UNITED STATES ARMY
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INTERVIEW
OF

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

C-3 MULTINATIONAL CORPS - IRAQ
HEADQUARTERS MULTINATIONAL CORPS - IRAQ

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BAGHDAD, IRAQ

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PROCEEDINGS

This is the Multinational Corps - Iraq Historian. Today is Saturday, the 16th of June 2007. It is approximately 1400, and also with me is --

U.S. Army Center of Military History.

Today we are interviewing the MNIC C-3.

If you could introduce yourself in your own voice.

I go by As you said, the MNIC Operations Officer or C-3.

All right, sir.

You were interviewed almost exactly three months ago by , and that recording we have in the archives for records. So we really wanted to just kind of pick up from there, and I think the first question I had would really -- Do you have a sense in your mind -- Thinking back over the last three months, how would you summarize the key developments of the situation since mid-March?

I think, since the last time we
talked, probably the key differences are, obviously, we have gotten more forces on the ground with the plus-up. The last of the five plus-up brigades became fully operational on the 15th of this month. So I guess that was yesterday, with 2-3 ID Infantry starting their first major combat operation last night.

I think we've seen more of the impacts of Fardel Kanoun (Phonetic), the plan to secure -- provide security for the population of Baghdad. We've seen a pretty dramatic drop in the number of sectarian murders and sectarian violence, of course, offset by spikes in civilian casualties based upon high profile attacks or spectacular attacks.

I think we've seen a maturing of the Baghdad Operations Center that we really -- I wouldn't say we didn't expect, but I think it has matured and come along further than any of his had really expected or were hopeful.

I think we've seen a pretty significant spike in violence in the Diyala Province since the last time we talked, specifically Baqubah and up the Diyala River Valley.

Things in the north have not changed that much. The most encouraging thing, I think, since three months ago is the continued progress in Multinational Force - West with
a very significant drop in the level of violence in the Al-Anbar Province and the continued progress and success with the tribal movement in the west; and of course, with that, we weren't even really talking seriously engagement and reconciliation efforts the last time that \( b(6) \) and I talked, and I think that is dramatically different now than three months ago.

\( b(3), b(6) \) Great. I wanted to ask, relative to the plus-up: Looking back at the timing of the five additional brigades coming into theater with the first coming in in February and the last -- \( b(3), b(6) \) January.

\( b3, b6 \) I'm sorry, in January -- and then just the last one, you mentioned, day before yesterday or yesterday, rather.

The timing of the arrival of those additional brigades seem to be about one a month. Was that timing driven by availability of those forces or by requirements and desire on the part of MNCFI in terms of the sustainment requirements to put those brigades in place? Which drove the train on that?

\( b3, b6 \) Mostly availability, and I
actually think -- now that you've asked that, I think \( (b)(3),(b)(6) \) and I discussed this last time, too -- some of it is based upon the capacity the capabilities of the theater to get them in and get them on the ground, operational.

Most of it was how fast they could be generated, and mostly the thing that was driving that was not so much equipment or people, but the ability of them to train to where they were at a level of preparedness to come over here to this environment.

I think what I told \( (b)(6) \) last time, I still agree with, is one per month, although not the way we exactly planned it. That was driven by availability. It seemed to work, in my mind, pretty well in terms of applying gradual pressure to the situation.

I think back in December when we started this, we could have asked for all five to show up all at once, and it was possible we would have. I'm not sure now after living through it but about once a month was about right in terms of applying pressure to different areas.

\( (b)(3),(b)(6) \): Do you have some sense for, now that all the forces are in place, what does the strength of the Coalition look like overall, any sense for how this
compares to other points in the fight here during Operation Iraqi Freedom?

(b)(3), (b)(6) You know, I really can't talk to in terms of the initial 2003 invasion (Inaudible). My first experience here was OIF-2, March of '04.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Oh-five, right?

Yeah. So I mean, from that point, I mean, obviously, there's more U.S. forces on the ground than there was before March of '04. Coalition forces have dwindled. The U.K. has gone down slightly. The Coalition contingent has gone down slightly. The Korean contingent has gone down slightly.

