

TRANSCRIPT

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**THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT AND MAY CONTAIN ERRORS. USERS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAPES OR NOTES OF THE SESSION IF ABSOLUTE VERIFICATION OF WORDING IS NEEDED.**

**Q: Welcome to General Pace this morning. We're very happy to have you. A good time to have you, too.**

**A: It's good to be here.**

**Q: On the record as we always are. And because there are so many of you here I'm going to have to ask everyone to please limit your questions to one question and a follow up. Tony, because you were here at 7:00 o'clock this morning you can go first.**

**Q: On readiness, back in February you said you weren't comfortable with the readiness of Army units back in the United States. You talked a little bit about the implications if the US had to fight a second contingency in other parts of the world. It would be less precise, wouldn't be on our timelines. How much have those trends, those problems been exacerbated by the extension to 15 months from 12 for the forces in Iraq and Afghanistan? How concerned are you over the next year we're in a state of risk?**

**A: The extension actually mitigates some of the problems that you just mentioned. First of all it will give the units that are home a minimum of one year which is important to ensure that we have adequate time to get all of the training done we need to and then a little extra time to perhaps train for some of the other missions other than going to Iraq. That's not to lessen the impact on the troops who are being extended. That's a different category.**

Just in talking to the specific things you mentioned, training will be helped by the 15 month, 12 month. Equipment usage will remain constant because it's either going to be PFC Pace or PFC Capaccio using the vehicle, but the vehicle itself that's in Iraq is going to be used.

The funding for repairs of the vehicles is in the supplemental request. The depots are working at capacity on the vehicles that need to be fixed.

So the 15-12 decision in and of itself will not have negative impact on the equipment and availability of troops.

Q: What about the impact on troops in the United States who don't have that equipment? Will they be less ready for other contingencies?

A: Let me make sure I get your question right because I want to give you as complete an answer as possible.

The timing of the 15-12 has no impact on that at all. What has impact on that is money and capacity to repair. Both the money and the capacity to repair have been requested to be able to keep the depots running full capacity. If Congress passes the supplementals as requested then the money will be there to repair the equipment as fast as possible.

We have about a two year backlog in equipment to be repaired, so if you were to stop using the equipment today it would just by virtue of the through-put at the depots, it would take two years to complete all the repairs.

Q: General, I've got a roles and missions question for you. The Air Force is itching to be executive agent for UAVs that fly above 3500 feet. The other services have responded with pretty much a rude gesture. [Laughter]. I'd like to get your idea on whether you think that's a good idea or if not, why isn't it a good idea?

A: I was part of that whole dialogue on a day-to-day basis when I was the Vice Chairman and I was running the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee. I've been a little less involved in the, no, I've been a whole lot less involved in the day-to-day conversation. So let me tell you what I believe without knowing all the details of who's saying what to whom or whose gestures are going what direction, because I really do believe that the services are trying to find the right joint solution. There's been nothing I've seen in the last five years in the JROC or in the Tank that hasn't been the senior leaders trying to find the right joint solution.

It makes absolute good sense to me that things flying above 3500 feet should be part of an ATO, Air Tasking Order, so that there's deconfliction of the airspace and the Joint

Force Air Component Commander, normally Air Force but not necessarily, is the right person to ensure that the airspace is deconflicted.

With regard to the specific types of capabilities that each of those airframes carry, it's understandable that the Special Operations Forces would want different kinds of capacities than the conventional ground forces. So if you're talking mix and match of payload we need to be careful not to override the needs of the troops on the ground by some kind of a generic package. But if you're talking about airspace control it makes sense to have somebody in charge.

Q: I think the Air Force is looking pretty much to avoid the duplication and the redundancy, but I think part of their motivation might also have been that they wanted to ask the Army if it was a smart idea for Air Force troops in lieu of ground troops doing things like driving trucks while the Army's creating a whole new corps of UAV operators. Is there a path here to maybe settle some of those inequities between the services?

A: I think it's worth taking a look at just to make sure that we've got the right guys and gals doing the right things.

The Air Force and the Navy especially have been extremely forthcoming in finding guys and gals in their services who have the skills that can help relieve some of the pressure on the Army and the Marine Corps with regard to ground troops. It's not a bad idea to take a look at all UAV operations to see who ought to be on the control stick, so to speak, for those operations. And if that's a place where the Air Force could free up Army troops to do other things it's worth a discussion.

