

**PRESS CONFERENCE:**

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**Maj. Gen Dave Edgington, Director of the Air Component Coordination Element for Multi-National Force Iraq**

**DATE:**

**NOVEMBER 4, 2007**

**TRANSCRIBED BY:**

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**SMITH:** Good afternoon. As-Salāmu `Alaykum. I'm pleased to be joined by U.S. Air Force Major General Dave Edgington, Director of the Air Component Coordination Element for Multi-National Force Iraq. Coalition forces routinely conduct operations aimed at improving security and stability throughout Iraq. I will brief you on some of the significant developments Iraqi and coalition forces are undertaking to help improve Iraq's infrastructure and basic services by helping business owners get back on their feet. Then General Edgington will provide an update on a very important aspect of our operational capabilities that is playing a vital role in helping Iraqi and coalition forces maintain the momentum against al-Qaida and criminal elements. Iraqi and coalition forces realize we must have the right balance of kinetic and non-kinetic operations to defeat terrorists and to create the stability necessary to allow for political and economic progress. The Iraqi economy is growing slowly, but steadily. The most recent gross domestic product figures indicate the GDP grew by 6.4% over the past year. Much of the growth is in the form of services, with agriculture and manufacturing continuing to lag and in need of investments. One example is the successful investment program of the micro grant program. To date, Multi-National Corps - Iraq has provided over \$2.6 million in grants to businesses to help them recover from the effects of terrorism. An example of this is at the Mutanabi book market in Baghdad. The picture on the left is in March of this year following a car bomb that destroyed the market. On the right is the market following the

micro grant funding program used to help rebuild and re-open fourteen such shops like the one depicted in the picture. Other successful projects are taking place across Iraq. Last month in Nasiriya, a water treatment facility was completed to provide safe drinking water to over 550,000 area residents. The Gulf Region Division headed up a \$277 million project in cooperation with local Iraqi contractors. This is just one of more than 578 ongoing Gulf Region Division projects valued at over \$2.5 billion. There are another 225 planned projects not started, valued at an additional \$1 billion. In an area surrounding Taji, irrigation was restored for the first time in more than four years. Coalition forces worked with local leaders, and together they fixed the pumps and provided stable electrical power to keep the pumps working. The farmers will now be able to grow a crop for the first time in years. The Qudas power plant in Baghdad is on track to be completed by March of 2008, and will add up to 260 megawatts of power to the electrical grid, providing electricity to over 235,000 Iraqi homes. The electricity production levels over the last two months have consistently been above pre-war levels, with September 16 marking an all-time high of 5,595 megawatt-hours produced. However electricity supply overall is still far short of a growing demand. On October 19th, Diyala residents held the annual Date Festival to celebrate their successful harvest and their improved ability to get products to the market. At present, over 65 million kilograms of dates have been harvested, 50% more than in 2006. The Ministry of Communication has signed a contract to build a

communication infrastructure at a cost of \$595 million, funded through a Japanese loan, to include a communication center, and installing 870,000 telephone lines over the next six months. The Basra oil terminal was completed on July 31st, increasing terminal loading capacity to three million barrels per day. Oil production has increased to the current 2.24 million barrels per day at the present rate. Modern medical facilities are being built across Iraq to meet the health needs of its citizens. These facilities contain state-of-the-art equipment and will not only be able to handle basic medical emergencies, but also have the capacity to perform specialized medical procedures. One such facility is in Basra, a cancer clinic and children's hospital slated to be completed in November 2008. The hospital will provide the only state-of-the-art pediatric oncology referral hospital in Iraq, and is viewed by the Iraqi Minister of Health as one of the single most important developments within the Iraqi health care system. And finally, over a thousand schools have been rebuilt or reopened in the last four years in combined efforts between Iraqis and coalition forces. In the al-Awad neighborhood in Baghdad, al-Qaida in Iraq destroyed four schools this past July. Coalition forces and local Iraqi leadership have been working together to rebuild those schools. Temporary trailers were brought in to create a consolidated school for over seven hundred students. These examples are, in part, the result of the improving security situation we are seeing here in Iraq. While Iraq remains beset by many challenges, good things are happening every day,

many of them driven and led by Iraqis in cooperation with coalition forces, the U.S. Embassy, and many other federal agencies. All these groups, along with coalition forces, are continuing to support Iraqis to help develop a secure and stable country and economy. I will now turn to General Edgington for an air power operational update.

