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Announcer: Welcome to HII Talking Points, a Huntington Ingalls Industries podcast. Twice a quarter, we'll sit down with HII leaders to discuss topics of interest in our company and industry.

Phoebe Richards: Hi everyone, and welcome to HII Talking Points. I'm Phoebe Richards, and with me today is Mitch Waldman, HII's executive vice president of government and customer relations. Mitch, thank you for joining.

Mitch Waldman: Thanks for having me.

Phoebe Richards: So over the past few episodes, we've heard from a number of HII senior leaders on what they do in the organization. Today, I'd like to explore the world of government and customer relations and how your team interacts with outside leaders and influencers to support the business. So first off, when we say government and customer relations, what does that mean exactly, and who are you interacting with?

Mitch Waldman: Well let's look at the title of the organization. When we spun off from Northrop Grumman, we, Huntington Ingalls, didn't have a presence in Washington that was able to significantly interface with the government. And so we said let's set up this organization, and let's focus on relationships. So that's the relations part of the title. So we cultivate existing relationships, we grow new relationships, we fix broken relationships. That's the fundamental tenet of what we do. So who do we do that with? Government and customers.

And I get a lot of questions, what are the differences? So the government is the government. Right? We have three branches of government. We have the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. We principally deal with the executive branch and the legislative branch. Our law department deals with the judicial branch, but then customers, that's a little bit tougher because customers in the context of suppliers to us, industry and trade associations, think tanks, just a broad range of individuals that help us do our business and help us produce the products for our navy and the nation and other customers that are so important.

Phoebe Richards: So how did you get to the role that you're in today?

Mitch Waldman: Well, let me brag on my team a little bit here and not talk about me, but really talk about the composition of the team, but the fundamental question of the role. Why do we even need the role? Why is that important?

Phoebe Richards: Right.

Mitch Waldman: So I'll look at our mission statement. You know, we talked about relationships, growing them, building them, fixing them, but the fundamental role is to work with the government and work with our customers to shape requirements, acquisition strategies, investments, schedules, and then the environment in which we do business. And so that's really the role of the government and customer

relations team. Now who is best to do that but the folks that have long experience really doing that for the government, or maybe even doing that for suppliers? So if you look at the composition of the team, call us a very senior, very junior team. We're very senior in our prior experience, either in military or civilian service, or with positions of leadership in a committee on the hill, the legislative branch.

Or perhaps even with the business units. So very senior in that domain, but very junior to HII, and so that's who we are, and that's a very unique part of the company in terms of what we bring to this game, we bring that expertise. I've had folks often say we're the folks that translate Pentagon-ese into shipyard-ese, and shipyard-ese into Pentagon-ese, and I think there's something true to that. All I'll say is I'm just honored to every day to lead this extremely talented team.

Phoebe Richards: And your background is also on the Hill as well. Correct?

Mitch Waldman: It is, and I was a civilian for many years, senior civilian with the Navy. And on the Hill and with industry. So I'm able to bring together – as many of my folks are – that triad if you will, a capability.

Phoebe Richards: Nice. So HII's customer isn't just the Navy or the Coast guard. Can you talk a little about how your team supports Technical Solutions' business portfolio? Because they're a little bit different.

Mitch Waldman: They are, but they're a little bit the same, too. Remember that part of Technical Solutions came out of the existing business units. The work that we do for ship repair, for instance, that's a Navy mission. The work that we are doing with autonomous and unmanned vehicles, that's a Navy mission. So Technical Solutions supports the Navy and Navy priorities that really in the same respect that Ingalls and Newport News and Continental Maritime do as well. So the difference is the range of customers. Right, you talk about Navy and Coast Guard, those are principally Ingalls and Newport News again. The range of customers for Technical Solutions is much, much broader, so it's Army, it's Air National Guard, it's civilian agencies, it's intelligence agencies, commercial energy, nuclear remediation. And so the list of customers is long, but the process again is the same, and it's what I said previously. It is growing new relationships, cultivating relationships. It is fixing broken relationships again, in the context of helping our customer shape requirements, acquisition strategies, investment schedules, and then the whole business environment. So what we do is the same. The who we do it with is a bit broader.

