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January 23, 2007 Tuesday

**PANEL I OF A HEARING OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE;
SUBJECT: IRAQ'S EFFECT ON TOTAL FORCE READINESS;
CHAired BY: REPRESENTATIVE IKE SKELTON (D-MO);
WITNESSES: ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL PETER
SCHOOMAKER; MARINE CORPS COMMANDANT GENERAL
JAMES CONWAY;
LOCATION: 2118 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASH-
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CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL PETER SCHOOMAKER; MARINE CORPS COMMANDANT GENERAL JAMES
CONWAY LOCATION: 2118 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. TIME: 10:00 A.M.
EST DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2007

REP. SKELTON: The Armed Services Committee will now come to order. We thank you for your attendance, General Schoomaker and Commandant Conway. Thank you very, very much for joining us; we appreciate it. And today our committee will hear your testimony on how the president's recent proposal to increase troops in Iraq will affect our readiness posture on the military, and what strategic risk will entail.

Two quick things. I understand that our friend John Kelly has just been named for a second star. I hope that's more than just a rumor. Congratulations. We here in the House feel that we got him ready for the rest of the Marine Corps and the rest of his duty when he was head of legislative liaison downstairs, General Conway.

And also, it's interesting to note, last evening after I left the House, I went back and I was flipping on television. And I found this movie on George Armstrong Custer, and the uniform, the blue uniform he was wearing at that time into battle was the same uniform that you now call your present and future Class As. So let me compliment you and thank you for wearing them for the very first time here in our committee room, and it's a look backward in history, and I think it's very, very appropriate.

We're now looking at alternate courses in Iraq. We are looking at the opportunity for members and the America people to understand the ramifications of the president's proposed policy on those in uniform and their training and their readiness. In July of last year, General Schoomaker, you will recall I asked you if you were comfortable with the readiness units in the United States and your answer was no. I'm very interested in learning what your opinion is today and what effect the president's new proposal will have on readiness as we go forward.

Now, based on your previous testimony, General Schoomaker, you may recall Congress had some \$17 billion under the leadership of our chairman then, Duncan Hunter, to reset the Army equipment that was becoming so worn. And

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we need to know what additional reset money -- if you have an opinion today, for the future for both the Army and the Marine Corps -- will have to be.

We also look forward to hearing from you on the strategic implications that such a policy might have on the overall defense posture. This hearing will be an opportunity for us to explore the second and third possible order effects that may result from the proposed troop increase. For example, how will the proposed troop increase affect unit and individual training? How will units be equipped for the fight, given the equipment shortages being experienced here in the United States? We are also interested in learning more about how the increase in troop levels in Iraq could affect the morale of the troops and their families, and what the services are doing to address potential recruiting and retention challenges that arise.

The war in Iraq, as we all know, has placed a large burden on our Reserve and National Guard forces. I hope you'll take this opportunity to explain more about the recent policy change on the Reserve mobilization and its impact. We understand the Army and Marine Corps are doing their best to address these concerns.

Today's hearing will also include a second panel of witnesses. This is very important, and that's why I'm hoping, number one, that you will keep your remarks -- though your entire remarks will go into the record -- keep your remarks to four minutes, if possible. And again, and our committee's been doing a very good job in staying within the five-minute rule, but we will urge them to continue that. Because we have a second panel: First Sgt. Allison, who is stationed at Ft. Lewis, Washington, who is with a unit that's been notified they'll be deploying earlier than expected. In addition, we have two Marine spouses, a Mrs. Shuster and a Mrs. Zimmerman, whose husbands are with a combat unit that will be extended to support the increased troop level in Iraq. These individuals are directly affected, and we look forward to their testimony, so I certainly hope we can reach them as quickly as possible.

Generals, these are important subjects, and -- we need to understand. I look forward to hearing from you. I want to remind our members that this is an open session, and General Schoomaker and General Conway may not be able to directly answer certain questions of a sensitive nature that could only be answered in a closed, classified setting. I urge members to remain or return for our second panel and remember we will strictly adhere to the five-minute rule.

And for his remarks, Mr. Hunter, ranking member.

REP. DUNCAN HUNTER (R-CA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for holding this hearing, which is very timely and very important. And General Schoomaker and General Conway, thank you for everything you've done for our country and for your leadership of our troops.

Mr. Chairman, you've focused appropriately on this readiness issue, and one thing that I'd like to elicit and to engage in as we go through the testimony, gentlemen, is the reset.

Now, last year both of you came to us and said, when we were past the initial mark-up stages of the Defense bill and said, "We're going to need a lot more money to reset," and that means basically to repair the tanks, trucks, aircraft, that are utilized in the war-fighting theaters and have been run pretty strongly and need lots of repair. And we asked you to come in and give us every dime of what you thought you needed, and you did that -- and did, I thought, a good job of it. And we went over that, largely in classified session, to some degree in open session, and you gave us your requirements and we funded every dime -- at least my directions and the ranking member's directions to our staff were to fund every dime and come up with what ultimately was, after you took out the amount of reset that was embedded in the president's budget and what was in the supplement, the balance that was unfunded we added together and we came up with a package that was right at \$20 billion. And the appropriations committees followed us; the Senate did the same thing, and we ended up with the president's signature on that -- on that funding package.

Now, in November when I checked, I looked at how much had been obligated. It was a fairly low number; I think it was 3.8 billion (dollars) about halfway through November, and that bothered me, because this -- this message that you gave us was one of some urgency. And one thing that we looked at before we engaged in marking up the reset requirement was checking our industrial base and mainly our depots to find out if we had the capacity to execute. Because the worst game in show business in this town is to come up with funding and then come up with a non-execution status on the monies that we've directed to the reset.

Well, when we looked across the depot, the array of depots in this country that will be relevant to reset, most of them were -- had lots of capacity, around 50 percent. So we said, okay, we've got plenty of depot capacity; we can do

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this. So one thing I'd like you to address today is how far down the line we are, and should we surge the depots? Because when you -- the depot manager who comes out of a business school often likes to see a gradual glide path in terms of hiring, in terms of contracts, so that he has a -- he has an operation which is smooth and is long-lasting.

The exigencies of war sometimes require lots of people and lots of contracts working very quickly and in large numbers, even though sometimes you lose economies of scale and economies of what I would call gradualism, but you get stuff repaired fast. So I'd just like your opinion on whether we should be accelerating the reset so that we've got that old fire engine back in the fire house and ready to go to the next fire as quickly as possible.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, I'd like the gentlemen to tell us a little bit about their thoughts on the president's plan, the Baghdad plan, with several Iraqi battalions out in front with the America battalion as a back-up, and the prospects for using that plan as a blueprint to get all of the Iraqi battalions -- which we see as 129 battalions on paper -- trained and equipped, to get them rotated into the operational setting so that every one of them, even if they come from a quiet area in Iraq, from one of the nine provinces where there's very little going on, get them some operational experience so that, you know, number one, they'll come when called, they've got a chain of command that responds to the Ministry of Defense; number two, they have some combat effectiveness.

So if you could comment on the president's plan and whether you think it's got potential to be used as a pattern with which we could stand up the entire Iraqi force and give them a stand-up in which -- which is capabilities-based, because they'll have operational experience, rather than geographically based because they're located in a certain part of the country. So give us your take on that, if you would.

And lastly, Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling the family members of folks who have deployed and are experiencing this high op tempo. That's an important part of our responsibilities, to take care of those families, to oversee the setting in which they operate, and I'm interested in their insight. So thank you, and I look forward to the hearing.

REP. SKELTON: Mr. Hunter, thank you very, very much.

Gentlemen, you may proceed with your summarized version of your more lengthy testimony.

General Schoomaker.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, on behalf of the secretary of the Army, Dr. Francis Harvey, and more than 1 million active Guard and Reserve soldiers and civilians of the United States Army serving around the globe, thank you very much for this opportunity to be with you today and to talk about, you know, the improvement in Army readiness, our concerns on the strategic depth, and decreasing our overall strategic risk. We're in very dangerous and uncertain times, as we've talked many times before, and as you know, current demands exceed the strategy that was outlined in the Quadrennial Defense Review.

Strategy involved establishing a proper balance among the ends, ways and means, and policy and strategy discussions often focus very much on the ends and the ways and fail to sufficiently address the means. The recent decisions by the president and the secretary of Defense to grow our ground forces and to assure access to all components of our force will help to establish the balance required to meet and sustain high levels of strategic demand by Army forces by providing additional means.

We have received considerable support from this committee and the Congress to increase the readiness of our Army, and as a result, the soldiers we have deployed in the current theaters of operation are the best-trained, best-equipped and best-led that we've ever put in harm's way. As I explained in the testimony before this committee last June, the immediate challenge lies in the readiness of the non-deployed forces. We will need your continued support in six key areas that I'd like to outline for the record to restore the strategic depth of our Army necessary to respond decisively to potential strategic contingencies.

First, recent decisions to expand the Army reflect a clear recognition of the dangers we face and the strain that five years of sustained demand have placed on the all-volunteer force. We plan to grow six new brigade combat teams and enabling organizations interactive component and other enabling organizations in our Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

This will expand our rotational pool to 76 brigade combat teams and more than 200 enabling organizations in the operational force of the total Army.

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Our goal is to provide a continuous supply of 20 to 21 brigade combat teams to meet global commitments. We remain committed to generating whole cohesive units that are fully manned, trained and equipped and are fully ready for the challenges they will face. This will require a national commitment to sustain the predictable resourcing over time, and to build our force in a balance, coordinated fashion while providing adequately for the needs of our all-volunteer soldiers and their families.

Second, in the near-term, to prosecute the long war and to sustain the full range of our global commitments, we must have all components of the active -- of the Army -- active, Guard and Reserve -- ready and able to deploy together. The changes in reserve component mobilization policies recently announced by Secretary Gates are essential. Our reserve components comprise 55 percent of our Army's capabilities. We must fully enable them to perform their new role as an integral part of our operational deployable force.

These new policies will provide predictability and facilitate the deployment of trained, ready and cohesive units while decreasing the burden on our soldiers and their families. We are working to implement these changes rapidly will require continued congressional support to do so.

Third, with the support of this committee and the Congress, we have been provided the resources needed to restore battle losses and repair worn equipment through an aggressive reset program. We are well ahead of schedule in executing these funds in fiscal year 2007. In just the first quarter, we have already obligated 10 billion (dollars) of the 17.1 billion appropriated.

As I testified last year, we anticipate that our fiscal year 2008 reset requirements will be approximately \$13.5 billion, a figure that will increase as we plus-up forces in current theaters of operation and increase the size of our Army. Because the replacement of equipment can take up to three years following the commitment of funds, we seek to make this funding available to use as soon as possible. To overcome the unprecedented stress being placed on our equipment today, reset funding will be required for a minimum of two to three years beyond the duration of the current conflict.

Fourth point: With your support we have made great progress in increasing soldier and unit effectiveness through our modernization efforts. As I have said before, we have historically entered conflicts flatfooted. This current conflict is no exception. Investment accounts were underfunded by approximately \$100 billion during the previous decade, resulting in nearly \$56 billion of equipment shortages across the Army. To meet combatant commanders' immediate war-time needs, we pooled equipment from across the force to equip soldiers deploying in harm's way.

This practice, which we are continuing today, increases risk for our next-to-deploy units and limits our ability to respond to emerging strategic contingencies. The changed conditions of warfare necessitate that we can no longer accept risk in how we equip our combat support and combat service support units. There are no front lines in today's battle space. We must equip all units with force protection: night vision goggles, (pre-served ?) weapons, radios and other critical items needed to operate.

Your continued support is helping to fix what I call holes in the force. I ask you to increase your support for this effort as we work to break the historical cycle of unpreparedness. We must remain committed to investing in technologies and equipment that enable our most important asset, the soldier, to remain ahead of our adversaries who are quickly adapting to our methods, tactics and tools of warfare. Investing sufficiently in our future readiness is a strategic necessity which must be viewed as a matter of priority, not just of affordability.

Fifth: Our ability to grow the force to meet rotation requirements is jeopardized today by our inability to execute nearly \$6 billion worth of scheduled military construction. We have developed a carefully synchronized, closely knitted stationing plan to enable us to meet our global commitments while fighting the long war. Current delays in funding military construction projects contained in the 2007 Military Quality of Life and Veteran Affairs Appropriation Bill limit our ability to build our modular force and to deliver quality of life improvements which our soldiers and their families both need and deserve.

I have addressed my concern in two separate letters. In November, I co-authored a 16-star letter with the other service chiefs; and in December, Secretary Harvey and I re-emphasized the significant impact of this delay. I recently requested to meet with Speaker Pelosi to emphasize how imperative it is to pass this legislation without delay -- especially now while we're at war. To properly house, train and prepare our soldiers, we need Congress to pass the appropriations bill or amend continuing resolution language to permit execution of all military construction and BRAC projects requested in the 2007 president's budget.

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Sixth: We will require access to supplemental funding for fiscal year 2007 by April, and possibly sooner, to properly sustain the Army. We cannot repeat last year's near disastrous cash-flow experience and meet the increased operational demands now facing us. For fiscal year 2008 and beyond, we must fully resource the Army to enable it to grow as projected.

We are continuing to work with the Department of Defense to revise our equipment investment strategy and to obtain the additional resources needed to support that strategy. These requirements should be transmitted in the fiscal year 2008 president's budget. I ask you to increase funding for these necessary requirements. A fundamental challenge impacting Army readiness and strategic depth is the need to establish a proper balance between strategy and resources. Had we funded the Army to requested levels in recent years, and endorsed policies to assure access to all of our capability, we would be in a better strategic posture today.

I am greatly encouraged by the actions of the Congress, the president and the secretary of Defense which reflect clear recognition of the compelling need to rectify our situation. I look forward to working with this Congress to enhance the readiness and strategic depth of our Army.

And Mr. Chairman, thanks very much. That concludes my oral statement.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you, General Schoomaker.

It's interesting to note that at the very seat you are now occupying, Lieutenant General Ted Stroup in 1995 testified the need for adding an additional 40,000 soldiers to the United States Army, and we're finally getting there. I hope someone picks up the phone and calls the General and thanks him for his foresight.