**EDGINGTON:** Thanks, Greg. What I'd like to do is offer you an update of the contributions of the air components and then toward the end show you some videos and show you some of the technological improvements that we have recently enjoyed here in theater to better integrate with our ground forces in fighting the insurgents. Most of you know that the backbone of the air component's contribution is through the airlift forces. Our airlift continues to remain strong. The number of pallets that we bring into this country keep at least a hundred vehicles off of the roads every day that would otherwise be delivering via convoys, and keeps our troops, the risk to the coalition forces, down by avoiding those trucks being on the road. We also transport all of the passengers, all of the troops, the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines into theater. And when you're talking...now, I'm talking both Afghanistan and Iraq, but our average used to be around 3,000 troops a day. That average is now up around 3,500 troops a day. And just one month ago we hit the highest number that we have seen since 2003, with 5,500 troops in one day of passenger support. So that's our airlift contribution. Also, through our airlift, we would

consider the aeromedevac capabilities. Now all of the services have some helicopter capabilities to evacuate our injured troops, as well as the United States Air Force. But then to get them from the regional caches in this country to more involved, in-depth medical care is handled by the airlift forces through aeromedevac. Our success rate is very noteworthy. If you recall, you've probably heard in some other press conferences that for any of the injured troops—both coalition troops, Iraqi security forces, as well as civilians—if we can get them to a regional cache within one hour, we have a 98% survival rate, which is a credit to the medical teams that we have throughout Iraq and the coalition forces. Then, I would also like to underscore the tankers, the area refuelers, because of the fact that we have 24 hour a day, seven day a week presence, we have tankers that make that possible for us. We offload or pump from these tankers in the sky over 3.5 million gallons every day into the aircraft that it takes, and that's both Iraq and Afghanistan. We track both of those from the air component. But a significant amount of fuel to keep our aircraft airborne. The intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aspect, that mission for us we've covered that before for you. We have the radar aircraft at the JSTARS, we have signals intelligence and imagery that is provided by U-2, Global Hawk, C-130, P-3, C-12, a lot of different aircraft in the theater that provide those. Again, 24 hour coverage. And then more emphasis, or the most emphasis, recently has been from the unmanned aerial vehicles, the UAVs, of which the Air Force provides the Predators.

And we have had an increasing demand. Based on General Petraeus's recent request and the Secretary of Defense, the United States Air Force has accelerated by one year the deployment of several Predator systems, and in fact, this week we are increasing our capability with the Predators overhead in Iraq in support of the mission here. And then finally, what most people think of, and a lot of the videos that I will show you, is the kinetic piece, where we have the fighters and the bombers in the combat air patrol, the combat precision strike role that we are, again, presence 24 hours, and are able to synchronize and integrate with the ground forces and provide the effects necessary, whether it be from a show of force in just showing that airplanes can fly overhead and we are there, or if necessary, using the right level of force by the munitions that we carry on these aircraft. We have maintained a robust presence throughout the surge, synchronized with our ground forces. And we have noticed, in fact recently, there has been some press coverage that this year, the statistics that we have counted this year, have shown a marked increase, about four times the number over the year, of weapons that we have dropped from fighters and bombers in Iraq. That in fact is true, but I would also note that over the last month, we have seen a marked decrease. And in fact, I think that you can consider that that is, in part, which you've been hearing from General Petraeus, General Odierno, from Admiral Smith, the security situation is such that we are noticing that from the air as well. We are having less calls for kinetic operations. We're still there. We're available

