

February 28, 2007 General Pace Can't Have it Both Ways

For Immediate Release

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By: John P. Murtha

Washington D.C. - Rep. Murtha released the following editorial to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in response to General Peter Pace's testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

General Peter Pace testified on Tuesday to the Senate Appropriations Committee that my plan to restore military readiness in order to meet current and future threats and to require the Pentagon to uphold its own guidelines, standards and policies would somehow be damaging on the battlefield.

General Pace himself recently issued a report to Congress that said because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is a significant risk that our military won't be able to quickly and fully respond to another crisis. Two weeks ago, General Peter Schoomaker said the President's surge in combat troops will further erode the Army's ability to respond to other incidents around the world.

General Pace also indicated that if he was forced to adhere to established DoD readiness standards, one third of units currently programmed for Iraq could not be deployed. This statement is alarming. Is General Pace saying that he is willing to accept that in the near future, one third of the total military force in Iraq will not be fully manned, fully trained or fully equipped?

General Pace is trying to shift the blame, when in fact it is this Administration's policies that are hurting our military.

Let's revisit history. On November 17, 2005, I said that the failed war policies of this Administration were destroying the future of our military. I said that our military is stretched thin, that the war in Iraq is resulting in significant shortfalls at our bases in the U.S., and that we must rebuild our Army. I knew then that the war policies of this Administration were unsustainable, and that our military preparedness and our strategic reserve would suffer.

After visiting Iraq in 2003, I was the one who found severe shortages in body armor and shortages in armor and spare parts for our military vehicles. I worked with my colleagues to fix these problems. Since the start of this war, Congress has provided 145 billion additional dollars for essential war fighting and life sustaining items which the President did not ask for but which were needed. Congress also provided funding for 30,000 extra troops as a "temporary increase in end

strength" because our military asked for it.

At the beginning of the Iraq war, 80% of all Army units and almost 100% of active combat units were rated at the highest levels of readiness. Just the opposite exists today. Virtually all of our active-duty combat units at home and all of our guard units are at the lowest level of readiness.

My plan calls for the restoration of our military readiness to what it was before the war. For the health and well-being of our military force, I am requiring the Pentagon to uphold its own deployment and rotation guidelines that have been in existence for years.

The intense strain that this Administration's policies have placed on our current military force is the problem. I am trying to fix what this Administration has broken.