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INTERVIEW

OF

BRIG. GENERAL JOHN R. ALLEN

DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL

MULTINATIONAL FORCE WEST

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June 27, 2007

BAGHDAD, IRAQ

This transcript was produced from tapes
provided by the U.S. Army Center of Military History.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

[b 3 b 6] This is [b 3 b 6]
[b 3 b 6] the Multinational Corps Iraq historian.
Today is Wednesday, the 27th of June 2007, at
approximately 1910. We are at Camp Fallujah at the
Headquarters for Multinational Force West, and I am
interviewing Brigadier General Allen, the Deputy
Commanding General for Multinational Force West.

Sir, if you would be so kind as to
introduce yourself in your own voice with your rank,
first name, middle initial and last name.

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: I am Brigadier
General John R. Allen, Deputy C.G., Multinational
Force West.

[b 3 b 6] Great. Thank you, sir.
We have your biography on file. So I am not going to
take you down that path at all, sir. I just wanted to
jump right in.

I wanted to start by asking if you can
give me a sense for, as the Command got ready to roll
in here, what were the kinds of things that General
Gaskin (Phonetic) asked you to focus on as the Deputy

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Commanding General? Which areas does he want you to zero in on?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Beyond the fact that we organized for this deployment as a MAGTAF (Phonetic) in the sense that we had five generals instead of the previous couple of deployments, which was three generals, I serve not just as the MAGTAF Deputy but also hold down the portfolio for governance, economic development, rule of law, and tribal engagement.

So back at Camp LeJeune, General Gaskin asked me to do several things. One as to write a concept for stability operations that would, for all intents and purposes, constitute his Commander's intent for how we would operate out here.

He also permitted me to put together a PME program on tribal engagement, the history of Mesopotamia and Iraq into the modern time, and in particular to talk about what we have termed the human terrain in the Anbar Province.

So we spent a lot of time studying that, and beyond that prepared for economics and governance

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by having a three-day conference conducted at UNC Chapel Hill, sponsored by the Business Transformation Agency from OSD, the idea being that we would do everything we possibly could when the security situation presented itself to be able to move very quickly to capitalize on the secure environment in order to begin to bring government quickly online and have government sponsor economic development.

So we spent a great deal of time doing that. Back in the rear we had a reading program, a PME program. We had guest lecturers. We actually visited a phosphate plant akin to the one that is in al Qaim (Phonetic), learned all about the phosphate processes.

We visited Wilmington, met with the city fathers of Wilmington, the various functional managers of Wilmington who took us through the concepts for sewage, water, electrical, trash, all of the things we deal with every single day in every populated area in the Anbar Province. So it was a fairly significant work-up.

Then beyond that, as the Deputy C.G., we

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dealt with such things as technology, adapting the capabilities that would be made available to us at the Marine Warfighting Lab, Marine Corps Systems Command, standards.

We spent a great deal of time ensuring that our relationship with those entities fostered the kind of introduction of technology that would be operationally relevant and not technology was just coming over to be tested, and then go back to the States and be verified.

So those are the kinds of things we did. It was a pretty extensive work-up across the board. In my world, it was mostly a cultural, economic, and governance work-up, and General Verganus (Phonetic) would tell you as the GCE Commander that he, of course, was concentrating on the tactical preparations of the various units.

b 3 b 6

All right, sir. Sir, can you speak to: Given that focus, were you part of the selection and finalization of the staff that was brought here in this go-round, and if so, what were some of the key players that were put in place to make

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that happen?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: I really wasn't. In fact, I was one of the last people to arrive on the staff. I had been three years in OSD, Director of Aid and Policy, and arrived very late. In fact, I arrived the day the unit departed for the PBSS for here, and followed them two days later.

The staff was in place. There were people still coming, but I had no role in the selection. I did have a role in the selection of the second G-5. The G-5 that we have out here now leaves in two weeks to command an artillery regiment. His replacement -- I had a hand in selecting him and getting him approved and ultimately detailed. Otherwise, I had really very little. Much of the staff had already been selected before we deployed, before I arrived on the scene.

b 3 b 6 Sir, along that same line, are there any civilian advisors that were brought into play to help either formulate the plan or that came with the staff over here and serve as advisors right now, especially given the responsibility you have for the governance piece?

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BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: You know, it's very interesting. One of the things that -- I would like to think it was intentional; I can't say that it wasn't, but the G-5 had been in a job very similar to mine in OSD, but he had done this in Korea. So he was very comfortable dealing with people from another country.

He was a former Director of the School of Advanced Warfighting, had an MBA from the Wharton School of Business, UVA, a very uniquely qualified guy. So he understood governance. He understood economics.

My governance chief was a graduate of the School of Advanced Military Studies at Leavenworth, very strong background in civil/military operations. My economics chief was a graduate of the School of Advanced Warfighting and a logistics officer and had been my S-4 in the Infantry battalion I had commanded; and my rule of law chief is a Marine Reserve Colonel, but was also a lawyer, even though he is an infantry officer.

So just remarkable qualifications that you

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would probably not find massed in any one group that I had ever seen, frankly, that kind of serving officers who were uniquely qualified and uniquely grouped.

That wasn't the question you asked me, though. You asked me about civilians. Very few civilians came with us. We got over here. We encountered a provincial reconstruction team that was very small. It was fragmented across the battlefield and largely because the PRT, as it is called, was unable, really, to do what a PRT ought to do, because the security situation is so dangerous in the entire province.

So by and large, they were hunkered down, spent a lot of time with us, but their ability to operate unilaterally was very limited. If you could say did we have civilian advisors, the PRT chief, (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Phonetic) who is a career Foreign Service Officer, was certainly an excellent advisor to us in that regard.

Then shortly after we got here, I took a brief one day in Baghdad from a fellow by the name of

(b)(6) (Phonetic) who had been here for

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four straight years. He had been here in the assault, had been here ever since. He had a Special Forces and an Army Infantry background, and he had become a specialist in the Anbar tribes and was working for Triple Canopy, which is one of the security firms. He was an advisor on tribal affairs.

We immediately struck up a relationship with him, hired him on contract, and now he teaches tribal affairs to all of our officers and staff NCOs within the higher headquarters, within the command element.

So a very long answer to your short question. We had no civilian augmentation per se, but fell in on at least two very strong civilian advisors when we got here.

b 3 b 6 Sir, given the evolving situation, this seems like a period of time when we look back eight, ten months ago, the situation couldn't have been more different than it appears to be now, obviously a great bright spot in the greater fight in Iraq.

As the speed of that changed, how

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challenging has it been to keep up with that, given the plans that were made? Did anyone anticipate that it would go this quickly, and how tough is it to kind of keep pace with events?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: That's a great question. It is really a very important question, actually.

In the work-up before we came here, we were anticipating in the development of our own campaign plan some of the watershed events that we thought we would encounter here. We initially thought we would have to deal with the execution of Saddam Hussein, which you can imagine was going to be something that could have forced us into an even more dire situation, for the security situation was pretty bad as we were getting ready to come over.

