







## NEWS

Updated 17 Sep 2003

 [About News](#)
 [DoD News](#)
 [Advisories](#)
 [Contracts](#)
 [Live Briefings](#)
 [Photos](#)
 [Releases](#)
 [Slides](#)
 [Speeches](#)
 [Today in](#)
 [DoD](#)
 [Transcripts](#)
 [American](#)
 [Forces](#)
 [News](#)
 [Articles](#)
 [Radio](#)
 [Television](#)
 [Special](#)  
 [Reports](#)
 [Search](#)
 [News](#)  
 [Archive](#)


United States Department of Defense

## News Transcript

On the web: <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030917-0683.html>

Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131

Public contact: <http://www.dod.mil/faq/comment.html> or  
 +1 (703) 428-0711

**Presenter:** Acting Assistant Secretary  
 of Defense for Public Affairs  
 Lawrence Di Rita

Wednesday, September 17, 2003 12:47 p.  
 m. EDT

### DoD News Briefing – Mr. Di Rita and Mr. Slocombe

(Briefing on the status of the New Iraqi Army and Police Force. Participating was Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Lawrence Di Rita and Walter Slocombe, Coalition Provisional Authority Special Advisor on Security and Defense. Photos of today's briefing are available at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/photos/Sep2003/030917-D-9880W-063.html>)

Di Rita: Good afternoon. We are very fortunate to have with us today Mr. Walt Slocombe, whom I think many of you know and is certainly no stranger to this department. He's presently managing the efforts for the Coalition Provisional Authority to stand up the new Iraqi army. He's been doing that since about May. He's been in Iraq most of that time, or in the region, and has been working obviously very closely with not only the Coalition Provisional Authority but with the Governing Council and others, the ministry officials that are working with the coalition.

Obviously, as I said, he's no stranger to this department and probably to this briefing room. He was the former undersecretary of Defense for Policy from 1994 until, I believe, 2001. And he has been gracious not only in offering some time while he's in town today but in his time the last four or five months, on



[News by E-mail](#)

[Other News Sources](#)

behalf of the United States, in a very difficult, challenging position. And he's got a few things he'd like to say, and then we'll take some questions.

Walt?

Slocombe: Thanks. It is interesting to be back here under these circumstances.

As Larry DiRita said, my job in Iraq is primarily to do with the creation of a new Iraqi military and ultimately with national security institutions for a free and democratic Iraq. What I wanted to do today was to talk a little bit about what we're trying to do in connection with the new Iraqi army.

The Iraqi military under Saddam Hussein was a part of the system, and when the major fighting ended, say, in early April, major maneuver operations ended, the old army simply disintegrated. Everybody went home. They took with them whatever they thought was worth taking, and what they didn't take people came in and stole or destroyed or looted. The degree of the looting in military installations in Iraq is really hard to imagine. They didn't just steal stuff that was not nailed down, they stole the toilet fixtures, and they stole the pipes and the tile in the latrines. The degree of destruction was quite substantial.

And so the old army, which we formally dissolved as an institution, no longer existed when we did it. But Iraq will need an army in the future, and it is important to begin the process of building that now. The army will have to be very different from what it has been in the past. It must be non-political, it has to be professional, it has to be representative of the country, it has to be a force for national unity, and it has to be controlled by an elective government within a legal and constitutional framework. Furthermore, its mission has to be different. Its mission has to be the military defense of the country, not assisting in securing the power of any particular leadership or regime. And in the region, the army, as a part of an Iraq national security establishment, has to be a force for stability and not a threat to its neighbors. Also, and this is very important from the Iraqi perspective, it has to be much smaller. Iraq was a grotesquely over-militarized society. Iraq had something like 500,000 people in its military establishment. That's as big as the American army in a country which is a tenth of the population, and much less than that in terms of gross national product. But it also has to be militarily effective because Iraq lives in a dangerous neighborhood and it needs to be able to defend itself.

