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## Briefing on Release of 2006 Country Reports on Terrorism

**Frank C. Urbancic, Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism**

**Russ Travers, Deputy Director of the National Counterterrorism Center**

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(4:15 p.m. EST)

### [2006 Country Reports](#)

**MR. CASEY:** Well, good afternoon, everyone. I congratulate you on -- those of you who are now attending your third or fourth briefing of the day, if you include the gaggle from this morning. We wanted to have this opportunity to have two of our officials talk with you today and talk to you in a little more detail about the Country Reports on Terrorism that most of you, I see, have in front of you. We've got some additional information here from NCTC to share with you as well.

Once again, we'll have with us this afternoon our Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism Mr. Frank Urbancic as well as, in a repeat performance from years past, Russ Travers, who as I think you all know is one of the Deputy Directors over at NCTC.

So, Frank, let me turn the podium over to you and Russ.

**MR. URBANCIC:** Thanks very much. Thanks. I do have a couple of opening remarks to introduce the report. I'll go through them, and then of course we'll be happy to take your questions after -- Russ has got a few points to make as well.

Besides meeting the congressional requirements, the 2006 Report aims to inform, to stimulate constructive debate and to enhance our collective dynamic understanding of the global terrorist threat. It should serve as a reference tool to inform policy makers, the American public and our international partners about our efforts, progress and challenges in the war on terrorism.

As background and introduction, I would note that the Country Reports of 2006 begin with a strategic assessment to illustrate trends and to gage our progress. We are very pleased to note that cooperative international efforts have produced genuine security improvements, particularly in securing borders and transportation, in enhancing document security, in disrupting terrorist financing and in restricting the movement of terrorists.

Working with allies and partners across the world through coordination and information sharing, we have created a less permissive operating environment for terrorists, keeping leaders on the move or hiding. We've degraded their ability to plan and mount attacks. This has contributed to reduced terrorist operational capabilities and detention or deaths of numerous key terrorist leaders.

It's also important to note our shared successes, not to take credit for them but to demonstrate results. The longer we fight terrorism, the better we get at inflicting serious setbacks on our adversaries. Despite this undeniable progress, serious challenges do remain. There's no question about that. The number of incidents increased overall, largely due to terrorist attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. The perpetrators of these terrorist acts do not represent nation-states and they have no authority, neither do they have any desire, to sign any sort of peace accord with us. As we've said before, this is not the kind of war where you can measure success with conventional numbers. We cannot aspire to a single decisive battle that will break the enemy's back, nor for a hoped -- nor can we hope for a signed peace accord to mark victory.

The Report also underscores the barbaric nature that the extremists we are fighting pose for us. The vast majority of the victims were innocent civilians and a majority of them were Muslims. Attacks on children were up more than 80 percent, if you can imagine, with more than 1,800 children killed or injured in terrorist attacks in last -- in 2006. The terrorists also targeted workers essential to civilized society. They targeted police. They targeted government leaders. They targeted teachers. They targeted journalists. The international community is working together to confront these extremists because they threaten the right of people everywhere to live in peaceful, just, secure neighborhoods and countries.

On al-Qaida, although we have captured or killed numerous senior al-Qaida operatives, al-Qaida's core elements are resilient and they remain the most immediate national security threat to the United States. They are a significant security challenge to the entire international community as well and they are so recognized. Al-Qaida is highly adaptive. It quickly evolves new methods in response to our countermeasures, and we have to develop countermeasures to those countermeasures.

The international community's success in disrupting terrorist leadership and operational capacity has led al-Qaida to focus greater efforts on misinformation and anti-Western propaganda. What they can't get by force, they want to take by lies. This trend accelerated in 2006 with al-Qaida exploiting the grievances of local groups and attempting to portray itself at the vanguard of a global movement. Al-Qaida openly describes itself as a transnational guerilla movement; it applies classic insurgent strategies at the global level. Through intermediaries, web-based propaganda and subversion of immigrant expatriate populations; al-Qaida inspires local cells to carry on attacks, thus circumventing the need to insert a team across borders or clandestinely to transfer funds and materiel. The 2004 Madrid bombings, the London attacks of 2005 and the thwarted August 2006 attempt to attack passenger jets operating from British airports included elements of this approach.

