






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Presenter: Stephen A. Cambone, USD
(Intelligence)

Friday, May 30, 2003 - 2:00
p.m. EDT

Briefing on the Iraq Survey Group

(Briefing on the Iraq Survey Group. Participating were Stephen A. Cambone, under secretary of defense for intelligence, and Army Maj. Gen. Keith W. Dayton, director for operations, Defense Intelligence Agency.)

Cambone: Good afternoon, everyone. The first sunny day of the month, as far as I can tell, and a Friday, and you're all here.

I'm here because when last I was here, I made you a promise that when we were getting prepared to stand up the -- formally stand up -- the Iraq Survey Group, that we would come down and tell you what we were going to do and how we were going to do it and who was going to do it.

And so, I have with me today Major General Keith Dayton. General Dayton is going to head the Iraq Survey Group. He is currently the director of the Defense HUMINT [Human Intelligence] Service within the Defense Intelligence Agency. Prior to that, he served as a pol-mil officer down in J-5. And prior to that, he was the Defense attaché in Moscow, and in the early 1990s, spent some time -- in the mid-1990s, rather -- spent some time in the Council on Foreign Relations. He is by training an artilleryman, and had the division artillery in the early '90s for the 3rd ID [Infantry Division].



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So, what I'd like to do is introduce General Dayton, have him tell you what it is he is going to be doing and have him answer some of your questions. I am unfortunately scheduled to leave here at 2:30; I've got to go off to a -- to Warrenton, of all places.

So, General Dayton --

Dayton: Thank you, Dr. Cambone.

Let me address a few aspects of the ISG so that you all better understand what it is and what it intends to accomplish. As you all know right now, the current hunt for the weapons of mass destruction is being carried out by the 75th Exploitation Task Force. Now to date, they have visited over 300 sensitive sites, many off the master site list that they've been working from, and many based on intelligence tips received in the field. At the same time, there are operations taking place throughout Iraq in the areas of document exploitation and collection, captured materiel exploitation, and interrogations and debriefings.

Now, the Iraq Survey Group [ISG] represents a significant expansion of effort in the hunt for weapons of mass destruction, as we build on the efforts that are ongoing. The ISG will mean more people applied to the task, to be sure. But this is not the most important point. Rather, the ISG will consolidate the efforts of the various intelligence collection operations currently in Iraq under one national-level headquarters. Moreover, the ISG will have a powerful intelligence analytical element forward-deployed in the region, with virtual connectivity to an interagency intelligence community fusion center here in the D.C. area. The ISG also has a pretty potent WMD [weapons of mass destruction] disablement and elimination capability assigned.

So, what's the ISG going to do? Well, the first priority, of course, is the search for and elimination of weapons of mass destruction. But in addition to WMD, the ISG will collect and exploit documents and media related to terrorism, war crimes, POW [prisoner of war] and MIA [missing in action] issues, and other things relating to the former Iraqi regime. It will interrogate and debrief individuals, both hostile and friendly, and it will exploit captured materiel. The goal is to put all the pieces together in what is appearing to be a very complex jigsaw puzzle.

Now, how are we going to do this? The ISG, as currently planned, will be manned by between 1,300 and 1,400 people from the United States government interagency, from the United Kingdom and Australia. The main effort is going to be in Iraq, with the headquarters in Baghdad. This collection operation will include a joint interrogation debriefing center, a joint materiel exploitation center,

chemical and biological intelligence support teams and the ISG operation center. The main analytic effort will be co-located with CENTCOM forward, as will the combined media processing center. Furthermore, the ISG is going to have liaison elements with CJTF-7 in Kuwait and with other U.S. government agencies inside Iraq. And finally, the intelligence fusion center will be here in Washington, D.C. And all are going to be linked electronically.

As we speak, the analytic center in Qatar is up and running. And various collection elements are operating in Iraq, as I said before. Significant work has been done already in planning and developing a workable infrastructure for the Baghdad headquarters for the ISG, and we will begin a planned, two-week transformation -- transition with the 75th Exploitation Task Force in Baghdad, beginning no later than 7 June. During the transition period, the ISG operations group, which is really my command post, will gather under its control the various intelligence collection operations that are currently underway and begin to refocus collection efforts to analytically-driven requirements. The fusion center in Washington is also operational presently, and will transition from what it currently does, which is consolidating and reporting information, to a new mission of guiding ISG collection efforts.

