

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**THE HONORABLE LES BROWNLEE
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

and

**GENERAL PETER J. SCHOOMAKER
CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES ARMY**

BEFORE THE

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UNITED STATES SENATE**

ON

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Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, we appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and testify on the tremendous accomplishments of our Soldiers and the great progress they are making in "Winning the Peace" in Iraq. On behalf of the Soldiers who are serving our country around the world, let us begin by expressing gratitude for the exceptional support that you have provided to our Soldiers and their families.

We have been asked to talk about the great work our Soldiers are doing, their attitudes, their training and equipping, and how those with medical issues are being taken care of. We have both been in Iraq in recent months. During those visits, we had the opportunity to speak face to face with commanders and Soldiers at every level. Also, although our deployed Soldiers are under the operational control of the Combatant Commander, U.S. Central Command, senior Army leaders in the Pentagon communicate routinely with senior Army commanders in the field. We are grateful to have the opportunity today to share with you our perceptions of our Army at war.

We appreciate the service and the enormous sacrifice made by our Soldiers and their families as we meet the challenges and risks posed by the War on Terror, with the current higher operational tempo and frequent, extended deployments. We would also like to highlight the invaluable contributions of our Reserve Components and their employers.

Against this magnificent performance by our Soldiers over the last 26 months, we must express a word of caution. We are an Army at war, serving the Nation at war, but we are concerned that all too many, across the Nation as well as within the Army, do not understand the implications of being at war. Americans have been killed here at home by terrorists, who will try again; the events of September 11, 2001, may presage another attack in the future. The resources Congress has given us, and the work it has done in informing the American People of what we are doing, and why, are critical to our successes to date.

We must all understand and communicate to our fellow citizens some key facts about the Global War on Terror. This war differs in significant ways from the conventional paradigm that many associate with World War II, the threat to the survival of our Nation and our way of life

are at least of the same magnitude. In fact, because of the destructive power that can be unleashed by small numbers of people and the potentially devastating informational effects of major terrorist acts, the threat we face today may be even more serious. We cannot let the fact that the terrorist threat is often difficult to detect and substantiate lull us into a false sense of security. In fact, the terrorists we are fighting have been waging war against us for many years. They are elusive, cunning, and committed to using every means at their disposal – including our own institutions and processes – to undermine our society and erode our will to persevere. The war is not likely to end until we destroy the terrorist networks that are aligned against us, and convince the populations from which they have arisen that peaceful development within a framework of representative government is a better alternative than terror.

The Global War on Terror will require a sustained effort over a long period. There will be periods when our military will be in direct combat during this war, and there are also likely to be periods when the battles subside. We cannot afford to be lulled into a false sense of security and we cannot afford to treat our current situation as if it were “business as usual.”

War is often ambiguous, and requirements to meet the threat will continue to change. We must adapt to the changing requirements in order to succeed. The Members of this Congress have enabled our military to adapt to the conditions of the battlefield through your action on recent supplemental spending measures and other Defense legislation. On behalf of our Soldiers, we thank you, and ask you to sustain this critical support. We are committed to working with you in support of your Constitutional responsibilities.

One fact is clear: the dedicated service of the Army’s Total Force has been invaluable. The steady progress in the War on Terror has been possible because our Active, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard units have fought together, along with our sister services, to win decisively on battlefields where terrorism once flourished. Now we are engaged in bringing peace to these regions and creating an environment where democracy can take root.

As the President said on the same day that he announced the end of major combat operations, “We have difficult work to do in Iraq. We’re bringing order to parts of that country that remain dangerous. We’re pursuing and finding leaders of the old regime, who will be held to account for their crimes.” He added, “The transition from dictatorship to democracy will take time, but it is worth every effort.”

President Bush has identified three primary objectives, to which we remain committed. First, we must improve security by aggressively hunting down the terrorists and individuals who are attempting to

undermine progress for the Iraqi people. Second, we must work with the international community and the Iraqi people to rebuild Iraq and restore basic services – jumpstart the Iraqi economy. Third, we must support efforts to accelerate the orderly transfer of sovereignty and authority to the Iraqi people.

Our Soldiers understand this clear mission, and their extraordinary commitment and dogged determination to getting the job done is having a positive effect on the people of Iraq. They are working with the Iraqi people, our coalition partners, and the international community to achieve a better Iraq for the Iraqi people, the region, and the world. Our Soldiers understand that helping the Iraqis build a free and democratic society will help make our own country safer, and they continue to make remarkable progress in that direction every day.

During our visits to Iraq, we have witnessed the progress being made. Living conditions are getting better, and will continue to get better, both for the people of Iraq and for the men and women serving there. Several Members of Congress and their staffs who have been to Iraq have come to the same conclusion. On behalf of the men and women of the United States Army, thank you for your interest and your efforts.