General Conway.

GEN. CONWAY: Chairman Skelton, Representative Hunter and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the men and women of the United States Marine Corps.

Your Marine Corps is currently engaged in what I believe to be the first battle of a long war against Islamic extremists. Alongside our fellow servicemen and women, we have been in that fight now for almost five years. Though the troops and the operating forces are being pushed by the operational tempo and the frequency of deployments, morale has never been higher, because they believe they're making a difference.

They also believe, ladies and gentlemen, that the people of the United States and its government are behind them. The evidence of that support is everywhere to be seen: the fielding of new material and equipment to make their mission success more certain and protect them from enemy blasts, the reset of the force so as to be able to accomplish follow-on missions throughout the globe, and most recently, the request by the secretary of Defense to grow our end strength.

While the morale of our Marines remains high, we also see leading indicators that the impact of multiple deployments on Marines and their families is being felt. More significantly for the nation, we believe our training for our other missions is also being impacted. The recently proposed increase in our end strength to 202,000 active-duty Marines will go a long way towards reducing the strain both on the individual and the institution. If this end strength is approved, we will grow our corps approximately 5,000 per year. This plan will gradually decrease the deployment-to-dwell ratio of some of our low-density, high-demand units. Currently, many of these units are deployed for seven months and home for only five months before they return to combat.

Because over 70 percent of our end strength consists of first-term Marines, we're making plans for the necessary increased recruiting and retention, which will be challenging. We'll need the continued support of Congress for enlistment bonuses and other programs, such as advertising, which will be essential for us to continue meeting these growth challenges.

This end strength increase is separate from -- indeed it pre-dates -- the plus-up operation that has been directed in Iraq. For that operation, approximately 4,000 Marines are affected. Three of our combat formations will be extended by some 45 to 60 days. These extensions have already impacted our Marines and their families, but we have been emphatic about keeping our families informed of the details. We believe that unit programs and family support systems at home stations will help our people meet the challenges associated with the extension.

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I'm glad you asked a spouse -- two spouses, really -- of our affected battalion -- 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines -- to join you later today. The voices of our families are heard loud and clear in our headquarters and I appreciate that they'll be represented today in the Congress as well.

On the issue of equipment readiness, with your help over the last two years we've made substantial progress, but there is still much to be done if we are to win the current fight and be able to respond to other challenges that face the country. We have the right processes in place to reset our force, as well as make additional equipment purchases commensurate with our end strength increase. And of course, when it makes sense, we'll procure next-generation equipment to keep pace with technological improvements.

Chairman Skelton and Congressman Hunter, thank you for the opportunity to report to you on behalf of the valiant men and women of your Corps. They remain committed to their mission and know that the American people and its government support them in their endeavor. Your Corps stands ready to serve in any clime and place, but your continued support remains a vital and much appreciated foundation to this service.

I look forward to the questions of the committee.

REP. SKELTON: General, thank you very, very much.

Let me ask General Schoomaker, once again, are you comfortable with today's readiness of the United States Army that is within the United States today?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I have continued concerns about the non-deployed force, as I stated in my statement. I have no concerns about how we are equipping, training and manning the forces that are going across the berm into harm's way, but I do have continued concerns about the strategic depth of our -- (inaudible) -- readiness.

REP. SKELTON: General Schoomaker, based upon our recent announced deployment -- an increase in troop level in Iraq -- what impact will that have upon our readiness and strategic risk; in other words, our ability to fight elsewhere if called upon?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, obviously it puts continued pressure, increased pressure upon the non-deployed forces.

REP. SKELTON: General Conway, I ask you the same two questions. Are you comfortable with the level of readiness of the Marines that are within the United States today?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I cannot say that I'm comfortable. I will talk somewhat around it, because we're in open session, but suffice it to say that we have examined other war plans and our capability to respond to those plans and we see that we are lacking in some areas with our ability to do so.

REP. SKELTON: Are we running a strategic risk if the Marines were called upon to fight elsewhere today?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, we feel like there is risk. We feel like that we would be able to respond with those forces that are not committed to Iraq or Afghanistan, that the response would be slower that we might like, would not have all of the equipment sets that ordinarily would be the case, and there is certainly risk associated with that.

REP. SKELTON: Mr. Hunter.

REP. DUNCAN HUNTER (R-CA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Conway, of the 21,500 reinforcements that are being sent to Iraq, 4,000 -- as I understand -- are going to Anbar province. Is that right?

GEN. CONWAY: That's correct, sir.

REP. HUNTER: That's a -- tell us a little bit, in a general way, about why you need those 4,000 Marines?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I really believe, after having visited there just over the Christmas holidays, that we are going to be reinforcing success in the Al Anbar province. Things are going quite well out on the border at a place called Al Qaim, where I think Marines have bought that success in blood. Likewise in Ramadi; I was somewhat surprised to see that things are as encouraging as they are there based on the efforts of both the Army Brigade and some great Marine battalions that are in the region.

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So I think that in this instance, the commitment of additional forces is timely and that they'll be able to assist the commander there in reinforcing the success that he's seeing in his AO -- in his area of operations.

REP. HUNTER: And are the Marine commanders on the ground there, are they the folks who wanted additional Marines to come out?

GEN. CONWAY: That's correct, sir. In conversation with General Zilmer while I was there on the concept -- of course, there was a wide range of options in discussion at the time -- and he indicated he could use some help, did not think that he needed as much as was being talked about in some of the planning. But he felt a couple of battalions could make a significant difference.

REP. HUNTER: Okay, okay. Thank you.

Gentlemen, and General Schoomaker, I understand that you've obligated 10 billion (dollars) of the additional monies that we've funded for reset. Have you taken a look at the prospects of obligating this money faster?

And let me just tell you, as we've watched the business process, we've often sent our teams out from the Armed Services Committee -- particularly on up-armor of vehicles -- and we'd say, how come we're not doing this faster in a particular case? And the answer would be, well, we're only getting our steel so fast.

We then sent a team to the steel company, and our professional staff members would say, "How come you're not doing the steel faster?" And they'd say, "Well, because we didn't get a request to have more shifts. And we think that even if we did get a request, we might have a -- we're going to have to work with the unions."

And our professional staff members would then say, "Well, let's talk to the unions." And we'd talk to them and they'd say, "We've got kids over there. We'll put on -- we'll go with more shifts."

And we would be able to actually move the production of up-armor to the left -- that is, get it done sooner -- not because we weren't working smoothly, and not because funds weren't being obligated, but simply because we didn't ask the system, can you get it done faster?

So my question to you is: Can we get it done faster -- this reset?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I share your concerns about the typical management process of trying to be the most efficient and, you know, managing through what I call each eye of the needle on a perfect slope.

And that has been a frustration of mine, and we've worked very hard, the leadership and -- and much of the leadership behind me has worked very hard to push that mentality to the side and to move.

As you know, the \$17.1 billion that was appropriated -- that you authorized was appropriated this year for us to reset is broken down, roughly, into two roughly equal pieces. One piece of it is procurement, which actually goes out and buys things -- materials and items out of industry. The other piece of it is for work -- that's operations and maintenance money that pays for labor and for the actual work.

We have obligated the first piece of that against the requirements -- put that stuff onto contract. The thing that will regulate the expenditure of the rest of it is, you know, we paid for work performed, so that's going to be metered out at a different rate than what the other is. We have reset now, since the beginning of this war, 200,000 pieces of equipment, and we have doubled the depot output. But as you know, in the depots, there are different lines, and some of those lines are constrained by long lead-term items that we are making an investment in now that are going to affect us down the road, but because we didn't make the investment previously, are hampering the kind of effort that you're talking about.

So my view is that we agree in principle on the necessity to be unconventional in the approach as we do it. The investment we're making today is going to pay off us, but we're only four months into the deal.

HOUSE-IRAQ-SKELTON Mr. Chairman, I see my time's almost up. With your permission, I'd like to submit a question about troop needs in Afghanistan that I heard about in my recent trip and also what impact that might have on Iraq.

REP. SKELTON: Certainly, without objection.

Thank you very much.

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REP. : Thank you.

REP. SKELTON: Mr. Taylor.

REP. GENE TAYLOR (D-MS): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

General Schoomaker, I remain concerned that we're having a disproportionately large number of deaths and injuries in humvees. And I appreciate you need to reset the force and replace what you've already lost. The Marines have already outlined what I think is a very ambitious policy of replacing humvees with something that's going to have a v-shaped bottom to deflect the blast from mines and IEDs, something a little bit higher off the ground hopefully, again, to buy them some space between that blast and the people riding in that vehicle.

I was wondering what the Army is doing. Because it was General Blum that actually explained to me humvees is actually worse than a flat bottom. It's got a concave bottom that actually channels the force of that blast into the cab, which explains why the gunners, in many instances, are blown 20, 30 yards from the vehicle once that mine goes off underneath.

Given what former Chairman Hunter said -- always Chairman Hunter -- about the delays that all of us felt and the frustration all of us felt in up-arming the humvees and the message not getting sent, first to the industrial base and then to the people working those factories -- the people in the ballistic plants -- that this is important, this needs to get done right now. This isn't a jobs program, this is a mission to be accomplished by the American private sector. What's the Army doing so that we can replace these vehicles with a more capable vehicle in a timely manner, keeping in mind that this is where a very disproportionately high percentage of our injuries and deaths are coming from?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I think that's an excellent question. The first thing I want to do is dispel the myth that the Marines have a different program than the Army. This is a joint program. Both of us are working on the MRAP program together.

REP. TAYLOR: Okay. If I may then, General, the 4,000 vehicles in open testimony that the Marines said that they wanted to have in inventory by the first of next January still leaves us far short from the approximately -- off the top of my head -- 20,000 vehicles in theater. So, what is the plan to --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: And therein lies the dilemma. First of all, the MRAP -- the one we're talking about -- is the mine resistant ambush protection vehicle that is an interim solution to a better vehicle, a joint vehicle that clearly needs to be designed, you know, for the future. The Marines' requirements are only a fraction of what the Army's requirements are in Iraq. It's a much smaller subset of the whole. And the Marines, like the Army, we want to accelerate the interim solution, this MRAP, the light which is the lightest of the three versions. You know, the next is the Cougar and then the Buffalo -- you know, levels two and three -- which we're doing. And it's the light version that is the issue -- the humvee version. So, we support what the Marine Corps wants to do, because we want to do the same thing. We want to accelerate the fielding of these, but our requirement's much larger.

REP. TAYLOR: Well, General, if I may. To that point, I was really impressed with the Marine Corps general in charge of this program -- not only gave a target figure but a target date for delivery. And I think that's good for all of us. What is your target figure of number of vehicles and what is your target date of delivery so that, hopefully, Congress can work with you to make this happen?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, the initial target figure is 2,500 on it. But as I told you, we want to make sure that we're ramping towards a better solution which is the joint one that is designed, you know, with the latest technologies to be able to resist the deal. And I'll have to give you what our target date for that is.

Are you familiar with what it is? (Off mike.)

MR : Yes, sir. We're moving forward to JLTV from 2012 which is clearly inadequate, trying to make the MRAP the interim solution.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Right. So, the MRAP -- what I'm describing here, what the Marines are talking -- is an interim solution, as I said. I think 2012 is the point at which some people think they can bring it and, of course, we want to move it to the left; that's inadequate.

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REP. TAYLOR: General, if I could just give you one last thought. One of my frustrations and I think many members of this committee is a continual game with words that says we've met requirement and requirement wasn't 100 percent of what needed to be done, whether it was body armor, whether it was up-armoring. I would hope "requirement" is every vehicle in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you so much, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Bartlett, please.

REP. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT (R-MD): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I note Mr. Conaway's very faithful attendance at these hearings, and consistent with my policy of usually relinquishing my time, yielding my time to a junior member, I'm very pleased to yield my time to Mr. Conaway.

REP. MICHAEL CONAWAY (R-TX): I thank my good friend from Maryland for the opportunity.

Generals, thank you both for being here. Appreciate your service to our country.

General Schoomaker, you mentioned some level of concern -- we'll throw an adjective, whatever you want to -- on the readiness for the troops still in country here yet to be deployed. Without violating security issues, can you talk to us briefly about is it people, is it equipment, is it training? What is it that does concern you? And then finish off with you mentioned the MILCON problems you're having. Ranking member talked to us about the inability to spend (\$17 billion ?) on a dime. The problems you're having with the MILCON delays as a result of Congress is both Republican and now the Democrats not doing -- I'm looking at a list that I think was provided by you. Replace family housing, maintenance, Infantry squad battle courses -- a wide variety of military construction that I suspect reaches all the way across the readiness issue and everything that we're doing, the quality of life. I've got barracks complexes. I've got replacement of family housing -- all those things -- urban assault courses. Those are the Army's problems.

And General Conway, if you could talk to us about the Marines' problems with MILCON being delayed.

And General Schoomaker, if you could mention what Speaker Pelosi's response to you was when you talked to her.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I have not met with Speaker Pelosi.

REP. CONAWAY: So you just requested the meeting and --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I've requested it; I'm pending. I understand that I'll have the meeting, and I will lay out some of what I say here.

First of all, to your first question, I testified in June that I had concerns about the strategic depth of the Army. That was about seven months ago. Since that time, we've got increased stress on the Army. We are using the supplemental funding to reset the Army as fast as we can but as you know, there's latency in delivery.

You know, we've got it moving very quickly, but the delivery is yet to be taken. So my concerns are increased over what they were in June in terms of what the pressure is on our force, both in terms of dwell time, in terms of equipment, in terms of time available to train and all the rest of it. So, we have a slightly different problem. Our primary problem in the active force is equipment on hand and the dwell time available to train properly and fully. And on the Reserve side, we have equipment on hand issues and personnel issues. As we reset the Reserve components, that's primarily what it was.