to do that as necessary, as called for by the ground the commander. But there is significantly reduction in the number of weapons that have been called for. Now the weapons that we're carrying there've been some improvements on. And that's what I want to turn to as I get up and share with you some of the videos that I brought for you today. And again all of these videos will be available for you on the MNF-I web page afterwards. Now the first set of videos that I want to cover for you, again we've talked about 24-7 presence. We're always overhead with these ISR collectors, these intelligence collectors. When we're over, we're watching the areas that we know the enemy is typically operating in. And occasionally, we catch them in the act. This first one—you can go ahead and run the video—yes, this one's back from August, but this is significant. It's outside of Balad Air Base, and what you will see here is a mortar team that will be shooting mortars. Over here you see there's one. There's another one that comes off. Now, the words up here is just in the presentation. We put a couple of aircrew terminology words. And here, they kind of call for what's happening next. But you'll see this team after the second shot run up and gather up in here. There's about three to four individuals that gather in here. At this point, this is a Predator with a Hellfire missile. He is now launching that missile to engage this team here. One of the individuals will come running out toward this area, but as you see, we have engaged them, held them accountable for the firing that they were doing against Balad. Ok, let's run the next video. This next one is small

arms fire. Our coalition forces were engaged from the top of this building. And again this is a Hellfire. There are other options available, but we use a Hellfire missile because it's not going to drop an entire building here. It's going to take out the individuals who are firing back at coalition forces. So you can go ahead and run that. You can see not a huge explosion, but enough to take out the individuals who are holding the coalition forces under fire at that point. And again, because of the fact that the Predator is on scene, he is armed, capable of engaging. We catch them in the act, and we are able to act on that immediately. Okay, next video. Pause this. Now this one just happened two days ago. This was a team that was caught out by Karma. They were planting an IED. They had walked around this, I believe, that roads and checkpoints are down here. But I know from the report that I read they had walked into the fields to get around checkpoints for their escape route. We watched them plant the IED, and we were able to track them down through this field. Run the video. And again this is a Hellfire that's able to engage these individuals. You'll see three of them; they disperse as they're walking across to about equal spacing, and we target the center individual. You'll see them dive for cover when they hear the missile coming in, right about now. But again they're held accountable for planting the IED as to try to kill our coalition forces or our innocent Iraqi civilians. This next one, now we're going to move towards bombs. But this is a team, again, that was caught planting IEDs. And instead of engaging them where they planted the IED,

we've tracked them. Again, we have the loiter time available based on all those tanking resources to be able to watch them. Sometimes, these teams will go back to a central location, and we would much rather find out where they're building the IEDs or find a larger grouping of individuals that are insurgents. But in this case they decided to hide in the trees, not under the crosshairs. But they're hiding in the trees over here. Run the video. So we engaged them here with a GBU-38, a laser-guided bomb, or GPS-guided bomb, this is a JDAM. And this one, we set for an air burst. So instead of actually penetrating the ground this one, the explosion you can see was kind of broad. The explosive went down and was able to kill these insurgents while they sat in the trees. Okay, next video. All right, let's pause that. This one is a bulldozer, an industrial vehicle as you see. This vehicle had run two checkpoints. It had run through it, not stopped. We knew it was hostile; it had some hostile intent. You can see the capabilities in the back. One of the capabilities that we have been working on trying to improve is to engage a moving vehicle. You understand the GPS coordinates of a JDAM, where you put coordinates in the bomb and it will fly to those coordinates. When a vehicle is moving, it's very difficult to be able to hit them. But we now have a capability in theater. It's called a Laser Maverick. Run the video. And we can have this with a laser spot track a vehicle on the move and the bomb, the missile will actually track that as it's going. Now you'll be able to tell from the explosion on 125-pound warhead, which is a rather small warhead. That

