

TRANSCRIPT

Defense Writers Group

A Project of the Center for Media & Security
New York and Washington, D.C.

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December 11, 2008

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Q: If you had a few minutes with the new President, what would you tell him about your organization and the need for it? Where you should go from here?

A: The initial thing I would say to the President-Elect or at the time of the inauguration would be the President, would be that the directive that guides us out of the department talks about us leading all the IED effort in the department. But for the purpose of beating the IED as a strategic weapon.

A lot of audiences I talk to haven't thought their way through that. They can visualize a missile or a weapon of mass destruction being a strategic weapon, and I don't think many audiences have thought their way through the IED as a strategic weapon. So I would emphasize to him that that's what we're all about. Because in my opinion you will not eliminate the IED from the battlefield. The IED is a lethal ambush. We've been ambushing each other in our history for thousands of years. I think it was 1277 the Chinese had the first explosive underneath the ground and therefore we began to have more lethal ambushes.

But for the systemic use of it to influence strategically is something that some leaders haven't thought through and I would want to make sure that he understood he had an organization in the Department of Defense that was working to defeat the IED as a strategic weapon. If I can get that point across, there's lots of other logic that falls from that that supports why the department's done what it's done.

Q: Do you think the current administration understands what you just said?

A: I think so, because I think the current administration put the Joint IED Defeat Organization into place for that purpose. Then the way they wrote the mission statement, it's clearly in the mission statement to defeat it as a strategic weapon of the enemy.

Q: What would you say, we're still looking at around 1400 attacks a month in Iraq and Afghanistan? So are we winning?

A: Combined. We're winning from the sense that, a couple of senses. One, the fatalities to IEDs is down in the single digits, some in both theaters. Each one of them is the ultimate sacrifice and I have great reverence and compassion for each one of them, but the IED is not going to defeat us tactically. Again, it's a tactical weapon used for strategic purposes.

Are we winning? Well, in Iraq all violence is down. IEDs are down. Probably a third put in place where the troops are still finding about half of them. A very small fraction are affected. Affected, the definition of which is cause a casualty. The killed in actions are in single digits for the past couple of months.

Now is all of that the Joint IED Defeat Organization's responsibility? No. Some of it is ours. We've given the troops great protection of themselves, of their equipment, of defeating the device, attacking the network, training the force very well. But there's a component of General Petraeus' strategy, and now General Odierno's continuation of that; there's a component of the Sons of Iraq; there are other components that have caused that violence to go down. But in the IED business we're learning more and more about how to counter not only the device but the networks.

Q: Talk a little bit about that, too. That was not originally part of the charter, was it?

A: I think most people got focused, when General Abizaid asked for a Manhattan-like project, most people equated that in their mind, we're going to defeat the device. We're going to build a ray gun, we're going to point it at the IED, and we're going to be done with it.

Defeating the IED is a very complex physics problem because it can be triggered, initiated, armed, all those things in many different ways.

First of all, you had to kind of get away from we're going to have a Manhattan project to defeat the device. General Meigs, my predecessor, did a brilliant job of not only working the defeat the device, but began to educate leaders of the department and warfighters

that they needed to attack the networks. Networks being financiers, suppliers of equipment, recruiters, bomb makers, emplacers, triggering, someone capturing the event for the influence and operations thereafter. So there are networks, obviously coincide and in many cases the same as the insurgent network, but it's attacking that network.

I came a year ago understanding what had been done and having a career of training soldiers, really saw the need to really emphasize training the kit that we had provided the soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen, not only to individually, to use their equipment right, to protect themselves, to find the devices. The human eye is still one of the best sensors on the battlefield. But to train those staffs and commanders all the way up to the core commander on how to attack the network.

So I carried on from what General Meigs had put in place for three lines of operation-- defeat the device, attack the network and train the force. I think my emphasis has been to carry the first two along as they were developed by him, and then really emphasize the train the force piece.

Q: Do the House Subcommittees [inaudible] recently and one of the things [inaudible] expand [inaudible] organization. By the same token there are those that say you should retain singular focus by [inaudible]. What are your impressions [inaudible]?

A: I have come full circle on that issue and I'm back to sticking with the bread and butter that we are focused on, defeating the IED. Again, I say I come full circle because I've thought my way through this.

