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HEARING OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE;
SUBJECT: CURRENT AND FUTURE READINESS OF
THE ARMY AND MARINE CORPS;
CHAired BY: SENATOR CARL LEVIN (D-MI);
WITNESSES: GENERAL PETER J. SCHOOMAKER,
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY; GENERAL
JAMES T. CONWAY, COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES
MARINE CORPS;
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS LOCATION: 216 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING,
WASHINGTON, D.C. TIME: 9:30 A.M. EST DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

SEN. LEVIN: Good morning, everybody. We welcome this morning to our committee
General Peter Schoomaker, chief of staff of the Army, and General James Conway,
commandant of the Marine Corps.

We note that this may be General Schoomaker's final appearance before this
committee as the Army's chief of staff before he retires, for the second time, after
over 35 years of uniformed service.

We're pleased that we could meet with you, General, before you pass leadership of
the Army to General Casey, not only because we want to discuss Army readiness
today, but also to express our gratitude to you for your lifetime of service to this
nation, to our soldiers and to their families. Thank you, sir.

And thank you, of course, General Conway. We'll be seeing more of you, but we're
also grateful that you could make it today.

We note -- we believe that among our observers this morning are nine members of
the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro.

Are they here? They are here.

We welcome you to visit our committee, to see how we operate, and hopefully, to get some benefit out of it. We'd be interested in your reaction, at some point, as to what you see and what your thoughts are about how we do operate here. And we'd be interested as to how you operate back home in Montenegro. We welcome you.

Today's hearing examines the current and future readiness of our ground forces. Over the last three years, the rotation of Army and Marine personnel in units sent into and out of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have put extraordinary pressures and stress on all aspects of military readiness.

The readiness of our forces deployed to war zones should never be in question. The recent Department of Defense inspector general report identifies problems with force-protection equipment shortages in Iraq and Afghanistan. Press reports expose persistent shortages of armored humvees and armor protection kits for humvees and other vehicles.

We also continue to receive complaints highlighting equipment items requested by deployed troops that appear to be unavailable in the supply system. While many of these reports are anecdotal, we cannot ignore them. In some cases, there are limitations in production capacity or lead times that we cannot do anything about in the short-term, but some of these issues can be addressed by action of the Congress and the Defense Department. We want to continue to work with the Army and the Marine Corps to resolve as many of these issues as possible as we move forward. And we look forward to the remarks of our witnesses in this regard.

I'm going to repeat what many, I think all members of this committee, have said at many times in the past, which is, Congress is going to provide whatever forces in harm's way need. We're particularly concerned that in order to sustain the necessary higher readiness levels in our deployed forces, the readiness of our nondeployed forces has steadily declined. Less-ready nondeployed forces makes getting those units fully equipped and trained for the next deployment that much more difficult and that much more risky.

The president's plan to surge an additional five Army brigades and three Marine battalions, and General Petraeus's request to get them into Iraq as quickly as possible, puts pressure on an already strained training and equipment readiness situation. We're concerned that deploying units will not have the required equipment, and the time to train with that equipment, before they are sent into harm's way.

This morning we will be looking for answers and, hopefully, assurances from the two uniformed leaders directly responsible for the readiness of our ground forces that surge -- the readiness of our ground forces, that surge units will deploy fully trained and equipped before they're deployed into Iraq.

Simply stated, our ground forces are stretched thin, and equipment is wearing out faster than planned and is not being replaced in a timely manner, which raises questions about the nation's readiness to deal with other contingencies in a world which has many dangers and uncertainties.

In testimony to the House Armed Services Committee last month, both General Schoomaker and General Conway were clear in their apprehensions about the short- and long-term risks resulting from the lower readiness levels of our nondeployed forces.

General Conway indicated that the Marine Corps, historically the force the nation calls upon first, would respond more slowly if needed to meet another contingency.

General Schoomaker was direct in his concern for the, quote, "strategic depth of our Army and its readiness" -- in other words, whether it is able to commit forces to another contingency if necessary.

General Schoomaker and General Conway, we share your concerns for the readiness shortfalls of our current forces and the unacceptable risks which result.

We're also concerned whether the administration's proposal to increase the end strength of the Army and Marine Corps would simply create a larger version of a less-ready force.

Army and Marine Corps plans for expansion must be comprehensive, detailed and fully resourced. Congress must know what you need to bring our current and expanded ground forces to the levels of strength and readiness necessary to meet our national security requirements into the future. We cannot solve readiness issues merely by increasing the size of the force unless we have sufficient time and money to equip and sustain that force.

And so we look forward to discussing these issues with you both today and in the days ahead.

Senator McCain.

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R-AZ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and thank you for scheduling this important hearing to focus on the readiness of our ground forces.

I'd like to welcome both the witnesses.

And, General Schoomaker, we -- I know I speak for all Americans when we express our appreciation for your long and dedicated and courageous service to our nation. And we know you will continue to contribute for many years to come. We thank you for your great service to our nation.

Since the attacks on 9/11, our military has been active in Afghanistan, Iraq and around the world. Our service members -- active, Reserve and Guard -- have responded magnificently to our nation's call, often undertaking multiple or extended deployments, sometimes with very short notice, and performing with the utmost professionalism. That reflects credit on their individual service and on the great traditions: our nation's military services.

There should be no doubt that difficult work lies ahead, but as General Petraeus said when he assumed command in Iraq last week, "hard is not hopeless."

The operations the last five years have strained both our personnel and our equipment. We all know that. While our men and women in uniform are in harm's way, there's also been a serious decline in the readiness of our nondeployed units, both in equipment and training.

I hope we don't spend our time here looking back at mistakes that have been made over the last few years and fail to focus on the critical readiness issues we are facing

in the here and now. We must not forget that we are in a very long war against an uncertain enemy.

As our nation is about to implement a new military strategy in Iraq -- one that could provide Iraq with the security necessary to provide sufficient breathing space to the Iraqi government that facilitates national reconciliation and economic reconstruction -- the president's recent decision to increase the size of the Army and the Marine Corps is a vital part of the readiness remedy. Some of us have been calling for this for a number of years.

This increase will help ease the strain on our deploying forces, giving them more time between deployments to rest and retrain. It should also reduce our reliance on our Reserve and Guard forces who have met the nation's call heroically. Finally, this increase will ensure we have enough forces available to meet other threats as they arrive.

Unfortunately, this increase in forces cannot occur soon enough. It'll take time to recruit, train and equip these new forces. I'm concerned about the readiness of our forces between now and when these new units come on line.

I hope our witnesses today will address how they plan to improve our readiness in the short-term, as well as how they plan to address the challenges in increasing the force structure over the next several years.

As Congress conducts oversight of defense spending, we should oft take measures to ensure that the services are receiving the absolute most value for every tax dollar, and of course, we want to eliminate duplicative and unnecessary programs. As you are aware, I have long advocated for reform in both the budgeting and the acquisition process.

In this year's budget request, the services presented long lists of priorities that were left without funding. I'm concerned about the size of these unfunded requirements lists, particularly that of the Army. The Army's budget request has increased significantly in recent years, as has the supplemental funding request, and yet the Army's unfunded requirements list increased by almost \$3 billion. I hope, General Schoomaker, that you can explain to the committee why that is.

I have a number of other concerns that the witnesses will be asked to address. You should expect questions on your service's readiness to respond to the president's plan for Iraq on prescribed timelines, the number of waivers granted to Army recruits, humvee armor kits and the very large unfunded requirement of mine-resistant ambush-protective vehicles and why those vehicles were not in the regular budget request. I look forward to your testimony.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you, Senator McCain.

General Schoomaker?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Mr. Chairman, is the mike hot?

SEN. LEVIN: It is.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Very good. Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the committee, thanks very much for the opportunity to appear before you today and represent the Army. I'll be very concise here. I've submitted a statement for the record that I hope you'll accept.

SEN. LEVIN: It will be made part of the record.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Thank you. I hope that -- I'd like to just express my sincere thanks up front for the great support over the last four years that the Army has received from this committee and to thank you for your kind words, and to express my appreciation for having the great privilege that I've enjoyed of serving the young men and women and their families of the United States Army during my tenure. So I look forward to answering your questions, and I thank you again for your support.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you, General.

General Conway.

GEN. CONWAY: Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to report to you today.

When I last testified before you at my confirmation hearing, I pledged to always provide you frank and honest assessments of the state of your Marine Corps, and I come today to you with that thought in mind.

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

They also believe, ladies and gentlemen, that the people of the United States and its government are behind them.

The evidence of that support is everywhere to be seen: the feeling on new materiel and equipment to make their mission success more certain and to protect them from enemy blasts; the reset of the force so as to be able to accomplish follow-on missions throughout the globe; and most recently, the request by the secretary of Defense to grow our end strength.

This end strength increase to 202,000 Marines will go a long way towards reducing the strain, both on individual Marines and on the institution. This plan will gradually decrease the deployment-to-dwell ratio of some of our high operational tempo units. Currently, many of those units are deployed for seven months and home for only seven -- some even less time -- before they return to combat.

While the conflict in Iraq demonstrates the uncontested need for boots on the ground, even in modern-day warfare, our current request for end strength increase is what the Marine Corps needs to be prepared to respond whenever and wherever our vital national interests are threatened, not just in Iraq.

Our corps bylaw is, quote, "the nation's shock troops." These additional Marines will allow us the additional dwell time needed to train at home station and sharpen those

skills that could be required of us in the next contingency, thereby reducing future operational and strategic risks.

With over 70 percent of our proposed end strength comprised of first-term Marines, we're making plans for the necessary increases in recruiting and retention, which will be challenging.

But our standards will remain high.

We'll need the continued support of the Congress for strong re-enlistment bonuses and other recruiting programs, such as advertising, which will be essential for us to continue to bring aboard the best that America has to offer.

Turning to the plus-up operations in Iraq, approximately 4,000 Marines are affected. Three of our units will be extended by 45 to 60 days.

This extension will impact our Marines and their families, but we've been emphatic about keeping our families informed of the details. We believe that unit programs and family support systems back home have already helped Marines and families meet the challenges associated with this extension.

As an aside, there has been some misunderstanding in the media that our end strength increase is directly tied to the plus-up operation in Iraq. The fact is that our request for additional Marines is separate from -- indeed it predates by several weeks -- that ongoing operation.

Moreover, there has been some concern expressed that perhaps the battalions moved forward in their rotation for the plus-up operations might not be fully trained or equipped for the fight. Ladies and gentlemen, let me clarify that the additional Marines going into the Al Anbar province have indeed had their training schedules adjusted, but those schedules include all five phases of our pre-deployment training package.

Cross-leveling of equipment is now complete, and we know the battalions will lack two equipment items as a result of manufacturer non-availability. And those are the latest generation sniper and spotter scopes.

Ladies and gentlemen your Marines recognize --

SEN. MCCAIN: What are those two, again?

GEN. CONWAY: Sniper scopes, sir, and spotter scopes -- latest generation equipment in both instances.

SEN. MCCAIN: Thank you. I'm sorry I didn't hear you when --

GEN. CONWAY: Ladies and gentlemen, your Marines recognize that this is an important time in history to serve our country. The majority of them joined the corps after the national was at war, knowing that they would most likely go into harm's way. They joined with the understanding of what was expected of them, and have shouldered that duty with courage and determination. They are truly a special breed of America's warriors.