In the CPA effort, there are really two elements related to military reform. The first is to create -- to begin the creation of a future Iraqi armed forces by training up light infantry units in what we're calling the new Iraqi army;

and second, to work with the Governing Council to create a new system of national security and military institutions.

To begin with the new Iraqi army, we started in August training the first battalion. That battalion will complete its eight weeks or so of training on October 4th, when it will commission as an operational battalion. We'll then run more battalions through the training center, and we'll have four operational, at least by early next year.

We're doing the training with U.S. contract trainers. Vinnell Corporation, an American company that does this, as its business is doing the actual day-to-day training. But it's under very close coalition military oversight. That oversight, through an entity called the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, is commanded by Major General Paul Eaton, who, until he went out to Iraq to do this job, was the commander in charge of training United States infantry. So we put our country's top professional on this job. The staff that he heads, like my staff, is an international staff. His deputy is British, there are people from other coalition countries who participate.

The force which is being trained is -- I said one of the characteristics is that it should be representative of the country. The force which is being trained is, in terms of its ethnic distribution, approximately a mirror of the distribution in the country. And that's a big change from the past, because in the past the army was essentially an army of Shi'a privates and Sunni officers. And that pattern is not going to hold in the future.

As the units become ready, they will go out on duty. They will perform military missions like territorial defense, a convoy en route, point security. They will operate under the command of CJTF pending the transfer of full security responsibility and sovereignty back to an Iraqi government.

The units will -- well, as I say, the motorized infantry, they will not be U. S. standard. No one is claiming that they're going to have the level of technology or the level of equipment. But they will be, by the standards of that part of the world and, indeed, by general international standard, a first class army. That means they'll require both facilities from which to operate any equipment.

There is no significant serviceable captured military equipment in anything like the numbers that are necessary. So all the equipment will have to be obtained, either use or donated or bought or recondition, except ammunition. There are vast quantities of ammunition.

I think it's worth making the point that much of the work in getting ready

for the new Iraqi army and its support is being done by Iraqi contractors. The construction work was done by Iraqi construction companies. The uniforms were made by Iraqi uniform companies. And we've tried to use Iraqi resources wherever we can.

The original plan had been to train up 27 battalions over the course of two years. Based on our experience with the first battalion, we believe it's possible to do that -- given sufficient resources and sufficient effort, to do that in just a year. We'll do that by focusing on leader training and use the pool of soldiers who already have had basic training to form effective units.

I should say that the only people who are excluded from the new Iraqi army are people who were at very senior levels in the Ba'ath Party and people who were in the security apparatus, even if they had nominal military ranks, people who were in the Special Republican Guard, the Mukhabarat, the various intelligence and security services that supported the regime. The great majority, the overwhelming majority not only of enlisted personnel but of Iraqi former officers are eligible to join.

At the moment, because we don't need people above the rank of lieutenant general (sic) -- (laughs) -- lieutenant colonel, we're not accepting applications from people who held higher ranks. As we develop higher echelons, it may well be that some of the former more senior officers will be brought in at those higher levels.

But it's essential to understand that only a very small percentage of the former Iraqi senior officers are going to be -- have military careers. The Iraqi -- we have the pay records of the old Iraqi army. They had something like 11,000 brigadiers and above. The United States Army, which is essentially the same size as the Iraqi armed forces, has 307 officers brigadier general and above. So the great majority of these people are going to have to find other careers. In order to ease that transition, as some of you may know, we are paying stipends to former officers and non-commissioned officers, and this month, we're also paying a one-time payment to former conscripts.

In order to do this successfully, we will, as I say, have to focus on training really a new generation of leaders and a whole new ethos of leadership in a military organization in a free society.

In addition, we will require facilities and equipment, and the supplemental request, which as I understand it, is going up this afternoon, will include a substantial amount for the facilities and equipment and sustainment of the new Iraqi army. The salaries will be paid for out of Iraqi funds.

The force which we're putting together will essentially be, as I said, motorized infantry. It will have limited air mobility. There will be a small coast guard for river and littoral defense. There will be some small -- relatively small armor and artillery units, but it will be, essentially, a motorized infantry force. We will also be setting up a civilian defense support agency as a precursor to a ministry of defense, which in this interim period, will provide logistics and administrative support; handle payroll and contract and that kind of thing, which will be staffed by Iraqis.