There have been some smaller companies that have ended their contribution. But the overall Coalition strength -- I mean, offset, obviously, the U.S. is the largest contributor to this. I would say the Coalition strength is probably, without looking at the numbers, higher than it ever has been minus potentially the initial assault. I would have to look at the numbers to tell you whether that's true or not.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Now that all these forces are in place, is there a specific integrated operation that is going
to take place now that everything is here or is it going to continue to be a very decentralized approach or are there some specific new objectives, new operations in store?

I think the environment we are and just the nature of a counter-insurgency fight drives you to a very decentralized operation, and that's just not at the corps level. I think that's at the division and, from experience, even at the brigade level.

It is very hard to -- It's not hard to execute a brigade level operation. It's hard to find the reasons that justifies a brigade level operation. At least, it was in my experience a couple of years ago.

We are in the middle of a corps -- It kicked off last night, what we are phrasing a corps level operation. It is synchronizing the efforts of three ID or MND Center with the arrival of 2-3 -- that's really about a two-brigade operation for the most part -- and upcoming operation in Diyala, and the arrival of the 13th MEU (Phonetic), which is a plus-up force for the Marines out west in Al Anbar in the vicinity of Lake (Inaudible).

So all that is kind of going together. So when you look at it from the corps perspective, it's not so much -
- and all those are in their own battle space. So it's not so much synchronizing the fight in much more than timing and resources. It's the natives. It's the ISR, UAV support, full motion video. It's CAS, close air support. It's the things that the Corps can bring to the fight in establishing who gets what in terms of priority. That's really the Corps' contribution. That's kind of the way we've looked at that, plus it's (Inaudible) projects, the Commander's Emergency Relief Program. It's construction, reconstruction dollars. It is the Corps' effort at reconciliation. It's the Corps' effort on getting IPs, Iraqi Police, hired.

So there's a lot of things the Corps brings to the fight, but it's more of a prioritization of resources and focus, primarily for the command group, on getting stuff done for a unit, that it is an integrated, synchronized, coordinated, corps fight.

But the Corps -- Correct me if I'm wrong -- picking the area for these initial operations. Could you tell the Divisions this is where we think you ought to go?

It's basically the--

Especially up in the north.
Yes. I mean, we are going to Diyala, because that's where the issue is, the biggest issue we've got is right now in terms of Al Qaeda.

In the south, for MND-Center -- I mean, they are going where they are going, because of the -- remember, when we started with, back in January, this concept of support belts or the Baghdad belts, that's really the last area that we really hadn't put a combat force in and really have it in the air support area for at least four years had a permanent presence down there.

So it goes back to what we are trying to do, is cutting off the accelerants to the sectarian violence, primarily vehicle borne IEDs, suicide bombers coming out of the support belts around Baghdad.

Now Baqubah is a -- in Diyala Province is a different fight. We think the issues up there now are primarily caused by Al Qaeda, and they are there now because Al Anbar has become so anti-Al Qaeda in terms of the tribal effort. So as pressure is applied to Al Qaeda out in Al Anbar by the tribes, by the people, by us, they have had to migrate someplace, and they have migrated to the Diyala River Valley, specifically Baqubah.
So, yes, that operation was by direction of the Corps Commander.

Was that a named operation? Is there a name that --

(Inaudible).

That would need to stay on the tape through the kickoff in another two or three days.

Right.

After that can you tell me a little bit or tell us a little bit about the development of Op Ord 0701? It looks like a more detailed refinement of the Corps operational concept of 6 March. Can you talk about that?

I mean, I looked at the mission statement and your key tasks. They all -- There was some wordsmithing in there.

(Inaudible) probably developed over the last six months. I mean, there's nothing in 0701 that we haven't been talking about for six months. I think we talked about this a little bit, too.

As we got here -- This is just the way things work, is -- and we'll do the same thing, is V Corps wrote the
campaign plan that would take us into our first four to six months before it had to be rewritten.

Right.

So it was time to rewrite the campaign plan. But really, as soon as we got here, the major thing is we went through our mission rehearsal exercise back at Fort Hood in --

June-July?

