



U.S. Department of Defense

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Presenter: NATO Training Mission Iraq Commander Lt. Gen. David Patreaus

**Thursday, February 10,
2005**

DoD Briefing on NATO Training Mission in Iraq

Patreaus: I guess I can start out by saying I'm actually here as the NATO Training Mission Iraq Commander. As you all know I have another hat as the Multinational Security Transition Command, Iraq commander. But today is really about NATO business so along with the other operational commanders of NATO missions I provided a briefing to the ministers on the progress in the NATO Training Mission in Iraq.

There's actually been quite a bit of progress. The NATO Training Mission in Iraq provides advisors and trainers who help in the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. Three national command centers in Iraq and a joint headquarters. It has a small team at the Iraqi Military Academy which by the way graduated its first class on the 6th of January which was Army Day in Iraq and have now started the one year course.

There is a team that has already developed a curriculum for the staff colleges, led by Italy, which will start training instructors in April and start the courses in September and then there will be another element that will work on reestablishing Iraq's War College.

In addition to that there have been out of country training activities that have trained a couple of dozen already Iraqi officials, with many more of those lying ahead. There have been substantial equipment contributions as well including over 9,000 weapons that were put into the hands of Iraqi security forces in time for the elections and that proved very very helpful indeed. In fact those three contributions in particular came from Romania, Estonia and Denmark and there's an offer on the table from Hungary of over 70 T-72 tanks and other equipment and trainers. That's enough, obviously, almost to equip an armor brigade.

So there's quite a bit of activity going on. But I also laid out for the ministers the need for the nations to provide the additional resources needed for the mission in terms of some additional trainers and also a budget for the infrastructure of the Training, Education and Doctrine Center and for in-country training.

Having given that introduction, why don't I open it up to questions.

Press: General, of the trainers, how many are there from NATO and how many of those are Americans?

Patraeus: We are in transition right now with people coming in and actually going out, but the initial batch of trainers that we hope to have filled are 159, and that's essentially trainers now. And I do not know the number that is U.S.. The 126 with me that is U.S. has not picked up on that, in my NATO hat, has not picked up on that yet.

Press: The percentage --

Patraeus: I don't know, actually. I'll tell you that in there right now, I mean there is a substantial U.S. contribution but it is by no means all U.S. at all. In fact as I mentioned, Italy has taken lead nation status for the staff colleges and maybe the same for the war college. The U.K. actually on the MNSTC-I side is actually doing the military academy, although NATO provides an assistance team for that effort as well.

Frankly, there's a very very close relationship, as you might imagine, between MNSTC-I and the NATO Training Mission, not the least of which is because their commander is the same guy. So there has been a high degree of complementary effort in some cases. There are distinct activities that NATO does, but they are again very closely coordinated with the effort on the MNSTC-I side. And there are actually organizations that have been created that Iraq has created, for example, a Training, Equip and Coordination Committee that literally, it's like the Iraqi version of the JROC back in the States that determines the requirements. We then push those up through higher headquarters to NATO which pushes them out to the countries and coordinates then the provision of these items. Actually the contributions of equipment that are out there again are quite substantial.

Press: What's your sense of what would be achieved by the end of this NATO meeting, to what extent will that --

Patraeus: Well, first of all the elections were commented on by just about every minister who talked after the presentation on the NATO Training Mission Iraq, and clearly had been as heartening I think to them as they were to those of us in the country, frankly.

Beyond that, there were a number of new pledges of money for various trust funds involved with the NATO Training Mission and also additional pledges of people.

Press: Can you give us a ball park of the numbers and/or budget?

Patraeus: No, I actually can't.

Press: Is the, [inaudible] about 300 trainers plus a large security force of a couple of thousand. Is that no longer the goal?

Patraeus: The plan remains the same as it always was. What we are doing is trying to start the staff colleges and the war colleges sooner rather than later, by not waiting on the completion of infrastructure at Al Rustamiyah. Al Rustamiyah on the southeast side of Baghdad is an enormous base at which with the MNSTC-I hat we already have rebuilt the Iraqi Military Academy and a lot of the infrastructure there and again, as I mentioned, started the Iraqi Military Academy back up in mid October of last year ran a pilot course of three months that took former students from the Iraqi Military Academy who had I think it was two years in at that time

and they went through a pilot course. Now we're doing a one year course which is based on a Sandhurst model.

The plan is for the staff college and the war college and also a doctrinal development center all to be at that same location. The work is ongoing for the common elements of that and we're awaiting NATO money to complete the infrastructure for some of the other elements of that.