Your second question had to do with MILCON, and I'll just give you an example. Not getting this MILCON budget is going to affect the stationing and the conversion of three brigades at Fort Bliss, Texas. And I was just out there looking at it, and the ground's all been pushed around, the foundations are starting to go in. But it's going to stop, because they don't have the money. It's going to prohibit us from consolidating the 173rd Airborne Brigade which is now split between Germany and Italy. It's going to prohibit both the growth and the stationing of the 7th Special Forces Group. We're supposed to grow an additional battalion in the 7th Special Forces Group. We will not be able to do that, nor will we be able to station the 7th Special Forces Group in Eglund Air Force Base as we had planned.

Additionally, it will impact 42 barracks complexes. In other words, we will not have barracks in which to put the forces we're growing. It will affect 30 training and training support facilities. It will affect 46 operations and mainte-

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nance facilities. It will affect approximately 90 Reserve component facilities in 45 states. It will affect over 5,000 homes in the family housing and 16 child development and youth centers, affecting approximately 4,000 children.

REP. CONAWAY: Could we let the Marines weigh in on the same issue?

Thank you, sir.

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, if I can, first, let me talk to the readiness in the United States issue as well, because General Schoomaker referenced this training is large. What we are developing right now is the best counterinsurgency force in the world, both Army and Marine. But that's essentially what they're focused on because of the limited dwell time state-side and the turnaround. So, we need to be able to train towards other major contingency types of operations, and we're just not doing it right now based upon available dwell.

REP. CONAWAY: MILCON --

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, sir. On MILCON, my service is up against the wall. We have needed new barracks for 20 or 25 years. But every year, when we had to prioritize what else was out there that we had to have, barracks sort of went to the bottom of the list. We've taken that as far as we possibly can. We're scheduled to have 105 new barracks built between now and 2012. They're going to be replacing Korean-era war barracks -- open squad bays in some cases -- where troops still live, and that's just unsatisfactory in our perspective now. And my predecessor initiated this program last year, and it is critically important to us, because we've just pushed it off as long as we possibly could.

REP. SKELTON: Mr. Reyes.

REP. SILVESTRE REYES (D-TX): Not Mr. Meehan?

REP. SKELTON: Mr. Reyes is next on the list.

REP. REYES: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Generals, thank you for being here, and thank you for your service.

I agree with you on the issue of the MILCON funding. In fact, we tried very hard to get it passed before the end of the last session and we'll continue to work on that with you.

Before I ask you a couple of questions, I think it's important to articulate that while the president's strategy calls for 21,000 additional troops, I don't support that, and I'll tell you why. I feel strongly that, like you and others, that the greatest threat in Iraq is security. And this very dangerous environment is primarily fed by the militias. Last summer and early fall, I listened to military leaders who were of the opinion that if given the position to neutralize these militias, our military could do so with a temporary increase of between 20 (thousand) and 30,000 troops. So, I felt that was reasonable and a worthwhile investment that would result in a more secure environment for both our troops and to give the Iraqi government an opportunity to establish itself.

However, since that time, the security situation has badly deteriorated. And when the president made his announcement and gave us individual groups of members of Congress briefings at the White House about his plan, he told us that that was essentially -- he attributed it to Prime Minister Maliki, which concerned me because of his spotty track record in the past. At one of those meeting with the president, I directly asked him if in fact that -- his plan would be to neutralize these militias, which he said it was not intended to do that. I think it's important, because I believe the solution is to make the Iraqi government accountable for both their own security and also, with our support, to find a political solution to the sectarian differences and violence that is creating the environment in Iraq.

I don't know if either of you wants to comment on that, but the questions that I would want you to comment on is the fact that, over the weekend, there was a report that we might be asking -- or we might be moving troops from Afghanistan in to Iraq. So can both of you assure this committee that no troops will be pulled from their mission in Afghanistan to fulfill this 21,000 plus-up in Iraq?

And then the other question, General Schoomaker, is in the doctrine of training to fight, with the shortages in equipment and the challenges that you have articulated here this morning, what does that do to that doctrine when you have to cross that threshold?

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GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, the -- to answer your last question first -- what we are doing is rapidly crossleveling equipment within the United States so that the people that are deploying have equipment to train on to go. So what that does, then, is you get the second order effect, third order effect of the units the equipment comes from not being able to do the things they need to do so that when they're in line, why have to move the equipment back to do that. So we're basically sharing equipment.

Now, one of the initiatives that, you know, the modular force where we're standardizing the force, one of the things we're able to do when we swapped out the 1st Cavalry Division and the 4th Infantry Division was, because both of them were modular, we were able to move the people of the 1st Cavalry Division into Iraq on the equipment that the 4th Infantry Division had there and leave the equipment at Fort Hood so that when the 4th ID came back, they fell in on the equipment that was left there that had been fixed. This saved us almost \$1 billion in transportation costs on this last swap-out and picked up seven months in terms of equipment availability so that we are able to train those units. So we're doing all kinds of things, you know, to get around it. But the fundamental thing is that we're sharing equipment and pushing it around.

But I can promise you that we are putting the best trained people we can across the (burn ?). But the shorter the swell time is, the more difficult that is to do.

You had a question up front on moving troops from Afghanistan to Iraq. I know of no effort to do that. I've heard nothing like that and we certainly have not sourced this plus-up in Iraq with any forces out of Afghanistan.

REP. REYES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you, Mr. Reyes.

The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Forbes.

REP. RANDY FORBES (R-VA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And gentlemen, thank you both for the great job that you do and for all that your men and women do.

One of the major things that you mentioned, General Schoomaker, when you began your testimony, was the balance that has to be strike -- struck sometimes between so many issues. And one of the big things that our forces are always able to do is create a deterrent from other nations doing things that, perhaps, that we would not want them to do.

And one of the things that I would ask both of you to comment on is based on where we are now relative to where we were let's say in 2002, if you had to rate it on a one to ten scale is our readiness -- is our deterrent effect overall for our forces worse now, better now than it was in 2002?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I would -- first of all, I think that getting into this in too much detail is not appropriate for this session. I recommend that you take a look at -- at the classified data that we provide the Congress that shows our readiness and -- and to take a look at the chairman's risk assessment which he -- which we all contribute to and that he submits. I think that'll answer it in more detail.

I can assure you the United States of America has got considerable deterrent capability. Our concern is when you take a look at some of the plans that because of the strategic depth problem that we have that we will -- we -- it will be slower to execute some of those plans in terms of the time lines that are expected and that, you know, there will be a greater crunch in that respect. And in many cases we would have to use joint capabilities to offset some capabilities perhaps we don't have the depth we need. So I think I'll leave it at about -- at that level.

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I'd answer it this way. If you -- if you just take a look at the numbers -- the percentage comparison between then and now, you might not be pleased with -- with what you see. However, I would say it is a much more capable force in terms of the combat experience -- in terms of the additional equipment sets that we now have -- those manner of things which allow us then to if called go somewhere and -- and be able to respond.

REP. FORBES: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you so much. Dr. Snyder?

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REP. SNYDER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, thank you for being here. General Schoomaker, appreciate your service. You were drawn out of retirement at a very difficult time in our nation's history and we appreciate you. General Conway, you're the -- the new man on the block -- born in Arkansas, I might add as a youngster.

I wanted to address some of my questions to you because you refer to the -- the trip that you made and -- with the Marines in Iraq over the Christmas time. You actually in your written statement you used the term 'surge' and words are -- have all kinds of different meanings and uses and we have all kinds of political dynamics to them, and so we're hearing the word 'surge', we're hearing the words 'escalation', 'fluctuations'. What's your -- what do you think the -- the appropriate term of art is for an increase of 21,000 proposed over a force of 140,000?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, that's a tough question to answer because we don't know what -- what the end state is going to be or potentially when those troops will come out. But by a strict military definition of surge, the commander makes a conscious effort to mass his troops at a specific point and place and time in order to achieve a desired result. But on the back side of that effort of a surge, there must be what we call a payback and that is that you'll have less forces to employ at a later period of time because you've used them in some former fashion. What I think I would term what we see happening right now is more a plus-up of forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, not a surge.

REP. SNYDER: One of the things that you said in response to a question was that you -- I think it was in response to Mr. McHugh that this may not be the last effort or -- or new effort, or I think in response was is this a Hail Mary, which I think is a, you know, a very candid thing to say. As these discussions are going on around the country, I think there is a lot of Americans that think this is more of the Hail Mary -- that this is our one last chance to get it right, and in fact Secretary Gates in his statement both oral and written said that if this isn't going well, we may stop it before we get to the 21 -- the 21 five. But your testimony is here today if this doesn't work, we may well try some other things. Is that a fair statement?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, it's my personal conviction that we have to be successful in Iraq. I have a concern that we're on a certain time line to accomplish success. Marines and soldiers are seeing incremental success I think on a daily basis in the country. But my concern is that that time line that we see needed is not the same time line that the country is prepared to provide us. And I just have dire concerns that if we leave before the job is done, conditions in the Middle East -- the -- the enemy statements in terms of his strategy -- his grand strategy is such that we could be going back in there someday in order to assure national vital interests are maintained.

REP. SNYDER: General Conway, you referred to -- that there were several different plans and that -- and that your troops on the ground in Anbar said that they could use, I think in your words, a couple of battalions. As these different plans were being discussed, is it fair to say that the -- the military leadership was coming down on the side of lesser numbers than the civilian leadership? Is that a fair statement?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, there -- you're right. There were a number of plans out there. One of them that I saw called for as many as four regiments in the Al Anbar province at any one time. That is -- is not consonant with what the -- the commander of Marine forces in Iraq said he thought he -- he needed or could use again against an achievable military objective.

REP. SNYDER: And the Marine Corps though our history has always had the reputation of being able to work in counter insurgency operations. What -- what is your assessment, given that you've only been in this particular task now since November, where we're at with regard to the political and economic -- the nonmilitary side of what's going on in Iraq? And that's -- for a lot of us that's the issue. I mean, I continue to be disappointed how quickly the president dismissed the Iraq Study Group and some of the recommendations. What are your thoughts about that from the military perspective?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I think -- I think that those that you mentioned -- the political and economic -- are absolutely essential to success over time. I think General -- or chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Pace has said publicly that it's a three-legged stool. Security is one aspect of it but the political and the economic are the others that will prop that stool, and they have to be in place for this plan and I think for our success in Iraq to -- to find a satisfactory in state.

REP. SNYDER: And final question -- do we need additional troops in Afghanistan?

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GEN. CONWAY: When I spoke to the commanders in Afghanistan they were concerned that there is a spring offensive coming, and it is their belief that they could use some additional troops in Afghanistan. That's as much as I should say.

REP. SNYDER: Is the surge proposed going to interfere with our ability to give them the troops that they're requesting? The Iraq surge?

GEN. CONWAY: Would you repeat that question please?

REP. SNYDER: Is the Iraq surge proposal going to interfere with the ability of us to meet the demands and requests of the commanders on the ground in Afghanistan?

GEN. CONWAY: I would say it will impact it. It will not interfere with it to the extent that it would preclude it.

REP. SNYDER: Thank -- thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson.

REP. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Generals, for being here. I'm very grateful the District that I represent includes Fort Jackson, such an extraordinary training facility -- Parris Island, training for the Marines east of the Mississippi -- the Beaufort Marine Air Station. And I'm just really grateful for those installations and the dedication of the persons who serve there and the young people serving in the military.

Additionally, I'm -- I'm grateful that this month the 218th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, General Schoomaker, the -- of the South Carolina Army National Guard -- I served in it for 25 years -- has been mobilized. This is the largest mobilization of the National Guard in South Carolina since World War II, and the members of that brigade are -- are so proud to serve. I had some come visit me yesterday before they actually leave country. They brought their family by to visit and tour the capital. But I am indeed concerned for Guard and Reserve members as there is greater mobilization. Could both of you, but particularly General Schoomaker, indicate are there any programs -- are there any legislative initiatives that are being proposed to assist Guard and Reserve members?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: To assist Guard and Reserve members in what regard?

REP. WILSON: With their families in terms of any benefits that are being proposed. Are there greater consideration for disruption of their employment? Obviously an issue that always is near and dear to me and others is to provide for the retirement age to be reduced -- not to apply to me -- from 60 to 55. Are -- are any of these going to be potentially enhanced this year?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I'd have to -- I'd have to take part of that for the record and -- and provide that to you. But I can tell you that in a -- in a broader sense we are making an extraordinary commitment in the -- in the budget -- in the program to recapitalize the Guard and Reserve.

I mean, right now it's some \$23 billion across the program in equipment. I know that -- and I've got Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughn with me here who is the director of the Army National Guard. He -- he has got some extraordinary programs going that -- that are working on with the states through the TAGs on family support programs, the networks to support people. I know across the force we've worked with Department of Defense for certain compensations and incentives for -- for these deployments. For instance, those soldiers that are extended in theater will see an additional \$1,000 a month. I think it's about \$200 a month in hardship duty pay and about \$800 in assignment incentive pay I believe that's involved in that -- these kinds of programs. On the back side with the families that are back obviously -- in the Guard and Reserves now that we have a coherent policy of mobilizing units rather than doing this tremendous cross leveling where it takes 20 or 30 states of individuals to put together a unit, we now have a better ability to deal through a coherent command structure so that we can support the families at home, and so that we can give predictability to -- to the Guard members.

And now that we have a policy that says our mobilizations will be a year, you know, and that we're going to front load prior to that year -- give an early alert to -- to Guard units so that they have a year to prepare -- will reduce the post load training that's required so that we can get more out of the year that we will have them mobilized. Of course, this will reduce the number of months boots on the ground probably somewhere around -- limiting it to nine or ten months boots on the ground but -- but it is a better policy and it's one that I think will -- will pay back. So --

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REP. WILSON: And -- and I really appreciate you and all the generals being soldier-concerned and family-concerned. Another issue that I work with, I'm very proud that the recruiting school is located at Fort Jackson and -- and really for both of you, and I know this needs to be brief, but are there new tools that are going to be made and again programs and, let's say, initiatives that could help in regard to recruiting and retention?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: We have -- well, I speak for the Army. You know, we had our most successful year in the active force in nine years last year -- most successful in National Guard in 13 years last year. We -- we recruited over 175,000 soldiers last year in 2006 -- very successful year. Of course, it had to do with a tremendous amount of incentives. It had to do with the amount of recruiters, the way we train recruiters, our approach, our advertising -- you know, a very comprehensive plan on how we did that. So this is going to continue to be a competitive market, and we're competing for the very best in America. You know, 100 percent of the soldiers that come into the United States Army have a high school degree or an equivalent of a high school degree.

