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INTERVIEW

OF

MAJOR GENERAL WALTER GASKIN, USMC

COMMANDING GENERAL

MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE - WEST

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JULY 26, 2007

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(b)(3), (b)(6): This is (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) the Multi-National Corps-Iraq historian.
Today is Tuesday, the 26th of June 2007. It is
approximately 1000.

I am here at Camp Fallujah interviewing
the Commanding General of Multi-National Force-West.

Sir, would you go ahead and introduce
yourself, if you would, in your own voice?

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: Yes. I am Major
General Walter E. Gaskin, Commanding General, Multi-
Forces-West.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Thank you, sir. It will
pick up pretty well. So don't worry too much about
having to lean into it. That will make it a little
more convenient for you.

I really wanted to ask you first, sir:
Looking back on when you first came here to take
command, what was your initial impression of the
situation at that time, and what were some of the key
points in the turnover process that you had from your
predecessor?

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: You know, we have a

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work-up prior to coming here. So I was pretty much in sync with how Major General Zimmer was dealing with the threat, as well as the transition to Iraqi control.

So when I arrived here, I made -- One of my priorities was transitioning. We put that under the umbrella of stability, meaning that we had to do security and we had to do government, we had to do economics across the moves, but we had to really delve into the tribal engagement part, which was just again the surface, and we had to find a way in a COIN sense -- counter-insurgency -- to separate al Qaeda, which we had identified as a number one threat, and all of the other insurgency groups had been morphed or absorbed into al Qaeda. So we had to find a way to separate them from the population centers or the people.

That was a very daunting task, because they had embedded themselves into the cities like Fallujah, Ramadi, Hit, and Baghdadi and Anna (Phonetic), but we saw some light in al Qaim. So we knew that it was possible. We knew that there was a

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shortage of Iraqi security forces, mainly IT; and as I turned over, it was the year of the police. Yet it was not a very good year for recruiting police.

So even though we had acknowledged that the police was the solution, we were still having a difficult time recruiting.

What I soon discovered, that there is a direct correlation between (Inaudible) engagement and recruiting. So that ability to commit the tribes with the cause that both of us had in common, getting rid of al Qaeda, and connecting them with their government meant that they needed to be a participant in that work from the Governor's standpoint as well as from the military police.

So one of the initial things we did is an assessment of what of where we were as far as ISF. They are short on police. Iraqi Army and both the 1st and 7th Divisions out here were at very low field. One was at about 50 percent and the other was about 35 percent, 1st and 7th respectively, but the preponderance of them were Shia.

Now ordinarily, that would not be an

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issue, except Anbar is 90-plus percent (Inaudible). So we had that type of relationship.

There was the legacy lack of thrust, the legacy of feeling disenfranchised, because they -- Some of them were in denial. They had not seen lately the (Inaudible) of old. They had to see either that Saddam was -- they -- He was a Sunni. That in itself could kind of claim some position in life. They had lost that.

The Baathification -- All of those who had had fresh (Inaudible) and who used the -- along the Euphrates River and especially up in the (Inaudible) area out west at the time of some of this for those that were what they call technicals and those that were in government and those that were in the military were disenfranchised.

Those that worked for the state on enterprise -- and there are about 17 of those in Anbar, and although they received -- continued to receive a portion of that, the fact that they didn't go to work every day, they consider themselves unemployed.

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So all of this was going against al Qaeda, who has a real -- very, very harsh mode of intimidation campaign going on, and since Anbar is such a large area, about the size of North Carolina, we were in a common force. So General Zimmer -- the folks that he had were stretched all the way from east of Fallujah all the way out to al Qaim, then south down to the borders of Jordan and Syria.

So there were vast areas that he just didn't have enough folks. So I'm coming in, and it's the beginning of the discussion of the surge. There is an assessment of how short we are in Iraqi security forces. There is a awakening sort of thing of the tribes. So it was very dynamic when I came in.

I had a tremendous foundation, though, because these relationships had already begun. One thing, if you look back, hindsight is always 20/20. You look back and you think about one decision that you made, and just glad we did it, and that was that I did not start a new campaign plan, you know, go through all that process. I took his campaign plan, and I developed it.

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So when I came out here, now I'm on Phase 3, stage B, of his plan, and that is based on where he assessed that he would be at this time frame, January, so to speak, of 2007. Where do you think you are going to be January of '07 on all of the assessments you do across the (Inaudible). So I used that as where I brought my beginning (Inaudible) and again continue to launch out for another 18 months, which of course, will end up with eventual Iraqi control.

