



U.S. Department of Defense
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)
News Transcript

On the Web:

<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4026>

Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131/697-5132

Public contact:

<http://www.defenselink.mil/faq/comment.html>
or +1 (703) 428-0711 +1

Presenter: Director Joint Training for the Joint Warfighting Center and Joint Forces Command Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya and Deputy Commander for Operations 18th Airborne Corps Brig. Gen. Michael Ferriter **August 23, 2007 10:00 AM EDT**

DoD News Briefing with Maj. Gen. Kamiya from Ft. Bragg, N.C.

COL. GARY KECK (Press Office director): Good morning again, everyone, and welcome to the Pentagon Briefing Room. I'm Colonel Gary Keck, the director of the Press Office. And I appreciate you being here today and want to welcome, from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, our briefers. This morning we have with us Major General Jason Kamiya, who is the director, joint training, and commander of the Joint Warfighting Center in Suffolk, Virginia; and Brigadier General Michael Ferriter, the deputy commander for operations of the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg.

And they're here to talk to you today about the mission readiness exercise that's taking place at Fort Bragg with the 18th Airborne Corps in preparation for their deployment to Iraq. They both have opening statements, and after that, we will have Q&A from the Pentagon press corps. And just so you know, the local reporters are there also, and after we complete our Q&A portion, then we will turn it over to them and we will go silent. So don't be alarmed if they don't get up or leave. They're going to continue a press conference with their local media there.

So with that, gentlemen, I'll turn it over to you for your opening comments.

GEN. KAMIYA: Thank you very much. And good morning, and thanks for attending today's press conference.

As just said, I'm the director of joint training for the Joint Warfighting Center and the Joint Forces Command. We have been here at Fort Bragg since the beginning of August helping to train 18th Airborne Corps Headquarters for the upcoming mission in Iraq. The first week was spent primarily on academics. We brought in a variety of subject matter experts from Iraq and around the armed services to speak about topics such as contracting, functional topics, staff topics like information operations, intelligence, logistics, et cetera.

Last week was spent in what we call the ramp-up exercise, where the Army's Battle Command Training Program provided a ramp-up exercise supported by the Joint Warfighting Center as a prelude to the final portion of the mission rehearsal exercise, which occurred this week.

This has really been a yearlong planning process. It involved multiple staff assistance visits to the Iraq

theater of operations, multiple dialogues with General Odierno and his staff as well as a variety of a function of experts from the theater to provide the most realistic exercise and environment and scenario we could for the corps.

To do this, we brought in about 56 experts from Multinational Force Iraq and Multinational Corps-Iraq to help us in exercise design and also in the execution of this exercise as subject matter experts. We also brought in a variety of our Multinational and interagency partners.

For example, on the Multinational side, we had Lieutenant General Ali, the commander of the Iraq Ground Forces Command, here with his staff to interface with the corps. We also have the corps' coalition partners: Korea, the United Kingdom, Poland and Australia. These four nations brought a variety of members, primarily with experience in the Iraq theater of operation, as well as those going into theater at the same time as the corps.

I'm also very, very happy and pleased to announce that, consistent with our usual partnership, we have a variety of U.S. interagency partners here with us during the last three weeks: Representatives from the State Department, from the FBI, from the U.S. Agency for International Development and a variety of other partners, to include the U.S. embassy in Iraq.

The Joint Warfighting Center can't do this alone, and we have the support of a variety of what we call enabling commands within JFCOM -- by Joint Public Affairs Support Element, Joint Center for Operation Analysis and a variety of others.

Part of the training transformation that started three or four years ago was investing in technology that allowed us to bring the joint training event to home stations that can save time, dollars and troop tempo from the old paragon of having to bring forces to a central location to exercise together.

So within this exercise, we have the corps's subordinate elements, what we call player cells, playing from a variety of locations: Camp Pendleton, California; Fort Drum, New York; here at Fort Bragg; from Suffolk, Virginia, my own headquarters; and Fort Hood, Texas; and Hurlburt Airfield in Florida.

With that, let me turn the floor over to Mike Ferriter.

GEN. FERRITER: Thank you, sir, and thanks, Gary.

Good morning, and thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today about the 18th Airborne Corps and our preparations for deployment to Iraq early next year.

Let me thank General Kamiya again, and his team from Joint Forces Command, and from the Army's Battle Command Training Program, for putting together this tremendous training exercise. The rigor and complexity, realism of the exercise have prepared us well for what we believe we'll experience in Iraq.