We were anticipating another election. Of course, the last one the Sunnis had boycotted. There was no reason to believe it would be any better, but we certainly believed that whatever election process we would encounter was going to be probably fraught with a lot of violence.

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Then somewhere way out on the horizon was this thing called provincial Iraqi control. You will hear it called PIC, P-I-C, which is, for all intents and purposes, our turning over security control of the province to the Iraqis.

I have to tell you, we didn't believe we would come near PIC during this deployment. In fact, we weren't even sure that the next MEF -- We call it "this MEF, next MEF, MEF after next," when we are talking about the graduation of command elements. We didn't even know the next MEF would be able to achieve PIC, because, frankly, the government was the governor alone in the government building every day. The Provincial Council had fled to Baghdad. There was no rule of law, zero. There was no court operating in the province.

Al Qaeda -- the weekly incident rates were numbered between 350 and 400, and it looked grim. Within 90 days of coming over here, virtually the entire situation had turned around.

It turned around for a whole variety of reasons, but we were faced suddenly with the real

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reality that, if we didn't do something quickly about governance and get the government some quick traction, we were going to have a pretty serious difficulty, because the people were now throwing off al Qaeda. They yearned for some kind of government. They yearned immediately for some form of future, which would be defined largely in economic development.

As I told all of our commanders, the one sound we can't afford to hear right now on this battlefield as it goes silent or goes quiet is the sound of silence. We can't afford to have the kinetic phase suddenly followed by this large pregnant silence where there is nothing governing and nothing being built and no money coming into the province.

So we very quickly instituted something called helicopter engagement where we threw the governor and key leaders onto the helicopter and flew them around from city to city to have them establish a relationship with the cities.

We took the Governor into Baghdad constantly for him to establish a relationship with the ministries to get the money to start to flow to

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the province. We asked for a \$50 million -- an immediate \$50 million infusion of commander's emergency response program money, which we could quickly funnel to commanders who now had urban environments where the people could start to clean up after themselves and clear the streets and clear the rubble and begin to build and put the shop back in order. And all of that had to happen very quickly.

Now it was much quicker than we had anticipated, and we began to talk about -- with this unexpected breakthrough in security, largely a result of very aggressive activity on the part of our conventional forces reinforced by the 4,000 surge troops -- Now you can debate whether the surge did any good anywhere else, but I am going to tell you, the 4,000 surge troops put us over the top here.

That, in conjunction with the Iraqi police holding the shoulders, if you will, of our penetration along with the Iraqi Army -- in other words, holding open the penetration by their presence -- we then thought about this nonconventional or unconventional battlefield in a different way.

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The exploitation forces now became economics, governance and rule of law, because that was what was going to make the biggest difference on the battlefield immediately in the post-kinetic phase.

So the breakthrough occurred by conventional forces, the shoulders of the breakthrough, the gap. The shoulders of the gap were held by Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army and the exploitation forces was our building governmental capacity, getting lots of money flowing very quickly into the three AOs being administered by the commanders and their civil affairs teams and embedded PRT elements, working very hard to get the rule of law going again, to try to get courts sitting in the province.

That is how we -- Because we had done so much planning in this regard, when the security situation went so fast for us, broke so quickly, we had done the planning. We were able to go into the exploitation phase. We called the operation Anbar-dan (Phonetic), and we are hanging on for dear life right now, hoping that we can stay out ahead -- very

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importantly, stay out ahead of people's expectations, because once expectations for the future begin to turn into despair that nothing will ever get better for them, then we've got a problem, a serious problem.

So we are at that critical moment right now where we've got to keep ahead of expectations.

b 3 b 6 Let's put the interface on this with Multinational Corps Iraq, Multinational Force Iraq. It almost seems like MNF-West is on the leading edge of this, certainly, and everyone is excited about the idea that what's happened in West is starting to happen a little bit in some of the other Sunni tribe regions in particular.

The full concept of reconciliation -- we are still trying to get our arms around it. Is MNF-W blazing the trail for that, and to what degree, and what kind of guidance are you receiving from our Headquarters?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Well, it's a good question. Usually, the term reconciliation is accompanied by the term engagement. So you will hear the term engagement and reconciliation. We are not

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doing much reconciliation out here.

The difference for us in this province and other provinces has been that our enemy was fairly stark. Our enemy was al Qaeda. In other provinces, it was various militias, armed militias, whether it was Jaish al-Mahdi or the scary elements, and there was AQI involved, but primarily our enemy here was AQI. Frankly, AQI is irreconcilable. We will give AQI the opportunity to surrender, but the vast majority of AQI won't surrender. So the solution is simple. We kill them.

When AQI arrived on this battlefield, they immediately subsumed the indigenous resistance elements that were here, the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade, Jaish Islami, Jaish Mohammed, these Baathist former Saddamist regime nationalist elements that were fighting us. They didn't have a choice. You either threw in with AQI or they killed you. They threw in with AQI.

Now what is happening is that AQI, by and large, has been pushed out of the population centers in the province, not defeated. We will never defeat

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AQI. We will kill a lot of them. We will remove them out of the population. That will be successful for us.

What is now happening is these resistance elements are beginning to gain traction again, and interestingly enough, so much of our success here has been a function of our allegiance and alliance with the tribes, that as these indigenous elements, these Anbaris who were in 1920 Rev. or Jaish Mohammed or Jaish Islami, as they approached the tribal leaders to get clearance from them to attack us again, the tribal leaders are telling them, no, don't do it.

They are saying a couple of things to them. They are saying, if you want to remain with the tribe, since the tribe has shouldered up to the coalition forces, if you ever want to come back, don't attack them; or they are saying there is no need to attack them. The Americans aren't going to be here forever. Now is the time that we need for the Americans to concentrate on helping us, because they are clearly helping us. They are helping us get on our feet with governance. They are helping us get on

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our feet with economic development. If you attack them, you risk all of that.

So they are really getting a very strong message. Sittar, for example -- you've probably heard of Sheikh Sittar who heads an element of tribes in the vicinity of Ramadi. He was approached by the head of 1920 Rev. and basically requesting Sittar to give him clearance to attack the coalition forces, and Sittar said shedding the blood of the coalition is shedding the blood of my tribe; if you do that, I will attack you.

That's not because of any wild love affair we have for the tribes. Tribes and tribal leaders and sheikhs are all guided by self-interest, not selfish necessarily self-interest; but it is the nature of tribes. It is the nature of Arab tribes, that Sheikhs are concerned about the interests of their people; therefore, tribes and tribal organizations and political decisions made by sheikhs are typically guided by self-interest.

It is at this moment in their and our history in both parties self-interest that we ally

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ourselves together against al Qaeda. Now they would say it is not just about al Qaeda, because as long as America is in the Anbar Province, no matter what happens in Baghdad, America will buffer us from the Persians that are dominating the Maliki government in Baghdad. That's what they will tell you.