There is a tendency to want some to look at us and say why don't you expand. Because we have with the focus on the IED learned some other things. As an example, when you really drill down and learn how to fight an IED network, what you really have done is learn how to fight a human network. Those tools and tactics, techniques and procedures to fight the IED network are probably, I think, applicable to drug networks or smuggling networks or laundering money networks. But I want to stay focused on the IED and I will share with other parts of the government what we've learned in fighting human networks but not become the human network fighter, as an example.

Another example would be in our signatures program, we look for the unique signatures of things. Homemade explosives is an example. As you're cooking homemade explosive with fertilizers and all that, we think there are a series of signatures that are available. To see those signatures there are multiple sensors across the battlefield and across the services. So in order to pull that information together we're into the ISR business. But I don't want to be the ISR king of the department. But I'm informing the department because I'm trying to pull together, and I can then turn and say see, here's an example of

the power of networking sensors, and building algorithms that share information so you reduce the false positive rates and all that.

So I've come full circle and I'm back to, I want to stay on IEDs. As we spin off understanding of other things, that's great. But we're not ready to high five in the end zone yet on defeating the IED.

Q: The same report also talked about JIEDDO's budget and suggested that additional oversight is necessary because some of the budget is a little bit hidden and it is a lot of money. Do you agree with that? What form of oversight would you be comfortable with?

A: I took over, and General Meigs already was working on the draft GAO reports that that informed the Oversight Committee. I took over with an already growing and more robust resource management section. An infant, but over the last year a growing internal review system. Incorporating the services' financial management software systems. Adding an acquisition oversight division and managing it with some pretty talented people. So not only had General Meigs started that process based on the GAO already drafting concern over fiscal responsibility, but we've continued it for a year. Have we gone back and fixed all the potential little things? Probably not. We're just continuing to be as prudent as we can with the taxpayers' money and I think we're on the right path to meet the criticism that the Oversight Committee gave us in the financial area.

Q: Congress has certainly shown a lot of interest in this issue of IEDs. I'm curious, are there other additional things you need from Congress? Is there more funding needed, more authorities needed? What can Congress do to help your organization?

A: What Congress did for us, because most of the money to date has been supplemental money. The Congress formed the Joint IED Defeat Fund which is money that comes out of the supplemental and what's different about that money is that it's three year money and it is what we call colorless. So when I'm visiting Congress and they ask me what can we do to help? I ask them to continue to trust the Joint IED Defeat Organization with a very unique situation which is three year uncolored money because that offers us a tremendous amount of flexibility to solve problems, first of all, that come from the warfighter and they need to be solved quickly; and it allows us to move around the department and get help from all sorts of folks in the department to solve the problem.

So that's I think one of the things I'd ask Congress to continue.

As the report says, there is a need to migrate funds into the base, from supplemental into the base, and I think everyone is concerned with the future of supplementals. But I would ask as we migrate into the base that they do as they did with the Joint IED Defeat

Fund, allow us to have some flexibility because it's that flexibility that gives us some tremendous opportunities.

Q: Could you spell out the numbers you were referring to a moment ago, chart the decline in numbers of IEDs you're finding and [inaudible]? And second, what can you tell us about the use of basically remote controlled cars as IEDs? We've heard some instances of [inaudible] being detonated [inaudible]. Is that a new kind of threat?

A: Back to the numbers, I think at the height of the enemy's campaign in late '06, early '07 there was probably a six to eight month window in there. Essentially we are giving you sand charts of all that data.

Voice: We're going to link you to what we call the [sand charts] to show--

A: What I'm going to describe, you'll get a picture of it. But late '06 to early '07, we were talking in terms of 2800 IEDs per month. That's, in my opinion, having been the corps commander there when that number was probably 800, 2800 IEDs a month is a huge capacity. That has dropped off probably almost to a quarter of that. We're in the 800 in place by the enemy in Iraq per month.

What I'm encouraged by is the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines continue to find-- and it varies different months, different data, but generally speaking they will find half of those. The good part about that is our understanding of how to take them apart and get the forensics data continues to grow. That's a whole subject called weapons technical intelligence, which is a really important part of future irregular warfare, I think.

Of the remaining let's say 400 that may have gone off, a very small fraction, let's say 20, 25, maybe 30 a month have caused a casualty. Like I say, in the past couple of months only, I think the past two months or three, only two killed to those IEDs and the rest were wounded. But those sand charts will show you all that data over time and you can kind of take all that apart.