-- June-July -- Actually, I think it was August of last year. We were starting to try to figure out how we were going to execute this mission with somewhere between 10 and 12 BCTs. We TOA'ed, I think, on the 14th of December, and it was probably -- It was before Christmas, so the week of the 20th, in there someplace, of December, we were figuring out how to do it with 20, how to get 20, additional five then and where we would put the additional five and how we would use them.

So my only point is, very quickly, what V Corps had handed us in terms of a campaign strategy of a very rapid transition of responsibility to the Iraqis, a downsizing and off-ramping of the U.S. forces, a closing of Coalition facilities, a (Inaudible) and bases here in Iraq, changed
almost the day we took over.

So we were early in designing a new campaign plan right from the time we TOA'ed. There was a lot of products and thought and conversations that went into 0701. That's the 0701. It just codified what we had done, really, for the first three or four months we were here.

Right. Now that's it looks like, and really, from your first mission on the 28th of December or your first operational concept, your 6 March, it looks -- You know, it does look very sophisticated compared to anything that I've seen in the V Corps files of their last Op Ord, and it looks like that you have -- that your Corps staff, and especially the C-3, has a much greater understanding of the situation here than V Corps did, or you work together better. But the narrative part of your 0710 and your operational concept -- Looks like a lot of work went into that.

Just talk a little bit about, you know, who were the key guys again on that.

Well, the key guy is

Which is the lead planner for
0701. (b)(3), (b)(6), which is my Chief of Plans, had a key role in it; and of course, I think we have a fairly good system for bringing in experts across the Corps staff, even in some cases outside the Corps staff.

So although they were the lead planners for us and really the drivers of the efforts, there was a lot of contribution made from across the entire staff.

I think the thing that enabled it I don't know if it's any better than what V Corps did or not, to tell you the truth. But if it, in fact, is, I think the thing that probably enabled that is the way that General Odierno does -- his planners work: In a very small group. It's very interactive. It's more of a discussion than a briefing. So we get some very, very good guidance from the boss in those sessions that we do twice a week. Different than anything I've ever seen before.

Usually, most senior planners, you get 100 people in the room, and it's just hard -- It's hard for me. I think it's hard for him to issue that detailed guidance and get into a good discussion when you got 100 people sitting there.

We do it in groups of less than 20, usually closer to 10 than 20, depending on the subject. So it almost
turns into, you know, a back and forth with the boss as we (Inaudible) down what it is he wants.

The other thing that helps is, with General Petraeus' arrival and Ambassador Crocker's arrival, they chose a slightly different course or a modification of the course we were on. So they brought in some people -- H.R. Masters, \( (b)(8) \) (Phonetic) and some other people -- that formed this JSAT, and I forget what JSAT stands for. \( (b)(8) \): Joint (Inaudible) Action Team, or something.

\( (b)(3), (b)(6) \) Yes. That really took General Petraeus' concept and codified that and put it on paper, and we had -- \( (b)(3), (b)(8) \) was a part of that group, and he deliberately put him in that group, so we were nested with the Force level thoughts and concept development right from the beginning.

\( (b)(6) \) Would you say you are totally in synchronization with -- \( (b)(3), (b)(6) \) They haven't published it yet.

So, yes, I'd say right now we are. We'll see whether we are when they publish it. And that was a deliberate decision, too, because they had a very, very aggressive timeline in
that.

You know, it will end up being a joint State/Force product which automatically meant to me that there is nothing aggressive about that timeline, that they are going to have to get (Inaudible) agreement for it, and it has not been published yet.

Right.

So it's a deliberate decision to go ahead and publish ours without theirs, and that was because of the level of confidence that we are nested with whatever it is they publish.

Right. It looks like, because they haven't published that strategic guidance, that you are way out ahead of them now. But because, like you say, you are nested in there, then you are really just in synchronization with them. Is that correct?

And we are focused on the security line of operation, obviously.

Right.

And we are responsible in this theater, although the Forces campaign plan -- I mean, we are the lead proponent for the security line of operations. So I
think the Force will pull from what we have in terms of the security line of operation.

