

GENERAL PETER PACE: THE WAY FORWARD

**Edited By Richard H. Wagner
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After testifying for two days on Capitol Hill on the President's new plan for Iraq, General Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, flew to New York to speak at an event sponsored by the Oxonian Society and the Cornell Club of New York. More than 25 Navy Leaguers were in attendance for the General's talk and for dinner. The Log is grateful to the Oxonian Society, a non-profit corporation which presents a variety of speakers in New York (see oxoniansociety.com) and to the Cornell Club (cornellclubnyc.com) for their cooperation and for making it possible for the Council to participate. The following is excerpted from General Pace's remarks.

Iraq

Let me just talk a little bit about where we are, where we are going and, most important, to start off with how I got to the conviction I have about the way forward. In the beginning of 2006, it looked to me like the training program we were on, the elections that had just taken place, and all the things that were happening in Iraq were headed in the right direction. Not pretty by any imagination but certainly the training that we were doing and the 325,000

Iraqis that we were going to finally complete this year would be sufficient to



take care of their own problems. I was very optimistic at the beginning of the year that we would be able to bring at least some of our troops home by the end of 2006. Around July is when the impact of the bombing of the holy mosque at Samarra really became evident. It happened in February but it took a couple of months to realize the intensity of the sectarian violence that had been spawned by that event. It was

around July that General [William] Casey [Jr., USA,] came into us and said "I'm not going to be able to recommend that we bring any troops home this year." That was a pretty heavy "wait-a-minute" for me. I felt that if we were where we were and if his analysis was right and it was, then we certainly were not where we wanted to be. It was time for me as the Chairman, and for the rest of the Joint Chiefs, to start taking a very hard scrub of the data to figure out where were we, where were we supposed to be and how could we get where we were supposed to be.

We started that analysis in early September of '06 - - about four or five months ago. We met as Joint Chiefs, the six of us, two to three times a week. Initially, we just wanted to do it on our own because I felt that we had been doing a good job as Joint Chiefs of grading the commanders' homework but we had not spent enough time taking the same facts that they were dealing with and thinking through what we might be doing differently. So, we did that. We worked for a while on our own and then we sought out colonels and lieutenant colonels that had recently been in combat to joint with us and share their ideas and we gave them things to work on and come back and report back to us.

Over time, we came to a conclusion about how would you get the way forward. One of the fundamental conclusions was that no amount of additional military power in and of itself was going to be successful. That unless we had a change in the political environment in Iraq itself and unless we had a change in the economic environment in Iraq that adding any number of troops was going to be just having more troops there doing what the troops that were there already were

doing without hope of progress or reconciliation inside Iraq.

We then started sharing our views both up the chain and down, especially the commanders in the field. General [John] Abazaid [USA] was going through the same kind of analysis in Central Command and General Casey was doing the same kind of analysis in Baghdad. When we all got to the point where we thought that we had done as much as we could on our own, we then pooled our thoughts.

It was the end of November when as a result of our discussions and as a result of General Casey sharing his thoughts with his Iraqi counterparts that Prime Minister [Nouri al] Maliki came forward to our President with his proposal to do Baghdad a different way. It was based on his initiative that we then asked General Casey and his Iraqi counterparts to go through the analysis of how many troops it would take to do the job. That resulted in the plan which calls for in Baghdad for the first time a single Iraqi general responsible for all of Baghdad. Under him, two Iraqi division commanders, one would have east of the river, one would have west of the river. Under them would be nine districts, each of which would have a brigade and a brigade is about 2,500 to 3,000 troops. In those districts, there would be three or four police stations that would form the hubs from which the combination of Iraqi army, Iraqi police and U.S. forces would operate. With Iraqis in the lead doing the sweeps, doing the knocks on the doors, being present on the streets, doing the census work, starting to give some sense of stability to their neighborhoods.

To help them, we would have a battalion of our folks, about 700 troops, who would be with them to help them

from a training perspective but, most importantly, to be able to help them, to be able to provide air support and the like, and to be able to provide quick reaction to be able to respond to emergencies. For example, what you've seen in Baghdad on television the last couple of days with Haifa Street, that was an Iraqi led operation, that had U.S. advisers with it, got into a fire-fight downtown, Iraqi and Iraqi, that resulted in calls for help from the U.S. and our fire support. That is an example of the way in which we see this unfolding.