REP. SKELTON: The gentleman from Washington, Mr. Smith.

REP. SMITH: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, for being here. Couple quick questions on the -- on the readiness of our troops. How is the training in counter insurgency going in terms of the troops when they're back here and ready to go into -- into the field? Because we've had some extraordinary successes in Iraq. You mentioned Al Caim (ph) and, you know, a couple other places.

But the impression I've gotten from talking to people is it's sort of hit or miss. There are some troops, some units, like General Petraeus' when he first showed up there that are ready to go on counter insurgency, focus trained, and their commanders and their leaders in the field move them there. Others it's not really a priority. How comprehensive is the counter insurgency training for readiness for when our troops go over there?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I'll -- I'll speak first and say that it is -- it is extensive and comprehensive. We have what we call a five-block training program that takes about five months of the seven months that a unit is -- is home on average. The last block and the most sophisticated aspect of it is conducted at what we call a Mojave Viper training exercise conducted at Twenty Nine Palms, California. There we have about 250 Iraqi Americans who live in a village -- who create with great frequency and -- and a level of angst issues and -- and problems and those situations that our commanders and the troops are going to face in Iraq.

REP. SMITH: So just, General, you're confident that -- that at this point anyway the troops in Iraq -- troops going over there are trained and ready to go in counterinsurgency

GEN. CONWAY: So we don't send a unit to Iraq unless they have completed all five blocks of that training.

REP. SMITH: Okay. Thank you -- (inaudible) --.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I would -- I would agree with that, but I would remind you that we -- we cover an extraordinary large number of missions. For instance, we have people that are running convoys. They train to run convoys. We have people that are security force companies that are either guarding facilities, protecting convoys, doing things in the security role -- they train for that function. We have people that are going to be operating in urban environments -- they train for that. We have some that are operating nonurban environments.

We have a -- a wide variety of functions so we tailor to task and we train. Now every soldier is trained to a certain level, and I can tell you that we have made huge improvements, not only in our doctrine but in the way that we're applying that doctrine as we learn this. And then I'll remind you that counter insurgency isn't just a military function. As has been pointed out, there are a lot of other nonmilitary components to it and -- and we attempt to train in that environment as best we can, you know, to prepare people for that.

REP. SMITH: Thank you. I want to follow up also on a comment you made about we have to succeed in Iraq, and we hear that a lot and I understand that. I want to tie that a little bit into Afghanistan because what really concerns me is in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda is still there. Bin Laden, Zawahri, you know, they're not gone and there's been some speculation that well, their operational capacity has been destroyed. The evidence -- there's a lot of evidence that there's still training going on up there -- that that is sort of the -- the center point for Al Qaeda, and we know without any doubt that they will threaten us. They have done it before and they'll do it again. Whereas in Iraq, it's a much more complicated picture, and there's absolutely a threat.

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I'm not -- don't interpret me as minimizing that whatsoever. But whereas in Iraq it's a threat, you know, what will happen if Iran gains undue influence -- what direction will the Shi'a go -- how much influence will al Qaeda have. In Afghanistan, it's more of a guarantee. And I just worry that we're not placing enough emphasis on what's going on over there, and I just want to sort of make that general plea. I'm interested in your -- your comments of course. And as far as succeeding in Iraq, I've heard this, you know, "Gosh, if we don't succeed we'll have to come back." I'm curious -- it's hard for me to picture at this point success reaching that level where in some reasonable time frame -- let's say five years -- we can walk out of there go whew, don't have to worry about that for 20 years.

It seems to me that we've reached the point in Iraq where our ideal outcome when we went in isn't happening. So I'm worried that we haven't sort of shifted the mission to say, "Okay, what does success look like?" Instead of just saying we have to win, what does it mean? Because we're not getting what we wanted. How can we get it to a reasonably stable point? And I'm curious -- have we evolved in our thinking on that in terms of what success would look like in Iraq, and also what are we going to do to make sure that Afghanistan gets the attention it deserves?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I think we have evolved to a degree in terms of what the commanders would now term in state in Iraq, and without quoting their specific mission statement it entails a country that is successfully stabilized, is self-governing -- that is -- that is not a -- an ungoverned space and -- and an area where terrorists can -- can operate freely as a base of operations. We think if we can achieve those things that in state will -- will be considered positive. I think that there is a -- a long-range concern for the security of Iraq as -- as a region. Iraq is potentially a very rich country and -- and there is a concern for its long-term security, and -- and we -- that must have proper consideration. But we're not talking about large investments of troops in order to be able to do that.

REP. SMITH: Absolutely.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you. Mr. Kline?

REP. RON KLINE (D-FL): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. I notice this is -- the entire panel today was my classmate at one time or another. Probably explains a lot about something. I'm just not sure which.

GEN. CONWAY: Makes you pretty old, Sir.

REP. KLINE: It does. Thank you for pointing that out, General. But I want to -- I want to sort of reflect back to those times. Let me do a couple of things. I want to follow up on what Mr. Wilson said about the National Guard and -- and put my plea in because you got the director of the Army Guard behind you, too. Follow up on what we're doing in the Minnesota Guard with a reintegration program -- what we're doing with the troops when they come back, particularly important now that the Minnesota Guard -- 2,600 soldiers are being extended for this surge, so that's my plug and you won't hear the end of it. We really need to do that and I hope that you'll be able to spread that Guard-wide. Then thanks also to everybody involved -- to you, all of you here and to the secretary for the additional \$1,000 a month -- very important for those soldiers and Marines who are being extended.

Now to get back to the old days -- we're here to talk about the impact of the increased number of troops in Iraq on our readiness, and we've heard testimony from both of you about spreading and leveling of equipment. I have confidence and I -- I think you do and if you don't I hope you'll say something now about the -- the state of training and equipment for those troops that are deployed everywhere in CENTCOM but certainly in Iraq.

But I remember in those bad old days, General, when you and I were classmates in the mid 1970s and getting a little bit better, General Conway, when you and I were classmates in 1982. But in those -- in the 70s there were literally days when we had to park the planes and park the jeeps and we could -- we could not train at all and I -- the famous example is when we asked the -- the married Marines to bring their toilet paper in so that the Marines in the barracks would have some. We're not anywhere near that, are we? Now can you just sort of in -- in comparison to what the state of our armed forces were in the -- in the 70s and where -- what the state is of our forces now in terms of their training, equipment and morale -- those that are back here in the states? Just a quick comment from each of you, please.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: When -- when you and I were classmates together at Guanaco (ph) at the Marine Amphibious Warfare School, I had just come from Korea where I was a battalion S-3 -- in a tank battalion on the DMZ. We had no heaters in our tanks, no canvas on our vehicles. We had so little fuel that we had to make a decision -- we only had 50 miles a month in fuel. We had to make a decision on whether to heat our barracks or whether to run our

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tanks. We would run entire tank gunneries on five tanks for a battalion because we didn't have the track, the road wheels or sprockets in the gun tubes and the ammunition to do that.

This was -- there is no comparison between this army and the army we had in the 70s. It was in total disarray. This is nowhere near that kind of a situation. However, the strategic demand on this force is higher than it's ever been in our history. It is so much higher than it was in the Cold War, and we cannot fail to invest to stay ahead of this for the good of the nation, for the good of the soldiers and Marines that are in -- in the force, and for the good of the family members that support them.

GEN. CONWAY: I could add -- I could add a number of examples to emphasize the same point but -- but it would all wind up in the same place. I think General Schoomaker's exactly right.

These plus-ups of our service that are being considered are absolutely essential with regard to this strategic appetite and the importance of taking the stress off the individuals that are seeing these repetitive deployments.

We've got the potential to have a great Marine Corps 10 years from now with all the combat experience and the things that are now developing. My concern is if we lose large numbers of our mid-level leadership, both in the enlisted and the officer ranks, we're going to suffer, then, as a result.

REP. KLINE: I thank both of you for your comments. I just shudder to think we could ever move even one step in that direction, and I hope you will be here pounding the table if you ever feel that we are moving to that -- in that direction. That is just absolutely unacceptable.

And then, final comment, I'm delighted that we're increasing the end strength. I've felt like, as a number of members on this committee, we've been shouting at the wall for some time. We want to make sure when we do that that they're adequately equipped.

So thanks very much for your service.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you. I thank the gentleman.

The gentlelady from California, Ms. Tauscher.

REP. ELLEN TAUSCHER (D-CA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As one of those who shouted at the wall for quite a while and couldn't get Secretary Rumsfeld to agree that we needed to increase the size of our active-duty forces, I'm glad that we all now agree. Unfortunately, I think it's probably three years later than any of us really believed it was necessary or important to do. But I actually have something in my office happening that I've got to deal with, so I'm going to yield my time to Ms. Boyda of Kansas.

REP. NANCY BOYDA (D-KS): Thank you so much.

Nancy Boyda from Kansas, and I bring you a message from my husband, Steve, who was a Marine during the Vietnam period, and he just says he's very, very, very happy to see the Army and the Marines working together so well these days. So thank you for that and thank you for your service.

I'd like to follow up on my colleague's question from Mr. Snyder from Arkansas. You were saying that you don't think that the -- that if we needed more troops in Afghanistan that this troop surge in Iraq will have an impact. I'd like to get some clarification on that.

Then you're saying if we need troops this spring in Afghanistan for any kind of a conflict increase there this spring, are those troops going to be available? And where would they come from?

GEN. CONWAY: Ma'am, let me -- let me answer your question quickly then turn to General Schoomaker because I anticipate at this point that they will be soldiers, not Marines.

So he'll have to, I think, assist with the second half of your question.

And I would simply clarify, there's impact any time we send more troops than we're sending right now. It impacts this dwell ratio that we spoke of; it makes it more difficult in terms of equipment sets and getting them into theater and those manner of things. So I would emphasize that there's impact, but interfering to the degree that we would not or

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could not provide those additional troops is where I would draw the line. We can do those things; it's just that there is impact.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I agree fully with that. If we -- and we may very well have to do that; we will be able to do it. And of course the impact is such things as extensions, such things as reduction of the well time, additional movement of equipment, compressed training time and all the rest of it. So there's an impact, but we'll be able to do it.

The question is, again, just like what the commandant said, on the back side of these kinds of actions, you pay a price. You pay a price on the back side.

REP. BOYDA: My original question has to do with the same area. The surge plan does call for five combat brigades to be sent to Iraq, but we haven't been told what additional combat support units will be needed to support these units. Combat units, of course, require a tremendous amount of support to remain operationally effective. Someone has to maintain the additional equipment, provide medical support and other logistical needs. How does the department plan to provide adequate support for these additional combat brigades? Will they be supported by additional military units, or by an increased use of Army -- or, contractors? If the support is from the military, where will these units come from?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, the five-brigade surge is Army, and right now we do not anticipate there'll be increased combat service support requirements over what is now embedded inside of the brigade combat teams that we have. As you know, with the modular brigade now, we now have four support battalions inside of the -- inside of the brigade itself. We now have engineers, et cetera. So it appears right now in our planning that the combat support/combat service support base that we've got set in Iraq is sufficient to support the five additional brigades that are coming, with the embedded combat support/combat service support capabilities that those new brigades now have.

REP. BOYDA: All right, thank you.

I yield my time.

REP. SKELTON: Let me ask an interim question here. The gentleman from California, Mr. Hunter, just reminded me how he and this committee urged the speeding up of production of humvees. I will ask each of you, and each of you have depots -- depots (pronounces "dee-pohs"), as we call them back in Missouri -- where you are re-equipping the force. Are all of your depots working at full capacity -- in other words, at three full shifts? General Schoomaker?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Our depots are not working at three full shifts. We've gone from, I believe, the six-day/eight-hour == eight-hour days, six-days-a-week shifts, and we've gone to six-day, 10-hour shifts in the depots. And again, that's an average, and it's got a lot to do with certain lines are running three shifts seven days a week because they have the equipment to do it; others are limited by long (lead-time ?) items. So it's complex. I'd be glad to provide detailed briefings in terms of how they're doing --

REP. SKELTON: There is some unfixed equipment, am I correct?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Clearly. Clearly.

REP. SKELTON: General Conway?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, we -- let me preface by saying we're not nearly as equipment-intense as the Army. We have one functional depot that's providing the capacity that you speak of. That's at Albany. It's operating at about 70 percent and it's keeping apace of our needs. In fact, we're conversing with the Army now as to some possibility of getting some of their work sent down to Albany.

REP. SKELTON: For the record, would each of you respond in detail regarding speeding up the equipment at the depots? We'd certainly appreciate that. And another reminder, a few moments ago a request was made for the record. Could you make sure that your record is complete within just a few days so we don't have to embarrass all of us and pick up the phone and remind you that an answer has not come by?

Dr. Gingrey.

REP. PHIL GINGREY (R-GA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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General Schoomaker, General Conway, thank you so much for your service and for being here with us today. I think I heard in both of your testimonies that you were concerned about the ability of us to react to other "contingencies," I think you put it, General Conway, in light of the situation, in light of the president's new plan forward in Iraq and the 21,000 additional troops, Army and Marine.

I guess really cutting right to the chase; my first question would be is it worth the risk there? You have acknowledged, I think, in your testimony that there is some risk in regard to the total force situation and what's going on in the Middle East and the need to plus that up. And then I will ask you too, as you respond to that question, my second one, if we had followed the advice of one of your predecessors, General Schoomaker, in regard to the total force needed to be successful in Operation Iraqi Freedom in particular, and I think that was a call for something like 250,000 troops. I think the most that we've had in theater has approached 160,000. If we had followed that advice -- possibly that was the correct advice; I don't know. There are a lot of Monday-morning quarterbacks now trying to make that decision and that call. But if we had followed that advice, what would that, indeed, have done to our capability of responding to other contingencies regarding what our total force structure was?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, sir, first of all I think you're -- you're referring to General Shinseki, and he made a statement, I think it was before this committee, that it would take "several hundred thousand." I think that -- or a "few hundred thousand," some words more -- so I don't know that he put 250,000 on it, but clearly the inference was that it was more than -- it was more than 200,000.

