

Americans follow along? Do the Americans make that decision? Who decides --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, the Iraqis are going to be in the lead here, and the United States in support roles, as the senior administration official said.

Q -- that the Iraqi commanders could essentially commit U.S. troops --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, U.S. troops, again, will be working under U.S. command and they will be working jointly. There is not going to be an opportunity for Iraqis to be giving direct orders to the United States.

Q But if Iraqis have tried to take on Sadr City, and U.S. troops are embedded, does that mean U.S. troops --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: You're confusing a couple of things also. Just because you have embedded forces and you're doing training does not mean that everybody sort of trails along on each and every mission. As the senior administration official said, of particular interest for the Iraqis is taking the lead in places like Sadr City.

Two more, and then I've got to go.

Q Will the benchmarks in the President's plan be associated with dates? And what's the span under which those --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, but the benchmarks are the ones that the Iraqis themselves have set. What he's saying is -- to the Prime Minister, you have set your benchmarks, you need to meet them.

Q Will he say --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, I believe so. If not, our supporting materials all do.

Q After the American people hear the speech or absorb it, will the President be saying that with this plan there is increased risk, expect more casualties, that will happen?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think -- it is certainly a possibility. Common sense would dictate, especially if you're going into areas where you have a dug-in enemy and you're saying, we're going to take you on now, there is a real possibility of -- in the short run -- more violence. We do not want people to think that the enemy simply is going to run away. This is going to be a time where Iraqi and U.S. forces are going very seriously after those who have tried to destabilize the democracy -- Al Qaeda in Anbar, a variety of different groups and organizations within Baghdad proper. So we are certainly

-- we're going to acknowledge the fact that this creates a prospect of greater violence in the short run.