If there is any -- There won't even be disconnects. If there is any slight differences of opinion, they will probably be in the other lines of operation, the political line of operation, for instance.

Right.

But I don't think there will be anything major. I think we will be well nested when they publish it.

Right.

Looking at the preparation for 0701 and the preliminary presentations, one of the interesting slides I thought, was the discussion about the possible range of enemy or anti-Iraqi force play into this, and I just wanted to ask your perspective on: Given that spectrum of anti-Iraqi force and your possible courses of action -- and that other phrase that I hear a lot is the enemy has a vote -- which one of those possible courses of action on the enemy's part concerns you the most?

Well, you always plan for the most likely and account for the most dangerous, I guess.
You know, it's clear in my mind that the threat that we have seen over here to address is still there, and the threat that we should continue to focus on is Al Qaeda.

You know, the rogue JAM or the JAM special groups, Jaish Al-Mahdi special groups, the ones primarily responsible for the rockets, mortars, EFPs, etcetera, are a minority of Jaish Al-Mahdi and really, in my mind, have little ability to attack our national security, why we are really here, the reason we came over here to begin with.

So I still think Al Qaeda is the fight that we cannot afford to lose, allowing them to establish a (Inaudible) or a safe haven in this country, or anywhere else.

So -- But I think that fight is going well. It is also efforts outside of the Corps, and there are other people focused on that fight. So I think there is constant pressure on Al Qaeda.

I don't think they are anywhere near establishing a (Inaudible) or even a safe area, safe haven, in Iraq. A lot of that is due to our efforts or our Coalition partners' efforts, and a lot of that is due to what has now shown itself to be an Iraqi populous unwillingness to accept Al
That's what we got to capitalize on over here in the next three or four months, is continuing to strengthen that unwillingness to have -- you know, live the lifestyle that Al Qaeda wants to impose on the Iraqi people.

The special groups piece of it: I've heard people say did you include the boss. I mean, it's an irritant, but it is killing our soldiers. So we continue address it with targets, and not all of Mahish Al-Mahdi, but primarily the special groups and that affects those groups -- supplies them with weapons, supplies them with explicitly formed penetrators, EFPs or the straight-up IEDs.

The Sunni and extremist groups are some of the ones that are starting to come around, 1920th Revolutionary Brigade. We've made some inroads with them; Ansar Al-Sunna or AAS -- we're starting to make some inroads.

Those organizations are mostly made up of disenfranchised Sunnis, for whatever reason, whether it's, you know, they had power at one time and no longer have power, they had a job at one time and no longer have a job, whatever reason they reason they joined the Sunni extremist
movement.

I think they generally are getting tired of fighting, and they are generally getting tired of the brutality of AQI, Al Qaeda. So there are starting to be some inroads made there.

It's not always them working with us. It's just basically sometimes it's them now starting to work against Al Qaeda, a lot of times on their own.

I think all those fights are going well, but I also think that all those fights will go on for a while. Which one I worry about the most is probably -- is probably Al Qaeda, because I think, long term, if we don't get the job done here against Al Qaeda, I think that will have an impact on our national security in the near and far future.

Relative to the one piece of that, which is the turnaround in Al Anbar that has been so successful and with the Sunnis becoming fed up with AQI, what has been the decision or where are we at with the decision as far as do we arm these local tribal militias? Do we not arm them?

Can you speak to what the current status is as far as what is the operational approach to how to take
advantage of them but yet not create emotions that will fight
us again someday?

\[\text{(b)(3), (b)(6)}\]

I can answer for us. I mean, a
large part of this is Government of Iraq and what their long
term plans -- what their willing to accept and what they are
not willing to accept.

In a nutshell, the answer is that's the direction
we are moving, is to -- A lot of this is coming about with
tribal leaders volunteering young military age males to
provide local security. This is not a deployable national
level organization that is going to be raised in Ramadi and
deployed to Mosul to fight Al Qaeda.

