# U.S. House: Legislative: Bill files: 109th Congress: H.J. Res. 55, Withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces from Iraq Resolution of 2005: Miscellaneous (1 of 3): Memorandum for HASC members: Full committee hearing on U.S. military transition teams in Iraq

# COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–6035
ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS



December 6, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR HASC MEMBERS

RE: Full Committee Hearing on U.S. Military Transition Teams in Iraq

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On Thursday, December 7, 2006, at 10:00 AM in Rayburn room 2167, the full committee will meet in open session to receive testimony on U.S. military transition teams in Iraq.

If you have any questions, please contact John Kruse (x6-6712) of the committee staff.

**WITNESSES (bios attached)**

**Lieutenant General James J. Lovelace, Jr., USA**
**Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3**
**United States Army**

**Major General George J. Flynn, USMC**
**Commanding General, Training and Education Command**
**United States Marine Corps**

**Major General Carter F. Ham, USA**
**Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division**
**United States Army**

## BACKGROUND

The President's National Strategy for Victory in Iraq articulated three pillars, or "tracks": political; economic; and security. One critical component of the security track is the creation of robust, capable Iraqi security forces. According to the strategy, the fielding of these units "increases the overall effectiveness of U.S.-Iraqi operations, as Iraqis are better able to collect intelligence and identify threats in their neighborhoods." The strategy also stated that "[a]s Iraqi forces become more and more capable, our military posture will shift, leaving Coalition forces increasingly focused on specialized counter-terrorism missions to hunt, capture, and kill terrorist leaders and break up their funding and resource networks."

As of November 29th, U.S. and coalition forces had trained and equipped roughly 323,000 Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) personnel, including over 188,000 Ministry of Interior personnel such as police and over 134,000 Ministry of Defense personnel. Reflecting an agreement between Iraqi officials and coalition members to intensify the commitment to Iraq's self-reliance and strengthen the then-nascent ISF capabilities, the U.S. military began to assign American advisors to ISF units in 2004. Today, there are more than 400 U.S. Military Transition Team (MiTTs) embedded and integrated with the ISF with the primary mission of advising, coaching, teaching, and mentoring ISF units to improve their combat capabilities. Additionally, the teams provide access to "enabling capabilities", such as air support, artillery, medical evacuation, and intelligence gathering, which can enhance the Iraqis' ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

One additional MiTT responsibility is to complete monthly Transition Readiness Assessments on the Iraqi unit in which the team is embedded. These assessments provide color-coded unit-level evaluations in six areas: (1) personnel; (2) command and control; (3) training; (4) sustainment and logistics; (5) equipment; and (6) leadership. Using this information, the MiTT then determines an overall unit-level assessment level, ranging from one (capable of planning, executing, and sustaining counterinsurgency operations without coalition support) through four (still in formation). Most Iraqi combat battalions are at level two, fighting alongside coalition forces but still requiring some coalition support.

In fact, as of August 2006, five Iraqi Army divisions, 25 Iraqi Army brigades, 85 Iraqi Army battalions, and two Iraqi National Police battalions had assumed lead responsibility for security in their areas of operations. In other areas, Iraqi forces fight alongside coalition forces. However, in some cases, Iraqi units do not yet have the capabilities to accept lead responsibility or conduct combined operations, ranging from a lack of combat enablers such as organic logistical capability to a lack of proficiency in basic combat tasks. In fact, recent press reports have cited American soldiers as saying that some Iraqi troops have inadequate training, resources, and motivation, that some lack equipment, or that they are not well-trained on new equipment. Press reports have also indicated that some U.S. trainers felt ill-prepared and ill-equipped for the tasks they were assigned.

Although some officials and experts anticipated that the introduction of ISF into the field would reduce the demand for U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq as a whole, there has been no such broad reduction to date. Some experts point to the increase in sectarian tensions sparked by the February 2006 attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra as an example of why a reduction in demand has not occurred. As a result of such increases in tension, the United States recently had

to bolster its forces temporarily, postponing the redeployment of some units that were nearing the end of theirs tour in Iraq.

## COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT

Under the current **command arrangement** in-country, Iraqi units, which have not accepted lead responsibility for operations, are "partnered" with a Multi-National Coalition-Iraq (MNC-I) or Multi-National Security Training Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) major subordinate command. The "partner" command is responsible for issuing operational orders to the transition units embedded with those ISF components. For example, the 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Division is teamed with units from the coalition-led Multi-National Division-Baghdad MND-B. Therefore, the MiTT embedded with the 9th IA Division takes operational commands from MND-B. (Note: In the event that the Iraqi unit has lead responsibility for an operation, the MiTT still takes its orders from the U.S. partner unit.)

