



# freep / news / michigan

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Entertainment](#) [Business](#) [Features](#) [Opinion](#) [Tech](#) [Help](#) [Marketplace](#)

## COLUMNISTS

- [Susan Ager](#)
- [Desiree Cooper](#)
- [Brian Dickerson](#)
- [Rochelle Riley](#)

## SECTIONS

- [Today's stories](#)
- [Metro](#)
- [Wayne](#)
- [Oakland](#)
- [Macomb](#)
- [Michigan](#)
- [Casinos](#)
- [Roadwork](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Children First](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Religion](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Nation/World](#)
- [AP wire](#)

## HELP

- [Search](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Death notices](#)
- [About us](#)
- [Subscribe](#)

## MARKETPLACE

- [Classifieds](#)
- [Find a job](#)
- [Find a home](#)
- [Find a car](#)
- [Yellow Pages](#)
- [Place an ad](#)



## Q&A : GEN. RICHARD MYERS: Sizing up the war on terrorism

### U.S. keeps targets on Al Qaeda's training hot spots and top leaders

April 10, 2002

*Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sat down with the Free Press editorial board on Tuesday before speaking to the Economic Club of Detroit. Following are excerpts of that conversation.*

#### Can you talk briefly about the lessons learned in Afghanistan and how they might be applied in any future action?

There are some significant lessons. The first is our ability to couple together, with technology, small numbers of special operations forces with the Northern Alliance -- or later on, the Pashtun tribal leaders in the south -- to support intersecting objectives and visions.

And then the ability to bring air power to bear on this: Nobody ever thought we would have B52s with the Joint Direct Attack Munitions, which is a GPS guided weapon. What makes them so effective is, if you know where the target is and you have accurate coordinates, it doesn't matter what the weather is or anything -- you just go to launch point, the weapon comes off and it guides itself to those coordinates. Once you drop the weapon you can go somewhere else.

We've used the Navy P3, a four-engine turboprop, that's been around for at least three

## marketplace detroit

- [find a car](#)
- [find a home](#)
- [find a job](#)
- [classified ads](#)

## NEW TODAY

■ [Jobless win benefits hike without a one-week wait](#)

■ [REACTION TO JOBLESS PAY: News of increase relieves workers](#)

■ [911 could get costly for police](#)

■ [BIG GAME LIVES FOR LONG SHOTS: Tonight's drawing for \\$220 million entices players to roll the dice with 76 million-1 odds](#)

■ [DETROIT: Officer says mother suspected son's acts](#)

■ [Boy charged in arson was on medication](#)

## SPECIALS

■ [Michigan Web guide](#)

decades. It's supposed to go out and do submarine hunting for the Navy. We turned that around, and we put it in front of the Marines, who were the first ground forces in large numbers in Afghanistan. The P3 was used to go out there and look at what's ahead as they were going on the patrols, and feeding that information back to the Marine tactical operations center.

Another lesson is the value of not just reconnaissance but surveillance and persistence in that surveillance. That goes to the unmanned aerial vehicle, the Predator in this case, which was just coming on-line. And as to using indigenous forces for a common objective: It's probably always a good principle if you can do that. But would it have the same effect in other countries as it did in Afghanistan? I think that is probably unknowable.

**You stress that this is a long-term fight. At what point will you know that you've won this?**

I think it will be a combination of things. There will not be a surrender on the deck of the USS Missouri. But I think we can degrade and perhaps destroy and make ineffective for the most part international terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda.

We'll know when they don't have a place where they can train and plot, like they had in Afghanistan. They were able to come and go as they pleased. They had support from the local population. They bought them off, essentially. As long as those kinds of places don't exist and we can't find them, I think that will be part of the definition.

I think part of it will also be ensuring that those who are doing research and development and production of weapons of mass destruction in an irresponsible way, that if they don't exist and terrorists can't get their hands on those sorts of devices, then that will be part of the criteria that would tell you we are winning this war.

I think those are the elements, along with the financial piece; there have been some pretty good successes there.

There is a lot more we need to do. But we have picked up some intelligence that people are complaining that they can't get the resources they need to do the job, so you know you are having some impact on them. This is a big "we," not just the military.