So this is these organizations, the provincial
support units, PSUs, are all about local security. One of
the key pieces that we think is what you said -- you cannot
create another Moishe, and that's probably the Iraqi
government's biggest fear, especially with the Sunni groups,
is creating a Sunni militia and equipping Sunni militia -- is
there will have to be, and it's yet to be determined, some
limits in terms of numbers, some limits in terms of
capabilities, and some limits on how long these things can
last, with the ultimate goal, and what we will continue to
push for, to integrate them into the recognized, legitimate security forces, probably Iraqi Police, because they are local forces and their driving factor is to protect their families and where they are living.

To get back to Fardel Kanoun, you had mentioned early -- earlier, and we discussed this in March at the March interview when it had been about a month old.

Now Fardel Kanoun is about four months old. Please give me your assessment as the Corps C-3 on how that operation is going.

The Fardel Kanoun is obviously focused on Baghdad. Some people -- You know, across the country, Fardel Kanoun, some people call Fardel Kanoun just Baghdad. Probably calling it just in Baghdad and the belts area, the support belts, would be the most accurate description of Fardel Kanoun.

There was lots of things we were concerned about when we went in with it, primarily would the government of Iraq let us do -- and let General Aboud, the Commander of the Baghdad Operational Command and responsible for security in Baghdad.

Would they let us, and him, do what we need to do
to secure the population of Baghdad? That has been mostly positive. There has been some instances of political interference to what was going on, but not coming from the PM, as best we can tell, which was not the case in the fall of '06, I guess.

We are seeing the same phenomenon we saw during Operation Together Forward and Operation Together Forward II, which were earlier operations here in Baghdad, that if you don't establish a robust presence after clearing operations are complete, the insurgents, mostly JAM special groups and Al Qaeda, move right back in behind you.

With a city of somewhere between six and seven million people, it's just hard to have a permanent presence everywhere. The rotation of Iraqi Army forces has gone well. We are now on our third rotation of units into Baghdad from outside of Baghdad, obviously.

Although they are present for duty science rank is not up to where we would like it, there has been very few issues rotating these units into Baghdad on three-month tours, basically, in Baghdad.

I'm not sure that's the concept we want to continue. It just creates a lot of disruption when you are
rotating, and that is three brigades and nine battalions.

I think I mentioned this earlier. The professional growth of -- Probably, the last time we talked, the Baghdad Operations Command was General Aboud and probably about two other Iraqi staff officers. It has, in my opinion, become a functional command and control headquarters that is able to publish effective guidance. It exerts some level of control over the forces it is in command of.

Are they at a BCTP U.S. standard? Absolutely not, but they are doing fairly well in terms of command and control headquarters.

The two area commands, the Karteria (Phonetic) command, which is on the west side of the river, and the Usafah (Phonetic) area command on east side of the river -- very effective, two Iraqi Major Generals, very effective commanders; and then the brigade sectors, Iraqi brigade sectors, some better than others.

Integration of the National Police and the Iraqi Army into the same brigade or division has gone mostly well. We still have sectarian issues, primarily in the National Police where they will execute operations, clearly, with a sectarian agenda.
The regluing of the National Police which was started before we got here -- We send them down to Numaniya (Phonetic) for about an eight-week course. Basically, they try to clean out the bad actors, put them through some retraining, bring them back into Baghdad. That has continued.

That training is valuable. What we've seen, though, is they decline in performance and an increase in sectarianism, the further you can separate them from that training, so basically falling back into the old habits.

We've put the National Police in a role they were never designed for. The National Police were never designed to be as basically asking them to keep the same missions on the same role as the Iraqi Army is, and they are not equipped the same. They are not trained the same, and they weren't formed for that reason.

They are predominantly, probably high nineties percent, Shia. So I mean, it's not unnatural that that would take that path, and they seem to be more easily influenced by some of the elements of the GOI that still follow a sectarian agenda. It's almost a paranoia of centuries, in my mind, and probably --
Paranoia of the Sunnis' fear that --

The fear of the Sunnis taking back -- You know, I didn't grow up over here, and if I would have, I could possibly share the same paranoia, and it's hard to understand that paranoia unless you've lived through it. But there is definitely a deep seated fear of the Sunnis regaining power in this country.