We have in the Report a section on state sponsors of terrorism. Much of this will not be of surprise to you, unfortunately. Al-Qaida is not the only challenge. Certain states continue to sponsor terrorism and Iran remains at the head of that list. Iran continues to threaten its neighbors. It continues to destabilize Iraq by providing weapons, training, advice and funding to select Iraqi militants. And as the President has said, some of the most powerful improvised explosive devices, IEDs that we are seeing now in Iraq today, include components that came from Iran.

Iran has also expanded its lethal assistance and funding for militant organizations, most notably Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas. And these all oppose reinvigorated Arab-Israeli peace efforts.

Iranian defiance of UN Security Council resolutions by providing weapons and assistance to Hezbollah demonstrates that Tehran continues to be the most dangerous enabler of terrorism in that region.

In addition, Syria, both directly and in coordination with Hezbollah, has attempted to undermine the democratically elected Government of Lebanon and to roll back progress toward democratization in the Middle East as a whole. Foreign fighters and terrorists continue to transit Syria's borders into Iraq. Syria also continues to provide political and material support to Hezbollah and political support to Palestinian terrorist groups, including the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas, who base their external leadership in Damascus.

Finally, state sponsors of terrorism pose a potentially grave weapons of mass destruction threat. A WMD program in the hands of a state sponsor of terrorism could easily enable a terrorist organization to acquire sophisticated WMD. Thus, state sponsors of terrorism deserve special attention and they are getting it as potential facilitators of WMD terrorism.

This year's Report also includes a discussion of terrorist safe havens. Safe havens allow terrorists to organize and operate with relative impunity because of challenging geography, because of limited governance capacity, limited political will or other reasons. Whatever the reason, physical safe havens provides security for terrorist leaders and they allow them to plan acts of terrorism around the world. Areas of concern include the Trans-Sahara, Somalia, the Sulawesi/ Sulu Seas, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. This unfortunately isn't an exhaustive list, but it's illustrative.

Because of the importance of safe havens to terrorists' operational success, the United States is working with our many partners around the world to strengthen counterterrorism capabilities and to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people while they also control effectively their sovereign national territory. Unfortunately, problem areas do remain.

On Iraq, most of the increase in terrorist attacks in 2006 did take place in Iraq. Much of the increase is due to the spike in violence in Iraq in the aftermath of the bombings of the Al-Askariya Mosque, one of the holiest Shia Muslim sites. And a paramount strategic objective in Iraq and the regions is prevent al-Qaida -- that's our objective -- its affiliates and other terrorists from enjoying safe haven in Al Anbar or anywhere else in Iraq. Groups such as al-Qaida in Iraq, that's the AQI; Ansar al-Islam, the AI; or the Ansar al-Sunna, the AS; as well as the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the PKK, as it's formerly known and which we continue to use as a shorthand; view Iraq as potential safe haven and they are attempting to make that into a reality.

Iraq, however, is an ally in the war on terror. Developing Iraq's security forces will require further training and resources before they can address effectively the terrorist groups already operating within Iraq's borders without further international assistance. Iraq's intelligence services continued to improve in both competency and confidence in 2006 and they require additional support before they can identify and respond adequately to internal and external terrorist threats in the future.

The international community's support is critical to ensure the Government of Iraq's plans to reduce violence, to improve services and to increase economic opportunities are successful. Prospects for increasing stability in Iraq will depend on the extent to which the Iraqi Government and political leaders can establish effective national institutions that transcend sectarian or ethnic interests. The Government of Iraq must continue to authorize its security forces to pursue extremist elements of all kinds. Success will also depend on the extent of the international support to the Government of Iraq to do so, the extent to which extremists, most notably the AQI, can be defeated in their attempt to foment inter-sectarian struggle between Shia and Sunnis, and the extent to which Iraq's neighbors, especially Iran and Syria, can be persuaded to stop the flow of militants' ammunitions across their borders.

In Pakistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the FATA of Pakistan, have become safe haven for al-Qaida terrorists and other extremist insurgents since the fall of the Taliban in December 2001. Despite Pakistan's effort to eliminate threats and to establish effective governance in the FATA, these tribal areas continue to be terrorist safe havens and sources of instability for Pakistan and its neighbors.

The Pakistani Government maintains approximately 80,000 troops, including army and Frontier Corps units along the Afghanistan border. The U.S. plans to help modernize and increase the capacity of the Frontier Corps so that they can become a more effective force. Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps units have targeted and raided al-Qaida and other militant safe havens in the FATA. The failure of the tribal leaders in the FATA to fulfill their promises to the government under the terms of the North Waziristan agreements which were signed in September led to additional insurgent infiltration into Afghanistan.

For our part, the State Department recognizes that military actions alone do not eliminate the terrorist threat. And we are working through the Regional Strategic Initiative with Ambassadors and interagency representatives in key terrorist countries of operation to assess the threat and to devise collaborative strategies, action plans and policy recommendations. We employ all the tools of state craft to establish long-term measures to marginalize terrorists.

Our strategy is aimed over the long term. With time our goal and regional cooperative efforts will reduce the terrorist capacity to harm us and our partners on a local security and development assistance will build -- I'm sorry -- to harm us and our partners, while local security and development assistance will build our partners' capacity.

Once partner capacity exceeds the threat, the need for close U.S. engagement and support will diminish and the threat will be reduced to a level that our partners can manage for themselves. As of December 2006, RSI strategy groups were already in place for Southeast Asia, Iraq and its neighbors, the eastern Mediterranean, the western Mediterranean and East Africa. In 2007 we have already organized a strategy session with our ambassadors in the Trans-Sahara, while new sessions are scheduled for South Asia and Latin America later this year, in addition to the groups that will continue functioning and that are already established.

Our strategy to defeat terrorists is structured at multiple levels: a global campaign to counter violent extremism and disrupt terrorist networks; a series of regional collaborative efforts to deny terrorists safe havens; numerous bilateral security and development assistance programs which are designed to build liberal institutions, support law enforcement and the rule of law; to address political and economic injustice; and to develop military and security capacity.

This enhances our partners' capacity to resist the terrorist threat and to address conditions that terrorists exploit. You'll find in the report as well, as in past years, regional overviews and reports on terrorists -- the terrorist situation in individual countries. We note progress and a lack of progress where appropriate. Examples include: (a) Afghanistan, which remains threatened by the Taliban, insurgents and religious extremists; (b) close cooperation between Pakistani, British and United States law enforcement agencies which expose the August London Heathrow bomb plot; (c) the capture of Abu Faraj al-Libbi which disrupted contacts in the Middle East and North Africa, the death of Ayman al-Zawahiri's lieutenants in January in Pakistan; (d) the 2006 -- in 2006 the Canadians disrupted a major extremist plot on their own territory and arrested 17 individuals in Toronto and; (e) in March the Australians arrested three suspected terrorists in Melbourne as part of an ongoing counterterrorism operation which disrupted a significant threat to that community.

We must measure counterterrorism success in the broadest perspective. While killing and capturing key terrorist actors is fundamental in combating terrorism, these actions do not eliminate the threat. We must also seek to build trusted networks of governments, private citizens and organizations, multilateral institutions, and business groups that will work collaboratively to defeat the threat from violent extremism and its radical ideology. Such networks, over time, help wean at-risk populations away from subversive manipulation by terrorists and they create mechanisms to address people's needs and grievances, thus marginalizing the terrorists.

I'll refer you to the report for any additional specifics that you might like, but I'll cut it short here to take some questions after Russ Travers has had a chance to talk about the methodology and the numbers because we don't want to confuse you with what we've done. Thank you very much.