I had several things that I thought would happen just as I got here, three things in particular.

One, there was a lot of discussion about moving Marine Corps Headquarters, the MEF headquarters, from Fallujah down to LSR (Phonetic), to the point that the Headquarters contract had been let, because of the lead time it takes to build it. So they are building the headquarters, and at the same time General Casey was saying, no, we can't move the headquarters; we've got (Inaudible) here. This is not the time to be moving the Headquarters out.

We knew that Saddam was on trial, and we figured that it would end up in an execution. We just

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didn't know when. So that was going to happen, and we also thought that we would have an election. We just didn't know when that was going to be, too.

So these were the major events that we plugged into our planning as we hit the ground. We tried to make sure that it was seamless as one MEF left and we rolled in; but these potential major things happened as soon as we got here.

Well, as you know, Saddam was executed, and it didn't impact us. We never had the election. So we then moved down to do this assessment on how do we get the Iraqi army, Iraqi police, the Iraqi border patrol, Iraqi highway patrol, along with the (Inaudible) itself better, (Inaudible).

Because the murder intimidation was still rampant, al Qaeda so badly overplayed their hand in their desire to (Inaudible) and desire to just control the lives. And the one thing that we have learned especially, and I applaud the Marines, both my predecessors and my team, is that we asked them to learn the neighborhood, to understand what tribal engagement really means, not just the name of the

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tribe but what do tribes really want.

The things that we discovered were so obvious that it was almost embarrassing that we had never really asked these questions before. That is, historically, tribes out in Anbar, the (Inaudible) Federation, had always come together in times of danger to their existence, always.

Now they have intermingled fights, and they go back and forth, and they have territories, and they have big issues, some as little as -- A bend in the river had been in the family forever, and they were fighting about how to (Inaudible) to the point where they control all of the dump trucks that pass through. So they have tribal rivalries. That will always be there. However, any threat to the family clan, they always come together.

Well, al Qaeda drove them together. Al Qaeda killed sheikhs, disgraced the sheikhs by not burying them within 24 hours, cut the heads off of children, blew up children, just plain brutalized and intimidated, took over people's businesses, threatened them at their house, killed the civic leaders and put

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their heads on sticks, anything that you could actually do that just totally disgusted the populace and citizenry all down the Euphrates River.

So the tribes said enough is enough. Some took different action of how they handled it. Some, in order to protect their sheikhs, sent them away to Jordan and Syria. Some in order to protect them formed bands of -- in other areas they call them militia. We don't, because they weren't militia. They were, you know, protectors. We later called them provincial security forces. We call them provincial emergency units, emergency response and VRE (Phonetic).

Whatever it was, this was devised to protect the sheikhs and what was there, either their business or their land. So we saw all of this coming together, beginning out in al Qaim and moving west.

The most pronounced of that was around Ramadi. Ramadi is the capital. So they got a lot more publicity. Sheikh Sittar -- His awakening group of sheikhs coming together saying, hey, we got to do something about it.

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Now there is one fundamental thing you have to understand about Anbaris. The Ottomans saw it. The British saw it. They don't take too kindly to occupation by anybody, and as soon as they discovered that al Qaeda had not planned to liberate them or to help them, al Qaeda had planned to occupy them and set up an Islamic state -- wait a minute, and oh, by the way, if you don't like what I'm saying, then I'll kill you -- came across. And they realized that the coalition forces is here to get rid of al Qaeda, and they had some very candid questions to us, and in some cases it was misunderstood.

The question was: When you kill al Qaeda, when are you leaving? You know, we truly misunderstood that "when are you leaving?" part. Are you going to fight me, too? You know, what they were saying is that we don't want any occupiers, I don't care who they are.

What we do have in common, however - and we've been able to articulate this, and this is why we have seen some success -- is that, look, I don't want to stay any longer than you want me, but I do want to

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help you kill al Qaeda, and I want you to help me kill al Qaeda. We have that in common. That is something you've always done. We want you to come together. However, there is another disconnect that we also need to help you with.

One, you don't trust the national government. It was your decision to boycott the election in 2005, which disenfranchises the new government. You are always talking about how rich you are, and (Several words inaudible), and that's important to you, sharing in the wealth of Iraq.

The way the government is set up, you have to connect with that government, which still is very, very foreign to them. They have always -- whatever I need was provided by someone, via the sheikhs. Even Saddam, he initially tried to eliminate the tribal structure, would not let them use a tribal last name.

At the end, he was not only talking religion, but he was also talking, hey, everybody is a member of a tribe. But he couldn't get away from those thousands of years of (Inaudible).