Does that answer the first question?

Q: Yes.

A: The second question?

Q: The use of remote controlled cars, and [inaudible].

A: We have seen, what I know about and [inaudible] a couple of very crude enemy cars that were remotely used to attack us. Very crude solanoids on the steering wheel, a brick

on the gas pedal. They kind of launched it a block away and so they're very very crude as compared to a couple of our initiatives to have unmanned ground vehicles, for example, leading convoys.

But I think it's just another way of the enemy trying to figure out ways to attack us. But we haven't seen a very sophisticated remotely controlled car. We obviously have seen people that have decided to commit suicide driving cars and that becomes their precision weapon because that human can make decisions and take that car to meet an intent and it can be filled with homemade explosives, it can be filled with military munitions. But it's a pretty lethal weapon.

Q: Does that mean you still think that the suicide driver is the main threat involving the car as opposed to coming up with a better way--

A: Yes. To date, yes. Again, we've seen some very crude efforts. One that went off, one that we captured. That I recall.

Q: General, the IG report recently on MRAPs talked about the military writ large, sort of suggesting the military should have known more about the IED threat before it did, before Iraq. And I'm not specifically asking on MRAPs, but just as you've studied the development of the IED over the years, do you agree with that? That the military writ large should have seen signs that this was emerging as a very large threat coming into 2003?

A: My answer takes me back to preparation for and then going to Iraq, taking the III Corps to Iraq and that experience. I think we, as it evolved, we evolved. In other words, as we recognize more IEDs and we recognize more lethal IEDs, we knew that we were growing in this fight against IEDs. So I got in the country in January of 2004. By April of 2004 General Cody had already stood up his Army task force to begin to counter IEDs. Later that summer it moved to a joint effort by Secretary Wolfowitz.

On my end, I assigned that task to one of my deputies. One of his top priorities was to work with these task forces against IEDs.

So as the enemy increased in volume and sophistication, we were going with him.

In the case of remotely radio initiated IEDs, which were the dominant type when I was the corps commander, the real counter to that were the jammers that we were able to design, field and push the enemy off of using radio controlled arming and initiation devices.

What is so challenging about this fight is the enemy could have chosen to become more

sophisticated or less sophisticated. In most cases he chose to become less sophisticated. He went from a, in some cases a pretty sophisticated circuit board with cell phones and all, to a command wire. But it still is our physics problem to solve, and finding the command wire on the ground has proven to be pretty difficult.

We have got some very promising technologies that I'm very encouraged that it won't be too much longer we'll be able to find the command wire. Then the enemy's got to decide where to go next.

So this we're fighting a very intelligent, innovative, albeit ruthless enemy. It's the cat and mouse kind of fight. When you take an advantage, they're looking to counter that advantage. We're looking to counter his advantage.

Does that help with your question? Because the MRAP, in my time we started with thinking that the OIF-2, which I replaced the V Corps, that we probably needed to be about one-third heavy and two-thirds Humvee. Tanks and Bradleys versus Humvees. When we got into the pretty conventional fights, the uprising in April of '04 that carried several months, we needed more tanks, more Bradleys. But then as Humvees were getting attacked we began with all the [bright] kits in the increased armor to the point that before I left no one left their FOB without being in an up-armored Humvee. So that progression. Then obviously after that we decided to go with the V-shaped hull.

What a lot of people don't understand about the MRAP, yes, it's a V-shaped hull. It's got a lot of great designs but it's a very heavy vehicle and it can absorb the energy of a pretty powerful under-belly [inaudible].

Q: You were talking about before operations began in Iraq. What they say here, what the IG said was DoD was aware of the threat posed by mines and IEDs and the availability of mine-resistant vehicles years before insurgent actions began in Iraq. So why was that not acted on beforehand?

A: I could only answer that I've been quoted in the print media before about having to eat crow. I was one of those that said if you can do the top end fight, the very complex, conventional fight, we can handle the things we needed to do in the Balkans at the time. I held that view as a corps commander going in, but I have learned that to fight a sophisticated insurgency as ruthless as this one can be at times, it's a very complex fight. Yes, you need all those conventional skills when you get in that fight, bring all the joint fires to bear and all, but you've also got to be a master of the non-lethal fight and all of that as we've learned, and we brought General Petraeus back, having been a division commander and having run the transition team business, we brought him back to Fort Leavenworth, we rewrote the Counter-Insurgency Manual, and then he went back to the theater and used the manual that he wrote with some success.