As that goes on what we wanted to do and what the Iraqis wanted to do was get going on the staff college and so we looked around the international zone and lo and behold found a facility there that's just perfect for running the staff college in. So after some discussions -- And then the Italians had already been doing the curriculum work so we said why don't we just start training instructors in mid April and get on with it.

For what it's worth, that has the added advantage of not having to deploy as many support personnel, security personnel and so forth, although they remain -- some of these will be on what's called notice to move so that when we do want to bring them in if we needed them at Al Rustamiyah or what have you, they're available.

Press: Can I just go back on --

Patreaus: I don't know that all your numbers are correct either. Some of those sound a good bit higher than my recollection.

Press: Are they [inaudible]?

Patreaus: I'm not prepared for numbers. I'm focused on one number right now which has to do with the specific number of trainers and others. There are a whole bunch of other little odds and sods, you know, transportation platoons, MP platoons, and all these others, most of which by the way have been pledged and will be brought over when they're needed based on essentially when we start standing stuff up at Al Rustamiyah vice in the international zone. Obviously in the international zone it's a lot easier to do something than it is to do it cross town.

So for right now we may have another piece of real estate in which we can do the war college, for example.

Press: So [inaudible] trainers it's 159?

Patreaus: That's the goal for this part that we're in right now. We'll keep bringing more in, whatever --

Press: 159 [inaudible]?

Patreaus: We do not know. That's one of the things that I emphasized is the need for --

Voice: I think it's also fair to say that it was not an objective of this --

Patreaus: No.

Voice: -- commitment to fill in gaps.

Patraeus: As you all know, obviously --

Voice: -- decisionmaking conference for General Patreaus to come here and brief them --

Patraeus: That's right. [inaudible] -- I was not looking for commitments. I do think obviously that a lot of these various events ongoing all lead up to the 22nd of February and the NATO Summit at which I think commitments could be made.

Press: I was trying to get the number right now. Not the goal, but the NATO level right now --

Patraeus: I think it's between 90 and 100. Again, we are literally bringing people in right now and also backhauling some, so it's somewhere in the neighborhood of I think it's 90 to 100 in.

Press: And do you know, I know it's a goal, when do you hope to hit that goal?

Patraeus: Within a couple of months I would hope. Depending on NATO contributions.

Press: Also, just to go back to --

Patraeus: Again, that's essentially staff and trainers. That's what I'm really focused on here. The rest of this stuff we generally have. It's not, nations are willing to offer MP platoons and transportation platoons and all the rest of that stuff.

Press: Of the 90 to 100 NATO personnel currently there, how many of those, or what proportion of those are Americans?

Patraeus: I don't know.

Press: [inaudible]?

Patraeus: No. Not at all. In fact -- No. The people who are on the ground now all have come out of existing NATO headquarters, or the bulk of them. We're just now getting in -- When this was stood up what they do is take people out of existing NATO headquarters all over, including out of Allied Command Transformation back in the United States in Norfolk, which has by the way a lot of allied, and actually runs, for example, the NATO's Shape school in Oberammergau. It runs the Joint Warfighting Center at Stavanger, Norway, and so forth.

So what we had is a, that group that has been in, that has rotated every probably two, three, four months depending on different nations, and now we're standing up, going to phase two which is the so-called initial operating capability which will happen later this month. And that's where we want to get, again in the next couple of months to this 159 of the staff and trainers.

Press: To follow up on the numbers --

Patreaus: This is -- You want to know how many we're training and equipped to? Iraqi security forces [inaudible]. 136,000. But they're trained for what they're trained for, you know.

Press: [inaudible].

Patreaus: Let me just tell you, when I sit at a meeting like this with people in that headquarters, I would say it's mostly alliance officers. It is very heavily, it's just all the different nations. It is not a U.S. organization at all. In fact my deputy, it was originally stood up by a Dutchman, two star, who stayed on as my deputy. I have now another deputy from another NATO country.

Press: It looks like these are, the goals are 300 and --

Patreaus: I'm not accepting that yet because there are stages of this and phases and you want different numbers for that, so.

Press: [inaudible] what NATO has provided.

Patreaus: We've asked for more than what has been provided so far, and --

Press: [inaudible] Iraqi forces need [inaudible] need leaders. The leadership at the platoon level, company level, higher up. Where is the crucial need?

