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Abstract

The day before the interview, (b)(3), (b)(6) was supposed to travel to Basra with an Iraqi delegation from the JPC. The trip fell through due to weather, but the reason for the trip, and Iraqis government officials' inability to travel there safely and display sovereignty and tackle Basra's problems shows that Basra is not subject to Baghdad, and that is worrisome. The GoI is seeking a governance and legitimacy in Basra that it does not have. Basra and Umm Qasr are vital to Iraq's economic future, but it is not clear we are making any progress there. It flabbergasts us that militias attack efforts that would benefit Iraqis, like building a Children's Hospital, but all that is about power and control. Iraqis fear losing power because that has lethal consequences, and that is why they're having so much trouble striking a political bargain; they fear compromise threatens them. The DMCNS and the MCNS do not coordinate. STRATEFF, STRATOPS, and SPA overlap terribly, which creates a lot of friction. Iraq's potential is astounding. Even though I'm responsible for policy, I'm not engaged in the SOFA issue, and the SOFA negotiation reflects we lack broad coherence in our staff effort. T. E. Lawrence is a bad source for counterinsurgency doctrine; he was an insurgent! Iraqi officials barely communicate. On the other hand, I've seen them have very sophisticated discussions about hard issues. MNFI is a problem because our role, and even our observation, changes the thing observed, and disrupts its own problem solving. Iraq desperately needs a political leader with great political capital and a secure base who can transcend his or her party to accomplish national goals, but some Iraqi leaders are trying to become that. I am surprised that Army officers are not better educated for the region and the problems we face, with language training and deep familiarity with the problems here, and personal relationships with Arabs to help them gain broader perspectives. We have to remember that we shot our way in here, because the Iraqis have not forgotten that.

Background

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Basra

Yesterday, 25 February, I was supposed to go to Basra with Iraqi officials from the Joint Planning Center. This is a government think tank that was established as an operating arm of the [Iraqi] National Security Council. The Director of the JPC was concerned about the issues of corruption and militia activity in the port of Umm Qasr and Basra following its having transitioned to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). Basra was Piced in December. The Director of the JPC approached the Director of the National Security

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Council, Dr. Rubaie, and said he thought it would be worthwhile for the NSC's analysis organ, the JPC, to make a trip to Basra to see the situation. Broadly, the issue is Basra is Iraq's 2nd largest city. It is deep within the Shia . . . there are strong Shia elements in the south that favor autonomy from the government of Baghdad. And because it is the 2nd largest city, there are issues with whether or not they accept rule from Baghdad. There were technical issues about corruption, and whether they accept Baghdad rule. Where it sits, close to Iran, it controls access to the Persian Gulf, and it has a strong [1.4b, 1.4d] [1.4b, 1.4d] That is a given within the Iraqi government.

3:30. So the trip began with the idea that we were going to take a small team of analysts from the JPC down there. My policy shop has a permanent seat on the JPC. I have an Air Force [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) who sits on the JPC as an active member. He is not an MNFI representative or an observer; he is an active member of the JPC. So we were invited to come along. What happened in January was that this very quickly elevated to becoming a political trip rather than a simple fact finding trip. This was for several reasons. First, this has to do with Baghdad asserting sovereignty over Baghdad, the central government over the province. Even under a federal system, there is the question of how much control Baghdad can extend and how much will Basra and its power brokers accept from Baghdad.

Then there is the predominantly military issue of the on-going offensive operations against the AQI remnants up in Mosul. Mosul is the 3rd largest city in the country, and the Prime Minister personally went up there three weeks ago with his crisis action cell to see the situation and confer with commanders on the ground. It was an excellent media event and display of political will and governmental capacity for the Maliki government. In the south, that is not a military situation, but it perfectly mirrors the dilemma that the MNFI command faces as a whole. In the last year, we've had some military success, we've created a more stable situation. And following classic counterinsurgency doctrine, what should follow that should be governance and legitimacy for the government.

5:55. So if you look at that, if in Mosul we're still executing the security campaign, in Basra we should be opening up the governance front. Or there is clearly an opportunity to do that. So I viewed this trip, and it became more and more political, and I mean that we picked up Barhem Saleh, the Deputy Prime Minister decided to come. Then he brought several sitting cabinet members with him, the sitting Minister of Defence and of the Interior, I believe Finance as well, and the DCG for MNFI. So clearly, how much work was going to get done on the trip was going to decline as you started adding more and more high-level people, it became more and more a political event.

6:35. Which was fine, because that confirmed my read that the GoI was viewing this more as an exercise in legitimacy than as a fact finding mission. And that our read from policy was that, yes, the military effort was going to continue in the north, but they're trying to shift political effort to the south. There has been, as you're probably aware, discussion about a broader southern strategy and how we deal with factions in the south.