was clearly bomb making materials in the back of the dump truck to make that large of an explosion. Ok, next video. Pause this. Alright, the technological improvement here, our A-10 aircraft has been around for many years. The average age, we have flown over 8,000 hours on these aircraft, and we are extending the life of these by some upgrades. We have now brought digital technology and video technology to the A-10. This is from an A-10C. This gives the A-10 a capability of dropping the GPS-guided munitions, the JDAM. This is the first use of a JDAM in combat by an A-10 aircraft. Go ahead and run the video. This is in Baqubah, and this is a house-borne IED. You'll notice from the explosion every entrance to this house has additional explosions emanating from it after ours. So that demonstrates that this was a house that was completely wired for explosive if anybody was to enter it. It was identified and we were able to take it out with that weapon from A-10. This is the last one I have for you today, and this is another technological improvement which we're very, very excited about. Many times you hear about civilian casualties. We are very, very concerned with and have a very deliberate process to go through limiting the exposure of civilian casualties. Many of these insurgents we have are in big cities. This happens to be in Baghdad. We found this as an escape house. We knew there were insurgents in here; we verified that. Yet there's a lot of houses around this area, and to take this out, either on the ground, we could have gotten into a big fire fight or from a large bomb we could have potentially dropped a

couple of houses next door. We now have the capability of a 26-pound warhead. It's partially concrete filled. It's a smaller warhead in one of our normal bombs. It's a version four, is what we call it, of a JDAM. Go ahead and run it. And, as you will watch this, you will see this house is essentially destroyed from the inside. It doesn't drop the entire house itself, but nothing around it. And again I don't have the video for you to go that long. But nothing around it was damaged in this case. When they went in afterwards, we did the exact amount of damage we wanted to the house that we were aimed at, but nothing else. We are carrying these bombs every day right now, and that's available to the ground commander. And that again is for the purpose of not holding at risk civilians who may be in the next door buildings. So, with that, I will turn it back over to Admiral Smith, but again I enjoyed the opportunity to share with you the latest contributions of the air component.

**SMITH:** Your questions please.

**REP1:** Asking question in Arabic.

**INT:** You know that al-Qaida is a terrorist group and is actually now doing operations. Now 90% of al-Qaida has been eliminated or captured. And of course, you have a good contribution in this. So what is your stance from the Iraqi Awakening? Were you able to help those groups? Do you acknowledge them so that you could add them or join to the Iraqi government? And the second question...

**SMITH:** Thank you. Let me address your first question. Now the 90% figure I think was quoted from the gentleman from the Anbar Awakening are currently in the U.S. And that's their assertion, that 90% of the al-Qaida in Anbar had been eliminated. We have not put out that number, although I will say a significant portion of al-Qaida activity in Anbar, of course, has been eliminated. Al-Qaida across Iraq is clearly been to some degree reduced and limited in their capacity to conduct operations. We've gone after their senior leadership, as you well know. We've gone after much of the feeding mechanisms, the financing support, the foreign facilitators. And all of that has been greatly aided not only with our efforts on the coalition side but as you point out, by very courageous Iraqi citizens who have stood up against al-Qaida. And clearly the Anbar Awakening, the first of such I would say citizen revolts against al-Qaida were very, very effective and remains very, very effective. In fact, throughout Anbar the Anbar Awakening and the other concerned citizens remain participants in the security situation. Many of those individuals are desiring to transition into the Iraqi security forces. Around 20,000 of the current 70,000 registered concerned local citizens have indicated interest in doing so. The remaining individuals are interested in participating in the near-term, but perhaps in the long-term returning to some other form of work, either in government or in the civilian sector. So as we transition full time support of security in Iraq to all the Iraqi security forces, army and police

– that being a long-term goal – the role of these concerned local citizens is very critical and very necessary in the near-term.

