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**Notes from CENTCOM Commanders Conference  
14 July 2007**

Complete slide packet of all presentations is available. These notes are particular comments that are relevant to MNF-I mission or provide background on CENTCOM that is useful for CG's personal use. **Highlights** are particularly noteworthy.

**Opening Comments from Admiral Fallon** about what he has observed in the past 3 months:

- CENTCOM Staff was too operationally and tactically focused. He is trying to get them out of that, so he created and wants them only to focus on the five major focus areas.
- All of us in CENTCOM, have a tendency to get very involved "down our lane" and fail to be cognizant of the strategic realities that are changing around us in the world and in Washington.
- He is cutting the CENTCOM staff by one-third because it was too big and not focused. He encouraged subordinates to do the same.
- We (CENTCOM) are the **consumer** of virtually all of the resources of the Armed Forces (especially Army and Marines) and we have no ability to reconstitute forces for any other mission in less than a year. **Since we will get whatever we ask for it gives us a responsibility to be careful and conservative in what we ask for.** He reiterated the caution on requests for anything (people, units, money, RFFs) throughout the day.

1.4b, 1.4d

**CG provided Iraq Briefing, campaign plan, and reconciliation.** In talking about Iraq, there was a sense that the group (with Admiral Fallon and the J5 MG Rusty Findley) was questioning the extent to which the current plan would be successful. For example:

- Would funding flow to areas, like Ninewah, since it is mostly Sunni? Ans: Yes because there actually is money flowing to provinces now.

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- How do you deal with the displacement and the problem of **ethnic cleansing** in particular communities? Ans (CG): This is among the problems with the “soft partition” approach. There are micro-fault lines throughout Baghdad and Baghdad has to be part of the solution. We are not “knitting the segments of society back together.” We are stabilizing the fault lines where they are and providing the opportunity for Iraqis to knit it back together (just as they did in the past with intermarriage, business, and other inter-sectarian relationships.)
- Admiral Fallon, as a question was asked about State Department civilians, indicated that he was very underwhelmed by the lack of impact of the **civilian surge** (while the CG was pointing out that we were getting new Ambassadors and some senior State personnel.)
- **On experiments.** The experiments at JFCOM are out of control. We are hostage to a 200 year old service-based procurement system. Most in the room agreed that getting people interested in experiments out to the field is where they would learn what is needed and what is being done with the technology that now exists.

**Admiral Fallon on Iraq overall:**

- “We will have to see how much Dave can accomplish on his campaign plan given very strong tide in Washington to see how to do things differently. Dave is going to have to deal with alternatives. We are not going to be able to make any of the political constraints go away here (at CENTCOM HQ). If things line up favorably that is good. I am concerned, however, that if we do not have options put in front of us, then we will have far worse ones foisted upon us. So we are going to have to do some thinking about that. We need to be prepared for some alternatives that may be pushed on us.”

(b)(6) on the team with RADM Winnefeld made essentially the same point with me during one of the breaks.]

- **Personnel reductions:** Related to the point of units going back to the same areas because of their experience, Admiral Fallon pointed out that one reason to reduce the OPTEMPO on the force is so that units can have greater habitual associations, but that is not possible with the surge in forces that we currently have.

**Comments from Admiral Fallon on different topics:**

1.4c, 1.4g

**HOA/SOCCENT:** He interrupted by explaining why do we even have a JTF-HOA, which is to provide some stability in ungoverned spaces. He did not seem as interested in the detail of

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what was happening or the particular people who either JTF-HOA or SOCEENT were engaging with through their ongoing operations.

**Ethiopia:** "Ethiopia intervened in Somalia for all the best reasons but now they have their finger in the dyke and cannot get it out. Doesn't that sound familiar?"

**Sudan:** "I see in Sudan the kind of long term request for intervention in humanitarian concerns that we saw in East Timor and will always be a problem."

1.4g

**People:** In the context of an RFF for individuals to support detainee operations, Admiral Fallon said, "the 'I need more people program' is ending. There is great sensitivity to any growth in people." In the context of a request for individuals with language specialties, which was denied by the SECDEF, Admiral Fallon said that this may portend stopping support for additional personnel requests.

**Electricity and Oil:** Admiral Fallon was frustrated by the progress on electricity and oil (as was the CG).

**Other topics from others and staff:**

**MARCENT:** V-22 will deploy to Anbar in Oct.

**ARCENT:** Can process up to 1.4a brigades per month through Kuwait on redeployment. Need disposition instructions on the equipment, which is a decision by both CENTCOM and, especially the Army with respect to global rebasing. Also need a policy on what can and should be turned over to the Iraqis.

**Campaign Ribbons:** Being worked by Admiral Fallon and CSM

**Joint Billets:** Being worked by VADM Nichols and J1. Apparently future joint credit will be by experience and not billet.

**J8:** If we need new authorities to spend money, just ask for those, rather than asking for an exception. That led to the \$100 million CCA discussion. Although the DepSecDef on the VTC apparently made it clear that \$100 was not a constraint, Admiral Fallon said that in his subsequent phone conversation with the DepSecDef, the DepSecDef did not say that the \$100 million constraint was lifted. Therefore MNF-I should only request \$100 million worth of CCA.