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So, with that backdrop, a couple of things jump out. First, the tremendous friction that the GoI here has with simply trying to move its people. It should be a fairly simple matter for the government to enable the Director of its JPC, a half-dozen of his analysts, and a security detail, and move them down south to a large urban area, have them meet with the governor and chiefs of police. In fact, it is not simple at all. And they demonstrated yesterday they completely lack the capacity to do it. They had attempted to lay on an Iraqi Air Force C-130. Maintenance wasn't there, the aircraft wasn't able to fly, they had to transfer over to our aircraft. By the time we'd gotten that sorted out, we had weather come in to keep us from going. We had to bring weather up from Kuwait to support our movement around Basra because we couldn't move on the roads.

So you have a security situation which has deteriorated to the point where government officials can not move from city to city, and once they are inside an urban area, they can't even move within that urban area except by air, safely. That is their read, the government of Iraq's read on the security situation in Basra, which as you know has been transferred to their authority.

8:36. Now I have been here two months, and I would view that as alarming. That's to me demonstrates legitimacy issues here with the central government as well as unresolved security issues down there in Basra which are either being . . . and I don't want to hit this too hard, but which are being either papered over or ignored for the sake of saying that "yes, we have sovereignty," but if they can't secure the area, then they don't have sovereignty, and of course that is the exact opposite of our campaign plan, which says security comes first. How this will play out is a role of the dice. I expect we'll reengage these issues and try to get down there with the DPM and a group of cabinet ministers to try to execute this visit within a couple of weeks. We originally tried to get down there on 28 January and then 6 February were both scrubbed, I think both times because of security concerns, because they were not comfortable taking that kind of leadership down there without better security in place. Yesterday's weather probably is the reason we didn't go. It would have been interesting to see if we had gone, once we got down there, how far we made it into Basra or to Umm Qasr.

What is the most direct communication you have with British forces in Basra?

9:56. I work through our Strategic Operations directorate to deal with anybody downrange. They are migrating to that J3 function. But I have not personally had communications with any of the British forces in Basra. I did not talk to the British battle group commander down there or anything. The logistics of this trip were all coordinated through MG McHale in the R & S Directorate, because the focus of this trip was principally about reconstruction, and the economic aspects of developing that port down there.

Since Basra went through the PIC in 2007, what have you understood about the security situation down there, separate from GoI officials' inability to move down there and move around there?

11:03. We do have State Department people down there. My impression is . . . well, there is fighting down there. We've had reports of . . . the airfield down there has been shelled repeatedly. In fact, the night before we left, there were unexploded 122mm

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rockets lying on the runway that had to be cleared at the Basra airfield, which is where the British forces have established their presence, or I guess maintained their presence. So there is this "JAM Ceasefire," but it clearly is a mistake to speak of "the JAM." There is no single JAM. The Jaish al Mahdi is a loose collective of apparently highly independent operators who seem to feel free to pick and choose what rules of engagement they're going to follow, and in the south they have been more aggressive than not. I also know that a couple of days before we were scheduled to go, there was an IED attack on some of our Gulf Reconstruction Division Corps of Engineers people who are down there, who are there to develop a children's hospital. I think it was designed to be a state of the art center in the Middle East for treating children's cancer. It's a wonderful initiative, and if you don't have the details on it, you need to go talk to these guys because it's a tremendous project, but here we were with some officials from the World Health Organization, here they were on the road, with doctors who can make this happen, and medical administrators who know how to put these kinds of things in place, and they were attacked. I don't think anybody was killed, but there were some injuries. That is the kind of stuff that is going on down there, and it is preventing what should be the second phase. If you assume that phase one is security, behind security should come governance and legitimacy, clearly this is the kind of thing you should want to have established down there, and it is under attack. You don't have road movement down there, you don't have freedom of movement to be able to go in and do these things, it raises the question of whether or not you've established that security condition. And, again, my read on the Iraqi government here, the people I work with here, their reluctance to go down there, their inability to go down there, ought to be taken as an alarming sign. Again, we've known for a long time, we've had an oversimplified mental model of Iraq as divided among Kurds, Shia, and Sunni. Among the Sunni there are various political movements, which have to be understood. I don't pretend to be an expert on what forces are prevailing in Basra right now, but the separatists are, whether these are people who believe that they can establish enough control over Basra to be in a bargaining position with Baghdad to get more revenue out of the government, greater freedom, greater control over the central government in Baghdad, perhaps.

