackle the central issues.

SATTLER: I don't think we all knew each other that well. Doug Lute and I both came in in August/September and here we are, ba-boom, we're in the middle of this. They don't really know who we are, we don't really know all them. We knew them by reputation. So I think there [00:48:00] had to be some trust earned. And by candid discussion and seeing where people came from and what their motives were -- our motives weren't to keep all our people at home, and State Departments' motives weren't use DOD as best we can, contribute little and get a lot -- but I think we had to get in there and bare knuckle it for a while. And I think Dr. Crouch teed it up very, very well, to kind of get, OK, we're getting a little donnybrook on the front side, then after we all know each other and we're a little worn down, tired of going at each other, then we're going to go at the problem. And we'll remember OK, I know you said this, but do you think we could? And I think the system worked. It worked very well, and I give a lot of that credit to Dr. Crouch.

MILLER: You mentioned the counterinsurgency just a bit ago. How much was counterinsurgency explicitly talked about and debated during the Crouch review?

SATTLER: I think it was always in the room, [00:49:00] the elephant in the room, the counterinsurgency piece. I'd been in all those discussion: civil war, counterinsurgency, are we just fighting bad people? Is it Al-Qaeda only or is there a resurgence of all those disenfranchised Iraqis who we labeled as you're all Baathists and you'll never work another day in your life.

MILLER: De-Ba'ath forces, yes.

SATTLER: We don't want to get into that one. That was not a good idea, but if you told me I'd never work again, I'd fight you, too. So who were we really fighting? But it turned out, I believe, it was going to take the policy of reintegration of all those Ba'athists, which was another thing we discussed. OK, there's got to be a life for these folks to get them to put their arms down. If their life is in jail, they're going to fight us until they die rather than starve or run out of money. And I think that the counterinsurgency piece, we knew that was the way we had to go. It was either withdraw [00:50:00] or double down on the clear-hold-build on the counterinsurgency.

Part of the build wasn't just build the towns. Part of the build was build the government, which was the PRTs and the surge from the interagency. Part of the build was also to build up the Iraqi security forces where they could do independent ops. And we had those MTTs -- Military Training Teams -- and the

police training teams embedded inside the units, which helped them grow rapidly. I think those young men and women who did that are the unsung heroes. That was a tactical move that had strategic impact. You had these young men and women, 15 of them, living inside of a unit, alone and unafraid, and earning the trust of the Iraqi unit battalion. And I believe they became the moral compass for the unit, they became the enablers for the unit, and they became the backbone of the unit when it was time to move into combat. And all that worked.

MILLER: So counterinsurgency was always linked with the surge? [00:51:00] They kind of went together?

SATTLER: In my view yes. Absolutely.

MILLER: Was there anybody in the Crouch review who expressed opposition to the idea of counterinsurgency as a workable doctrine?

SATTLER: Nation building was argued. We're not here to do that, we're here to build a modicum of security and get out of here and let them go. But again, that might have just been, we've got to get everything aired out here. And there were some very visceral ba-booms coming together on that. But I think early on we all realized that -- I don't think anybody used the term clear-hold-build -- I'm not sure when we coined that particular phrase. But I think we all knew security had to come first but there had to be something behind it. And that's when we started to talk the civilian surge in November. So I'm not sure if anybody ever said, "This is a counterinsurgency," but the discussion, at least from Doug and our perspective,

and I think everybody else -- because hey, those State Department folks have plenty of gun fighting time under their belts, too -- I think we all realized that [00:52:00] if we were going to be successful, security had to come first, but then we had to do something after we provided it.

MILLER: You've referenced Fallujah a number of times. It seems that that was a really formative experience for you in thinking about the way forward for Iraq. Did you raise that with others? Did you share it with others, about your stories from Fallujah, or did others share that same sense that Fallujah was an important formative experience?

SATTLER: Probably not so much because we're all -- nobody likes to talk about, don't you know where I was and what we accomplished? And I'm very proud of what the men and women, the Battle of Fallujah, what they accomplished. I take almost zero credit and rightfully so for the outcome. So, I think we talked a little bit about, you can provide security and once you do, people come back to life again. So I'm sure I was even asked, when there are only two uniform guys in the room [00:53:00] -- Lute and Sattler -- and when General Lute was the OPCO at CENTCOM when we were fighting Fallujah. So he was involved above that so he knew all of the strategy. But also too because we did a surge, I don't think that was very well known.

It wasn't just the Marines going into Fallujah. Far from it. We were surged with the right Army units to come in, and the Army played a prominent role in

that Battle of Fallujah, as did the six Iraqi battalions. So, when they said the Iraqis will never be able to, I was able to say *au contraire*. I had the opportunity to watch them. They're not as good as the 82nd Airborne or the 101st or a Marine division, but they came with the will and they fought and they stayed.