So now that you've got that part, tell the

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sheikh, look, this is how you sustain this. Stability means that you have a process. You have to take care of your people. That means you have to get involved in city government, municipal government, and provincial government. That will connect the government with the Prime Minister.

They don't like the governor. He's IIT. Guess why he is IIT? Guess why IIT won the election? You all boycotted it. Only 3400 voted in the election out here. So that's it until you have a provincial election. However, he is supposed to be the Governor of the people. So you want to participate in the Provincial Council. You want to participate in the cities and make the demands and see how you can have (Inaudible).

Well, we've never had to ask for things before. It was always given to us. Why do we have to ask for what is ours? Because that is the process. It is a democratic process. You have a plan. You make the request. You have a budget, and you connect with the Director Generals up through Prime Minister and through the municipal and city leadership, to the

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Governor. And both of those have budgets that will bring about prosperity and stability to Anbar, which is very, very tough for them.

It is extremely tough. However, what is interesting is that they are now looking past the security aspect, and they are looking toward who are you awarding these contracts (Inaudible)? Well, I'm Sheikh Arnah, and I have a business, and I have 200 dump trucks; can I get that award? So, absolutely. This is Iraqis doing (Inaudible). However, you know, we want all of your guys to abide by the rule of law.

The police are going to inspect those trucks. We are going to (Inaudible) so that we don't have any suicide bombers coming here blowing up things. Can you agree to that? Yes, I can agree to that.

If we didn't have the rule of law, we would have tribal law, and we would do something about it. You don't need that. We need law and order so that the people of Anbar -- Anbaris or the people of Anbar can return to some semblance of normalcy.

As Mike (Inaudible) liked to say, the people of Anbar all the days of their life lived in

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some type of violence. Either they are committing violence, they are observing violence, there is violence that is being done to their family through murder intimidation, or they are just watching it without -- condoning it by not doing anything, but violence is with them all the time.

So I think this is a long answer to your question.

(b)(3), (b)(6): No, that's great, sir.

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: So when we came in, that was our initial assessment, and because of what one MEF had done, we were able to organize our staff.

The one thing that we did differently as far as organization is that we went back to the (Inaudible).

It's really organized as a MAG (Inaudible), whereas 1 MEF staff had one deputy for support and a deputy for (Inaudible), I have a ground combat element commander.

General Mark (Inaudible) is truly the GC Commander. What the Iraqis recognize him in him is kind of he's the division commander, because he is in charge of all the ground forces. I have a general in charge of (Inaudible). I have a general in charge of

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the logistics, the province, and I have a true deputy, General Allen. General Allen -- As a deputy, he has a concentration of governments and tribal development. So he works very closely with G-5 in that respect.

I created a separate cell that deals with ISF. That's all they deal with. I have a separate cell that deals only with IEDs, and I have a separate cell that deals with governments. So in that, they have everything from how to help them write a budget to how to request to the thing that we've instituted called helicopter governance. So we put Governor Mamoud (Phonetic) on the helicopter, and we fly him around to the cities so he can actually meet with folks.

In some cases, when we took him down there, those folks had never seen their Governor either. So he goes. He addressed the city municipal councils, and furthermore, he listens to their plan for economic development. He approves it. He writes some checks. He has a session with their director generals so that they can request (Inaudible).

I got to say, this is probably the most

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complicated government -- as young as it is, most complicated government on the planet.

(b)(3), (b)(6): By that, you mean the way it is structured?

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: The way it's structured. I'll give you an example.

What you can't see is (Inaudible). If I am the Mayor and I want to have teachers for the school, I can't hire them. I have to go to my director general for education, who has to go to the director general at the provincial level -- of education -- who has to go to the minister of education at the ministerial level, to request funds for me to have teachers.

Now if I happen to have a project that requires electricity, sewage, water, teachers, I am now dealing with several director generals, with several ministries in order to get one project completed, and there is no real one bellybutton.

Now we have tried to work through that. Mainly, it took us a while to try to understand it ourselves, because the Governor gets some money that

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he can do that. I have, of course, my commander's Emergency Response Fund that I can kind of jump start them, but I can't fund these major projects.

So I really want to use Iraqi money, but we have to try to help them understand that process, because when they see the Governor, they expect, hey, because of their lifestyle of the tribal system they have, I would ask the sheikh for some money. But he would say, hey, build a school.