**MARQUEZ:** Gentlemen how are you? Miguel Marquez with ABC News. A couple of questions. One, do you know if the percent spent on security for reconstruction projects has decreased? Are we seeing a decrease yet in that, or is still, I think it was around 20-25% previously? And then, on air power, has the Turkey situation affected your flight operations at all? Caused them to change the way they fly in, how often they fly in, whatever the case may be? And the videos are impressive, but as we all know, the civilian casualties issue has become greater as of late. There is always a line given that, well, they ran into a building. We saw what they were doing, they ran into a building, and unfortunately some innocent people were killed. There was a high profile incident in Sadr City recently. There was Lake Tartar that was, I think, another incident in Sadr City. How do you go about ensuring that there are not civilian casualties? You said very clearly that you were sure that those guys inside were the bad guys. But how do you go about ensuring...when is it okay to fire on a building when people run into it? If I could get one more in...the Predator systems that's coming in, does that have anything to do with the PKK perhaps, and Turkey? Not that you would tell me if you probably knew. Thank you.

**SMITH:** I don't have the specific breakout of the percent of dollars being spent. I think your question was, are we spending the same percent of dollars on reconstruction versus other...there was an increasing emphasis obviously on reconstruction dollars. In fact, a lot of work is going in to identifying not only U.S. dollars, but also the international investment that is taking place. As you know, recently Iran and China and other countries are beginning to fund and support contracts here in Iraq for major reconstruction and infrastructure. I think there's going to be more and more of that. So, I think to answer your question obviously our level of security effort here remains consistent over the last four or five months. We've had a heavy surge on and the surge remains in place, but there is an increasing emphasis on reconstruction, and basically putting dollars into the economy through various means, not just U.S. dollars, but also a great international aid effort is underway.

**EDGINGTON:** I'll probably go in reverse, and probably forget some of yours, but if you remind me. The increase in the Predator systems were asked for about three to four months ago, and approved and accelerated, and are just arriving now. So the PKK situation that we're facing right now today was not involved in that. That's not to state that I'm not going to tell you operationally how we're going to use those things, but they're available to the MNF-I commander and the Multi-National Corps commander based on priorities that are provided by CENTCOM of how we're going to use

the ISR assets in theater. So it's an additional capability for anything that fits the priorities over here. Our flight operations, as far as regarding the situation in Turkey—we are in close coordination with the CAOCs, the air control centers up in Turkey, as well, with our folks to ensure that we have deconfliction between us. We have agreed upon procedures where neither side would misunderstand a close border incident with flights, and we've increased our, again, communication based on the sensitivity of the situation. Beyond that I'm not going to be able to discuss any specifics that we would do to support each other, although we have publically said that we are sharing intelligence. And again, I'll keep it at that, sharing intelligence with the Turkish and trying to fight this terrorist organization. And then, to address the civilian casualty situation—there is never going to be a guarantee that there will be zero civilian casualties. We are very deliberate in how we look at a situation develop. We don't guess that there are bad guys in this building. The only intelligence we have is not from an aircraft appearing on scene with just the clip that we could show you. There's sometimes 45 minutes, sometimes four hours of observation. It's in close coordination, and synchronized with the ground component commander who has that geographic responsibility. He has probably watched people that he has been chasing or watched IEDs guys go into that building or been fired upon by that building. We will be coordinating with him as to whether he wants to try to take it down from a team or a company trying to attack and invade the building, whether he wants to use