14:30. Let me double back just a second to the question of 1.4b, 1.4d That region, as you know, as you go south and east out of Basra, was the focus of fighting during the Iran-Iraq war. It has everything to do with Iraq's access to the Persian Gulf, or the Gulf. I guess as an Arab you do not refer to the Persian Gulf. This goes directly to the issue of Umm Qasr, which the port there was established essentially to move the line west off the Shatt al Arab, to move the line of communication west so that you could get to the Persian Gulf without having to run along the Iranian border. So the port is a relatively new phenomenon. The port is 40 or 50 years old. And its development as a viable commercial center is crucial to Iraq's economic development. And it is not in terms of oil exports, that is not what Umm Qasr is there for. It is for exporting agricultural products, a great potential advantage that Iraq enjoys over other Arab lands. There has been discussion about developing the breadbasket of the Middle East, but you've got to have a way to ship that, and Umm Qasr is for that. You can't do it out of Basra because of the Shatt al Arab, but you could out of Umm Qasr. That has to be developed, but it can't be developed until the security situation is acceptable.

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16:25. So this is a great example of where the political and economic lines of operation overlap the security line. I'm not completely satisfied, two months into this, that we've completely understood the relationship between establishing governance and developing the economy. They seem to be proceeding independently of one another.

In other operations, US forces have encountered this frustrating phenomenon of groups launching attacks on purely humanitarian efforts, whether it was food distribution in Somalia or building a children's hospital in Basra. How do you wrap your mind around that?

17:36. I would make a couple of points on that. The first is, I think we've very naïve, I've been on enough deployments before that I've seen this. We're very naïve about power and what people are willing to do, the lengths that people are willing to go to over power, in situations that we as Americans come into and view as trivial. I remember in Bosnia, the issues over these little villages and little import/export businesses that you or I would look at and say, well, this is hardly worth a single man's life much less the lives of all the locals that were killed here. And I don't think we should ever underestimate that, and we do continuously. It is just something that we seem to default to in our planning, figuring that if we go in there and show them a Children's Hospital, the high-speed super highway network, the new port facilities and international airport, wow, once these things come on line, they'll begin to see.

18:38. And the first thing that has to happen I think is you have to have established some kind of political bargain that the local players understand what kind of power they're going to get and they're happy with that, at least where they're not going to resort to violence as their medium of political exchange. And we're still in that stage with many of the regions of Iraq that we're trying to stabilize. Clearly that is still the case with Mosul, although that seems to be focused more on this external influence of Al Qaeda in Iraq. In the south, I don't think that's the case. We don't appear to have achieved an accepted balance of power in the south between the factions there and the government here in Baghdad. And I think until that happens, you could build Disney down there, you could build the Children's Hospital, you could pave the streets with gold, and I still think you would have IED attacks, you would have assassinations, and you would have attacks on coalition forces, because there is no material benefit that can compensate for the fear of a loss of power. Here, the fear of loss of power here is to be feared because it carries with it lethal consequences. Nobody here retires and writes his memoirs. If you're out of power here, you're very likely going to wind up dead in a ditch. That has been the historical pattern, and people are extremely very reluctant to let go of the power they believe they have, and are certainly going to be hesitant to enter into any power sharing negotiations with historical rivals, like the Sunni-Shia split made manifest when the British put the Sunni in charge when they pulled out of the country. I think, if you look at the "cleansing," the Shia militias butchering Sunnis to drive them out of Baghdad, this is very clearly driven by a determination to never again permit Sunni domination, and to never forget what happened under the previous regime. They are determined to eliminate the conditions that allowed that to happen. Whether or not that will lead to separatism or Shia dominance within a political entity called Iraq, regardless of what faction of the Shia

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you're talking about, I think that essential fear is there that the Sunni will come back, and they want to eliminate those conditions.

So where the US engages in hopes of bringing them over to the 'right side', the risk is that every segment of the population will only cooperate to the extent they see us as a useful instrument of their own power play.

22:10. Well yes, when we come in with material largess, in all its forms, military power, it is a physical presence of power incarnate, and there is just no question. We clear the roads when we drive on them, our aircraft can move with impunity around here. You just can't help but be struck by the contrast in the ease with which I as a colonel can move around Iraq and my counterparts, deputy ministers in the government, are essentially confined to that shabby-little convention center over there, which is where they're running their government out of. So, in material terms, power made manifest, it is very clear that you look at MNFI and say, "Ok, how do I get that to work for me? How do I get that to play so that it goes after my enemies?" Okay, I get a list together and tell MNFI, "Ok, you want peace? You want the roadside attacks to stop? Go after these people." And here we are, in all earnestness, figuring we need to establish good will and trust, saying, "okay, those are bad people, let's go get them." Well, there is probably a history behind that list. Things like that.

Chief of Policy

As Chief of Policy, what are the top issues on your plate?