**MR. TRAVERS:** Thanks, Frank. What I will do is give you kind of a quick overview, a high level on what we counted, how we counted matters for 2006. I would emphasize that there's a great deal more material on the nctc.gov website. That'll give you a sense of the methodology. It gives you, actually, a search engine against which you can look at all of the incidents if you're so inclined.

Next please, John.

I don't want this to be a methodology brief, but a couple important points. There are over a hundred definitions of terrorism according to political scientists. To avoid any controversy, we focused on the statutory definitions. Up through 2004, we used the definition there of international terrorism and that specifically emphasizes citizens or territory of more than one country. What we found was that there were some very important incidents that didn't get counted so that in 2005, we made a switch and we're now using a much broader definition of terrorism.

If you think about the key parameters, it's attacks against noncombatants for political reasons. And so it's an extraordinarily broad definition and as a result, what we've seen is that the incident totals have grown from a few hundred to well over 10,000.

Next please, John.

Since we've made the definitional switch, we have two full years of data for 2005 and 2006. Bottom lines, as Frank indicated, the incidents have grown from about 11,000 in '05 to something -- or 14,000 in '06. Fatalities up from about 14.5 thousand to about 20.5 thousand. Total victims actually in '05 and '06; that is, killed, wounded and kidnapped, about 74,000 in both years.

Two very important points: There is absolutely no question that cataloguing incidents over time can help give you some significant trends with relationship to what's going on in the terrorism problem. However, we are very convinced that trying to combine global totals on a year-by-year basis doesn't tell you very much. Why? Because embedded in a global total would be, for instance, the FARC in Colombia, ETA in Spain, the Maoists in Nepal, Lord's Resistance Army in Africa, and al-Qaida and all the Sunni affiliates. Simply adding all of those categories together just doesn't tell you very much and as Frank said, numbers can never be the total metric for terrorism. I see some of you having trouble looking at these. You've got -- your packages actually have got the full set of viewgraphs in the materials.

Next, please, John.

So we have to boil it down a little bit. What you see here is a regional breakout. The first point I would make is that terrorism is a tactic used around the globe. Here you've got in the dark color '05, in the red color '06 data. As you can see in the combination of the Near East and South Asia accounts for about 80 percent of the total. I mentioned that the total terrorist incidents have gone up from about 11,000 to 14,000. As you can see, most of that growth occurs in the Near East and most of that is accounted for by Iraq and I'll get into that here in a second. The rest of the world is relatively flat. There are some puts and takes and I'll walk you through those very quickly as we burrow down into countries.

Next please.

We'll look at Iraq first. The lower left-hand box will give you a sense of both incidents and fatalities as they grew from '05 to '06. And as a share of the total worldwide incidents, Iraq accounted for just under half of the total incidents and about two-thirds of the total fatalities. The top graph gives you a sense of what was going on month by month in Iraq. The light blue incidents with the scale on the left would be incident totals and the darker color will give you suicide bombings on the right.

Frank alluded to the bombing of the Golden Mosque on the 22nd of February and as he suggested, after that, you can see how the incident totals grew significantly across Iraq. Of somewhat interest, I think, might be the issue of suicide bombings. And you can see in the first six months of the year, suicide bombings are actually quite low relative to the second six months.

We don't know exactly why, but a couple of possibilities: You may recall that in the middle of 2005, Zawahiri admonished Zarqawi about indiscriminate bombings of Shia. That may be manifest in the first six months of the year, it may be because we were able to interdict suicide pipeline. Irrespective what was going on, quite clearly, there was a decision in -- sometime in the spring of last year to try to incite sectarian violence and suicide bombings increased dramatically in the second half of the year.

Next please.

With respect to the rest of the world, the lower left-hand graph again will show you the fatalities and incident totals: relatively flat. We'll get into some of the specifics, but working our way from left to right, obviously no major attacks in the United States. There were, according to Consular Affairs, 28 American citizens that were killed overseas. In the Western Hemisphere, Colombia was the -- certainly had the most terrorist incidents, about 750. That's very close to what we saw in 2005.