And I'm not done here. One final comment, and this comes from the heart. The 75th Exploitation Task Force, as far as I'm concerned, and their associated elements, have done a truly magnificent job in the two months they've been operating in very difficult conditions in Iraq. I think we all owe them a debt of gratitude.

The ISG represents a major change in the search for WMD in Iraq. It builds on the work already done by the 75th, but with its robust analytical capability forward, and consolidation of the various intelligence disciplines operating now under one national-level headquarters forward in Iraq, the ISG is well-positioned to achieve some real synergy here as we continue the hunt for weapons of mass destruction and delve into other areas of national interest.

This will be a deliberate process and it will be a long-term effort. We will be using all sources to put together pieces of an incredibly complex jigsaw puzzle. Some people have likened it to detective work. I'm optimistic we will have success. And I'm leaving Monday to stay.

That's what I have. Are there any questions? Sir?

Q: General, you said 1,300 to 1,400 people. Will virtually all of those be in Iraq?

Dayton: No. It's a split operation. The analytic center, which is about 120 people, about, and the media processing center, which is about another 250 people, will be operating out of Qatar. The reason for that is that Qatar just a well-developed theater of operations. It has all of the communications that I need to get up and running quickly, and it has excellent connectivity back to the United States and throughout the region.

The Baghdad site that I will be occupying with the rest of the folks, which I would call the collection aspect of what the ISG is doing, requires a bit more work to become as fully developed as that. It will be operational fairly quickly, but to get the level of sophistication in the communications networks that are required for digitally transmitting large volumes of information, that's already in place in Qatar, and it didn't make any sense to us to try to recreate that and lose a month in Iraq.

Q: So how many people are you going to have in Iraq? And how does that compare to the current number of people searching?

Dayton: There's about 200-and-some that are searching now, maybe a little bit fewer. As far as searchers are concerned -- and again, I want to make the distinction, the important point about the ISG is not numbers of searchers, it's the process by which the searching will take place. And we'll have probably between 200 and 300 searchers, so it's a small increase in numbers of searchers. But what it is, again, the synergy of getting all of these intelligence disciplines together with the analytic-based collection requirements.

Right now what the ISG has been doing -- or not the ISG, the Exploitation Task Force, because of how it developed and what its mission has been is it's been operating basically off a fixed-site list. It's done a very good job of going out to those locations. There will be a decreased emphasis in fixed sites and a greater emphasis in going to places where the intelligence community's analytic powers tell us that there is a much more probable likelihood of finding something or finding people who know something about what was there.

Q: General?

Dayton: Sir.

Q: U.S. military commanders, having been given intelligence that they were likely to face chemical or biological weapons on the battlefield, are continuing to express surprise -- it happened again today, just happened earlier today -- that they neither encountered them on the battlefield nor have any been found in the two months or so since then. What do you think is the explanation for that?

Dayton: I honestly don't know.

Steve, do you want to take a shot at that?

Cambone: We can come back to that. Let's -- why don't we stay on topic?

Dayton: Yeah, let's try to -- if we can, sir, on ISG issues, and then I'll -- any kind of policy or interpretation issues, I'll pass off.

Sir?

Q: Well, General, you say you're optimistic. Judging by what you've seen so far, the interviews you've looked at as well, what are your expectations going in? Is it possible that you may not find hard chemicals or biological weapons, and may just piece together, as you say, the complex jigsaw puzzle?

Dayton: My personal opinion -- okay? -- going into this is that there is a lot of information out there that simply hasn't been gathered yet, partly because Iraqis are reluctant to come forward in some areas, partly because we are still in the process of putting together the necessary pieces and the necessary targeting of individuals so that we can find out. You know, it may be more important to find out who the guard was and what he knows at a particular site than maybe a high-value target guy who may not want to tell us anything, or a truck driver who may have transported stuff from one place to another; that's what we're looking at, that sort of level of detail, instead of just going to -- again, to fixed sites that may or may not have anything.

Do I think we're going to find something? Yeah, I kind of do, because I think there's a lot of information out there, and that's why I tell you, this is going to be a deliberate process, but it will be a long-term process as well. This is not necessarily going to be quick and easy, but it will be very thorough.

Yes, ma'am?

Q: When you say you're decreasing the emphasis on these fixed sites that may or may not have something, why do you have less confidence in those sites now? These were the sites that I assume were on this master list to begin with, and some sites added since then.