So those points were brought up kind of early on, and I would say probably if I had a major contribution -- I don't think I did -- but my major points that I made from my contribution whatever that may be, was the fact, no, we did this. It did work. [00:54:00] General Petraeus made this work. Other people got the credit, but I was there to witness the fact that you could do this. And after the bloody battle -- and it was -- we broke their back, we drove them out, we owned the town and we slowly gave it back to the Iraqis, then we started to build it. So, clear-hold-build transitioned even though those phrases weren't, that's exactly what we ended up doing. And General Casey was a strong proponent and supporter of that. It wouldn't have worked without him giving us that surge for about a month. That's what we got them for.

MILLER: And so you actually did cite that specific example in the discussions?

SATTLER: I don't think I tried to say, "Well, when we were in Fallujah," but I think my experiences based on what I saw and was part of, we did. So maybe that was part of -- because we had a tangible example of a big battle that everyone knew about, that was -- and again, I never want to equate the challenges in Baghdad with the challenges [00:55:00] of Fallujah. But the folks who were in Baghdad are smart

people, very adaptable, but we proved if you drain the swamp and you get rid of the scum and you bring the good owners of the town back, they like the sunlight coming through. They don't like that oppressiveness -- then they started to buy into it.

MILLER: It's important to have a proof of concept.

SATTLER: That's a great way to put it, Paul.

MILLER: Good. That covers the ground pretty well, I think. Is there anything that I'm missing that --

SATTLER: Well, I think there's one other key point, and I talked to Peter about this this morning. I remember when President Bush came over into the tank in the Pentagon, where all the service chiefs were at the table. The chairman was there, the SecDef was in the room. And this was when President Bush was about to slap the table: what are we going to do here? He was still open minded, and you know and I know he was getting advice on both sides. Political advice was, you're a fool if you [00:56:00] do this surge, because he started losing Republican and Democratic support for sure, but Republicans started to bail on him and he was, "OK. I'm the commander in chief and I'm going to make this call, but I need to make sure I look everybody in the eye and have all the facts as presented."

So before he came over, I was talking to Doug Lute. We were still short a brigade. Nobody probably remembers or even realizes this. We were trying to source both Afghanistan and Iraq, and we were short a training brigade inside of

Afghanistan where the brigade would come in, they would break down to train the Afghan forces to be able to come up on ramp faster. So, what General Petraeus had done in Iraq, on the table to get it done here, under resourced though. So, I went and saw Chairman Pace, General Pace, and I said, "Boss, the president needs to understand that there are consequences based on his decision. I'm not telling you which way it ought to go, but if we surge four brigades, [00:57:00] we will have a brigade to go into Afghanistan to do the training piece." I'm in there with General Pace that morning. He goes, "OK, I've got that." But if we surge all five it's going to have to be a hold. It's going to have to be a win Europe then go to the Pacific, like World War II. And I just said, "I just think you need to ask the president to make sure it's clear to him, that that fifth brigade, that's a big one." And Chairman Pace said, "OK, I understand. I've got it. I understand it." I can't remember if Doug Lute was with me or not, because it's sort of his bailiwick on an OK with: the requests are here for the forces, who's going to get them? SecDef makes the finally call but the J-3 walks in with the book.

So the chairman said -- and I remember I was up in the peanut gallery, all the service chiefs were at the table -- and General Pace said, "Mr. President, I want to make one point clear here. We're still under resourced one training brigade, [00:58:00] which we can hold. They weren't going to combat, they were just going to go in and work the Afghan forces." So, we had debated all this. The chairman didn't really make a recommendation to the president. My recollection was he

said, "You just need to know, if we send four, we have one left to go to Afghanistan, but to support where you're leaning right now, all five would go into Iraq." And the president was pretty decisive when he said, "No, I don't want to leave any doubt that we under resourced Iraq. We're going to win this one first, and then we'll move on over to the other side."

I just felt inside of me that it needed to be a conscious decision. It couldn't be one of those where the president later said, "Wait a minute. I didn't know." But he was very decisive. He had thought it through. He believed, as we all believed, that this would work. By that point in time, I had morphed at that point, I was a big proponent. So, when you come into a meeting in November and January comes [00:59:00] and you've completely -- that's why I hate that term "flip-flopped." More information becomes available, great people articulate a position you hadn't thought all the way through, and all of a sudden you start to find weaknesses in your initial stance. And I was kind of proud of the fact, as you mentioned earlier, that the system worked. It was ferreted out, it was fought out, but at the end of the day, Sattler had personally moved into the camp I was not in when I walked into that first meeting.

