

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

## Derek J. Harvey (SES-1)

MNFI Special Advisor for Intelligence to the Commander

10 February 2008

Al Faw Palace, Victory Base Camp, Baghdad

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

### Abstract

Harvey has a long background as a Middle East FAO and in Iraq since 2003. Planning for Iraq post-conflict was abysmal. Bremer's decisions unhinged McKiernan's efforts. In the summer and fall of '03, the old regime was regrouping and turning on the foreign terrorist networks. Through summer '04, we were struggling to comprehend the situation, so Washington was in no position to understand, but CJTF-7 leaders never cried Wolf. CPA refused initiatives that might have stifled opposition. Bremer never understood Iraq or Iraqis, and his relationship with Sanchez was poisoned. Things were getting worse and worse until AQI made the mistake of the Samarra mosque bombing, which changed the equation. The GoI are not our friends. Transcription priority: low. These notes are nearly verbatim, but check the recording before taking quotes.

### Background

Harvey has held this position since January 2007. Before that, he was in Iraq from October to December of 2006 to evaluate intelligence processes. From January to April of 2005, he was in Iraq to assess intelligence systems at Brigade level and above. He worked with the Sec Def, OSE, Odierno, and Lt Gen Luck at JFCOM. From June '03 to October '04, he was a senior intelligence analyst for CJTF-7, and then with MNFI C2. In the summer of 2003, he formed CJTF-7's Red Team. It was like (b)(3), (b)(6) COAC, performing functions as a think tank. They had an anthropologist. The Red Team was charged by Sanchez and Casey with proposing solutions for a wide range of issues.

I had a career in military intelligence and then was a 48G Middle East FAO, and earned my PhD at Utah in Islamic studies. I studied political Islam, Islamic jurisprudence, comparative politics and international relations. I served in the Middle East and attended Command and General Staff College in Morocco; worked in embassies like in Rabat, and TDYs in Cairo, Kuwait, and Tel Aviv. I had policy positions in the DCSOPS, Deputy Undersecretary of the Army for International Affairs, chief of the Middle East branch supporting planning and operations. I handled planning security assistance for Title X within the Army. I supported OSD, handling issues from Madrid peace talks, to Palestinian-Israeli issues and WMD. I served as a DIA analyst on Iran and the Levant, and worked at the State Department as the Senior Army Fellow. In January 2003, McKiernan asked me to come to support TUSA/CFLCC as a senior intelligence officer with a primary focus on post-combat operations in Iraq.

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

I speak Farsi, and French for North Africa, especially Morocco. I have tested out as high as 2/2 in Farsi, have very limited Arabic skills, primarily polite stuff. Farsi skills are somewhat useful in Arabic, and it was required for my masters studies.

5:00 I joined CFLCC in the spring of '03. For the planning for Iraq, I spent time at the State Department getting spun up. Their preparations for Iraq were less than optimal. There was no depth or detail or understanding or linkages to the operational commanders and what they would be facing. In contacting people at CFLCC, I found there was not a lot there either. I started to develop an IPB of what Iraq would look like in the summer of '03. That meant understanding the tribes and what the various institutions in Iraq were. So that is how I built an understanding of the Mukabaratt. The difference between M4 and M5, what the Presidential security was, what the MoD offices were, what they're duties were. My team was focused on trying to build an understanding of tribal dynamics, key institutions and individuals, what we could find out about provincial and local leaders in these areas.

***It appears to me that at the highest levels, there was a willful neglect of stability operations because there was a determination to avoid nation-building missions. Is that accurate?***

8:16. "That may be the case, and I would not argue with that, but I would say it all came unhinged based on the decisions of Mr. Bremer early on." McKiernan and Wallace did not intend, nor did Garner, to see the fabric of administration destroyed by unilateral decisions by the USG. I know Wallace and McKiernan and talked to and worked out deals with former Iraqi division commanders. We knew there would be problems locally. Tainted people would have problems. There would be episodic violence, with expats confronting people they considered criminals from '91-'92, but you had to accept that the bulk of people running daily operations, technocrats, were needed. "The real criminals were fleeing anyway, because they knew that they were in trouble." The society wasn't running well, granted." Many Iraqi police just fled. In many places, the police were nothing more than a jobs program. They did gardening, house labor for administrative figure heads, party hacks. If you brought them back to work, they couldn't police the cities because they were illiterate and had never been trained to perform police functions. But there was normalcy by keeping these people on. Much of what Wallace and McKiernan needed to rely on were destroyed by CPA's fiats. The plan was to try to piggyback what was in place, prosecute the dead enders, and then bring the UN and NGOs in to get things running again.

13:00 We were shocked by the decrepit nature of the oil and power industry. We gave it the last nudge, and when it lost the only people who knew how to make it work . . . The only reason it appeared to work was that everything--the entire country's resources--were channeled to Baghdad. You can't lose 1.4 million of the population, Sunni and Shia, the technocrats, the administrators . . . It still would have been hard, and brought in other problems. But there was no real planning that would support coming in here and pushing aside what was here.

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~



~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

In May and June, I was in Kuwait. I had a good idea of what was happening, and we had teams ready to do something. I had staff contacts. I was asked to come work for Sanchez for 30 days, initially. I wasn't part of the V Corps staff, which was staying. I was part of Third Army, which was leaving. When I got up here, Sanchez asked me to do a few things. One, give him a good read on what was going on. What are the people who were in the government and military doing? Do we need to worry about violent opposition? Is there an organization? Is there leadership? What are their capabilities? Is there an underground? Who is it?

18:11. [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) was fighting the day-to-day battle. I was asked to step back, use my knowledge of having worked Iraq in the past, and try to assess what was going on. I leveraged V Corp's intelligence and I built a team. I made a team over the months, did interactive exchanges with Sanchez, and then with Fast, and we formalized the Red Team concept. The 30 days became 60, then 90 days, and a year.

***In mid-July 2003, Rumsfeld and Franks appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to trumpet OIF as transformational warfare. Did it already feel there was a disconnection between Washington and events in Iraq?***

20:15. "How did it feel at the time? I knew that we had, that the old regime . . . was surprised at the lack of presence and pursuit, and that they actually had space, and were taking advantage of that space and time to organize and plan, and were falling back, organizing, going back to the old underground ways, the principals they had applied once upon a time. We were finding letters about networking, about preparing, about preparing to be contacted at some point. Get into position, gather information, join groups, do not identify yourself or your associations. We knew this was happening. Violence was beginning in different places. We had the beginnings of make shift bombs. Before the fall, the [redacted] had dispersed their capabilities. [redacted] 1.4c

[redacted] 1.4c [redacted] 1.4c  
[redacted] 1.4c There were spreading out, building the base of capability. Most of the activity was not in direct action. It was in networking, rebuilding contacts, and building capacity. [redacted] 1.4c

[redacted] 1.4c

[redacted] 1.4c We had limited DocEx. They had been training people. [redacted] 1.4c

[redacted] 1.4c

[redacted] 1.4c and they attacked five separate Iraqi police stations in October '03. That's when I knew we really had a problem. Up until then, I knew we had a problem because we were not postured either in intelligence or operationally to understand the human terrain. That term came in later. It was trying to understand the human, tribal, familial, and religious relationships in such a way as to understand the community we were operating in. We had conventional capabilities. We

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~



~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

had the kinds of personnel, training, equipment for the kind of war Rumsfeld and Franks were talking about in July, but we were not postured for this type of a conflict, much less CPA, which was an abortion.

***Can you talk about CPA through the early summer of '03?***

27:40. I was so busy out here working with (b)(3), (b)(6) and looking at threats to convoys and things like that and trying to understand what was going on and traveling around that I really did not have a lot of contact with CPA until October '03. That is when I began to have consistent, multiple times a week, being down in the palace dealing with them.

***How difficult do you think it was for Washington to understand what was going on here?***

28:45. "There was a major disconnect. If we didn't understand well enough what was going on here, I think there was this mirage of all this activity, and all these people coming in to CPA, and there was this thought that there was more here than there ever was, in terms of deliverables. I don't think bad news . . . this is just conjecture, because over the summer, I don't think there was ever an appreciation back [in Washington] of what a country is like that has suddenly lost all its leadership and management, across the board, across all sectors. And then you bring in ex-pats who don't know how to deliver, in a complex environment, with the legacy issues of the Saddam era, the deterioration of the infrastructure, the mistrust and dislike, not just between the people that had stayed and the ex-pats, but between . . . the Shia who had come back and were bent on revenge, against other Shia even, for having been part of what they viewed as an authoritarian and cruel regime. The understanding of the major currents of Iraqi society was really unknown. And I know this from having been in SVTCs through the fall, with people like Rumsfeld, the DepSecDef, and others, were that . . . where I would leave there thinking that . . . there is a major disconnect, and no one raised the red flag from here. Because I never heard LTG Sanchez or Tommy Miller the G3 or Wodjokowski or any of them raise any issues about how bad things really were, that they needed more troops, that the infrastructure and electricity were much worse than we could have anticipated. And in some ways, our ability to get out and find out what the truth was was hard anyway. To try and absorb and digest the inner workings of institutions, and something as simple as 'how does this electric grid really work?', 'how does the water system really work?', 'who's responsible for this?' These things, someone has to make stuff work, and you have to have knowledge first. I think we spent from June through well into the next Spring trying to digest and understand the environment that we were in.

***On May 24, 2003, Rumsfeld told a news conference that, of 29 (or 24) cities being assessed on a daily basis for color codes on infrastructure, security, governance and the like, as of that morning, the last "Red" had disappeared, indicating everything was getting better.***

33:45. When I went back to DC in October of '04, I started to lay out the true story of what was happening here, which was a major disconnect from everything they were perceiving back in DC. I briefed the SecDef, Secretary Rice, and eventually the President, that we were heading for disaster, and I was able to take this briefing all the way through. Back in January of '04, MG Fast sent me back to talk to Admiral Jacoby,

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~



~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

DIA, to say "We're in a real war here, and it is going to get much worse, and we need the national community to step up. We need the DIA; we need help. And it fell on deaf ears, and I can relate all those kinds of things. The thing you were on. Those graphics, if you go and ask what are those [green, amber, red assessments] based on, it was based on nothingness. It's based on some guys driving through a town, saying the lights seem to be on, so it's okay.

*In early summer of '03, the early counterinsurgency efforts consisted of large-scale battalion and brigade cordon and search operations, rounds ups of men, sent to Abu Ghraib because commanders did not know what to do with the prisoners. MP reservists were suddenly overwhelmed with prisoners they did not know what to do with, and there was a hard core press for intelligence on the premise that these prisoners knew who the bad guys were and they needed to give us the intel we needed to break the attacks.*

36:40. There was a lot of pressure for intelligence. I was involved in all of that from an operational perspective, seeking relevant, good, timely information to drive operations, and trying to understand who are these people, what are the issues, and how do we move forward. I remember distinctly, in the last week of November, my deputy, [b 3, b 6] (b)(3), (b)(6) myself, and [b)(3), (b)(6)] who had come up from Tampa, we went up to speak to the governance team, led by Meghan O'Sullivan. We said, look, the fabric of society is gone. We've done de-Ba'athification, you don't have the competent cadres, the technocrats, the military has been pushed aside, the police force, etc. There is insecurity, the normalcy of life has been ripped asunder, and the people are falling back on two things, their church--the mosque--and their family, which was the clan, the tribe. And whenever everything else falls apart, these are the two institutions people are falling back in on. I've been traveling around the country, the tribal guys represent stability. They can provide guidance. There is room for maneuver here us. We don't have to keep traveling down this dead end, but we need to start doing effective outreach, and there were people who . . . there were some good young captains who doing things. So I said, listen, here is a proposal. We need an Office of Tribal Outreach. We need to actively resource it, and Meghan O'Sullivan said "we're not going to deal with the tribes. We're building a new Iraq. The tribes are a vestige of the past." End Quote

38:50. Now eventually, in the Spring of '04, they did create an office of provincial outreach, which did do some tribal affairs and handled some claims issues for people looking for family members who'd been arrested, looking to get compensated for their house being blown up, or a Bradley Fighting Vehicle had driven over their car which had been parked on the street. People were looking for claims. They staffed that with a [b)(3), (b)(6)] a civil affairs major, and a State Department guy who had spent most of his time in Kurdistan: three people. LTG Sanchez had wanted to have this run on his own, through the military side. CPA didn't allow it, they absorbed it, created it, and said we got it. And then they denied it oxygen. It was the type of thing we dealt with from Mr. Bremer all the time. People who understood Iraq, and I'm not saying I was an expert. But I was out meeting with Islamist jihadist insurgents, I was meeting with former IIS officers. I was out driving around this country in my Mitsubishi, doing this stuff. I wasn't just reading about all this in message traffic back here. We had opportunities. I

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~



~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

will say, retrospectively, in many ways, because of our decisions, and the fact that we had flipped this society upside down, those Sunni and Shia who had been running the country--and the Saddam regime was not just a Sunni-dominated government--Ba'athist. We had dispossessed them, their future was taken away, they had fear for their lives as well as the future of their families, the future of the next generation. And they had every reason to be angry. I'm not sure that anything we did could have prevented some sort of insurgency from arising, they were going to fight back, but the degree of it, and the drivers of it, we inflamed it even more with so much of what we did. The Tribal Outreach might have worked, but it was so difficult. These people probably had to go through stages of loss, acceptance, etc., from anger, denial, etc. As a society, they had to go through that. Now, there is grudging acceptance of the new reality, in the Sunni community, and it was going to take years. And that is where we're at with the Awakenings and the CLCs.

43:16. But originally, we could have mitigated that a lot. There was still going to be upset. We inflamed it, and continued to inflame it. We were probably on a reasonable track by February 2004, the attacks were down. You could travel around the country. Saddam had been captured. We had consecutive operations. The insurgents were getting chased out. Thousands of Saddam Fedayeen were seeking amnesty and negotiation to move on, but that sat and sat because CPA was convinced it was dealing from a position of strength and it refused to deal with people who had killed Americans. It would not recognize the need to move on, so outreach efforts accomplished nothing. We had momentum in Feb-Mar '04. What happened?

44:49. Talk about social and psychological dynamics. Abu Ghraib photos came out in April. March 31 we shut down Sadr's newspaper. Bremer closed Sadr's newspaper, and soldiers arrested Yaquibi, his spokesman. There was Blackwater on 31 March. Two days later, Bremer said "It's a line in the sand. We're not going to tolerate it. We're going to deal with Fallujah once and for all." Even though the Marines and the commander had a plan, all we did was inflame it again, and so we started to go after Fallujah, and then we stopped, and cordoned the city, and kept a cordon on it from May to November 2004. It became a human rights issue, 250K down to 15K. Displaced people, woe is me, Arab media, Shia uprising, Sadr City, and all these people who had been looking at amnesty, gun dealers who had fled to Jordan, in June and July they were flooding back into Iraq to return to the fight. Cells that had gone to ground and given up operations were re-starting. This is what happened because of Bremer's decisions with Fallujah, Bremer's decisions with shutting down the newspaper, and arresting Yaquibi: unintended consequences. Sure the newspaper was saying some bad things, but give me a fricken break.

***Do you find any rational explanation for Bremer's behavior? In the mid-'90s, he wrote an article for an NDU publication on dealing with terrorists, and his position was you never negotiate with terrorists, and that uncompromising attitude seemed to drive his willingness to foment endless confrontations in Iraq.***

47:15. The guy never understood Iraq. He didn't know the Middle East. He didn't understand Islam, he didn't understand the traditions and the cultural dynamics here, the motivations and the drivers, he didn't understand the psychology of the people who had

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

been dispossessed, the anger, the fear, the anxiety. Never appreciated what was going on. And this is what I deliver to the CG. I give him context. I talk about implications. He got a briefing today, and you heard it. For example, what I give him ahead of time, to supplant, this is what he is not getting. (b)(6) is extremely important. He is tied to the Iraqi National Gathering. We have him in prison. He was trying to build this organization before . . . This is not just a political movement. This is something that has been being worked on for some time. And all of these guys that you have there, (b)(6) b 6 they were all his deputies. They are all SGs. They are not our friends. They are trying to destroy the Shia Awakening, the grass-roots democratic movement. This is what you have to be concerned with.

48:52. And oh by the way, your GOI partners, ISCI, and BADR, and DAWA, they're deathly afraid of grass-roots political Awakening movements, because these guys are all ex-pats. They have a sense of entitlement. They're aristocratic, they don't have good grass roots support. They don't have confidence in that, so for them it is about controlling the power of government, and security. They want to coopt grass roots, and they want to limit Sadr's movement, because his is the one grass roots organization that can challenge them. 1.4b, 1.4d

1.4b, 1.4d This is the type of deeper analysts and context that I try to give the CG.

*Again on Bremer, there seemed to be no discussion between Bremer and Sanchez as to whether Sanchez had the forces necessary to execute what Bremer decided.*

50:38. These people . . . if you sat in our meetings, in the updates, these two, early on, did not get along. Part of the issue was . . . Bremer never understood the art of the possible here. Never did. He never understood the issue of time in relation to all this, and he was too enamored of process, just as the administration was too enamored of process, of making benchmarks, and have a transfer from the CPA to the Interim Iraqi Administration and apportionment by sectarianism, and then build a constitution, and a referendum, and an election, and at the end, the process will achieve the goal. Those benchmarks and timelines replaced fundamental issues. BG Carter Ham, LTG Odierno, GEN Petraeus, any of these guys, ask, did Derek Harvey say this whole process was going to help or enlarge the insurgency. I said it was all going to feed a larger insurgency.

53:26. The people boycotted the elections, you wound up with more separation, you wound up with a government in place that was not representative. Look at the attack trends. Once we got to Sept-Oct ('05) that is when it started to climb. Then in February '06, we get Samarra, and the dynamic fundamentally changed. Up until then, the insurgents were winning, we were losing. An Iraqi Sunni-Shia insurgency against occupation was winning, but [Samarra] made it Sunni against Shia because of AQI's provocation, and this unhinged the former regime's strategy. In retrospect, it was one of the best things that could have happened to us. Because we were on the wrong path, we were losing. AQI refocused everything, changed the dynamic. Because the insurgency discovered they could not fight the Shia militias, us, the emerging Iraqi Army, and Al Qaeda, and the best way out was to partner with the US, go after AQI, buy space and

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

time, regroup, get up the Awakenings and CLCs, capacity building, and posturing for the next stage. If they get something through the political process, that's great, but they're always going to use violence, they're not going to stop the violence. So that is where we are at today.

*For the next meeting, we focus on January to April of '05.*

56:45

Approved for Release

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~