Dayton: Oh, I think we've learned something in the past couple of months. The fact that we've gone to a lot of these sites and haven't found anything that is of value tells us that, okay, we took the top priority sites, didn't find them, so

now, before we go to other sites, we're going to want to get a bit more analytic assessment of the site done before we go back and try it again, because things have changed in the last two months. They may well have been excellent targets back in February or March, but, you know, we just want to know more about it before we take resources and send them out there.

Q: But excellent targets in February and March and they're not now, why? Because of looting? Because people have been in there?

Dayton: I really don't know. Could be all the above. And that's what I'm going to try to find out.

Q: And on that same topic, one of the things Dr. Cambone talked about last time was the chain of custody of samples and at some of these sites. Are the sites that have not yet been checked secured by anyone at this point?

Dayton: I don't know the answer to that. I haven't been over there. I'm not -- (Off mike.).

Sir?

Q: General?

Q: To follow up what Martha was talking about, does it indicate that the original intelligence on those primary sites was faulty and that now you're going to have to start from scratch and develop a whole new intelligence database?

Dayton: I don't think so. What it tells to me, and again speaking just from my experience on this, is that things may have changed in the interim time from when we first developed these sites as a location. Things could have been either taken and buried, they could have been transported, or they could have been destroyed. It doesn't mean they weren't there when we thought they were there. That's my personal opinion on this. And that's the assumption I'm going in on.

Yes, ma'am?

Q: General, what would you say to people who would say, well, you're increasing -- you're minimally increasing the staff by small numbers, and yet you're greatly expanding its mission, to not only the weapons of mass destruction, but war crimes, MIA? I mean, I can hear people say that that may be difficult.

Dayton: They're all interrelated. And what I would say that we bring to the

equation now is that we are connecting various pieces that really the operational commanders have not had the ability to connect. And they're all interrelated. And so when I talk about interrogating people on war crimes, there's no reason not to suspect that interrogations will reveal information that will be useful coming back to weapons of mass destruction and things like that. They simply haven't been staffed and they haven't had the national-level focus to enable them to do that.

I have an interagency team that's going out with me from all areas of the U.S. government, a lot of tremendous expertise. We have some former UNSCOM [United Nations Special Commission] inspectors who are going out with us. This is a pretty thoroughbred team. And I would tell you that -- you know, I wouldn't focus on the number of collectors, but rather on where the collectors are guided and by what process. I think that's the important thing here.

Q: General, who does the interrogations? Who's going to be doing the interrogations?

Dayton: Well, I'm not sure I understand your question.

Q: Well, you have 200 people who are going to sites. Who actually does --

Dayton: Those are -- let's say, for example, I'm going to go to a village where I know that there are several truck drivers who happened to have worked at a particular WMD facility. Those people, I have a separate team of interrogators and debriefers, we call them. Okay? These are usually Army or civilian people who have been trained to do this. They will go with that team. They are not the people who are currently involved in another aspect of interrogation and debriefing which is happening with the high-value targets. There are other assets that I will have available to me that go do that.

Q: General?

Dayton: Ma'am?

Q: Two questions. Is there any role for U.N. arms inspectors in this to join in the search?

Dayton: That's a policy issue. That goes to him, not me.

Q And then the second question is, on the prisoners issue and the war crimes issue, yesterday Central Command said that they ended up releasing someone that they believe may have killed between 10 and 15 thousand Shi'as 10 years

ago. What is it that you-all are going to bring to this that will prevent that from happening? And what more can you tell us about that incident?

Dayton: You know, I can't answer that question, because I read the report that you did. I don't know what -- how he got released, why he got released, whether it was somebody made a mistake or whether it was -- I just don't know.

Q: (Off mike.) -- tell them that he was a war criminal.

Dayton: Well, I don't know. I just can't answer that one.

Sir?

Q: Can I go back to the question of expectations?

Dayton: Yeah.

Q: Can you tell the American people with some certainly you expect to find artillery shells, rocket shells, bulk agent, these thousands of liters we were led to believe existed by the president and Mr. Rumsfeld? What, realistically, should the public be prepared for you to find?

Dayton: I can't answer that question either, because I just don't know. I'm going out there to, as I said before, to put all the pieces together to find what I can. It could be that stuff has been moved somewhere else and we'll find it where it's been moved to. It could be some stuff has been destroyed. There are ways to determine that to, I think, everyone's satisfaction, but it will take time and it will take putting a lot of pieces together.