In the Middle East, Israel was up dramatically in terms of increased rocket attacks in Israel, although suicide bombings was down in Israel to very small numbers last year. There were no major attacks in either Jordan or Saudi Arabia.

Europe and Russia, nothing to compare to the July 7th bombings in the UK and Europe, and similarly nothing like what we've seen in previous years for the bombings in Chechnya and Russia over the last several years.

In Africa, the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, GSPC, merged with al-Qaida in the fall and we saw the first attacks against Western and U.S. interests, and that presaged also what we've seen here over the last several months.

In South Africa, a number of locations in Sub-Saharan Africa, there were additional numbers of attacks. I will tell you that the data for that part of the world is the most suspect of anyplace in the world.

In South Asia, Afghan attacks were up by about 60 percent. Pakistan and India both had fewer attacks. And in the Far East, Indonesia for the first time in several years had no major attack. We've seen attacks there every fall over the last several years until last year. In Philippines, attacks were up somewhat. In Thailand, attacks were down somewhat.

I would call your attention to that lower right-hand box; numerous plots either disrupted or just fizzled. An important point: If, as Frank suggested, the attacks in the UK, if the air plot had occurred, we'd been giving you a very different brief today. So the difference between success and failure can be very, very close.

Next, please.

In terms of types of attacks, on the left-hand side you see a pie chart that breaks out the different ways in which terrorists conducted their attacks. This looks very similar to 2005. Roughly half of all incidents were armed attacks and roughly a quarter were bombings and then the other quarter broken out in the various categories.

On the right-hand side, suicide bombings. As I mentioned, they were down last year from '05 and that's largely because of the first six months in Iraq being down. However, Afghanistan went up dramatically, by about a factor of five or six. And again, this is only attacks against noncombatants. We don't track military attacks in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Next, please.

And finally, with respect to victims, as I mentioned at the outset, about 74,000 victims -- that's killed, wounded and kidnapped. In terms of fatalities themselves, a couple of key data points. As I mentioned, 28 Americans killed. Like last year, Muslims bore a disproportionate share of the attacks. Of the 20,000 fatalities, certainly something over half of all fatalities worldwide were Muslims, largely at the hands of other Islamic extremists.

Other categories, as it suggests there on the chart, several thousand police officers -- and Frank gave you some numbers -- many hundreds of children and teachers and press and so forth. So many categories. These are undoubtedly low. They were only the indications we get from reporting. The numbers are undoubtedly higher.

And finally, let me close with one more warning about just using gross total numbers. The chart on the right gives you a graph of fatality ranges and the number of people that were actually killed by -- broken out by incidents. The chart there, as you can see on the right-hand side, like last year, over half of all incidents had no fatalities whatsoever, whereas you can see on the far left-hand chart, something less than 300 incidents accounted for over one-third of all fatalities. So it was -- on the left-hand side you're getting a sense of just how many fatalities were caused by individual incidents.

So with that, I'd be happy to stop and turn it back over to Frank.

**QUESTION:** Let me ask just some numerical questions to start. Can you give us the figures for the number of terrorism-related fatalities in Iraq in 2006 versus 2005 and in Afghanistan in 2006 versus 2005? I don't believe they're in there. There's one rough estimate of about 13,000 for Iraq. But taking your point that one shouldn't just use gross numbers; can you give us the precise numbers for fatalities for Iraq and Afghanistan and the five comparatives?

**MR. TRAVERS:** I can. Why do you -- we've got other questions, I'll come back to this and we can get those for you. Sure.

**QUESTION:** Okay. Great. And then the second question that I had was looking at the fact -- and this may be for you, sir -- looking at the fact that the majority of deaths clearly occurred in Iraq, do you believe that the war in Iraq ultimately has been good for the effort to reduce terrorism generally?

