

**Oral Statement by the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency,
Lieutenant General Michael D. Maples to the
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
Annual Threat Assessment Hearing**

February 5, 2008

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman Bond, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and to represent the dedicated men and women of Defense Intelligence. And thank you for your comments about their service. My short remarks will focus on changes in military operations and capabilities.

There are several general global military trends that are of concern, including proliferation of the knowledge and technology required to produce weapons of mass destruction, longer-range ballistic missiles that are more mobile and accurate, improvised devices and suicide weapons as weapons of choice, and the continued development of counter space-and-cyber capabilities.

In Iraq, an improved security situation has resulted from coalition and Iraqi operations, tribal security initiatives, concerned local citizen groups and the Jaish al Mahdi freeze order. While encouraging, the trends are not yet irreversible. Al Qaeda in Iraq has been damaged but it still attempts to reignite sectarian violence, and remains able to conduct high-profile attacks.

We have seen a decline in the movement of foreign terrorists into Iraq. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, Qods Force, continues to provide training and support, and DIA has not yet seen evidence that Iran has ended lethal aid. Iraqi security forces, while reliant on coalition combat service support, have improved their overall capabilities and are increasingly leading counterinsurgency cooperations.

In Afghanistan, ISAF's successes have inflicted losses on Taliban leadership and prevented the Taliban from conducting sustained conventional operations. Despite their losses, the Taliban maintains access to local Pashtun and some foreign fighters, and is using suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices and small arms to increase attack levels. While the insurgency remains concentrated in the Pashtun-dominated South and East, it has expanded to some western areas. The Afghan army has fielded 11 of 14 infantry brigades, and more than one-third of Afghanistan's combat arms battalions are assessed as capable of leading operations with coalition support.

We believe that al Qaeda has expanded its support to the Afghan insurgency and presents an increased threat to Pakistan, while it continues to plan, support and direct transnational attacks. Al Qaeda has extended its operational reach through partnerships with compatible regional terrorist groups, including a continued effort to expand into Africa. Al Qaeda maintains its desire to possess weapons of mass destruction.

Pakistani military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas have had limited effect on al Qaeda. However, Pakistan recognizes the threat and realizes the need to develop more effective counterinsurgency capabilities to complement their conventional military. At present, we have confidence in Pakistan's ability to safeguard its nuclear weapons.

Iran is acquiring advanced weapons systems and supporting terrorist proxies. New capabilities include missile patrol boats, anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missile systems and an extended range variant of the Shahab-3 ballistic missile. Iran is close to acquiring long-range SA-20 SAMs, and is developing a new Ashoura medium-range ballistic missile. Lebanese Hezbollah continues to receive weapons, training and resources from Iran.

North Korea maintains large forward-positioned land forces that are however lacking in training and equipment. Robust artillery and mobile ballistic missiles are being sustained. Development of the Taepodong-2 continues, as does work on an intermediate-range ballistic missile, a variant of which has reportedly been sold to Iran.

China is fielding sophisticated weapons systems and testing new doctrines that it believes will strengthen its ability to prevail in regional conflicts and counter traditional U.S. military advantages. Military modernization includes anti-ship cruise and ballistic missiles, submarines, a cruise-missile-capable bomber, and modern surface-to-air missile systems.

China's missile development includes the road mobile DF-31 Alpha ICBM. Future ICBMs could include the JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missile and some ICBMs with multiple, independently targeted reentry vehicles. China successfully tested an anti-satellite missile in January 2007 and is developing counter-space jammers and directed energy weapons.

Russia is trying to reestablish a degree of military power that it believes is commensurate with its renewed economic strength and political confidence.

MORE Russia's widely publicized strategic missile launches, long-range aviation flights and carrier strike group deployment are designed to demonstrate global reach and relevance. Development, production and deployment of advanced strategic weapons continues, including the road-mobile SS-27 ICBM and the Bulava-30 submarine-launched ballistic missile. Russia is also making improvements in its high-readiness permanently ready conventional forces.

To our south, Colombia's counterinsurgency operations are achieving success against the FARC. Venezuela's neighbors express concern about its desire to buy submarines, transport aircraft and an air defense system in addition to the advanced fighters, attack helicopters and assault rifles it has already purchased.

This has been a brief summary highlighting the work of our Defense intelligence professionals. They are honored to serve our nation, and thank you for your interest and support.