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Unnamed location within International Zone, Baghdad

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MNFI Historian

Abstract

(b)(3), (b)(6) was a career infantry and Special Forces officer, retiring in 2007 after 30 years of service. From September 2005 to September 2006, he took 12 months off from a Joint Staff assignment to organize MNSTCI's COIN academy in Taiji. As an aside, (b)(3), (b)(6) explained that Secretary Rumsfeld gave SOCOM the lead for the GWOT after 9/11 because only SOCOM could operate worldwide in the small teams with low profiles necessary to meet mission demands. (b)(3), (b)(6) faced immediate challenges setting up the COIN academy. Even though Casey wanted it, (b)(3), (b)(6) had difficulty getting MNSTCI and MNCI to support it, so initially it was an uphill battle getting supplies and forcing units to attend. He had to build the curriculum and the teaching staff. COIN was a foreign concept to conventional forces, and they resisted it fiercely. The Marines got it [understanding of the situation] quickly, because they are more agile, and their small wars manual works. The Army is much more professional than it used to be, but reservists and those who left active forces for recruiting or other stuff have a hard time keeping up with the demands of the job. When Chiarelli took over in January '06, he empowered moving the intelligence assets down to lower levels. The academy changed from SF-taught to conventional instructors who understood COIN. Taiji now has a treasure trove of intelligence on all parts of Iraq. Moving off the FOBs and out to secure the population, which the Marines led with, was critical to effective COIN.

Interviewer Comments (b)(3), (b)(6) is interesting and entertaining. He interprets his dawning awareness of conventional and counter-insurgency challenges as the Army's own belated comprehension of what was going on.

FIRST RECORDING

Background

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For background information on SOCOM, can you explain why Secretary Rumsfeld gave SOCOM the lead for the Global War on Terror? To me, this seems to go against the grain of SOCOM's regional orientation.

6:00. Here is the dilemma, and why he used SOCOM. Nobody could synchronize because you had these [geographically restricted] combatant commands that were in and of themselves, whole entities, and in order to fight the GWOT, you had to have one organization fighting all over the world, an organization working between all these other commanders. Only SOCOM has expertise from all the combatant command areas, and guys that go in and out of each of the theaters, and it takes small teams, which is SOCOM. SOCOM was well suited for it, but the problem was that SOCOM, despite having this worldwide reach, had less clout than the major combatant commands, of which EUCOM is preeminent. This meant that SOCOM had to build itself to equal in prestige what the combatant commands were. SOCOM thus had to outstaff folks, because one power the CINCs have is their staff work. SOCOM was up against that. Then, of all the combatant commands, SOCOM brought the best interagency relationships to the fight, with (b)(3) 10 USC 424 and with State globally. So, even though SOCOM was not as prestigious or as powerful as the other combatant commands, they brought vital characteristics to the worldwide fight. So that was a good idea. Still, it comes down to execution, because you have to empower a guy to do a global war. People still have their lanes, and if you ask anybody, Petraeus is in charge. He talks to the President direct. And that was what needed to happen with SOCOM. Not necessarily talking to the President, but talking to the SECDEF with that authority on what we needed globally for the global war, not necessarily the fighting--which was limited, but how are we getting intel, how are we getting our people into these areas, how do we do the battlefield preparation before we even consider combat operations, which is the last step. When you start talking about putting boots on the ground, with brigades and divisions, that is the last resort. And what you want to do with the GWOT, because boots on the ground sends a different signal to people. It makes us look imperialistic, even though that is not our mission, but you're never going to de-link that image of what people remember of empires and US incursions. They're going to see it as a grab for resources, space, or people, like the Suez canal. With Special Ops, you have the opportunity for a very low footprint to interact with those areas, and that is where that regional orientation serves you best. Special Forces execute low profile operations, and

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the Philippines is now a model of a very low key mission. Now, the Philippines are a model. SF A teams, is a way to engage and empower without displacing locals, you can do low profile, or high profile, depending on the message you want to send, with or without fanfare. That is my take on SOCOM.

So how was it you came TDY to Iraq?