The question always comes up -- do we expect Iraq to defend itself with three light infantry divisions? And the answer is no. We understand that in the long run, Iraq will, in all probability, choose to make additional investments in a larger force. But those decisions, we believe, are best left to a new Iraqi government. What we are trying to do is to create a base, a nucleus, a seed that will allow Iraq in this area, as, indeed, in others, to move forward to make decisions about what kind of -- what kind of investment they want to make in security forces, what kind of international relations they want to have, to what degree do they want to enter into mutual security arrangements, either with us, if we were willing, or with regional -- other countries in the region, if other countries in the region are willing.

In addition to creating the new Iraqi army, we will also be working with the Governing Council as they move on to this aspect of their work on creating a law-based system for civilian oversight and control, creating the institutions and mechanisms to run the national security policies of what will be a major state in the Middle East. And that is, in itself, an important part of the creation of a democratic, law-based, constitutional system, which is, of course, our overall strategy. That is, to work with the Governing Council to begin the process which will move toward the approval of a constitution, the holding of elections and the transfer back to the Iraqis of complete sovereignty over their government. The military is a part of this, and I think an important part.

I should also make the point that it is, of course, only a relatively small part of our overall effort to bring Iraqis into the business of providing for their own security. In addition to the new Iraqi army, we are creating -- we will be beginning a major recruiting campaign for the police. We'll do training for the police so that we can roughly double the size of the existing police force and have people who are better trained, who are more attuned to policing work in a democracy. We're also setting up a border and customs police, which will handle border control. One of the problems with Iraqi security is that the borders have been essentially open. This will allow normal checking and control of the borders. And there's a facilities protection service, which is not really a single

service; it's a whole lot of different guard forces which are run by individual ministries. Just as this building is not protected by the military to any -- in the immediate degree -- the people who check your badges, and so on, are Defense Protective Service; somewhat analogously, the different ministries will have their own guard forces, some of them, as in the case of electricity and oil, quite ambitious because they have to protect a very extended system of infrastructure; some much more modest.

And then, in addition, the coalition military is organizing the Iraqi civil defense corps, which will work with the coalition forces on providing an Iraqi element for things like guard duty, point security, and individual augmentation for American and other coalition units.

So the Iraqi -- the new Iraqi army is an element of this overall effort.

I'll be glad to take your questions about what we're doing.

Voice: (Off mike.)

Voice: Just in case you get some questions that are awkward and political -- (off mike) -- (laughter) --

Voice: We don't do politics.

Voice: Charlie?

Q: Walt, how are you going to -- I understand that, first of all, the Iraqi police are not being accepted that widely by the people because they're suspicious and worry about them, given their history. How are you going to get the army to be accepted better? How are you vetting these people? Are you going to send some of them to the Marshall Center or bring them back to Carlisle or -- to imbue them with civilian control of the military? How are you going to work it so that the Iraqi civilian population accepts these people?

Slocombe: Our impression, without necessarily agreeing with the statement about the police, which I think is, frankly, wrong, that the creation of an Iraqi army has been a very popular move in Iraq. It's been endorsed by the Governing Council. The recruiting has gone very well. We've had very good success in getting people -- not large numbers yet, but getting people from communities that have not historically been major factors in the Iraqi military to join.

I think it is seen by Iraqis as an important symbol of what's very

important for the United States, which is to get across the message that we want this to be over in the sense of turning over primary responsibility for Iraq's security just as soon as possible. And this is a symbol of our commitment to that.

Di Rita: Let me see if I can just address the premise just a bit of your question.

Walt does work on the army. The military commanders are reporting -- and it's always going to be spotty, there's no question about it, with respect to whether police are being accepted, which was your premise. Police are not accepted in every community in -- anywhere in the world.

