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

USMC)

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Embassy Annex, International Zone, Baghdad

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Abstract

~~(S/ACQU)~~ Turkish cross-border operations are a continuing problem. We have coordinated and de-conflicted with them, but there is friction; they refuse to coordinate with the GoI, but we want direct GoT-GoI dealing with the issue. It is very sensitive. In Basra, the situation was tenuous and threatening failure. ISF did move forces fast and IqAF played a big role, but CF MITTs and CF airpower carried the day. PMM has not followed through on promised aid. IZ in the IDF has degraded our operations, considerably at times. The PM wanted a full frontal assault into Sadr City. The CG pressed for a concerted and considered approach that would avoid any all-out assault. Decreasing violence from the surge was very encouraging; the GoI had to deal with Basra, Mosul, and Sadr City sometime. Ops in Basra suffered because we had no visibility over the situation. Ops in Sadr City present their own problems. These notes are complete. Transcription is necessary for quotes, and (b)(3), (b)(6) addresses the issues very well.
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Interview

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What has happened in Basra, and why?

~~(S/ACGU)~~ The problem in Basra reflects the problems coalition forces face throughout Iraq. As coalition forces draw down, we lose reporting and situational awareness on what is happening. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, the GoI command and control capabilities are not as robust as ours. Second, they don't have the same responsibility to report. There is not a fusion center in these areas. This creates the problem of where do we get and test information for ground truth. It appears we accepted risk in Basra.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ Despite repeated reports of General Mohan's demise, he's still in charge in Basra.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ It was stressful in the SOC how this was unfolding over Easter weekend. The SOC became the center for all information flow. We found out quickly that they needed complete logistics support. There were several centers of gravity in this. The PM took the MoD and the MoI down there and set up in the Basra palace. General Mohan set up his Basra Operations Command some where else. MND-SE was out at the COB at Basra Airport and had no contact or information flow with the Basra Palace or with the BOC. \

~~(S/ACGU)~~ We sent a SOC Liaison Team down there with (b)(3), (b)(6) a couple of guys from the Tier one protection team and comms team. We tried to get a CJSOTF Team into the BOC, but Mohan did not want a captain in there. MND-SE had no visibility down town.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ The operation immediately ran into great logistics problems, and the Iraqis brought two C-130s into the fight. They carried supplies in and casualties out. General Petraeus was extremely supportive of Maliki from the beginning. Because the Iraqis did not have an effective command and control network, MNCI became the clearing house for the logistics. The ISF could not process the logistics needs. The C-130s could get stuff to the airfield, but the harder part was getting it off the airfield and out in

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distribution. There were concerns they would fail, and for 72 hours the operation seemed to hang in the balance.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ Initially, the PM insisted this had to be an Iraqi-pure operation, but he soon complained that they were not getting American air support. It turned out he had forbade the MiTTs to accompany Iraqi units, and without the MiTTs and their embedded TACs, the Air Force could not drop ordinance. We quickly got MiTT teams down there and created new ones from scratch. The Brits formed new MiTTs, the Marines sent MiTTs, and a company from the 82nd Airborne went down. The company split up its platoons as MiTTs. These brought airpower and confidence and turned the situation around.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ The PM declared a huge victory, but maybe the bad guys just took a knee as leaders fled. What will happen now? In the long-term, there has got to be a solution for port security that includes replacing the Facilities Protection Service. The jury is still out.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ The situation in Basra and our new role erupted because we did not have a tactical infrastructure down there. That required high-level intervention from here, and that led to all the teams that went down to assist. We are now getting daily morning reports that are giving us situational awareness. We are seeing fewer caches and fewer HVDs now. That is understandable, because the first neighborhoods the ISF swept were the worst ones. They're getting to the better ones now which were never so bad, and the HVDs have fled. We have cleared the FPS from the ports, and that is good. General Petraeus has said that flowing aid is now the key to improving the situation, but not much is happening on that front. We need quality of life improvements. The PM pledged \$100 million in aid, but that money has never been delivered. We haven't seen it.

IDF Attacks on the IZ

~~(S/ACGU)~~ The attacks really started on Easter Sunday, 23 March, in conjunction with the PM's move to Basra. From the beginning, what stood out about them was their size, duration, and accuracy. They degraded communications within the IZ by knocking out a power generator. Last year, we lost power because bad fuel got in a generator. We responded to that by building in some redundancy. This time, when the power generator got hit, our engineers could not get outside to start the second generator until the all clear sounded. Our communications steadily degraded with radio batteries being our last source of. We got down to the last remaining asset as the whole system steadily degraded. Since then, we've put in more generators right outside the building and other sections have come to us to hook in for backup power.

After the interview, ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ discussed other factors that degraded. Contract workers did not come to the embassy, so cleaning stopped and the bathrooms got nasty, food service deteriorated, supplies started running low.

Going in to Sadr City.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ MNCI and MND-B have been working on the Sadr City problem for months. Their idea has been to isolate the southwestern quarter from the rest, secure it, improve quality of life there, start reconstruction, and then use carrots to extend good work there gradually to the north.

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~~(S/ACGU)~~ The PM decided, much as he had with Basra, that we were going into Sadr City. He came in one morning and announced ISOF would begin operations that night. We hastily wrote a frago, but nothing happened that night, or the next night. It felt like Basra all over again. The difference from Basra was the Baghdad Operations Center was already tied better into MNCI. What was not different was the PM's lack of planning. The BOC had no pre-notification.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ They did put together a plan to attack from PL Gold to PL Copper. MND-B and the BOC were coordinating an attack. The CG looked at it and declined. He wanted shaping operations, limited raids on the periphery, to engage 1.4b and he wanted an information campaign.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ Sadr City was different from Basra. The SG leadership was more robust, hardened, and determined in Sadr City.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ The majority of contacts we've seen have been along PL gold.

Where are we in the war?

~~(S/ACGU)~~ In the first seven months of the surge, it was very gratifying seeing the violence come down. We were having success. It would have been nice to keep those lower levels of violence. The decision was made to go after these packets of resistance in Mosul, Basra, and Sadr City. The recent rise [in violence] is positive if it means we're in a better position. It will take conviction among American leadership. We can't take our eyes off Basra, Mosul, or Sadr City.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ Our challenges are continuing the drawdown while the need for forces continues. It is significant that they (the ISF) moved two brigades to Basra quickly. The ISF has improved and our connectivity has improved. The ISF infrastructure has improved. The greatest concern is the GoI ability to improve goods and services.

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