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(b)(3), (b)(6)

11 January 2008
American Embassy Annex, International Zone, Baghdad

by (b)(3), (b)(6)
MNFI Historian

Sitting in on the interview was Marine Corps (b)(3), (b)(6) who did not contribute.

Interviewer's Comments: (b)(3), (b)(6) laid out the organization and mission, with specific staff assignments and the importance of relationship building with USMI. He described the Iraqi legislative process and the current status of the Accountability and Justice Laws, the Provincial Powers Law, and Article 140. There was also a brief discussion between Marks and the USMI Political Councilor, (b)(3), (b)(6) on CG's views of empty Iraqi cabinet seats. Transcription Priority: Medium.

MNFI is not set up like a typical J-Staff. The STRATEFF Directorate handles engagements and liaison. We handle interagency issues every day, working through MG K. Berner to facilitate the flow of information between MNFI and USMI. STRATEFF's economic section is downstairs. [The Political Division is in the AEA, North wing, on the second floor].

The Political division is the main liaison between USMI Pol, Pol/Mil, Econ, and Legal. (b)(3), (b)(6) in the division deals with UNAMI, when the CG wants info, it is on us to get it. We do more than liaison, we coordinate action. It is truly an interagency effort, including a legislative task force with a CIG representative (b)(6) who serves as the CG's voice) and a legal rep. We tie into the CIOC for intelligence information.

The front row of the SOC in the BUA shows how integrated MNFI and USMI are. We vet everything with the embassy.

The 9010 report became the 609 report. We informally vet it with the State Department, and received input from them. It is a good give and take. Embassy coordinated relevant issues with us before they send cables to DOS. DOS is more hierarchical than we are. USMI vets cables on military operations with MNFI. We are building relationships. The TS clearances are key. Maj Gen Scott and Maj Gen Bergner have important relationships with their USMI counterparts.

(b)(3), (b)(6) handles Pol/Mil, which is more regional diplomacy, as well as UNAMI coordination. Similarly, USMI has an Office of Provincial Affairs.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Australia) handles elections and the Iraqi and UN electoral offices.

(b)(3), (b)(6) USA) handles IDPs, refugees, US soldier trials, prison abuse cases.

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What is unique this year is that the Iraqi government is feeling their oats. We pushed them to assure their sovereignty, but we work with them on capacity building.

On Specific Legislation:

Accountability and Justice. Chalabi got ahold of de-Ba'athification under the CPA, and used it as a purge tool. This law is an effort to correct that. It still does not let the highest Ba'athists in. It does not let the mid-level guys return to security duties, but it does offer pension benefits. The Iraqi legislative system does not have very much bureaucratic capacity, no big system of congressional legislative assistance. There are several ways to introduce a law. The PM gives it to the CoR, who gives it to the Shura Council, who returns it to the CoR, which puts it out into committees as it goes through readings. The A & J Law has been through the De-Ba'athification Committee and the Legal Committee. After the 3rd reading, there were more issues, so there was another amended copy. There are still issues to hammer out. The speaker has said the CoR will vote on it line-by-line.

The Provincial Powers Law is in its 2nd Reading. There are two drafts, both in the Shura Council. This concerns the central government and the provinces. Maliki opposes much of the law, so he can gum it up in the works. Since he didn't like it, he wrote his own draft, ignored the CoR's draft, and submitted his own to the Shura Council. The Shura Council is ignoring the CoR's version and favoring the PMs. The CoR can ignore both the PM and the Shura Council. There are questions now about Abdul Mehdi and Hashimi and how they will handle it. Hashimi is a Tawafuq Sunni. Hashimi has vetoed laws passed by the CoR. He vetoed the Japanese loans, but the CoR then went and overrode the veto. This shows the growing strength of the legislative process.

Article 140 is going nowhere right now. The Constitutional Committee is completely stuck in a constitutional review process. USMI has discussed the concept of a huge bargain (involving 140, the Hydrocarbon Law, Provincial Powers). The huge bargain would seem to have logic behind it, but

The central problem of 140, HCL, and PP is that they all founder on various embedded pieces that amount to the same overarching issues of federalism, oil, and democracy. There is no clear path through the maze.

I asked whether there was progress in developing the process.

There is progress in other key laws, as with the expansion of the Japanese laws in which the CoR overrode Hashimi's veto.

I asked about his office's interactions with Iraqis.

That is really the business of USMI. MNFI reps occasionally join USMI to talk to some Iraqis, like Dulaimi, but USMI always has the lead.

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My discussion with (b)(3), (b)(6) ended when (b)(3), (b)(6) the USMI Political Councilor, stepped in to discuss an issue with (b)(3), (b)(6) wanted to know the CG's view on the empty Cabinet seats the PM was holding for the return of Tawafuq. As I recall, the gist of it was the sense that (b)(3), (b)(6) thinks PM M is trying to have it both ways. He keeps the seats open as a sign the Sunni's have seats waiting for them, but he doesn't fill them with other Sunnis because he doesn't really want Sunnis in the cabinet.

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