But just how many people are doing things shouldn't be the sole driver in making that decision. But I would really like to disabuse you of the finger-pointing drill, no matter which finger it is, because I haven't seen that and we've discussed this in the Tank and I know that Admiral Giambastiani has discussed it in the JROC. Both of those fora are very professional, very joint in their approach to things.

Did I answer your question?

Q: Kind of.

Q: I've got a question on Iran. There's been a fairly long history of US statements that point to elements within the government of Iran as sending weapons into Iraq to kill US forces. Just last week General Caldwell said, quote, "Iranian intelligence services have provided training to Sunni insurgents. We see the Iranian intelligence services being active here in Iraq in terms of both regarding funding and providing weapons and munitions."

I guess my question is what is the proper response that's aiding and abetting the killing of American forces?

A: I think we should continue to be aggressive inside of Iraq and aggressive inside of Afghanistan in attacking any element that's attacking US and coalition forces. Regardless of where they come from. There are folks from various nations in both Iraq and Afghanistan fighting against US and coalition forces. But I want to make sure again, as I tried to be about a month or two ago, that we're very precise about what we know and then what we surmise from that.

What we know is that in aggressively going after the IED network in Iraq that we policed up some Iranian Quds Force members. We know that there are munitions that were made in Iran that are in Iraq and in Afghanistan. We know that the Quds Force works for the IRGC. All stop. That's what we know.

We then surmise from that one of two things. Either the leadership of the country knows what their armed forces are doing, or they don't know. In either case, that's a problem.

Q: So what are you going to do about it?

A: We will continue to be very aggressive inside of Iraq and inside of Afghanistan against any elements that are posing a threat to our armed forces.

Q: In '86, for example, the Americans attacked Libya, went after Qaddafi. There were suggestions that the Libyan intelligence services had killed American service members and we responded that way. Given that Caldwell says Iranian intelligence services, why when there seems to be a lot of evidence pointing to that, are you setting Iran aside for not attacking militarily when you seem to have a lot of intelligence pointing that way?

A: First of all, we're coloring a little bit outside my lane but I'll give you my answer.

There is a lot more diplomacy not only between the United States and Iran but between all the nations of the world and Iran that can still be brought to bear to change Iran's attitude. Military force is your last tool, not your first tool. There are still many international tools available to address Iranian interference.

Q: Following up on that a bit, have you any more information in the string of helicopter shootdowns of whether the SA-16 or 18 was involved?

A: I do not. I do not know where we are in the forensics on that.

Q: Are there SA-16s and 18s, on the battlefield?

A: I'm not sure. I do not know.

Q: Are SA-16s and 18s in the hands of the Iranians and Syrians?

A: I'm not playing games with you. There are so many SA-this, SA-that, SA-so and so's, I don't have that detail in my head. I'm not going to tell you something I don't know, I just don't know. It doesn't mean it's not true, I just -- there's SA-7, there's SA-9, there's SA-18, et cetera. Who's got what at this instant in my head, I don't have it. I'm sorry.

Q: [Inaudible] the latest shoulder fired SAM?

A: If we can, if I can get back to you with the answer. I just don't have it in my head.

Q: Thank you.

Q: General, some people liken the war in Iraq to a game of whack-a-mole. We see the mole raising its head north of Baghdad now in Diala Province. There's been talk that US reinforcements may be going there to deal with this, perhaps including a brigade element of the surge. What can you tell us about this?

A: The surge troops have been provided to the commanders on the ground based on what they told us they needed for Baghdad and al Anbar. That does not preclude General Petraeus, General Odierno, Admiral Fallon, from using troops anywhere in country that they need them to deal with emerging threats. But in the process of doing that they will need to balance the cost/benefit of moving troops from Point A to Point B. That would certainly be well within their responsibility and authority to make those kinds of decisions to do the right thing tactically to impact the strategic situation.

Q: Is such a movement being considered?

A: Not to my knowledge.

Q: General, switch the topic for a minute to missile defense and the Russians' objections to the US plan to establish a base in Europe.

Do you understand their objections and do you consider them to be legitimate? Or do you think they are looking for a reason to challenge US influence in Europe?