There are criticisms there, and I'm one of those that had to eat a little crow. This is a learning effort.

Q: General, how are you shifting resources from Iraq to Afghanistan? How are the networks, the human networks in Afghanistan the same or different as Iraq? Can you talk a little bit about the work on an MRAP-SAU solution that would work in Afghanistan that would still protect against IEDs but wouldn't be as heavy and unusable?

A: Let me answer the last one first real quickly. The Deputy Secretary for whom I work has said we're not in the platform business. So with respect to aircraft and sensors and all, I'm not, in MRAPs, I'm not in the platform business. So a whole different part of the department is working to design a lighter, faster, better protected MRAP for that rugged terrain of Afghanistan.

You had two more questions.

Q: How are you shifting resources from Iraq to Afghanistan? And how are the human networks in Afghanistan the same or different than Iraq?

A: The shifting is, and I just made a trip for that purpose, to better understand how I can support Afghanistan. The shifting is going to be complex. The thought that we have that we're just going to move units from Iraq to Afghanistan is not that simple. When you bring a unit out of Iraq it will go back to the States and another unit will be trained to go to Afghanistan. So one of the things I've been emphasizing with my teams forward is we need to track all those unique things that we have given Iraq. They need to be catalogued, retrograded, taught and trained with the future force that's going to Afghanistan, and those, that kit go forward to Afghanistan. That's all doable, it's just something we've got to be alert to and ensure that those units going to Afghanistan have been trained and have the wherewithal that we've given the units in Iraq.

As far as the networks, I think they're human networks. They are in some cases very similar in Iraq and Afghanistan in basic principles, but they will have different culture, they've got different communications. The communication infrastructure in Iraq is much superior to Afghanistan, although Afghanistan is growing pretty quickly. You've got, one of the major differences I think is really the safe haven that the insurgent has in Pakistan. That is a significant difference in the fight that we'll have against IEDs in Iraq and Afghanistan because of that safe haven. That's probably one of the biggest differences is that commanders and soldiers have got to figure out how to work on the conventional side, how you manage not crossing borders, to suck as much information as you can.

Q: Therefore [inaudible] you can't follow all those.

A: You can't follow it quite as well as you could in Iraq.

Q: Is there a dollar figure or an emphasis figure on shifting, 75 percent of your focus a year ago was on Iraq and now you know, 50 percent of your focus is now on Iraq versus Afghanistan?

A: No, because in many cases whatever the Joint IED Defeat Organization did in Iraq, we were equally doing in Afghanistan. It was to fight the IED. But one of the reasons of my trip was to better understand, to look the commanders in the eye and say do I really have it right? I didn't want to sit back here and make an assumption that this fair sharing of information and capability. I wanted to go forward and ensure. I think what I came back with is it's going to be a very complex transition. We've got General McKiernan now who has gone from just being the ISAF commander to being dual-hatted as the U.S. commander. So based on how many subordinate units they put, he then has subordinates. My team will, whereas at one time it looked really to one division commander and helping him with his IED fight, we will probably look at multiple commanders and, I don't know if my acronym's right, but General Cone's command that supports the Afghan army and police force, they're fighting IEDs too. So he's coming to my people more in Afghanistan with help about how to solve the fight that he's got to train the Afghans to fight. The complexity is more than I thought it was going to be, and I've got to help my team in Afghanistan manage that complexity.

Q: General, Congress, it looks like they've authorized kind of an increase, there's a very small office in DHS, the Office of Bomb Prevention, and it looks like they want to make that more robust and increase that. Can you describe what kind of cooperation you've had between your organization and DHS in may be preventing similar incidents in the United States and what you anticipate?

A: I believe the nexus of IED information, so as Northern Command and its subordinates and parts of Homeland Security have come to us for information, we have certainly shared that information. As I stress often, we are not an intelligence agency. We accept and analyze and try to turn data into knowledge and forward it to the warfighter, but in the case so far, I think we've been a technical help, we have been a willing partner to share with them what we've learned about IEDs. I think as the new administration comes on board, I just think, it's obvious to me that we need to be as helpful as we can.