The commanders have been selected in cooperation between General Casey, our commander on the ground, and the Iraqi commanders on the ground. They have selected the additional units that had to come to town because when we looked at the responsibilities, there simply were not enough Iraqi troops or U.S. troops available in Baghdad to clear, which we are very good at doing, to hold, which is primarily an Iraqi responsibility to be on the streets all the time, and to build, which is a governmental responsibility. When you do the math on that it turned out that we needed three more Iraqi brigades, which adds up to about 8,000 more Iraqis, and we wanted to have two more U.S. brigades, which adds up to about 7,000 U.S., to be able to have enough power to not only do the sweeps and to do the clearing but stay and provide long-term security.

What is different about this? Simply adding more troops is not the answer. It will not get the job done. You have to have a fundamental shift in the attitude and leadership of the Iraqi government, number one. That has been shown, first, by Prime Minister Maliki bringing forth his ideas to our President and to date, everything that the Iraqis are

supposed to do to make this plan work, they have done. They have named the commanders, they have cooperated with us in picking the subordinate commanders, they cooperated with us in picking the units from outside of Baghdad that were the best trained and best led to come into Baghdad and, significantly, compared to last time, they are in fact moving these troops from outside of Baghdad into Baghdad. So, to date, what they have promised they would do, they have done. The Prime Minister went out on 6 January, which is their armed forces day, and gave a speech in which he articulated his plan and his desire to make this work [including] to give the commanders on the ground the authority to operate, not just in Sunni neighborhoods, which is where they were restricted to in the past, but to be able to provide the rule of law across Baghdad whether it is a mixed community, a Shia community or a Sunni community. That is the promise.

In addition, once you sweep through, you must have some sort of improvement in the life of the people. In addition to stopping the violence on their streets, jobs have to come with it, and cleaning up of the trash, and things like that, and produce immediate positive results.

Can I guarantee that this plan will work? The answer is that I cannot guarantee things over which I do not have control. However, the military plan as drafted, as part of a three-legged plan that includes political leadership, which to this point has come through, and economic progress towards which the Iraqis have pledged \$10 billion - - if those two things happen then the plan we have militarily will work. If they do not happen, this plan will not work. It is also true that you can't have economic

and political progress without the security. So, this is not a finger-pointing, it is a matter of fact that all three of those things have to happen otherwise you won't have long-term success. We can have short-term success, you can put a bunch of troops in there, you can quell down violence for a little while but unless there is something from the government leadership-wise and economically, you are just going to have the same caldron continue to boil.

Success to me is not an Iraq that has no crime and has no terrorists. That is something that you cannot strive for and obtain. New York has crime but it has a police force that keeps that crime at a level below which most of the people in the city can live their lives the way they want to. That is success in Iraq, that is success for Baghdad - - not that there are not an occasional terrorist act or that there is no crime but that those acts are below a level at which the people in general feel safe in their neighborhoods and the government is functioning to provide services and jobs. That is success.

It won't surprise you that as a Marine I am thinking about anything other than how to reach that success. I am not thinking about "we'll try this and if it doesn't work, we'll try something else." I believe that leaving would create a worse situation than staying and finding the way to get it right.

The Iraqi armed forces and Iraqi police perform in varying degrees from very well to very poorly. The Iraqi army quality-wise is ahead of the Iraqi police because we have spent more time and resources in training up the army than we have yet in training up the police. We don't have authority to train police absent special authority from Congress. Regardless, we have the authority now

in Iraq to do that. The Iraqi army, especially, in most instances, is fighting very well for their country. Their casualties that we know of are twice as many as ours. They are out there working. Our hospitals have normally more Iraqi troops in them than U.S. troops. I hate talking about casualties like that because it sounds cold and I don't mean it to sound cold but it is just the reality on the ground. Our guys and gals are out there working and theirs are too and they are taking casualties for their country and sacrificing.