A: I cannot speak to what is in the Russian head. I can speak to the discussions I had with my counterpart, Yuri Baluyevsky about maybe three months ago when I was in

Moscow. I'd have to get the exact timeline. But he and I talked about this and we had sent teams to Moscow to show them exactly what we're thinking about. The math and geometry is fairly straightforward and fairly basic. You can do the math and the geometry that tells you if you put a defensive missile in this spot that if, and we don't expect this either, but if the Russians were to fire a missile at the United States, the missile that's in Poland would not be able to catch the missile that was fired from Russia. That's not why that missile would be there. We have other missiles that could handle that.

Q: Do they accept that calculation?

A: I don't know. We've explained it to them. We've got teams of experts who have sat down with their experts. We've diagramed it for them. Whether or not they accept it is a question you'd have to ask them, but the math and geometry is very straightforward with regard to what missiles can be intercepted and what missiles cannot be intercepted from Poland.

Q: But the US will go ahead of the project regardless of the Russian concern?

A: That's not my call. That's between the President of the United States and the leadership in Poland and our Congress. I'm there's --

Q: Do you think we should, though?

A: I think we should find as many ways as possible to defend ourselves and our friends. The decision about how to do that is way out of my lane.

Q: I feel bad for Dave because he struck out so I'm going to let him take a second question.

Q: I hope you feel really guilty. [Laughter].

A: I'm sorry. We'll try to get you the answer.

Q: I'm just back from Japan and talking to the military people there, the Japanese military people. They said they are truly focused on F-22. They want F-22. They don't want a bridge airplane. They don't want an upgraded F-15 or F-18. They want the F-22. They said it has become a point of pride that they get the F-22, and others are saying not only is it a point of pride, but because of the cruise missile defense capability it's becoming a point of national preservation. And US military people are saying they're asking the administration and others to reconsider selling F-22s to Japan. Are you hearing any of that dialogue? What's your understanding of the status of play on that?

A: I was in Japan about a month ago, just shy of a month ago. I went to Japan and China. I met in Japan with our Ambassador, with the Ministry of Defense, the Deputy Ministry of Defense, with my counterpart Admiral Saito and with several other leaders. Not once in the time I was there did the F-22 come into the discussion. I'm aware that the Japanese are interested in the F-22. I'm also aware of our concerns about what we export and what we don't export in our high end technology.

The Japanese are a very close friend. We're committed to the defense of Japan so we'll work our way through it, but I have not been, it did not come up in my time in Japan.

Q: How about the issue of cruise missile defense? Is that growing in their visibility as a great concern to them? Is it a concern to us in that region since it's a very relatively short distance across the Sea of Japan?

A: I think we all need to be concerned about both ballistic and cruise missile defense. Again, perhaps because I was only there for about 24 hours, they didn't raise it with me but they did not raise either the F-22 or cruise missile when I was there. But it is something we in the United States military need to continue to work on because the cruise missile threat is a real threat.

Q: In response to an earlier question you referred to an Iranian role in Iraq and Afghanistan. What's the Iranian role in Afghanistan [inaudible]?

A: Say the last part again.

Q: If I heard you correctly you referred to an Iranian role in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A: Yes.

Q: What's the Iranian role in Afghanistan? Which Iranian entity are you talking about? What are they doing? Is this the al Quds Force? Is this a train and equip? Is this involving IED technology? What are you talking about?

A: It is not as clear in Afghanistan which Iranian entity is responsible, but we have intercepted weapons in Afghanistan headed for the Taliban that were made in Iran. We do not know with the same clarity we know in Iraq who is delivering those weapons or who is involved.

So the fact that we know it is made in Iran, being delivered to Taliban in Afghanistan, intercepted by coalition forces. That's all we know right now about that.

Q: Which type of weapon?

A: There were mortars and C4 explosive type explosives. That's what I know of.

Q: And they were intercepted coming from Iran?

A: They were intercepted in Afghanistan, in the Kandahar region.

Q: But believed to have been shipped from Iran?

A: Made in Iran. Don't know if they took a torturous route to get there. Don't know.

Q: Can you put a timeframe on that? Was that recently?

A: Within the last month.

Q: C4 is pretty common in this area. How do you --

A: Markings.

Q: General Pace, can you please describe the reaction of the Joint Chiefs to the 1st Marine Special Operations Company being expelled from Afghanistan? What does that mean for the future of MARSOC?