It's on their behalf that I come before you today to answer your questions and to help all understand how we can best support these tremendous you Marines and sailors in combat.

Thank you.

SEN. LEVIN: General, thank you.

We're going to have a little tricky schedule here this morning. We got votes -- two votes at 10:30, and we're just going to have to work around them the best we can. Hopefully some of us could leave and vote at the beginning of the first vote and the end of the second vote, so that we don't have to recess this hearing.

And we'll try a six-minute round, given our schedule this morning.

General Schoomaker, first, is the current readiness of your nondeployed Army forces at an acceptable level?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, as I have testified in the past, and as the chairman's risk assessment -- which is classified, which you have -- shows I am not satisfied with the readiness of our nondeployed forces. And I would say that, you know, the level of operations that we are now committed to further aggravates that.

SEN. LEVIN: Are you able to tell us in an unclassified setting what percentage of your active force is not deployed and what percentage of this nondeployed force is trained and ready for worldwide commitment?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, the -- I have no concerns on the force that we deployed. They continue to be the very best trained, led and equipped force. I don't think I can say in an unclassified forum any percentages of our nondeployed force. Needless to say that we are having to, you know, go to some extraordinary measures to make sure that we have the ability to respond properly.

SEN. LEVIN: Would you say that this percentage -- although you can't give it -- that we are in worse shape now than six months ago?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I would say the pressure on us is -- has increased as a result of the level of operations. Yes, sir.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you. General Conway, can you tell us whether or not the readiness of your nondeployed Marine Corps forces is at an acceptable level?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I would say it's acceptable but I do have some concerns. It is not on a par with those forces that are deployed, certainly, I think it's fair to say. In general terms, because we're in open session, I would say that our equipment status is pretty good.

I think my largest concern probably has to do with training. When we're home for those seven, eight, nine months, our focus is going back to Iraq. And as I mentioned in the opening statement, therefore, we're not doing amphibious training; we're not doing mountain warfare training; we're not doing combined arms live-fire maneuver such as would need to be the case, potentially, in another type of contingency. So those are my concerns.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you.

The Defense Department's inspector general released a draft report in January indicating that troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, quote, "experienced shortages of force protection equipment such as up-armored vehicles, electronic countermeasure devices, crew-served weapons and communications equipment," close quote.

Now we also continue to see press reports of problems, including one in The Washington Post this week in which, quote, "Units in Iraq and Afghanistan lack more than 4,000 of the latest humvee armor kit known as Frag Kit 5."

The Army also released a statement also this week indicating that they produced sufficient armor kits for humvees but that installation will drag into the spring for Iraq and into the summer for Afghanistan. And this -- these delays are unacceptable, I know, to you, and they're unacceptable to us.

I'm wondering if you could tell us what your plans are to eliminate all force protection equipment shortages throughout the area of operations -- both Iraq and Afghanistan.

First, General Schoomaker.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, first of all, I think you know that we did not concur with the IG report, that we felt it was anecdotal in nature. It's clear that Afghanistan -- because of the recent requirements coming out of Afghanistan with the train-equip mission -- we do have some work to make up there and we are doing that.

However, in Iraq, I stand in what I said before. There is no shortage of equipment to perform the missions that are being conducted today, to include being able to cover the surge with sufficient up- armored humvees, weapons. And there is no problem on personnel -- individual body armor and this kind of thing.

We do have the steel and the kits to complete all of the vehicles that are in country right now. We are close to a little over 14,000 vehicles in country. As correctly stated, we are applying kits to about 3,000 of those. But there are adequate -- you know, 12,000 vehicles over there that are adequate for the need. And we're working with General Petraeus very carefully to ensure nobody goes outside a protected space that is not adequately protected for the mission.

I'm sorry, I --

SEN. LEVIN: Well, did that include, then, this latest humvee armor kit, that Frag --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's right. I'm talking about Frag Kit 5.

SEN. LEVIN: You are.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: We've been operating under an order that General Casey issued that nobody would leave protected space that was not in a Level I up-armor. As you know, Frag Kit 5 is an increased level of protection. We are now, in my view, approaching a point where nobody will leave without Frag Kit 5, which -- you know, this is a continuing process of improvement. And as you know, the MRAP that we've asked for is an improvement over Frag Kit 5. And that is the next step that we want to go through on the path to an even better protected vehicle -- the joint program -- that we feel is necessary in the future.

As you know, the MRAP is a program we've had in the Army for quite some time; it's now a joint program with the Marine Corps. We have almost a thousand MRAP vehicles, if you consider the ASV, which is part of that program, and route clearance equipment like Buffalos, Cougars and RG-31s. We already have about a thousand of these in theater. So we are already on the path to the next step.

SEN. LEVIN: Just to complete that question: There was a quotation in the paper from General Speakes, I believe -- if I could find that -- Lieutenant Stephen Speakes, deputy chief of staff, said that the Army, quote, "doesn't have the armor kits and doesn't have the trucks," close quote, requiring units deploying to share with units already there. What was he referring to?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: He's referring to the Frag Kit 5 additions. Our biggest challenge, quite frankly, is in the medium tactical vehicles and the heavy tactical vehicles -- the logistics vehicles -- and that gap has been closed as well.

SEN. LEVIN: But he said that the Army doesn't have the armor kits. He's quoted as saying that the Army does not have the armor kits.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: We don't have the armor kits to complete the entire inventory in the Army, but we have focused these kits on the theater.

Now General Speakes is here.

(Aside.) Do you want to clarify that?

LT. GEN. STEPHEN SPEAKES (deputy chief of staff, U.S. Army): Yes, sir.

SEN. LEVIN: Can you just -- if you would perhaps stand and speak with a loud voice if you don't come to the mike.

GEN. SPEAKES: Sir, it's my privilege to address you. And having seen my name in press, I would appreciate the chance to correct the record.

What I was illustrating when I talked about the depth of our planning was the commitment that this Army under General Schoomaker's lead, and Secretary Harvey, to ensure that no soldier goes in harm's way untrained or unequipped. My responsibility is the equipping part of this thing.

The first thing we talked about is the concept of what we're doing right now to ensure the theater provided equipment is made up for these additional brigades that are coming into theater. They don't have a unit to fall in on with whom they will exchange the equipment. We have to make sure those sets are put together. We have a very, very detailed plan that essentially is aligned with each brigade to ensure that as that brigade arrives, a full complement of equipment is waiting for them.

The particular focus has been up-armored humvees with the complete suite of equipment that is required. That is, a Blue Force Tracking, that is a jamming device, that is a crew-served weapon. All that is now configured and prepared in echeloned order through the spring.

The issue that I identified -- and I wanted to use this to give the American taxpayer confidence we've done our homework was -- medium and heavy trucks is an issue. The problem right now is we don't have great surpluses of medium and heavy trucks waiting in Kuwait to issue additional brigades. So what we are doing right now is able

to equip the first elements -- the first brigades that are deploying -- with existing sets of heavy trucks.

What we identified was at the tail end of this surge we have some work to do. The problem is creating these kits is industrial work. The factories aren't producing that any more. We had produced enough for the theater and a comfortable surplus. The surge complicates that challenge.

What we are doing is two things. First, we're cross-leveling about 800 trucks out of more than 11,000 that are in theater right now. We have already received a detailed plan from MNCI. They have provided us the specifics on what trucks will be made available and when to make up those requirements. We then at the Army level are continuing, now to start up another factory effort to ensure that additional kits are made ready. They will be installed and made ready early in the summer.

So what we'll do in the near term is cross-level, and in the second time what we'll do is generate new production and new capability.

Our point was that we stand behind our guarantee: We will do it right; we will ensure that no soldier operates without the correct equipment.

SEN. LEVIN: General, thank you so much.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, could I just add, real quick?

SEN. LEVIN: Sure.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: So going back -- there is no soldier today that's in harm's way over there, and we're on a footrace on the vehicles. But let me just re-emphasize: We also were deploying tanks and Bradleys, Strykers, ASPs and the rest of these vehicles which compliment -- actually are increased protection over what humvees and these trucks are. And part of my concern is the fact that we've drawn on pre-position stocks to be able to equip this force that's over there, which reduces our flexibility.

SEN. LEVIN: These are really important assurances to us. We're all very much concerned when we look at what's ahead of us. And we thank you both.

Senator McCain.

SEN. MCCAIN: Thank you very much, General Schoomaker and General Conway.

We now plan to increase the size of the Army and the Marine Corps. Are we going to have any difficulty recruiting these additional personnel?

General --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: In my view, sir, we can accomplish what I said -- 7,000 to 9,000 a year; that is what we program for. As you know, this year some of that growth is in supplemental funding, but in future years all of that growth is going into the base budget.

SEN. MCCAIN: But I mean do you believe we can recruit without having to provide additional incentives to serve?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I believe we can do it. As you know, last year we had our best year in nine years in the active force, and the best year in 13 years in the National Guard. I believe we've exceeded our goal in the first quarter of this year. We exceeded January. We are on path to exceed --

SEN. MCCAIN: But there's also information in the media that you're increasing the number of waivers -- that the Army and the Marine Corps are increasing the numbers of waivers in order to meet recruiting goals.

Is there anything --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: True. That is true. We have increased the number of waivers over the past year. But I can assure you that every one of those is being looked at on an individual basis. We're tracking those soldiers through the system. We're seeing no -- the soldiers that we have waived are retaining in the force -- and not attriting in other words -- at the same percentage as other soldiers. And we believe that what we're doing is proper. And we understand the concern. But it is getting a great deal of top attention in terms of what we're doing.

SEN. MCCAIN: General Conway?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, we think that the number of 5,000 a year is about right for us without any diminishment of quality. There are some things we're going to have to do. We're appealing to some of the Marines who are with us now to stay longer. We're sending out a letter to Marines who've been out one, two, three, four years to consider coming back until this fight is over. They're trained and they would be helpful. We are going to have to put, we think, some additional recruiters in the field in order to be able to come up with the numbers, but we feel confident that we can do that.

With regard to the waivers, sir, if you want t me to address that: We have not changed our standards since before 9/11. What we have seen is a mild increase in the number of waivers that have been granted -- we call them moral waivers -- over time. But we ask hard questions up front. And we want people to be honest with us, and if we find that they're not being, then they're not being then they're not granted the waiver.

As General Schoomaker indicated, we track these people through raining to gauge success in attrition rate, and in fact we've seen no increase in attrition even though our waivers have gone up mildly.

SEN. MCCAIN: General Schoomaker, you spoke very strongly that you are not satisfied with the readiness of nondeployed forces. When did you come to this conclusion --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, sir, I testified --

SEN. MCCAIN: -- that the readiness of nondeployed forces was unsatisfactory -- year ago, two years ago, four years ago, yesterday?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I testified in June -- matter of fact, I believe it was the 27th of June before the House Armed Services Committee, last year -- when it reached a level that I was concerned. Obviously, we -- you know, I have been concerned since I've been the chief, about accelerating the transformation and the -- you know, filling

the holes in the force that I've testified to many times. As you know, as you conduct combat operations, you increase combat losses, you increase the attrition and repair, the consumption, so to speak, of the force. And so we're working a very complex formula here as we go forward.