23:55. The nuts and bolts of what I'm doing here consists of . . . like everybody else around here, we have a meeting schedule that we are trying to discipline. And in the case of policy, it is the Ministerial Committee for National Security. It meets once a week, and my impression after a couple of months is that this is something that hits the Iraqis smack between the eyes once a week between Wednesday and Thursday for a Sunday meeting. And they were handing us a piece of paper that says, in two days, we'd like to talk about these things. For a ministerial level meeting, I think that is pretty poor. We've been trying to push the horizon out and say what we actually want to do for these meetings is execute a slate of decisions that have to be made. The Prime Minister himself chairs these meetings. You've got his time for 90 minutes on Sunday, what do you want to do with that time to focus his attention of the most important topics, and get some decisions and resolution as a decision-making forum. That is a delicate act. You don't have all the ministers in there from the Council of Ministers. It is a select group. I think the permanent members are Justice, Interior, Finance, and Foreign Affairs, and periodically other members will come in there depending on who you need. And the intelligence services sit in there, and their armed forces, Joint Chiefs equivalent sit in there. So you have to be careful what kind of decisions you want to carry in there. You don't want to carry in too many economic decisions because they have broader ministerial interests, but clearly there are economic decisions that are nationally security related, particularly as they related to oil or access to the gulf. So we want to turn that into more a planned event, where we are executing a campaign of decisions. That clearly has to be tied to issues that are coming up in front of the Iraqi government over the next 6 - 8 months. The things that come up immediately are Article 140, the Kurdish issues, and provincial elections, what are we going to do with all that. We just had the really

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incredible legislative success, getting the three bills all in one week. They're late, but they're done, but how will they actually be implemented? Those are the pieces we're trying to pull together.

27:00. And then there is a whole battery of meetings at the ministerial level that have to be synched with that. There is the I-ESC, and I'll stumble over that, the Executive Steering Committee, which deals with economic issues. Then the folks in STRATEFF are on that. And that gets into how we divided the baby here in this headquarters. Now coming from the Pentagon, where we have far too many people doing far too little. Coming here and seeing that we've essentially exported that executive style here, and you essentially have two-star generals doing things that normally you would assign to a major, that is clearly an indication that we have overdone it. If you look at what I'm doing, the first thing that ought to jump out at you is why do we not have a political officer from the embassy chairing this meeting, or chairing the US mission, MNFI effort. All the people I deal with are civilians; I don't deal with any uniformed members of the Iraqi government. So why is a US Army colonel doing that? When did we make that decision? Again, I'm the new guy here, just walking around kind of looking at how this thing fell out over the last five years. That needs to be a civilian function, with an Arabic-speaking political officer, which I am not. It ought to be a fluent Arabic speaker sitting in my chair dealing with the Iraqi government.

28:50. That seems to me something that we never really sorted out, and I don't know why. We've got the policy functions in the headquarters divided among SPA, STRATOPS, and STRATEFF. Why is that? There are clearly pieces of it that belong over in the embassy. So the amount of staff coordination that has to go on to execute the simplest tasks are just ridiculous, so we've built friction into a system that is already inherently difficult, because it is policy. And that slows down our ability to turn things and know where we stand on issues before we engage with the Iraqi government. And of course, their ministerial processes are very immature, so that doesn't help. We bring capacity, for sure, we've got laser printers all over the place. We can generate, but the issue is are we putting out quality work that will serve both our interests and the interests of the clearly nascent GoI.

I saw a CNN report last night about the GoI struggling to pass the Hydrocarbon Law and what great potential Iraq has, what wealth they have available, but their inability over years to come up with a Hydrocarbon Law.

30:40. I saw that report on line, and my first thought was we ought to get the Iraqis to go pay a visit to the state government up in Juno, Alaska about how they distribute the oil wealth up there. There has to be an equitable way to do that. Any Iraqi who is even moderately aware of the situation in their country knows that they are standing on top of a sea of stuff. It is selling for \$100 a barrel out there. With a cable TV, you can see the gilded show that is going on down there in the south shore of the gulf, Dubai, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi. And you have to ask yourself, why isn't that happening here? And then you add in the other pieces. Iraq has water. You can not imagine . . . I've been coming to the Middle East since I was 18 years old, and most of the places have been these sandy sheikdoms on the Arabian peninsula, you can't help but be struck by the difference when you come to Iraq. It is green. They have water, agriculture; there is an economy here that