But the military commanders have reported that they're seeing -- it is their -- they don't have the -- they don't have fine statistics on this, but they are clearly seeing an increase in the amount of things being referred to the military in their areas of operation from the police, which in turn began because an Iraqi citizen came to a police officer or a police substation and said, "Something's going on in this neighborhood that you need to know about."

So the linkages are imperfect, but they are developing. And so it would be difficult to make a broad assertion that they are fully accepted or that they not accepted by the public. I think that's the way it should be --

Q: (Off mike) --

Slocombe: Just let me ask -- with respect to vetting, the only prohibitions are what I said -- that is, the people who are at high ranks in the Ba'ath Party or who were part of the old security apparatus, even if they nominally held military ranks. People have an interview. That -- those are the formal requirements. There is an interview process, and people are not accepted unless they show in the interview that they understand what they're getting in for, that they're committed to the rules, which involve things like, for example, there is a separate track for officer candidates, but officers are not guaranteed their old ranks or any other rank. So as a practical matter, most of the officer candidates are former captains and lieutenants, rather than more senior officers, simply because they're more willing to do this.

And then we do have -- we have a very limited list of people who we -- against whom there are individual criminal charges. But those are relatively few.

Q: (Inaudible) -- excuse me -- places like Carlisle or Fort Jackson or --

Slocombe: We probably will -- some of the people who being picked

from our senior positions, yes, and outside the United States as well.

Q: I want you to talk a little bit about the decision back in May to disband the Iraqi army. Tony Zinni, the retired CENTCOM commander, called it a "blunder," as did his predecessor Joe Hoar. And they say that what you've done is put hundreds of thousands of angry men back on the streets and set back the creation of the security force by quite some time.

Can you just talk about what was the thinking about disbanding the army back in May? And if you had to do it again, would you have made the same decision?

Slocombe: I have great respect for General Zinni and General Hoar, but I wonder if they fully understand what the facts were in May. As I said, the Iraqi army did -- we did not disband the Iraqi army. The Iraqi army disbanded itself, with a little help, little encouragement from the coalition military. But the -- when the war was over, when the major maneuver fighting was over, there were simply no units still in existence. Everybody had gone home. So there was not an issue, which some people thought we might have to face; that is, where you'd have divisions sitting in garrison, and what were you going to do with them? And I don't know how we would have dealt with that problem if that had been the problem, but it wasn't the problem. The second point is -- so people say, well, you should have recalled them.

The second point is, it was a conscript army. All the enlisted personnel, all the privates and corporals, were conscripts, who would, as in most conscript armies, would be delighted to be told to go home, and would absolutely not have come back simply because their old Sunni officers told them to come back. So the second problem is, if you'd been trying to recall them, the conscripts wouldn't have come. You might have gotten a lot of officers, but there would have been no troops, no army.

The third problem is that the facilities were destroyed. There was literally no place to feed anybody, no place to house them, no place for them to take care of essential bodily functions. And as we build up the Iraqi army, we're having to go around to old Iraqi military bases and, at very considerable expense, reconstruct them simply so as to have basic facilities. So that option didn't exist either.

And I don't think it's been a setback for creating the security forces. We have not, with the exception of these very senior Ba'ath Party officials and security people, we have not in any way discriminated against former military people in these other security forces. (I ran through ?) the list.



First of all, of course, you've got to remember this is a country with universal conscription, so except for the people who were able to bribe -- who were not physically fit or were able to bribe their way out of service, virtually every Iraqi male over the age of, what, 20 is former military in some sense. That's not the key thing about their identity, but it's true. So we assume -- we know in the new Iraqi army that 60 percent of the Arab people were in the former army, and actually probably somewhat more than that. The Kurds -- most of the Kurds were in the Peshmerga, so they've been part of this process. The second is, we assume that most of the people who have been going into these other security forces are former military.

And a lot of -- as is true of a country that's as militarized as Iraq was -- a lot of the industry, a lot of the business, which we would think of as business, was done by the military. For example, the construction companies were run by an offshoot of the military establishment. Most of the people who worked there held nominal military ranks, and they simply have been civilianized and gone back to working in construction companies. So I think the basic charge is simply not true. I mean, if we had had a situation in which we had had intact units, then we might have done it differently. But --

Q: So that's a moot point in your mind: they took off for the high grass; there was nobody that disbanded them, correct?