SEN. MCCAIN: I understand that, but it was pretty well known to many of us that we were going to be in this thing for a long time; it was very tough, that these things were going to happen, and yet somehow it doesn't seem that the Pentagon anticipated, at least sufficiently, because we are now at the position that you just described, that nondeployed forces are not ready. So my curiosity is aroused as to why we didn't act to prevent this situation, which obviously has serious implications.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well sir, I can speak for the time that I've been here. We requested -- you might remember as -- going back to 2004 -- we only received \$300 million in procurement in our supplemental funding to address the attrition of -- and combat losses.

There was a time the year before that when there was no appetite for any procurement funds and supplemental funding when we knew that the attrition of the force was going to -- or of equipment -- the depreciation of equipment.

In 2005 we got about \$8 billion worth of procurement in the supplemental funding. And 2006 we got another 8 billion (dollars), but you might remember that all the way up through 2006 we never received this money in time nor to the full request.

This year we received, for the first time, in time for the fiscal year to start, the money we asked for -- sufficient money, on time, and as you know, we've now committed about 12 billion (dollars) of the 17.1 billion (dollars) that we received on the 1st of October to address this problem.

SEN. MCCAIN: So for several years the Congress failed to meet the requests of the Defense Department?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I'm not saying the Congress failed. You know the system. The Army submits its requirements; it goes through the Department of Defense, to OMB, into the president's budget and across to the Congress. And the record is clear -- we can provide it for the record -- what our request was against what passed through OSD and -- or -- into the president's budget and then what the Congress did with it.

SEN. MCCAIN: Well, the only reason why I asked -- I was under the impression that Congress had fully funded the requests that came to Congress from the executive branch. And -- so --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, in some cases the Congress added money to our request.

SEN. MCCAIN: So --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: To the president's budget.

SEN. MCCAIN: So the breakdown was someplace between your budget requests and what arrived at the doorstep of Congress?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, the system is clearly understood. We all know what the system is.

SEN. MCCAIN: Well, it's a bit dispiriting though, because I think that most of us on this committee would have supported whatever we thought was truly needed to prevent us from being in a situation where we're in today, which, I agree with you, does not affect the situation on the battlefield today. But it's clearly, I think, and you've stated, I think, in forthright terms, of great concern if we have a lack of readiness on nondeployed forces. I hope that it will be a subject of attention of this committee as well as the Appropriations Committee.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses.

SEN. LEVIN: Senator McCain is right; I believe we have at least supplied the funds requested and more so in the number of years, but if you would submit that document for the record that you just said that you'd be happy to supply as to what your request was to the OMB and then at each step of the way what happened to it over the last four years, it would be very helpful to us.

Senator Kennedy.

SEN. EDWARD KENNEDY (D-MA): Thank you.

SEN. JOHN WARNER (R-VA): I have an inquiry.

SEN. LEVIN: Okay, sure.

SEN. WARNER: On our notification the footnote says there's a possibility of a closed session. I think in view of the first responses of our witnesses, that closed session, in my judgment, is a needed session.

SEN. LEVIN: We hope that we can reach a closed session here today, depending on the timing. But it is an important subject we're at, and we'll either -- if we have a closed session, we can get into the percentages which were referred to as to the lack of shortfalls in readiness of nondeployed forces. If we can't get to a closed session for whatever reason today, we would then ask those questions for the classified record.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, we would be glad to send the experts over here and lay it down in detail for you.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you so much.

Senator Kennedy.

SEN. KENNEDY: Thank you very much.

General Schoomaker, thank you for your service.

General Schoomaker, every time this committee has asked you whether we've had sufficient funding and equipment to protect our troops in Iraq, we've been assured that we do.

In November 2003, you told the committee, "This army is committed, and we've got to do -- is commit ourselves and make sure we're supporting our soldiers."

And three years ago, you told the committee, "I'm confident we're doing everything we can to move more up-armored humvees and other armored vehicles into the theater."

When I expressed frustration about the lack of armor humvees and the need to make it a higher priority in February '04, you said: "We are raising the production levels. I'm with you 100 percent."

April of '05, the deputy former Marine Corps Commandant General Hagee testified at a Seapower Subcommittee hearing, "Marines had all the funding they needed for up-armored humvees."

Two months later, General Hagee assured the committee, "The force protection of our troops is absolutely priority number one."

In June of '05, when I raised the issue with General Myers, he assured us that safety in the force protection of our troops is absolutely the first priority.

February '06, when I asked you again about this topic, you said, "We're going to continue to have either anticipated or overproduce, which I believe we have in body armor, or come up with other solutions to the situation we've got."

According to the April 2005 GAO report, the Army said nine times that they had enough -- the Army had enough armored vehicles, only to turn around, and they had more. Each time, the Army paid for them with funds Congress added to purchase Army vehicles in excess of the stated requirements.

Now, I understand that your so-called unfunded priority list for 2008 includes \$2.2 billion for MRAP vehicles, the most up-to-date protection for our troops. But you're not asking for any MRAP funding in the fiscal year 2008 budget, either in the basic budget or in the supplemental. And in the Army budget, you only funded 60 and asked for 500 requested in the '07 supplemental.

The Marines have funded 805 and requested 244 in the second. You've only asked for 60 and requested 50 for the Congress to buy. Why isn't the Army putting this as a higher priority?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, the -- first of all, let me go back and address -- as you recall, the original requirement for up-armored humvees was 235. Today, it's 18,000. Every time we close -- start closing the gap over the request that the theater makes, it moves again. And so every time we've testified, we have testified to the facts as they were at that point in time. And as we continue to move forward, the goal keeps moving forward.

So what we are trying to do is overstretch. As to the unfunded requirements, if you -
- in our original request, those requirements that are unfunded were in the request. We are asking for 2,500 MRAP vehicles in the program. We want to build MRAP as fast as we can, and of course, at some point in time, we want to make sure that we can transition into the joint vehicle, which is a better solution.

SEN. KENNEDY: Well, General, why is it that in the Army you've got 60, the Marines had 500 -- got 800 funded? They put it out of their own funds. You've only put 60 in your funds, and you've asked the Congress in the supplemental to put 500. The

Marines have put 800 in their own funds and requested 244, and then you're not requesting any MRAP funding for fiscal '08, either in the basic or in the supplemental.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: What is our request?

SEN. KENNEDY: You've got unfunded for \$2 billion. But the issue is in terms of your priorities: 60 funded in the Army's budget. And you're expecting the Congress in the supplemental to do the 500. The others, because of the urgency, you've asked for 800 funded. And that is -- we're trying to find out -- we've gone over this -- the up-arming of the humvees over a long period of time.

I think it's been tragic that we always find out -- it's by and large been the Congress that's been after the increase in the up-arming of the humvees over a long period of time. Now we're finding out just in terms of the point that has been gone over with the General Pace and others about the shortage and about how people aren't going to go out into missions because they haven't gotten it. Now they find out the Army's only requested 60 in here.

And I don't understand how this is consistent with the assurances that you're giving this committee this morning.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That number doesn't track with my numbers, and I'd like to have -- come up here and tell me what we've got funded, Steve.

SEN. KENNEDY: Excuse me, what is -- if you'd give us what is funded and what is requested in '07 supplemental.

LT. GEN. STEPHEN SPEAKES (deputy chief of staff, U.S. Army): Yes, sir. Sir, let me address the concept. The concept right now is --

SEN. KENNEDY: Just give me the numbers, please, and then we get the concept.

GEN. SPEAKES: Yes, sir. Sir, absolutely.

The requested '07: \$520 million. We are in the process right now. We have submitted a reprogramming request for \$70 million. That is up at the office of secretary of Defense's office, being considered now. In FY '08, an additional \$500 million.

We also put into our unfunded requirements list \$2.2 billion. That goes and buys out 2,500. We are en route then to the future. We're doing it now.

SEN. KENNEDY: That's unfunded?

GEN. SPEAKES: Yes, sir.

SEN. KENNEDY: So that is unfunded?

GEN. SPEAKES: Yes, sir, it is.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Not all of it.

SEN. KENNEDY: The -- well, I have the list. I don't want to take up more time, but I have the list -- the DOD list -- which is unfunded requirements: MRAP at 2.2 (billion

dollars). I had -- my information was, you funded out of your Army budget 60 and had requested in the supplemental '07 500.

Now, if those -- rather, my time is up here. If you could translate that -- those figures that you gave into that, the point that I would be saying here, General: It's difficult to gather the sense of urgency that I think most have expressed about having adequate equipment over there when we've got the Army, which has a major role in this surge aspect. And the Army request is only 60, and the Marines have gone up to the extent that they've had virtually eight times the amount of the Army, and had (done ?) the request.

I'll make those figures available.

If you could just answer back, I'd very, very much --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, we'll respond for the record because those figures, I don't believe, track with what we have.

SEN. KENNEDY: All right. Well, I'll give the general just the figures from the Defense Department that I have here. If -- that's where we've gotten them -- both from the Marine Corps. And if those aren't accurate, then we'd like to be corrected.

Thank you.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you, Senator Kennedy.

Senator Thune.

SEN. JOHN THUNE (R-SD): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Schoomaker and General Conway, thanks so much for your service and for being here today.

General Schoomaker, in your testimony, you had mentioned that budget reductions in fiscal year '06 caused the Army to, quote, "Slam the brakes on expenditures when supplemental appropriations were not provided when expected," end quote. You also mentioned the lack of funding in FY '06 was avoidable.

And I guess the question is: How was it avoidable? Was it a planning issue or a communication issue with the Congress?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, we received the main budget in 2006 at the end of December. That's one quarter after the fiscal year started. We received our first increment of supplemental funding at the same time, at the end of December. We received our second increment of supplemental funding at the end of June, 30th of June, which was only 90 days before the fiscal year ended.

SEN. THUNE: It's June '07 -- excuse me, June '06?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I'm talking about in 2006 -- last year is what I testified to. So we received -- we cash-flowed our self for the entire first quarter of '06, which caused us to have to take extraordinary measures to slow things down. We then had to cash-flow our self again, all the way to June 30th.

You might remember, we had significant dialogue with the Hill about the impacts of this. We had to go through extraordinary measures of laying people off, slowing down production and depots, stopping travel, stopping all kinds of things that were crucial to us.

And when I testified in June about my concerns, about the nondeployed force readiness, it precipitated an effort for the Hill that was appreciated, which gave us \$17.1 billion in reset funding at the beginning of this fiscal year, which included over \$4 billion. Actually, there was almost \$5 billion that we were denied the previous year, to catch up. So, the \$17.1 billion was actually a makeup from 2006 and what we anticipated we would need for 2007 to keep things going.

As a result of getting the money on time in sufficient amount, we now have got the - - we've gone from some -- we're up to over 25 million direct labor hours in our depots. We've accelerated from eight hours a day, you know, shifts, five days a week, to now where we're averaging 10-hour days on two shifts six days a week -- a significant increase in our depot output for reset.

So, that's what I was speaking to. It's a matter of timing and sufficiency, and if we have, if we don't -- this year we will suffer the same fate if we don't see the supplemental funding come in by April. We'll end up having to go right back to that same cash-flow kind of a problem, and we'll slow down this whole system.

So that is our -- and again, I remind you that the Army request, as it goes in, just like the Marine Corps and everybody else, goes through a process where different levels help shuffle these priorities about what is, and certain things end up unfunded.