So, okay, good sheikh, government, where is my money; and he is saying, well, you know, I have a budget. And they don't understand. But what they are beginning to see, and the sheikhs we have encouraged, you are involved in the process. Now you understand, and you can be a businessman as well as work in the political process. It's okay for you to see how this process works.

You know, by the way, if you are the only guy who has chlorine that is needed for the phosphate factory, you can be (Inaudible). So it's sometimes watching paint dry as a democracy.

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

: Is that just because of

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the way the government was formed? Very centralized?

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: Yes. Very centralized. Even under Saddam. You know, that's how you can control. If you've got, well, I can't hire a teacher unless I talk to the Prime Minister, you know -- look what control you have. I mean, you are right down into the daily lives.

What has become more difficult in this democratic process is that, if we become Saddam to the sheikhs, to the people, now it's from the Prime Minister through the governor or through his ministers to the DGs. So you got these (Inaudible). There is no relationship across these ways unless the government understands that the Director Generals facilitate money for its people. So we are working with Mamoon. So he is now meeting with the Director Generals.

These guys were in hiding. I mean, anybody who had any technical skills was a target. So if the Director General is missing in this process, that's where it stops, because you have no connectivity, and that was frustrating, you know.

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The sewage is backed up in Ramadi. We cannot find the Director General for Sewage. So they complained. And, oh, by the way, (Inaudible) and I still have no sewage. I mean, what life.

So -- and to become more secure, the folks are happy, but they are just like the days of Moses. Moses brought them out of the desert. He said, wait a minute, you guys out here; you're freezing, but when are we going to eat, you know?

So nothing changed. That's just a human nature and human dynamics. So we've been able to try to get them involved. The more we get them involved, the more stable it's going to be; and as we have seen in the cities like Hit and Qaim, Ramadi, Baghdadi, once they have seen peace and what it can be like, that's the way they want it.

So I've got to do it another way with a government that's called (Inaudible), but give us peace. It also -- By placing these sheikhs in positions of authority and responsibility, it maintains what they are used to. So they don't feel threatened, and they are participating in the process.

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Now having said that, our challenge, the challenge from my level and higher, is to get the government in Baghdad to understand that there are a whole lot of conspiracy theories out here in Anbar. You don't trust them to rise up against you, and they are in denial that (Several words inaudible) and the Sunni time was over, [REDACTED] 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] 1.4b, 1.4d

because they are going to say,

[REDACTED] 1.4b, 1.4d

before he even came out to

Anbar, those type of things.

For example, my biggest challenge now, we've grown the police out here twofold, which we believe is a key to stability in the city; because these are just like the police of our hometown. He's walking the beat. He knows who should be there. He could tell you about bone structure by the voice sound, dialect, where he came from. They will tell you, no, no, this guy is from Baghdad, he shouldn't be in here.

That's what the police bring to it, and in a counterinsurgency fight, that's exactly what you need. You know the populous, and you know the

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natives. So we do that. However, when they made the numbers as far as budgeting for Anbar, they budgeted - and there's about 13,000 police. So we've been gradually getting up. We got them up to 21,000 now, but the requirement is 30,000; because if you are going to put police in every precinct in every city, every population city, you need as many as you can.

Before, it used to be a recruiting thing.

Now the sheikhs are saying, hey, the sons of Anbar are coming up, hire them. The Iraqis say, you know, (Several words inaudible). You know, I want to make sure that you don't have a shadow guy out there, because you're taking some kind of percentage for the numbers you have. I want to make sure that guy spells his name the right way according to his tribe, you know, an "i" instead of a "y."

I mean, it is just amazing when you send the roster and they pay you. They say, we couldn't recognize this guy; is he still coming to work. So you're trying to get these guys paid. At the same time, you're trying to get them to have faith in their government, and they are being employed by their

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government, that because the sheikhs say go work for the government of Iraq.

Like I said, my biggest concern is they really want to cap it at 21,000, because they feel -- You know, they listen to the hype that comes from the news people: Are we on in the tribe? Everybody in Iraq is a tribe member. Everybody's got a weapon. I mean, we're trying to get a picture of they have some type of a direction as far as who tells them when to point those weapons that they have, and that we register those weapons, because they come with their weapons, We want to make sure that -- and then we vet them to make sure that these guys don't show up someplace else.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Is this the regular IP, sir, or are they National Police?

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: This is IP, Regular IP, you know, IPs that the MOI authorized that number.

Now that original 13,000 plus the now 21,000 also includes the provincial security forces. I am authorized eight of those at 750 each.