I'd also like to thank Brigadier General Joe Anderson and the 3rd Corps, the current Multinational Corps-Iraq, for bringing their staff here to Fort Bragg to help us better understand the operational environment and ultimately making the transition between the two corps seamless.

As you heard additionally, we -- our coalition partners from Poland and Australia, the United Kingdom and Korea were able to join us and added a valued perspective to the training event.

Lastly, I'd like to thank the members of the Iraqi Ground Force Command who were integrated in our staff during the exercise. The 18th Airborne Corps has a special relationship with the Iraqi Ground Force Command, as we assisted in their stand-up in 2005.

Our corps staff has learned a great deal during the past three weeks. We've built our team. We've worked our processes and interacted with our partners and set the conditions for the corps to assume the role as to Multinational Corps-Iraq after the new year.

We'll continue to build on our successes and work on areas of improvement over the next couple months, and I'm confident we're ready to take the task ahead.

And now we are happy to take your questions.

COL. KECK: Well, thank you, gentlemen, for those opening comments. And I would just remind everyone here that these gentlemen cannot see you, so when you ask your questions, please let them know who they're talking to and what news organization you're from.

Dave?

Q Gentlemen, it's Dave Wood from The Baltimore Sun. I wonder if you could describe briefly how this MRE differs from ones you've done in the past, and in particular whether you were exercising the capability for a phased withdrawal of forces.

GEN. KAMIYA: I'll take a part of that question. In our pre-exercise discussions as part of the year-long planning effort, as I mentioned before, we consulted with General Odierno and his staff, as well as elements within the Multinational Force-Iraq, General Petraeus' headquarters. We did our best to replicate the environment that we estimate will exist at the time of the corps transfer of authority next spring.

Now having said that, we're sitting here in August of 2007, and we're looking at a spring 2008 transfer of authority. So following this exercise, we will get together with General Austin and identify another abbreviated period in time between now and their transfer of authority. We will have more granularity over all of the elements of the environment: the political aspects, progress of transitioning more and more responsibility for security to the Iraqi security forces, et cetera. And we'll go ahead and present a tailored training event for the corps headquarters based upon General Austin's training objectives at that time.

So as you well know, there are a lot of uncertainties in terms of the fidelity of the environment in the spring '08 time frame for all the reasons that you are fully aware of. So here in August, again as a result of our dialogue with those in theater, we provided the environment that in our estimate at this point in time best replicates that environment.

GEN. FERRITER: Thank you, sir.

I would just add that our particular focus for this exercise is really to gain that initial understanding and build expertise in the ongoing activities and the expected activities that the U.S. forces are participating in securing the Iraqi population, in assisting the Iraqi security forces and building their capacity and really setting the space and headroom and allowing through a secure environment for interagency and nongovernmental organizations and private sector support to the Iraqi people.

So our biggest focus and prominent focus here has been on developing mastery of understanding, and then our processes to continue really so we'll have a seamless and a smooth transition with the 3rd U.S. Corps.

Q General Kamiya, it's Louie Martinez of ABC News. Could you describe what the environment is that you've tried to replicate?

Are you saying that it's a level of violence that is lower or higher than it is currently or, I mean, just what

kind of details about the environment that you replicated?

GEN. KAMIYA: Some characteristics of continued presence of contractors in the environment, and what that necessitates in terms of coordination, et cetera. More and more transfer by area, province, region of the security responsibilities to Iraq security forces, and bringing with it more and more integration with the Iraq security forces. A dynamic media environment, international as well as U.S. media environment that is informed, fueled by the dynamics that we expect will probably occur globally. Just a few examples.

Q If I could follow up, sir, how about, let's say -- (off mike) -- contact that you would encounter with the insurgents?

GEN. KAMIYA: Sorry to interrupt. The -- in terms of the kinetic aspects of this exercise, we are trying to replicate a level of violence equal to or slightly less than exists today.

Q Kimberly Dozier with CBS News.

I'd like you to follow up on what sort of changes maybe you've made to how you're going to be taking over or handing territory over to Iraqi forces, for instance. What sort of changes have been suggested to you from Joe Anderson and his guys, what they've done, what they suggest you do this time around? Does there need to be more overlap, for instance, for a longer period of time?

GEN. KAMIYA: I can't comment on the specificity of General Odierno's and General Petraeus's plan. However, as part of our scenario design and context for this exercise, we took a look at the strategy, the strategic documents and plan that was published by General Odierno and his staff as recently as a few months ago. And that is the plan that we are executing in this exercise, and I can't comment any further on the specificity of that plan, in terms of the transition of responsibility more and more to the Iraqi security forces.

