

Have you heard at all from them in terms of their knowledge ahead of the conflict there? Were they surprised on the moves by the Georgians and the Russians? And can you also talk a little bit about what exactly happened with the five Humvees that were then taken?

GEN. CONWAY: I can answer the second part better than I can answer the first. I've been in contact, of course, indirectly through our component commander in (YUCOM ?) on those Marines and the relative safety at the time of the attacks and so forth. I've not asked the question of him as to whether or not they were surprised by what took place so I just wouldn't know how to answer that part of it. I read somewhere with regard to the Humvees that they had satellite communication equipment on board, which really struck me as unusual because we don't normally ship our vehicles in that configuration. So I did go back to Major General Cornell Wilson and ask that question.

He just responded yesterday and said that there were a total of five Humvees that were apparently taken by the Russians -- four that were conventional, one that was an up-armored Humvee -- but that none of those had anything like secret satellite communications -- in fact, no radios at all. They had radio mounts only, and that's -- that makes much more sense because that's traditionally how we ship. So I think we're going to send the Russians a bill and tell them, you know, either pay up or give us back our vehicles, guys. You know, that's not the way we do business.

Q Was there any clarification on how they were taken? Were they put into an area that wasn't secured at all by Georgians or --

GEN. CONWAY: They were at port is as much as I can say. I don't know if they were actually aboard a ship or if they were off at that point on pier side but they were at the port there.

Q One quick clarification.

GEN. CONWAY: Last question.

Q You had said it's plausible to backfill the 24th MEU. Are you saying it's likely that there will be troop reductions in Anbar and a corresponding backfill in Afghanistan?

GEN. CONWAY: I don't know that I said it was plausible to fill -- backfill 24 MEU. The -- in fact, I would say it's implausible to put a MEU in there at this point with like capability unless the commander of CENTCOM decided to employ his operational reserve, okay. It takes a while to get a MEU over there, it takes a while to train a MEU, and at this point there's absolutely nothing planned for that and so the timelines just don't match up to back out 24 MEU. Two 7, I would say it's plausible, okay.

Q (Off mike) -- are you saying it's likely to expect troop reductions in Anbar -- (inaudible)?

GEN. CONWAY: I will continue to say the same thing to the secretary of defense that I've said before and that is, sir, if you choose to put Marines in behind 27 I must ask you for troop reductions elsewhere, and the only elsewhere at this point that I see available is in Iraq, okay.

Q Well, thanks again, General, for -- (inaudible) -- your time. Thank you, General.

GEN. CONWAY: Thanks, guys. Good seeing you again.

Q Thank you.

GEN. CONWAY: Thank you for what you do.

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