As an example of who you can trust, we take ten, twelve, fourteen of our guys and we put them into their battalions of about 500 or 600 troops. They go into the field with them and they operate with them and they are able to be there so when they get into a fight we are able to bring in helicopters for Medevac, we are able to bring in fixed-wing aircraft to provide fire support, we will do the kind of things that the Iraqis cannot do for themselves. We have not had any of those units turned on by the Iraqi units that they were with. They are well-protected by the Iraqi units they are with because the Iraqi soldiers know what the American soldiers bring with them.

What is difficult is the civilians - - to know who is really civilian and who is really a fighter. That is why it is fundamentally important to have Iraqis doing the holding in neighborhoods and having Iraqis doing the knocking on doors. Take your own neighborhood. You know who lives there and who doesn't. If I go to your neighborhood, I wouldn't have a clue as to who was supposed to be in those houses. That's the same thing in Baghdad. We don't know who is supposed to live there and who is not. We know who is carrying a

weapon and who is fighting against us and we can do something about that. But if you want to have long term security, you have to have people on the streets, police on the streets, who understand who is supposed to be in the neighborhood and who is not and be able to do something about it.

At the end of the day, it doesn't make a difference what the number [of troops] is. What makes a difference is whether the Iraqi people trust their armed forces and their police to provide security and trust their government to work on their behalf to share the oil revenues, to adjust the constitution as needed, to provide jobs, to lead a unity government instead of a separated sectarian government.

[S]ome of [the Kurdish] militia have, over the last year or so, transformed into part of the Iraqi army. So, the troops that will be moving into Baghdad will be Iraqi army troops but the formations, the battalions and the brigades, are mostly Kurdish troops. They are very good in the field. One of two things is going to be true. Either they are going to be a balanced force that both Sunni and Shia can trust, or, for whatever reason, they might turn out to be working for Kurdish aims. I'm not aware of any Kurdish aims in Baghdad. I know they have got aims up north but this force can be seen by both Sunni and Shite as unbiased and they are serving very capably.

What has been incredible to me has been the absolute ingenuity of our great troops. [They] have taken the weapons and capabilities that were designed for conventional war and applied them to the counterinsurgency, unconventional part of this war. [Also,] the special operations forces that our nation has that I truly wish I could tell

you more about because what they are doing for us, literally, as we stand and sit here, makes your eyes water. These folks are incredibly talented and precise in what they do and extremely disciplined in the application of force. As a result of their work, Al Queda has been beat up pretty badly in Iraq.

What has to continue to evolve is our capacity to train other countries' troops to do the work of their own countries. Because we just cannot have a better security presence than homegrown troops who know the areas, know the people, and are accepted by the people. We do not have yet enough of our armed forces allocated to that mission although we are going in that direction. It will take time to train up folks to go train other people. We also have problems in the way that we allocate money to do those kind of jobs in that some of the work that we need to do with our military forces is still in the responsibility chain of the State Department. It was put there for a very good reason. But, if you look out across the challenges that are out there, it seems to me that if we want to keep our forces home and not have to deploy major combat formations to go to battle, then we are going to have to make sure that our friends around the world have the capacity to take care of their own problems. That requires being able to spend money on our trainers being able to go to other countries and being able to train other countries. [We] need to take a good hard look at the laws of our land and decide which of those that were made in the '90s ought to continue to apply now and which ought to be changed.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is an under-appreciated success to date. We are not out of the woods. A \$4 billion economy in '04 and about half of that was poppy seeds. Now, it is about \$7 billion and still about \$2 billion is poppy. So, as the economy grows, the poppy growth has not subsided but it has not increased its percentage of the GDP. There are some positive aspects of that despite the fact that we have not been successful to get the poppy under control. That is being led by our good friends in the U.K. and they are working with the Karzai government to try and knock it down. About 90% of the heroin that is produced in that nation ends up in Europe so the Europeans have a very special opportunity to do something there.

The Taliban is down but not out. It is a little bit confusing right now when you talk about Taliban who is in that basket. Now, there is a capital "T" Taliban, who are the guys we have been fighting against all along, and then, there is small "t" taliban, who have to be counted as them but who really are drug lords trying to protect their turf. It is a little bit hard to determine one from the other and at the end of the day it doesn't make any difference because neither one of the groups is good for the health of the Afghan government.