Patreaus: I would say it goes all the way up to the ministry. In fact I think that one of the areas that General Casey and Ambassador Negraponte and others have emphasized for this year is additional assistance with mentoring and so forth at the ministerial levels. Now that's a U.S. embassy or actually coalition embassy type task. But there are ministerial advisors who do not work for MNSTC-I, but we again have a very complementary relationship. The senior advisor to the MOD is a Brit. The senior advisor to the Ministry of Interior is U.S.. But these are very very important because it's obviously imperative that we can train companies, battalions, brigades, even divisions. Again, what we are doing now is shifting emphasis, if you will, or adding emphasis I would say to the brigade and division level because they flat didn't exist before. It was really a battalion level structure, mostly in the past with about six brigades. But now we've got actually eight division headquarters that are in various stages of being established, going to nine in the very near future.

Press: [inaudible].

Voice: I don't know if General Patreaus can speak for himself or will, but having just left the briefing the spirit in there is one of people really trying to help solve an important set of challenges. There is no way anybody can describe the sense of it as including the word disappointing. People are very pleased with the, people are leaning forward, they want to be helpful, they're looking for different ways to be helpful. The Secretary General has laid out a number of ways countries can be helpful.

Patreaus: That's exactly why I didn't use the word disappointing. As you may have noticed. Because, in fact, again, there was quite a spirit of willingness to pitch in. So again, that's why I said what we've got to do is sort of tally up okay, what's where. And really, I think the real tally comes after the 22nd.

Press: On the national caveats question. What's the [inaudible] Training Mission?

Patreaus: There's no impact in terms -- I'm not sure, give me an example.

Press: In terms of people who have not been able to perform because their governments have said they don't want their staff officers in Iraq. [Inaudible].

Patreaus: Again, that's not -- a national caveat usually has to do with a restriction on activities of somebody in the theater. There's no national caveat on training or something like that. There are nations that have chosen not to send people to Iraq. That's for those nations --

Press: [inaudible] participation at the headquarters level that [inaudible]?

Patreaus: I'm not aware of that -- I'm downrange from the headquarters.

Press: Can I get a sense of the big picture? The level of commitments you're getting for trainers, any [inaudible] pending standup and [inaudible] the Iraqi Army take the bulk of the responsibility for the country in some sort of reasonable time? Especially with some of the countries that are offering help, just giving money or training outside the country rather than inside. Can you reach the goal in some sort of identifiable timeframe?

Patreaus: Not an identifiable timeframe that I would ever offer to you, but we can certainly reach that goal and I think there's been considerable progress made and there will be considerable more progress made.

The fact is, I'm sort of shifting back and forth between MNSTC-I and NATO Training Mission. The NATO Training Mission, remember, is very focused on certain things and I probably should be very clear about that. It's focused on what's called strategic training and assistance or advice. So again, it is advising at the administrative, the joint headquarters, and the three operation centers levels. It's helping reestablish institutions. Again, that's staff colleges, war college and also assisting with the military academy that's being done, again, by MNSTC-I. It is providing equipment from donor nations. As I mentioned there have been some very substantial contributions made with some really big ones in the offing. It is helping with out of country training, and again, we're really, we've done again a couple of dozen of those with lots and lots more out there. We're also training in a variety of other different ways actually in NATO classrooms already. I mean they're doing things like English as a second language, information technology, a variety of staff skills, courses, communications, you name it, and a lot of work in these command centers. So that touches hundreds and hundreds of Iraqi officers right in there.

The MNSTC-I on the other hand is about building and helping Iraq build, again helping the battalions, brigades, divisions. It is about helping Iraq rebuild the infrastructure. It's a \$1.9 billion infrastructure reconstruction program that is actually going quite well. It's about equipping Iraqi security forces. So it's the train and equip piece.

Again, all I'd say is that these are very very complementary missions, and frankly being dual-hatted helps that a great deal.

Press: [inaudible] specific timeframe, but you can quote that 136,000 now, going to 200,000 by October 1st. Maybe half of those police as opposed to military. How close is that, and all of them very green. How close is that to whatever it is Iraq would need in order to take care of its own --

Patraeus: As you know, what Iraq will need depends on a number of different factors. So you can develop a various degree of assumptions about those factors which I won't do for you, but I'll tell you that the factors obviously include how the political environment is shaped after the results of the elections are announced. It has a lot to do with how the economic reliable goes on in the provision of basic services. It even has to do with a variety of sort of social aspects in addition to, of course, the activities of the insurgents. So those are the factors that will determine how many forces does Iraq need and --

Press: You mentioned a couple of countries that are training outside Iraq. Of course there's Jordan, there's a police academy there, Germany, and UAE. Are there others? Can you just tell us specifics as far as some kind of numbers that they're churning out?

