

Jan. 12, 2006

Military Analysts Call

Briefers:

MG Stephen Speakes, Director, Force Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8, United States Army

MG Jeffrey Sorenson, Deputy for Acquisition and Systems Management, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology)

Host: Allison Barber, DASD OSD-Public Affairs

Transcriber: Murphy

ON THE RECORD

Ms. Barber: This is Allison Barber. We have with us General Speakes and General Sorenson. Today's call and information is **on the record** and we'll open it up. General Speakes, if you'd like to go ahead, and then we'll take some questions and move forward. Thank you both for your time today.

Speakes: Sure. This is Major General Steve Speakes. My job on the Army staff is the director of force development. As the director of force development, we're responsible for Army investment accounts for equipment; we're also responsible for overseeing the distribution of all of that equipment. And so we get in the business of insuring that soldiers across the Army have the equipment they need in accordance with the missions they are given.

What we would like to do is -- General Sorenson and I -- is talk our way through this. What we'll do is quickly highlight what we think some of the key issues are, and then we'll talk through what we believe is the appropriate -- or frankly, the truth in terms of some of the issues from our perspective.

The first issue is we saw in the weekend coverage the perception that essentially, once again, we in the military are reactionary to the developments that are happening over on the battlefield. And so what we'll talk a little bit is our longstanding commitment to go ahead and field the right stuff, and to anticipate trends on the battlefield.

The other thing that you saw is some discussion that said we continue to have a problem with various armored vehicles. And what we can quickly summarize for you is the success story that we have had in armored vehicles, and what we continue to do to improve our overall armored vehicle posture.

So what we'd like to do first of all is to begin by talking a little bit about body armor. I think that -- and for example, I saw Colonel Maginnis the work that you did on MacNeil Lehrer (referencing 11 January broadcast), and obviously, you have not only worn it, but you can talk it, and so what I will do for everybody else is just summarize some of the key points from our perspective.

Integrated body armor, interceptor body armor is something that has been in the Army inventory essentially since the start of this war. We have gone from about 75,000 sets that were available and distributed in the Army at the time we crossed the line of departure in Kuwait, to now over 700,000 sets. This amount is enough for all the forces operating in the Area of Operations plus the majority of the operating force of the Army.

But, more importantly, it has gone through a continuous series of improvements, and the improvements have been a twin pull of the dynamic of what we see on the battlefield and then what our various research, development and testing activities tell us back here in the United States. And so those two imperatives are then constantly giving the Army the chance to see where we ought to go to improve, and then to make those improvements.

The most important feedback we get always is what we call operational need statements, which are statements from the commander in the combat zone of what he needs to improve the