**MR. URBANCIC:** You know, if the battle against terrorism isn't in Iraq, it's going to be somewhere else. It started out in Afghanistan. The terrorists are looking for places where they can operate and that's what they're doing. So we can fight them in Iraq, we can fight them somewhere else. The fact is they are there and they're going to find other ungoverned spaces and they're doing that and they're expanding -- they're expanding their scope. So yes, I mean, Iraq is at least a relatively friendly place. The people of Iraq are deserving people and they deserve better and it's good for us to help them.

I can start.

**QUESTION:** Yeah. Can I just -- I have another numbers question, and that is -- and then I have another one. Why did you choose to say there was a 25 percent increase in the number of attacks when, in fact, the percentage is slightly higher than that -- almost 29 percent?

**MR. TRAVERS:** You will have slightly different numbers here in the book because the information cutoff -- I mean, these numbers change. As you'll find out, the '05 numbers that we have are different than the '05 numbers that were in country reports.

I don't know what you've got there exactly.

**QUESTION:** It's the same in the report and in your -- in this little fact sheet. You have incidents growing from 11,153 to 14,338, which I believe is about a 28.5 percent increase. And yet the copy -- these say 25 percent. I'm just curious as to why you used the lower 25 percent figure, as opposed to --

**MR. TRAVERS:** Probably it points to the art, not science, aspect of this, as you suggest. I also said I think that Iraq counted for half of the total incidents. In reality, it's closer to 45 percent. So I mean, what we're trying to do is give you an order of magnitude on these numbers.

**QUESTION:** Can you then -- and this is the non-number question. What is it that has made a -- that has turned a 25 percent or 28.5 percent increase -- why has that resulted in a 40 percent or 40.2 percent jump in fatalities?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Well, I mean, that --

**QUESTION:** That is an exponentially larger --

**MR. URBANCIC:** I'll go back to that, but if we could start out, we would like to emphasize the text of this report. We're mandated to produce the numbers and we're happy to do that and Russ is doing an extremely competent job. But I really wouldn't want to get involved in a discussion about .2 percent versus .6 percent. So just -- I'd beware of that --

**QUESTION:** That's fine, but it's not .2 percent. It is 3.5 percent.

**MR. URBANCIC:** Okay. But I'd just like to get that out there. We'd like to talk about the text. That's our primary focus on this.

And the terrorists, there's no question, are intelligent people and they learn from each other. They learn from each other -- they watch each other. The people in Afghanistan are watching the people in Iraq. The people in Iraq are watching the people elsewhere, and there's a snowball effect and they work through the internet. They communicate. They're working on all kinds of nasty things. The IEDs are being perfected. There's no question that they're learning. So I mean, I think that's the basic reason. They're efficient people. They're evil people. They have finances and they have contacts. But we have to continue to fight them.

Sir.

**QUESTION:** What is it that's kept Iraq from being included in the list of safe havens? Well, I mean, you say, I mean, the language on Iraq in the safe haven chapter is almost identical to last year, although the situation seems to have evolved quite a bit. Why is Iraq not considered a safe haven for terrorists?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Well, it's a potential safe haven this year. And we simply looked at the assessment according to the definition that we use, which is broader than the statutory assessment or the statutory definition. For 2006, that's where we came out. That does not mean that we're not worried about al-Qaida in Iraq. It doesn't mean that we're not worried about the PKK in Iraq. We very seriously are and we're watching it very carefully.

So again, don't be misled by distinctions that don't really count. We are very concerned about the fact that the terrorists want to

use Iraq as a safe haven and they're working as hard as they can to turn it into an actual safe haven. There's no question about that.

**QUESTION:** And why today is it not a safe haven?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Well, the report addresses 2006. The situation is serious and we're watching it. I mean, there's no question that they are increasing their capabilities.

Sir.

**QUESTION:** Frank, you said that -- I think it was your wording -- attacks on children were up more than 80 percent. I was wondering if you could elaborate on that. I mean, are there instances where they were actually singling out busloads of kids? Are you talking about large-scale bombings that were indiscriminate? Is there a trend where they're targeting children?