The first part of my answer would be we had sufficient forces to do the first phase of this operation, which was to defeat the Iraqi forces, the conventional force of the Iraqi army, and to seize Baghdad, and we did that very successfully with the force that was committed.

My military judgment, in hindsight, it's clear that several hundred thousand forces following that would have been -- made a difference. It would have made a difference. But, you know, this is four years later and we're looking back on it, and so I don't think there's any question. History has demonstrated General Shinseki was correct that following the -- you know, the follow-on phases of it, those additional forces would have been necessary. In my opinion, my military judgment.

I would tell you that at that time we have made such significant strides in improving the Army since that time that my view is the risk would have been even greater in terms of the strategic risks we'd have been taking in terms of the depth. Remember, the first appearance I made before this committee I said that I had requested from the president permission to grow an additional 30,000 soldiers in the Army, because at that time we were down at 482. So in fact, that investment we made temporarily is actually the great big down-payment on this growth that we're trying to do. We did not waste the three, three and a half years that was in there.

But we didn't have those forces then, nor did we have the number of Humvees that we've got today, nor did we have the body armor, nor did we have the weapons, nor did we have the radios. We were over 100,000 radios short in the Army at that time. That was an A-load Army. That was an Army that was reporting not against what was required fully in the force, but what was authorized based upon the shortage. And the biggest problem we had was in the combat support/combat service support part of our Army and in the National Guard and Reserves, which were clearly under-equipped and under-trained and unready, in my view, compared to today.

So the answer is I think he was -- I think, in my judgment, I agree with General Shinseki that it would have been useful to have more forces following the success that we had in the initial phase of the operation and, secondly, had we committed that amount of the Army to this endeavor, the strategic risk would have been greater than what -- where we sit today.

REP. GINGREY: Sir, I have a different perspective on that I'll offer you. General Schoomaker's exactly right. We had sufficient force to achieve the objectives, to take down the Iraqi army and secure Baghdad. But my belief is that as soon as possible thereafter, we had to get the most respected institution in Iraq back in place and functional, and that was the Iraqi army. And for a combination of reasons, that didn't happen. We thought there were going to be more troops, but we thought they were going to be Iraqi troops; that we would, again, have assume responsibilities, and that didn't happen. So I don't know that more U.S. troops would have made much of a difference at that point.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: And I agree with that perspective. I was speaking in terms of history, now; we saw what happened. You know, had that happened, it would have been great, but --

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REP. GINGREY: Thank you, General. My time's expired.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Thank the gentleman from Georgia.

Well, whatever the case may be, we can't go back and un-ring that bell. That's a page in history that cannot be rewritten.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Murphy.

REP. PATRICK MURPHY (D-PA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today, and thank you for your service. And I'm happy to know that your daughter, sir, is in my former division, the 82nd Airborne Division, so I'll keep her in my prayers.

Gentlemen, all the rhetoric I hear from our administration indicates that the proposal to escalate the troops in Baghdad and in Al Anbar is nothing more than a short-term surge. I know, General Conway, you said that's not just how -- you know, Marines shouldn't be used that way.

The problem that I have with that, gentlemen, is that last week we had at this committee Dr. Kagan, a strong supporter of the president's approach. And he noted that the operation to clear and hold the center of Baghdad is only the beginning of a larger effort to pacify Iraq. For example, Dr. Kagan points out that by securing Baghdad, we do nothing to bring Fallujah or Ramadi under control, and that the military action that may be needed to try and provide security in these cities -- in other words, it seems as if the president's pushing a policy that will result in an extended escalation in the number of troops being deployed to Baghdad, not just a short-term surge. And that the problem with all these measures that we are talking about and done to facilitate this, as you put it, General Conway, the "occasional" surge.

So my question is, are there plans currently to accommodate longer-term troop escalations in Iraq beyond the current surge in Baghdad, and if so, what are they?

GEN. CONWAY: We are concerned, our contribution to the Al-Anbar province has been essentially six battalions of trigger-pullers, and then the commensurate aviation and logistics support that goes with the construction of a Marine Corps -- Marine Air-Ground Task Force. If that requirement goes to eight battalions on a constant basis, we're in the process right now of looking at what that means, but I can tell you that it is going to simply make it more difficult, it is simply going to reduce our dwell time in the other battalions, and it's going to put us, I believe, even below one-to-one, because we have other global commitments that eat up the numbers of battalions that we have available. So ergo, the difference, and you highlighted it well, I think, between a surge and a plus-up. If it is indeed a plus-up, it is going to make our future more difficult.

REP. MURPHY: And I agree with that.

So the -- General Schoomaker, as you mentioned, you know, when you said you pay a price in the back side, so the back side would be not just in Iraq but also then foreseeably Afghanistan, especially when they're asking for more troops. Wouldn't that be accurate, then?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: It would be accurate to say anywhere in the world that more troops are required there would be an impact.

REP. MURPHY: What would you say the probability is that there's going to have to be plans for not just this surge, but a true escalation in Iraq, not just to secure Baghdad but -- and Anbar, but other sectors in Iraq?

GEN. CONWAY: Well, as I said about the Al-Anbar province earlier, I think that there is success taking place now that we haven't seen in a number of years, two or three years now, in the Al-Anbar province.. How rapidly that will continue to take place and how quickly we could get over the hump, if you will, in Ramadi and even Fallujah, remains to be seen. But there are some very positive indicators out there, and I'm just encouraged that this period of time that we expect the troops to be employed, I think will be critical, but if we continue along those positive lines, it could also be decisive.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I was with the brigade, the Army brigade in Ramadi, which is out with the Marines, (verse the First ?). They're on an extension now. They report -- they reported to me great success, as the commandant

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has said. The sheikhs are reaching towards a central government; they're turning towards al Qaeda, there's great opportunity out there.

When I talked to General Babakir yesterday, the chairman- equivalent for the Iraqi forces, he agreed. I asked him, I said, "Is this real about this?" He says, "Yes, it is real," and a very positive kind of a deal. So -- and I have already said what he said about the Baghdad business. He thinks it's different, he thinks that we do have a chance of success there.

I would remind everybody that Iraq and Afghanistan are part of something that's much, much bigger. We are up against a very big strategic problem here with this deal. My view is this is not a short-term deal, that we'll be involved in this thing for decades, not exactly as we are today, but in some form or fashion, and that Iraq and Afghanistan are absolutely essential to the success of this strategy.

REP. GINGREY: Roger, Sir. I think that the question a lot of people have, though, is in Afghanistan, if we're taking our eye off there and we anticipate, as was mentioned today, an escalation -- in the spring from our enemy, and the commanders on the ground there are asking for more troops and we're not giving it to them -- you know, why are we giving it to them in Iraq, but not there, if we --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, just remember that in Afghanistan, ISAF has grown, the NATO forces have doubled that are there. So there is a different component going on in Afghanistan, and now that General McNeil is going there, this whole effort will be under one single, unified command. He will be the ISAF commander. All of the forces will be under that, in a much more cohesive, coherent unity of effort.

REP. MURPHY: Roger, sir, but even the British are asking for more troops from the Americans; I think it was 20,000, and we're not responding with that. I mean, that's accurate, correct, sir?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I'm not sure you're -- I'm not sure. There have been discussions about increasing forces in Afghanistan. When the decision's taken, we will do what -- you know, we'll make that assessment. But I don't know of any requests that the British have made for additional American forces --

REP. SKELTON: Mr. Calvert.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I don't have any knowledge of that.

REP. KEN CALVERT (R-CA): Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I understand it, I guess the way the plan is to be laid out, by June there's going to be approximately 41,000 American troops in the Baghdad area, 50,000 Iraqi troops, for approximately 91,000. How does the police coordinate with you all in that endeavor, once -- once the force is up to that level by June? How are you going to deal with the police when that --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: The knowledge I have of the plan as it was laid out in its -- in a broad way over the Christmas period when I was there, showed that Iraq and the nine different compartments of Iraq were going to be under the control of -- or, the plan had a unified effort between Iraqi army and Iraqi National Police entities, and that there was a unified command structure there and that we fundamentally would be involved in both partnership and in embedded -- you know, with embedded trainers with this.

General Babakir yesterday made it very clear that with all of that effort, things still are going to be required of the local police to remain present in the areas that we're working, and that will all be under the unified control of the Iraqis.

REP. CALVERT: I'm kind of curious. How many police are in Baghdad this --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I'd have to give you that for the record.

REP. CALVERT: Would this troop increase, do you think -- will directly or indirectly affect Maliki's government to keep his commitments to stop this political and sectarian violence that's taking place right now? Do you think that that's a reasonable expectation that you can do this?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I really have no knowledge. You know, I've never met Prime Minister Maliki. Again, Iraqi military indicates that they believe that they will deliver both politically and militarily on the plan.

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REP. CALVERT: Let me ask just one question, because I have limited time. How would -- how would our -- if, in fact, things didn't go as we expected, how would a retreat or defeat in Iraq affect commitments made by us throughout the world, and then generally on the war on terror? How do you think that that would affect how our enemy looks at us today?

General Conway, would you like to answer that?

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, sir, I will. I think that, unfortunately, there is a perception on the part of al Qaeda, to a degree, and other nations in the region as well, that they have momentum at this point and that if we were to pull out of the Middle East, Iraq in particular, without having succeeded, then I think we would lose a level of credibility. I think that our leadership as a superpower would certainly be questioned, and I think that our national interests, again, would be vulnerable as a result of that.

REP. CALVERT: General?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I certainly agree with that. I did mention to an earlier question, respond to an earlier question that we in the United States have considerable joint military capability and that the degree to which that can be applied to this strategic situation we have is important, an important consideration. And again, I recommend that you take a look at the classified material that's been provided to the Congress and look at the chairman's risk assessment. I think it amply addresses this issue.

REP. CALVERT: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Mr. Johnson from Georgia.

REP. HANK JOHNSON (D-GA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Generals, it's my distinct pleasure to be here today. This is the first time that I have encountered any of you and -- along with staff, and I just want you to know that I support the military in terms of its readiness, or its need to be ready.

And -- however, I do have some reservations and some -- I have never been in favor of the war in Iraq, and that's pretty much irrelevant at this point, but I did want you to know that before I start my questions.

And of course, the war at its inception was supported by the majority of Americans, but that level of support has declined over the years that the war has been in operation. And at this point, it looks like maybe -- I think maybe 68 percent of Americans are not in favor of this war. And I would suppose that that has had an impact on the ability of the Army -- let's start with the Army -- to attain its recruitment goals. Is that correct?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Actually, my answer would be to the contrary. We, as I stated last year, 2006, we had the best recruiting in nine years in the active force and the best in 13 years in the National Guard, and indications are this year that we're on the proper glide path for success this year.

REP. JOHNSON: Well, in looking at my briefing memo in preparation for this hearing today on page six, it talks about the fact that the Army remained the service with the greatest recruiting challenge during fiscal year 2006. "Although the Army achieved its accession goal of 80,000, it failed to achieve its goal for new recruit contracts by 20,128, or 17.8 percent."

Would you disagree with that figure?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I think first of all, you have to understand that the Army always has the biggest challenges, because if you added up all of the recruits the Marine Corps has, all of the recruits the Air Force has, all of the recruits the Navy has and add them together, we recruit more soldiers every year than all of them put them together. So we've got a big a challenge.

REP. JOHNSON: Well, I understand. I understand the challenge.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: The second thing is --

REP. JOHNSON: But I would like to know whether or not that figure is correct. Did you fail to achieve your goal for new recruit contracts by 20,128 in 2006 fiscal year? Is that true or is that false?

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GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I don't know. Since we had -- since we were successful in our goal, I don't know how we could have failed to do that. So I don't know what that is. But I would be glad, you know, to have it checked out and give it to you for the record.

REP. JOHNSON: And I also want to get some clarification: You stated that 100 percent of the recruits in fiscal year 2006 had a high school diploma or equivalent -- I believe you may have qualified that. But according to figures that I have --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Eighty-one percent have high school diplomas. The rest of them have equivalencies.

REP. JOHNSON: Actually, your target is -- or Department of Defense goal is 90 percent --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: High school --

REP. JOHNSON: To have a high school diploma.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's correct.

REP. JOHNSON: But yet, 2006 fiscal year, 82 percent -- or 81 percent. So our --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: And all of the rest of them have GEDs or equivalencies. Everybody is a high school graduate, but 81 percent of them have actual high school diplomas. The rest of them have gone through equivalency testing.

REP. JOHNSON: Did they obtain those equivalency exams before or after they are recruited?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Before they're recruited.

REP. JOHNSON: And --

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, if I could comment.

You are correct in terms of our studies reflecting propensity for whites, for blacks and for Hispanics. All -- we show the propensity to want to join the service is down in recent months. I think that just reflects the great job that the Army and Marine recruiters are doing out there in order to be able to achieve our service goals on an annual basis. So we've got a little bit of a dynamic at work there.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: If I could just say something here. In the 1980s we were --

REP. JOHNSON: Well, really let me --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: If I could -- in the 1980s we were recruiting --

REP. JOHNSON: Let me get this question in right quick.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- 50 percent cap force.

REP. JOHNSON: Well --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Greater than 50 percent and today we're doing less than 4 percent. Big difference.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you.

Mrs. Miller.

REP. CANDICE MILLER (R-MI): Thank you.

Gentlemen, thank you both for your attendance here today and we certainly appreciate your service to our nation as well. And I know we're here to talk about readiness of the troops, certainly, and I have a question about that. I'm not sure if we'll be able to get to it.