Slocombe: Exactly.

Di Rita: Well, it's more than a moot point. What he's saying is the assertion is wrong, and that's -- I think there's a difference.

Q: Zinni also said that contacts were made over the years with some of these regular army units to stay intact and so forth, that were not after you or after the Republican Guard, that -- you know, the plan was to use them for a security force post-Saddam. Do you know anything about those contacts being made, or was that just something that --

Slocombe: If there were those contacts, and there obviously were efforts to be in contact with various Iraqis before the war -- if there were those contacts, whatever their content, they did not result in organized units standing by in an organized way, which I expected would be the case. I mean, it just didn't happen.

Di Rita: What happened was they were either destroyed -- a lot of units were because they chose to fight, or they disbanded, as Walt has described. As the secretary's talked about, we captured early on, in the course of the conflict, a

very small number, relatively speaking -- relative to the full size of the army, 8,000 or 10,000, 12,000 people. So, we didn't have large units turning themselves in for further cooperation. It just didn't happen.

Yep.

Slocombe: Just -- the other point -- there was a period of time when there was a lot of agitation among former officers -- we're talking about former officers broadly -- that they weren't getting paid. And we made a decision that it made sense to provide an interim stipend so that they had some source of income while they were transitioning to getting civilian jobs.

As I said, even if we called back -- there is no way we're going to pay for an army of 500,000 people with 11,000 generals in it in Iraq. Inevitably, most of the officers, under any conceivable arrangement, would have to find new jobs. So, we are paying this stipend. And it has been, I think, generally very well-received. I mean, they complain that they have to stand out in the heat to get paid and so on, but they have come and been paid, and it's been, I think, generally very successful in eliminating the former officer class, as a class, as a source of opposition.

Q: Could you be more specific about what the training entails; what you're training them to do; what their mission is? I know you said defend Iraq. But more specific on training. And also, whether the security situation in certain parts of Iraq is complicating your recruiting and your training?

Slocombe: To take the second part first, we have been able to run the recruiting -- there are four recruiting stations in Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Erbil. We've been able to run the recruiting successfully. There's security around -- we recognize they're a potential target, but there's security around the recruiting stations, and they've run successfully.

The training is broken into two halves. One is --

Q: Can I just stop you just quickly on that? Security meaning -- when they see the security situation in Iraq, does that scare people away, if you will?

Slocombe: Part of the problem is for the ordinary Iraqi, the security situation is not what it should be. But the streets are full of people, the stores are full of people, the stores are full of goods. You go down -- you drive down the street, there are people, men and women, walking around with their families. I mean, it's -- the image that you get, to some degree, in the United States that this is sort of like Mogadishu or Beirut during the fighting is just wrong. I mean, it's

dangerous and it needs to be improved and we need to work on it, and there are -- there is a level of ordinary crime, in addition to whatever political stuff there is, that needs to be brought down. But in terms of day-to-day life for ordinary Iraqis, they go around where they want to go.

With respect to the training, half the program is essentially individual training, and half is collective training in which -- and the individual training is standard basic-training stuff. The collective training involves exercising on the kinds of activities they will do when the units go operational: convoy security, running checkpoints, standing guard over facilities, that kind of thing.

Q: Can I follow up on that same topic of the nature of the training? I'm curious whether these battalions are being trained with the intent to make them capable of operating with U.S. forces on offensive combat operations to pursue the security goals that the U.S. forces are doing? In other words, in pursuit of the Iraqi --

Slocombe: We certainly expect that the Iraqi units, like the coalition units, will make a contribution to the security inside the country, as well as contributing to the defense against external attack. I would expect that in most cases -- if by operational you mean things like when we went in to get Uday and Qusay --

Q: Right.

Slocombe: -- my expectation would be most of that would be done by specialized forces, which would not, at least in the early days, include Iraqis. But I don't know. Those will be decisions to be made by the military commanders.