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functions besides the renter economy of selling oil. So there is a potential here using the money generated from \$100 a barrel. And then there was an educated middle class here, and there still is to an extent, that could be head and shoulders above the stratified societies of the traditional monarchies in the Gulf area. There is no question that Iraq should be a powerful Arab country, when you look at the physical circumstances of the country and the character of the population. It all goes back to my earlier point about the political bargain that has to be reached. You are not going to get an oil law without a political bargain, without people saying "This is acceptable to my people. This does not threaten dispossession or genocide by accepting this bargain." I really think that in many cases those are the terms that people are looking at. 'If I accept these terms, am I putting my people at risk of dispossession or death?' Maybe that sounds a little overdramatic, but just the way this is falling out, I think the factional leadership of the country has to aware of that [thinking in those terms]. That is one of the reasons why I think the Kurds have been so very, very careful about the terms, and they've been making it just a little bit more possible every day for them to live independently of Baghdad, should they have to. I don't think there is any question about it. And you can see, for example, and I don't mean to run on, but if you look at the movements of Kurdish influences to the south and west, what you're seeing up there is the uncovering of a series of border crossings with Syria. For someone who has probably read more history than is good for me, it is striking to me how much that follows the traditional pattern of development that goes back to the origins of civilization out here because it follows the line of the Euphrates, because the Euphrates hooks out to the west and gives you a land passage out to the Mediterranean. Well, the Kurdish movement now that's coming down now out of the Kurdish areas is sort of uncovering the northern tip of that, and would give them an access out of Kurdistan to the Mediterranean. Then you don't have to go to the gulf and you don't have to go through hostile Turkey. You can now have an overland route through Syria that gets you out to the eastern Mediterranean, and then of course to Europe. Things like that are not without consequence. I believe any attempt to solidify that kind of access would result in a significant confrontation with the government here. I think if you're here in Baghdad and you see that, I think you realize they won't come to the table if they think they can get by without Baghdad, and can we exist here without them. And we've done that math, and the principal we are all trying to maintain right now is a unified Iraq. Now, anything beyond that is speculative, but if you look at that situation up there as it is developing, I think it is clearly developing in the direction of 'I want to make sure that whatever political bargain is established, I want to ensure the safety and security of my people.' I don't know that we've understood that as well as we should have. It is possible also, but I don't fully understand it myself. Everything that I'm seeing going on is consistent with that kind of underlying logic.

Here at the end of February we are about to have an SES visitor come in to work on the Strategic Framework Agreement and the Status of Forces Agreement. Where do we stand on those issues?

36:45. I'm going to be . . . I have not worked that. I have an opinion on it, but you don't need my opinion. Do I think policy ought to have a role in that? Yes, that is a policy issue, but that goes back again to how we've divided up our work around here. We have another team of guys that is focused on that, (b)(3), (b)(6) and the guys up in SPA plans. This is an another example of how we've set up an independent line, this one being the

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SOFA, but it is not hooked into our engagement with the GoI as a whole, and specifically for that topic, it is not hooked into the question of "what other major issues of governance does the Maliki government face over the next six to eight months as they enter into negotiations with us on the SOFA?" I mean, it is pretty easy to see just how, speculatively, decisions are arrived at, or a position that we arrive at to go negotiate with Maliki over the Status of Forces could de-couple or sink other work that we're doing with the Maliki government. From my humble foxhole, it doesn't appear to me that we've got those gears in place.

Doctrine and T. E. Lawrence

I've heard GEN Petraeus and others cite T.E. Lawrence that "Better they [the Arabs] do it tolerably than we do it well."

38:25. Two thoughts on that. First, every time I hear someone cite T. E. Lawrence . . . Unfortunately, for you, you're talking to someone who knows a little about the guy. The thing you have to remember about Lawrence is that he was an insurgent, so whenever we're running counterinsurgent operations and we're quoting an insurgent, I don't mind that, as long as we keep in mind that what we're trying to do is understand the mind or the method of the guy we're fighting, not implement that method to fighting back, necessarily.

You'd be much better off quoting Bernard Fall or, hell, even Landsdale, or that crowd, I think, if you're going to look at counterinsurgency. I read *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* when I was in Saudi Arabia in the '70s as a teenager because it was a banned book, and I wanted to read a banned book, so it had a certain cache being a banned book. My father was an Army engineer. He commanded an Army Corps of Engineers Command down in Saudi in the last '70s. That is the first thing about Lawrence. The new counter-insurgency manual was a good thing and I was glad to see it, but there's too much Lawrence in there. He is an engaging figure, and he wrote beautifully, and he was a master manipulator of ideas in the public sphere, but as a guide for what we're doing here, if you're sorting out what you want to put in your ruck, you can probably leave out Lawrence. I don't see him as being terribly useful for what we're trying to accomplish here.

40:20. The other thing you've got to remember about Lawrence is that the guy he was supporting against the Ottomans winds up as the king of Iraq, and that whole sequence of events, how that all falls out, is directly related to how all these people view the British in particular, but also the whole western influence in general. And this whole idea of "we're really tired of you guys coming here with your guns and your gold and telling us how to run our lives." And for a lot of people in the Arab world, I believe, there was hope at least that they were past that. And our whole presence here is an insulting reminder of a not too honorable past, the way they view it.