And I guess I want to just take this opportunity to ask a general question of you both about the president's strategy for the surge. And I think that there is a lot of us who are expressing some consternation about the way that we're trying to understand how the surge is actually going to be implemented, perhaps because there's not a comfort level about timelines and deadlines and consequences to the Iraqis if they don't meet various parts of the matrix as you begin to benchmark some of these things.

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And I'm -- I'm not going to tell you how old I am, Mr. Kline, but I will tell you I'm a product of the Vietnam era. And I'm not trying to draw any analogies between this and Vietnam, but one of the lessons I think that our nation learned during Vietnam is that we saw an unfortunate circumstance where you had the politicians micromanaging the experts -- the military experts and the commanders in theater.

And I just am trying to understand -- or perhaps you could tell me -- how do you feel, honestly, about the surge strategy? And I ask that, particularly, because General Schoomaker -- and I don't want to mischaracterize what you testified last week -- but I did read somewhere where you said you thought we had a 50/50 chance of success with that strategy. I'm not sure if that was a correct representation of what you said, and I guess I'd just like to try to get a better handle on making sure that our military commanders -- that this is their strategy, not a political strategy.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, at some level -- at some level you don't divide the two. We have civilian control of the military in this country, and both of us sit as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And I can assure you that we provided our unvarnished advice to the commander in chief and to the leadership of the country on what we thought about this.

The commander in chief's made a decision. We're now in the business of making sure that we're successful. I would categorize -- and I'm not going to comment on the 50/50 business, because you know, whether I said that or not in a closed hearing isn't appropriate here -- but I will tell you that there's no question in my mind that the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps, and the other military elements that are here, are going to deliver on our part of this.

As has been properly pointed out, the question is, will the Iraqis deliver and will the other interagency parts of our government deliver in a coherent, counterinsurgency commitment and strategy to this? And therein lies the question. And as we watch this unfold, I think we need to make continual judgments about whether we go forward, sideways, backwards or whatever we do. And I know there's adequate flexibility for us to make those judgments as we go through it.

GEN. CONWAY: I think the process was about right. I think it's fair to say we had a tremendously productive session with the President when he visited us in the tank. It was extended beyond the time that was allocated for it and I think we all felt very good about it walking out.

On the heels of that, you saw General Pace and the new secretary of Defense go into the theater to go eyeball to eyeball with our commanders there. And then when they came back, they went to Crawford, Texas and decisions were made. So I think there was a great deal of rigor that went into all of the possible courses of action there before the commander in chief decided.

I would also highlight that we had two tremendous commanders in theater, who are reaching -- really, they're beyond their expected time in Iraq, in the case of General Casey, and in his billet in the case of General Abizaid -- so with new commanders coming on and a new strategy that the commander in chief has opted to invoke, I think we're anxious and optimistic about the outcome.

REP. MILLER: Thank you.

Since I just have about 30 seconds left, let me ask a quick readiness question about the Guard and Reserve. And General Schoomaker, you had mentioned in your testimony that about 55 percent of the Army's capabilities are Reserve components, which I thought it was somewhere in the 30 percentile, so I'm sorry I did not understand that. And I'm wondering what the -- I guess it's 30 percentile Guard and Reserve that are engaged in theater.

And I'd be interested to know, General Conway, what is the similar number in the Marines.

GEN. CONWAY: You're right, ma'am. It's about a third. We have 39,000 active Reserve out of a baseline strength of about 175,000. So it's roughly about a third.

REP. MILLER: Okay.

Well, I just asked that question. It's very interesting. I actually have a Guard and Reserve base in my district. And we think about the deployments that they've been -- and redeployments -- that they've been engaged in. This committee has done everything that we possibly can to achieve parity for the Guard and Reserve. And we certainly want to continue with that commitment.

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Thank you.

REP. SKELTON: I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Courtney from Connecticut.

REP. JOE COURTNEY (D-CT): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank the witnesses for their presence today and endurance.

I want to just follow up on what Congresswoman Miller was describing as sort of the attempt by, I think, a lot of us and people across the country to sort of understand the sequencing and timeline and approach that's being taken here with the surge.

When Secretary Gates was here, certainly the impression I took from his testimony was that there was going to be some attempt to sort of measure the Iraqi performance, and that there was sort of a pipeline that would maybe be turned on or off, depending on how well the performance, you know, was demonstrated by the Iraqi army, which, again, I think a lot of people have concerns about.

This morning's Washington Post has an article about General Petraeus' testimony before the Senate and basically indicates that he really has no plans to really measure that performance. He's just going to -- in fact, the term that's used here this morning is that he's going to be ignoring any Iraqi shortcomings and just asking for all five brigades of the planned U.S. reinforcement. And the comment was, to do what has to be done, they all have to go. I mean, which seems to paint a much different picture than I think what was presented initially, which is that, again, we were sort of going to be tying this to some degree to the performance of the Iraqis.

I mean, Congressman McHugh asked the question earlier about, you know, what contingencies are sort of left for us if in fact they don't show up and they don't perform well. And I just wanted to see if you had any comments about those press reports this morning about General Petraeus' intention and how that sort of fits in with what the plans are.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, first of all, I'm unfamiliar with the press reports. But I know General Petraeus. I know he's thoughtful. I know he's experienced. I know that his judgment will apply. I also knew the manner in which these forces are flowing and I know that we have adequate time to gauge the flow of those forces in either direction.

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I -- with all due respect, I don't necessarily believe what I read anymore, entirely. I also know General Petraeus. I've served with him in Iraq. He is very thoughtful. And I'll be surprised, in fact, if he doesn't have a series of metrics on virtually a daily basis that determines for him the progress, particularly in and around Baghdad.

REP. COURTNEY: Well, I hope you're right.

And I have one other question, which is -- General Conway, in your written testimony you, I think very thoughtfully, described the quality of life issues, which is part of our military readiness, and talked about the assistance that's being given to wounded soldiers and their families, which for the peace of mind for people who aren't wounded I think is an important service to be provided.

But The Army Times has an article, it's reported January 20th, which indicates that the Defense Department is closing the Military Severely Injured Center and workers were told last Wednesday, basically, to close up their case files and their layoffs were effective on Friday. And I didn't know whether you were even aware of that change that took place, or the layoffs. But it certainly seems that if people have active cases it suggests that their services certainly weren't redundant. And that seems to be sending -- it just seems to be headed in the wrong direction, particularly at a time when the violence seems to be increasing.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Where is this center you're talking about?

REP. COURTNEY: It's Arlington, Virginia.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I'm unaware of it. We certainly will check into it and get back to you.

REP. COURTNEY: I would appreciate that and I'd be happy to share this article with you for the record.

I yield back the rest of my time, Mr. Chairman.

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REP. SKELTON: The gentlelady from Virginia, Ms. Drake.

REP. THELMA DRAKE (R-VA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Generals, first of all, thank you for being here with us today and thank you for your service.

General Conway, last night I read an article that's in The Marine Corps Times that has a lot of quotes from you in it about "every Marine into the fight." And what really caught my eye was the paragraph that says, these are your words, "Frequent deployments and short-dwell periods have been the norm. When they join our corps, Marine expect to train, deploy and fight. That's who we are. That's what we do. We must allow every Marine that opportunity."

The reason it caught my eye is because that's exactly what I've heard on my two trips to Iraq -- across the services, though, not just from Marines. But from everyone that I've talked to, they use that term, "that's what we do."

And I think our perception on this committee, because we know the sacrifices that our men and women have made, is that they've been overextended, they've been sent repeatedly, that it's been very, very difficult for them. Yet you read in this article that Marines are actually complaining that they haven't been able to deploy. And then you go into the numbers that out of 175,000 permanent troops, about 66,000 have not been deployed.

So my question is, if you could expand on this article a little bit. And I'd also like to ask, is there some way we can get this into the mainstream media so that Americans can see what truly brave men and women we have serving today?

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, ma'am.

First of all, ma'am, I would qualify the 66,000 number, because my manpower people did for me, by saying about half those people are in what we call "victor units" which are headed to Iraq or Afghanistan in a relatively short period of time. So that cuts the number to about half -- about 30 (thousand) to 35,000. But even that, in my view, is still a significant number against an end strength currently of 175 (thousand), 180,000.

So our thought process is that we have got to engage those folks to the best of our ability to do so, and relieve some of the deployment tempo on some of the Marines who have been two, three, four times at this point. Now the manpower people will tell you that the military occupational specialty doesn't match up well, or that individual may be critical to a need elsewhere. There are a host of -- I'll say reasons; I won't call them excuses -- but we want to blow past those and get these people the opportunity to one, get into the fight; and secondly, help relieve some of the deployment tempo experiences that we're seeing.

REP. DRAKE: Well, I think especially when we see Navy personnel who are serving on the ground in Iraq that it's --

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, ma'am.

REP. DRAKE: -- it's surprising. So is it a training issue? They haven't been trained?

GEN. CONWAY: Part of it -- no. Every Marine is trained as a rifleman first. And that allows them, with the additional training that we spoke of earlier, to be able to go into the theater and do a job for us.

Part of it is just a turnover. Again, I think I commented in the opening comment that we have a 70 percent first-term force. So a lot of those people are relatively new to the Marine Corps. But again, they've joined since 9/11. My view is that they probably came in with the expectation they were going to fight for their country. I just think we need to afford them that opportunity.

REP. DRAKE: And I thank you for that.

General Schoomaker, I know there's sort of a proposal out there by some members not to go into Baghdad with our forces, but to focus on Anbar where we know we're fighting al Qaeda. Do you think that would be workable at all to -- and I think the concern is that this is an Iraq Shi'a-Sunni conflict, and why should our men be in the middle of that?

But my thought watching it is that when we have 80 percent of the violence there, that that would not be a workable solution, that we have to deal with the violence where it is, and that the goal in embedding these troops are to train the Iraqis and give them the combat experience, with us standing behind them.

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GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, first of all, the commanders on the ground are making the judgments on that. My opinion, from where I sit -- and I'm not there day to day -- Baghdad is either the center of gravity or the culminating point, either way that you want to look at it. It has been said that over 90 percent of the violence happens within a 30-mile radius of Baghdad.

I don't know how we can approach the end state that we desire in Iraq, which is a unified country that's able to exercise sovereignty, be an ally in the war on terror, and be a good neighbor in the region, without dealing with the center of gravity. It's just incoherent to me that we would separate the two.

REP. DRAKE: Thank you.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Cummings.

Let me -- before Mr. Cummings, let me -- by my count there are eight members who have not had the opportunity to ask questions. And there's a very important panel that will follow these two gentlemen. And I urge you to do your best to be present for them, because we look forward to hearing from a soldier and some spouses.

And I also am told -- I'm also told that we would have votes between 1:00 and 2:00. So we will go on from there.

Mr. Cummings, thank you.

REP. ELIJAH CUMMINGS (D-MD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And Generals, I want to thank you for your service. And on behalf of the American people we really do appreciate what you and the men and the women of the service are doing.

One of the things that -- as I listen to you, General Conway -- you know, I've listened to all the testimony here this morning. And one of the things that I see that there is apparently a disconnect -- and you said it pretty much.

You said that, when we were talking about how long this would go on in Iraq -- I think that's what we were referring to -- you talked about a timeline and what you saw as the timeline, how long it might go on. And then you said that, "but the American people seem to have a different timeline." The American people's timeline is filled with impatience, as you probably are well aware. And I was just wondering, what is it that -- and I think the American people have gotten to a point where they have begun to lack trust. In Covey's book, entitled "The Speed of Trust," he talks about how important trust is.

In some kind of way we need to try to connect these two; that is, the American people and you just brilliant generals who have the president's ear. And I'm just wondering, what is your timeline? And how do you -- and it's got to concern you that -- you know, when you read the papers and you hear the poll numbers, it's got to concern you that there may be some kind of disconnect here because you all are seeing one thing and the American people are seeing something else. What do you see as the timeline, General Conway?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, if you -- if you study insurgencies over time, it's traditionally somewhere between about eight and 12 years before an insurgency is sufficiently countered or conquered and a fledgling nation is able to get on its feet, create stability, bring on economic conditions such that the country can then survive. And I think that's probably reasonable if you look at our own nation and our own history, how long it took us from the time of the Continental Congress until such time as we were a viable nation. I think it's -- I think it's certainly going to take more than the two or three, three of four years that we've seen, impossible to say for sure. But historically, somewhere close to a decade.

REP. CUMMINGS: On another subject, you have both mentioned that some specialized equipment will need to be cross-leveled among the units in Iraq. And I would assume that you have not over-equipped those units. So will they now be doing the same mission with less? Will the units lose armored vehicles or other equipment? Do you follow what I'm saying?

GEN. CONWAY: I do, sir, and those types of items I have scrutinized myself. There are 14 or 15 items. There's sniper rifles, there are enhanced night-vision devices. There is some armor, but there's enough armor that it can be spread load.

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To answer your question, it's the assessment of General Zilmer, our commander in the west, that those items can be sufficiently spread load amongst the two additional battalions that, one, battalions will be able to accomplish their mission; and secondly, do so without undue personnel risk.

REP. CUMMINGS: I want to go back to the humvees for just a moment. One of you all mentioned -- I think it was you, General Conway, who said something about 2012. What was that date? Is that the date that we expect to have the best humvees available? Is that -- was that the date, 2012?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, my reference to 2012 had to do with our barracks and the completion of the barracks that we have at this point on the docket for build.

REP. CUMMINGS: Well, let me talk about humvees for just a moment. In a Baltimore Sun article dated January 21st, it says interviews last week with senior Army and Marine Corps officers acknowledged that they are struggling to just meet the needs of service members already in Iraq. Even if the Pentagon can find millions of dollars not currently budgeted, and even if it can find factories to produce the armored vehicles, most U.S. troops in Iraq will not have access to the best equipment available. Is the accurate?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I will tell you that the Marines do not go outside the wire on the Al Anbar Province unless they are under protection from either an up-armored vehicle -- M-1114 -- or a HMMWV with what we call a MAK 2 kit, which actually provides better side protection that does the up-armored Hummer. That is by direction of the commanding general.