SEN. THUNE: What advice would you pass on to General Casey to ensure that it doesn't happen again?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I've -- I mean, we've already had significant discussions, the last one as late as yesterday. And I told him that it is absolutely essential -- I mean it's just paramount -- that we maintain the momentum. If we don't maintain the momentum and the synergy that we've achieved here between the department and the Hill, and get -- and continue to stay ahead of this problem, we are going to end up having to back up.

Now I remind you, we started this fight flat-footed as a result of the \$100 billion in underinvestment in the United States Army that occurred following the Cold War. The Army was the major bill payer in the peace dividend. And so, we started with a \$56 billion deficit in equipment.

The Army is only 40 percent -- I'm talking about active, Guard, Reserve -- it's only 40 percent of the size of the Army at the end of the Cold War. We are on a very aggressive program to increase the actual organizations in the Army, combat organizations, by over 30 percent. And we now have permission to grow the Army in terms of personnel to man that.

But at the same time that we're at war, when we have combat losses and we have accelerated depreciation of this equipment because of how hard it's being run, we still have to make up that shortfall that we started with. At the same time that it's "attritting," the same time we're trying to grow.

And we can't do it by keeping shooting behind the ducks. We have to get ahead of the program, and that means adequate funding in a timely fashion to get ahead of where we have to go. We have that momentum today, and I really -- again, I wasn't being -- I meant what I said. I appreciate the support we've gotten out of this committee.

We're on the right path. We need to continue to support General Casey and the Army as we go forward. We need to complete this. It includes things such as BRAC and MILCON, which, right now, we're fighting. We've got a \$2 billion shortfall in BRAC funding, which means we won't have barracks, training facilities, child care centers, family housing for the units we have to grow and reposition.

And so we need your help to operate in anticipation of where we're trying to go, and join together in our campaign to get this thing right. We are in a dangerous period, and the things that we're seeing today are going to continue.

I just got through talking to my Chinese counterpart the other day. And they didn't say that we're their adversary, but they made it very clear that people are going to school on what they see happening, and this asymmetric component of warfare is going to continue to be part of warfare in the future, and we've got to fix this force -- Marine Corps, Army, SOF, Navy and Air Force -- in such a fashion that it is prepared for the 21st century.

And so I'm sorry to amplify this thing into a, you know, a big ball here. But we've got to quit dealing tactically with this problem and deal with it strategically, which means we've got to look at the whole issue. And we've got to come together in a way that solves this issue: not chasing humvees every time that they raise, but going and reaching out and getting ahead of this.

And these people that keep saying that we're never going to do this again, I don't know where they come from. I mean, this is a peek into the future, and we better get our self ready for it.

And so, I will get off my soapbox, but, you know, I probably answered more of the question than you wanted, but that's where I'm coming from.

SEN. THUNE: I appreciate that.

And my time is expired, Mr. Chairman, but I would like to submit a question for the record, regarding National Guard funding in particular as it pertains to my state of South Dakota.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, if I could, I can tell you something right now. We have about \$46 billion in equipment that you've -- that's in this budget for the National Guard and Reserves. If you take a look beyond 2013, there's an additional \$52 billion worth of requirements that we estimate right now. Of that, \$24 billion is for the National Guard and Reserves.

SEN. THUNE: Thank you.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: So, you know, this budget that is submitted, although substantial, is only getting us partway by 2013. And if we want to do something smart, we would try to accelerate some of that stuff outside this program at some point into this program, and get ahead of it.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you, Senator Thune.

I've just been informed there's going to be a third vote this morning, which complicates our lives further, but we're going to continue to just try to work around it the best we can.

Senator Reed.

SEN. JACK REED (D-RI): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, General Conway, General Schoomaker.

Let me add my commendation, General Schoomaker, for your service in a very difficult situation. You performed admirably. Thank you very much, sir.

I just want to go back and clarify something -- General Speakes comments to Senator Levin. You used the term "cross level." What does that mean? I -- maybe General Speakes

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Are you asking me?

SEN. REED: Either one who's most prepared.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, in our terms, what we're doing to accelerate forces in the theater is having to move -- maneuver equipment, as I'm sure the Marine Corps is doing, from across units to make fully equipped units that are going forward.

SEN. REED: So essentially, you're taking equipment from units principally in the United States, I presume?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's correct.

SEN. REED: And giving them -- which further erodes your deployment situation, your readiness situation in nondeployed --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That is correct. That's the dilemma.

SEN. REED: Let's just focus a minute on the last brigade you have scheduled to go into Iraq. They don't have -- I presume they don't have the equipment physically in their possession yet -- all of it, is that correct?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: They have -- first of all, I don't want to talk about timing, but as you know, it's down the road a ways.

SEN. REED: Yes, sir, I don't.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: And the answer is that they have the equipment that's available in CONUS, and yes, they are -- they have been accelerated in their training with it. However, as you know, things like MRAP 5 up-armored humvees and some of this feeder-specific equipment they will not link up with until they get in the theater, so --

SEN. REED: Okay. That equipment that they have to link up has been identified?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: It has been. That's what General Speakes was talking to.

SEN. REED: And there's not a situation where there's a -- there could be a disconnect -- I'm talking about the last brigade down, moving forward, and those last units where it's identified, but it can't be produced or it's not linked up. You're confident that --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I believe we have the solution in hand. It's going to be some hard work. I believe we will get there, given the set of conditions we have today.

SEN. REED: Let me switch to another issue which I think you're being tasked for, and that is first, enablers: translators, Civil Affairs officers. Have you a full complement of translators and Civil Affairs officers (with your ?) new tactics?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: As you know, we've accelerated all of that. We're doubling our Civil Affairs holdings. We're growing Special Operations Command by about 14,000, which is Civil Affairs, PSYOPs, Special Forces, Rangers, Special Ops Aviation, so --

SEN. REED: Thank you.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- but again, it's going to take time. I mean, this is going out through the program.

SEN. REED: We understand that, sir. But you've got a mission to support General Petraeus's new tactics, which presumes significant translators, since you're operating small units in the neighborhoods. Can you guarantee us that they will have the full complement -- the request -- of translators and Civil Affairs officers?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I cannot guarantee that. I know we're working very hard on it. We're doing the best we can.

SEN. REED: No, I understand, and I appreciate your candor.

With the respect to the supplemental, General Conway, how much did you ask for this supplemental -- the Marine Corps?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, \$5.6 billion.

SEN. REED: And how much did you get?

GEN. CONWAY: You're talking about --

SEN. REED: Talking about the FY '07 supplemental.

GEN. CONWAY: The bridge sup, sir, the one that -- we got all we asked for.

SEN. REED: You got all you asked for.

General Schoomaker, how much did you ask for in the bridge supplemental?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: We had in the -- you know, it comes in different pieces. The bridge supplemental Title 9 was about \$44 billion. It's \$43.8 billion. The main supplemental request for '07 is \$46.7 billion.

SEN. REED: Do you have it all that you asked for?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, we got what we asked for in the bridge. The main is pending.

SEN. REED: And the pending -- have you received everything in the pending request?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, as you know, there is an "un-financed" requirements list that we were asked to submit, and some of that was in our request.

SEN. REED: And you made the request. Who essentially turned you down for that funding?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I don't know. You know, it goes through OSD to OMB, and comes out in the president's budget and request over here to the Hill, so the process prioritizes above us. We lay out what we think we need, and --

SEN. REED: So you've made the case for more resources, but either the sec. Def. or OMB or the president has decided that they're not going to fund those requests.

GEN. SPEAKES: Sir, I don't think the decision's been made yet. But we're still testifying in order to try to be able to justify it.

SEN. REED: And you're testifying to who? I don't mean to be --

MR. SPEAKES: Spoke yesterday, sir, with the House Armed Services Committee on --

SEN. REED: Well, I'm talking about the request that's come over here, which comes from the executive. We've been known to increase, based on your testimony, but what's coming over here seems to be less than asked, at least by the Army, and that decision was made above your level. Is that correct, sir?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's the process --

SEN. REED: I understand. I just want to make it clear because when you return here and people ask you, "Why didn't you ask for the money?" you did.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: First of all, in defense of everybody, I don't think it's really simple why things get prioritized the way they do. As you know, people are working against certain top-line caps and have to work within certain limits that are set. And so I think people are trying to do the very best they can do, in terms of their priorities. But the fact of the matter is, you know, it's different than what it ends up.

SEN. REED: I have a --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I just got a piece of paper. We requested 99 billion (dollars) in the supplemental, and we -- our submission now is for 93 (billion dollars).

SEN. REED: So there's a bell curve of about \$6 billion.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, sir.

SEN. REED: You mentioned pre-positioned stocks, General Schoomaker. Can you elaborate on your concerns?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: In an unclassified form, I'd rather not go into specifics, but I can tell you that pre-positioned stocks were part of the solution to accelerate the brigades. And therefore, it increases the risk to our strategic depth.

SEN. REED: And this obviously raises issues with respect to other potential contingencies. You are not as well prepared today as you were several years ago to respond to an additional contingency.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I think in some respects we -- it's not useful to compare to prior to this war because we were in, you know, we weren't in good shape then. But I would tell you that my concerns have increased. That's why I've talked about this. And again, the Chairman's risk assessment -- the classified documents have been provided over here -- lays this out. And I think that it would be more appropriate to discuss that at that level.

SEN. REED: Well, final question -- my time has expired.

Given all you've said, this obviously is a factor in the advice that you would give to the secretary of Defense and to the president with respect to other operations.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Absolutely.

SEN. REED: Thank you very much.

SEN. LEVIN: Just an historic fact: The '06 sup, which came to you so late, was not included in the '06 base budget.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's correct.

SEN. LEVIN: That's the heart of the problem, and that's what we've been complaining about here. We want these sups in the base budgets.

Senator Warner.

SEN. JOHN WARNER (R-VA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Having had a little experience myself in the building, I really commend you and your staffs. These necessary changes and challenges you have are tough to beat, and you're doing the best you can trying to work out a long-range financial plan and at the same time adjusting for what the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, JCS and the president deem are necessary additional requirements.

So I draw your attention to the president's announced plan in just weeks ago, in January, about the 21,500 additional forces. Since that time, we've had published reports, namely the Congressional Budget Office, stating that there were considerable additional forces than the 21,500 needed, for the infrastructure to support the implementation of five new brigades into this operation, and such additional Marines has come forward.

Do you have any comments on that report? And in the period of time since that report was issued, which was February 1, I presume the system has worked it and now has a more accurate answer.

General?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, we could give you specifics for the record. I'll give you the magnitudes.

Since the last time I testified, we knew that we were going to have five brigades that were so-called surging into Iraq. And of course, we've worked that very carefully.

In addition to that, since that time, we now have an additional brigade going into Afghanistan, we have an additional some 2,500 embedded trainers over and above what we had before, and we now are getting requests for combat support -- combat service support components, to support this surge.

So, you're exactly right. The five brigades is only the tip of the iceberg. And there's lots below that that we have to do. And we're even today, getting additional requests for forces that continue to stress us, in terms of what we have to do.