It is difficult to accurately portray just how bad things were in Iraq when our forces liberated the country this spring. What we would consider a normal society did not exist, having been terrorized by Hussein's government since 1979. Crippled by decades of neglect, the country's infrastructure was in shambles and cities were crumbling. Yet the vast human potential of the proud Iraqi people was still there, with great natural resources to help rebuild from the damage Hussein inflicted on them.

Working closely with the people of Iraq, we are making progress throughout most of the country. Local government councils are taking increasing responsibility for civic administration and services across Iraq. Our Army divisions are training Iraqi police, facility protection forces, and civil defense corps to assume responsibility for local security and law enforcement; more than 85,000 Iraqis are serving their countrymen in providing safety from the Baathists who stole it from them once before. Civil affairs public health teams, working with governmental and nongovernmental organizations, have facilitated reopening of all 240 hospitals and 95 percent of Iraq's 1,200-plus clinics. Since the war, 22 million children and 700,000 women have been inoculated against diseases.

Our units are helping get Iraqi schools running again. Army Civil Affairs teams, non-governmental organizations, and USAID had completed 1,628 school renovations as of October 14. An additional 1,597 renovations are ongoing, and 200 more are in the planning stage. In all, 5.1 million students are enrolled and attending class. These efforts

have benefited from numerous American communities, which have been sending the troops additional supplies to distribute to Iraqi children. We are continuing to make things safer for the people of Iraq and our own troops by removing ammunition caches from around the country, seizing explosives and weapons from those remnants of the former regime seeking to terrorize their countrymen. Markets are open, and trade is steadily coming back to life.

These are but a very few of the thousands of things our Army is busy doing for the people of Iraq these days. For our troops:

The end of fast-paced mobile operations is providing time for our supply system time to catch up with the various units. Mail flow has been improving; food quality is rising with the delivery of more hot meals plus fresh fruits and vegetables; we are building more dining facilities, internet cafes, phone banks, and climate-controlled buildings to give our Soldiers better opportunities to relax between missions.

In September, Soldiers began taking advantage of the Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Leave Program. Under this program, deployed Soldiers may be authorized 15 days of chargeable leave between their third and eleventh month and a flight, at government expense, to and from designated airports in either Germany or the United States. We have recently added Kuwait City as a third departure point, and are steadily expanding the number of troops participating. When the program started, we flew the troops into Baltimore-Washington International Airport; on November 1, we increased the arrival airports to include Atlanta and Dallas. We feel this program will be a valuable aid in sustaining deployed forces' morale.

Taking care of our forces is of great importance to the Army. We are striving to meet the Combatant Commander's requirements for up-armored HMMWVs. The Army's current fiscal year 2004 requirement for up-armored HMMWVs is 3,331, of which 3,142 are for Central Command. As the Army recognized this emerging requirement, we took immediate action to fill a critical need, including the redistribution of vehicles from across the force (Balkans and United States). To date, we have redistributed or sent from production 537 vehicles, bringing the total in Central Command's area of responsibility to approximately 1,300. As of last week, another 116 were in transit. The production rates for new vehicles rose to 80 per month at start of fiscal year 2004, and we are seeking to ramp up production rates to the maximum of 220 per month by May 2004. On October 17, we began testing kits of bolt-on armor for regular vehicles to improve their resistance to improvised explosive devices. Testing continues and an analysis of the results is ongoing. We expect final definition by the end of this month. For our Strykers, we are fielding slat armor, with all kits to be in theater before the Stryker vehicles arrive.

Another example of how we have adapted to battlefield requirements is Interceptor Body Armor (IBA), comprised of Outer Tactical Vests (OTVs) and Small Arms Protective Inserts (SAPI). Last year, commanders in the field identified a shortage of IBA in theater. The original requirement for IBA was based on issuing it only to the dismounted fighting Soldier. In June 2003, as the threat to our Soldiers changed, the basis of issue was changed to include every Soldier and Department of Defense civilian in theater. This increased the requirement by over 80,000. With the support of this Congress, we have stepped up production to meet this increase. We have boosted current production to the maximum rate the industrial base is capable of, and production is fully funded at the rate of 25,000 OTVs and SAPIs per month. As of November 5, over 116,000 sets of IBA had been fielded. At this pace, every Soldier and Department of the Army civilian in theater will soon have IBA.

We owe it to our Soldiers to care for them to the best of our ability. Our planning assumptions for our mobilization sites rested upon the belief that the active duty units at those bases would be deployed, and that the Reserve Component units who mobilized and demobilized there would do so on largely empty sites. Additionally, many medical personnel deployed to theater to meet the Combatant Commander's requirements. Events since the end of major combat operations in Iraq have differed from our expectations and have combined to cause problems for many Soldiers – problems we have identified and are taking corrective actions to fix. For example, on October 30, we transferred 50 medical hold personnel from crowded conditions at Fort Stewart to the less-strained facilities at Fort Gordon. We are taking additional measures to resolve these problems, such as moving other medical hold personnel into climate-controlled buildings, seeking local civilian medical appointments, and increasing medical staff.

Back in Iraq, our Soldiers must attack and eliminate remaining anti-coalition forces and establish a secure environment where the values of freedom and democracy can take root. An integral part of this campaign is assisting interim governments to deliver basic services – security, food, water, power, and education – to their people. Our Soldiers must simultaneously conduct combat operations and provide humanitarian assistance, often shifting between the two in the course of a single day.

The magnitude of the effort is staggering. For example, in Iraq, Soldiers are executing around 2,000 missions every day. Each mission is important, and each one is dangerous. Nonetheless, our Soldiers are performing as professionals – with skill, courage, and dedication. We all know this will take time, and that for now, the Army, as part of the joint team, will bear the brunt of the fight.

The operations tempo is high and so is the pressure. We are in a dangerous business. Our men and women and their families recognize the obligations that come with the uniform, and they have not flinched. We have visited them at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, as have many of you. Without exception, they deeply impressed us with their dedication to duty and their units, their good spirits, and their faith in the United States. Their families – mothers, fathers, relatives – and friends whom we've met there and elsewhere are the same. They understand that freedom is not free, but it is the most precious thing we possess. These Soldiers and hundreds of other service men and women know this and have paid for the freedom of other Americans they will never meet. They are American Soldiers in the greatest traditions.

It is an all-volunteer force doing this tremendous work, and recruiting and retention are of great interest to the Army's senior leadership. For the most part, initial indications are encouraging, but we understand that we must closely monitor this key element of readiness. The Active Army's fiscal year 2003 recruiting objective was 73,800 new recruits. We accessed 74,167, of whom 94.5 percent were high school graduates. This is the highest percentage since 1992. Additionally, the percentage of recruits in Category IV was 0.27 percent, the lowest since the all-volunteer force began in 1973. Numbers are comparable in the Reserve Components. Charged with recruiting 26,400 new members, the Army Reserve accessed 27,365, and the Army National Guard achieved fiscal year 2003 end-strength with the lowest no-show rate ever seen. Further, there were zero no-shows in the September call-up. We are aware of reports coming out of Iraq that suggest a morale problem in certain units and are working to address those issues.

Recent news reports have attempted to highlight impending problems in retention, but the figures cited in these accounts are not far from historical averages. For instance, a recent article claimed that 46 percent of soldiers surveyed indicated they would not reenlist. Over the past four years, however, the rate of first term soldiers who did not reenlist has ranged from 42 percent to 49 percent. The Army achieved all retention goals during this period. We believe this success can be directly attributed to the Army's Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) program. The Army re-enlisted 54,151 Soldiers in fiscal year 2003, including 15,213 Soldiers whose enlistments would have expired before September 30.

In fiscal year 2004 alone, the Army must retain approximately 58,100 Soldiers to maintain desired end strength; this equates to a retention mission increase of 2,000 Soldiers. We will continue to rely on a robust SRB Program to enable achievement of our retention goals. Developing ways to retain Soldiers directly engaged in the ongoing War on Terror is critical. We implemented a "targeted" bonus (TSRB) at the

end of fiscal year 2003 that was quite successful. We expect the TSRB will greatly enhance our ability to attract and retain Soldiers.

Despite remarkable successes, our fight is far from over. Our enemies are committed and believe we lack the resolve to “Win the Peace” in Iraq. We can assure you that this is not true: we have seen it in our Soldiers’ eyes, and heard their determination in their voices – here at home and overseas with our deployed forces. The progress we have made in the past six months is a testament to our force’s ability to quickly adapt and respond to the many complex challenges they face. Our commanders and troops are confident and feel that we are gaining momentum in the fight, increasingly taking the fight to the enemy. It is hard, and may take longer than we had expected or hoped, but our ultimate success in helping the Iraqi people reclaim their country is assured.

In years to come, when historians write the story of this critical period, they will note that in Iraq and around the globe, the unwavering commitment, courage, and compassion of the American Soldier led the way in the fight against terror and lit the lamp of freedom and democracy for millions who had known only oppression. By carrying the fight to the enemy, the Army is destroying terrorism today at its core and spawning grounds, providing the greatest assurance of protection to the American people, and striking fear in the hearts and minds of our terrorist enemies.

In closing, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support for the men and women in our Army – a relevant and ready Army and a full member of the joint team, deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world fighting terrorism. We look forward to answering your questions.