A: That particular issue has not been discussed amongst the Joint Chiefs as the Joint Chiefs in the Tank. I have had a discussion with General Conway, Chairman and Commandant of the Marine Corps talking with each other about this. General Conway, clearly disappointed in the performance of those Marines. He told me that he's very supportive of the investigation that was initiated by the Special Operations Commander on the ground, that he agreed with taking those Marines off the battlefield until it was clear what they had done or not done. So there is no service rivalry problems because of this, because they've either done something or they haven't, and the facts will bear out what they've done and haven't done. It has nothing to do with what color uniform they're wearing. It has to do with finding out what they did right, what they did wrong, and fixing it.

So the future of MARSOC in Special Operations is exactly what it was before this incident which is the Marines will continue to find ways to be included and supported and contributors to the Special Operations community. But this certainly, for Marines, if it at the end of the day turns out to be factual, will be a nick on Marine pride, for sure, and would be something that the rest of the Marines involved with Special Operations will do what Marines always do, which is to work harder to be more useful to the nation

in a way that restores Marine credibility in the Special Operations community.

Q: Has it affected any future deployments of the MARSOC?

A: I don't know the answer to that. I'm not sure what was on tap. It certainly curtailed that deployment and brought those Marines off the battlefield. Whether or not it impacts the future or not, I don't know. You'll have to ask the Marines.

Q: When does the issue with the budget and the supplemental turn from a nuisance into a problem? And as folks fighting the war, have you given Congress any kind of a drop dead date, or are you exploring ways to tap into money elsewhere in the federal government if this funding [inaudible]?

A: We have explained to Congress the steps we would have to take based on dates on the calendar. That's different than giving the Congress of the United States a drop dead date. We don't give Congress drop dead dates, we explain to Congress what the impact is of going past certain dates.

What we told Congress is if we got past 15 April that we would, the Army especially by 15 April, would have to start curtailing some training for units at home, would have to start curtailing some repair of equipment, would have to start thinking about and preparing for releasing civilian employees, and that if the decision and the money were not in hands by 15 May then the Army would have to start considering, exclusive of the decision they've already made, the tour lengths of units because you may not have all you need at home to be able to properly train units to be able to be deployed and we are absolutely committed to making sure that every single person deploying to the war zone is properly trained and equipped. Some of the money for the training of the brigades that were due to go would start to be impacted around May.

You can go back to what happened last year this time. This is not solely projections of what might happen this year, it's also based on what actually did happen this time last year when the funding didn't come on these timelines and we can point very directly to those end points.

We're trying to be helpful in the decision process by putting on the table what we know about last year and what we project about this year in a way that helps the decision makers make decisions.

Q: Is the Pentagon different from other types of federal government [inaudible]? When there's some sort of difficulty, I mean with the debt ceiling, Congress just assumes now that the Treasury will find a way to move money around and keep the government open as long as possible and then when it finally can't the Treasury will say so and Congress

will act. But they sort of trust in the money managers to move things around.

Do you feel like you have that expectation, or do you think the Pentagon is a different case because of the safety issue?

A: Let me try answering the question the way I think you've asked it. If I've got it wrong you've got to come back again at me.

We have inside the Department of Defense the ability to ask Congress to allow us to reprogram some of the money we already have. So there's money available in pots that are already approved for this year's FY07 budget that go through 30 September that we can ask the Congress to allow us to spend on the war instead of on whatever they gave it to us for. But there are legal restrictions as to how much of that money can be asked for and then there is the requirement for Congress to vote on allowing us to reprogram that money, which kind of seems like if you can get together to vote on reprogramming might the energy be better spent on getting to whatever decision is going to be on the supplemental itself.

As I understand it, and I may use the wrong terminology here, but as I understand it the main difference between the rest of the federal government and DOD is that with an ongoing war the President has the authority and responsibility to do what we term food and forage and go out throughout the entire government and find the resources from the entire government to fund an ongoing military operation. But that's separate from, it's a little different than the supplemental that I think you asked me about. So I'm not sure I've gotten to your questions.

Q: My follow-up was, do they feel a sense of urgency? Because you have all these other ways to get money, even if they're not the ideal ways, do they feel a sense of urgency about some things?