Patraeus: I can't, again, because I won't get that right. It would be off the top of my head. But I can tell you that Iraqi officers have trained at the Joint Warfighting Center in Stavanger, Norway which is a NATO training center. They've trained at the NATO school in Oberammergau, Germany. There are a host of different, in a sense bilateral offers that took place before the NATO Training Mission was even established. There is, for example, an Iraqi officer at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. There are also very substantial offers again by other nations on a bilateral basis like Germany to train engineers, train EAD specialists, and again, a lot of different countries have done that. A number through NATO now, and some that are still going bilaterally. But that is by no means inclusive at all. Almost every action that talked in there which was probably half the table mentioned some offer or another that was either made through NATO or perhaps was made bilaterally.

Press: Can you just clarify one thing? Is [inaudible] by October 1 and the ultimate goal --

Patraeus: First of all, though, let me say that this is not about just numbers of trained and equipped. And again, I want to be very clear that we have always specified that there's trained and equipped to a specific standard, you know. For a new policeman it's an eight week academy course. For the intervention force it's the officer and NCO training that took place, six weeks each, then it was four weeks of cadre training where they get together, then it's eight weeks of basic training, and then it's five weeks of follow-on urban operations/ counterinsurgency training. So there are very different levels of training for these people that are in that 136,000 number. Then they have their individual equipment.

Over time we obviously want to start focusing on the combat capabilities of units, and it's units that are really the coin of the realm in many respects in counterinsurgency operations. It's difficult for individual police to stand up to a determined insurgent attack. So we also have to change the construct within which those police operate, hardening the police stations, increasing the armaments, providing good communications to quick reaction forces that will respond and that are themselves trained. So we've done, for example, training in a number of five provincial SWAT teams, a number of provincial emergency response units.

There are some very very highly trained units in that number of 136,000. There are Iraqi counter-

terrorist force operators that are truly close to special mission unit operators. There's nearly close to 200 of them on the military side and about roughly the same on the police side in what's called the Emergency Response Unit, a national force.

Also again, that number encompasses a number -- We have been very very clear what those training standards are for those different, but they are individuals and so your next focus would be units and right now, for example, there are 90 combat battalions operational in Iraq on both the police and military side. Sixteen of those are police which includes the quite effective Police Commando Battalions. There's eight of those actually operational now with a ninth one in the works. It includes the Public Order Battalions, six of those. It includes two police mechanized units and BTR-94s.

On the military side there are 42 of what were Iraqi National Guard units that have now transitioned to the Iraqi Army effective 6 January. Prime Minister Allawi announced that they are part of the Iraqi Army. Those units have, the authorizations for their equipment has gone up in some cases by four-fold. For example in the case of heavy machine guns, from eight to 32 per battalion. Other weaponry is increased, radios, vehicles and so forth.

Then the remainder of those units are a variety of different national military units that are either the intervention force, the regular army, the mechanized battalion, the commando battalion.

What we are already focusing on more is in a sense the effectiveness of those units. And some of this is somewhat objective. Personnel fill, equipment fill, sort of basic training levels. And then there's also an [inaudible], sort of a subject evaluation of are they fighting. And by the way that's obviously a pretty important quality. What we look at, frankly, what I look at quite a bit as we look at these various units.

I would add that what helped to get Mosul back under control for the elections was the deployment in that city of seven Iraqi security force battalions -- five from the intervention force and two police commando, in addition to an element of the National Emergency Response Unit.

What is keeping Fallujah under control is the deployment of some nine Iraqi security force battalions. I mean these guys are in the fight very much. There are three of these deployed into [Sama] plus an additional national guard battalion that was already located there.

In Mosul, by the way, there are a number of other units that are always located there -- Iraqi national guard and now increasingly, regular army from a base located near Mosul.

Baghdad I think had somewhere on the order of eight or nine battalions deployed into it in addition to the national guard battalions that were already there, the former national guard battalions which by the way were really quite good and in which the 1st Cavalry Division made a substantial investment.

So again, there are very very tangible representations, if you will, of units that will fight and that are fighting and that are taking casualties. We're well aware of the really quite heroic actions of a number of Iraqi individuals on 30 June when the March of Democracy was secured by Iraqi police and soldiers. Yes, there was a coalition force backup, but the searching, the two rings of security around -- By the way, 5,200 polling places. Two rings of security around each one. And somewhere around on the neighborhood of 130,000 Iraqi security

forces that were on duty that day. Not all of which, by the way, are a part of the 136,000 that are trained and equipped, and we can take that out for you because there's facility protection security forces that we took out of the count.

One of these days we'll probably need to brief you on how the counts get to where they've gotten because we take 75 -- The Secretary showed it to you that one day, but I guess he should have.

Okay, thank you.

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