I constantly test the water with these guys, and I tell them, you know, we are leaving, not going to be here forever, only got a couple of years, and we had better get everything we can out of these couple of years and the probably couple of hundred million U.S. dollars remaining to be spent here. We've got to solidify your government. We got to get your courts on their feet. We got to get your industries going again, so that no matter what happens in Baghdad, everything will remain solid and resistant to whatever political instability could occur elsewhere.

It really resonates with them. It works very well to our advantage. It gets us cooperation in areas and at levels that people might be willing to wait us out. Now they recognize that, if they wait us

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out, they are waiting themselves out, and that's not --
-- That failed before when they all boycotted the
election two years ago. They got nothing out of it.
Now the government up in -- the government in this
province was elected by 3700 votes total there were
cast out of 1.2 million, and they got to live with it;
because we tell them rule of law. We support the
elected government. The elected government was
elected by 3700 votes. You don't like them, well, you
should have voted.

The lesson for you is, when you have the
next election, you better vote. And they got it,
believe me. They got it.

[b 3 b 6] Sir, one of the things
that is interesting to me is Governor Amoud
(Phonetic), and I wanted to ask kind of two questions.

Can you give me a little more information
on the helicopter engagement strategy? When did that
actually start? What was the genesis for the idea?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: It started with us
about two months after we got here. We almost

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immediately encountered that the government in Fallujah was collapsing. The Provincial Council -- Excuse me, the City Council Chair, Mr. Abbas (Phonetic), had just been assassinated, and in the way Iraqi government works, the Council Chairman is actually more powerful than the Mayor or the Governor, who are appointed as a result of Council action.

So the Council Chairman is more important.

Abbas was assassinated. He was the third to be assassinated in over a year, and people weren't coming to Council meetings anymore. The Mayor was completely corrupt. The police chief was pulling his hair out. He didn't have enough cops. He was fighting al Qaeda every single day. It was -- Fallujah was on the skids.

So we wanted to try something, because we knew we were surging into the eastern part of our AO, and if we were going to make the main effort of our tactical operations defeating al Qaeda in a conventional way, why not think about it a little bit differently and also seek to create a stable provincial or municipal government in our rear while

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we are fighting.

So we went in with that kind of thinking.

So we brought in (b)(6) (Phonetic), and we brought in Abdul Sallam (Phonetic). Dr. Abdul Sallam is the Chairman of the Provincial Council. They, over a period of three weeks, reconstituted the City Council, elected a City Council Chair, and then ultimately elected a Mayor.

That gave us the idea, that whole process, that as the Iraqis for really the first time in several years have the opportunity to govern themselves at a municipal level, why don't we go from city to city and begin the process of reaching out to them, based on General Gaskin's guidance to us that we should do all we can, that our vision for governance should be connect Baghdad to Ramadi, connect Ramadi to the cities and towns.

Now by virtue of the size and the nature of this province, which is almost exactly the size of North Carolina, it was clear to us that we were going to spend a lot of time on the road driving the Governor around, if we didn't take advantage of our

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helicopter capability.

So the next place we went was to Rupa (Phonetic), and we recognized very quickly that when the people of Rupa fell out to meet the Governor, this was a big event, and it really was working. So what we decided to do was to embark -- the provincial reconstruction team leader and I, b 3, b 6 we coined the term Helicopter Engagement, and we are now systematically going from Ramadi to the various towns in the province, and on the helicopter is the Governor, Provincial Council Chair, Provincial Chief of Police, certain members of the Directors General from the ministries, usually electricity, water, oil.

When we get off the helicopter, the Governor goes with the Mayor. The Provincial Council Chair goes with the City Council Chair. The Chief of Police goes with the local chief of police, and the DGs will fan off with the local DGs to talk about the difficulties with utilities and that sort of thing.

They will have their meetings. They will talk about their functional relationships, and we bring everybody back together again and we have a

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plenary session where the sheikhs come in, lots of the local notables. They have -- It's usually a fairly incendiary meeting, because in many cases the provincial government has never been to that town, ever. No one alive in that town has ever seen a Governor.

So as is the case with Iraqis, they never leave home without a want list. So when the Governor and those guys show up, I mean, the want lists come out, and it's nothing but I want this, I want this, I want this, and if I don't have it tomorrow, you know, it's going to be a disaster.

So they are fairly incendiary, but the wonderful thing about the way the Arabs do things -- this goes back to our cultural preparations to come here -- you go to these meetings. There's the early playing on the tactical battlefield of who seems to have the stronger argument.

You will see the meeting then come to a crescendo of yelling at each other and gesticulating and posturing, and then the Governor and Abdul Salaam at the right moment will give them something.

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You know, out will come the wad of 20,000 dinar bills, you know, and they will fund a project that they've wanted in that town for a long period of time, and the Governor will say form a committee, and he will lay 8-10 million dinars on this committee for anything they want to do as a project in the town, and suddenly there is celebrating throughout the land. The Governor has come from Ramadi. There has now been this outreach which -- you know, in the hand of the outreachers is a big wad of dinars, and everyone is happy. We all go have some goat, and we get on the helicopter and fly off.

Now the province has been connected, and it has worked out very well. We are about to finish up the first cycle, and we've been done on the way, down on the pilgrimage route to Mecca. We've been out to Rupa, which is another critical and strategic oasis, been to al Qaim twice, been to Hit twice. We have been to Haditha last week, been to Fallujah twice. Of course, we work Ramadi all the time, about to go to Baghdad. We will finish up with Anya and Rahwa (Phonetic), and then we will start all over

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again.

My hope is to have the Governor and the leadership in every town in the province at least once a quarter, and that will create a lot of connectivity. It will also create a lot of accountability. The Governor is not going to be able to make some promises and fly off into the sunset. He's going to have to be held accountable, and that's a good thing; because they don't know about accountability in this government, but they are learning about it.

(b)(3), (b)(6): What is Governor Mahmood's take on this quick turnaround? I'm just thinking about eight, ten months ago. He's the only guy in Ramadi in the Government Center, and when he tries to show up he gets assassinated. Now it almost seems like his day in the sun has arrived. What is his take on all this transition and where that puts him?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: He has really grown into it. As you may know, he is Iraqi Islamic Party, IIP, although he swears on a Koran that he is not, but he is. He can't help it. He's tainted by having been

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in the party.

The IIP, you have to understand, in this province -- and everything is tribal in this province.

The IIP is the antithesis of the tribal ethos. The IIP is a progressive, fundamentalist Islamic movement that has as its origins the Muslim brotherhood.

IIP doctrine would say that tribes are an anachronism, that tribes are something out of the past, and tribes are an impediment to progress. So if you are a tribal leader and your government is almost entirely IIP, because those are the only people that went to vote two years ago, you don't feel like you got much of a government in Ramadi.

So the Governor is turning out to be a fairly adept politician, beyond being what almost all Iraqis want in a pinch, which is a strong man to lead them. The Governor has tried to distance himself from the party, but also every time he goes to one of these towns, seeks to create a constituency in those towns through good works and through flowing resources.