Now these paramilitary guys -- you know,

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these guys are coming with their trucks and their own weapons, and so we had to give them 80 hours of police work and promise them that one day they are going to have a slot as a real police. I mean, that's the agreement that we have.

Now MOI, the guys in Baghdad have different (Inaudible): Here's your number; that's it, that's all you need. And sometimes the Prime Minister, even though he's sadly misinterpreted, says things to the press that they misinterpret. The Prime Minister understands very well about tribes. What he said was, you know, a lot of you don't understand about arming tribes. He didn't mean don't arm the folk you don't understand, and we did have a very big ignorance of tribal dynamics all over Iraq, and that's not just in Anbar.

So getting them to understand that these tribes of Anbar are not going to go marching on -- Matter of fact, the greatest anchor point during my period is the police. The police are very reasonable. They ain't going nowhere.

The Iraqi Army right now is predominantly

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Shia that are doing very well with interaction with the Iraqi police, and we are training them so that they can be able to do what an army should do, protect the border, conduct counter-insurgency operations, and are the two divisions I have.

I don't have the same issue that (Inaudible) in the north with Diyala and the 5th Division. I would put the 1st Division and the 7th Division anywhere, and that's my problem, because as I train them out here, they want to move them. They want to move them to -- You know, for example, I got a brigade in Baghdad, the 4th Brigade of the 1st Iraqi Division, and most recently they want two more battalions, one to go up to replace -- They go to Kizer (Phonetic) and replace the battalion that is going up to guard Samarra, and they want another battalion to go into Baghdad, because they're a good group.

1st Division is a good, solid division. They train well. Of all the 21 battalions, Iraqi battalions, in this AO, all of them have a transition team, a (Inaudible) transition team, and all of them -

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- Of the seven brigades, all of them have a transition team, and the two divisions have transition teams.

All of them are partners with coalition forces. So if I'm doing a training assessment level or training level with these, I can tell you, because (Inaudible) in training. And of the operations that originate now in the east as well as down in Zydahr (Phonetic), Karma (Phonetic) or in the Amaparish (Phonetic) area or in Aburata (Phonetic), all of those are partnered with Iraqis, so that they can be in to do the fight after we leave.

Now as I tell every Congressman or (Inaudible) that comes through here, we are asking of the Iraqi army to do what we ask of no other army in the world, and that is to train while they are fighting.

You know, these are Iraqis that -- You know, most armies train, and then they go to war. These guys are at war now. This is the biggest OJT pool in the world right here. I often tell them, don't get hung up on numbers; look at capacity and capability.

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Currently, if you take and open the gate at Parris Island and San Diego on graduation day and tell those brand new recruits you are now in the Marine Corps, everybody would look at us like we was crazy. But that is exactly what we are saying.

We get these basic trained Iraqis and we flesh out the division, and suddenly they are a division. Well, they've got to train. They got the agreement training. They've got to train at every level.

We wiped out all the top, the bottom officers, and we are just beginning to grow young officers. You know, there is no staff NCO system that will enable them to fast forward to adjust. So we got to -- We have asked MNSTCI, and they have supported us with a pilot course for officers.

I have accepted the fact that I am not going to make an NCO -- a staff NCO corps here. But I do know this. I do know that, if I train those young officers to do the same tasks that we have our staff NCO do that it will get done for that unit.

Now what that young officer will do is --

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what I like to tell them -- it will give them a special power of attorney. He will say, hey, you will do this to an NCO or to someone who has NCOs, and they would do that specific task. He would not carte blanche them or give them a general power of attorney, because they don't understand that, because no officer is going to listen to the staff NCO tell them anything.

Our officers will sit in and listen to (Inaudible) Master Sergeant, Sergeant Major, teach a class about an area of expertise they have, and not think anything of it, actually applaud them, especially if you know them very well. That would never happen. Culturally, that won't happen. The officers will not accept it. They will turn off. They will not listen. But those requirements still exist.

So that the pilot course that we have -- we are training those young officers to do those things so that that unit has that skill base that they can -- and so now the officer becomes a trainer, and he becomes a supervisor, and he becomes a delegator of

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those specific tasks that that unit needs to do.

My second thing with the relationship with the army is that -- and this is a realization for all of us -- this army only has to be as good as 2003. I do not have to turn it into the United States Army. I do not have to turn it into the United States Marine Corps. I have to bring it up to the level of (Inaudible) when we came.

That gives them the original stability doing operations (Several words inaudible).

(b)(3), (b)(6) : Sir, backtracking a little bit -- I know we had this in the archives -- what was the official date of the transfer of authority?

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: February 9th.