With the Baghdad Operations Command, you said basically it has been very successful. It has developed since February when you formed it.

Now I see the beginning of a Diyala Operations Center. Is that a Corps directed --

It was an Iraqi idea.

It's an Iraqi idea?

Yes, because you are going to see the Karbala Operations Center, too, and there has been talk of the Basra Operations Center.

Some of them, I think, are good ideas; some of them, I think, are terrible ideas. And I think it's based on the success of the Baghdad Operations Center. It is the Iraqis have seen something that, at least initially, they thought was working, and there's been ups and downs with it,
I think, whether it is actually effective or not. But I think overall they see it as an effective way of command and controlling Iraqi forces.

I think, what the upper levels of the government of Iraq appreciate is General Aboud basically works for the Prime Minister, kind of outside the MOD, the Ministry of Defense channels. It's kind of -- for the National Police, kind of outside the Ministry of Interior channels. So there's a way for the PM to influence security operations in Baghdad.

The Iraqis latched onto -- and it's probably the Minister of Defense -- latched onto this Diyala operations command centered around Baqubah, based upon some of the things we were talking about earlier, and it was pushed pretty hard by an organization called the Diyala Support Command, which is a group of civilians, about 50 percent of them on the Council representatives that have ties to Baqubah and Diyala and the Diyala Province, that started bringing issues and requests to the Minister of Defense, the Prime Minister, and they had their ear about the security situation in Diyala.

So a way to -- and I think probably the most
effective way we've got is to bring all security forces under one unified command, if you will, this concept and the same concept we stood up for the Baghdad Operations Center in Diyala. So you've got Iraqi Police, obviously Iraqi Army. There's really not any National Police in Baqubah, but all security forces Iraqi-wise, and then establishing that linkage with a Coalition partner. In this case, it's Major General Mixon and MND-North, the 25th ID.

Do you think General Mixon is very much involved in helping that?

I think General Mixon is very involved, and they have -- MND-North is putting a very robust tactical forward TAC in it, let's see, I think it's in Diyala. It's F-5 Warhorse. It's not far outside of Baqubah.

The H-4's position, Brigadier General Bedenerik (Phonetic), which is his ADC or Deputy Commanding General for Operations, spends a lot of time there, and they have established the Diyala Operations Center in downtown Baqubah, the same concept.

It is paired with the Provincial Police. It's paired with the Governor. So it is both a civilian and military organization, but the unifying thing is there is one
Iraqi that's in charge of that.

We've been back and forth on who that is going to be. We had one, but he didn't want it. Then we got another one. I'm not sure -- So we are still struggling to find out who that key Iraqi is that's going to --

General Aboud is -- To go back to Baghdad,

General Aboud is a pretty unique character, because he has been more effective than any of us thought he would be and more -- probably more balanced in terms of Sunni-Shia issues than any of us thought he would, in the security operations.

But that is not a trait that is in abundance in terms of what the government of Iraq will accept as the senior military leaders.

So Aboud has been a pleasant surprise 90 percent of the time. So finding the right guy in Diyala that not only the Iraqi government can trust, but that we can work with, that the Diyala Support Committee can trust and that the people of Baqubah have faith in is not an easy task.

(b)(6): So it's not stood up yet?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Oh, yes, it's stood up. It's about like it was with Baghdad the last time we talked. I mean very, very immature at this point.
Okay. But they don't have an overall commander yet?

They had one. I'm not sure where we are now, to tell you the truth. There may be -- General Ali, which is over here at the Iraqi Ground Forces Command, has been sent up there.

He was the initial commander until they found a permanent commander. They found -- I've forgotten the guy's name -- another Iraqi Lieutenant General to put in charge, and then he just recently stepped down. So I think Ali is back up there right now.

Okay. I'm going to go interview General Mixon on Monday.

He can clear that up for you.

I wanted to ask a little bit about the infrastructure piece. This is -- certainly, just sitting in and listening to you, the Force level and the Corps level battle update assessments -- a lot of focus on the oil pipelines, the electric lines, in particular now, the bridges.

I just wanted to get your perspective on, operationally and a counter-insurgency environment, how tough
is it to deal with the piece of keeping that infrastructure protected, and what is the current approach to doing that?