Recently, there was an attempt to organize the lineal sheikhs in the province. When I say the

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lineal sheikhs, I mean the old families, because there had been a sense that the Sittar (Phonetic) movement had hijacked the ancient order of genealogy in the province, if you will. Sittar is a minor sheikh in a third tier tribe. That's not meant to be derogatory or denigrating. It's just the nature of who you are.

When delegations from Washington arrive asking to see Sittar but don't arrive to see Sheikh Sabbah (Phonetic) or Sheikh Hathim (Phonetic) or Sheikh Ali Hathim or these guys that have been around a long time and whose families planted themselves here 1,000 years ago. No one had ever heard of the Al Arisha (Phonetic) tribe, but they have all heard of the Al (Several words inaudible). Pretty quick, Sheikh Sittar gets real unpopular, largely because we did it, too.

So they have become disorganized, and it appears that the Governor is, in ways I don't fully understand yet, because he hasn't started telling -- I'm going to figure it out here -- is starting to align himself with these lineal sheikhs, because Sittar has emerged as a political party. His element

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is making itself a political party and is setting itself up to be the opposition party for the IIP.

So if you can't crack into Sittar's party, and the IIP isn't like tribes, and a tribal gathering of lineal sheikhs is occurring, and they tend to rely on people like the Governor for the governance -- they don't like the Governor. They liked Ali, they didn't like the Governor.

If I'm the Governor, I'm going to throw my hat in with these lineal sheikhs. So that's the interesting dynamic that is occurring. So the Governor is turning out to be quite an adept politician.

[b 3 b 6] Sir, I wanted to come back to the provincial Iraqi control issue, and we talked about trying to get the message across and getting the message across to the tribal leaders about that balance between what they see as a buffer between the [1.4b, 1.4d] Shia elements. Where is the happy medium there? What are you hearing from the sheikhs and the home Governor Mamood in terms of what are they saying about how long should we be here?

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When will -- Given this transition that's happened, when will we have overstayed our welcome? When is that right moment to pull back to tactical or strategic --

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Great question. It depends on who you are. I learned a great quote from the Governor the other day. He said all sheikhs have two hands, the one they extend to you and the one they extend to others. What he meant by that is all Iraqis have two hands.

So on the one hand, the Iraqis will tell you we don't ever want you to leave, because you really represent stability, and the Kurds are an example of this. But the Kurds had achieved technically the ability to go to PIC months ago and didn't want to declare that they were in PIC, because when you do that, the U.S. forces have to rearrange themselves or leave, and they don't want us to go.

The Anbari Sunnis, the tribes here, have now figured the same thing out. They all want us to go. I mean, there will come the day when I get on an airplane and fly off into the distance, and there

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won't be a tear shed on the runway, I promise you. But in the meantime, with all the uncertainty in Baghdad just on the form of government, with all the uncertainty in Iran just in terms of what their long term intentions are, with all of the problems that we have with Assyria on any given day, they want us to stay.

I think the question isn't whether they want us to stay or not. The question is how long do they want us to stay, and what posture would they like us to be in when we stay.

I think we've probably got about another nine months to a year before we really need to be out of the cities, maybe not even that long. And I know you do -- If you know Kuwait, what you know about Kuwait today is that our big presence in Kuwait -- The vast majority of Kuwaitis never see us. We are not a factor in the day to day life of Kuwaitis.

We are not a lightning rod for everything that goes wrong in that country. We don't taint their faith. We don't disrupt or corrupt their society. We are not a factor. We live off in the desert in our

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air conditioned splendor, and we never intersect or have intercourse with that particular community.

I think we are headed for that here, and the Iraqis will be very happy the day that we finally bottle ourselves up in several large BOBs or main operating bases, MOBs, and train as we need to, come out to help when there is an emergency, but by and large we are invisible to the people. Yet the very presence of our forces in the area provide stability to the province, back-up to the security forces, stability to the central government,

1.4b, 1.4d, 1.4a

1.4a, 1.4b, 1.4d

So I think that's really where we are. Depending on whether you are an educated engineer like (b)(6) who just in a pragmatic way recognizes that we got to be here, or you are a Sheikh Sittar who begs and pleads for a relationship akin to the one we had with South Korea at the end of the Korean war, which was to stay and mentor the government into a democracy and rebuild its economy -- and Sittar with tell you, you took a broken South Korea and created the tenth largest economy in the world with it; we are the same

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kind of people. We would love you to stay and do that for us.

So it is really kind of an interesting process, but in the end they want us to stay. These Anbari Sunni tribesmen want us to stay. The question will be how long do we have their goodwill before we need to disappear.

b 3, b 6 Sir, I appreciate being able to sit in this afternoon to listen to some of the discussion with the G-5 planning for those many pieces of the economic picture, the banking picture, the railroad picture, so on and so forth.

You had talked earlier about what the situation was with regard to the interface with the other U.S. governmental agencies on hand and the Provincial reconstruction team. Given again the scheme of events, has the U.S. government side, those entities, the Provincial reconstruction piece -- have they been able to keep up with that?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: That's a great question, too. You give me some great ones.

I think -- I can't speak to other

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provinces, but I have to guess that this may be the case. When it became clear, at least in our province, that we were going to be able to really start to operate in an environment that was sufficiently secure that we could get some traction, there was a huge infusion of people. They just came from everywhere, came from USAID, came from State Department -- frankly, not many from the State Department, but some -- and a lot of them came from DoD, some serving officers, some Reserve officers, some civilians.

They came blazing out of Washington, D.C. in a special training program, were dumped out here -- that's not a good word. They were certed out here really in very short order. That probably in a perfect world would have been a process that could have been more deliberate. They could have come out here in smaller numbers and been inserted in kind of a surgical way instead of with a baseball bat. But frankly, we had three damn good commanders in three battle spaces who, with strong civil affairs teams that were already plugged into much of what these people were going to do, took these folks, and all

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three of the embedded PRTs that went to each battle station were already making, I think, significant traction out there.

We are all different. You know, personalities dominate. Commanders' personalities influence. So they are all different, but when you think that they had been on the ground less than 60 days, they have accomplished a great deal in less than 60 days.

Of all the agencies, I think, that have really had to pony up on this and, I think, was taken by surprise, is USAID. Now I was square in the middle of a Sunnami. I ran the task force for Sunnami back in Washington, D.C. I spent time on the ground in Thailand, Sumatra, up in Bunde Ache and later in Sri Lanka.

USAID is one of the great agencies of the Federal government, and it is doing it again here. But I think that, certainly no fault of their own, they could not have anticipated that the security situation out here was going to change so quickly for the better. So they have really been in a very loud

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and conspicuous way yelling for help, and we are about to get our provincial USAID rep. I put a colonel with USAID, a colonel by the name of (b)(3), (b)(6) (Phonetic) who is a Reservist. He could not have been more valuable to keeping us on the USAID scope.

USAID has been going out and requesting resources. Those resources are coming, but there are other provinces that can't spend the money they've got. They are taking that money and sending it to us now.

So of all the agencies, probably just simply because USAID doesn't have an expeditionary nature to it, that has had to run the fastest and the hardest to stay out in front of the movement to peace, if you will, it's been them.