14:00. Basically, I was going to retire the next year. I had about 18 months left. I figured with almost 29 years in, we've got the big dance going on, and I'm not even over there. So I started asking. I asked my rater, BG Peterson. I politicked for this job, hard, because I figured I didn't have anything to lose. So I just kept at it. Then, GEN Conway was very supportive. He understood that guys want to get there, and be there. So he wrote the letter to the personnel guys giving me a 12-month release. That meant they would not get a replacement. So I got over here. Maj Gen Bargewell was the Operations Chief at the MNFI SOC, in the Green Zone. I thought I would work at SOC, the Special Operations Command, so that was great. I was going right where I wanted to go. Then, I got here and learned that SOC was Strategic Operations Center, and that was a shock. I had already talked to him, and he told me, when you come here, whatever you do, don't go to the J1. Come see me first, call me, and I'll make sure you get to my office. I flew into BIAP. When you come in as a replacement, and I was coming in blind, they just put you in a line. All I knew was I was supposed to go to the palace annex, and I was told to get on the Rhino, but there would not be one until the evening. So I called Maj Gen Bargewell to let him know I'd be along on the Rhino. Instead, he sent his PSD to get me, and that was my introduction to Baghdad, through all kinds of traffic, and guys yelling. It was a nice, well, 'you're in Baghdad.'

17:20. Bargewell had two jobs he needed filled. 1) The Force Protection guy in the SOC. 2) The other, GEN Casey wanted to start COIN school; there are plans on the deck, but he hasn't selected anybody for it. He [Bargewell] knew me from Bosnia, when I was the Chief of Staff of one of the JTFs back in EUCOM that helped make the SOF guys invisible, put it that way. So we were face men of stuff we don't want folks to know. So he said, "I know you don't want to be on staff," which was right, but "we've got this thing up in Taiji, and a lot of shit goes on up in Taiji." I think at that time, the road to Taiji was the deadliest road in the world. So I went up to Taiji to look at the place with the guy who was planning it, who was the Force Protection guy, a tall, slim, blond SF guy . . .(b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) He had been planning it as a SOF guy, as an extra duty, but it needed someone's full attention. I went up and looked around, and they briefed me on the idea. And Taiji was nothing. There were no phones, no furniture, no anything. It was an empty, beat up building, with ideas that this was going to happen. There were contracts, but nothing had been done.

19:45. I came back and was told Casey wanted to see me, and he'd give me approval or not. It was the first time I'd met Casey. He told me what he wanted, his idea for the school. He said we have not trained guys to do what they have to do in Iraq. In other words, he knew the conventional mindset was slowing down the progress of the fight here in Iraq. My opinion of what he was saying, is they weren't doing it in the states, but the level he wanted, in the training, was to break the "maneuver idea," the idea of brigade

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combat teams on the roll to kill folks. That was not being taught at the National Training Center, they were using villages, but it was roll through the village, asks the villagers where the bad guys were, and keep rolling. That was their idea of civil affairs. Just don't shoot anybody, get some intel, and roll on. That was how folks were coming here, but there was nowhere to roll. In this environment, you're stagnant. The rolling is to engage the people. He knew this. He also knew . . . the question is why use SOF guys, and that was a big issue with Ft. Bragg and SOCOM, because SOF does not teach U.S., they teach foreign forces. In talking to SOCOM, they felt they could not take on this COIN CFE mission because they had too much on the plate with Direct Action missions and working with indigenous forces. And now somebody wanted them to take on yet another mission. Now, Casey did not say, "you've got the job." He said, "this is going to be hard, and you don't know what you are getting into." I remember that very well. "It is not going to be what you think it will be."

I remember when I went to Georgia Military College, and I was one of the first three blacks there, and I was on a scholarship. My dad told me, "this is going to be very difficult, but I know you can handle it." I was a good student. It did not compute with me what he meant. But when I had to confront these red neck guys, then it was like, "ooh, now I know what dad was talking about." Now, if you're a good person and your competitive, you'll win people over, and as a military brat, I knew about starting over to win new friends, and use charm and competitiveness, but when Casey said that, I thought, "how difficult can it be?" I had his support, and he wanted the school.