Q: You're not going to go there blindly. You've had the -- especially in your position as the director of HUMINT, you've seen the intelligence on this from the human perspective, the spy perspective and vector perspective, Don't you have a feel for, now, in terms of how credible that early intelligence was and realistically what you're going to find?

Dayton: Well, I'm one of those that thought that intelligence was pretty credible. Okay? I thought it was credible. I still do. And I think that we may get lucky. We may not. We may find out three months from now that there was a very elaborate deception program going on that resulted in destruction of stuff. I have no idea. That's what I'm going out there to find out.

Q: On the HUMINT issue, there's been a lot of talk, of course, about maybe having relied too much on defectors and exiles who perhaps had their own

agendas. When you say you feel pretty good about that intelligence, are you saying you felt pretty good about the HUMINT that you were getting from defectors and exiles?

Dayton: I'm not saying anything like that. I'm just saying I felt good about what I understood to be the intelligence that was collected through all means of intelligence collection.

Q: Can you comment on the HUMINT issue?

Dayton: Not really, no, I can't.

Q General?

Dayton: (Inaudible.) -- sir.

Q Two questions. First, just to be clear, the answers from the podium so far on this issue have been that the search was going to go systematically through the 900 sites or 600 sites which were WMD-related and we should be patient. You seem to be announcing that that search is going to be phased out. I just wanted to be clear about that. You're not going to plod through the 600 sites on your list?

Dayton: What I'm going to do, if the intelligence community analytic base -- which is pretty darn powerful when we combined yours and ours together -- if they tell me that this site that hasn't been looked at yet is a good target, then I'll go take a look at it. Okay? But if they say that site No. 353, based on everything we know now, and based on our interviews with people, and based on, you know, other kinds of intelligence, that it's not a good place to go, then I'm not going to go to there just because it's on a list. Okay?

So, in that sense, we're not going to mechanically go down the list and check off locations. We're going to try to gather a lot more information on stuff before we go do that.

Q: (Off mike.) -- but you say that the basis of these searches would be analytically based. But, of course, the basis of the drawing up of the original list was analytically based; it was based upon the analyses of the information available to the intelligence community at the time. Given the failure to find materials, even at the sites which were all first priority in the list, which was said to be the sites you should go to first in the triage operation, have you gone back and looked at -- done a second look at the analysis and the information that led to those sites being on that list? And what conclusions do you draw, if you have gone back?

Dayton: No, I haven't done that. But I will tell you that we know a lot more now than we did back in February or January, when these lists were originally developed, and that we are in much better shape now, based on interviews of a lot of people that we had never had the opportunity to talk to, to refine what we think we're going to find and where we think we're going to find it.

Q: But the information reaching our people out in the theater is that the interviews, so far, have produced nothing by way of solid information from people who say, "Yes, we have ongoing weapons programs; this is what we were doing." So far, they've said no --

Dayton: I can't comment on that. I'm not privy to that.

Q: You said you know a lot more now. Do you mean by that you know a lot more of what you don't know?

Dayton: No, we know a lot more --

Q: If you know a lot more, you would have found these things; is that right?

Dayton: Remember, my mission is not only WMD, but it's all kinds of things. And we know more about what people think they saw, we know more about where people were, we know more about -- again, it's a beginning process. We've put a lot of pieces together on this. And so, yes, of course we know more. We've interviewed a lot of people. Hasn't always been successful? Of course, hasn't been successful in many cases, but that's not the issue here.

Steve, I'm going to turn it over to you.

Cambone: I got time for about two questions, if you got 'em. Who's got --

(Cross talk.)

Q: Actually, Jamie first, and then I have another question. (Laughter.)

Q: Wow! That's very good.

Q: Jamie asked the one earlier that you had --

Q: My question was answered, actually, within this whole discussion.

Cambone: Okay. There you go.

Q: Oh, then I have -- I actually have one that's more of a general question, on the reason that the U.S. went to war. And I raise it because of the remarks by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, who was quoted as saying, "For bureaucratic reasons, we settled on one issue -- weapons of mass destruction -- because it was the one reason everyone could agree on." And he lists other reasons. And he said one that was almost unnoticed, but huge, was the war allowed the U.S. to withdraw forces from Saudi Arabia.

And as a close associate of the Defense secretary, I wondered what your thoughts are; why did the U.S. go to war?

Cambone: I'm not here to talk about that today. And if you're going to want to follow up with that, you'll have to find an occasion through the Public Affairs Office to talk to the deputy secretary.