SEN. WARNER: Can you give us some better estimate? I mean the -- one of the CBO estimates apparently was it to be not 21,500. It could be as high as 48,000. Now, that seems to me to be slightly beyond realistic.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's beyond realistic, but --

SEN. WARNER: What increment above 21,500 do you estimate?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I think the planning factor we've used in the past is about 15 percent.

SEN. WARNER: Fifteen?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: So about 15 percent for logistics to support the force. And of course, your embedded trainers, the 2,500 I talked about, are over and above that. So there's probably a factor of another 5,000 or 6,000. And this is an estimate. We'll give you the specifics.

GEN. CONWAY: From a Marine Corps perspective, sir, we have no additional increase. It's a mature theater. We rely upon the Army for theater-level logistics, and our numbers are what they are.

SEN. WARNER: So your numbers will remain?

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, sir.

SEN. WARNER: Now in the course of the buildup -- of the planning for the buildup, the president and his staff -- and I've often said -- did work very hard there for about 90 days in the fall and announced it in early January. I presume that each of you -- or perhaps not you, General Conway, because you were still moving into the commandant's office -- but you, General Schoomaker, were consulted on a regular basis as to the availability of the forces to meet those surge levels of 21,500.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, we were consulted. We provided our very candid military advice on this. I don't deal in the 21,500. I deal --

SEN. WARNER: I beg your pardon?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: The answer is yes. I was fully consulted and I was able to provide advice, as were the other chiefs. We don't tend to deal in numbers like 21,500. We deal in X number of brigades, X number of --

SEN. WARNER: All right.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- trainers and these kinds of things. So what we talked about and the advice we provided was a variety of options and what the impact would be. And I personally feel that from the president on down that I had adequate opportunity to provide my absolute candid advice, and I did that.

SEN. WARNER: Are you able this morning, or should it be in classified session to share that advice with us?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I -- sir, you know, our practice is that the advice we provide the president remains confidential between us and the president.

SEN. WARNER: But in this instance, you are responding to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I'm responding to -- in the case that I'm talking about, I respond to the secretary of Defense and the president, as an individual chief, as a member of the Joint Chiefs, and we communicate through the chairman to them.

SEN. WARNER: Well --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: What I'm saying is that the chairman is obligated to present any dissenting opinions --

SEN. WARNER: Correct.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- of advice, and he did that, as did we -- anything that we differed. However, I will remind you that our mission now is to support the commander in chief. He's made a decision, and we are putting our heart and soul into making sure that General Petraeus is successful in this --

SEN. WARNER: I don't question that at all, General. And I have some familiarity with that reporting chain, so I appreciate your statement. But we have fortunately, in Virginia, the Joint Forces Command under General Smith. Are you familiar with that?

Now he actually goes out and tasks the various service chiefs to advise him about the availability and the degree of training and equipment in each of those forces.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's correct.

SEN. WARNER: Now when he approached the Army through you, presumably, did you at that time express to him concerns about meeting the requirements?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Absolutely. General Smith is the Joint Force provider. Under Goldwater-Nichols --

SEN. WARNER: Right.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- his job is to provide the Joint Forces.

SEN. WARNER: I'm familiar with it. I've worked in Goldwater- Nichols and helped draw it up.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, sir.

SEN. WARNER: But my point is, I'm trying to determine the extent to which this committee of the United States Senate can be privy to your professional opinions with regard to the availability within the Army of a suitable number of units trained and in a state of readiness and its equipment to meet the requirements of this surge.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I would be glad to share with you what I told General Smith and --

SEN. WARNER: That's what I thought -- that is not --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: And his component is the Army Forces Command, and that is who we deal with. And we laid out to him exactly what the risks are in terms of the strategic depth of the Army -- exactly what the impacts are against other contingencies.

He was fully appraised of what the second- and third-order effects are of the level at which this force is being used to include my concerns about the lack of adequate dwell time -- not to just train and equip, but time for people to recuperate, to reunite with their families and to do the things that are necessary to sustain the long fight.

SEN. WARNER: Fine. I had the opportunity yesterday to go into some detail personally with General Smith -- this plan -- and therefore, Mr. Chairman, I hope that we can have a closed session. And in that closed session, the general can be forthcoming with regard to his response to the Joint Forces Command.

I thank the general.

SEN. LEVINE: Thank you very much, Senator Warner.

Now, Senator Ben Nelson is next. Have you voted, may I ask you?

SEN. E. BENJAMIN NELSON (D-NE): No, I haven't.

SEN. LEVINE: Okay, because we're in the second half now of that first vote.

Is there anybody here who has voted, if not -- okay.

Well, Senator Nelson, it's in your hands. If someone gets back by the time you are done, hand it over to them.

SEN. NELSON: I'll hurry.

SEN. LEVINE: Otherwise just please recess.

SEN. NELSON: I'll hurry.

General Schoomaker, the funding for the National Guard equipment is an imperative, and we all understand. It's my understanding that the Guard is equally concerned about having additional funding for the adequate training for the equipment because

as the equipment is replaced, it's obviously replaced by improvements as new designs and new equipment becomes available.

I assume that's the case with the RAPs as that becomes available to those -- the Guard and Reserve units. Do we have adequate funding if requests in the budget for that kind of training?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, the --

SEN. NELSON: And it's a multiyear --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, sir.

SEN. NELSON: -- of a requirement, too.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: As you know, the Guard and Reserve comprise 55 percent of our Army. They are a significant portion of our Army -- the total force. As you know, the Guard and Reserve traditionally has not been well-resourced and has not been retained at a high level of readiness. We are correcting that. As I stated in this program that we have submitted, the president's budget out through 2013, there is an excess of \$40 billion worth of equipment. In fact, I think its 45 (billion dollars), almost \$46 billion --

SEN. NELSON: Forty-six. Forty-six.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- that is in there to help rectify this situation. Now that's a steep hill to climb because we've got -- you know, they were -- they've got old equipment in many cases, and they've got holes in that force. Twenty percent of the equipment in theater right now is from the reserve components. Eighty percent is from the active components. And as I said earlier, if you look beyond 2013, of the \$52 billion that we estimate it would take to complete this resourcing of this force properly; the force that we're growing, about \$24 billion of that is for Guard and Reserves.

So I think by any measure, when you take a look at the commitment we have to the Guard and Reserve as part of the total Army, that this is historic in terms of the resourcing that -- .

SEN. NELSON: Well, I'm very pleased with the resetting of equipment. I think it's important to do that, but I equally am concerned at making sure that the training dollars are available as well, or otherwise there would be an inadequacy. And I truly understand that.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That's right.

SEN. NELSON: General Conway, you are listed in the consultation section of the Iraq Study Group report as one of the military officials who met with the ISG. Were you ever interviewed regarding any question of surging troops in Baghdad?

GEN. CONWAY: No, sir. I was not. My involvement with the committee was as the J3. I presented to them a number of briefs -- I think three briefs in total -- as they came through the Department of Defense on their way into Iraq.

SEN. NELSON: Well, as we engage with the Iraqi Army and the surge, particularly as it relates to Baghdad and the sectarian violence -- or violence worse than a civil war as it's been described by some -- can you tell me who the enemy would be?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, my expertise is in the Al Anbar province. That's where the Marines are. I would defer questions on Baghdad, I think, appropriately to General Schoomaker where we have Army brigades.

SEN. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

General Schoomaker, can you tell me who the enemy is? Who we will be fighting in sectarian violence?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I can tell you who -- I would prefer to categorize it like this. There are anti-coalition forces. And our purpose there has created a security environment so that other elements -- the political element, the economic element -- can take its traction.

SEN. NELSON: I understand why --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I think you know -- I think what you're alluding to is this is an extraordinarily complex situation.

SEN. NELSON: Absolutely.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: It's one in which, you know, probably at this point now, it would be better addressed to General Petraeus in terms of based on which area he's operating in and what the dynamics are in that area, and what would be considered to be the --

SEN. NELSON: And maybe what neighborhood.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Excuse me?

SEN. NELSON: And maybe what neighborhood.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: And maybe what neighborhood. That's correct.

SEN. NELSON: Particularly as it might relate to Sadr City.

Well, given the time frame, thank you very much.

And thank you, General Schoomaker, for all the courtesies and for your extraordinary service to our country.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Thank you.

SEN. NELSON: I look forward to seeing you again.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Thank you, sir.

SEN. NELSON: Thank you.

(Recess.)

SEN. LEVIN: (Sounds gavel.) The committee will come back to order. And we have at least two senators now that are going to want to ask questions in open session, and then we'll hopefully have time to go to executive session.

Senator Cornyn.

SEN. JOHN CORNYN (T-TX): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Schoomaker and General Conway, I want to ask you about supplemental appropriations and through the regular -- about the regular appropriation process.

I know there's been a lot of back-and-forth about what the best way to fund the war costs is -- wherever it's through the regular appropriation process or through supplemental appropriations. And specifically what I want to direct your attention to is the BRAC funds -- the Base Realignment and Closing (sic/Closure) commission funds -- \$2 billion of which were cut out of the continuing resolution, or omnibus appropriation, that we passed yesterday.

There were a number of us who complained mightily about that and offered an amendment to try to reverse that change. But now, I think we've been told that that money will likely be made up in a supplemental appropriation bill.

Can you explain to me, General Schoomaker -- perhaps, starting with you, sir -- what your approach has been to how you try to allocate cost to the general appropriations versus supplemental appropriations? And are we sending you a consistent message, or are we sending you mixed messages?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, if I could address the first part of your question. As you know, there's been a continuing difference of opinion about where the war costs ought to be. And I'll tell you that I think that there's certain part of the war costs that are very hard to predict, and, therefore, the supplemental appropriations in some form is necessary.

However, now, six years into this, we have some experience, and we can predict certain aspects of it. And I do agree. And I think that as we go into the future, we're seeing certain aspects, certainly of what the Army's doing, pulled into the base, as we go forward.

For instance, the growth of the Army is split between the base and supplemental right now, but by 2009, the whole thing will be inside the base, as an example.

Specifically to MILCON and BRAC, we had about a \$5.8 billion requirement there, between the two that are absolutely essential to being able to re-station and build the force that we're talking about.

I mean, just to, kind of, order of magnitude, there were 42 barracks complexes in there that housed almost 10,000 soldiers, 19 day care centers, about 30 Reserve force facilities to replace armories that are, you know, being BRAC'd -- training ranges and things of that nature.

So, as you know, the MILCON -- of that 5.8 (billion dollars), all but about 2 (billion dollars) has been taken care of. We've got the \$2 billion that's BRAC-related that now is a concern.

And the only caution I would make is that as it goes in -- if it goes in the supplemental, it ought to be additive, that what we shouldn't do is displace else, because you've seen our un-financed- requirements list. You know what our -- the demand is as we surge and as we try to do what we're doing in the war. And so, we would hope that in rectifying the BRAC that it doesn't then offset something else that's essential as well.

GEN. CONWAY: Senator, I would substantially the same thing to you. I think that the supplementals have been helpful in terms of those unanticipated or the costs that we just can't calculate as finely as you might like at budget time. But it also creates a level of uncertainty for some of the out-year programs.

I'll use manpower as an example. We contract people for four years. To think that we would pay for the end strength through a continuation of supplementals I think puts some of that long-range planning and so forth at risk.

The CR is really important to us. In the Marine Corps we denied to ourselves the importance of barracks, in particular, for a long time. They've just not made our top cut in terms of the priority year to year. Now we find ourselves up against a wall. And we have Marines living in Korean-era barracks with gang heads, and we owe them something much better.