Q: But will they be trained to that level, that they could conduct such operations?

Slocombe: Certainly not in the short run. But they will be trained to do the things which normal armies do. The vast amount of the -- the vast part of the American Army is not trained for those operations either.

Yes?

Q: I'm looking for some clarity on the numbers and timing, if I could. You describe 27 battalions that will build these three divisions --

Slocombe: Or nine brigades, depending on how you divide by three.

Q: Yeah, those units are different in every country. What is the total end strength you're talking about?

And my second question, sir, is you've described it was a two-year time line; now you've cut it in half. That seems to be sort of an amazing success story. What has happened that you were able to accelerate in such a remarkable manner to your goal?

Slocombe: The -- to answer the -- business about numbers. We anticipate that the twenty -- that the force, when we have 27 battalions, will be on the order of 30 to 40 thousand people. You can do the math and you can figure that 27 battalions, each of which is on the order of 800 people, is not going to -- is not going to add up to 30 or 40 thousand. But by the time you add in the necessary support, as you get a -- you get bigger units, it will probably be on that order.

As to why we've been able to accelerate it, that's -- that's a good and interesting question. What we learned is, that the Iraqi army was not much good for some things, but it did a perfectly competent job of basic training, and that the real requirement is for leaders. So what we propose to do is to focus on training the officers and NCOs. One of the big elements is to -- we will set what is, in effect, an NCO academy. They had a lot of people who had the ranks of NCOs, but they didn't fulfill the functions that NCOs do in the American military, or the British military, or other competent militaries. And we will train up the leadership first. And then we'll continue to do some basic training, so that there's an opportunity for people without prior military experience, and then be able to bring relatively large numbers of recruited former enlisted personnel in, go through a very brief refresher of the basic soldier skills, and then begin working collective tasks. So they will actually have the effect that in -- instead of kind of, you know, a battalion at a time, it'll be back-end-loaded.

Q: Can you give a sense of the basic training? It'll be eight weeks, 12 weeks? What model are you using?

Slocombe: My recollection is -- of the plan is that the collective unit training will be a little shorter than the eight weeks. It'll be something like six weeks. And, I should say, one of the things we have to do is we have to get lots of facilities ready for these units and buy lots of equipment and so on. It will be a very substantial effort.

Yes, sir?

Q: You said there would be a lot of re-equipping of the unit. Well, not re-equipping; actually, equipping for a start. What are some of the things that are

needed, what are some of the soldiers you're seeing now, and what sort of --

Slocombe: Well, they need everything. I mean, from uniforms, weapons, vehicles -- it's not for the individual soldiers, but there's got to be -- we have to recondition the buildings. Mostly the buildings exist physically. It's a question of rehabing them. (Laughs.) Furniture, messing facilities, latrines, training facilities -- everything has to be -- everything has to be procured.

We will buy as much of it as we can in Iraq. Some things we will have to buy outside.

We will do as much of it as we can by competitive bid. Everything so far has been competitively bid, including -- to the great credit of the American Army contracting people, we went from a blank sheet of paper to a completed competed award in 30 days, which is a new land record, I believe. And we will do as much of it as possible by competition. But we'll use different sources.

There is a lot of -- for better or for worse, there is a lot of adequate used and excess military equipment in the world that's available. And we're buying relatively low-end stuff.

Q: You mentioned there was an astounding degree of looting. Was it more or less than the looting that was carried out on other government ministries or other sectors of the Iraqi government?

Slocombe: No, but --

Q: And was there anything we could have done to anticipate that and prevent it?

Slocombe: I find it hard to believe -- well, to answer your question, I don't think it was substantively different from what you got in police stations, other government buildings, which obviously varied from place to place.