Intelligence agencies have been fine. You know, a little bit of sprinting that we've had to do, but we've been doing that shoulder to shoulder with them.

OCFI special operators -- there's still plenty of al Qaeda out there to capture and kill, and those guys are going to still do an important job for

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us.

I think it's probably useful to ask the question, what is the U.N. doing here. I mean, they are not even an entity out here. But I would be interested in whether the U.N. was found ready to play in a big way here when the time came.

Now you asked something before I didn't respond to, and I need to say this. MNC-I, more so than MNF-I -- it's just because they are one command -- we could not be happier than our relationship with General Odierno. He has been incredibly supportive in this.

Our boss and he have a very good personal relationship. He doesn't in the least blanch with the delivery of bad news. You know, he's a big man with broad shoulders. He takes bad news well. I know he is under tremendous pressure, but he never -- I mean, you would never know it by seeing him.

Without a second thought, he gave us a tremendous infusion, and certainly promised more if we need it. We just need to be able to spend it and account for it, and we promised him we would do that.

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So I couldn't be happier.

Mark McDonald, Brigadier General Mark McDonald, from Strat Effects -- we've had a very good relationship. On a couple of occasions where I've needed help, I have called him, and he has been hugely forthcoming.

So Corps has been very useful to us. Force has been useful, but as would be the case, we would always go to Corps first, and then Corps goes to Force. It's a good relationship, and General Petreus, General Odierno, and Mark also, I think, have a very close operating, working relationship.

b 3, b 6: Sir, one aspect of this turnaround in Anbar -- and given the economic goals and the banking goals, these certain things, and the involvement with that seems to necessitate from the government of Iraq at the central level -- seems that one of the issues at hand is with a Shia dominated government or Prime Minister Maliki right now seems to be a natural suspicion to a resurgence of the Sunni populace.

How much of that are you seeing, if any;

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and how are you working around those issues of being able to get to the central government so that the Iraqi government out here can channel the funds and the resources?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: That's a very good question. I just think the people can't help themselves. You know, I think that, if you are a Shia and you have been oppressed by the Sunnis for hundreds of years -- the Ottomans certainly used the Sunnis to control the Shia; it's worked that way right up to the end of Saddam's regime -- it's very difficult when the time comes to make tough decisions to come down on the side of the Sunnis for the Shia.

The Shia ministries in Baghdad have made it very difficult for us. I didn't think I would ever say that. I always thought, you know, these guys just have differences of opinion. The world view in Baghdad is different than the world view in Ramadi, and that's just not true, and the sectarianism has generated and dominated a lot of the decision making, and a variety of the ministries have made life very difficult for us in some regards.

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You know, (Inaudible), for example, with virtually no notice, Maliki's office, led by a doctor by the name of Basimah (Phonetic) -- I don't know her first name, but she is very much a Shia sectarian. She has no security background whatsoever, but she is the principal advisor to the Prime Minister on issues of security, and she called a meeting of the Governor, Provincial Chief of Police, and the Deputy Minister of Interior. We were barely able to get our guy in there.

My fear is that Maliki, who seems to be constantly concerned about a growing Sunni police force, a rapidly Sunni appearance to the two originally Shia divisions that were out here -- they came here as Shia, but we have indiginized them. We have basically turned them inside out with local Sunnis, plus we have three standing and two growing Provincial security force battalions.

I believe that these guys are very concerned about the numbers of armed Sunnis in a relatively stable tribal province that is growing in political power. I think they are concerned about

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that. My fear is that this meeting will result -- and we'll find out about it here in a couple of hours.

My fear is this meeting is going to be bad news, that they are not going to give us anymore police or they are going to cut back on the number they are going to authorize.

So dire predictions probably aren't what you want to hear for a history, but I went from trying very, very hard to believe that what appeared to be partisan politics was really just getting used to young democratic processes or early democratic processes, and I have, unfortunately, come to believe that sectarianism is absolutely rife in the ministry.

I may be the last guy in the province to come to that conclusion. I tried very hard not to.

So I watch the Governor, hugely frustrated and angry that decisions up there have direct impact, for example, on how much fuel that we can bring to the province to give to the people, where Shia provinces have unlimited access to fuel and refined petroleum products.

We have to run the gauntlet. In fact,

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tomorrow a convoy of probably 50 or 60 trucks supported by 40 Iraqi Army vehicles with a Marine Corps GET and a MET going along with them, are going to convoy up through Taji, past the Golden Mosque and right into Base to fuel them up, and then convoy them back. We expect to fight our way up and fight our way back. That's the only way we get fuel into the province.

The Shia Minister of Finance has made it very difficult for us to get money, and as you heard today, if a dinar comes out of Baghdad, it's because we've brought it out of Baghdad, went in and got it.

My liaison officer to the office in Baghdad that goes out and gets the money ended up receiving combat action, because his unit went out to the Central Bank of Iraq, was ambushed one day, and they had to fight for their lives to get back. The front of the bank was damaged by a car bomb. It's just another day in Baghdad.

So out here, what we are trying to tell these guys is you can fiddle around and waste your time and be disorganized or you can get serious about

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getting yourselves organized in a governmental way and get your economy going so that, no matter what happens in Baghdad, you will be solid out here. And more and more of them are taking bait or taking (Inaudible).

The problem for us is we were desperately hoping for an election on the 5th of December, which is what's on the calendar at the Embassy, and we got some very bad news today that the Embassy has finally concluded, because of the inactivity on the legislation of the Council of Representatives on the Provincial Powers Act, I think it's called. It would appear that we will be lucky to see an election before June next year.

That's bad, because people are now left desperate, because they can't stand the governmental processes in place. So we are going to have to think very hard about how do we adapt to this thing. How do we perhaps, without an election, reach out to the people, in a very statesman-like way convince the Provincial Council that there can't be a popular election. Let's now reach out to the people and reconstitute the Provincial Council in a way that

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truly represents the demography of the province. We are going to make that suggestion very soon.

The Governor, for his part, has largely done that. He has largely risen above his IIP, Iraqi Islamic Party, groups. The question will be can the Provincial Council, because if we don't, the sense that the government in Ramadi is an illegitimate government will grow and grow and fester, and eventually it will create an insurgency in and of itself, not opposing the Americans and not opposing Baghdad, but opposing the Provincial government, and that will be (Inaudible).

b 3, b 6 Sir, there is a very interesting (Inaudible) underway, listening to the discussion of the agriculture issues, the vocational training issues, the education issues. I'm just thinking of a parallel to one of the positives at least in the Multinational Division-South, at least in the Basra areas that there has been an economic growth down there, even if there are still issues with the (Inaudible).

When you look at that array of projects

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and things that were discussed this afternoon, for instance, how close and where do you think the key areas will be when we will really start to see the successful economics come into play all, and will let the Anbar Province really stand fully on its own two feet?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: I think we are probably going to see a lot of that before the end of the calendar year. That's my hope. We won't see the end state, but we will certainly see the beginnings of kind of institutional economic growth. That's really the key. So long as we can keep the money flowing to the banks, so long as we can ensure that the contracting process delivers work remains and appears to remain impartial so that these opportunities are spread among the various constituencies out there, people will retain confidence that economic development will be widespread, and economic development is something that everyone can benefit from. But we got to keep it going.