a ground munition that may be more capable, or whether it's too dangerous for his troops to be able to close on that objectives. And he has air available to him. He many elect to ask what air do I have available? What munitions can you use? How we would then go through that is that we take the munition, the location. We will do a collateral damage estimate, knowing what the size of the munition is and say, "There will be an explosion that will affect either this building or out to this distance. There's a potential for people in the open to be killed at this distance based on a frag pattern." All of these things are scientifically devised by tables and experience that we understand, and we look at. Then we will present that back to the ground commander, discuss it with our air commanders on the ground at the CAOC and make a determination that, okay, this is the target, this is the potential collateral damage. Again, there will never be perfect knowledge that nobody else is in this building. But in many of the cases, as you talk about in Sadr City, a couple of the incidents that I can recall, we were, you know, our ground commander is saying, "I've been fired on for three hours out of this building. And there's been multiple windows and entries of this building that's been firing on me," yet after the air component comes in and produces the effect that the ground commander asks for by dropping that building, the next thing we hear in the press is probably from the enemy going out and claiming how many civilians were killed inside that building. You know, at the point of the objective and what we needed to do, that was considered to be, we knew

that there was potential for some civilians inside that building. It was definitely a hostile situation, and the ground component commander, in conjunction with the capabilities of the air component, determined that was a risk worth taking based on the mission at the time of potential for civilian casualty.

**MARQUEZ:** Can you give me a percentage or number decrease? You said in the last month you've seen a precipitous decrease in the use of air power...

**EDGINGTON:** I mean I don't have a number for you. I can tell you every night how many we dropped. And I will even tell you that yesterday we dropped no munitions. We were called several times in the single digits to respond to potential situations where it could have developed into a situation where we could have used a munition, but in no case did we need to yesterday. Three, four days ago...the facts are there, but if you look at a metric, over the last three to four weeks, based again on the reports that you've heard from MNF-I and MNC-I of a significant reduction in casualties and engagements of coalition troops. We're seeing that in the air. We've been called to responds but not been asked to drop munitions. And I think that's an indicator. Again, this is just me, but it looks like an indicator of a reduced demand for kinetics, and a better, improved security situation.

**SMITH:** I'll just make two follow-up comments regarding the civilians as well. Coalition forces would never knowingly target civilians, period. Absolutely would not. In fact, we've often had to avoid engaging targets for that very reason. The second point is, the enemy clearly understands that. He understands that if he surrounds himself with civilians and makes that known, that we've got no choice but to take other measures. He also, though, often hides among civilians, hoping then that his activity then will be less challenged. In some cases, we have no reason to know that civilians are there, and you've got to take the action, as the General pointed, to often times reduce that threat. But the enemy has a vote here. He does not need to surround himself with civilians. He can leave a building, he can go some place and conduct his operations where he's not putting his family at risk. But we're seeing more and more times than not he chooses to surround himself, in many cases, with immediate family and puts them at risk. So we certainly hold the enemy accountable for their actions, and regret the loss of life when it does occur, but we never knowingly target civilians. Next question please. Sir?

**REP2:** Asking question in Arabic.

**INT:** Question from an Iraqi newspaper. What is the percentage of trust of those who used to work with al-Qaida and now are working the Awakening troops? Do you trust those people?

**SMITH:** Certainly, we have entered into a relationship with many members that, perhaps at one time, were on the other side. I think part of reconciliation is to put down your differences with your enemy, those you used to disagree with, and work towards a common goal and common bond. In the case of Anbar, that's exactly what's happened. Now individuals who were and could be proven to be directly responsible for loss of life of either coalition or Iraqi security forces are not part of this new relationship. Each of these individuals has gone through an extensive screening process. They've been added into a database. If they've had a criminal background, they've been removed from consideration, and they're not part of the current concerned local citizen groups, and certainly would not be moved on to the more permanent Iraqi security forces. But they clearly, at one point in time, had been on the other side, and again, part of reconciliation is to make accommodations and to work out your differences. And that is what has taken place, not only in Anbar, but elsewhere. Individuals who, for whatever reason, found themselves on the wrong side of justice and the wrong side of the law, the wrong side of good common sense, in some cases, have made a choice to put down those arms against us and pick up arms, if you will, against a common enemy. So it's a good thing, and I think we've got a really good solid process that works with the tribal leaders and our ground force commanders to make those determinations. Question, please.

**REP3:** Asking question in Arabic.

**INT:** Question from al-Harah TV to General Davis. In the past months, there were statements by the Multi-National Forces that there were an increase in attacks against the Iraqi, or the American Air Force, particular to the Black Hawk. Is there a decrease in these attacks? We heard that armed groups are using some air missiles to attack the helicopters. Have you eliminated these attacks?

**EDGINGTON:** I cannot say that we have eliminated any of the attacks. It is constantly something that we are monitoring. Occasionally, we will get a missile fired at an aircraft. We track that very closely, and if we can track the group or the individuals responsible, we will certainly go to try to capture or eliminate their ability to hold our aircraft at risk. But I would not be able to capture for you either an increase or decrease recently. It's about the same threat against our aircraft recently as it has been in the past several months.

**SMITH:** There was a period, of course, earlier this year, when a significant number of our helicopters had been affected by ground fire, some resulting in both the downing of the aircraft and loss of life. We've learned a lot from those particular incidents. We study each and every one of those to learn what the enemy has used to deploy weapons or use tactics, and we evolve from that ourselves in our own tactics. Of course we won't discuss what those are, but it's safe to say we take measures to prevent that from repeating itself. We also have had a very targeted effort against the teams that use

this type of weaponry, especially if they're shoulder-fired missiles and the sort. We have gone against both the stockpiles and sourcing of these types of weapons pretty aggressively, so I think that has had some impact, in addition to our own understanding of the enemy's tactics.

**REP4:** Asking question in Arabic.

**INT:** Question to General Davis. The information that you get before launching an operation, are you sure of these operations 100%? And these informations, are your sources reliable? Do you have any misleading information or reports that led to civilian casualties? It's a Turkish news agency.

**EDGINGTON:** The intelligence is developed over an extended period of time. Again, every situation would be different. Some of these targets we develop for weeks at a time. We've been tracking individuals and watching and confirming, and we go to extensive lengths to ensure that we know that this is a just and valid target, that the individual has either held us at risk or caused coalition casualties or caused Iraqis civilian casualties and is definitely hostile. So, I would say that if there was ever a doubt on the reliability of the intelligence, we would develop that target for greater intelligence before we would engage it. 100% is very difficult to say, but there is a confidence level for the ground commander that again, how we

integrate from the area, we communicate or confirm that the intelligence is good, and then we will engage that target.

**SMITH:** I think as the general pointed out, when you watch these videos you may get the wrong impression that the operator of that weapons system, in the case of a Predator, or a pilot in an aircraft, is solely making those decisions and viewing what he or she is seeing in the cockpit of airplane, when in fact there's a great integration of effort, both on the ground and other sources of intelligence that allows the team to make a choice and make a decision. And as the general points out, sometimes that decision-making cycle can be many days long. In some cases, there are rapid decision making cycles that are needed. You've got a fleeting enemy threat that's occurred, say, a heavy machine gun fire coming from the roof of a building. You're going to suppress that fire if your forces are at risk. There's a way to avoid it if we know there are civilians in the area. As I pointed out earlier, we use a small munition to take out just that precise rooftop location. But those are team decisions made with a very integrated approach, and I don't want to leave you with the impression that from 30,000 feet, those decisions are being made in a cockpit necessarily.

**BRIDGINGTON:** As a follow-up also. Just for example, I showed you the house-borne IED the A-10 took out. We would not take one tip from a local

national that said that house has been wired, and drop a bomb on it. The ground commander will take that information, he'll examine it, he'll find out if we've seen anybody go in or go out. He may send a scout team in to check the outside and say, "Okay, that door is pried open, or we have seen this pattern before." We may ask a few other local nationals, we may test something else. And at that point he may say, "Okay, I'm convinced there's nobody inside, we've tried to contact people. It looks like other patterns that we've have seen." And so he will make his determination then as he's developed the intelligence. But we will not just take one unreliable source of a tip and engage with the level of kinetics that you saw that we've dropped in these videos.