**MR. URBANCIC:** So far, thank God, children themselves by and large have not been targets, but the indiscriminate attacks lead to a great increase in -- well, they're all innocent, but in the deaths of very, very vulnerable populations.

**MR. TRAVERS:** Do we get the two different (inaudible)?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Do you have that?

**MR. TRAVERS:** Afghanistan in '05 was 684 dead. In '06, 1,040. Iraq, 8,262 up to 13,340.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**QUESTION:** So Iraq, the first one you gave us?

**MR. TRAVERS:** Iraq, 8,262.

**MR. URBANCIC:** Sir.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Coordinator, do you consider November 17 terrorist organization closed once and for all or is still active since in your report the picture is not clear?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Well, we hope it's closed.

**QUESTION:** You don't know if it is or not?

**MR. URBANCIC:** The actual -- if I need a legal response to that, let me get back to you. But there are -- the situation -- there are, you know, various groups bleeding back and forth into other ones. Let me back to you on that.

**QUESTION:** So it's not clear yet?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Let me just get back to you with a more specific answer.

**QUESTION:** One more question. In your report you are saying that the entire Republic of Cyprus, the Kurdish organization PKK maintain an active presence for the first time. Question: Based on which information you are claiming that since it's very well known, as you said earlier, that PKK members are stationed in northern Iraq and making the Turks very angry?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Making the Turks very angry. The PKK is -- I'm sorry?

**QUESTION:** About Cyprus, you are saying in the report that for the first time you note very active PKK members in Cyprus. And I was wondering on what did you base this information?

**MR. URBANCIC:** As you may know, the United States is running -- is working actively against the PKK. General Ralston is working the trilateral part with the Turks, the United States and the Iraqi Government. And I, in fact, am leading the part of Western Europe. And what we are finding as we work more and more with our West European allies is that the PKK is like an octopus. It has a head -- actually, it has multiple heads in various West European countries and it has tentacles that go throughout West Europe and leading far into East Europe for that matter.

It's a criminal organization in addition to its terrorist aspects and it has money-laundering operations. It has trafficking-in-persons operations. It has operations that would -- we would recognize here as basic mafia type operations. And so I think it's not surprising to find them operating in any particular West European country. We are working now to raise both the effectiveness of the counterterrorist threat -- our counterterrorist response to the PKK threat in Western Europe and to raise the consciousness and the understanding of the Europeans of the threat that the PKK poses.

**QUESTION:** Including Cyprus? That's my question.

**MR. URBANCIC:** Including Cyprus. Cyprus is part of our East European RSI.

Sir.

**QUESTION:** Yes. On North Korea.

**MR. URBANCIC:** Our embassy in Cyprus, not the government of Cyprus.

**QUESTION:** Yeah. North Korea is still on the state sponsors list. What are they going to need to do to get themselves off that finally?

**MR. URBANCIC:** As you may know, we have an agreement or we reached an agreement this year, so it's not technically covered, although it's in the 2006 report. We have an agreement with the North Koreans that we will take initial steps. This is a -- coming off that list is quite a long process. You may recall how long it took us to work on Libya. The same types of things the North Koreans will have to do. But the first initial steps are what's -- are what we're committed to. This is not a decision to take them off. It's just a decision to begin the process to begin the discussion.

**QUESTION:** Okay, because there are specific points.

**MR. URBANCIC:** That's right.

**QUESTION:** You know, the question of abductees, the question of the Japanese Red Army.

**MR. URBANCIC:** That's right.

**QUESTION:** Are they going to have to address each and every one of those?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** So just to follow up on North Korea, could you explain the reasoning why the entry of North Korea this year is much shorter in comparison to the previous years? There's a lot of detail that's been omitted. And the language seems a bit softer also when you say Japanese nationals believed to have been abducted rather than just Japanese nationals who were abducted.