The Iraq Assistance Group (IAG) provides **administrative and personnel management support** for the MiTTs. A two-star subordinate command of MNC-I, the IAG headquarters has about 70 U.S. military members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and is responsible for:

- Providing pre-mobilization and pre-deployment training guidance;
- Coordination of movement to, within, and departure from Iraq;
- Identification of equipment requirements,
- Determination of team assignments;
- Personnel management and replacement;
- Evaluations and awards processing; and
- Equipment accountability and control.

Additionally, MiTTs working with division- and brigade-level Iraqi units often have coordinating relationships with lower-level teams. These relationships may include, in some cases, the ability for a division- or brigade-level MiTT to redistribute personnel and equipment among subordinate teams. A May 2006 report from the Army Center for Lessons Learned (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) observed that this command arrangement, with separate administrative and operational chains, proved unfamiliar to many soldiers and that fuller coverage was required in the teams' pre-deployment training.

## STAFFING

***Sourcing.*** Originally, teams were sourced by units already in Iraq ("internal teams"). There are reports that the U.S. military assembled some "internal teams" in an ad-hoc fashion, using an inconsistent mix of active and reserve component members with an inconsistent range of skill sets. While several "internal teams" remain in Iraq, the U.S. military decided to move toward a different way of building MiTTs.

Currently, most MiTTs are sourced by the military services, primarily the Army and Marine Corps, from outside Iraq ("external teams"). The United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) determines personnel requirements for "external teams" and submits proposed MiTT manning levels to the Joint Staff for validation. For the Army, Human Resources Command assigns personnel from the active, reserve, and National Guard components to transition team billets approximately 120 days prior to the report date. The other services provide personnel to the teams in a similar process through volunteers and individual taskings. Finally, the Department of Defense has designated the 1st Infantry Division, located at Fort Riley, KS, as the lead agent for training Army, Navy, and Air Force MiTT members. The Marine Corps uses its Training and Education Command at Quantico, VA, and training facilities at Twentynine Palms and Camp Pendleton, CA, for Marine MiTT members.

As stated, the primary purpose of the embedded transition teams is to advise, coach, teach, and mentor the ISF. Teams, each with a staffing goal of 10-15 members, provide a mix of combat and support specialties to include: operations; intelligence; logistics; communications; engineering; and security. Team members can range in grade from Staff Sergeants to Colonels. For example, a typical battalion-level MiTT sourced by the Army would include:

- Team Chief – Major, Lieutenant Colonel, or Colonel
- Staff/Maneuver Trainer – Captain
- Field Artillery Effects Trainer – Captain
- Intelligence Trainer – Captain
- Logistics Trainer – Captain
- Advisor – Captain
- Intelligence NCO – Staff Sergeant
- Logistics NCO – Staff Sergeant
- Communications Chief – Staff Sergeant
- Medic/Corpsman – Staff Sergeant
- Field Artillery Effects NCO – Staff Sergeant

***Deficiencies.*** The Army Center for Lessons Learned report indicated that transition teams were experiencing difficulty accomplishing all tasks required for daily operations. It found that the teams had a shortage of many necessary skill sets such as medical, communications, civil-military operations, and tactical intelligence. It cited a frequent complaint by senior Iraqi officers that junior U.S. officers sometimes fill the role of advisor to much more senior Iraqi counterparts.

The report found that as currently organized, the teams could not satisfactorily meet the demands placed on them by combat missions with Iraqi units, while also continuing to monitor the broader tactical situation. Some of the "regular" U.S. partnership units provided additional personnel to assist and augment the teams, but this was generally a function of the value the commander of that partnership unit placed on having the transition team with its adjacent Iraqi unit, and so it varied from unit to unit. The report recommended increasing the size of the transition teams to 25 or 26 members.

## TRAINING

***Army Program.*** Transition team training occurs both in the United States and in-theater. Initial training of Army, Air Force and Navy "external teams" takes place during a 55 to 60-day course at Fort Riley, Kansas, by the Army's 1st Infantry Division. This was instituted in 2005 to standardize the expedient measures that had been employed to rapidly train and deploy the initial teams which had resulted in some trainers not being fully prepared for the tasks they were assigned. Additionally, some of the early teams had been assembled in an ad hoc manner, although the practice is now for the members to go through the training at Fort Riley and in-theater together. The division's focus is to oversee the training, manning, equipping, deployment, redeployment, and reintegration of organized transition teams.

