

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 9, 2010 6:20 PM  
**To:** McDonough, Denis R.; Rhodes, Benjamin J.; Ramamurthy, Pradeep  
**Cc:** Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J  
**Subject:** FW: SOCOM/CENTCOM update

Denis, Ben and Pradeep:

The meetings in Tampa went well. I got a message Thursday night while I was heading down there that Adm. Olson also wanted to meet so I met with him before the CENTCOM meeting. I ran through the new strategy with Olson and he is very supportive of our new approach. He again said he wants to find a way to transition some of this activity to State. He said he had tried to do this before but was unable to find a way to easily transfer the funds (there isn't one) and he was concerned about our ability to handle the activity. I believe he now feels we can do the latter and we agreed to work together to formally assess the situation and see what, if anything, we can transfer. We both agreed that this has to be done in a collaborative way and that we would have to go to Capital Hill together. I told him I hope to meet with Michelle Flournoy and her team next week to present the new strategy and propose a framework for moving the State/DoD conversation forward. Olson and I are scheduled to meet again in DC January 19.

After meeting with Olson I had a series of briefings at CENTCOM. Frankly, their activities are far more extensive than I had at first assumed. Some of their initiatives seem highly problematic and, indeed, somewhat troubling. Unfortunately the agenda was so packed I did not have a lot of time to dig down too deeply or ask too many questions. I attended Petraeus' daily briefing and then met with him and some of his staff for about an hour and a half which included lunch. I presented the new strategy to him and I sensed he was initially somewhat skeptical. However, the more we spoke the more comfortable he got. By the end of our discussions he said he wanted me come back to Tampa and also make a trip to Baghdad so I could really see and understand all they are doing. He directed his staff to arrange trips for me and to be sure I got the opportunity to "see behind the curtain with nothing held back". We will work to get this scheduled as soon as possible.

Petraeus and I did not discuss transition. I have no doubt he will be initially resistant to any shift in responsibility and I believe it is critically important that I continue to build a personal relationship with him before we broach that subject. At this point my strategy is to continue to emphasize that we need to share information and develop ways to support each other's programs to maximize the impact of all USG initiatives in this critical area. I think if we move too soon they may shut down and I won't be allowed "behind the curtain".

Will keep you posted.

JM