Q: Would you answer the question about whether or not the remaining six sites have been secured?

Cambone: I think what we have is a situation where there is, as Keith said -- and I didn't bring my numbers with me, and I meant to do that for you -- there were some 900-some-odd sites. They have been through 200 and something. It is my expectation that over a period of time, all of those sites will be gone through. I mean, the question was asked, are we abandoning that sort of thing --

Q: But right now they're not secure?

Cambone: Hang on. So, what happens is, they go into them, and in some places, you will find that there are things of interest, in which case, they are either secured and moved, if they have the transport, or people are left until such time -- to secure them -- until such time as the team can get packed, finish whatever it is they need to do in the facility, and then once they're finished with a facility, and they no longer believe there is any value to sustaining its security, they will move the teams on to another place.

So, there are still some places on that list that they have been through which have security at them. There are other sites which they have completed their review of and no longer believe they need to be secured, and therefore, are not secured.

Q: But it would seem obvious, then, that from the beginning, when Baghdad fell, that you didn't immediately go out and --

Cambone: To all 900 and something sites --

Q: (Inaudible.)

Cambone: Given the number of sites there were, and let's not forget what we're still engaged in, all right? We've got, you know, five people killed this week alone. So, they're still engaged in operations to stabilize the country, even as they are doing the kind of work that we've described to you here. So, there is a balance that the command is trying to strike, and what we're trying to do with the work that General Dayton is undertaking is give a little more precision to this exercise. So, it's not a question of giving them up. It's a question of: All right, we've been through some of them, we know that there are more; we also know that there are other opportunities to gain this information and knowledge. Let's start to combine all of that and see if, with the resources we have available, we can be more efficient in the way we've gone through this.

Q: And when, specifically, was it decided to form the Iraq Survey Group?

Cambone: I recall having this conversation with people in -- just after the beginning of hostilities, as we were thinking through what happens when we get from what the military calls phase three into its phase four operations, and we go from -- and remember what we have over there.

We have a combat support group in the 75th, whose job it was to support the combat forces. And so, their job was to be able to give information to the combat forces about things to either avoid, precautions to be taken, events that they may have to prepare for. They weren't prepared, organized and equipped to do the kind of wide- scale analytic work that General Dayton's group is designed to do.

And so, therefore, once you go from a state where hostilities are the norm, to one where you have a more secure environment, you can take the kind of approach that's being discussed here.

(Cross talk.)

Cambone: I got two more.

Q: U.N. arms inspectors, why not bring them in to help -- (Off mike.) --

Cambone: I don't know -- you asked me that the last time, and I know people are talking about that. As you know, there's an IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] team that will go in next week sometime. And so the people in -- who work that problem are working that problem, and I'm not quite sure when

they're going to --

Q: That doesn't fall under you?

Cambone: No. We're -- we're in the "let's get the job and the execution done." The question of who participates, and so forth, is done elsewhere.

Charlie, last one.

Q: Seems the secretary and other senior administration officials have for months been saying that they were confident that chemical and biological weapons would be found in the country. This week, in a speech in New York, the secretary suggested perhaps Iraq had destroyed its chemical weapons. Is the administration beginning to back away from its long and firmly held stand that there were chemical and biological weapons in Iraq when this war started? Are you still convinced of that?

Cambone: I do not believe the administration is backing away from that position, Charlie. I think -- no. I don't think that at all.

Q: So you're still convinced that there were chemical and biological weapons --

Cambone: Nothing that has happened over the last month --

Q: -- in that country when the war began?

Cambone: -- has changed my view or, as far as I know, the view of others on the subject. So -- last one.

Q: To whom will this group report? I mean, will they be under the command of General Franks? Will they report back here to Washington? Who has op com and to who do they report?

Cambone: It will belong to CJTF-7, or the Joint Task Force Iraq, or whatever the name is going to be, reporting up through that chain to General Franks and into the secretary of Defense. The DCI [Director, Central Intelligence], as the head of national intelligence, will have an interest in seeing that the product, that the work of the group, in terms of their reports and finished reports, are done to meet the standards that are imposed by the protocols, if you will, for this kind of work. So there will be -- both of them will have a very keen interest in making sure that the work of the group gets done properly.

Okay, I've really got to go. I thank you for being here this afternoon. And as this unfolds over the course of time, we'll continue to keep you apprised. Okay? Thanks.

Q: Thank you.

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