So we have a program through about 2012 to build 105 more barracks, most of them for the operating forces. And it is rather critical to us that this point that we see this program through.

SEN. CORNYN: General Schoomaker, I recall over the last few years that we've had a lot of discussion back and forth about how do we access more of our active-duty military, and how do we transform what -- the military we have -- to make it more accessible for the new kind of missions that they're being called upon. And you've been at the forefront of that.

And I recall the former secretary of Defense talking about tapping a keg at the top as opposed to the bottom and saying, you know, there ought to be a better way to access the 2.5-or-so million men and women in uniform. And it just doesn't make any sense to have a 130,000 people deployed, roughly, in Iraq, and that puts such stress and strain on our service members.

Could you update us about where we are in that effort to try to make sure that is -- whatever the force is -- that we've got it organized to optimal levels so they can be deployed without unnecessary stress and strain on our military and their families?

SEN. SESSIONS: Senator Cornyn, I just want to note the secretary of Defense quoted General Schoomaker about that keg story. So that's a good question, as he wraps up his time here.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I wasn't going to 'fess up because I've been afraid I'm a culprit in this deal, and, you know, there's a limitation to that analogy. But to really answer your answer, I think you're talking about accessing the Reserve components in a better way.

As you know, in the Cold War the Reserve components were looked at as a strategic reserve, and it was anticipated there would be a lot of indications and warning, and

that we would have years to bring them up. Therefore, there was a lot of risk taken in the Reserve component.

Today, Reserve components comprise about 55 percent of our Army, and they are now an operational force, not only for homeland security and homeland defense, but also for what we call the away game. So, therefore, we need to have the entire Army on a common baseline of equipment, training and readiness to standards. And that's what we're building towards.

We have created what's called the Army Force Generation Model, which allows us to predict the time at which we will need these forces, both active, Guard and Reserve, and time their training, readiness and equipment reset based upon that model.

Now, the reality is that what we've been doing in the Army as we re-balanced the Army and fixed the keg solution there that I guess -- we'll use another analogy -- we said this is kind of like building an airplane while it's in flight.

And so while we've been fighting this war, we've been transforming the Army, we've been doing the re-balancing, restructuring of the Army, and the more and more that has been committed to the fight, the shorter and shorter the dwell on this Army Force Generation Model of these forces. And therefore, it's caused us to have to use active, Guard and Reserve forces more frequently than we would otherwise like to. And quite frankly, it has made it even more demanding as we've tried to develop the depth we need in the force.

And I'm sorry that -- I hope this explanation's adequate. It's a very complex kind of a situation. But I believe we are well on the path to correct what existed in those days.

You know, we have moved the institutional portion of the Army down to something less than 30 percent. In other words, previously we had a very large institutional piece of the Army compared to the operational force. We have grown the operational force within our own footprint -- reduced our institutional thing. We've done good business practices. We've done military-to-civilian conversions. And we're working this very hard to make sure that what we're doing is getting the best bang for the buck as we grow this force.

Again, I'll tell you that the Army is about 40 percent the size it was at the end of the Cold War. We are increasing the capability of the Army by over 30 percent, and we're largely doing it within our own footprint.

And now that we're getting some growth with end strength increase that's going to help us considerably accelerate this and to build the kind of Army we need for the future.

I think we're well on the path to do that.

SEN. CORNYN: Whether it's the stress and strains of multiple deployments because our Army is and military force is too small -- I know we're taking steps long term to address that -- or whether it's providing the facilities, the barracks or housing or day care centers through funding, one thing I think this committee I know is certainly determined to do is to make sure, to the best of our ability, you get what you need, and our military, particularly in an all-volunteer military, where we not only have to recruit people but also retain experienced service members, that we try to -- my

hope is we try to avoid some of these peaks and valleys and some of the herky-jerky approach that, unfortunately, seems to have prevailed all too often.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, if I could have an alibi there: In the Army's case, this is not just a matter of increasing and improving the quality of life of the soldiers we have, but in the case of BRAC, the \$2 billion, we actually have to build facilities to be able to put the forces we're growing. This is not a matter of improvement; it's a matter of having the capacity to actually station forces that we're moving and building. And without that, we in fact will retard, you know, the growth of the Army.

And if I could go just one step farther: I presented in the past in testimony kind of an equation that said, you know, the current operational demands on our force exceed what the QDR strategy said it was going to be. And the QDR strategy exceeded what the resourcing was. And we've tried to fix the disconnect between the resource and the strategy through base appropriations. And we tried to fix the delta between the strategy and the current demand on the force with supplemental appropriations.

Now, with the growth of the Army, we're starting to close those. And I believe that we can start merging, in many cases, supplemental and base budget kind of things. But of course, that means we have to grow the top line of the base budget.

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, you make a strong point on the importance of taking advantage of everybody that we do have in uniform. And in the case of the Marine Corps, about three and a half weeks ago now, we put out a directive that says we've got to get every Marine into the fight.

When I travel about and ask for a show of hands, I'll get a lot of people will see two, three and four deployments -- a rare five -- but I also get hands of people who say they haven't been at all. And so we're saying to our commanders out there, "You've got to get these Marines there." That's why they joined. They expect to be able to defend their country, and that their MOS doesn't match up or they're the only guy that can do drain-plug thing -- doesn't matter, because in time, those people will be competing for promotion and for opportunity against people who have been there. And so we owe it to them at this point to give them that opportunity and also to expand our combat experience within the Marine Corps.

SEN. CORNYN: Well, at the great Marine museum at Quantico that I just went out to see recently, I was reminded every Marine's a rifleman. And so I appreciate what you're saying.

GEN. CONWAY: (Laughs.) You're right.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you, Senator Cornyn.

Senator Sessions.

SEN. SESSIONS: Just to follow up on the BRAC question: Gen. Schoomaker, the money for the BRAC that was taken out by the Senate leadership, over my objection -- and I had to be in the position of, unfortunately, voting against the CR just to let people know I disagreed with that very seriously. You had that in the baseline budget of the military? Is that -- I mean --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, that's correct. And -- but --

SEN. SESSIONS: So we had it in the baseline, and this clearly was a part of a baseline budget, not a war cost. It was a baseline budget. So now it's been moved over to the supplemental. And either one of two things are going to happen: Either they're going to keep the supplemental at the president's request and make you take other monies from the war to do the BRAC, or we're going to raise the supplemental, which will create a false impression of the -- how much the war costs at this period of time. Is that fair to say?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Under the current circumstances we find ourselves in now with this, it's the latter, I hope, that occurs. I hope the --

SEN. SESSIONS: I understand that.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- raising of the supplemental top line is what I --

SEN. SESSIONS: I know, and I -- we -- I support that, and I'm going to vote for that. But it's painful because some tough decisions were made to keep it within the budget, and we spent that money on social matters that -- the Democratic majority spent it on other matters, deliberately leaving us short, knowing that we could -- had to have this money to complete BRAC and that we would put it back in on an emergency supplemental. I don't think that was good.

General Schoomaker, let me first thank you for your service. You took on a difficult task. You have served exceedingly well. You brought great experience to it. And as -- one of -- the experience you brought to the chief of staff of the Army was that you was that you had been the commander of our SOF forces, our Special Operation Forces, which have proven themselves to be exceedingly valuable, particularly in this kind of conflict.

Would you reflect for us, just briefly, on the -- how much we've moved and increased the Special Operation(s) Forces? Those are our forces who have cultural studies, language studies, embedded forces, and are trained to do asymmetric kind of warfare activities.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, sir, I share your pride in our special operating forces, and of course the Army has a great investment there. You know a lot of people think that our SOF forces are outside the Army end strength; in fact, all those forces -- Army forces -- are inside our end strength.

So, when we're growing SOF now in this program by an additional 14,000 -- we're adding five Special Forces battalions; we're adding -- the equivalent of a Ranger battalion; a Special Operations aviation battalion; we're doubling Civil Affairs and doubling PSYOP, and providing some logistics for them. It's a significant investment that the Army has in -- in fact, when I was commanding SOCOM, 46 percent of all SOF was in the Army.

So we have a huge investment there, and I'm proud that we're continuing to support SOCOM because I agree with you -- I think the special operating forces are a very, very important component of the kind of fight that we're in. But I will remind you that they can't do it all.

And they're special because they do things that other forces aren't organized, trained, equipped to do -- language qualification. They're very senior in terms of

experience and rank. And they operate in ways that are very complementary to what our general purpose forces bring to the fight.

But I think we've made just leaps and bounds. And I'm very, very proud to have been associated with them. As you know, I go back a long way. I was part of the failed Iran rescue mission. I know what it was like when we were way at the bottom of the heap and when we had enthusiasm confused with capability, through the Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and everything that's occurred in the growth of our Special Operations Forces. I think we've done this right. And we did it at the right time, and it came together just in a nick of time for the kind of a century that we now face today.

SEN. SESSIONS: And with regard to Afghanistan, would you briefly tell us how the special operating forces are -- how they contribute to that effort?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, they -- as you know, they have a major --

SEN. SESSIONS: Summarize that for us.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, sir. They have a major role to play in the training and equipping, and they have a huge role to play in many special operations --

SEN. SESSIONS: That the initial --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: In the initial days, as you know, it was a Special Operations fight. Getting in there and enabling the Northern Alliance to be able to defeat the Taliban in such short order was quite a fact.

In fact, I often use young Captain Martin Noosh (ph), who was one of the ODA team leaders at -- that worked and was successful at the battle of Mazare Sharif, where a mere 14-man team with 2,500 Afghan fighters defeated a Soviet-equipped 10,000-man force dug in in a reverse-slope defense and a defile. And they did it in one night. And they did it using guile and precision and communications that were successful there. So I think that's an indicator of the kind of false-multiplication role that our Special Operations Forces can play in that kind of a deal.

SEN. SESSIONS: Thank you for your tremendous leadership across the board. But history will record you helped create the Special Forces and bring them to the level they are today.

General Conway, I just want to tell you how much I admire you and appreciated the opportunity to visit you in Iraq and the leadership that you and your people showed in Fallujah and that fierce battle that was fought there. And I wanted to appreciate that, say thank you for that, and we're proud to have you head the Marine Corps -- and would ask, briefly, with regard to up-armored vehicles -- humvees -- that are -- General Casey said that with regard to the Army, he had issued a rule that none would be off the secured bases. Is the Marine Corps operating at same level?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, it applies to us as well. Our Multinational Force West reports to the Multinational Corps, and those orders are all in effect. And we are doing exactly that. We're also in good shape in regard to the Frag Kit 5s. But also, importantly to us, because out west we're seeing a lot of underbody explosions -- Frag Kit 2 is also -- which is the underbody additional armor -- is also there in large numbers to outfit all of our up-armored hummers.

SEN. SESSIONS: I just don't to have mothers and fathers who may be watching this thinking that we're riding around in Iraq without -- and not being in armored humvees and that kind of thing. This Congress has put up money, and we've produced huge numbers. I think we went from, like, several hundred armored humvees to 24,000, I was told this morning. And none operate off bases in Iraq today.