A: Please go ask them. We have to the best of our ability described the impact and our sense of urgency. I know that the leadership in Congress is working hard to find the right answer.

Q: Can we get back to Iraq? The Secretary has made it pretty clear that he would like to see an evaluation for a thumbs-up or thumbs-down mid to late summer on how things are going. Obviously as chief military advisor to the President you're probably involved in some of that determination. A couple of things on that.

One, it strikes me, and some others, that if we are indeed only really starting the surge, all five arrive in June, that really only gives General Patreaus six weeks, two months on the outside, to really prove that this is going to work. I'm just curious why the Secretary

and yourself think that mid to late summer will be enough time to make a decent evaluation on this. Do you want to start with that?

A: We've been talking with Admiral Fallon and General Patreaus and General Odierno. As you properly pointed out, we're adding one brigade per month and the fifth and final plus-up brigade for Baghdad will arrive in Kuwait during May and in Iraq during June.

That doesn't mean that nothing's happening until June, it means that we won't have the full force there until June and the prior brigade are getting three. Three of those five are there now. The third one just is going fully operationally capable as we speak in the Baghdad area. So you do have some impact right now.

But let's go back to June when all five brigades will be there. June, July, August. Somewhere in that timeline during those two, three, four months, General Patreaus and General Odierno had told us they should have a flavor for how this is going. And let's remember, this is not pure military. Not only will we have a good flavor for how it's going militarily, but we also ought to have a flavor for the other two very important parts of this surge which are a surge in political action by the Iraqi government and the potential for surge in economics, although clearly the economic surge would follow the security and governance surges. But we should have a feel for at least the political and the military by mid to end summer.

I've been with Secretary Gates multiple times when he has answered that and he's not putting a hard and fast, by X date on the calendar you've got to make your decision and give it to me. What he's saying in response to questions like this is he and his commanders and I believe that after having everybody there for two or three months we ought to have a pretty good sense of how goes it.

Q: As the Joint Chiefs and the Joint Staff being the people who check the homework type thing, are there metrics -- frankly, all of us will probably end up in Baghdad as reporters July/August, to try to make our own determination of whether the thing is working.

I'm curious if you can share with us maybe the metrics that you'll be looking for as you sit down in that July/August timeframe to try to make a recommendation and evaluation.

A: As you know, every 90 days we send to Congress what's called a 90/10 report. The last time we submitted it, February, it was about 60 pages long and there's an enormous number of metrics in there, and not surprising to anybody around this table, we track all kinds of bar graphs and charts, et cetera.

I'd recommend a very simple but straightforward metric and that is a two-part question. One, do the people in Baghdad feel more secure today, whatever today is, whenever you ask the question. On the day you ask the question do they feel more comfortable the day you ask the question, more secure, than they did the day before? And do they believe that the next day and the days beyond they'll be even more secure than they are today?

When the answer to both those questions is yes, then the impact of the military, governance and economics will have had the impact desired. And if not, then all the other metrics may be of interest but aren't as compelling as that one is to me.

Q: General, Jack Sheehan wrote a pretty incisive piece explaining why he didn't want to take over the so-called war czar and he deconstructed the strategic vision going forward that he saw was flawed. I was wondering if you could comment on that.

Also tell us, you're the continuity in this war. You've been here at the start, and we all think it's kind of winding down one way or the other, you'll be here presumably at the end. What went wrong, besides the enemy having a vote, what went wrong and what would you like to have done better?

A: I'll let General Sheehan speak for himself. I spoke with him before he made his decision to take himself out of the running to see if he was interested in being considered. I have not spoken with him since that time. I'll let General Sheehan speak for himself.

I believe that we are in a long struggle and you said winding down. I'm not sure where you're talking about winding down. But this only gets to wind down if both sides decide it's going to wind down. To my knowledge the al-Qaeda have not backed off of their 100 year plan. Therefore us deciding, if we were to decide that we don't want to play any more, would not end this confrontation and this threat to all free nations.

So what we need to understand is where should we be, where are we, what's the delta, and how do you close that gap? That's what I and the Joint Chiefs did between August and October/November this year, first by ourselves to give a fresh look, using the same facts but giving a fresh look; then in conjunction with Central Command and multinational forces in Iraq, which led us to the recommendation that we gave to the President and the Secretary about the plus-up in troops, the plus-up in economic, and the plus-up in governance. That is now unfolding. My focus right now is on helping, supporting General Patreaus in whatever ways we can to give him every opportunity for the military piece of this to provide the security that would allow the other two parts.