I think the more prepared our Homeland Security community are in countering IEDs, that works as a deterrent. We certainly will work hand in glove with them to the extent

of which the administration and the policies will allow. But we are indeed communicating with and being as touch as we can about Homeland Security.

Q: What kind of technical advice, in what areas are you seeking advice?

A: So far most of the effort has been detection, how does the device work, and defeating the device. I'd like to keep it there because I don't think we're in the position to help them attack the networks internally. That's an area we shouldn't be in, so we don't cross that boundary. So it's really been the technical aspects of the IED, how it can be armed, how it can be triggered, the almost infinite ways that it can be put together, different types of explosives.

One other thing we realize is there is already a very robust connection between the explosive ordnance and the detection business in the armed forces. All the services have DoD soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, and there are relationships with the local government up through the state and federal level that already deal with explosives, and the IED is just an extension of that. So there's a whole layer of efforts that have been going on for decades. We've just come on board with a new set of our experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq with techniques and technology.

Q: Any evidence that people have used these techniques in Iraq, Afghanistan, are trying to extend their influence and share their techniques with cells throughout the world?

A: I don't know of individual connections, but I do know that the internet offers a very easy way to transfer information. It's not difficult to get on a web page and understand how to build an IED. That to me is the concern. The ease of information, the ease of which an IED can be built.

Q: I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. The [inaudible] financial network you mentioned as [inaudible]. What's [inaudible] with the Treasury Department? [Inaudible] financial intelligence and [inaudible]. How effective has that tool been [inaudible]?

A: We are working with [inaudible] in Iraq. I don't think that we have seen yet the benefits directly from that kind of data. But I believe it's there. When I was there as the corps commander the dollar was still the currency that was used to pay insurgents and thugs and I assume it still is. Therefore I think there's a robust role for Treasury to play as we track this.

It's obvious to me at the height of the enemy's capacity, as I mentioned, 2800 IEDs a month, that cost somebody some money. One of the things I want to constantly do and I think that's the only way towards success is not just Joint IED Defeat Organization,

because commanders in the field need to make everybody that's in an IED network for the enemy, tomorrow's more risky than today. The risk of being in the IED business to your life, limb or capture constantly goes up. What also goes up is the cost [inaudible] that network.

Now to the extent at which we can measure that cost, that's proven to be pretty hard. Locally we can kind of find out how much they're paying the emplacer, a bomb maker and stuff. But getting the metrics, the exact metrics of what it is is pretty tough, but you want to make those networks go up. Therefore, you want to continue to work with Treasury and others to try to understand that data, to see where you are. So it is an important aspect. I just don't think we've mined it yet to the degree that we could and should and will. There will be some point that [inaudible].

Q: A follow-on, on Iran. Are they out of the EFP business in Iraq? That was the [inaudible] driver [inaudible] MRAPs. Are they largely out of the business in Iraq?

A: The EFPs are way down. Way down.

Q: From what to what? Roughly.

A: This is really rough, but I think you'll--I'm talking in terms of a dozen, twenty in Iraq in a month to, from maybe 60-80 or something. But they are, like the other IEDs, are down by at least a quarter. You know, anyone that knows anything about this business knows how lethal an explosive formed projectile is and they have represented, over time, probably five percent of the IEDs and would represent maybe as much as 35 percent of the casualties. But in the past three months they have been way down and we must assume that someone has made a decision on the [inaudible] side in connections with Iran, someone's made a decision to bring them down.

I do think that some of our attack the network efforts have focused on networks that were concentrated on EFPs and that has caused some of that downward turn. We have an initiative ongoing right now called FOX that we've got a couple of teams, robust teams, in two brigades in Iraq that are really very, trained well, knowledgeable on explosively formed projectiles. And we think we've put them in the brigades that had the biggest threat. We're evaluating to see if that manpower and the kit we gave them is as successful initiative. My gut right now says it is, that we have been focusing on the networks that we think are using the EFPs, we've done some deterrence in that.

Q: Do you have any feel for whether there was a conscious decision by the Iranian government, the Revolutionary Guard Corps anyway, to pull back on their support [inaudible] to [inaudible] EFP production?

A: I think you can draw that inference from the data. The EFP explosions are down, the find rate, finding them are down, the casualties to them are down. You extrapolate that back. Again, I'm not in the intel business, but that's the conclusion I would draw.