And I also -- General Schoomaker -- this morning, Secretary Harvey talked about these new brigades. And if you could just give me this number, because my time has expired -- briefly -- but the new brigades through technology, good management, weapons systems that use fewer people to operate the weapons systems and the vehicles -- you've been able to take the same number of soldiers in a brigade but have far more infantry capability fighting for us out of that.

Would you share briefly how --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sure.

SEN. SESSIONS: -- you've done that?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, sir. If you look at the objective brigade we're talking about -- FCS-equipped brigade -- that is 900 soldiers -- roughly 900 soldiers smaller than the heavy brigade that it displaces. It has about 20 percent of the sensors, 60 percent less logistics associated with it, and it has twice the number of infantry and squads in that brigade.

So this is a perfect example where technology is allowing us to place manpower in the places that are necessary -- you know, doubling the number of riflemen in a brigade. It also provides the best situational awareness and the best force protection that technology can provide. So that is the path that we're on. And I think --

SEN. SESSIONS: Thank you.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- he spoke to that this morning.

SEN. SESSIONS: And you've done that in a time of war, and it's been most difficult. And thank you for your service.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you, Senator Sessions.

Just a couple questions, and then we'll go to Senator Warner and back to Senator Sessions if he has additional questions, and then we'll go to executive session, at least for a short time.

On this brigade -- the efficiencies technologically that are going to be able to be achieved -- you said 900 less soldiers in the brigade.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, that's the Future Combat System brigade --

SEN. LEVIN: Right, right.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- that we will start fielding in 2014.

SEN. LEVIN: Right. And what is the percentage of that -- does that represent? Nine hundred fewer than -- what's the current --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: That will --

SEN. LEVIN: -- approximate size?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: The program calls for 15 of these brigades that will displace 15 heavy brigades.

SEN. LEVIN: But how many in a brigade? How many soldiers?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Oh, I'm sorry. We go -- that brigade is around 2,800 soldiers.

SEN. LEVIN: So we'd -- it'd be a reduction from 2,800 roughly to 2,100 --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: From 3,700 -- from 3,700. It goes from 3,700 soldiers in every brigade down to about 2,800 soldiers in a --

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you. On the BRAC issue, I understand that there is a commitment on the part of the appropriators that the BRAC money will be funded in the supplemental and we expect that by April. Is that your understanding?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: We definitely need it no later than April.

SEN. LEVIN: Have you heard about that commitment?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, I've heard people say that we're going to be fully funded. My concern is whether it will be additive or whether it will displace other necessary things in the supplemental. That's my concern.

SEN. LEVIN: Fair enough, fair enough. But on that issue itself, assuming that it does not displace or it is done in a way which is acceptable, you do have -- you have heard about that commitment --

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, sir.

SEN. LEVIN: -- that money will be put into the supplemental.

Is it also not your recollection that that money was in an appropriation bill?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, that was in our base request.

SEN. LEVIN: I know that. But in the '07 appropriation bill, which never got to conference, which the Senate adopted for military construction -- that 2 billion (dollars) was in the Senate version of that appropriation bill, but it did not -- it was not allowed to go to conference. Is that your recollection?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, that my understanding

SEN. LEVIN: Okay

Senator Warner.

SEN. WARNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Very quickly, gentlemen, and I'll ask you to reply just for the record.

As we move towards increasing the end levels of both the Army and the Marine Corps, that puts additional burdens on the medical service that's rendered. And I'm told that there's internally an effort to reduce currently the number of medical personnel in uniform to be forwarded up to the secretary of Defense.

I might ask that each of you focus on that, and if you'd kindly advise the committee whether you feel those additional cuts in the uniformed personnel in the medical systems can be taken in view of the expectation that Congress will meet the president's request to increase end strength.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: You want this for the record, sir?

SEN. WARNER: Yes. Thank you very much.

What extent here in open session can you address the very serious sets of facts whereby a number of the helicopters that have recently been lost in combat scenarios? That loss has now been confirmed by the department as being attributed to enemy action, basically ground to air.

What steps, if any, are you two chiefs of services taking that you can tell us in open session to try and remedy that situation?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I will -- what I won't discuss in open session is what we know about how they were hit. But I can tell you that --

SEN. WARNER: I will raise that in this session, so we'll cover that for the record.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Yes, sir. The vice chief staff of Army, General Cody, who's a senior aviator in the Army, is returning today from an extended trip over there, and we -- one of his missions was to get into this and to talk to every aviation brigade commander and talk to the leadership.

We've had our chief of Army Aviation engaged in this. We've got our Aviation Center looking at it. It clearly is a combination of technologies and tactics -- tactics procedure -- you know, it's the full gamut of things. And as you know, we have protected our aircraft now 100 percent, with the aircraft survivability equipment. And --

SEN. WARNER: Up to this point.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Well, you might remember that before we canceled the Comanche program we had a hell of a lot of aircraft that were not --

SEN. WARNER: Yes, I do.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: -- not have this on it. We now have 100 percent of the aircraft that are over there and have for quite sometime, as a result of using that money to make that happen.

But there are more threats and dismissal threats in the theater, and so our tactics and the way that we operate have to continually adapt. And, you know, the factors of unpredictability are large, and so those are the kinds of things that we need to also do, so --

SEN. WARNER: Well, I have think you've given us a reassurance that every resource that you have at your command is now being directed to bring up solutions in --

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I'd rather talk about our specific tactics, techniques and procedures in a closed session, but I can tell you, generally speaking, that the things that we have been doing we think have protected our helicopters fairly well. Now, the exception, of course, was the loss of the 46 that we now believe was shot down about eight of nine days ago.

In looking at what we believe to be an accurate video, we're concerned that the ASE did not properly deploy on the aircraft. So our investigation is going to get after, why not? And we also, like the Army, are of course going to have to continue to review our TTPs to make sure that we continue to make our aircraft safe.

SEN. WARNER: Thank you.

One last question, Mr. Chairman, then I hope we can go to that closed session.

We've just been on the floor engaged in a colloquy about bringing up Iraq resolutions, and I'll leave to the record that situation to try and explain what our leaders were working out -- a good-faith attempt by both leaders.

But anyway, the resolution that I've put in S.ConRes. 7, which has been characterized by the press and others in many different ways, but the major thrust of the senator from Virginia in putting that in was to direct the attention to the fact that I was hopeful that the Iraqi forces -- 300,000 of them that we have trained -- could be utilized to a far greater degree in that operation than envisioned by the president's plan, because they understand the language; they understand the extremely complicated reasons why the sectarian violence of Sunni-on-Shi'a and vice versa -- so much for that history.

But we were assured, and the president in his plan described about the parallel chains of command and the like, and how the Iraqis would be on the point, and our forces would basically be in a support role.

So against that background, you can understand my astonishment when I picked up The New York Times this morning -- I can't verify the authenticity of this article, but I think it's important that we discuss this, to the best that you have knowledge on it, in open session.

I read: "Thousands of American troops and armored Stryker vehicles swarmed three mostly Shi'ite neighborhoods in northeastern Baghdad on Wednesday, encountering little resistance during what commanders described as the first major sweep of the new security plan for the capital."

Then dropping down: "But even an Iraqi announced the new phase of the security plan, it was clearly an American-led operation. Only 200 Iraqi police officers and soldiers were involved, commanders said, working along(side) 2,500 Americans."

Now, I just have to tell you that that falls far short of the public representation made by the administration that this operation would be a joint one, so to speak, and that the Iraqis would take the lead -- we would be basically in a support role.

Can either of you provide any light on the article that's now being disseminated publicly?

General?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, I talked to General Casey -- I can shed no light on that article; I have no knowledge about that operation. But I did spend quite a bit of time yesterday with General Casey in a discussion of how things were going in Baghdad up to the time that he left on Sunday. And his representation to me was that this is - - the emphasis here is on Iraqi-led operations, with U.S. forces backing up with embedded trainers inside the Iraqi forces.

So, that has been the way the strategy over there has been described to me. That's what I believe is being executed, and I have no further knowledge of what you've described there.

SEN. WARNER: Well, I would ask that you could provide the committee with your own views as to the authenticity of this article and the status of the balance of forces -- namely, Iraqi and U.S. -- as they move in on these operations.

General Conway, I look back at the time when I was chairman. You were always very courteous, and I tried to get over every week or two, and when you were in charge of the Joint Staff, to avail myself of the briefings. I know that you kept up to the time that you proudly stepped into the commandant's role a daily analysis of this situation. Can you comment at all on this article?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I cannot. It is counter to what I understood to be the plan as well, and then of course our traditional plan is to put the Iraqis in the lead. It's their country, and it's their military, and they will be the ones that eventually secure the stabilization of the country.

And it's counter to articles that appeared just the day announcing that Iraqi battalions were arriving as strong as 70 percent or more so.

So I think there is a plan to get them engaged. I don't understand the sequencing and the timing.

SEN. WARNER: Well, I was led to believe that as we moved out on the phases that things would be in place to fulfill that representation, namely that it'd be an Iraqi-led operation and we would be in the support role. This is -- this is astonishing, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you, Senator Warner.

Let me join Senator Warner in his expression of dismay at that article that runs counter to what we've been told that the surge would be, how it would be handled, and I don't know whether or not -- I had to talk to Senator Webb for just a moment -- but Senator Warner, did you request the report on that --

SEN. WARNER: No, I asked each of these chiefs of their services to -- after they've had an opportunity to determine the credibility of this report and perhaps other similar reports that I've seen -- not as serious as this one -- as to whether or not you feel this operation is proceeding as it was represented to you and to the Congress.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you. We will then rely on you, General, to get us that report back on behalf of the Army.

There was a story in yesterday's papers as well which read almost precisely the same. You saw pictures of the American troops in the lead.

I'm going to -- Senator Webb is next. He's not had an opportunity yet. He will take his turn. I'm going to leave the gavel to him. And then Senator Sessions or Senator Warner, if you have additional questions, he will then --

SEN. WARNER: Then do we --

SEN. LEVIN: -- call on you --

SEN. WARNER: -- do we recess?

SEN. LEVIN: -- and then he will recess to 222--

SEN. WARNER: -- 222

SEN. LEVIN: -- for executive session.

Senator Webb.

SEN. WARNER: Well, first I'd note that I'm pleased that my colleague from Virginia after just a few months in the Senate is now acting chairman. (Laughs.)

SEN. LEVIN: Well deserved.

SEN. WARNER: Very impressed. It took me 29 years. (Laughter.)

SEN. LEVIN: Well, let me say it's long overdue. Let me put it -- (laughter) -- Chairman Webb.

SEN. JIM WEBB (D-VA): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And my distinguished colleague from Virginia, it only took me 15 years to follow you over to secretary of the Navy, so I'm a little behind the power curve here in terms of what it might take in terms of becoming chairman.

Gentlemen, I apologize for having had to leave the room when -- we've got a competing hearing on Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and then a lot of maneuvering's been going on on the Senate floor. I appreciate your patience this morning. I did have a few questions I wanted to ask.

One of them -- and this is a limited time -- so I mean, you know -- in the interest of getting us all out of here, I don't expect, you know, extremely long answers to these questions, but I do want to get them into the record. And I have some concerns.

The first is on force structure. I would like to commend -- and by the way, Senator Warner, if I may say -- one other thing: General Conway was an officer candidate in the company in which I was a platoon commander back in 1970. So I can assure that they had a very rigid experience before he put on his second lieutenant's bars. So --

SEN. WARNER: So they passed the Webb test, right?