What I particularly take from Lawrence is that, despite that frequently-cited quote here, what I see is a frequent frustration that Iraqis are not doing what needs to be done. The most recent example is the breakdown in late '07 and early '08 of Turkish electricity supplies. It appears that what happened is that offices that needed to communicate did not communicate, the system broke down, and then it took forever to get the power turned on again.

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41:50. Everything that you and I would take for granted that would happen in a government, if you complain about your DMV in your home town because you think it is inefficient. I'll guarantee that your DMV is a paragon of government activity and efficiency compared to almost all Iraqi government activities that you're going to deal with over here. Government up down communications is spotty at best. It tends to go down, not up. Lateral communication is non-existent in many cases, and again, you talk to battalion commanders or guys out in the BCTs working local issues, they might say it is a staff colonel who is out of touch. It is possible that . . . it is my understanding that it is better at the provincial and the municipal level than it is at the national level. I don't have that experience. I can't verify that. I will say that . . . simple things, like when we are putting the Ministerial Committee for National Security together, we will have a . . . we exported our model here, so we will have a Deputies meeting (DMCNS) before the principals meeting. The deputies will meet to resolve an issue and come around to agreeing that this is a recommendation that we want to send to the prime minister, whether it is on . . . we just dealt with transitioning the security responsibilities for Baghdad International Airport. Right now it is in the hands of a private security contractor. It is being administered by the Minister of Transportation. Under their sorting of responsibilities, they've decided the Ministry of the Interior ought to be able to do that, but then the Ministry of the Interior doesn't have the capacity to do it, so are they going to get a new contract . . . it was involved. But the point is that at the deputy level they made a decision. The deputies did not talk to their bosses; they don't transmit information up, and then they don't delegate down because that's viewed as a loss of power. So what you have is a decision that comes out of the deputies meeting that has absolutely no throw weight when it comes up to the principals meeting, because the Ministers are either ignorant of it to begin with, or they're deliberately ignorant, or they're just plain not told of what was going on. And they have different agendas than their deputies do. And if you don't understand that, then you walk into these meetings with different expectations. And we would think, 'Your guy was in the meeting. This was typical staff work. He said it was alright. Was he not empowered to speak for you?' And instead of . . . an answer that clarifies, you get these kind of murky answers that "well, he's not really my guy," or "he doesn't speak for me." It is very confusing and very frustrating.

44:35. If you're going to say let them do it for themselves, you are going to have to accept a method of doing things that is very different from ours, and it brings into question all kinds of things, like can any system other than ours do things like manage modern infrastructure, manage issues, like security of international airports, transshipment of goods, exportation of oil, distribution of national wealth. In the absence of a modern bureaucracy, can you do those kinds of things? And, we're products of our environment as much as they are, we would say no, you've got to have that to execute those kinds of things. Clearly, when we look for it, we don't find those kinds of things here, and I think it is safe to say that everyone is concerned about it. The flip side of that is that, there is a way. I've seen these guys run meetings, where it is just me in the room, I'll come in there as a note taker, or one of the guys from MNSTCI will come in there with me, and I'll have an interpreter. I'll try to be as unobtrusive as possible. I won't sit at the head table; I'll sit in a corner, and you watch these guys running a meeting, and they're completely

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different personalities than when, for example, our generals are sitting at the table with them, the Ambassadors at the table with them. They know how to push an agenda through when they really want to, and we should never, never forget that. You watch these guys, and they're all wearing their latest Italian suits and loud ties. You forget a lot of these guys are all former military. They understand how to put a staff paper together; they understand how to drive a decision, if it's got to be made. I saw them very, very concerned, and a very mature, very sophisticated conversation, frankly I wish some of our people could have seen this so they would understand how to do this, on the issue of personal security details. This was two weeks ago at the Deputy Ministerial level. And you have to understand . . . what has been going on, of course, is that there has been . . . the security environment has improved, there is better security now for the senior people in the Iraqi government, but if you look at where the assassinations and bombings have happened, the guys that are getting hit are the colonels, the provincial officials, the guys that are getting hit are the deputies, the guys that are at risk are the guys that are actually making the gear teeth hit in the wheels of governance. And if that gets cleaned out or shut down to where it doesn't function, then you've got a real problem, and they understood that very clearly. And . . . but at the same time, they were weighing, and if anybody has any doubts about the current government's determination to execute a federal system under the law should have been in this room, because it was a very sophisticated discussion about weighing. They said, for example, okay, if we give a deputy minister money to go hire guards, he is in effect hiring a private army. The estimate I heard for AQI fighters in the Diyala Valley three weeks ago was between \$150 and \$200 [a month]. If you've got a guy out there who is able to hire a 100-member PSD, then he in effect has an army roughly the size of the Al Qaeda strength in the Diyala Valley. So you can't have . . . the feeling in the room was you can't have people drawing from the public treasury to hire their own private armies. You're back to this sort of Roman Civil War business. But then you still have to deal with this problem of factions using violence as their medium of political exchange, who were threatening to, or who were cleaning out the second tier of the bureaucracy, which would cause the government to cease functioning. And it was an excellent discussion, and they came out of there with some solid recommendations. They wanted . . . you watched them divide the power up. They said the money has got to come out of Finance, they said it had to come out of a specific budget, they wanted to set up a Directorate inside the Minister of Interior that would manage the money and determine who would get what. It would be overseen by the Minister of Justice; the Attorney General was going to look over it to make sure that they had oversight of where the money went and why it was going there. And they had an excellent discussion over whether the GoI had an obligation to protect GoI officials who refused to live in Iraq, because as you're probably aware, a lot of these guys hang out in Amman or in Switzerland. So it was a great discussion, and what struck me about it, and there were no MNFI generals in the room, and maybe this speaks volumes about how they view MNFI colonels [laughter], but they had no problem being quite candid with me sitting in the corner taking notes.