REP. CUMMINGS: Thank you very much.

With that, I'll yield back.

REP. SKELTON: The gentleman from Kentucky, Mr. Davis.

REP. GEOFF DAVIS (R-KY): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I remember back in the 1970s and '80s when we suffered many of those issues related to flight hours and parts. I still suffer post-traumatic stress disorder from the character-building opportunity that General Champeaux (ph) gave us, cause he saw it as simply more time in the worm pit for those of us who needed to grow in character. But practically speaking, you're right. It's a totally different force. It's amazing what our young people are doing.

Rather than talk about the specifics of current operations in Iraq, the perspective that I'd like to go to is maybe something a little bit bigger. Looking back on our incursion in Haiti in 1994, issues we dealt with in Somalia, issues in Iraq and Afghanistan, things I've personally seen on the ground, two things come to mind. And I think particularly when the army force generation model has been stressed to where it has, it's exposed some other constraints that -- in the national security process.

And what I'd like you to comment on is really a twofold piece. First of all, the traditional struggle within the Army -- I'm not sure to the point in the Marine Corps it's an issue -- between what I would consider the SOF community/civil affairs side of things and the big army on conventional missions versus being structured for a more unconventional, classic counterinsurgency issue. The current military structure focuses much more on big war, and we're seeing field artillery battalions converted to MPs or transportation units, et cetera.

But also I'm very concerned about the interagency process. How do we structure practically to be able to respond to really what I believe are the strategic threats, or the management of most of our strategic threats, in the latitude 10-40 window of operations other than war: low-intensity conflict, constabulary operations, things like that?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I can comment quickly on -- you know, I spent most of my life in special operations. And you know, prior to this job, I was commander in chief of U.S. Special Operations Command, where I was in charge of all services' Special Operations forces.

As chief of staff in the Army, we are growing our part of SOF by about 14,000, and that's coming out of our Army end strength. And we're creating an additional five battalions of Special Forces, another battalion of Special Ops Aviation, doubling the civil affairs companies, creating another battalion -- equivalent of a battalion of Rangers and psychological operations forces. So we are investing heavily in that.

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The next thing I would tell you is that I have never seen a better relationship between our special operating forces and our general purpose forces than we have today. That's on the battlefield, that's in the training arena, that's in every venue.

Third thing I will tell you is the Army and the Marine Corps, in my opinion, have made huge shifts in terms of -- and we've shown great adaptability and agility, and have adapted to the world that we're in, away from the Cold War force. Anybody that thinks that we are continuing Cold War methodologies, thought, you know, organization or anything else doesn't understand what it is that we've done in both the Marine Corps and the Army, in my view.

So I --

REP. DAVIS: I think -- and I'm not questioning that. I have -- I've been amazed at the resilience at all levels of the training, from initial entry, preparing troops for practical mission -- it's remarkable how well that's being done. I'm thinking more from a strategic perspective in how the force structures, and then secondly, you know, how we go into this issue with, again, the interagency to address issues that are beyond, frankly, the military mission.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, there's been -- there's been an awful lot written and talked about, and the frustration that everybody has with the interagency. And it has to transform. You know, capabilities have to be -- depth has to be developed. And I think Secretary Rice has talked about it. I think others have talked about the kinds of things that need to happen.

And of course, as we've said, that the -- in a kind of threat that we've got as we go forward, and the kind of challenges we've got, it's going to require an interagency and a coalition. You know, it's going to have to be joint inter-agency/coalition in its approach. And there are limitations in terms of what the military can deliver. You know, we can over-deliver to a point, but then you have to have these other components come in to deal with the other elements of power.

REP. DAVIS: My final question along this line is, do you feel that other supporting agencies -- State Department, Treasury, Department of Justice -- have an adequate planning capability -- operational planning capability -- to support these types of operations and a personnel policy that would support that?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: In my view, they don't.

REP. DAVIS: Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: I -- from my observation, General, I would certainly agree with your last answer. That was -- from early on, I've seen that very lack of coordination and cooperation.

The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Ellsworth.

REP. BRAD ELLSWORTH (D-IN): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I'd echo the sentiments of the panel and thank you all for your service.

I think a lot of the frustration -- we heard testimony the other day in this panel that one of the gentlemen who is responsible for checking on the equipment and the accountability of equipment in theater was having trouble going outside the Green Zone, and so he's unable to check on things outside the Green Zone. It sparked a question in me. Over the course of this campaign, would it be possible, General, to describe the Green Zone and how it has fluctuated, if it has at all, since this campaign began, whether it's shrunk, grown? Because I would think one measure of success, how much area is safe in theater? And would it be possible -- I don't know, yearly, every six months, what it's done if that's possible to address -- to describe verbally, I guess?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I don't spend time in the Green Zone, and I don't have a clue about how big it is, how small it is or what. I have an idea of what happens inside there, but I don't know -- you're not talking about a military person that had trouble getting out and checking on equipment because we've got teams all over the country that are certainly not in the Green Zone. We don't have anybody in the Green Zone that I know of that's checking on equipment. So you know, I'm not quite sure who you're talking about there.

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But you know, the place is dangerous. I mean, it -- there is an active insurgency going on in the country. Parts of the country are less dangerous than other parts, not unlike Washington, D.C. I mean, there -- you know, it's -- there are places you don't want to go other than in numbers and with the proper equipment. And so I don't know quite how to answer the question beyond that.

REP. ELLSWORTH: Okay, maybe I can say would that area, that it's -- no area is safe if the insurgents are getting into what we would consider safe areas. Maybe it's safe today, maybe it's not tomorrow. There's not an area that spreads, saying, "We've secured this and now we've secured more, and now we've secured more," where it's --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I think the Green Zone's largely -- I think it's very secure, and it's -- I mean, that's the seat of government and where an awful lot of -- our embassy is there and the rest of that. It's not a military facility. It has a lot of contract guards and there are lots of procedures there. But obviously, our forward operating bases are secure, and we secure them so that, you know, we've got a bases to operate from. They're more secure than other places.

But I will tell you that it depends on where you go in that country. There are various degrees of -- and I don't know anywhere that there's any guarantee of security because, as you know, we receive on occasion rockets and mortars and other kinds of things into very secure areas.

Yes, sir.

GEN. CONWAY: I think that's fair, sir. And I think there are large chunks of the country -- some in Baghdad, but especially outside -- that have been turned over to the Iraqi security forces for primary responsibility. And they operate in them -- they have outposts, they have police stations, they have their own barracks, facilities, those types of things. But they operate outside of Baghdad in particular on a routine basis.

But General Schoomaker's exactly right. I mean, the problem is where the insurgents happen to be on any given day. It's interesting to watch in the background of some of the reports that come into our TV media in terms of what's happening just in the wake of an incident. And you'll see a level of normalcy that the people are experiencing, even though it's a very dangerous place.

REP. ELLSWORTH: Thank you.

And General Conway, if you'd elaborate -- something you said a few minutes ago and I was trying to write it down. You were talking about if we pull out before we succeed, the al Qaeda would then flourish, grow, take over. Can you help me -- and that's something we've been asking for a long, long time. What is the success? Is that when we capture or kill all of al Qaeda? Or -- help me with the success, please.

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I would rephrase, perhaps, what I said earlier about what the commander in Iraq sees as success, and that is a stable nation able to govern itself -- ideally through democratic principles, but it will be uniquely Iraqi; however that settles out, I'm satisfied -- economic institutions that work; and essentially not a safe haven for continued operation by terrorists who are there now. I think if we can achieve those three or four elements, then it will be a win for the Iraqis. It will be success for us.

REP. ELLSWORTH: Thank you both very much.

REP. SKELTON: Thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Hayes.

REP. ROBIN HAYES (R-NC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service, and particularly the men and women you represent.

Talk a few moments, if you will, about a couple key issues. The new plan going forward, what are the key points that make this plan new? I'm supportive of the plan, but from your perspective, Army and the Marine Corps, what are the key elements of this new plan that are new, that make it new, and the reasons that come from that that this will be successful?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I'll speak to Baghdad very quickly and then comment on -- talk about Al Anbar. Basically, in the clear plan and -- or the clear, hold and build construct that you often hear people talk about, the funda-

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mental difference here is not in the clear problem; it's in the hold and build. And the commanders on the ground and those that I've talked to feel that that's the significant difference in the --

REP. HAYES: We help, they hold. That's what you're saying. We help them --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: We help them clear or hold, and then resources come in to build so that there -- and then people stay. You know, the business here is -- is that you go in and what you accomplish, and somebody stays so that they -- reconstruction can continue and the building can continue. And I think that's a fundamental difference in it.

REP. HAYES: And this is the Iraqis holding?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's correct.

REP. HAYES: And I know what I know -- I'm just trying to get --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's correct.

REP. HAYES: -- you all talking about it. That is a huge difference. That is a huge difference.

General Conway?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I -- there have been surges in the past, but the troop surges that we've seen before have had a specified objective normally related with election security, and we saw the forces come out fairly rapidly on the heels of this. This time I think it's got more of an operational design associated with it, intended to take down the bad guys both in Baghdad and in the Al Anbar. So we're seeing a surge or a plus-up -- my preferred term, if you will -- for a different reason this time.

I think what's different about it in Al Anbar is, again, this issue of success that we have had, both out on the border and in Ramadi, and arguably in Fallujah -- where, in the past, where we have had success, there's been a place where the bad guys could go, reconstitute, and we play the game of whack-a-mole to a degree. With the ability now to force them out of places with the help of the Sunni tribes and Sunni police, and then restrict their ability to regroup in any form or fashion in the Al Anbar, that's going to be new, that's going to be different.

REP. HAYES: Well, the military leadership, also under the new plan, with the three generals in Baghdad, that to me is a significant increase as well. I'm trying to get people to talk about the ratio of American forces -- the plus-up -- to the Iraqi force plus-up, which is significantly more than we are. I'd like to see even more. Can you speak to that briefly? And then the lead indicators, not the lag indicators that people at home were very concerned for a whole host of reasons, can look at it as measuring points for this is something we're doing that's working.

GEN. CONWAY: I learned at a dinner last night that -- sitting next to an Iraqi officer -- that there are three Kurdish brigades that are -- principally Kurdish brigades coming down out of the north into Baghdad. That, to me, is a good signal because those aren't seen as Kurdish brigades; they're seen as Iraqi brigades being employed elsewhere in the country. And they see that as a net positive. Plus, we believe those are pretty good brigades.

REP. HAYES: Speak to Sadr's people coming back on the political table in the militia, at least going through some motions of disarming themselves. That's significant. It's kind of unreported at this point.

GEN. CONWAY: I don't have details on that. I don't know if General Schoomaker does or not.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I only know, again, in conversations with Iraqis yesterday, again, that was a question I asked. You know, I mean, what -- and his indication was that that is part of this.

REP. HAYES: So it's the real deal, not just window dressing?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: But they're, you know, ideally political accommodation.

REP. HAYES: Last but not least, you spoke earlier, General Schoomaker, about -- and I think you were saying we need to get milcon construction up and going not under the CR. You mentioned Fort Bliss. Fort Bragg's got a huge dent in that very necessary armor. So anything that you and General Conway -- of course, the Marines are equally important -- help push that through I think is critical to the nation's security to make sure that we pass that bill and not go under CR.

Again, thank you.

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And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: I thank the gentleman.

I think they just punted the football to us a few moments ago on that issue.

Mr. Sestak from Pennsylvania.

REP. JOE SESTAK (D-PA): General, you -- thanks for the time.

You had mentioned that we're a much more capable Army today because of this vast investment we've had.

If you were about just to remove Iraq, (Merlin ?), just remove it, would you say you were then therefore a much secure America? A much more responsive military than five or six years ago?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I would say that we are a much more capable military with Iraq. I mean with Iraq -

REP. SESTAK: Yes, sir, but I'm asking, if you were able just -- Iraq disappeared, because of this investment we made, are we a much more better military -- able to meet the war plans better if Iraq were not there because of this investment?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, of course. There's significant demand on the force there. But let me say that, as I said a minute ago, that this is much bigger than Iraq and Afghanistan.

REP. SESTAK: Yes, sir. I was going to come to that.

And General, you said that if we removed ourselves, (where is that ?) from Iraq, it's going to spiral into civil war. These weren't your exact words, but it's going to become, you know, things will spill over. Is that a military assessment of yours or a political, military assessment?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, my comments are tied to what we know to be the strategy of the al Qaeda, and that is, that they want to eject Western influence from the Middle East. They want to destroy Israel. They want to choke off oil supply and bankrupt our economy. So with that as an announced strategy, I think we need to be looking at how we counter that.

REP. SESTAK: And so, you've taken the capability to do that into account. Not just the words militarily.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Absolutely.

REP. SESTAK: And then general, question I have is, particularly with your background, this shaping that the military, the Army and the Marines, have done over the years, absent war, 60 countries at a time, has this been impacted by our involvement in Iraq? Beginning to get where you were going.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes.

REP. SESTAK: So it --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: And it's been focused in areas that are directly related to the broader long war, the global war on -- against extremists, violent extremism. And that's where our shaping efforts are going. But I would say some of the -- some of those that traditionally we've had have lesser priorities today as a result of that.

REP. SESTAK: Lesser priority. Does that have an impact upon our ability to be more secure? As -- because you've put a lot of time over the years in shaping strategy, particularly Special Forces throughout the world, countries that were not involved with, in a sense, in conflict, but, you know --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well --

REP. SESTAK: -- the peacetime shaping.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I'm not sure it's easy to answer that way. I think that our shaping efforts, and our efforts, in fact, are making us more secure because they're focused on the problem we have.

REP. SESTAK: Got it. Then my last question then comes back to the trends. Did he -- the gentleman -- the Congressman had brought up the question on high school diplomas and all. Back in 2004, at least 92 percent of our incom-

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ing recruits had high school diplomas. Now, we're down to 81 percent. Still great men and women. But you have done so much with FSC and modular in trying to have a military based upon technology. And yet the trends are that those coming in are perhaps not quite the same ilk in terms of educational prowess as might had been before. To what the standard had been, the 90 percent.