President [Hamid] Karzai has exhibited terrific, courageous leadership. Not all the decisions that he has made I'm sure are exactly what he would make again but he has been moving that country forward. They have an assembly and it is working. But as happens in Afghanistan, we are in the winter months right now, so most of the fighters have gone to ground. Comes the

Spring, there will be a spring offensive and the question is whether it will be ours or theirs. We have to think through like we did for Iraq, where are we in Afghanistan, where have we made progress and how do we reinforce that progress, where are we not where we want to be and how do we change that and certainly opium production is one of the places that needs more attention.

We've got now all the countries in NATO plus many others . . . helping in Afghanistan, not all at the same level, not all with the same authority to do things, but 42 countries that are helping in one way or another and that is good. So, I am optimistic about Afghanistan. Their troops have a fighting capacity that is pretty solid. They are loyal to their central government. Our guys like to serve along side Afghan national army troops: (1) because they are good fighters and (2) because they know the local area and can help us in a lot of ways that way. So, I am optimistic about the way forward as long as we collectively continue to help with security so that they can continue to grow their government.

But, there is a stark difference between Iraq and Afghanistan with regard to two very important factors. One is money available to the state. Iraq can probably produce about \$30 billion a year in oil revenues alone. There is no oil that we know of in Afghanistan. Second is 80 plus percent of the Iraq population can read and write and about 20 percent can in Afghanistan. If you are going to use the human capital of the country for the betterment of the country, you have to start with the school system in Afghanistan so they can educate themselves and better manage the options they have.

Somalia

We have been since 911 tracking the Al Queda and terrorist networks across the globe the best we can. [S]pecifically in Somalia, we have authorities to track and when we positively identify certain individuals who are very high up in the hierarchy of the terrorist network to capture or kill them [under certain conditions]. So, you are out there, you are looking, you are searching, you see them, they are moving and if you don't do something right now the opportunity is gone. With the Ethiopian incursion into Somalia to support the government there, the terrorists who had been inhabiting Mogadisho started to scurry. When they start to scurry we were able to better to observe and track them and that gave us an opportunity to do what we did the other night. There is a very precise authority that the troops in the field must adhere to and if there are four or five criteria that must be met and if any one is not met, then you don't do it. [This is] to ensure that if we do these activities that we are going to apply force against an enemy of our country in an environment where if we don't take a shot now, we are not going to take a shot in the future.

North Korea

It is dangerous for lots and lots of reasons. First of all, because their armed forces are getting weaker in the conventional sense, the fact that they have created a nuclear detonation is cause for concern - - especially, if they are led by someone who does not work on the same rational principles that most other people work on as best we can tell. Therefore, things that make sense to us

that would be persuasive are not always persuasive for him. And if he were to miscalculate and determine that he wanted to do something militarily, and if his armed forces are getting weaker, which they are, and he has a nuclear weapon, that's a problem. It is also a problem because everything else he has ever built militarily, he has sold. They have no other export other than missiles and hardware for military.

The Chinese certainly have more sway with the North than we do but I think it is instructive that the Chinese asked the North Koreans not to conduct a nuclear test and they did anyway. There is a limit to outsiders' ability to control.

The Legacy of September 11

We need to post a picture of the skyline of New York in as many places in the Capitol of the United States as we can. People should be reminded every day of what our enemies want to do to us. I cannot come to this city without getting emotional. The good news and the bad news is the same news. The good news is that we told ourselves that the best way to get back at the terrorists is to live our lives the way we darn well pleased and that is exactly what we are doing, thank God. But, that also means that the further and further we get away from September 11, 2001, the less we remember what our enemies are really all about. I cannot tell you why we have not had another attack here. I'm sure it is some combination of what we are doing militarily, what we are doing internationally with police forces, what the intelligence community is doing, and a good chunk of luck. But, all you need to be reminded that they are still out there is the planes that they tried to send

our way from London just a couple of months ago. I really do understand and appreciate the concern of all those who would like us to leave Iraq now. But, I really do believe that if we left Iraq now that they would follow us to Afghanistan, and, if we left Afghanistan, they would follow us here. I cannot prove that to you but I can certainly show you their websites where they say that is what they plan on doing.