49:40. Where I'm going with that is that we have a tendency, it is a little bit like Eisenberg's uncertainty principle, whereby observing things we're affecting its behavior. It's a little difficult for us to know exactly how good this government could be because

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you've got this monster called MNFI with its vast resources and very aggressive and intrusive leadership involved in just about everything that is going on. I mean the capacity is there, they've got people there [in the GoI] who know how to do this stuff. The human capacity is there, the institutional capacity is not. Some of these guys can't even call one another on telephones. They're using Yahoo mail to communicate, among . . . the government infrastructure isn't there.

On the Turkish power problem, I think from General Petraeus' perspective, it was not even clear that Baghdad bureaucrats even cared that power had been cut off to northern Iraq in the winter.

50:45. Yeah. I mean, he is clearly much more the expert on this than I am, but I'm having trouble finding guys who think in terms of a nation of 26 or 28 million people. It is not a blob on the map to them, it is "I'm from this region, what happens in Diyala, what happens in Basra, is more important to me than what happens in Baghdad, what happens in Kurdistan, what happens in ___?. That is a very hard thing to overcome, particularly when you see, for example, the growth of regionally-focused schooling. We were down in Muthanna three weeks ago, and we were in a school-house down there, which, if it didn't make you angry then you weren't paying attention. And this thing didn't look like it had been painted since the Gulf War in 1991, and there was just trash everywhere. And when we flew in, you could see the black flags flying, it was around the time of Ashura. With the education the kids are getting down there, it is probably not "To the Greater Glory of Iraq," or even something . . . which you may or may not want, but a nationalist education can be pure poison to . . . but even something as benign as the sort of civics we get in the United States of the benefits of the federal system . . . how our country, the ethos that we want to have among our citizens, of equal justice under the law. You wonder, is that being taught? Is there going to be a generation that comes up as Iraq begins to rise out of this wreckage, what kind of view are they going to have? Are they going to have the view of 'my tribe, my city, my region,' or are they going to have a view of Iraq as a whole? The question kind of answers itself when you consider that the central government is reluctant or unable to even move down to Basra to hold something as simple as an economic summit. But, again, I've only been here two months, and I think that is the fourth time I've said that. [laughter].

Iraqi Leaders and Army Officers

For me it raises the question of is there anyone like an LBJ or a JFK . . . Robert Kennedy, who went to see poverty in Appalachia and said, "we've got to do something about this," or LBJ who took on electrification of rural communities. But does anyone have that perspective in Baghdad?

53:30. Interesting that you should bring up LBJ, because I was thinking along the lines of the political capital that he expended to push through civil rights legislation. I don't know that this government has political capital to spend. That really . . . if there is a deficit out there is . . . is there a leader with a bully pulpit in a legitimately elected government who could push through something like . . . the equivalent of a civil rights bill, or . . . let's take the oil law . . . is there anybody out there with the vision and the political capital to be able to push through a Hydrocarbon Law that is acceptable to all the factions. I mean . . . clearly there has to be a person. This is not going to result as a sort of an anonymous

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process. An anonymous process is not going to save Iraq. There have to be people who care enough about the idea of a unified Iraq that they're going to come in and they're going to take personal risks, and if you're in this government you are taking personal risks, and there are going to have to be people with that kind of vision to be able to pull something like that off.

[You need] someone like an Eisenhower, or a Kennedy, or later a Reagan who had the political capital of being war heroes, or 'imaged' heroes to be able to rally the country to something.

55:07. Very clearly, you don't want a man on a horse, you don't want the guy who is going to come in and enforce unity at the point of a sword to save everywhere. Somebody who knows how to make the gears of government go, and who can put a vision out there that everybody is willing to buy into, and I don't see that right now. I think one of the difficulties, the frustration we're having right now with the whole governance issue following behind the security success is that . . . you don't even have a mature machine there that you can turn to. And it isn't that leadership is lacking, it is that you don't have . . . you don't have legitimacy for that leadership in the eyes of all the people concerned. There is still not a political bargain in Iraq.