GEN. FERRITER: If I could just pitch in just a bit, I'd tell you that given the what or given the specific scenario item, the value that we gained was in the how we would need to coordinate or speak with or bring together the groups to effectively understand what requirements would be needed to cause transition.

And to be specific, it mostly would involve allowing the Iraqi security force or working through Multinational Force, who is replicated in the exercise also, to get the right players to set the conditions discussed, turn over, hand over or promotion of more services to an area.

And so it was valuable for our staff to understand that they would have tremendous interplay with both the Iraqi forces, governments and provinces in order to execute a task that otherwise they might have wanted to grab and run with themselves.

Q To follow up, I guess what I'm trying to say is we have in the past seen so many hand-over ceremonies, so many portions of territory, be it in Baghdad or outside Baghdad, that are handed over and then low and behold after a few weeks or a few months, there are spikes of insurgent attacks there; U.S. forces have to go back in. I'm wondering what sort of lessons have been learned about how to keep that from happening, and where you would point to say, there's an area that we've handed over and it's worked, and here's why.

GEN. FERRITER: I'll go ahead. From the exercise perspective, your question is an outstanding question because this is the complexity of the environment that the 3rd Corps and their divisions are working. So in many cases, two steps forward and then we'd receive a report of an incident or an occurrence or an enemy action that would require our forces to go and help or provide support or to backstop the Iraqi security force in the exercise play. And I think that's realistic to what we'll see in the future.

GEN. KAMIYA: A point also from a trainer's perspective is that any transition in security in a given area

cannot only be looked at from a military perspective. That this transition must also involve a coordinated effort in that area with the Iraqi ministries through Multinational Force-Iraq and the U.S. embassy. So this is, again, a key training objective of General Austin.

Q It's Andrew Gray from Reuters here.

Could you give us an indication of the assumptions you have made in the exercise as regards to force levels? How many brigades do you anticipate having under your command during the period when you're in Iraq?

GEN. FERRITER: The decisions for transition that General Petraeus will come back and brief next month are still something that we don't have insights into. So we took into this exercise the belief that we would go in with relatively the same number of forces as projected right now, and that we use those forces with a plan towards transition in the months ahead.

GEN. KAMIYA: As I said earlier, as the situation evolves, with General Petraeus's report next month, et cetera, we'll have more granularity in the fall than we do right now. So again, we'll work with General Austin to present an exercise of some type that will then provide a context and scenario that replicates more clearly where -- our reform, thinking of where -- what the environment will be, to include potentially force levels when the corps -- transfers of authority in the spring.

Q It's Thom Shanker with The New York Times. A question for General Ferriter. As we look at the patches of the units projected to fold in under your corps, I'm curious how you're preparing this rather mixed group of command. For instance, how are you going to integrate very heavy division headquarters and heavy brigades who really don't know the way Airborne people operate? How do you assure connectivity, command and control and that it will be this seamless transition you're talking about?

GEN. FERRITER: Well, good to hear your voice again, Thom, and I hope to see you sometime soon again. I think your question is excellent. The -- it really speaks to the -- a good news and success story, not only in the United States Army, but really across the joint force, because your question could also easily be expanded to say, how is it that we can work so well with the Marines and the Air Force and our Navy folks on the battlefield?

To specifically get to the question, this 18th Airborne Corps, working with heavy divisions, reflects, first of all, the fact that these exercises bring the best practices, as seen over the last several rotations, fed by the experts, Joint Forces Command and the experts from the Army's Battle Command Training Program to the leaders.

Now, we've done the mission readiness exercises as the higher headquarters for the 3rd Infantry Division who's over there now and for the 4th Infantry Division. And we have General Hertling from the 1st Armored Division with us during our academics here, and they are in constant communications or consistent communications with our headquarters as they have questions still. The strength of the modular brigade concept has played out as well. This -- as well many of its divisions will have brigades that don't normally live with them in their area.

I think it speaks to the tremendous leadership, the adaptable leaders that we have from corporal up to brigade commanders and general officers, and it really speaks to how we've adapted our training programs and our education programs over the last several years to meet the changes that we see in the real world, to get it back to the next person who will have to fight and to make sure they're ready.

I appreciate your question. It's a very good one.

GEN. KAMIYA: I think from a trainer's perspective this exercise is unique in a very special way, and that is, because of the decision regarding the surge, we have moved away from a training paradigm where we have

the corps headquarters and all of its subordinate elements linked in one specific time to give one exercise.