(b)(3), (b)(6) : That was a very pivotal time for the overall force in Iraq, just because we had just had a new Multi-National Corps commander come in. General Petraeus just came in on the 10th of February as Multi-National Force.

Given that you had been able to kind of work things in advance and then come over, take

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charge, what was sort of the initial guidance or the sort of change that was happening in the area? How did that impact down here at the Multi-National --

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: I think we probably did it right a long time ago in the Force, the relationship between -- you know that we call them Multi-National Forces, not Multi-National Divisions, because they realize that this is really a MEF-minus.

so that relationship with the Corps had to be such that, you know, hey, here is a force that has its own air force. It has its own logistical hubs, and we have our own 13 sustainment unit right here, and we have our own -- We don't have to go to the Air Force.

We have it (Inaudible).

It was easier to give us the rest, one-third of our rank, but the relationship had to be such that we could actually work within this joint command.

So very early, it was identified that III Corps out of Killeen, Texas, was going to be -- and General Odierno was going to be the head of that, and I was then the CG of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command back in early 2000 -- 2005 -- yes, 2005.

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So he started this training program, his academics. So he and -- at the beginning of the staff, we traveled out to Fort Hood, Texas, and started the work-up process, knowing at the same time we have our own maritime staff training process going on, too, and so we are connecting as the staff forms up training us to do this, at the same time realizing that my operational boss will be III Corps.

Now with General Tonelli (Phonetic) who was the OMF predecessor, and working with Zylmer (Phonetic) on how they were running business -- So my thing was, knowing what they are doing here, knowing what our assessment is, what is General Odierno going to do differently, and what do I need to learn about his (Inaudible), and who are his subordinate commanders? You know, Joe Fil who, you know -- he has 1st Cav, or Randy Mixon who has 21st ID. Ricky Lynch with the 3d ID came lately in that whole -- He came as part of the surge.

So we are all getting together. I mean, I thought that General Odierno did it right. He understood service cultures. He also understood the

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uniqueness of the Marines out here and having a Army brigade as a part of that, and what he provided to this out here. But at the time, among those we were the number one priority of the Multi-National Corps Iraq. They were not Baghdad. Sectarian violence hadn't kicked in to that point. And remember, we also had declared Anbar lost by our own assessment.

We have lived with that. I don't think that's (Several words inaudible.) It was just bad, but anyway a lot of folk are not used to Marines showing anything toward a loss. So we kind of lived with that. So we had that as backdrop. So it became a part of our assessment. You know, why things lost.

But my initial discussions with General Odierno about what was happening in Anbar is that, you know, you got a hell hole out there; you know, that's -- al Qaeda has moved in and brought in all the whole family.

I mean, they are there to stay, and they have already declared Ramadi as their capital Islamic state, and you know, we are rooting out. And of course, my discussions with him is that, you know, we are doing an economy of force out there. We are

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stretched all the way down the Euphrates River. Al Qaeda is living out in the hinterland, coming in and raising hell in the cities. But if, you know, you crack down on the cities and you don't leave anybody in the cities, they just stay in there and raise hell.

I mean, so we've got to do something, you know.

Of course, General Casey and General Petraeus, you know, is totally different, and I think, as far as the philosophy of -- Well, I think General Casey was beginning to realize this is a COIN fight. I think General Petraeus understood that (Inaudible) as backdrop, that you know, we have got to find a way to separate these folks from the (Inaudible). We are cleaning up a lot of them, but they are still here.

After we came out here, we started looking at the dynamics. We were making more, because they thought we were here to occupy. So some of them was just fighting for us to lose. They were fighting al Qaeda and us, you know. So it's a reconciliation that we understood right away, that a lot of people had a lot of problem with. You know, how can you fight someone who fought against you?

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I say, well, how was the North and South reconciled, and they are cousins fighting brothers and uncles and all that stuff? You have to for the good of the country, and I think they understand that. So for the good of the country, they quit fighting each other, and they fought al Qaeda. They quit fighting us and fought al Qaeda.

So I think the matter for which we still do -- and I see the same thing now developing with 18th Airborne Corps. They are beginning to get together and talk about where they will, especially since the Army got an extension -- where will they be when 18th Airborne Corps comes up, which will now give more overlap than we originally anticipated with John Kelly, who is going to replace me, working with General Odierno, because originally he was working with (Inaudible) Austin of 18th Airborne.