MILLER: It sounds like it was a learning process for everyone in the strategic review, including the president. And everyone learned and was able to come up with a sort of superior decision at the end of the day. That's my take on it.

SATTLER: I think you're absolutely right. Some assumptions that we believed wouldn't work: Malaki will never get on board; he'll never let us go after Muqtada al-Sadr's militia or whatever. All those biases, we each brought different ones in because we'd been in there. For two years we'd all been involved in this [01:00:00] -- two-plus years -- and when those things started to go away, when assumptions were voided, then you needed to go back in and look at your plan again. I think I'm proud of the way the system worked, and I'm proud of the fact that not only me, but I think a lot of other people, based on argument and discussion, some came this way, some came that way, but I think that we had a very good consensus position at the end that was presented. But I will say, the president showed strong leadership. He talked to everyone, he went through all the if, ands and buts, but then he said, "This is what we're going to do." And all the chiefs were in there and nobody took umbrage with it.

MILLER: Anything else about the tank session?

SATTLER: No, that was the most --

MILLER: That was the one.

SATTLER: I remember, first of all, it was exciting to be in there and watch the president working with all his service chiefs and the chairman, the vice-chairman, the SecDef. Pretty important time, in my life at least, to be in there watching that all unfold for this big decision. [01:01:00] But the underpinnings of the iceberg getting up to that point were -- he just didn't walk in that day, as you said. He was open-

minded. He took everything on board, but at the end of the day, regardless of pressures.

I remember one time General Petraeus, one last little story. We're on a VTC and General Petraeus said something like, "Mr. President, you're going to get a lot of blow back in Washington, D.C." And the president -- we were on a video teleconference inside where the NSC met. The president pushed his little button and said, "General Petraeus, thank you very much for being concerned about me back here. I'll take care of D.C. I've got it. You worry about employing these forces to take care of the bad guys." Because I really remember -- I shouldn't even say it on camera -- but, the president said that and he kind of looked over, and I was behind General Pace over on the side And when he made eye contact with me, I winked. I was so jacked up, wow, the commander in chief taking charge. He looked at me and I gave him like a little wink, [01:02:00] and he winked back and I went, "Oh my god. I just winked at the President of the United States." I remember thinking, I've just got to get out of this room as soon as this meeting's over. But that was another one of those, I came home and told my wife, "I think I busted protocol today. I winked at the president because I was jazzed up on the way he articulated that with General Petraeus in the video teleconference."

MILLER: That's fantastic. A great story.

SATTLER: I'm wearing you out now with stories you don't need to hear, but I'll --

MILLER: No, no. I appreciate it. This has been very helpful and plugging a gap in our knowledge. So I really appreciate it. Is there anything else that --

SATTLER: I guess I would ask, am I ever going to be able to -- because I'm sitting in here. There could be nine different sessions going with you interviewing each person, scratching your head going, how did two people -- but you know how that is: two people hear the same thing and take away something different from it.

MILLER: Absolutely, yes.

SATTLER: And I know General Lute and I kind of grew up the same way, and even the two of us, in recollection, "Doug, that's not the way it happened." "No, you're wrong, John." So, I'd just be interested to see how my [01:03:00] nine-year recollection at age 67 pans out to when I was inside that room.

MILLER: We intend to make some edited transcripts available for the interviews, and there'll be a conference and eventually an edited book of essays.

SATTLER: Wow.

MILLER: So we'll produce what we hope is sort of the definitive narrative of this surge decision. It'll be a couple of years before this all comes to fruition, but yes, this is going to be available for everyone to see and read, so.

SATTLER: And I'm not worried about how I come out in the book or how I look on TV. I already know that one. But I just wanted to see how my recollection balances against people I respect the hell out of. So that'll be good.

MILLER: Yes.

SATTLER: So you're working with Admiral McRaven now?

MILLER: That's right, down at UT. He's been fantastic for university system and I'm really excited to be working with him.

SATTLER: Wow. For our big leadership conference at the Naval Academy -- he just got back to me -- he's going to come up and give the keynote pep rally to jack everyone up.

MILLER: That's great.

SATTLER: We expect to have two to three thousand midshipmen and other schools in [01:04:00], and he's going to roll into our big Dahlgren Hall, and he's going to light them up. He's so selfless. He just agreed, "Busy schedule, but if you do it on Sunday I can be there," so we changed it to Sunday to get him. But what a great, tremendous, tremendous warrior and human being.

MILLER: He is. He's fantastic, and he's already been a great asset for the UT system. So we're happy to have him there. He spoke at our conference just this last week, so it's great.

SATTLER: All right, Paul.

MILLER: Well thank you so much.

SATTLER: Three, two --

MILLER: I appreciate your time and it's been very helpful.

[END OF AUDIO/VIDEO FILE]