It was certainly very systematic, and I don't think it -- I suppose if you'd made it your highest priority, you could have protected a couple of facilities. But I don't -- preventing looting on a large scale is a -- you can argue we should have protected this place or that place, but the -- Iraq is full of military installations. I mean, one of the things that's astounding is, in a country that invested so little in other infrastructure, their military installations are first-class. I mean, we went to one air base that has a huge multi-screen theater in it. Air [conditioning] -- I mean, out -- way the hell and gone out in the desert, and it has this huge theater. Indoor swimming pools. They went first class.

Q: So you're saying it wasn't in our capability to protect all the military bases in Iraq?

Slocombe: There are so many that, I mean -- and I'm not sure that that would have made any sense as the highest priority anyway. Anyway, it's a hypothetical question.

Q: You said that the supplemental -- that a large part of the supplemental --

Slocombe: Well, no, a large amount, not a large percentage of the supplemental.

Q: Well, what will be the cost of all of this?

Slocombe: My understanding is that the supplemental will be published this afternoon. Then you can look it up.

Di Rita: That's a great answer. And on top of that, I think we're going to be doing some special -- some specific briefing on the supplemental later today. So we'll make that information available.

Q: (Off mike.)

Di Rita: Let's kept it to the people who have been working it. Walt's been 7,000 miles away. So he's --

Q: Well, could I ask another question? You said that one of the objectives was to change the mix of the -- the ethnic mix of the officer corps. How are you doing that?

Slocombe: It has turned out to be surprisingly easy. I mean, we pay attention to it, but it has not required -- we used to joke that we were waiting for the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action.

It has turned out that if you get across the message that this is a military which is open to all the groups, you will get what you would sort of expect, a reasonably representative pool. We made a special effort in the Kurdish areas to make sure that the local Kurdish leadership understand that this is an important thing for them to do, and they've been very supportive. We've also gone to other -- we've gone to Shi'a leaders and said, you know, this is -- just as in other aspects of Iraq, this is your opportunity to be full participants in this part of a

system which has excluded you in the past. So it's worked out all right.

Di Rita: We've got time for maybe one or two --

Q: What are these people going to be paid, especially --

Slocombe: How are they going to be paid?

Q: No, what are they going to be paid, especially compared to how they were paid before. I mean, what kind of money are they going to make -- privates, colonels, captains --

Slocombe: Privates will make \$70 a month, which in Iraq is a perfectly decent salary for an entry-level job. And then the ranks go up. The salary scale is equivalent to the civil service salary scale. I forget what it tops out at, but it's -

Q: I understand the number of detainees being held inside Iraq are going up. And I'm wondering -- I think the last figure I saw was 10,000, up from about 3,000 in July. And I'm wondering, is that -- from your perspective, is that a hindrance in the struggle for the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people?

Slocombe: I don't know, I don't do detainees.

Di Rita: Well, again, I would just -- I would comment, as I did earlier, on the question with respect to whether the police are accepted by the people. Our commanders report that they're getting more and more cooperation. They're doing their best to be as refined as they can be when they go and search for people. In fact, General Petraeus refers to his techniques now in one area -- his is just one area -- as, I think, something on the order of "search and knock." In other words, they don't go in and, as has been portrayed, kind of knock things around. They go in and ask for people to come out, and if there are some people inside the building that are of interest, they try and extract them in a reasonable way, and if not, then they use whatever force is necessary. The point is, they understand that there are different techniques required for different targets.

It's -- the intelligence is getting better all the time. The cooperation of the local authorities, as well as the local population, is getting better all the time. They report substantial increases in the accuracy of the information that they're getting. And as a result -- that both is an indication that -- this was your term, not mine -- the "hearts and minds" are someplace; you know, it's an indication that people are willing to work to some degree.

It also reflects the importance that I think the commanders have of trying

to be as specific as possible and as refined as possible when they do this. But they'll use -- and General Sanchez has talked about this. They'll use whatever force is necessary across the scale of force that he has, and it's substantial, to get the job done. So --

Barbara?

Q: Mr. Slocombe, just a couple of equipment questions on where your thinking is headed, about the kinds of things you want to buy or give donated for the Iraqi army. Are you looking at actual Western or U.S.-type equipment? In other words, two questions: M-16s, AK-47s, and if it's motorized infantry, are you looking at essentially HMMWV (High Mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) - class vehicles, Bradley-class vehicles, BMPs --

Slocombe: No, not Bradleys.