There are people who will say, (Inaudible)
-- you know, it's the old analogy, "better to teach a

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man to fish than to give him a fish," and they will say, if you continue to spend cert, you are not making the Iraqis discipline themselves to have good fiscal policy and fiscal discipline and all that.

My answer to that is, yeah, you're right, but I'm going to tell you right now, if the option is give them nothing when they have an absence of capacity themselves to discipline yet in fiscal ways or to have good governance or economics, all I'm doing is creating another insurgency for myself.

So I'm willing to spend tens of millions of dollars to put people to work, recognizing that in a very real way that primes the pump. Work creates jobs. Jobs creates money. Money creates a willingness to risk that money in the creation of small business.

In the meantime, we create small business associations. We create vocational technology training centers. We create fair and impartial and transparent contracting process. So this becomes an upward spiral rather than a downward spiral, and that is our hope. You just got to -- It's like nuclear

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warfare. It seems counterintuitive. You just to understand that, if you do these things in the right kinds and combination and not get too nervous on any given day, let it go for a while, chances are you won't be disappointed.

That's kind of where we are. We are in the hope and faith phase.

b 3, b 6: I wanted to zero in on one thing, if I could, about that piece. I think it's an interesting piece, which is the point of entry issue, because looking back to when the Marine Corps first came back to Iraq in 2004, one of the original strategies was, you know, to have -- I can remember seeing maps with what we were going to do on the borders, have OAR out there, control these kind of, you know, smuggling routes.

What is the status of the point of entry project out in -- in particular, oh, out in Qusaybah (Phonetic), and what do you see in terms of do the Iraqis get it, so to speak, in terms of, mmmh, if we control this, we can -- this is a source of revenue for us? How big is that recognition, and how far

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along is that project?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: The Iraqis get it, but for example, down in Trebil and Waleed, we are constantly fighting the corruption within the -- I think it's about 11 at this count -- 11 different Iraqi agencies that have their fingers in the pie, so to speak, of the money that transits through the ports of entry.

So they do get it. For us -- and at the Qusaybah (Phonetic), what that does is, if you connect Amman through Rupa through Mohammadi and into Ramadi and into Baghdad that is a very ancient caravan route. That was one of the traditional flows to the Red Sea and ultimately to the Mediterranean, very ancient.

The other one is from Aleppo coming out of -- past Damascus, and then down the Euphrates River and into Baghdad. The two probably most ancient caravan routes in the world, even older than the Chinese, are those two routes.

The fact that we are about to open one should indicate that, if the past is prologue, this is

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going to be a huge economic boon. We just know it is.

Go to al Qaim sometime, walk the streets of the Qusaybah, look at the growth there. Look at all the building. Look at the clean streets, at the kids going to school in the clean clothing. Look at the rehab schools and the rehab clinics that we and the Iraqis have done. These people all get it.

The Mahal tribe is in a little bit of loggerheads with the Salmanis and the (Inaudible) and some of the other tribes there. That's the way it is.

You got a big tribe, powerful tribe. Get in line. If it wasn't for the Mahals, we wouldn't have the peace that we have up there. The Mahals created the opportunity for economic growth and for governance.

That area is ready for a huge economic influx when that port opens sometime around the middle of August. In fact, I got a phone call I got to make to General Anderson tonight about that, because you know, we own the ground. We will certainly run the day's events for the ceremony when the port opens, but you know, there are Syrians involved. There's Governor of Iraq that's involved. There's the U.S.

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Embassy involved. This is a big thing. This is going to be a big deal, and we want to make sure this thing comes off right.

First of all, we want to make sure it comes off, then off on time, and then off right. So I'm dealing with General Anderson to make sure we are out ahead on this thing.

So the port of entries, the four that we have, Qusaybah, Khalid, Trebil and Arrar (Phonetic) -- Arrar is always closed except for the Taj and Saudi deporting Iraqis back into Iraq. Trebil is a very large source of money, Waleed less so. Qusaybah will probably be the richest of all four.

b 3, b 6 Sir, switching gears a little bit, I just wanted to ask a little bit about your role in the technology side of the house. You made an interesting comment when you opened the discussion by talking about there's things that come out that are helpful, and there's things that just come out.

What are you seeing in terms of new technologies that have really been, wow, hey, this is

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a great thing, it's really doing a wonderful job.

What are the success stories along those lines?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Well, 1.4a, 1.4g

(Phonetic), the 1.4a, 1.4g

has been just huge for us. It's been very, very valuable. It was something that 1 MEF had started.

They get all the credit for it. All we did was execute their plan, but it was relatively new technology -- not new technology. It was a new capability by combining technologies: 1.4a, 1.4g

1.4a, 1.4g

The next has been, of course, in the area of counter-IED. The whole MRAP business has been, and is, and will get huge for us. We are going to get over 1,000 MRAPs. They are starting to come in in large numbers now. Our hope is that, by the time

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General Kelly, who is in the next MEF, is halfway through his deployment, there won't be any Marines circulating on the battlefield encumbered anymore. They will all be in some form of an MRAP. So that's a key issue.

Approved for Release

1.4a, 1.4g, (b)(3), (b)(6)

We've not had as much problem with that, because early along before we deployed, I sat down with the relevant and relevant CGs of Armed Force SysCom and Marine Corps Warfighting Lab and the Standards Branch, and all four of us agreed that,

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first of all, we weren't going to become a test bed in Iraq for somebody's bright ideas. That just gets Marines killed. We ain't going to do it.

Number two, before a technology came over, it will have been thoroughly vetted and, to the extent possible, thoroughly tested, and we will want to accept it. No technology will be jammed down our throats.

Then number three, to be fair going back, we will promise to provide a comprehensive back-brief on what we learn and how it might play in the future.

So it's been a very good relationship in that regard. We have not found ourselves confronted with a battalion of some strange technology out there that we were not anticipating.

1.4a, 1.4g

When you talk to General Ruganse (Phonetic), more of the technology has been on his side than the tactical, conventional operations side. But I can pick the phone up and -- Well, it's changed now, but pick the

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phone up and call the CG of the Warfighting Lab, and they will do anything that we need. It's really been a great relationship.

General Hollis, who was the CG, is going to come out with the next MEF.

b 3 b 6 I still have to ask about the MRAP. Was there a recent arrangement where you arranged that some MRAPs go -- extend to the Army? Is that -- What is the status of that?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: You know, the Army has got a lot of armored vehicles that we don't have. They got Bradleys and tanks in large numbers that we don't have. The Army is going to get about 1200 in their systems. They are probably about six to eight months behind us.

We are not giving up any of our MRAPs. We did take a slight cut in our MRAPs in order to cover the sailors, the 30th NCR, which was appropriate. So none of the MRAPs that were coming to us anyway are going to be diverted to the Army.