25:30. The reality set in when I got there. There were so many naysayers. We got support from MNSTCI, but I worked for GEN Casey. Well, as a colonel, I don't get to go see Dempsey, so I go to his chief of staff, or to his CMATT. Well, the CMATT commander, BG Wolfe was the 2nd one, had guys all over Iraq dying on a daily basis, and not getting their supplies they needed. Then you are talking about a school, compared to guys doing what Special Forces normally do, living with indigenous forces, in combat situations. So obviously, when you say "I need a copier," the response is like "get out of here." But if you're a school, you've got to produce all these materials, and a copier is mission essential. The staff would not take my requests seriously, because I was way down the list of priorities. We opened in September, and didn't have a copier until January. To make copies, we had to scramble to beg, borrow, and steal copies all over the base. That is not the right way to do things. You're wasting time, and people get tired of you coming around. Then, there was the attitude of people that . . . the Army has been teaching me to roll over people for 20 years, and now we're in this quagmire, and people are now wanting to fight in the quagmire. Well, that is where the insurgents want you to fight. Fighting daily battles, you make mistakes, and the population ends up hating you. That is just the way it is. Second, if you spend all your time chasing the insurgents, you'll never get anything else done. The people will never understand what you're doing. It took a few years for the population to decide we're not the bad guys. Other programs [COIN] were taking a back seat to combat operations.

30:10. Here's my philosophy on COIN. Many people say we didn't bring enough troops, and that means we'll lose. No, that doesn't mean you'll lose, but it does extend the

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mission in time. Having just a few guys--as we did initially--forces you to do the reconstruction under duress. We will not end terrorism in Iraq, but we have to build up the Iraqis to fight the terrorists themselves. We could have brought more--though we only had so many, and we'd have had no ability to rotate.

In civil affairs, every CA guy came here in the first two years, and then we were done; there were no more left. So, Rumsfeld said he wanted more CA. We only had two battalions of CA on active duty. There were a lot of guys who had civil affairs training that were not in civil affairs jobs. We then had to shake the trees and bring anybody in a CA background into the CA mission. So, like recruiters who had done CA had to come back, and go to war. Now people may say once a soldier, always a soldier, but skills atrophy, and it was tough getting these guys back in the game, especially if you have not developed in units. So you had that friction. But since we did not have enough guys, then we put together the pick up teams, and the skills and quality went down, and they lost respect.

34:15. The Army is much more professional now than in past years. Accountability is high, and guys who were in it years ago have lost touch, if you have not stayed in the mainstream Army. So there was this problem with the reserves, who don't like working with active Army, and then active talking down the reservists. The difference was the mission focus. I lived and breathed the Army for 30 years. It is very hard to see somebody who doesn't do it because they love it. For Reservists, it's a part-time job. They can come up to the standard, but when you bring in a reserve division, and then break them up to support all these Army units, and their cohesion is gone. So they either assimilate, or there is friction. And we saw that all the time.

37:30. The guys I'm talking about were a reserve training division that were assigned to MNSTCI, and they got broken up and served all over MNSTCI. We were different, because when you're SF, you use the same skills with Iraqis that you use with anybody. You constantly check the attitudes, and how to get the most out of these guys. As a matter of fact, the US guys used to send us the guys nobody else wanted, because we knew how to figure out how to work with people. This was either the 106th or the 107th Division. They would fill all the augmentee slots. It was a way they had of filling all these augmentee positions with one reserve division call up. So they put two guys in the S2 shop, four in the S4, and they would do base ops support, or augmentees to the Iraqi units filling JMD positions. The admin was that division.

39:50. For all that was going on at Taiji, this COIN CFE was alone; they were scattered in different positions in the Army and had to be pulled back into CA for the mission.

The 106 Division (Training) was filling in all the empty augmentee slots. They handled base operations support. We worked with Taiji supply depot to fill the JMD.

Casey and Dempsey had to cut a deal on me. The deal was that Dempsey would rate me, but Casey would tell me what to do. That wasn't a good deal, because I remember that Casey told me to do something, and then I briefed Dempsey on it, and Dempsey said

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"General Casey's priorities are not my priorities," or words to that effect. I figured I was just briefing Dempsey on all the things that Casey wanted me to do, and I figured Dempsey would accept I was only taking up a small piece of Taiji, so he would just rubber stamp the effort. It didn't go off like that. So remember, Casey told me it was going to be hard; he knew that. He knew how MNSTCI was, and he knew the Corps' guys attitudes.