**CALVAN:** Bobby Calvin with McClatchy Knight-Ridder. What kind of preparations, if any, is being made – I'm moving back north by the way – to address any threats Iraqi-Turkish border. I mean what kind of assistance is perhaps being laid out for evacuating civilians, or any kind of cooperation up there from here?

**SMITH:** There has been, as you can all imagine, extensive dialogue, not only here in Iraq with our partners here in the Baghdad central government, but also Kurdistan regional leaders have been down to Baghdad in recent days, and there is great interest, obviously, in reducing any potential for a major incursion into northern Iraq by all parties. This is being dealt with at the

current time, very heavily with diplomacy. There obviously is a desire on the part of Turkey, our friend and NATO partner, to resolve this issue. Iraq wants to resolve this issue in the same way, as does many of the neighboring partners in the region. So our work has been done so far is to try to do all things we can do to give assurances to both Iraq and Turkey that we'll work closely with them at the appropriate time at the appropriate level. But I won't go in to detail. Much of the discussion, of course, is also taking place in capitals, Ankara, with Secretary Rice having been to the Neighbors Conference. The Prime Minister was there, as you know, these past couple of days. And again I think there'll be discussions about steps being taken by Iraq to deal with issue, steps being taken by Turkey to deal with the issue. And those will be coming out in the coming days. But thus far, it's been done very measured and through a great deal of diplomatic effort.

**CALVAN:** But isn't the military mobilized for it and have prepared for any potential for military action. As you know, tomorrow in Washington, the Prime Minister is expected to meet President Bush. I mean, what kinds of preparation is already being done? I would imagine that preparations are being done as the word implies before the fact.

**SMITH:** Well I wouldn't describe preparations are being done. I would describe that we certainly understand what capability exists in the greater region,

not only just here in Iraq. But the U.S.-European command, which has the geographic responsibility for Turkey, would clearly be looking at its forces' levels, and so forth. But again, Turkey is committed to a diplomatic path at the present time, and we're not going to discuss contingency operations, potential movements, potential planning, except to say that we're working very, very closely with our partners in the region to address the issue both in the near-term and the long-term.

**MARQUEZ:** But on the Turkey issue, so there has been no diminution of flights or changing of flight patterns? But you just sort of redoubled your efforts to make sure that everybody knows what U.S. planes are flying over? Is that what you meant by exchanging information?

**EDGINGTON:** Well, we are exchanging intelligence, or we're offering intelligence information that we otherwise would collect. But if you're talking about flights themselves, we have not added flights as far as our support for MNF-I specific to try to work the issue. Again, we're working with both partners here. I may not be understanding you...

**MARQUEZ:** I mean has there been any...there was discussion about the Turks perhaps reducing the number of flights or cutting off the U.S. ability to fly goods in here. I know that was one of the initial concerns. Has there been any reduction in flights, different flight patterns? You mentioned that

basically you've redoubled efforts to make sure that everybody knows what U.S. flights are coming into Iraq so that clearly they're not shot at by the wrong person.

**EDGINGTON:** Exactly. And to my knowledge, no, I saw those reports yesterday that there was a cessation of flights, and then immediately saw that Turkey had withdrawn that. That was incorrect, whether it was incorrect reporting or incorrect announcement that those were still going. So to my knowledge, there has been a potential for economic sanctions offered by Turkey and a diplomatic solution, but there has been no cessation of flights that certainly I am aware of.

**SMITH:** Any other questions? With that, then, I'd invite to this Tuesday, two days from today, we'll also be doing a press brief discussing the role of the explosive ordnance disposal teams here in Iraq, both coalition and Iraqi, that work so hard to reduce the amount of munitions in Iraq. And we'll have some exciting news to announce on that day as far as our success over the last year. In addition, this Wednesday we'll be doing another press brief to give you more operation updates, so we'll have a couple opportunities to discuss this week with you all. Thank you so much. Shakrun.