Q: [Inaudible] why the Iranians may have pulled back on EFPs?

A: I don't think I'll venture into trying to figure out what's inside an Iranian's head. [Inaudible] strategic decisions in what he's doing. I do know the EFP's a very lethal weapon and it is one that we are working hard against.

Q: You mentioned trends in Iraq. What are the trends in Afghanistan with IEDs?

A: The trends are, look at the data, and again you see the sand charts that we'll provide you. It's very season in Afghanistan. Right now it's down because on top of very tough terrain you've got very tough weather. But when you look at overall, you'll see a positive incline to the volume of IEDs.

Q: What was the peak this year?

A: Again, that's on the chart. If I guess something now and I'm off--It's on the chart. It will be around 400, I'd say, a month. But I'd ask you to look at the charts. I don't know that number exactly.

Q: I'd like to talk about the budget again. As you see a drawdown of troops in Iraq, do you then anticipate, especially looking at FY10, a lower need for funding? Or is your funding going to remain constant whether we have 30,000 troops in Iraq or 150,000 troops in Iraq?

A: First of all, there is a component of our budget that will be related to the number of troops. The major change in our budget will be as we get completely out of supporting the jamming effort. [Duke] jammers, chameleons for the Marines. So that's a huge amount of money that the JIEDDO fund has supported to rapidly get where we are in the jamming business. So that's going to make a big difference.

There will be a slice that will be proportional to the number of troops deployed.

What we tried to do is we offered input to the President's budget which has not been sent forward yet. And it's still in draft and all that. It's to build in the base budget what we felt like would be our enduring and sustaining costs. And then lean on the supplementals to be those things that are, we call them Joint Urgent Operational Needs that come from the warfighter, meet those needs with supplemental dollars. So I think there's, frankly, I'm looking forward to a smaller budget because that means I'm out of

the jamming business, that's been turned completely over to the services, and I can continue to focus on what I think we were put there for, is the urgent needs by the warfighter and be able to rapidly acquire material and non-material solutions to their problems.

Q: So to be clear, you're saying that in FY10 your intention is to transfer the jamming portion over to the services significantly and fold the enduring, anticipated costs back into the base budget, and then only depend on supplementals for the [inaudible], is that correct?

A: In ball park terms that's how I'd like to see the--

Q: Is that about 50/50?

A: The problem is, I don't have the crystal ball to know what the urgent need's going to be two years from now. But historically I can look back and say here are the urgent needs that came over throughout this war, and then project. It goes back to the dealings with the Congress. How much will they put in a fund for us that doesn't have tagged a particular need? I don't know where the enemy's going. He gets a vote in this thing. And quite frankly, doesn't care about our budget cycle. So we have got to, I think, another thing that this administration will be facing, how much flexibility will we be allowed to meet an urgent need that we don't know what that need is today? But I am very very sure that there's going to be a need two years from now for something we haven't anticipated.

Q: You talk about the rapid acquisition process. Everyone's looking for ways to speed up acquisition. I'm wondering what have you noticed in that that can be transferred to the rest of the programs that are so slow? And what things can't be transferred? What would be best [inaudible]?

A: First of all, I do not want to become the department's rapid acquisition czar, because we take each individual requirement and try to figure out what's the best way to get about an 80 percent solution to the warfighter. Almost all our initiatives, we quickly develop them here in the states, get them to the theater, and we do assessments in the theater with soldiers using them under the stresses and strains of combat and use that input as quickly as we can and then some of that three year uncolored money can procure X amount to go begin to support the warfighter with the full intentions over time to determine whether or not it should be a program of record and be enduring and handed off to the services, or is it a niche for this particular fight that the COCOM commander needs. We continue to fund the supplemental. Then it may atrophy. But we move all that as quickly as we can through a system that we've got that I think prudently protects the taxpayers' money while still getting it to the warfighter as quickly as

possible.

Q: [Inaudible], has there been a strong increase in past years of IEDs against? And if so, do you feel like the insurgents there have learned from Iraq? And has it become the first cause of mortality among U.S. military?

Second, could you tell us about EFPs in Afghanistan? Is there a big presence of EFPs? Has there been an increase recently?