41:07. Now LTG Vines, I love him like a dad. He was not for COIN CFE; until his guys went through, and his guys said, "This was good training; we should have had it back in the states." Now, that is the only thing that got us over. Here was what was supposed to happen. Casey said he wanted the Corps commander to come over and give his pitch, and Casey came to ever class and gave his campaign pitch on strategy and whatever was hot, killing too many civilians, he would tack it on. And he wanted the Corps commanders to come, but they wouldn't come. It was always, well, if we have time, then we'll do it. Well, finally, Vines came one, he met me, he knew me, he saw what we were doing, and then he told me "You are doing God's work here." I will never forget that. I respected him, and he was not sold on COIN training for the conventional forces. But when he left, because he was swapping out with Chiarelli, and in January '06, Vines turned MNCI over to Chiarelli. The scheme for the thing was to train lieutenants up to the brigade command for one week, while their guys were going through RSOI down in Kuwait, this was all before they got to their AOs for RIP-TOA. These leaders wanted nothing to do with Taiji training because they thought they had more important things to do, the gunner and everything about RSOI. You should have heard all the bellyaching.

44:30. I finally had to tell Casey units were not complying, so he had to give the instruction again, and say "I'm not going to tell you again." Then, they started complying. So, once they got there, and this is what made it all worthwhile.

The first class, with a pilot course of people in country, was the middle of November. The end of November, through mid-December, was four or five classes, with their officers sans 2LTs. What happened in the AARs was it was very positive, but they complained that they should have had this before they got their train up back in the states. There were about 20% who still complained that it took them away from their preparation in Kuwait, until they got to their area of operations, and then almost to a man they wished they'd had more, and had it earlier.

47:00. Now we were into January. We had started off with just SF guys. We did a contract, for mostly SF, but we had a hodgepodge, with one Marine, one of the best guys on the team, because he related to the Marine Corps, which was another fight. We wound up with guys from different disciplines who understood counterinsurgency. Now the brainchild was a Major by the name of ?. He was brilliant, but he could not get folks to understand what he was saying. It was all correct, what he said, but he could not communicate. It was like being Einstein, with all the knowledge, but he did understand teaching or communicating. We developed charts and analytical tools, and five days was never going to be enough time. So, the goal became to expand what guys knew enough so that they did not immediately turn to pulling triggers when something goes wrong.

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49:40. For example, when something goes boom in the night, and guys start plotting where all the booms are happening, they might conclude they need to mount a combat operation where all the booms are happening. That is not COIN, and that is piss poor analysis. Now, if it was combat, that would be right; every time we send a patrol there, they get their ass shot off. Ohh. Everytime we send a helicopter there, it gets shot at. Humm. Ok, we focus intel, to tell us what's there, and then we mount an operation, because there was activity. But that is not COIN, because what you need to do is not mount operations to chase all the bad guys, it is to get the population to chase the bad guys for you. That is why Al Anbar is safe and secure today, and if nobody has seen that today, then we are blind. And the Marines; I love the Marines. And I though they were doing a better job, because . . . one thing about the Marine Corps is they are not afraid to get folks killed. And I mean that in the way that in the way of, if you've got a mission, then you've got a mission. They don't look back. They don't second guess. If they think that they need to go to a certain place, it was my experience listening to their briefings and going out with them on a couple of patrols, it was . . . 'We going out.' [with enthusiasm]. On the other hand . . . and they had small COPs before it was popular, before Petraeus brought that idea and said, en mass, this is what we've got to do. A lot of folks pooh-poohed that, and that was one of the most important training things we were giving guys. Out in Al Qaim, on the border, the Marines did Fallujah and then went to the border. They knew once you hit and destroyed, you can't leave, you have to stay, you have to clear, hold, and build. But we found there is a limit to how far you can go, because once you put a COP out here, you have to resupply it, and there is no formula that says how many miles or kilometers. It all depends on who is out there and who opposes your operations. Many people did not understand that initially; they just put COPs everywhere they could, but then you lose the ability to supply all those points. Thus, you've lost what effectiveness that COP has. Let's say it takes 40% of your guys to supply 60%, if they are at a certain distance. A lot of folks would do the math, and they would put all their force at COPs, which means that the enemy would have a lot of fun between the COPs. I think the Marines were the first, when they came to the class, to say, "well, you can't do everything." And that is where we started figuring out . . . where I started understanding, why you need more guys in COIN, because you have to protect twice as much when your unit is dispersed as when you are rolling as a combined arms army. Now, is that a blinding flash of the obvious? [It is] only if you've never done it before. Now, if all you've practiced and all you've been taught is rolling as a combined arms army, yes, when you get in this new situation, and people tell you "Hey, we've got to protect more than we used to." Remember when guys were saying "There is no rear," and the unit early in the war took a wrong turn, and the lady was captured, and all that. See, it wasn't obvious. If it was obvious, then somebody would have said then, "Look, you can't just go like this is secure rear area, like we imagined." Remember all those World War II movies, you never see any snipers in the rear area. Like the Battle of the Bulge, you've got guys fighting, and then you've got the trucks resupplying from the rear. You know, I think we learn everything that comes into us. Now our culture of those World War II movies, it ain't tactical, but that's what we think it's like. We're too prone to thinking that movies, like *Saving Private Ryan*, is what's like.