I guess that's where I'd stop.

Q: General, switching gears a little bit to look at Sudan and what's going on in Darfur, US government officials I've heard many times now talk about changing the military equation on the ground in Sudan and trying to convince Bashir --

A: I'm sorry, who has said that?

Q: US government officials. I'm sorry I can't be more specific. [Laughter]. Talking about changing the military equation on the ground, convincing Bashir that he doesn't want to get bogged down in Darfur and cease his operations there. What is the US military role in changing that military equation? And what is the US military role in creating, making the South Sudanese forces a more credible force against Bashir?

A: Right now our role has included and been restricted to air transportation of some other countries' troops for the United Nations to be able to get them to the region, and some handful to a dozen planners that have assisted here in Washington and up at the UN headquarters and in country to help the United Nations do some planning. Beyond that there is not a role projected for the US military.

Q: Beyond that then, can you talk more broadly about how the military equation on the ground could be changed? I've heard people rule out air strikes, rule out a full intervention. How do you change the military equation on the ground without those two things?

A: I haven't studied that enough to know the exact military actions that might be taken because, A, not being tasked to do so and have other things on my plate; B, the United Nations very much in the lead and working with the governments in the area. The African Union very much involved. So there are other entities that I know our government is supporting like the United Nations to have a lead role in that. I have not spent time thinking through military action because that's not something that the US military is contemplating right now.

Q: General, to follow up on a question on the supplemental. You said if you don't get the money by May 15th you might not be able to deploy units that you were planning to deploy. What does that mean? Does that mean that when units are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan you would not be able to replace them so you would end up with fewer troops over there and a surge in otherwise than you would desire?

A: One of the results of going past May 15th, in addition to less training in general and less repair work in general, is the possibility of not having enough training money for the seven brigades that are in the pipeline yet to deploy to Iraq over the next six months or so. And it's possible that depending upon how long the money is not provided, that you would not be able to get all the training done that you would want to get done for

PFC Pace before you sent him into combat. Therefore you would not certify that unit as being combat ready and you would not send it.

Then your choice would be either A, extend the unit that that unit was supposed to replace; or B, bring that unit home and have a lesser size force doing whatever the mission is.

Again, it's not a switch on and off and it's not a 15 May, everything happens all at one time, but it's a projection that by the 15th of May if the funding's not there and you don't know when you're going to get it you by law have to stop doing things so you're not spending more money than you have within this year's budget. And since 30 September is when this year's normal budget runs out, you have to start, the Army especially, has to take the actions that will allow them to fund the things that they're doing overseas inside the money they have and not break the law, which says you can't spend money you don't have.

Q: Just a quick follow-up. If you don't get the money, what is the likelihood that you will not get the training in and that you will either have to extend tours or end up with fewer troops than you planned?

A: I don't know. Again, it doesn't just all stop on 15 May. Again, trying to provide to the Congress as much information as we can, to be as accurate as we can, realizing that this is like a kaleidoscope and when you change one thing a lot of things change. Trying to give to them the best information we can so they can make the decisions they need to make with regard to funding.

Q: General, I wanted to get back to the idea of having a war czar in the White House, or an implementation manager, or whatever it is. Do you think that's a good idea? Why is it needed? And the fact that they're having so much trouble finding somebody to fill that position, doesn't that suggest that it's ill conceived in some way, or at least a reflection of lack of confidence in the direction that you all are moving on the war in Iraq?

A: I think Steve Hadley used a very good description which is that this person would do on a daily basis for the President, for the National Security Council, what Steve would do himself if he could focus solely on Iraq and Afghanistan. But because, in Steve's words, there's so much going on globally that he as the National Security Advisor must be on top of, that from his perspective the President, the National Security Council and the nation would be well served by having an individual who focused every day on Steve Hadley-like level issues for the President.

That makes good sense to me. I think it's a very helpful position to have, to have somebody who can be watching the implementation of the decisions that are made and

to be able to say this is on track, this is not, we need to make some adjustments here.