After stateside training, teams travel to the CENTCOM area of responsibility where training continues. First stop is Camp Buehring in Kuwait for 5-10 days of in-theater orientation training. Next they fly to Camp Taji in Iraq for 5-10 days of instruction in the practical application of their skills through case studies and vignettes at the Phoenix Academy – the transition team "finishing school."

Following completion of the Phoenix Academy, the teams enter the final stage of their training – a 10-to-15-day overlap with the team they are to replace. This phase is commonly referred to as a "relief in place, transfer of authority (RIP/TOA)."

***Marine Program.*** Marine Corps transition team members do not attend the Army training but attend a 30-day training package for Marine at Twentynine Palms, CA. The divisions follow-up with enhancement training at their major bases in Camp Pendleton, CA and Camp Lejeune, NC.

***Training Shortcomings.*** The Army Center for Lessons Learned report received feedback from serving transition team members on training shortcomings. The top three areas identified as vital to team success were cultural awareness, the fundamentals of unit advising, and Arabic language skills. The report recommended restructuring the cultural awareness training to enhance instruction in topics such as Iraqi military culture, to help team members better understand Iraqi soldiers.

Currently, most MiTT members have little to no previous experience or training as advisors. Serving as an advisor requires a different skill set than commanding or serving in a U.S. combat unit. Among the recommendations of the serving team members was bringing back former team chiefs to conduct seminars during the training.

Team members in Iraq noted that interpreters were not always available or could not be relied on to provide an accurate translation, especially given military-specific vocabulary. MiTT members depart Fort Riley with the ability to use basic phrases, but ultimately could not understand what their Iraqi counterparts in most conversations. They expressed a desire for more extensive language training with more than just a simple classroom environment, asking for more practical application exercises with native speakers.

***Special Forces Training.*** Special Forces have long-standing expertise in conducting foreign internal defense training for partner militaries. While not designated as MiTTs, U.S. Special Operations units conduct similar training in Iraq. Two U.S. special forces groups rotate teams to train the Iraqi Special Operations Force Brigade. Additionally, there are U.S Special Forces units training members of Iraq's elite national counterterrorism force.

## EQUIPMENT

In addition to personal equipment, each team requires major items of equipment such as hardened civilian vehicles, sophisticated communications gear, and navigational systems for blue (friendly) force tracking. One of the problems identified is that there is not equipment repair expertise resident in the teams and so in the event that a critical item breaks, the team is forced to go without it, or wait for their partner unit to assist with repairs.

## POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

- The committee is aware of the training that Special Forces teams provide to foreign forces. Why do you think Special Operations Command (SOCOM) does not have the MiTT mission in Iraq? What lessons have you learned from SOCOM experience in foreign internal defense training?

- What is the shortfall between transition team staffing levels requested by USCENTCOM and what is actually on the ground?

- Should every Iraqi Army battalion have a transition team, and if so, does every battalion have one? What types of security environments in Iraq would not require a full MiTT to be embedded with Iraqi battalions?

- The committee heard General Abizaid said last month that military transition teams need to be substantially increased and given the capacity to operate more robustly with the Iraqis. What drives the 10-15 member team size? Would increasing team size allow U.S. forces to accelerate or improve the training of Iraqi units? What additional skills would be needed?

- There have been reports of uneven quality of personnel on the transition teams, especially in leadership positions. Since this is a high priority, what are you doing to attract the best and brightest personnel to these teams?

- At what point is a team assembled and assigned to a specific Iraqi unit, prior to training or afterward in theater?

- Is the Army the right organization to staff the Border Transition Teams and National Police Training Teams? How involved are other U.S. departments with expertise in these areas?

- The language barrier is often cited by returning team members as a serious obstacle to accomplishing their mission. How are you improving the language skills of team members?

- What training do teams receive in conducting the Transitional Readiness Assessments (TRAs) of their Iraqi units? How do the criteria they utilize differ from that applied to U.S. units?

- How do you prepare transition teams to assess the extent to which Iraqi Security Force personnel are loyal to groups other than the Iraqi government? How do MiTTs report back such information?