SEN. WEBB: Excuse me?

SEN. WARNER: They passed the Webb test.

SEN. WEBB: They passed the Quigley special test, actually, at that time. But I've long admired General Conway's career, and he has my utmost congratulations on the assignment that he has right now.

And General Conway, did mention early on, and I'm glad that you did -- the strain on the force structure in the Marine Corps and your desire to get back to a one- to two-deployment cycle for the units that are going over.

And I know that, General Schoomaker, you've mentioned these issues as well.

The question that I have -- and I would like to get a clarification from both of you on this -- is, on the one hand, in your statement here, General Conway, you mention that you're emphasizing that the underlying requirement for your end strength increase is separate from the plus-up that's now being debated. At the same time -- and I asked this question of the secretary of Defense when he was before here. The whole political environment in terms of how our troops are being committed to Iraq is under debate right now. And it is conceivable that there would be a dramatic drawdown in the force structure, as you're ramping up -- in the force structure committed as you're ramping up your end strengths here.

And the secretary of Defense when I asked him this question indicated to me that there are what he called off-ramps in the budget process itself; we're taking into consideration that if the force structure were to be drawn down in Iraq, there might be different estimates in terms of what the end strength might be.

And I would ask both of you whether a considerable drawdown in the force structure committed in Iraq would have an impact on the end strengths that you're asking. Would you be looking to put the funding into other programs, or would you still be asking for the same end strengths that are in your plan?

GEN. CONWAY: Sir, I'll start and say that I think from a realistic point of view, we have to accept that as a possibility. The Marine Corps request was built on this concept of a certain committed force and trying to get that force into a one- to two-dwell. If that requirement comes down, dwell is made better and we're facilitated some.

But I want to asterisk it by saying, as well, that I believe we've a nation at war. I think that Afghanistan and Iraq represent the first battles of this long war, and I think, like in any war, you don't know what's on the horizon; you don't what is going to follow.

So if asked for my military advice on whether or not we should look at off-ramping or stopping something short of 202,000 Marines at this point, I would recommend we not do that until such time as we think that this war against Islamic extremists is over.

SEN. WEBB: General Schoomaker.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, if I were -- if I were still here, I would strongly advise against not completing the plan to build the forces, the ground forces that are

required. I think that the Army is too small for the century that we're in. I believe the plan we have is the proper plan and proper slope to do it. And so my advice would be that we complete the plan and we sustain this force. It's my opinion the nation can afford it, and it's necessary in this century.

SEN. WEBB: Thank you.

I'd like a question about this notion of enlistment waivers, as you're building up your force. I was present in an earlier exchange, and then I don't know if this was -- this came up again with -- while I was gone. But both of you mentioned that you don't see material differences in terms of attrition through training programs, et cetera, with people who've been granted the waivers.

I'm wondering if there has been any distinction in respect to the type of waivers that have been granted -- for instance, high school graduation waivers as opposed to moral and age waivers -- or is this a general experience?

GEN. CONWAY: Once again, sir, I'll start. And the answer, at least in the case of the Marine Corps, is that, no. In terms of high school graduate requirements, in terms of Cat 4 levels of authority, there have been no changes. The DOD standard is 90 percent high school graduate. The Marine Corps standard is 95. We've been recruiting 96.

The DOD standard for Cat 4 is 4 percent. We recruit 1 percent.

The waivers that we have been granting are against that, basically, one-third of the American population that can qualify for military service and even what we call "moral waivers," where if a young man or woman has some turpitude, we make an assessment on it. We ask hard questions upfront. We do do the drug testing and that type of thing, but certainly, you know, we base the waivers based upon our assessment of the individual and severity of what's occurred.

So, again, to clarify, those waivers have been on a slight increase since 2002, but we have not found that our boot camp attrition or our non-EAS attrition have either one gone up as a result of that.

SEN. WEBB: So this is -- you're talking purely about the moral waiver?

GEN. CONWAY: Yes, sir, exactly.

SEN. WEBB: What about age waivers? Are you --

GEN. CONWAY: No, sir. They have not exceeded what we traditionally bring in.

SEN. WEBB: General Schoomaker?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Sir, we -- first of all, to put it in perspective: 1979, we had 50 percent Cat 4's accessed into the force. In 1980, we had 56 percent Cat 4's accessed into the force. Today we have less than 4 percent Cat 4's accessed into the force.

SEN. WEBB: Well, let me ask you a question about that before you go any further, because I'm an old manpower guy, and my recollection -- I was working on the Hill at the time -- is that they changed the definition of Cat 4 in '79 and '80, in that time period, where there are a lot of people who are now Cat 3B's who would have been Cat 4's back in '79 or '80.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: I'm not aware of that. I don't know.

SEN. WEBB: You want to verify that? Somebody verify that?

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: We certainly could. And we'll provide it to you for the record. But nevertheless, in terms of the magnitude of -- if they changed it then, I mean, we were still in double digits all the way through the middle of the '80s. And so the quality of this force is as high as I've ever seen in the almost 38 years that I've associated with the Army and uniform and out.

In terms of other waivers, it's still a very -- I mean, we're talking about 1 percent of the force. And I'll remind that we recruited 175,500 soldiers last year -- I mean, the best year we had in a long time. And these waivers, just like in the Marine Corps, receive a great deal scrutiny. And we watch the attrition and the training base as well as the units, and we're seeing no difference between this.

In terms of age, we allowed some soldiers to come in over 40 years of age because they want to. But I believe the figures are correct. I think the magnitude of this is something like 700 soldiers. I mean this is not a large number of people. They turned out to be very fit, very motivated and very committed. In fact, we've had some of these over-40-year-olds that have actually been the honor graduates in their initial entry training. So, you know, this is, in my view, kind of canard, you know, that this is a problem.

I'm very, very satisfied with the way that we're doing what we're doing. I think it does bear a lot of watching. We do not want to return to the days where we see indiscipline and the difficulties that we experienced in our early years. I do --

SEN. WEBB: Well, I mean, that's -- just to clarify here, and in the interest of time, because I think people are wanting to close the hearing down -- that's not really my angle on this. I said I'm an old manpower guy. I'm also, as General Conway will remember, an old trainer. And I personally have never been that concerned about people who are non-high school graduates coming into the military. And if there are statistics that show that these people are the ones -- I know you move now toward this GED completion, but you really basically have a similar product.

Those are people who -- many of those -- if you give me a high middle-category high school dropout who is enthused about they're doing, A, they become very good soldiers and Marines, and B, they become very good citizens. I have a number of close friends who are examples of that. Carlton Sherwood, a longtime friend of mine, who was a high school dropout and became a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, three-Purple Heart Marine. Walter Anderson's the chairman- CEO of Parade Enterprises -- was a high school dropout who went into the Marine Corps and became a valedictorian of his college class when he finished.

The argument that was used in order to keep these people out of the system was that since they failed to finish high school, they probably were going to fail to finish an enlistment or training. But if your attrition figures don't show that, you know, a high middle- category high school dropout is potentially a very good soldier or Marine.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Senator, I think, if I could, to make your point -- the secretary of the Army testified the other day that we surveyed a -- you know, we have the best noncommissioned officer corps I can ever remember. And he conducted a

survey of the serving sergeants major in the Army today. Thirteen percent of them reportedly entered the Army as Cat 4's.

The Army and Marine Corps build great citizens. And part of what we contribute is building young people. They're exactly as you described. There are people properly motivated, properly led, put in the proper environment that -- in fact, we're turning out great citizens for America. And we think we're on the right.

SEN. WEBB: Okay.

Senator from Alabama, do you have any further questions?

SEN. SESSIONS: Briefly, General Wojdakowski at Fort Benning was in my office yesterday, and I asked him, could he tell the difference in the training level, and is he worried about it? And he said not any whatsoever. He was very firm on that. And I think Senator Webb's raising a good point. I think if you choose carefully those who may meet -- not meet some standards, then the military benefits and the whole nation benefits, because I do think life in the military turns out to be blessing for many, many young people.

General Conway, when Senator Warner and Levin and I were in Al Anbar in August of last year, things were not going well. Marines are primarily in that tough, tough area. Marines briefed us, and there was some real concern -- I think we both felt -- I've heard since there's some progress. Could you briefly tell us if what changes, if any, have occurred --

GEN. CONWAY: Sure --

SEN. SESSIONS: -- since August?

GEN. CONWAY: I'd be happy to. Sir, a major and I took a trip over Christmas go out to see the troops. And --

SEN. SESSIONS: I believe it was October -- the senator, Warner, corrected me -- when we were there.

GEN. CONWAY: You may remember, sir, al Qaim at one point was the wild Wild West out on the Syrian border, and we put some great Marine battalions through there, and I think they paid for success through blood, sweat and tears. But today I would argue it's probably the model for the rest of Iraq, because today the Sunni tribes out there have allied with the coalition forces.

They've worked against AQ -- the al Qaeda of Iraq. They've shut down, not entirely but significantly, the rat lines down through that Euphrates River Valley. There's a marketplace that goes every other day, and there's 8(,000) to 10,000 citizens there who mass without fear of being blown away because of the local security provided by Sunni tribesmen, police and soldiers.

I was surprised to find in Ramadi the essence of the same thing starting to take root. There's a great young Army brigade commander there who has a Marine battalion working for him. He reports to the MEF commander forward out in Fallujah. But he showed us a chart of Ramadi about three months. This was again over Christmastime. But of the 16 tribes in and around Ramadi, 12 were allied essentially

against the coalition forces at that point. They were red or amber on the stoplight chart.

Today, it's just the opposite. Those tribes have finally had it up to here with the AQI because of indiscriminate killing of their sons and daughters. And they came to Colonel McFarland and Colonel Journey (sp), the battalion commanders; said, "If you'll support us, we're going to work against these people and get them out of our culture." And that's exactly what's been taking place ever since.

Today those same 16 tribes show about 12 amber-green and the others coming over.

So I think that it's a real success story. We haven't fully turned the corner yet. Ramadi's still an armpit and will be that for sometime. But it is dramatically different from what it was, and it's exactly what we were trying to do from the very beginning in the Al Anbar.

SEN. SESSIONS: Well, that is good to hear because I left troubled, I've got to tell you. And I was uneasy. And I've heard that. That's a good statement. I guess we shouldn't bet against the United States military when they set their --

GEN. CONWAY: They just need time, sir.

SEN. SESSIONS: -- minds to a tough challenge. And it also points out that, even though we've had some bad news in Baghdad and other places, things can change, because that's just in a matter of two or three or four months that this change has occurred there.

And I would just -- on this -- the supplemental and the 2 billion (dollars) that came out of BRAC -- we really have got to replace that. That cannot be done any other way. It should not be taken from the military. It was in the bill when we voted on it last year. It was taken out, and money was spent on social programs and other things. And now we've got to get it back in.

And I think, General Schoomaker, I'll be prepared to support, even though I'm a budget believer, that I will put it on top and not take it from your other -- resources.

GEN. SCHOOMAKER: Thank you, sir.

SEN. WEBB: Senator Warner?

SEN. WARNER: Proceed to 222.

SEN. WEBB: Yes. The committee's adjourned, and we'll resume in executive session, Room 222.

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