Phoebe Richards: So how supportive of HII's programs is the current political climate in Washington, DC? So kind of switching roles a little bit.

Mitch Waldman: So we pay attention to political environment. Obviously, we operate in that space, but national security is a national matter. It is I'd like to think not a partisan matter. In many respects, it's an apolitical matter. It's supported across the aisles, supported broadly by the people in this country. And so we look more at the system of how we do our business. And we look again across suppliers, commercial suppliers, and suppliers that provide military products to us, folks shaping policy. Obviously, the government.

Again, executive branch, legislative branch, but it's very much a system. When I talk to college classes about this, I often draw a diagram of industry executive branch and legislative branch. Because you need all three pieces to do this business, to provide national security solutions for our nation. So that's how I

view this. So the political climate is important because often the political climate will govern the amount of debate, rigorous debate that should occur in our nation and in Washington about matters of national security. So that's the context in which I view this climate.

Phoebe Richards: So being apolitical, it's maybe sometimes under the radar in terms of the big conversations that we hear.

Mitch Waldman: Well hopefully the big conversations actually get a level of national debate. The question is the clock, if you will, the play clock. There's only so many days in Washington to do things. The government operates on a fiscal year. The Congress operates on a legislative calendar. And so the challenge is getting all the work done. There's a lot of work to be done that's very important work to have the dialogue at that very senior level. So we encourage that discourse. We bring important matters into the government. The government brings important matters to us.

Again, our goal here is to be the most trusted supplier provider for our range of customers.

Phoebe Richards: So many of us outside of government may have opinions on if it works or doesn't work. So how do you view our government, and how does its structure impact HII, either good, bad, or neutral?

Mitch Waldman: I get that question a lot. I often think about the Winston Churchill quote, or at least a quote that was attributed to him. He said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others. You know, I think about this as a student of history, and I enjoy reading history. You know, government is messy. I serve in government for the majority of my career, but I'll tell you, government in all branches, the folks working there are hard-working, dedicated, committed, talented, wanting to do the right thing. And industry as well. Same thing. Patriotic, talented, committed, and so you know, this is a hard business.

And the reality is it does work. We work with our customers on requirements, affordability, and all the things I mentioned before to provide the capability that this nation needs to do what this nation needs to do. And so that's the role that we play. Again, from a national security perspective, my view – and I don't think I'm in the minority on this – from a national security perspective, it works quite well, and all you have to do is look at the terrific things that the men and women over at uniformed services every day with the great products produced by the ship building industry, including us.

Phoebe Richards: So last question. We're coming into an election year. I have to ask does it matter to HII whether we end up with a Democratic or a Republican administration?

Mitch Waldman: I always have a funny answer to this question. I don't do politics.

Phoebe Richards: There you go.

Mitch Waldman: Funny for the Washington person to say that. I'll go back to the student of history comment I made before. I think the founding fathers just did a terrific job in framing what our government is. You know, we have the extraordinary honor of periodically electing our representatives who represent us, right, the representatives of the people. And what really matters is us as citizens exercising that right and voting so that our leaders are elected by a broad cross section of Americans, not just a small group of folks. So that's our civic duty, that's our responsibility as Americans to do this.

We at HII and me personally, again, very talented, very committed people of great character. We look forward to working with whoever is elected, whoever serves in the appointed office in the executive branch, whoever is there from a career, the many career folks we work with and have worked with for a long period of time. So we just look forward to working with that great team, again, to provide these great capabilities, the ships, the services, everything we do here for our customers and for our nation.

Phoebe Richards: So either way, it'll all work out.

Mitch Waldman: Either way, we look forward to moving forward and doing the right thing.

Phoebe Richards: Well very good. All right, well thank you Mitch for sharing your thoughts today.

Mitch Waldman: My pleasure.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to HII Talking Points. This podcast was produced by Huntington Ingalls Industries corporate communications team. We welcome your feedback and ideas for future podcasts at www.huntingtoningalls.com/podcast.

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