**MR. URBANCIC:** The Country Reports on Terrorism provides the Department of State's annual statutorily mandated assessment of trends in international terrorism. There are numerous mechanisms that the North Koreans have to meet, but as part of the six-party process to resolve the North Korean nuclear threat the United States agreed on February 13th, 2007 to initial actions, as I mentioned before, to begin the process of removing the designation of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism.

As part of the six-party process we also have begun the process, but there's no timetable set. And the language in the report therefore changes each year to reflect developments in that year. This is technically actually a little out of place since it happened in 2007. And just to alert you, probably the language will be different in 2007 as well -- not to predict anything, but across the board, we change the language as developments occur.

**QUESTION:** So you felt it was reasonable to omit a lot of the detail, especially regarding the Japanese abductees this year in relation to what happened in February of this year?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Actually, the discussion of 2007, to be quite frank, is simply to be more complete. It does not change what happened in 2006, obviously.

Sir.

**QUESTION:** I have a question on North Korea. In the text you mentioned about Red Army first and then comes to the abduction issues. And in the previous years in the report, the abduction comes first and Red Army is added at the end. What the reason for the change? I don't recall any particular incident regarding the Red Army?

**MR. TRAVERS:** I would just urge you not to read too much into this. I think if you just read the -- read what it says, it will be complete.

Sir.

**QUESTION:** So if Pakistan is a safe haven for terrorists and also in the chapter here you are saying that President Karzai also complaining that you have to go after terrorists and terrorism beyond Afghanistan, those who are training and arming and financing and terrorist camps and here I'm referring to Pakistan. And they also have an 80,000-person army on the border. Why can't we control terrorism into Pakistan from Pakistan or Afghanistan when they are sending terrorism around the globe, and also why don't we have yet Usama bin Laden or his deputy with 80,000 army?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Okay. Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror. Afghanistan is an ally on the war on terror -- in the war on terror. The problem that we have is the border, which neither has complete control over on either side. We are working very strongly with those allies to help them establish control in those areas. That, I think, is the key.

The border area is what we're talking about. There are multiple ways that this has to be addressed. It has to be addressed on the economic side. It has to be addressed on the military side. It also has to be addressed on the social side. And we are acutely aware of both the limitations and the great stress -- to the great progress and the great efforts that the government of both Pakistan and Afghanistan have made. We're very pleased that Presidents Karzai and Musharraf were able to meet in Turkey, just finished up, and this is also something that we hope we'll be able to build on in the future.

**QUESTION:** Just a quick follow-up.

**MR. CASEY:** We have time for a couple more, so Goyal --

**QUESTION:** Just a quick one. Sir, I understand that General Musharraf has been ally and also President Karzai as far as global war on terrorism and with the U.S. But at the same time, U.S. has its army there in the area and they have not been allowed to search for Usama bin Laden or go beyond the border. Are you expecting anything, because since they have failed to help the U.S. beyond what they have done so far, are you expecting that now U.S. army may have to take action to find those who are most wanted here in the U.S. and around the globe?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Well, I certainly -- I don't want to speculate on military operations, but I can say that we are working as closely as we can and we have very good cooperation not only with President Musharraf but with the Government of Pakistan, and we anticipate that we will continue to have. As situations evolve, we will have to deal with those situations.

**MR. CASEY:** Michele.

**QUESTION:** I just have a very basic question. Why shouldn't Americans look at this report and members of Congress look at this report, the numbers and the analysis, and come to the conclusion that we're losing this war on terrorism?

**MR. URBANCIC:** Well, for several reasons. First of all, I mean, people who want to draw conclusions or who have prejudgments, they will draw those conclusions. We are working as hard as we can to defeat the terrorists. We have to continue to do that. The situation on the ground -- the terrorists are not omnipotent and they are not almighty and they have suffered real losses. We've been very successful against their leadership. We've been very successful in disrupting many of their networks. Not all of the things that we've been successful in doing have been able to be made public, but there are great successes that are out there.

But these people are intelligent and they want spectacular successes against us and they have been able to achieve some of those.

**MR. CASEY:** Thanks a lot.

**MR. URBANCIC:** Thank you.

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