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55:40. It is a blinding flash of, not the obvious, but a fundamental change in thinking, that everybody has to make the switch. Once you study it, it's like "Duh," but when you're trained to do one thing, and you get thrown into that situation, you learn it the hard way. Casey was trying to train folks up first so that they didn't learn it the hard way. And I thought the Marine Corps started learning that lesson before the Army. This is a couple of things I did learn from the school. Once they saw what the school was doing, they sent us a couple of guys to be instructors, and we really needed them. They were some of our greatest proponents. Their small wars manual keeps them thinking agile. Mental agility is what we did not have in our Army, but I think the Marines had a leg up on us, because they knew quickly they couldn't do it like we did it at 29 Palms. I think they adapted faster and easier than we did. That's my feelings. And they're smaller. Another thing about the Marine Corps, you're either in war, going to war, or just back from war. So after a year, if there was anything new to be taught about COIN, after a year everybody had it.

How did the CFE change over the year from Sept '05 to Sept '06?

58:20 When Chiarelli came in, there was a fundamental change in the MNCI. He had been in Baghdad as a division commander with 1CD. He, early on, Baghdad was sort of pacified. People were living fairly normal lives, there was trash collection and markets. When the militias started up, and we didn't really take it to them in the beginning, then you had a new dynamic starting, with people not going out, not going to work, and sectarian killings between Shias and Sunnis. Al Qaeda was taking advantage to attack the infrastructure, to knock out power, no gas. . . to make the people hopeless, which is classic insurgency tactics. Then, once they [the population] culminate with despair, then we'll [AQI] show them the better way, that if they'll [the population] our way, then this bad stuff would not happen. This is your punishment for not following Allah.

1:00:06. I don't know how many books have been written about how to do this, and for some reason, we, our military, missed it, and the few guys who were saying . . . this is what is going on; they were the 'odd-ball' kind of guy, not listened to. Like the Army just wanted to kill people, not solve the problem. I heard a briefing in which a guy was talking about how many of the intelligentsia was being killed. Well, duh, read any book from Mao to whoever, get rid of the smart guys, and you become the smart guys. Get rid of their doctrine, and you give them your doctrine. Why did it take us so long? Did we protect doctors? No. Maybe there were too many. But who was even trying to protect the universities. Let's just try to put . . . anything that you would do when you know it's a target, like the power station, once again, if you don't have enough troops to protect all the targets, its not that you are going to lose . . . How many smart guys are just going to leave because it is safer someplace else, and better in France or Canada than in Baghdad. Since we did not bring enough troops, we now have to build mental capacity, because we didn't take care of guys, and they fled. So, again, that extends the mission.

But you asked how it changed. When it started, we had too much technical information. We were heavy on analysis to understand why things were happening in your area, and it is not really that technical. If you understand what the enemy is trying to do, then you

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don't need all these charts to prove that that is what is happening. Then, our COIN . . . analysis chart would lead you to the guys you needed to target.