As Mike Ferriter talked about, we began this training effort back in March when we helped the Army's Battle Command Training Program train the 3rd ID, who was accelerated into theater. Following that about a month or so later, we helped train the corps sustainment commands -- their logistics, intelligence, et cetera commands. Following that, a month or so later we helped train the 4th ID and 1st Armored Divisions prior to them going into theater.

So while the focus here in August is the corps headquarters, we have invested an equal amount of training, energy and time ensuring that their subordinate elements, their subordinate commands are equally well trained, again, overseen by the corps each step of the way.

Q I'm Carl Osgood. I write for Executive Intelligence Review. Just a couple weeks ago, I paid a visit to J-9, and I saw a demonstration of the modeling and simulation and the virtual environment capabilities down there. So I'd like to know -- I'd like you to talk about, if you could, a little bit about how you use these tools in this exercise.

GEN. KAMIYA: Because this exercise was primarily focused just at the corps headquarters, it is primarily a constructive exercise.

And for those of you who don't know, in a joint community, we have the capability in our modeling and sims work to provide a joint live, virtual and constructive environment.

For this exercise, this exercise is primarily in the constructive environment, where the icons, et cetera, don't represent a person in a simulator flying a simulated A-10 or an AC-130, or actual live forces on the ground, just because of the exercise design and the training objectives of the corps commander.

However, in other exercises, we have been successful in linking live training ongoing with virtual capability, such as a pilot in Hurlburt Field, Florida, flying in a C-130 simulator and having that virtual C-130 flying inside the simulation, along with -- filled out by constructive elements, where there is no live forces or a person behind the simulator.

The important thing is that no matter what environment you come from, live, virtual or constructive, the commander and his staff see in front of them a common operational picture where the icon, whether it's live, virtual, constructive, is completely transparent to him. But for this specific exercise, the icons are primarily in the constructive environment.

Q Bill McMichael, Military Times newspapers. The value of bringing the Iraqi ground forces commander and his staff to Suffolk, as well as the members of the Multinational Corps-Iraq staff to Suffolk, is undeniably valuable to you all in a general sense. But given your vast simulation and communications abilities, and given the critical point at which the U.S. and coalition forces find themselves in the war now, in the middle of the surge, what's the value in bringing them all the way over here, rather than communicating with them in a simulated fashion, so that they can be on the ground there and attend to -- continue attending to that business?

GEN. FERRITER: Well, I think certainly you're cutting in just a little, but -- in and out just a little. But certainly the value of personal relationships in the environment where we will go, and the trust and reliance that comes from knowing each other and understanding the commander and the way he looks at things and he understands those who work for him, is priceless.

And so here at Fort Bragg to have them come and travel and be with us really gives us those insights into how they'll respond. And their comfort to be able to speak openly and directly to our commanding general is without question the most value that we get out of that.

COL. KECK: Okay, we are at the end of our time. And we appreciate you spending some moments with us and we want to be sensitive to the media you have there also. At this time, if you have any closing comments, we'd like to hear from you, and thank you again.

GEN. KAMIYA: Just a final note to thank you very much for all that you're doing to report on the great work of our men and women in uniform, both in Iraq and throughout the globe.

GEN. FERRITER: And I would just again thank you as well, and I look forward to you coming to Iraq when we're there and you being able to see these great young men and women of the armed forces who are working every day to get it done. Thank you very much.

COL. KECK: Thank you all.

(C) COPYRIGHT 2007, FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, INC., 1000 VERMONT AVE. NW; 5TH FLOOR; WASHINGTON, DC - 20005, USA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ANY REPRODUCTION, REDISTRIBUTION OR RETRANSMISSION IS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED. UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION, REDISTRIBUTION OR RETRANSMISSION CONSTITUTES A MISAPPROPRIATION UNDER APPLICABLE UNFAIR COMPETITION LAW, AND FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, INC. RESERVES THE RIGHT TO PURSUE ALL REMEDIES AVAILABLE TO IT IN RESPECT TO SUCH MISAPPROPRIATION. FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, INC. IS A PRIVATE FIRM AND IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. NO COPYRIGHT IS CLAIMED AS TO ANY PART OF THE ORIGINAL WORK PREPARED BY A UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE AS PART OF THAT PERSON'S OFFICIAL DUTIES.
FOR INFORMATION ON SUBSCRIBING TO FNS, PLEASE CALL JACK GRAEME AT 202-347-1400.