But I've also watched you and the Marines focus so much upon, with FCS and modularity and C-basing speed and the agility to do things. As you talk about our readiness to respond, absent shaping, the peacetime shaping where hopefully you're preventing us having to go to war because of the good shaping, are we impacted upon that speed of response to where Saddam Hussein, if we were to be able to respond more readily if he went into Kuwait we might have been able to preclude our still being there?

And I ask that question because of the readiness money that we're pouring in, to where it has gone from, as you know, it's \$14 billion soon to be per month, if the OMB, at \$10 billion more per -- for the next supplemental that we heard is going to join the 70 billion (dollars). The \$10 billion per month for the reset, the \$6 billion for the MILCOM, the \$10 billion increase in the forces. When you look at all that investment that we've put into the military, are we -- do we have the speed and the agility by remaining in Iraq to meet the future responses we need of which you were trying so hard with FCS modularity and c-base to try to achieve --

REP. SKELTON: If you can answer the question in a couple of words.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I can't do it in a couple of words, but I will tell you that, number one, obviously the demand in Iraq has an impact upon our ability to do other things; I've testified to that. Secondly, we have the finest non-commissioned officer corps today that we've ever had. They are a product of a time in the 1980s when we had far less high school graduates than we have today and where we had 50 percent (cat ?) force. That is what the basis of this current non-commissioned officer base corps is.

REP. SKELTON: All right, thank you.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: The Army has something to do with how people turn out. It's not just a --

REP. SKELTON: I thank the gentleman. General Conway, I'm a bit concerned about your putting all the eggs in the basket of al Qaeda, when is it not a fact that al Qaeda is part of the Sunni insurgency and that overlying all of this is the sectarian violence between the Sunnis and Shi'ites and the Shi'ites versus Shi'ites? I'm just concerned that, in your comment that you're laying it all in one basket when it's far more complicated than that. Am I correct?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, what I was referring to was the al Qaeda strategy. Certainly, that's separate from the enemy that we face in Iraq.

REP. SKELTON: All right. Thank you so much. Mr. Jones.

REP. WALTER JONES (D-NC): Mr. Chairman, thank you. And I will be quick, because I know we have a second panel. I want to say to both generals thank you so much for being here today, and this is toward the end. I sit here in amazement. Last week we had the inspector generals of the United States, secretary of state -- the State Department, Army, and then David Walker.

And I sit here and listen to your needs and the needs of our men and women in uniform. And my mind keeps going back to what they said about President Reagan. That when President Reagan, he actually probably brought the Soviet Union down on its knees. Economically, he broke the economy of the Soviet Union. And last week, I was not able to be here for the time, but I've heard David Walker say publicly that if this nation today had the write a check to pay off the liabilities and obligations, if they had to write the check today, the check would be for \$43 trillion.

And I sit here and I'm wondering you -- all of our men and women in uniform are heroes, every one of you. But I wonder how much, Mr. Chairman, a nation can call upon the military and say, you go here, you go there, you fight, try to bring democracy to a Muslim world that the English said -- I mean, they gave up in 1920. And I've heard some -- read some comments from Churchill and what he said about Iraq. And this is -- a couple of questions, and then I'm through. I used this last week. And you gentlemen have been to Iraq, you'll probably go back and back and forth.

And this was Lieutenant General Jay Gardiner. And he's quoted in The Washington Post as saying, and I'll read quickly: "You'll never find in my lifetime one man that all the Iraqis will coalesce around. Iraqis are too divided among sectarian, ethnic and tribal loyalties," he said, "and the loyalties are regional, not national."

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You're not the policy makers. I wish that they wouldn't -- in fact, Mr. Chairman, I put a bill in recently, that I hope this committee will consider, to say that the Secretary of Defense, that anyone that's been in the military, that three years after serving in the military, that their name could be submitted to the Senate by the president. Because I think, and this is not to slam Mr. Rumsfeld -- I was not a fan of his and I'm glad he's gone -- but the point is that when I sit here and listen to you men and women in uniform who are leading this military nation, I think that maybe if this bill should ever become law -- now you have to wait 10 years before you could choose someone that has served in the military to be considered by the Senate, by the president, to serve as Secretary of Defense.

But when I listen to you gentlemen, you are experts. You know today what the military needs. You know what the military needs tomorrow, in five and 10 years down the road. You should be able -- Mr. Chairman, I hope you will bring that bill up, at least for a hearing -- you should be able to be chosen by a president to sit in as Secretary of Defense. This is my question to both of you. I have listened to my colleagues. They've asked great questions. You've given great answers.

But the whole issue is this: give me your opinion, that if we had never gone into Iraq, and we had put 100,000 troops in Afghanistan four years ago, as we did 100 (thousand) plus in Iraq, would Afghanistan be in a situation where it is possible to say in a few years it would be success, if we had put the 130,000 in Afghanistan? Either one.

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I'll start, and say it's conjecture only. You pose a hypothetical situation, I'll give you a hypothetical answer and say that there are national borders there that make success in Afghanistan very complicated.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I met with President Musharraf this last trip during Christmas. Had a long conversation with him. My answer to you would be probably not. This is much bigger than a choice between Iraq and Afghanistan. And we truly have a global problem here that is growing. And it is going to come home. And we must work this thing, and it's going to take a long time. And I don't think the answer's as simple as what you postulate.

REP. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you very much. Ms. Shea-Porter, New Hampshire.

REP. CAROL SHEA-PORTER (D-NH): Thank you. And I appreciate your service. I will tell you that sitting here listening to all of you talk about the problems that we're now facing, after years of positive reports about the climate in Iraq, it's very disturbing to me, and it makes me remember the time during the Vietnam era, and afterwards, when my husband was in the military. And we had many conversations. Listening to military people talk about what had gone wrong and what we were not allowed to do. And, you know, how it ended, ultimately.

And so, we've been listening to this administration talk about these great victories in Iraq, and then I listen to you talking about what we did wrong. And then we sort of summed it up, saying, well, we can't go back in history. But we are going forward. And I would hope that we have some eye on the present and the future and a voice, so that we don't repeat this once again. It's so unfair to our military. It's so unfair to our nation. And while we pay this great economic price, and certainly a price in the world, we're also paying domestically here because whatever money is going into this problem now, is being taken away from our children, our grandchildren, our senior citizens. So, I have a great concern about this.

I also worry about our stop-loss policy and the impact on the military. I worry about, who's speaking Arabic, who's communicating with the people on the ground there, and the shortage of people who speak Arabic in our military. I worry about the helmets and the other equipment. I think there's something tragic when you can go to a website and make a donation so that people will be able to have proper helmets in Iraq. Something is very wrong.

I also worry about how we use the word "insurgency" now. When we started this venture, we didn't use the word "insurgency." We talked about weapons of mass destruction, and that was the mission. And then we talked about a mission of democracy. We didn't talk about insurgency.

Now, what I'm hearing today is that what we're hoping to do is stabilize Iraq, not necessarily in a democracy, but to stabilize them so we can leave. And I can't help but remembering that actually Iraq was stable, even though Saddam Hussein was obviously a bad man. If stability is the goal, well, they had that goal then. So, my question to you, and I appreciate your being here for so long -- we've all sat and learned a lot, and I thank you for that.

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But, you said the mission is now stabilization and self government. How will the military accomplish this without a political solution? And how will we get a political solution, when we have factions that do not wish to be united? And the truth of it is, that when you look at the Shi'a and you look at the Sunnis, they are not interested in working together.

And we now have a plan, an escalation plan that, once again, talks in glowing terms about these groups working together. And I want to know what's different now. What has made this plan different? We still hear and read in the papers the Sunnis and the Shi'as are not getting along. And I thank you again for your service and your attempts to work out a solution here.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I would like to start at the beginning of your comment, which was part of your question. First of all, anybody that is donating money for a soldier in the United States Army and I'm sure for the Marine Corps for a helmet is wasting their money. They're being ripped off. We are giving every soldier that is going into Iraq the very best helmet that we have. It's being fitted properly, and there's no reason for anybody to do that. Same thing with body armor. That is a rip-off.

Secondly, I'll tell you that the United States of America today, right now, even with the supplemental, is spending less as a percent of gross domestic product in time of war than it ever has in its history, since World War II. We are not overspending on our defense.

Third thing I would say, we can't go back and ring the bell again, that's for sure. But we don't want to ring the bell again the same way again in the future. So we ought to learn from where we've been. And that's what we're trying to do. Lastly, directly to your question, the challenge is going to be this reconciliation. It's going to take a long time. The Iraqis I've spoken to indicate that they believe they can make some of these accommodations. But it is going to take time.

And I agree with you; I think these are very deep-seated. I think this is a very tough challenge that we've got ahead. But it's going to have to be Iraqi political accommodation, and we're going to have to help them establish the environment in which that can take place. And that's what this is all about.

REP. SKELTON: I thank the gentlelady, who is running out of time in two seconds.

REP. SHEA-PORTER: Okay, thank you.

And I do believe in a strong defense, for the record, but I'm concerned that we're directing the money in the wrong place. My understanding -- and I may be wrong, but -- in Baghdad, in that area, in Iraq, that it's only 3 percent al Qaeda. Is that accurate?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I don't know what the percentage is there. I know that --

REP. SKELTON: Ms. Davis, California.

REP. SHEA-PORTER: Thank you.

REP. SUSAN DAVIS (D-CA): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General Schoomaker and General Conway, for being here, certainly for staying with us throughout the morning.

I wanted to follow up very briefly with one point that was made and then move on quickly, I hope, to the other panel.

You -- we've talked about the surge. You used the word "plus-up." And I wonder if you could give us your best estimate of how long a plus-up -- and it might be on several different levels -- could be occurring so that that payback that you talked about -- the ability from a readiness standpoint to be prepared for either another conflict or more escalation in Iraq or Afghanistan would be doable. What are the outer limits? Can you give us a sense of that?

GEN. CONWAY: Ma'am, we don't know for sure what the intent is going to be because we don't know how the plan is going to evolve, what the successes, the issues are going to be with that. We're projecting at this point an eight-battalion base.

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We're saying, okay, if this is indeed a plus-up, and the next rotation requires eight battalions instead of six, how are we going to get there from here?

Now, our hope --

REP. DAVIS: Is there a time that you're looking at, without being totally specific, but you know, this could go on for six months, a year. I'm concerned about that pay-back time that you talked about.

GEN. CONWAY: Our hope is that it is abbreviated to the degree that it's six or seven months, ideally not more than that, and that then would be represented as a surge, as opposed to the plus-up. And I think you understand the difference.

But our hope is that we can get back to a more normal deployment cycle, simply because it again enhances our dwell time for our great young Marines and sailors at home. That is just yet to be determined based upon the outcome of the operation.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I would like to answer it this way: This is a zero-sum game. We have what we have. It's either going to be in this corner or that corner or somewhere. And wherever we push it, there's going to be less where we took it from.

And my view is that our capacity makes it especially important that we've got this Reserve component mobilization policy and that we're doing the investments we're making in our Reserve component, 55 percent of the Army, because that's where we're going to have to go on this.

REP. DAVIS: And quickly -- and this may not necessarily be only in your jurisdiction -- but can we do the embedding and the training of Iraqi soldiers at the same time that we do the plus-up?

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, ma'am. Increasingly, General Casey's intent -- and I suspect it will be carried over to General Petraeus -- is that you will have the embedding accomplished by organic units, in other words, those who are in the country. They'll both provide for the training teams, as well as the partnering of the adjacent Iraqi units.

REP. DAVIS: Thank you.

May I move really quickly to the health of the military, the health of the Marines, the health of the Army, and particularly in the area of mental health? I know that we're going to have a secondary panel coming in, and I hope that we'll have a chance to focus on the families as well.

How do you see that? We have approximately 20 percent, as I understand it, of soldiers coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan with post traumatic stress syndrome. Some of them, apparently, are going back in the field. With the Marines we know that, you know, still there's a stigma of mental illness, I think, in the Marines. How do you see that? What kind of emphasis are you putting on this issue so that we actually have people returning healthy or coming home and finding a healthy path to a more productive life?

GEN. CONWAY: Ma'am, we're attacking on all fronts. And we consider that a head injury is as significant as a loss of a limb -- both with PTSD, that you mentioned, and also the traumatic brain injuries. The IED is the signature weapon. The head injury is a signature injury that we see coming out of it. And we've got to get after the associated -- stigma associated with it.

It's true at the troop level, as well as unfortunately true, I think, in some cases with the leadership. And we're working heavily, from a medical perspective, from a leadership perspective, from all kinds of screening taking place before and after you're in theater, to identify and then treat to get these people back on board as soon as we can.

REP. DAVIS: And do you feel there is enough outreach to families so that they are partners in this? And are you -- would you expect that that's what families would say, or do you think that --

GEN. CONWAY: Well, I would like you to pose that question to our family members here today. And I hope that they're seeing the efforts that are being placed forward.

There's a lot we don't know about it, but what we do know is that it's real and that it's going to be a serious concern if we don't address it.

REP. DAVIS: Thank you.

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I know our veterans groups in San Diego have coined a phrase, and I think it's quite apt, that this is a military at war and not a nation at war. Is that something that you would -- would you say that that's true? Is that your sense as well?

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, ma'am.

REP. DAVIS: Thank you.

REP. SKELTON: I thank the gentlelady.

We have gone through all those eligible to ask questions. I will ask the next panel to step forward.

First let me thank General Schoomaker and General Conway, not just for your testimony, but for your service. We appreciate it very much.

One last comment. General Conway, you were speaking about head injuries. There is an ongoing study at Bethesda headed by a Dr. DeGraba regarding head injuries. Are you familiar with that study? Would you be kind enough to furnish this committee with an update and see what, if anything, Congress needs to be doing to further that head injury study that Dr. DeGraba is heading up?

GEN. CONWAY: Absolutely, sir.

REP. SKELTON: I appreciate that.

I had an interesting conversation with him about it, and it's of keen interest, I know, to the members.

And thank you both, again. I appreciate your being with us. Have a good day.

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