One of the hallmarks of great western leaders is that they rise to the top through some party, but at the top, they transcend that party, and we don't see anyone here doing that.

56:09. No, we do not. Now, if you get a chance to go talk to some of the guys that we deal with, the language is all there. The guys that we deal with in the secretariat over there working for Dr. Rubaie, the language is all there: 'It is all for the good of greater Iraq; think in terms of Iraq, not where you came from.' They have a big sign in the JPC as you go in that reminds you of that. I don't know if they're just trying to convince themselves, or is this . . . are they trying to propagate. I don't know. But you see it; they are making the effort.

In two months in Iraq, what have you been surprised by?

57:00. This is a . . . you know, we're good at belly-button gazing in the Army, but I'm surprised at the way our Army as an institution has responded to this thing. I can't believe that five years into this thing, we haven't figured out how to generate, how to develop, an officer corps that is more savvy in this part of the world. Again, I've been coming out here since I was 18, so clearly the Army should not be surprised at where the Middle East is on a map, or the issues that are out here. (b)(6)

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many, many times, and I still can't believe that we have officers who don't understand the basic geography, the basic history, the issues, why borders are contested, why governments exist the way they do, why there is a difference between . . . just the Arab republics, understand [when] you're dealing with Arab republics versus monarchies, and what kind of history and baggage that brings with it. We ought to have people that know that kind of stuff, and the Army as an institution ought to value that, and we don't. And I sat through . . . again, I don't want to put dirty laundry into the history, but I sat through absolutely unbelievable briefing the other day where we had general officers arguing

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whether we were in Asia Minor or Mesopotamia. I mean, that kind of ignorance carries a price with it. I think it was some dead German, Moltke the Elder, who said "A mistake in initial dispositions can not be corrected in the course of a campaign." Well, you know, a mistake in the education of your officers can't be corrected overnight either. And when you've got people who are in charge who don't understand the geography and the issues in play in a region where those literally carry consequences of life and death, I think that is an indictment of the institution. And I would really like to see us fixed up like that. We need a cadre of officers who have been going out to the Middle East for their entire careers. They're fluent in Arabic; they're fluent in Farsi; they know the history out here; they know people out here, which is just a fantastic gap. We don't have people in the Army who know people out here. Why is it that we don't have colonels and generals in the Army who are on a first name basis with key leaders in the region? I'm sure we have a few. But just look around at how we contracted this thing and you'll see people who are on support contracts who are here as cultural advisors and as interpreters who are actually performing staff functions that ought to be. . . that are inherently governmental, in the stilted language of how we cut contracts. These are inherently governmental functions. There ought to be colonels and generals who have a facility with this region of the world who are out here in key positions, whom we have built specifically with the purpose of putting them in key positions for situations like this. And we don't have that. And it is not a matter of saying "Wow, we could never have predicted that we were going to go to the Middle East." I mean that's ridiculous. It's been going on my entire career, and I'm going on 23 years, it's been going on my entire career. It was certainly going on for a lifetime before I got in the Army. So where are our, not where our Arabists. It is where are our Army officers who know the Middle East and the Middle East knows them?

Sir, did you happen to read General Tommy Franks' book, American Soldier?

1:01:00. No, I did not, for a lot of reasons.

I think the value of the book is it illustrates his view of . . . he is the CINC, and everyone should know and respect that, including all the regional powers, and should defer [to him] and it illustrates the extreme ignorance that you suggest. That the Turks should do this, and they'll do it and like it, because I say so.

1:01:40. And of course, basic things, like, not only can we not . . . like King Canute trying to stop the tides, not only can you not dictate to these countries out here, whether it is from a military headquarters or even from Washington, for all the reasons that we talked about earlier, the cultural baggage that it brings with it, I mean, very few of the Arab states do not have some kind of a colonial history. And I . . . to not understand that Iraq is a frontier state, that you have the Turks to the north and the Persians to the east, and the significance that that has. That you have . . . a history here of . . . of this land being sort of a football for the great powers, and how, as noxious and bloodthirsty and horrible as the Saddam regime was, one of the reasons that . . . one pillars of legitimacy, if you can use that term, that he had was that he was a strong man. And he kept the foreign powers at bay. And if you were an Iraqi nationalist, I would not. . . that has significance. The western dogs were not here. They were at bay. And now we have . . . it is amazing to me how many people, you know, because we turn over tours so quickly, how many officers I have run into here in this headquarters who do not understand that this is not a

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humanitarian relief expedition. People forget that we shot our way into this place five years ago. I guarantee you the Iraqis have not forgotten that.
1:03:55.

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