- The committee heard from General Abizaid last month that although the number of Iraqi combat battalions in the lead has risen to about 90, there are no battalions able to operate without the supervision or assistance of U.S. or coalition military forces. What are the criteria for an Iraqi combat unit to no longer require a transition team?

- Major General William Caldwell said last week in a briefing from Bagdad that MiTTs will remain in place well after the U.S. has met its goal of training and equipping 325,000 Iraqi Security Forces. Do you have an estimate of how long these teams will remain in place?

# Lieutenant General JAMES J. LOVELACE

**Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7**
**United States Army**
**Since: October 2004**

SOURCE OF COMMISSIONED SERVICE USMA

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED
Field Artillery Officer Basic and Advanced Courses
Armor Officer Advanced Course
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Armed Forces Staff College
United States Naval War College

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES
United States Military Academy – BS – No Major
Indiana University – MS – Physical Education
United States Naval War College – MA – National Security
Salve Regina College – MA – Management

FOREIGN LANGUAGE(S) French

| PROMOTIONS | DATES OF APPOINTMENT |
|---|---|
| 2LT | 3 Jun 70 |
| 1LT | 3 Jun 71 |
| CPT | 3 Jun 74 |
| MAJ | 8 Jun 81 |
| LTC | 1 Oct 87 |
| COL | 1 Jun 92 |
| BG | 1 Aug 96 |
| MG | 1 Aug 00 |
| LTG | 23 Jun 03 |

MAJOR DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

| FROM | TO | ASSIGNMENT |
|---|---|---|
| May 71 | Oct 71 | Assistant Fire Platoon Leader, A Battery, 4th Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, United States Army Europe, Germany |
| Nov 71 | May 74 | Commander, Fire Platoon, A Battery, later Assistant S-3 (Operations) 1st Battalion, 41st Field |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Artillery, United States Army Europe and Seventh Army, Germany |
| Jun 74 | Jan 77 | Instructor, Pershing Section, Field Artillery Center, Fort Sill, Oklahoma |
| Sep 77 | Dec 77 | S-1 (Adjutant), 6th Battalion, 37th Field Artillery, 2d Infantry Division, Eighth United States Army, Korea |
| Jan 78 | Nov 78 | Commander, C Battery, 6th Battalion, 37th Field Artillery, 2d Infantry Division, Eighth United States Army, Korea |
| Dec 78 | May 80 | Commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 6th Field Artillery, 18th Field Artillery Brigade, Fort Bragg, North Carolina |
| Jun 80 | Jul 81 | S-3 (Operations), 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, 18th Field Artillery Brigade, Fort Bragg, North Carolina |
| Jan 82 | Dec 82 | Student, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana |
| Jan 83 | Sep 85 | Instructor, later Director, Physical Training, Department of Physical Education, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York |
| Oct 85 | Feb 87 | Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, First United States Army, Fort Meade, Maryland |
| Mar 87 | Jun 88 | Deputy Fire Support Coordinator, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina |
| Jun 88 | Jun 90 | Commander, 5th Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, XVIII Airborne Corps Artillery, Fort Bragg, North Carolina |
| Jun 90 | Jul 91 | Student, United States Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island |
| Jul 91 | Dec 91 | Deputy J-5 (Plans and Programs), United States Alaskan Command, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska |
| Jan 92 | May 92 | Chief of Staff, Joint Task Force Cobra Gold, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan |
| Jun 92 | Jun 94 | Commander, Division Artillery, 6th Infantry Division, Fort Richardson, Alaska |
| Jun 94 | Aug 95 | Chief, Commander-in-Chief's Initiative Group, United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command/United States Forces Korea, Korea |
| Aug 95 | Jun 96 | Chief of Staff, 2d Infantry Division, Eighth United States Army, Korea |
| Jun 96 | Sep 96 | Assistant Division Commander (Support), 2d Infantry Division, Eighth United States Army, Korea |
| Sep 96 | Aug 98 | Commanding General, Joint Task Force 6, Fort Bliss, Texas |
| Aug 98 | Jun 00 | Director of Training, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, United States Army, Washington, DC |
| Jun 00 | Aug 02 | Commanding General, United States Army Alaska/Deputy Commander, United States Alaskan Command, Fort Richardson, Alaska |
| Aug 02 | Jun 03 | Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3, United States Army, Washington, DC |
| Jun 03 | Sep 04 | Director of the Army Staff, Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army, Washington, DC |

| SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS | Dates | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Deputy J-5 (Plans and Programs), United States Alaskan Command, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska (No joint credit) | Jul 91-Dec 91 | Lieutenant Colonel |
| Chief of Staff, Joint Task Force Cobra Gold, United States Alaskan Command, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska (No joint credit) | Jan 92-May 92 | Lieutenant Colonel |
| Chief, Commander-in-Chief's Initiative Group, United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command/United States Forces Korea (No joint credit) | Jun 94-Aug 95 | Colonel |
| Commanding General, Joint Task Force 6, Fort Bliss, Texas | Sep 96-Aug 98 | Brigadier General |