A: No increase. Very few even seen in Afghanistan. So I can answer that pretty quickly. As usual, I go backwards and can't remember the other question. But EFPs are very few even found, even less used, and it's a unique month to see a couple of EFPs in Afghanistan.

Q: In terms of trend of IEDs in Afghanistan. Has there been a strong increase in past years?

A: There has been an increase. I don't think it's an increase because of transfer of information from Iraq. I believe it's because the Taliban, al-Qaida and other insurgents find direct fire and indirect fire not to be as effective against coalition forces, that the counter-fight in the direct and indirect fire business is won by coalition forces, and it's tending to go to more IEDs. Again for that strategic purpose that he feels that's probably the way to influence his campaign, our campaign, people at home, his recruiting networks. So he is using more and more IEDs.

Q: And [inaudible] Taliban now [inaudible]. It seems that--When [inaudible] become?

A: I don't know when the cross-over point was. It would be a close guess, but I think about six months ago we began to see more [inaudible] in the IEDs than indirect and direct fire. And I think this data will be, and [inaudible] will share with you. But there has been at least one month in my recollection that only the casualties were IEDs. But I think all that data's going to be available.

Q: General, going back to what you said earlier about expanding focus or keeping the focus of the organization on IEDs. When you talk about the human network, when attacking the network, is there a clear way to distinguish that from counter-insurgency in general? How do you keep your focus and provide something that's unique value-added when the whole Army and Marine Corps are focusing on counter-insurgency?

A: Again, you're researching the data, you're trying to figure out, answer questions that have been asked of us from the warfighters, the leaders, and their questions to us are in terms of IEDs. But clearly if we find something that's less connected to an IED we're not

going to hold the information. Therefore, it may be more about the insurgency than the IED, but we're certainly going to share that information.

What I've got to do is keep my folks focused on what we have been chartered to do, the mission statement and the money, to focus on the IED networks. But to me I think it should be obvious to everyone that there's a very close connection between a network that are really putting out IEDs and the same people who are involved in an insurgent fight.

There is bleed-over, but what I'm trying to tell you is I don't want to get out of the IED business and be the counter-insurgent, irregular warfare, find all the asymmetric weapons you can think of.

Q: Tare there specific characteristics of the IED portion of the insurgency that you folks can attack that may not transfer to the networks, [inaudible], for example?

A: I don't think I could tell you that there's a piece of the IED network that is in a Venn Diagram separate of the insurgent network.

Q: General, the 800 a month still sounds like a huge number. I'm surprised it's that high. Do you have a sense for how many active cells that may be emplacing those bombs? Whether those are new cells or ones that have been around for years, if you will. Also, if you could, what percentage are Sunni insurgents versus say Shia militia groups?

A: Those are really hard questions. I'm not trying to have the knowledge and not trying to share it with you.

I think all of us, it's a [swag] number of the number of IED networks. I think it could range probably from 50 to 100.

My gut tells me that they are not new networks. They continue on. And they have continually come down. I'm sure that somebody [inaudible] them out of business and they joined the Sons of Iraq. So that whole business. I'm giving you a swag on the number. I don't think they're new. And then my best guess would be they're in the portion of population of Sunni and Shia. I don't see a disproportional number of Sunni networks per the population, either way. I think [inaudible].

As you know, regions are dominated by particular Sunni or Shia and that's where you're going to find those kind of networks.

Q: Are you still seeing IED attacks predominantly in the Baghdad area or is it country wide?

A: Way down in the Baghdad area. Because the fight had migrated to Mosul, probably a lot more in the Baghdad to Mosul leg of the Sunni triangle is where we see the most.

Q: The IEDs you are finding, are those primarily local builds or do you think they're still coming in from out of the country?

A: We are seeing a lot of local builds. So the idea is there but the details and the sophistication of the cooper plate and things are less.

Q: General, in Afghanistan how much of the rise in violence that's taken place over the past two years would you say is represented by IED attacks and how crucial is it for the U.S. and NATO to overcome IED attacks if they're going to have some affect on the public perception that the situation there is deteriorating?

A: I think as I talked about earlier, there is a rise in IEDs with some reduction in direct and indirect attacks as we've collected the data.

As a sidebar comment, the collection of data is a moving target because as Iraq or Afghan police and army forces become better, the reporting's better. So to normalize it against previous data is tough. We're trying very hard to do that.

But the numbers are up and I'm afraid I'm missing--What was the other part?

Q: I guess what I'm trying to get at is whether the fight against IEDs in Afghanistan is strategic from the standpoint of the information war between the Taliban and the West?

A: Absolutely it is. Just as I think insurgents wanted to wear our will down in Iraq, the Taliban and others have recognized it's their artillery, in some cases with the suicide bombers they're a precision weapon. They recognize it's the weapon because they haven't been able to use the indirect fire and direct fire as they have against the Soviets and I guess spears and arrows with Alexander the Great. They've come to the point that IED is probably the way that they're going to influence us strategically.

Q: Is it possible to say what percentage of overall attacks in Afghanistan are accounted for by IEDs?

A: I think that's in the data. It is a growing percentage. I think our data will get you that.

Q: One last question. You mentioned the militant safe havens in Pakistan and their role in all of this. What can you tell us about the way the quality of the munitions has evolved?

A: I don't think we've seen a change in the quality of munitions. You're speaking to Afghanistan.

Q: I am, indeed. Then what's been the contribution of the safe havens in Pakistan?

A: Knowledge and rest and refit and planning and just, you're not under the pressure of being found and hunted and having to protect yourself. It gives you time and energy to do other things. That's to me the tremendous advantage of a safe haven.

Q: General, I want to go back to sort of what Josh was talking about. You mentioned as far as your budget going forward, you're going to be divesting yourself of the electronic jamming piece. Am I to imply that you all in a big picture are getting away from the platform and technology base approach to fighting this problem?

A: Not at all. What we have is what we call a process and it's a transfer, transition or--

Q: What exactly does that mean?

A: It means that as we have [birthed] the initiative and matured it to help the warfighter fight the fight, some of them we got wrong. Some of them they terminated. They didn't work. That's one path that they can go.

Another path is they can be a very good program, and we keep the entire joint force, services involved in our process, so they know what's coming. We brief what's called the capability boards on the Joint Staff. We keep OSD informed of what we're doing. So that if a real good program's coming down the pike the service can say okay, we're going to accept that. That's a good one. Law enforcement program is a non-materiel program that was a real winner that has been turned over to the Army.

It can be good enough that it meets all the parameters of the acquisition business and becomes a program of record.

Others can be okay, good program, but it's unique to the fights we have. We don't see it in the future of the service, but the service is going to carry it on because I'm not in the long term procurement and the long term sustainment of a particular program.

Q: So you're basically going to allow the individual services to take care of their own requirements as far as--

A: Right.

Q: Kind of following from that, to what extent has this fight against the IEDs become an air war? The UAVs play a big role. They actually shoot at IEDs when they're discovered. They're useful at tracking people. Is that a false impression or is that real, that it's becoming more of an air war?

A: I think we have taken advantage of a three-dimensional capability, either in UAVs, rotary wing, small prop planes, all the way up to U-2s. We either use a sensor that's already been developed and we may use it in just a little bit different way and we've learned about that. Or we're in a need to develop a whole brand new sensor.

The problem with the air piece of it in many cases is the air worthiness of adding that sensor to a high performance aircraft, and then you've got to go down a lot of safety routes. It takes a long time. To put a sensor on an aerostat, it's pretty easy, pretty safe. Put a camera, a couple of cameras and sensors on an aerostat over a FOB, you quickly gain a capability from the air.

So yes, because of the three-dimensional sense, aerostats, UAVs, the whole spectrum, you get a lot of goodness out of fighting, in your IED fight, with air assets.

And again, what I'm encouraged about is the signature program that we've worked and it's everything from the signature of a person that's been working with home-made explosives that probably has very stained hands from messing with acid. If you find a guy like that at the checkpoints you may want to ask a few more questions. That's a pretty fundamental signature that you want to train soldiers to pick up.

Then there can be some very technical signature, a command wire or a particular process produces and your problem is that sensor gives you too many false positive rates that are going to troops running around in circles all the time, so you've got to figure out another way to look at it. Pass it through a couple of algorithms, reduce the false positive rate, so when you tell a commander there's a high probability that that house is cooking homemade explosives he's got a high probability when he goes there he's going to find evidence of it or find it and it's a real benefit for him.

Yes, there's a lot of advantages we get from having the air capability that we do.

Q: We're out of time. Thanks very much.

END TEXT