**Early on, was too much emphasis placed on the specific pursuit of Osama bin Laden?**

A lot of people tried to make clear not to personalize it from the very beginning. I know Secretary of Defense (Donald) Rumsfeld and I did not want to personalize this because it is bigger than one person.

There is some interesting work out, by one of the think tanks, that says you might not want to go against the top leadership in these organizations. The mid-level might be the harder ones to replace. There is always someone to take the top guy's place. But this mid-level structure, where you have people who are really into the details -- they are a little harder to replace.

But we never thought one person was going to make this Al Qaeda organization fall.

**What's your best guess on where Osama bin Laden is today?**

I really don't know. If I had to put money on it, I would place a bet that he is still in the general area along the border (between Afghanistan and Pakistan). He could be on one side or the other. There are tribes or groups that live on both sides so they kind of come and go. Al Qaeda can buy support and they do.

We devote a lot of intelligence resources to finding the leadership -- both Taliban leadership that we still want and Al Qaeda leadership that we still want. Having said that, we don't have a good pointer to bin Laden.

**Do you think he is still alive?**

Again, I don't know. If I were guessing, I would say yes.

**What damage have you inflicted on that mid-level structure that you are talking about?**

Well, with (top Al Qaeda leader) Abu Zubaydah and several of his cohorts now of various ranks, he was very caught up in the operational piece of it. We've got some folks who were in the financial piece as well. We think we have made a dent.

We think by going after places where they would stay -- either in compounds or caves or whatever -- where we have been able to extract information, that has prevented attacks in places like Italy, the Balkans and in Singapore, probably other places as well.

So, we think we are having some effect. But again, it is decentralized, already positioned in many countries, including this country. It's hard to know.

**Is Al Qaeda strengthening or forming new alliances?**

We know there are connections in Asia. We are trying to pursue that. I think they are looking for other places to operate, other places to train. It's one of the reasons we are going into Yemen to help them with their counter-terrorism training. Same reason we are in the Philippines with the Abu Sayyaf group, which had very loose ties to Al Qaeda. And you have to worry about Indonesia as well.

**How have the problems between the Palestinians and Israelis affected the coalition?**

First, I think everybody is concerned with what is going on inside Israel. It's a terrible tragedy.

Having said that, in terms of the impact for coalition support, up to this point, there has not been a substantial impact. I think that is because a lot of our relationships with our coalition partners in the Middle East region are long-standing relationships. Saudi Arabia goes back more than 70 years.

I think we have to watch this very carefully. I think the importance of the secretary of State's trip is right along in this vein.

The problem in Israel needs to be worked. And then we need to keep our coalition together and

the kind of support we need, that in the end we are going to make a difference for the region.

**How are the various services doing in terms of getting the people they need to enlist?**

So far all of the services' recruiting efforts are meeting their goals and, except for just a small percentage, are making their retention goals as well. So we are doing pretty well there.

There hasn't been a big upsurge in enlistments, but it has been pretty steady. . . .

I'm just a big fan of public service. It doesn't have to be military. It has a lot of benefits, not only for this nation but for the individual.

**Do you see at any point resumption of the military draft?**

I don't. It's not been an issue that anybody has raised in a serious way that I know of.

I'm counting on the people who are either on first or second enlistments, that -- despite how tough the going is going to be for them and their families over the next several years -- they will stick with us. They are being asked to do something that is incredibly important where we have no alternative but to carry through. With that motivation, stick with us like that generation did in World War II, when they set their sights on the objective and never let go. And the nation didn't let go, and victory was achieved.

**How much safer are we than a few months ago?** It is really hard to measure success -- to prove something didn't happen because of our actions. Again, we know quite definitively, in at least three and probably more cases, we have disrupted their operation because we have rounded people up. We have had intelligence leads and rounded them up in Italy, Singapore and the Balkans. There probably have been others that have been stopped, thwarted or delayed. But to know how many, we just don't have a good measure for that.

[MORE MICHIGAN STORIES](#)

[FREEP FRONT](#) | [NEWS FRONT](#)

Comments? Questions? You can reach us at [The Freep](#)

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Entertainment](#) [Business](#) [Features](#) [Opinion](#) [Tech](#) [Help](#) [Marketplace](#)

All content © copyright 2002 Detroit Free Press and may not be republished without permission.