US DECORATIONS AND BADGES

Distinguished Service Medal

Defense Superior Service Medal
Legion of Merit (with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters)
Meritorious Service Medal (with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters)
Army Commendation Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster)
Army Achievement Medal
Parachutist Badge
Ranger Tab
Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge
Army Staff Identification Badge

As of 06 Dec 06

## Major General George J. Flynn
Commanding General, Training and Education Command

Major General Flynn graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1975. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in International Relations from Salve Regina College, a Master of Arts Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College, and a Master of Science Degree in National Security and Strategy from the National War College. He is a Distinguished Graduate of the College of Naval Command and Staff and the National War College.

Major General Flynn's command assignments include: Commanding Officer, HQ Battery, 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines; (1979-1980); Commanding Officer, L Battery, 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines (1980); Commanding Officer, P Battery, 5th Battalion, 10th Marines (1984-1985); Commanding Officer, 5th Battalion, 10th Marines (1992-1993); Commanding Officer, Officer Candidates School (1999-2001), Commanding General, Training Command (2002-2004).

Major General Flynn's staff assignments include: Forward Observer, Fire Direction Officer, Battery Executive Officer and S-4 A, 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines (1976-1979); Officer Selection Officer, Manchester, New Hampshire, (1981-1984), Operations Officer, 5th Battalion, 10th Marines (1985-1986), Plans Officer, Plans Policies and Operations Department, Headquarters Marine Corps (1987-1989); Junior Aide-de-Camp to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (1989-1991); Assistant Fire Support Coordinator, 2d Marine Division (1991-1992); Future Operations Officer, III Marine Expeditionary Force (1994-1995); Military Assistant to the Executive Secretary to the Secretary of Defense (1995-1997); Military Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations (1997-1998); Head, Strategic Initiatives Group, Headquarters Marine Corps (1998-1999); Military Secretary to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (2001-2002); Deputy Commanding General, Training and Education Command (2002-2004). Chief of Staff and Director, Command Support Center, United States Special Operations Command (2004-2006).

His personal decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Legion of Merit with three gold stars, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medal with gold star.

## Major General Carter F. Ham

Major General Carter F. Ham served as an enlisted Infantryman in the 82nd Airborne Division before attending John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio. He was commissioned in the Infantry as a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1976. General Ham's early assignments included service as a training officer at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and tours of duty in Italy and Germany. After graduating from the Armor Officers Advanced Course, he was a Recruiting Area Commander in Lima, Ohio. In 1984, he served with a joint service unit in support of the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. From 1984 until 1989, General Ham served as Assistant Inspector General, then as Battalion S-3 and XO at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California. He attended the Naval College of Command and Staff, graduating with distinction in 1990, and was then assigned to the US Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia.

He served a tour as an advisor with a Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade in Riyadh then returned to Fort Benning, where he was the executive officer for the Infantry School. General Ham commanded the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry in Vilseck, Germany including a six month tour with the United Nations Protection Forces in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Following battalion command, he was the Senior Observer/Controller of the Timberwolf Team at the Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany. He graduated from the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama in 1997 then returned to Germany where he served as G3 then Chief of Staff, 1st Infantry Division. From 1999 to 2001 he commanded the 29th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning then was assigned to United States Central Command serving in Tampa, Florida and in Qatar. General Ham was assigned as the Deputy Commanding General for Training and Readiness, I Corps at Fort Lewis, Washington in August 2003. In January 2004, he assumed command of MultiNational Brigade – North in Mosul, Iraq serving there until February 2005. Returning from Iraq, General Ham served as the Deputy Director for Regional Operations, J-33, The Joint Staff. General Ham assumed command of the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas August 1, 2006.

General Ham's awards and decorations include: the Defense Superior Service Medal (3rd award), the Legion of Merit (2nd award), the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (6th award), the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal (3rd award), the Army Achievement Medal (3rd award), the Combat Action Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Ranger Tab, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge.