

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

MAJOR GENERAL LLOYD J. AUSTIN III
COMMANDER, 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION (LIGHT INFANTRY)
UNITED STATES ARMY

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

FIRST SESSION, 109TH CONGRESS

ON THE PREPAREDNESS OF
FORWARD DEPLOYED LAND COMPONENT UNITS

April 20, 2005

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

DRAFT 111900 APR 05

STATEMENT BY
MAJOR GENERAL LLOYD J. AUSTIN III
COMMANDER, 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION

Senator Ensign, Senator Akaka, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today representing America's most deployed Army division. On behalf of the tremendous Soldiers, civilians, and families of the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum, I am pleased to report that the division is proudly answering the nation's call to duty in support of America's strategic interests abroad and the war on terror.

The 10th Mountain Division is stationed at Fort Drum, New York, and includes a newly formed Brigade Combat Team headquartered at Fort Polk, Louisiana. We have 19,000 Soldiers and are organized as a modular, brigade-centric force whose capabilities span the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict. Over the last 15 years, the 10th Mountain Division has been involved in more deployments than any other division in the United States Army. We currently have approximately 2,300 Soldiers of our 2d Brigade Combat Team engaged in combat operations in Iraq. I returned from a visit with them two weeks ago and can report to you they are doing an outstanding job. One of our Brigade Combat Teams will replace them in the next few months, and the division headquarters and remaining Brigade Combat Teams are currently scheduled to return to Afghanistan next winter to assume the mission for Combined Joint Task Force-76.

Our success, past and present, would not be possible without the dedicated team of nearly 2,000 civilians who manage and lead the garrison operations of Fort Drum, New York. They play a crucial role in Fort Drum's mission as a key mobilization center and power projection platform. In the past 12 months, Fort Drum successfully redeployed the division from

Afghanistan, deployed a brigade to Iraq, and supported the 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard, as it mobilized and deployed to Iraq.

The 10th Mountain Division owes its current operational success to the men and women who daily carry out the mission of defending America's interests in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and who continue to perform magnificently as one of the nation's key fighting forces in the war on terror. Their accomplishments come amidst the challenge of Army transformation and a dramatic expansion in the size and scope of home station operations, while also maintaining one of the highest operational tempos anywhere in the world.

On behalf of these remarkable young men and women, I thank the Members of the Committee for their resolute concern and commitment to America's fighting force and providing the support they require to succeed wherever and whenever the nation calls them.

Today, I would like to provide you with an overview of our experience with personnel, deployment training, reset of units, modularity, and training and equipment as they relate to the 10th Mountain Division over the past 22 months.

Our readiness is enhanced by our steadfast commitment to leverage the insights gained from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Drawing rigid lessons from ongoing operations would be imprudent; however, we strive to incorporate the enduring experience while avoiding the case-specific issues. Several lessons are indisputable:

First, although technology cannot win wars by itself, it plays an essential role. For example, our growing joint network-centric capability is revolutionizing how we fight. As we experienced in Afghanistan and Iraq,

networked leaders are bolder and less risk-adverse even when conducting distributed operations across vast geographic distances. In Iraq, it is just as important for a patrol to have information as it is for a division commander. In fact, it may be more important. Ultimately, we want to extend this network-centric capability down to our most junior leaders—allowing them to make better decisions, quicker, with greater tactical and even strategic consequences.

Secondly, although technology is important, experience in Afghanistan and Iraq proves that skilled and disciplined Soldiers are indispensable to our success in modern warfare. Technology plays a useful, but distinctly secondary role. We tend to elevate technology above people because the human dimension can be troublesome, undependable, and frustrating. But even our most sophisticated satellites and computers cannot peer into the mind of an enemy commander, interact with local populaces, cultivate trust with coalition partners, negotiate with tribal leaders, understand societal and cultural norms, or make the instantaneous life or death decisions that win battles. Thus, we must strike the appropriate balance between a technological, network-centric and a human-cultural approach to winning the war on terrorism and beyond.

Ultimately, our fighting men and women are the key to mission readiness. 10th Mountain Division Soldiers, past and present, personify the American spirit and embody its values. Far from receding in importance they are ever more clearly the key to victory. Our Soldiers continue to accomplish spectacular things, overcome enormous challenges, and continually prove themselves worthy of America's trust and confidence. The measure of their individual readiness is the metric by which all else must be measured.

We must never forget the human dimension of soldiering. America's sons and daughters deserve the very best military training, but they also

deserve world-class health care, reasonable compensation, educational opportunities, decent housing options, and a network of support services for themselves and their families. I am fortunate to be a part of a military community that embraces the quality of life of our Soldiers as its primary mission. Fort Drum is among the very best installations in the world for Soldiers and their families.

Success stories include the Army Well-Being programs that contribute to the Army's ability to provide trained and ready forces. These include child care, youth programs, schools, recreational opportunities, and healthcare improvements. The Fort Drum Army Family Team Building program, recently recognized as the best in the Army, plays a particularly vital role for families undergoing present and future separations due to operations overseas. Another is the Residential Communities Initiative, which holds the promise for greater availability and quality of housing for military families.

Consistent with the Army Campaign Plan, the 10th Mountain Division is rapidly transforming into a modular, capabilities-based force while simultaneously supporting ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The success of the modular force is apparent from a series of recent command post exercises at Fort Drum and the first of two brigade-level training rotations at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana. I am confident that our experience with modular conversion fully supports the Army's goal for an increasingly versatile, adaptive, and efficient fighting force.

An integral part of our transformation experience includes "reset," a parallel process of replenishing worn-out combat equipment as units return from Afghanistan and Iraq. Reset is a priority—a bill that we must pay. Otherwise, we risk our readiness for sustained campaigning in the war on terror and beyond.

Consequently, resetting the force will not be a one-time event. In some cases equipment from previous deployments is left behind in theater for follow-on units to use, or otherwise requires reconstitution due to combat operations in some of the most inhospitable conditions found anywhere in the world. As equipment ages and wears it requires reset or replacement, often on very short time-lines as units train and prepare to re-deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan. High operational tempo and the environment in which we conduct operations cause accelerated degradation of equipment. This requires a sustained commitment if combat capability and readiness are to be maintained.

But just as there are challenges to resetting, there are also opportunities. The process of transforming a unit following a recent deployment is facilitated by the momentum and focus that comes from the deployment experience. In this environment leaders are able to see the value of the modular force initiative and its promise of enhanced joint interdependence capability.

Soldiers returning from overseas deployments often share a joint and expeditionary mindset that conditions them for future campaigns. This future is assisted by reenlistment incentives that play an invaluable role in retaining a force that is tailored, trained, and motivated. The Army's new stability initiatives, especially Life Cycle Manning, allow us to retain their precious combat experience and remain in a high state of readiness for extended periods of time.

As we work to transform and reset units returning from overseas, we are also leveraging their experience in order to better train and equip them in the future. Ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, make clear that the logistical support needed to conduct sustained operations is more challenging than ever. In particular, we are operating

across noncontiguous, nonlinear areas of operation involving complex multinational and interagency support relationships.

In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the security situation and compromised or limited local transportation infrastructure have created a situation where coalition forces do not always control contiguous supply routes. There are areas of relative calm and security, but the process of moving between and among them often creates extraordinary management and planning challenges.

In Afghanistan, for example, there are situations where Soldiers and units are primarily dependent upon solitary supply routes stretching hundreds of miles. Security precautions add an imposing planning and resource requirement that hinders an otherwise optimal use of available logistics assets, including coordinated ground convoys and aerial resupply.

The challenge for logisticians is being met by increased connectivity, particularly satellite-based communications that facilitate reliable information flow across the battle space or provide reach-back to the United States. Satellite technologies allow real-time requests for equipment and supplies that cut response times and increase overall efficiency.

Other focus areas for logisticians include development of an accurate, responsive, and timely distribution network; the ability to move equipment and supplies from transportation centers at ports and airfields; and an integrated supply network. As in all such challenges, the success of the mission is directly attributable to the selfless dedication and hard work of our people – Soldier, civilian, and contractor, who make up the energetic team that ultimately gets the job done. Nothing would move without them.

In terms of training the force for current and future operations, our observation is that America has the finest trained fighting force in the world. Every effort continues to prepare our young men and women for the challenges they will face in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. This preparation includes leadership development designed to foster a culture of innovation and increased institutional agility. Our goal is to train Soldiers who are confident in themselves, their equipment, their leaders, and fellow Soldiers. The Soldier's Creed, Army Values, and the Warrior Ethos are reinforced in all we do.

Unit training is an extension of the focus on the Soldier. It is designed to instill mental and physical rigor while engendering a refusal to accept failure. This is particularly important in the context of the new modular force, where key training and education will focus on developing an expeditionary capability to deploy and fight interdependently with our joint partners in complex terrain with little or no notice. We have seen the value of our efforts to continually capture, study, and leverage lessons learned from recent operations across the joint force. Individuals and units are trained using realistic scenarios, both at Fort Drum, the Combat Training Centers, and the recently implemented Joint National Training capability developed by Joint Forces Command and the Services.

Transformation has afforded the 10th Mountain Division the opportunity to translate many lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan into critical training opportunities for our Soldiers. These include valuable language and cultural programs that provide our Soldiers with the sensitivity and linguistic skills to understand and converse with the populace. This capability enables an "every Soldier a sensor" approach in gathering information and developing intelligence.

Soldier acculturation is too important to be relegated to last-minute briefings before deployment. The Fort Drum Language Training Facility is

an important response to these new training requirements. The goal of our cultural and language awareness program is a full spectrum approach to language and cultural training encompassing maintenance for Army linguists, specific training for small unit leaders, and fully resourced courses designed to support qualified linguists for future mission requirements.

With three full time language trainers, the 10th Mountain Division has a command language training program and cultural awareness library in one consolidated training center. Here, the language training programs are complimented by a cultural awareness library containing materials pertaining to theater specific cultures, including a digital library accessible by all Soldiers on Fort Drum. By fusing both the digital and physical training environments together, and stressing the importance of cultural awareness and language capabilities, 10th Mountain Division Soldiers are better prepared to understand the operational environment today and into the future.

Similarly, we are currently working on a system of modular structures that can be arrayed in different configurations to replicate urban areas, road blocks, and forward operating bases. The idea is to train units and Soldiers in way that develops familiarity and confidence with what they will face in Afghanistan, Iraq, or elsewhere. Other key initiatives include increased ammunition allocations to improve Soldier live-fire training, a focus upon key battle drills, and an emphasis on effects-based operations employing lethal and nonlethal capabilities from across the Joint team. The 10th Mountain Division has also instituted a number of programs to help our combat veterans deal with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, including a unique partnership with Yale University.

In terms of equipping the force, our Soldiers deserve the very best protection and equipment money can buy. Our challenge in this area has

been twofold. First, the process of equipping the force for current and future operations is conditioned on our ability to rapidly recapitalize old equipment; and second, to acquire needed upgrades to existing stocks and systems.

The 10th Mountain Division has directly benefited from a number of recent programs that help us fill unit and Soldier equipment shortfalls. These include the Rapid Fielding Initiative, which leverages commercially available “off the shelf” technology to fill needed requirements rather than waiting for traditional acquisition programs to address the shortages. Another, similar program is the Rapid Equipping Force that typically uses commercial and field-engineered solutions to quickly meet operational needs. The critical contribution such programs have on mission and unit readiness cannot be overstated.

The challenge for the future is to develop capabilities that provide overwhelming dominance for the individual Soldier at the point of the spear, specifically our Soldiers who conduct the brutal, often deadly, and close tactical fight. We must put American technology, intellect, and resources to work to ensure the success and safety of the young people who perform this difficult task. This means rapid spiraling of new and promising technologies into the current modular force, integration of current combat lessons in areas of doctrine, organization, equipment, and other key elements, and eventual incorporation of advanced capabilities developed in the Future Combat Systems program. The goal is to enable our Soldiers to see first, understand first, act first, and finish decisively.

The 10th Mountain Division is aggressively reshaping to achieve greater joint and expeditionary capabilities, winning the war today as we prepare and posture for the future. We also remember the ultimate sacrifice made by Soldiers on behalf of our nation. For them, and those who will follow, we remain committed to maintaining the finest possible

fighting force with essential capabilities for the fight we face today, and tomorrow.

Our young men and women represent the best of their generation, and continue to exceed every expectation for courage, dedication, adaptability, and selfless service. As we wage war and transform the Army, I cannot emphasize enough the fundamental importance of the men and women who are at the center of all we do. Their values and commitment are the cornerstone for the wars we fight, and the peace we will ultimately win. I appreciate your continued strong support on their behalf.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.