The Army made a decision, and we went with the MRAPs, and the Army decided that they had -- they

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were heavy enough on armored vehicles, they weren't going to do it. Then they took a lot of heat for it, and now they decided they want to have an MRAP program. I don't blame them. It's the right thing to do. General Odierno was very public in his encouraging of the Army -- big Army -- to do this, and now they have made the right decision. Now they just need to move out smartly, and I believe that they are going to get their MRAPs. They are just going to come behind ours.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, we've covered a lot of ground. I kind of wanted to come back to you in a broader sense and say other things that I haven't asked you at this point, that you're thinking he hasn't asked me about this. He's the historian; this is significant.

Are there issues on your mind that we haven't touched upon so far that you are thinking, hey, we need to capture this?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: You know, out there somewhere is somebody's book on the tribes and how in the winter of 2007 something happened in the Anbar

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Province. The tribes turned on al Qaeda and shouldered up to the United States Marine Corps in a way nowhere else in Iraq, and the enemy was defeated.

There is a book out there on this somehow.

We are not completely sure how it happened or why it happened. The war isn't over, by any means. These poor kids get killed every single day. That beeping you heard on my machine, that's a casualty. Every time you hear one of those, a Marine gets killed or wounded, and so that we are not out of the woods, but something happened that fundamentally and profoundly changed the calculus of this war in this province.

If you look here, something a lot of people don't think about. First of all, the Iraqis see those borders, and they are angry about it, because those borders are not natural borders. Those borders were imposed on them by the British. I can tell you when they were drawn. I can tell you who drew them, but they had no say in it.

So in many respects, those borders cut right through tribes, cut right through families. So they are invisible. Iraqis don't think in terms of

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borders, as do the Arabs.

Three Sunni Arab states on our boundary here, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia. Those guys see this province, the size of North Carolina, as a buffer state against a failed Baghdad or a failing Baghda :4b, 1.4d

1.4b, 1.4d

So when they look at the map, they look at the map very differently than we typically look at the map, and if you go to bed every night as a Sunni Arab in Jordan worried about the ultimate rise of Iran as the dominant political and military influence armed with nuclear weapons in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, what you want to have is a lot of stability and a lot of terrain between you and the enemy.

So, frankly, when I fly to Oman on Sunday, which I do periodically because of the Iranian -- excuse me, the Iraqi expatriate community there, I deal a lot with them. They give me good advice, and they will flow money back into the province to help their people.

I spend time with the Grenadians. I know

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the Saudis are deeply concerned about all this, as are the Syrians in their own way and in increasing ways are concerned that the Anbar province needs to be a very large, secure entity. So they are with us in all of this.

They don't want us here anymore than anybody else does, but they understand that here we bring stability. We bring an Iraqi security force that is potentially capable, not just of policing the streets to keep al Qaeda from reemerging, but also defend that province against something bad that might happen [REDACTED] 1.4b, 1.4d

On those occasions where things have seemed to go south on us, where we hear that Maliki will intentionally disarm the Sunnis, you will very quickly hear down here the Saudis won't stand for it, and they will put pressure on the United States, put pressure on Maliki not to let that happen; because the tribes cut straight across here.

The Annah (Phonetic) is a tribe, and on the page can trace its heritage to King Abdullah in Riyadh, just as the al Dorisha (Phonetic) tribe can

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trace its heritage to Kuwait. So these tribes are regional. They are not country specific or country centered.

Something happened February or March of 2007 in a -- I'll use the classic sense of the word -- in a wonderful way. That deserves research and treatment, and what we are trying to do every day here is not take this relationship for granted, keep our hands on it 24 hours a day, and manage it as best we can.

When that bomb went off in Baghdad yesterday and killed those sheikhs out here, by today all three of those families had received from me on my one-star stationery letters of condolence and encouragement, because we can't afford to let those people think that we are not part of their families. This is a relationship we've got to manage every single day, because if a tribe goes south on us, everything goes south on us, and that is something that a lot of people don't understand.

Frankly, we bristle -- I'll just be honest with you. We bristle when higher headquarters wants

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to help us with tribal engagement. We don't need their help. We need their support. If you want to help me with tribal engagement, give me \$20 million. I'll spend it where I know it will make some good.

They will come down here and tell me that you need to sit down with sheikhs, have a conversation, because when someone comes past me and sits down with a sheikh, the sheikh looks to them from now on. That's potentially the downside of the higher headquarters, and it's not with MNC-I. It's with MNF-I and this perennial sense that they, led by General Lamp and now the next group of British officers in the front office, the sense that reconciliation and tribal engagement is somehow their purview and their realm of operations.

We don't need the help. We need the support. We love them coming down here. We are happy to brief them, take them all over the province, and we will introduce them to people. We do not want them to have a unilateral relationship with the tribes that blows right past this headquarters. I think we have been generally successful keeping after that.

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Tribal relationships are very delicate. You are only one bomb blast away from the entire calculus changing, and that's what basically damn near happened yesterday.

I was in a meeting with Sittar and his security advisor, Terek (Phonetic). Bomb goes off. Terek -- or Sittar then tells me that he was in my meeting and had turned down that meeting to meet with me. We are hearing the body count that Terek, the security advisor, killed. He was with me in that meeting. That's what everyone anticipated. So Sittar would have been killed. Very interesting.

Earlier that day they had been with Maliki, Shia and Sunni tribes. They go to the Monseur (Phonetic) Hotel where Maliki was going to meet them again with (b)(6) (Phonetic). At the last minute he can't show up. They are killed, five of them on one side and two of them on another side, killed in a bomb blast.

Now al Qaeda -- Thankfully for everyone, al Qaeda has since taken ownership of that attack, but if you live in a world that's nothing but conspiracy

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theory, that one stinks. It's all about the tribes.

b 3, b 6 Sir, one follow-on to that, which is: Because of this turnaround you mentioned -- I like the way you phrased that -- something happened, you know, in the February and March time frame.

Is there a sense within the command in realizing -- I don't want to take you down the road of anecdotal piece of this. I realize that was slightly before (Inaudible), but is there a common understanding of was there a specific event, was there a specific person, was there a specific thing that we can point to as historians to say, yeah, that was it, that's when Anbar turned and when this thing started to go in the other direction. Is there a sense --

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Actually, there are two things. One is that Allah Mahal (Phonetic) in '05 threw in with us when we started fighting up there.

b 3, b 6: In 2005?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: In 2005. They were the first tribe to come over. Before that, they had all been against us and, frankly, we were occupiers.

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The one thing that tribes will agree on is the security dilemma. We created a security dilemma for them, and it gave unity to the tribes, that the vast majority of things never will bring tribes together.

Tribes live in equilibrium. They generally live apart, and their relationships are defined by economic relationships. That is the nature of tribes. But they will come together in a second if there is a clear and present security danger, and we were that.

Al Qaeda, foreign fighters came across the border from Syria in such large numbers in '05 that life became a living hell for the tribes up there, and Mahal threw in with us, paid a hell of a price. They had the desert war, if you recall. That was that militia element. They are still out there, too.

They went with us. That secured that area. Today, you see the benefit, close relationship with us. We have flowed a lot of money in there. They have sufficient leadership to exploit that money and the relationship, and today they clearly are the beneficiaries.

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The next thing that happened, the second thing, was Sheikh Sittar. A lot of people bad-mouth him. I'm ambivalent on the guy on most occasions, but I'm pragmatic enough to recognize what he did. Sheikh Sittar lost two brothers and his father to al Qaeda.

The sheikhs had come together in '05 in the Ramadi area. Nine of them had banded together to oppose al Qaeda. The worst nightmare for al Qaeda were the sheikhs coming together. They knew it, and al Qaeda had systematically gone after the anchor points of the tribal societies since they day they came into the province.

Anchor points are lots of things, but one of the great anchor points was the sheikh. You kill the sheikh, run off the sheikh, the tribe (Inaudible), becomes fragmented into sub-tribes, sub-tribes fragmented into clans, clans fragmented into families, because there is no unifying person.

Nine sheikhs came together. Within five months, six of them had been assassinated by al Qaeda.

Drove the tribes to ground. Finally, Sheikh Sittar, after losing two brothers and his father, said, what

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else? What else can happen to me? And he brought a bunch of tribes together.

They created the Anbar Awakening Council, from which then the military arm, the Saqua (Phonetic) al Anbar, which is the awakening of Anbar, was created. Three battalions were offered to the Ministry of Interior. Those battalions were accepted, armed, and hit teams were assigned to them by the Army, our brigade there.

Then, of course, whatever he did at night, he did at night. We never knew it. We were never with him. But al Qaeda took to heel. They couldn't stay there any longer, because the Saqua made it too hot for them.

That then began to paint a picture that the tribes could make the decision to come over. Then in the east part of the province, the al Ghorisha (Phonetic) south of Fallujah threw in with us -- al Buissa (Phonetic), I'm sorry, the al Buissa, i-s-s-a.

So in the east we had a very strong tribal figurehead, Sheikh Ahmese (Phonetic), who was helping the other tribe to get organized. In the middle, in

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the Ramadi area, we had SAA, and then up the Euphrates River Valley, we had a strong tribe in the al Bahdeemer (Phonetic) at Hit. We had the Jugathe (Phonetic) tribe in the Heathha (Phonetic) area, and then we had the Mahals in the Lastapah (Phonetic) area.

What we have done now, we have systematically culminated our relationships with all of them. Each relationship is different. We spend all of our time trying to explain why we didn't mean to hurt your feelings, because Mahal got this on this day and you didn't get it; we'll give you something else that will make you happy. And I recognize, when I make you happy, Mahal will be mad at us or the Esah (Phonetic) will be mad. But that is just the way it is.

You take the -- take shots from these guys, but in the end it's all about self-interest. And for now, their tribal future is tied to us, because they recognize that we can all make common purpose in fighting and defeating al Qaeda.

What our challenge is right nw, our

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biggest challenge is to help them define in this post-conflict era -- and they all consider that they have come to a post-conflict era -- is that our common interest is still maintaining security, but our great common interest now is defined in creating governance and economic growth; because you can only get so much traction out of defining your purpose in terms of security when the security situation has largely been resolved.

After that, you begin to lose traction with regard to your purpose. So we have to help them redefine the significant consensus that they have in relevant terms. Relevant terms for them is creating stability in the Anbar province by having sound government and economic development. That's our biggest challenge right now.

b 3, b 6 Sir, just to make sure I captured it right: We talked about Sheikh Sittar and the Anbar awakening when they offered up three battalions?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Three battalions, and offered to facilitate the recruitment of, frankly,

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thousands of police and army troops.

b 3 b 6: Was there a date to that event per se, sir?

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Yes. August, August and September, the battalions. We just said, you know, if you've ever watched Star Trek, the uncloaking of the battle greeters. These there battalions just kind of were uncloaked one day. They just kind of showed up in formation, all armed, all trained, and we accepted them. We put a 15 with them. We trained them to military standards. We've got the partner with infantry battalion, and off the relationship has gone.

Now we are actually building two over in the Fallujah area from ground up. What we are doing is each tribe is getting a company's worth of troops inside that. That now ties the tribes into the battalion.

Now importantly, we are not arming tribal militias. That is the refrain in the press that's killing us -- Not killing us; it's killing the coalition forces, because what we are doing is we vet

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every single person. That person goes on the MOI payroll. So we connect them to their government. They are not connected to us. They are connected to their government. So they've had to be vetted, so to make sure they are not all chain saw murderers.

They've got 22 teeth which is, frankly, one of the requirements, and that they -- Well, those are -- Actually, it's a requirement, that you are not a murderer, and you've got enough teeth. Then after that, we actually teach them to read if they can't. We teach them to read enough that they can read their enlistment contract when they sign it.

Can I take this call real quick? Just a second.

(Off the record briefly.)

b 3 b 6: Just coming back from a brief pause. We were just wrapping up, talking about some of the requirements, the 22 teeth and that sort of thing. But, really, we've pretty much at the end of the questions I had. I just didn't want to close out without kind of --

BRIG. GENERAL ALLEN: Well, once again,

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one of the reasons for our success was the tribal element. The tribes translated into police and army in just huge numbers for the government of Iraq; but most importantly, Corps and MNSTCI responded with a funding stream that has helped us.

You heard me talk to (b)(3), (b)(6) a few minutes ago. What you heard me say is that we are under-resourced, but it isn't because Corps hasn't tried to help us. It is because there aren't enough AK-47s in the country, if you can imagine that. They are just not out there to have.

So we are working to resource our police and our army. We went in with a request for 30,000. They pared us back to 25. Two weeks ago, we were told 21, and I'm afraid that meeting there when he went into Baghdad is going to be nothing but bad news.

So what has made it possible for us to be where we are today is two years ago when we cleared a town, we kept on going, and we left the town empty behind us. It was like a boat going through the water. You know, the water just closes in behind the boat and closes up the wake.

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Today, we have going on 20,000 police. When we clear a town, we leave the police behind us in police precincts and headquarters, and the police are from the village. The police have been to school. The police are professional. They are well led, and if you come rolling back into the town as al Qaeda now, chances are you are going to find yourself in somebody's basement shackled to a pipe until we get around to your case, and that's our detention facilities, because, guess what, Iraqis don't have them either.

That's the other thing that we are doing. We are building detention centers. So tribes generated police. Tribes generated an Iraqi army of two divisions out here. They have been the ones who kept the wake from filling in behind us as al Qaeda, and now that wake has filled in behind us as Iraqi security forces from the neighborhood, and that's been the secret -- If we've had success, that's been the secret to the success out here, and it's largely due to the confidence that the tribes have and the sheikhs volunteering the sons of Anbar to serve shoulder to

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shoulder. That's what they say: I will give you my
sons. That's the way they put it.

I'll end on that.

b 3, b 6: Sir, thank you very much.

That concludes this interview.

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