So I think it has influence. Our biggest problem, as I see it, is that we have two time clocks that we are working off, a time clock which is a political one that says, now how soon can you get out there, let's go, let's go, let's go, you got this many

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people on; you know, come back and greet me in September, ask for more time, but ultimately you are going to be out of there, and we want to see you just draw down, draw down, draw down -- and the other time clock is how we see it on the ground as we are providing an umbrella to grow capacity.

I get asked every time someone comes out here how long will that take. I don't know. It's like watching paint dry. I watch it, and at some point during that time it got dry. I couldn't tell you the exact moment it dried. I just know it changed color. I just know, if I touch, it won't be on my hands anymore. But I haven't left it alone. I've given it everything it needs to dry, but it has to dry on its own. That's what we keep trying to do with the capacity of the Iraqis.

We will see time and time things that they do well that will allow us to say they are ready for that. But this idea of instant fix, you know, even with the Iraqi government -- what is that, about 11 months old? -- it's going to have to have growing pains. I mean, it took us 13 years to work out the

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Constitution. It just takes time, and that's why I say we work on two time clocks.

I am beginning to talk to Kelly about where I think we will be with Iraqi control, where are we going to be by the time he comes in. We are currently scheduled to go PIC about the time he arrives. I'm probably going to seek to push that up if he doesn't -- My own major events, it could have occurred when I -- I couldn't imagine now, looking back in hindsight, what would I have done if I had been right in the middle of (Several words inaudible).

It would have just been very, very difficult. I think it will be very, very difficult for them to do that.

The other thing is that I've tried to look at some of the lessons learned in MN-Southeast. So they went to PIC down in the south, and what that meant in Basra or something.

Well, people have to understand that PIC is sovereignty. It is sovereignty over these divisions that now belong to me, belongs to the country of Iraq for their own military system. It

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means I have to request everything that I do, just like we did in Japan, just like we did in Germany, just like we did with Korea.

So if we don't have a handle on or we haven't done a very good job of training or setting the conditions, when you reach PIC, you are in trouble, and that's what I think we are finding out down in Shaw's areas, that, you know, he has become the has become the target. They only attack him. They don't even attack with us. In order to deploy, he needs to get tough with the Governor to actually engage, because it's just like, if we were in somebody's country, we have to talk about how we are going to (Inaudible), and a lot of that is done through our Ambassadors.

So it's a varied thing. So we are looking at it very seriously about what PIC means when we really hand things over to the Iraqis to do the next, that we do it very well. As we shrink down, we will take like (Several words inaudible), how many brigades it would take (Several words inaudible), and can we really shrink down and move into al Assad where they

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have you funnel back, and still cover -- have some type of reaction force to the whole larger support of the Iraqis, kind of like an (Inaudible).

(b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, I know we were only on your schedule for a half-hour. Do you have time for one more question?

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: Sure.

(b)(3), (b)(6): I wanted to ask about -- just looking back again, because this change has been so dramatic, so quickly, and I'm thinking to myself 10 months ago some of my -- Governor Mamoun -- he's had, you know, however many attempts on his life.

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: Thirty-one.

(b)(3), (b)(6): -- thirty-one attempts on his life -- who couldn't even get his advisors and council to come to the government center there, because it was so dangerous and their lives were so much in danger, and things being so different.

What is his perception in your interfaces with him about when this -- How hard is he pushing for provisional Iraqi control, when that date should come?

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MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: You know, a good question, because every month during our provincial assessment analysis, we (Inaudible), you know, sitting down with the Governor and seeing how he sees things by population center. You are looking at seven of them now, (Several words inaudible), all of the services provided, and from the security point.

There is no course on how to be a Governor. So he has learned -- I mean, I have watched him. I've always thought of him as being a very brave man. You know, he went to that Ramadi center every day, and even last December he (Inaudible) -- but you know, he stayed in that building, because he viewed that just like Americans do our Embassy. You know, that's sovereign territory, and if he had given up that Ramadi and al Qaeda had declared Ramadi as their capital, he would have actually acquiesced and given it to them. However, he is still rough around the edges in the governance part, you know, and he has to be explained that this is not your money, and your budget is the people's money, and so -- and you can't just do your tribe; you have to do all. You can't be

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perceived as -- and so that's why we developed the helicopter governance.

So you have to sit down and talk about it.

One of the things we also discovered is that the Governor is not an elected official. He's like a CEO.

The Provincial Council is elected, of which he is a member, and with the Provincial Chair chairing the Provincial Council, elects a governor.

So the Provincial Chair is really the maker, because he can initiate the removal of the Governor. So he's a very powerful guy, and the 41 members that make up the Provincial -- and the Governor, just like a CEO, comes in to give the state of Anbar to them and to work on the projects and to make a budget and to have a plan. So these type things, we discovered, were grossly missing.

He had a checkbook. He knew that there were millions of dollars, whether it be bonds or whether or not (Inaudible), but he knew that that exists, and he thought of it as his.

Now this angered the sheikhs. Remember now, the sheikhs didn't elect him. They boycotted.

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He is IIP. So they are very secular (Several words inaudible). They are very secular. They truly believe that there is a division of church and state, you know.

So here is a guy who is Iraqi Islamic Party, who is the Governor, who has money, and they have been cut off. Brave or not, they don't get it. So now we bring them together, and I think there has been about two major achievements that we have been able to broker under General Allen, who has governance and who has tribal engagement.

The first one was get the Governor on the aircraft and take him all the way around and have him sit down. Let's eat some goat, and let's drink some chai. Let's just talk about what are the issues out here, and what do you see? What do you want?

Then the second thing is to get the Governor sitting down with the sheikhs, not the City Council, not the Mayor, unless they happen to be sheikhs, but just to talk about -- He's from a tribal society. He understands what that means. So just sit down, and let's talk to the sheikhs, and they are

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going to bitch.

I mean, they are going to moan. They are going to talk about all things, but after that the fact that you've come to them and talk about the problems of the day and acknowledge who they are in the fabric of your society means a lot, and it took a whole lot of the edge off, especially when you have a sheikh like Sittar who gained so much notoriety, representing a whole area around Ramadi where your provincial capital is, and not like you. Don't want to talk to you, because you are IIP; I'm al-Anbar, and you are the IIP. We are (Inaudible.) It's like having Republicans and Democrats. However, Mr. Governor, you can't get mad at a HC or a group of Sheiks and then not provide anything to their people because of that political thing.

So this has been a very intensive learning process. And when we have had some off-sites, we went up to Babil, and we used the Interagency BTA, and afterwards -- BTA was (b)(6) (Inaudible) (b)(6) (Phonetic). I think he's out of DoD, and they actually talk about governance and economic

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development, and this is how you plan. If you are a city planner, this is (inaudible). If you are a governor and you are planning a budget, this is how you go.

We had another off-site in Amarra (Phonetic) where we can actually get some of the sheikhs and businessmen who felt safe to come out and talk about economic development, talk about agriculture, talk about electricity, talk about sewers, all these things that are very important to them.

This is when we first discovered how many guys did business out here. There are a lot of guys.

I mean, they are afraid to come out in Anbar, but there are a lot of businessmen who have capabilities, and there is a lot of technical -- I mean, we've got -- I'm willing to bet you that I probably have the greatest concentration of engineers in Iraq out here in (Inaudible). I mean, these guys were training engineers, but they are considered technical by the sheikhs, the sheikhs with sons, and one son is a doctor. One son is a lawyer; the one I'm most proud

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of is my smuggler.

I'm like you. I'm laughing. But to me he is very serious. For thousands of years, the family has had a business. I'm thinking smuggling is criminal enterprise. He's thinking a smuggler is a day to day business. So that son has kept them rich or kept the family going. The other two are technicals. You know, they do doctor stuff. They do lawyer stuff. They are not going to be rich, and they are not going to support the family by doing that.

So all that inner dynamic is (Inaudible) learning for us.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Sir, is there anything else we haven't touched upon before --

MAJ. GENERAL GASKIN: I think I have rambled a lot here, but no, except to say that we are excited about the possibilities, and it is not a fluke. That's what I am most excited about, you know.

We won't come in at night and close the door and things will go back like they were. As someone asked me one day, he said, well, aren't you afraid that things will go back? I said, no, because

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I'm not the one doing it. The Iraqis don't want it to go back, and that's what you want.

So the transition occurs every day. The more stable we can make it, the more they transition, the more they want economic development, the more they want things done. If folks in Ramadi want their city to be free again.

I mean, that is a rough old city out there, and so they just want their city back like it was; and if they can get that without getting shot, this is what they want. So that's what we want to help them do.

The most stable city, I think, and I put that against Urbile and anyplace else is al Qaim. Folks in al Qaim have everything in a model we want. They have Iraqi police, Iraqi Army working with police. They have the City Council, a Mayor who interacts with all their DGs. Director Generals know each other and have connection with the Prime Minister.

So al Qaim -- and they are getting their phosphate plants open. They are getting their

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railroad open, and they can't wait to get the
(Inaudible) program. So it is the model.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Thanks very much, sir.

That concludes this interview.

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