When decisions are made, DOD takes our piece and Department of State takes theirs and Treasury takes theirs, and each department is working real hard to do what the nation needs them to do, but you don't always know in DOD what the status of play is in the other departments, and vice versa. The NSC is the entity that does that for us and if they need an additional person to help do that it makes sense to add that person.

Q: Why a general, and why are they having so much trouble finding one to do it?

A: I don't know that it has to be a general. I think a civilian could do that as well as a general or an admiral, and I believe that the scope of individuals being looked at is wider than just US military active and retired. But that's really a question to ask Mr. Hadley as far as how wide a scope he has. Obviously if you ask me my opinion about who ought to be considered the guys and gals I'll be recommending are folks I know who are either active duty or retired military, but I'm sure there are other folks being asked their opinion and I'm sure there are civilians in there as well.

Q: [Inaudible]? Can you order them to do it? [Laughter].

A: What I was trying to say was when I get asked my opinion I've got -- I know two groups of people well. I know active duty folks well and I know retirees well. I don't know very many civilians very well. Therefore if I get asked that kind of question my natural default is going to be to look at the active duty list and retired list to recommend names. Other people in other parts of the government, every other department of the government, not DOD, are going to, by their nature, not be recommending military guys and gals, they're going to be recommending civilians who they know. That's all I was trying to say.

Q: Back to the metrics thing, and I think what I heard you say was a bunch of metrics, but in the end it will be the Iraqis [inaudible].

A: Thank you, because it really should be do they feel better about today than they feel about yesterday, and do they think tomorrow is going to be better than today. That includes security, it includes governance, it includes economics.

Q: I just wonder, and maybe this is more from a security standpoint, but given the X number of US forces over there, potentially more [inaudible], how do their presence mask the progress and how will you be able to discern what those methods are given the presence of so many forces there?

A: There are certainly metrics that answer your question. For example, there are 10 Iraqi

divisions. As of today nine of those divisions are under the Iraqi chain of command. That's a significant, positive move for the future of Iraq. Of the 120 Iraqi battalions of about 500 men each, some 80 to 85 are either operating independently or side by side with coalition forces. So you can track those kinds of metrics. You can look at training and equipment and lots and lots of things that are reported every 90 days to the Congress and to the American people. You can look at a lot of metrics. I was just trying to help simplify what is an enormous amount of information into something that I think is a reasonable question to ask which is do you feel better about today than you did yesterday, and do you think tomorrow's going to be better than today? When both those answers are yes, then all the other things you're doing are, in my mind, having the impact you want them to have.

Q: But it will be possible to separate what influence the American forces are having on the security situation and what influence the Iraqis are having for themselves when you get to that point?

A: Oh, --

Q: That's where it seems is the rub.

A: We will know -- Let me think with you out loud for a second. We will know by the impact that the security is providing and we will know how much of that is being done by Iraqis and how much of that is being done by coalition, and we'll have a feel for how much responsibility we have turned over to the Iraqis and how much of that they'll be able to sustain on their own and how much of that they'll need some support with into the future. But I don't think you can say 57 percent is A and 43 percent is B. It will be fuzzier. You'll know what security is doing, you won't necessarily know exactly which units are responsible for what part of that.

Q: General, in a press conference with the Secretary a couple of weeks ago you said that, in response to the US ability to respond to what we used to call a major regional contingency, maybe you still do, elsewhere than the Middle East war theater, that the US could respond equitably because there are some two million forces, active and reserve, they'll go and nearly the entire Air Force and Navy available. But given the fact that the military is in an acknowledged stretch in the Middle East right now, particularly in terms of equipment, how realistic is that, should something actually break out let's say, say Iran -- I'd say Korea but there are already a lot of forces there that the South Koreans do call upon. Particularly in terms of the equipment shortage. Are they going to call back units that have just been redeployed or come back home and so forth? Wouldn't this necessarily be an Air Force/Navy response and not a ground response because of [inaudible]?

A: I'll try to give you as complete an answer as I can give you because it's really important and because there's more than one audience.

What we're trying to do given the tasks we have right now is to lessen the stress on the ground forces by growing the size of the Army, growing the size of the Marine Corps, changing the tour lengths, and over time having the Iraqis and the Afghans providing for more of their own security.

As you look out over a long duration campaign or the need over a long time for the United States, we will have some of its forces deployed. We try to get it to where a unit is deployed for one year and home for two. So based on the deployed for one year and home for two, the force is stretched because we've got them basically one for one or basically 15 for 12, so the force is stretched.

That is totally different from responding to another threat to our national interests wherein the assumption is that this threat is such that we would remobilize and we would use everything in our arsenal to defend ourselves, which is where you get then to my comments about there's about 220-some-odd-thousand US armed forces in the Gulf region right now out of 2.4 million. So the nation has about two million individuals -- active, Guard and Reserve -- who are available, plus the full strength of your Navy and the full strength of your Air Force.

Why I say it would take longer is what you point out, which is that some of your force is currently employed and a lot of your intelligence assets that help you with precision munitions delivery. So if another threat popped up tomorrow, regardless of where, because history usually tells us that where we plan for and where we end up are two different places. But regardless of where you end up you would have the Navy and the Air Force being able to get there very quickly and you would have the Army and the Marine Corps who have part of their force already employed, taking longer to get there than your war plans would call for because you must then get those folks at home mobilized, on ships, on planes, and delivered to wherever their next theater is.

So you end up, if you had nothing going on and you could focus totally on this new event you could get there very quickly and you could execute your plan for that event the way you wrote it and on the timeline you wrote it. But because you've got something else going on over here, which is a major event, it's going to take you longer to generate the capacity to go do what you've got to do. But our enemies need to understand that taking longer to get it done is a whole lot different than not being able to get it done because we categorically can handle any threat that's out there. It will just happen on a longer timeline than we would like to spend if we could just have a clean sheet of paper. And because some of our assets, precision strike, are already tied up it would be more brute force than you might otherwise be able to do if you had all of your precision weapons

available for just that one theater.

But I try to speak very precisely publicly about this because the worst thing you could do would be to have some country sitting out there miscalculate the enormous residual capacity of the United States military and think that they could do something because we are currently tied up. Because we are focused on Iraq, we are focused on Afghanistan, we do have a lot of our assets there, but we do have an enormous residual capacity that's available to the nation. There's a difference then between day-to-day operational tempo for a long duration commitment and the ability to respond to a threat to the nation.

Q: Given that you probably wouldn't be able to redeploy your forces out of Iraq [inaudible] national security is it a bit of a stretch to say that there are two million other folks who are available to respond? Given the equipment shortages that have prevented people from actually deploying [inaudible]?

A: No, it's not because they are available and because we can mobilize the force and because we can generate sufficient ground force to be able to do it. It would take us longer than we would be able to if we weren't otherwise employed. But I'm making the assumption that if you had to go do something else that the forces that are currently employed would say doing what they're doing and that we would handle this new threat with forces that are not currently employed.

One of my responsibilities as Chairman is to make that assessment every year and send my assessment to the Congress and I do that along with the Joint Chiefs, which is why I have such solid conviction that having done all that, having run the scenarios, that what I just said to you is accurate.

Q: I had a quick question about Africa Command. You've got a stretched force, you've got a Darfur situation. How concerned are you that this command may get the United States involved, the military involved in a lot more scenarios than you are today -- humanitarian issues, preventing genocide -- exacerbating a stretched force and getting us involved in a lot of little conflicts that will bleed us dry?

A: I'm not concerned about that at all because each of those countries right now in what would be Africa Command is currently the responsibility of the US-European Command. So we have military teams responsible for that right now. There's no reason to think that, let me say it differently. What we're trying to do with Africa Command is to have an entity that is not exactly the same as all other commands, but rather has many more participants on a daily basis from all the agencies of government so that we're able to assist governments in that region to get ahead of the kinds of problems that you currently see in places like Africa. So if you're able to help the local governments through US Treasury action or through Department of State action or through other

non-military means through a focused mechanism which would be Africa Command, that you can prevent future hot spots as opposed to have to respond to them.

So I think the Africa Command would work to our great positive result and lessen the likelihood of US military in Africa rather than raise that likelihood.

Q: Lessen versus put more pressure every time TV cameras show horrible scenes?

A: We have a military command today that's responsible for that. What this allows us to do is have an interagency team focused on bringing all elements not only of US national power but of the international community to assist, to prevent the need for military operations.

Q: Thanks.

Q: We're out of time.

A: Thank you all very much.

END TEXT