Q: Strykers? (Laughs.)

Slocombe: Not Bradleys to Strykers or Joint Strike Fighters.

The AK-47 answer is easy. For better or for worse, the AK-47 is the weapon of choice in that part of the world. It turns out every Iraqi male above the age of about 12 can take them apart and put them together blindfolded and is a pretty good shot. It would be silly, apart from other -- apart from other reasons, it would be silly to try to change it. Also, they happen to be cheap. We've put it out for bid on AK-47s, and they came in at 60 bucks -- 59? -- 59 bucks a copy, which is pretty cheap, for brand new --

Q: For how many?

Slocombe: Forty thousand. Forty thousand with an option on another 30, I think.

Q: Who are you buying from?

Slocombe: I'm not sure that's a matter of public record, but I think it is, actually. So we'll give you -- if it's a matter of public record, we'll get it for you.

Q: (Off mike.)

Slocombe: Excuse me? If I -- an easily changed status, I understand that.

Q: (Off mike) -- on the vehicles, sir? Are we talking Jeep- class, or



actual, you know, motorized infantry vehicles here? What are we talking about?

Slocombe: Mostly we're talking about what the military calls non-tactical vehicles: trucks.

Last one, I'm sorry.

Q: Could we just get your reaction to the release of another tape from Saddam Hussein, apparently? And also, the poll that the State Department has apparently done showing regular Iraqis resent the American military? Maybe you want to talk about it too, Mr. Slocombe.

Slocombe: I'd certainly -- I didn't even know there was another tape. So I've been so busy preparing for this appearance with you that I don't have any comment.

And as with respect to a poll, I haven't seen it. So I just don't have any reaction.

Q: But on the tapes in general, what do you think their goal is by releasing these things?

Di Rita: Who knows? I mean, they clearly want to give the impression that they're still available, that they're still out and about. But it's -- I'm not speaking to this particular tape because I don't -- I have not seen it. I'm not even sure what -- who the subject of the tape is. So --.

Q: Can you, Mr. Slocombe, see resentment of the American military -- do you see the Iraqis wanting the Americans to get out and want to take over themselves?

Slocombe: Obviously, there are particular incidents that people don't like. It's not easy having a foreign army in your country.

The evidence -- and I haven't seen the poll, either. The evidence that we have is that most Iraqis want what most Americans want, which is that we help them get back on their feet, and then turn over sovereignty to them, and then the great bulk of the American army go home.

I think one of the problems we have is that years and years of propaganda, some of which is believed outside Iraq, have convinced people that we're there to steal their oil or we want to stay there forever or we're going to give it back to the Jews or something. And getting across the message, which is

that what we want to do and what we are doing is to get going a political process, which includes this security effort, includes the economic effort, as well as the -- what I would call the constitutional process, so that we can, as soon as possible, hand over to an elected Iraqi government that's able to take care of a country that works. Iraq is a country with huge potential. And I think most Iraqis want to see that -- want to see that developed, and do not want to see -- would not want to see the United States leave precipitately, but would like to see us leave eventually, which is, after all, as I understand it, our policy.

Di Rita: Thank you very much.

Thanks, Walt.

Copyright © 2003 by Federal News Service Inc., Ste. 220, 1919 M St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 USA. Federal News Service is a private firm not affiliated with the federal government. No portion of this transcript may be copied, sold or retransmitted without the written authority of Federal News Service Inc. Copyright is not claimed as to any part of the original work prepared by a U.S. government officer or employee as a part of that person's official duties. For information on subscribing to the FNS Internet Service, please visit [www.fednews.com](http://www.fednews.com) or call (202) 347-1400.



[Printer-friendly Version](#)



[Email A Copy](#)

---

[Privacy & Security Notice](#) | [External Link Disclaimer](#) | [Web Policy](#)  
[About DefenseLINK](#) | [Contact Us](#)