Do you mean a Human Terrain Map?

1:03:00. It is more complicated than that. Let me give you an insurgent example. Say if I kill you today, because you're the XO. People will look at that and figure I was trying to get rid of the XO. In fact, I may do that because I know who is going to replace you, who will be moved to replace that person in their position, and that that will open up the position I want to get my guy into. It is a domino theory of opening up slots you want to fill. Don't look at things at face value.

What was the difference that Chiarelli made?

1:04:24. First was the intel piece. When we talked to him about bottom-up intel, the Army system, with its electronic capabilities, works top down. That doesn't work in COIN. The satellites and such doesn't work here. It works against the big enemy, the Soviets or Saddam's Army, but in COIN you need the intel assets at the lowest level. The Corps ACE become superfluous, you've got to push those guys down, and guys don't want to push those guys down. The Corps ACE will scream and stomp against pushing intel guys down. The Marine Corps had already done it, with 2 to 3 man intel processing cells at company level. Every patrol would bring in a massive amount of information on individuals, and the intel cell had started using that at low level. Chiarelli knew the intelligence was not giving him what he needed.

In the COIN fight, the Corps commander has a lot of clout. When he goes to visit a sheik, it is like shooting an MLRS. It affects a wide area, but you've got to have a scheme. He can't just go where all the killing is going on.

So, how did the CFE change from '05 to '06?

1:08:35. One, I would say we got rid of the SF guys and their influence, and we brought in more conventional guys who understood COIN. Although guys respected the SF guys, once we started talking about needing to move the intel assets to lower levels, they shut down on what the SF guys said, until they started hearing the same message from conventional, brigade-level intel officers who said the same thing based on immediate, recent experience. I got Casey to give us a brigade intel officer to validate the need. So we got an intel guy, an maneuver guy, a couple of Marine guys, and then some Australian guys, three were SF, and one was maneuver. What we found out was there was nothing for the NCOs, and they have to change also. The NCOs have to . . .

1:10:40. [Illustrating with items on top of a desk] In conventional battle, you've got all your formations working together with mutually supporting fires. In COIN, everybody is too spread out for mutually supporting fires. You need to mutually support with intelligence, but you can't with fires, but the NCOs . . .

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When you send guys out, the lieutenant is only with one element, and he is not COIN savvy. The NCOs are really running it. We found out the NCOs on their own had started putting things together, but nobody was bringing them together and coordinating their learning. In CA, nobody may have been passing the lessons of the importance of repetitive meetings, and gift giving. You don't automatically endear the Iraqis, so we started an NCO handbook for COIN, and the Australians led with that. Now, we as US have a hard time taking and appreciating other people's doctrine. The British in Northern Ireland faced an insurgency. They were there for twenty years, and they have a Blue Book. It is twenty years of cumulative knowledge on the blue book. I tried to get a copy, but I couldn't get one. Someone sent me a couple of pages from it, and it showed just the kinds of problems we have here.

3:30. For instance, that bad road from Baghdad to Taiji, the British did a thing in northern Ireland with watch towers. They could see the entire road; they knew when things happened anywhere on the road. I would guess somebody would have been saved if we'd secured the road with towers. That is just one thing. We got better and better at what was going on.

We had a schedule. Two to three weeks before a class, we would send a team to the area a brigade was scheduled to go into. We would collect the intel and all the information pertinent to that area. We would then incorporate those AO specific pieces into the class, and that gave the class even greater relevance. We used the data from the area, the specifics that really mattered. That meant we were talking about the same guys, because they had gotten intel ahead of time.

So Taiji right now must have a great store of knowledge on every area of Iraq.

6:30. That's right. We started in January and February. With the Marines, we had been to Al Asad, Haditha, and Al Qaim. From the area, we would get a personal dump from the brigade commander and a battalion commander. That started with the nearest guy.

