

Testimony before the House Armed Services Oversight and Investigations
Subcommittee, 25 July 2007

I am Paul D. Eaton, retired now 18 months from the United States Army in the rank of Major General. My last operational assignment was Commander of the organization missioned to rebuild the Iraqi Security Forces from 2003 to 2004.

My remarks will focus upon the United States Army, the Iraqi Army, current Iraq operational approach and State Department efforts in the Middle East.

First, the American Army, the most important Army on the planet. We are under funded, under strength and are poorly supported by this administration - all the while given a critical mission that this President insists on executing on the cheap. Our depots continue to operate under strength and under funded, with huge quantities of materiel awaiting rebuild while units go without. We have failed to meet deployed leaders' demands for bomb resistant vehicles, solution the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP), while continuing the funding of Cold War legacy equipment best illustrated by the F22, JSF and the Virginia Class submarine. We have failed to put this country on a war footing to support the equipping of the American Soldier to ensure he is properly equipped for training while he is properly equipped for war. Our industrial performance during World War II was far more impressive than what we see today. Our ability in the Pentagon to meet acquisition requirements in a timely fashion remains a significant weakness.

Recently, in order to meet the requirements of our Foreign Policy, Secretary Gates increased deployment time to fifteen months. Eighteen month deployments are not out of the question. This isn't like WWII where our men fought battles, then retired to safe zones to rearm, refit. This is constant, grinding attrition warfare. We must immediately embark upon a massive, focused increase in the size of the Army and Marine ground forces. Figures range from 70K to 100K for Army; 15K to 20K USMC. To this date, my local recruiting stations have not received increased recruiting quotas although six months ago, the Secretary of Defense stated the need for an increase, endorsed by the President. The joke in the Pentagon is that a vision without resources is a hallucination. Preparing for a near peer competitor twenty years from now is interesting but we are at risk of losing the near fight.

This President is an unsupportive Commander in Chief for our Army and Marine Corps. He has resisted until early this year, to grow our Armed Forces to meet his Foreign Policy objectives – admittedly so advised by his former Secretary of Defense and current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace. Unlike war presidents before him, he has failed to put this country on a war footing to meet fiscal and personnel demands of the current and growing threat to our Nation. Finally, he has recently shown himself callous before the needs of our troops with the denial of your proposed pay raise and the abject failure of the Veterans Administration before the needs of our returning wounded.

Recently, retired Army Chief of Staff, General Edward 'Shy' Myer, one of our last truly candid Generals, notable for his warning on the hollow Army of the seventies, warned

that you may not know the Army is broken until well after the event has occurred. Many signs indicate we are there. One of the canaries in the mine is the wife of a serving Army officer, former Special Forces Sergeant, who tells me she cannot recommend Army service for her oldest son. She is not alone and her feelings are based on the belief that the President she voted for has abandoned the Army.

Recommendations:

1. Immediately do a bottom up requirements review to grasp the true extent of the budgetary needs of the Army and the Marine Corps. You can still properly fund this war while prudently paring down Cold War weapons programs to increase the Army and Navy budgets to meet current demands. The F22 by the way is useless in Iraq and is suspect in Korea. Our traditional 24% of the TOA is inadequate. Raise and Maintain the Army is a Congressional duty.
2. Immediately direct an increase in the Army and Marine Corps endstrength. Move to limit tour lengths to one year. Move to mandate minimum 24 month home station rotations. These are current Army objective personnel standards.
3. Move to contain or limit this President's corrosive impact on the health of the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps by properly managing budgetary support.

Next, the second most important Army on the planet, the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Security Forces(ISF). Again, this administration has treated the ISF as an afterthought. This force is as well under funded, has a flawed personnel policy and lacks the moral strength an Army enjoys when it believes in its government. The result is Iraqi Forces remain under equipped after more than four years of effort. The initial policy of a nationally recruited, nationally representative and locally employed force was abandoned after my departure resulting in many ethnically pure and unreliable forces. The original unifying force of the Iraqi Army has become a contributor to sectarian violence. The pro-shiite government of Mr. Al Maliki robs the Army of a sense of legitimacy that the American Army accepts as its birthright.

I am recently informed that there is now thought of locally raised, locally trained and locally employed ISF. This looks like the Police – a failed force and the former Iraqi Civil Defense Corps – also a failed force. Sectarian, partisan and another name for local militia.

Recommendations:

1. Award, track and manage funding for the ISF in a more directive approach. The former Warsaw Pact countries are awash in reasonably good equipment more than prepared to refit all of it for sale to Iraq. South Africa has excellent and reasonably priced bomb resistant vehicles that would add immediate value to the ISF.
2. Encourage with any number of enticements, the Iraqi Government to revisit the notion of an ISF that would provide a unifying influence for the country. The

King of Jordan understands how to do this. Consult with him. Consider the Italian carabinieri model.

3. The government issue I will cover in my fourth point, diplomacy.

Current operational concepts seem to follow, very closely, the work of Lieutenant Colonel Doug Ollivant and First Lieutenant Eric Chewning – distributed smaller operating bases and strong integration with the Iraqi Army. If the current operational approach doesn't work, I can't imagine another that will work. This brings American forces in direct contact with Iraqi troops, role model opportunity of the first order, and direct security to the communities affected. Where employed, it works.

Recommendation:

We must begin a rational, methodical draw down of combat forces on a straight line of 24 months. Withdrawal of forces under contact is difficult and must be executed with significant forethought and planning – currently underway if we are responsibly led. Such a plan will perform as a forcing function to the Al Maliki government to either get their house in order and fulfill the benchmark expectations or abdicate for another, more survivable government approach. Senator Biden's plan is the most rational I have seen. The current shia dominated government will stall indefinitely if we do not discipline the process with a timeline. The administration's charge that we are aiding and abetting the enemy is specious. They look as we do to January, 2009. We must force the compromise governing solution now.

A diplomatic surge failure. We are treated to a frequent comment that this war cannot be won militarily. This administration has never brought the full power of this Nation to bear on the problem – military, economic, diplomatic and political. It has sought to put the full weight of operations on the shoulder of the Army and the Marine Corps. The State Department has failed to deliver any deal, any assistance to our Department of Defense. Secretary Rice does deliver frequent cameo appearances with zero return on the modest State Department budget. The Army needs help from State.

Recommendation:

The State Department must organize a series of regional engagements between strong internal and strong external actors in the Iraqi area of interest.

The real case study is the Kurdish controlled north of Iraq. They really represent a nation within a nation. Strong actors and a homogenous population have achieved security, economic stability and military prowess. Forces external threaten that security.

The United States must bring the strong internal actors of Iraq, Messrs. Talabani and Barzani, and the leaders of Turkey and Iran into a Camp David type scenario and hammer out the solution, not unlike an earlier era of Egypt and Israel, still at peace. All have interests and vulnerabilities.

That process must be repeated with the strong actors of the Sunni region and the strong external actors of Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Egypt should be invited as well.

And finally, that process should be simultaneously repeated with the Shia and Iran. Prime Minister Al Maliki has allowed himself to be identified already as a partisan strong actor.

The result of all this will look very much like the proposal tendered by Senator Biden in January and the Baker-Hamilton report late last year. None of this is new – all of it ignored by this administration.

You must force, in an asymmetric approach, rational governance by this administration. It is irresponsible for Congress to allow the executive branch of the United States to flail diplomatically when we are faced with an existential threat. The power of the purse can be used with much greater finesse to coerce an this administration into prudent governance.