In September '06, it was at the peak of everybody appreciating the COIN academy. We got into our stride in June or July. You no longer had to beg people to come to the course. The Marine Corps, they were doing six months, rotating back, and could have come back for the 2nd time. They validated what was going on. The worst class we had were National Guard guys. They were a class that had the Iraq wide mission, like communications relay stations out in the middle of nowhere, they were at some Iraqi Army bases, and because they were doing convoy support, and because they didn't have to interact with Iraqis much, somebody could tell you you're killing too many Iraqis on the road, needlessly, you could take great exception to that, because its either me or him. Our answer was that was what discipline was all about. Everybody is afraid of the suicide bomber, but you can't shoot everybody who scares you. Now, Chiarelli wanted us to teach things that weren't COIN, but were related to Iraq, like Escalation of Force in this environment. Chiarelli wanted this to be a course we taught the leadership. Well, no. That is a Rule of Engagement issue for any war. If you're on the front line, and somebody speeds at you, that is not COIN. If there is an IED, that is not COIN. It may

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be the greatest tool that they have, but it would be like teaching offense, as in how a tank shoots. Well, how a tank shoots is not offense.

Many people tried to get Casey to add stuff to the course, and he resisted. I had to go to Casey to get changes approved. Once he knew me, after a couple of months, he accepted my judgments.

In 2006, the mission for many units was not to engage Iraqis, but to withdraw from engagements and smaller FOBs toward bigger bases and gradual transition. In December, Casey determined we were headed for strategic failure. How did that affect your operations?

13:07. All our was against the big FOB mentality. Look at the Marines. They were living like you and I imagine soldiers live in war. Their compound was a nasty compound, a nasty shitter, dull and dreary, and you don't want to stay there, but that's what we signed up for. And when you're outside your big FOB, when you're living in the not-so-nice place, it is easier to go outside. You don't mind going out. When your on the FOB, it is too much like back in the states. I hate the PX.

There were so many widescreen TVs in the Taiji PX, I was thinking, how did they get all these widescreen TVs here? How many trucks? That was a convoy that some US joker was risking his life to get these widescreen TVs out here. That is what big FOB gets you. Then you get the support guys. I love them, you need them, but when they're not in the fight, you get a different kind of person. That isn't COIN, but if we're going to fight, and we're fighting COIN, don't build something that undermines your COIN.

16:00. Now Petraeus got credit for pushing guys off the FOBs, and guys were complaining that more guys got killed at the small FOBs than at the big FOBs. Well, duh, that is risky, but do you want to be here for 13 or 15 years, or make it so that the Iraqis have a chance to get it done. That is another mind set. I thought it was so against what I always thought the Army was about, the resignation that "Yeah, we're going to hazard ourselves to get the mission done." I couldn't believe that attitude, and I saw it in the Stars and Stripes. As an old soldier, that kind of crap bothers me. Soldiers don't get to pick and choose the strategy.

18:20. One other point, the Stryker was the best thing that happened to urban warfare in this country. Folks still poo-poo it, but when you can move four Strykers with ten guys each into any area, AQI boots start shaking. The HMMWV can't match it. Some of the principles that we have in regular combat, like mass, do apply in COIN. You do need to mass in COIN.

Also, we are not agile. We are probably more agile than the Soviets area, but so what. It is like saying we're faster than the fat guy. But we could be faster. It takes us too long to move. It would take us too long to move a brigade up to Mosul, because we are too tied to FOBs. When you're on the battlefield, you not worried about guarding FOBs and the PX. That stuff inhibits. The Marine Corps would send their guys back to where ever the PX was for R & R. Its not coming back from the mission and going to Burger King. We

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need to correct the mentality of the PX in the Army. When we feel that is a core benefit, we have gone way off the scale of what the ground pounder should be. It is a bigger issue in COIN, because a conventional fight would not permit it in the front lines.

With the HMMWVs, I don't know what the thinking was, but that wasn't it. We should have had MRAPs out here in the second year, in 2004. We were able to get every . . . every six months we got a different anti-radio thing, the warlock, the warlock 2, and the blue and red thing. That was one reason they didn't teach things in the states, because stuff was changing out too quickly here for the stateside training system to keep up. You had to learn it in Kuwait, and hopefully they had a set of the equipment.

23:22. I returned to the states in September of '06, and retired in March of '07, and came here a month later.

24:50

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