Well, I don't think the approach has really changed that much since we've been here. The infrastructure has always been something we worried about, because of the impact it would have if we lose it.

Even back in 2004, we were talking -- I mean, there was threats out there about shutting lights off in Baghdad permanently and the impact that would have on the populous and, therefore, the impact it would have on, hence, the security of Baghdad, and it is something they have been attacking since we started.

There's an interesting dynamic, though, in terms of why they are attacking it. The crunch to it is -- and if you look at the linear infrastructure in this country, you've got oil pipelines that basically run from Um Qasr down in Basra, the ports, all the way out to Turkey, north and south; and from Kurkuk all the way out to -- at least to Difah (Phonetic), if not out to Al Kahn (Phonetic) toward the Syrian border east to west.

So -- and that's just the oil. I mean, of course, you've got the power infrastructure, whereas in the
history of this country most of the power that came into Baghdad, which always had the most power, was always brought in from outside of Baghdad.

What's happened is, if you look at the amount of power available, the tables would just turn 180 degrees; where you look up in Minawah (Phonetic) up around Mosul, northern Saladin, down south in the predominantly Shia areas -- the exception would be out west -- they've got more power than Baghdad has.

So whereas Baghdad -- it's almost, you know, a microcosm of what everybody is -- what the Sunni experience is: We had it all, and now we've got nothing.

So there is definitely attempts -- I mean, this has always been about Baghdad. I mean for at least back to the 1920s. I mean, it's been about Baghdad. It remains about Baghdad. I think most of that is historical. It is the capital of the country, and I think a lot it's just historical in the way it's always been approached. Iraq is always about Baghdad, and Saddam had that approach when he defended it during the Persian Gulf war and then again in 2003. But there is just so much one-year infrastructure out there.
It's next to -- There's not enough soldiers in the United States Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy, if we brought everybody over here to do a double-arm interval and guard -- put in the infrastructure; and if we tried, that would be the only thing that we would be able to do, is guard the linear infrastructure.

In order to guaranty the integrity of the infrastructure, you have to be successful 100 percent of the time. In order to take out a chunk of the linear infrastructure, you only have to be successful once. That could be one percent of the time, and you've had your input.

Now the reason is they are doing it, I'm not convinced, is tied as much to the insurgency as it is to corruption and personal gain.

Crime? Crime. Black market. So if I'm importing personal generators and selling a lot of personal generators in Baghdad because, you know, I'm a Baghdad resident and I'm only getting six hours of power a day, I can't keep my refrigerator running or I can't watch my favorite TV show at night, so I'm going to go out and buy generators. Why would I want, you know, maximum amount of
power coming into Baghdad for the Baghdad loop. If I'm --

Can you hold that thought for a minute, sir?

If I were at a trucking company that carries oil products, refined or crude, and I'm able to make money off of that, not only legitimately but from the black market, why would I want the pipelines to successfully push oil? So I think there is a degree of that, and then it's just a matter of argument whether you think that's a large degree of it or smaller degree.

I kind of think that is more than 50 percent of the issue, and I don't think the government is concerned enough about it. I think we are more concerned about it than the government is, to be honest with you.

I think the government is -- I don't know what their operating budget is from the oil, but I think they feel that that's just the way it's always kind of been, and I kind of agree.

Saddam kind of handled the problem by paying off the tribes to protect the infrastructure, and then when they didn't do a good job of it, he had his way of dealing with it. We don't have that way of dealing with it as an option.
So we could -- There's probably a way in the
government to pay off the tribes and to protect the
infrastructure. What is different now is there is no
incentive for them not to take more money from somebody else
to take out the infrastructure, and you don't have Saddam's
way of keeping them in line. They are just taking more money
from somebody else.

(b)(6) Strategic infrastructure battalions:
Are they designed to protect the infrastructure? Was that
been their idea or is that we pushing them for that?

(b)(6) That's probably something we
pushed them to do, much like the force protection service or
facilities protection services back in '03 and '04. But the
SIB, the Strategic Infrastructure Battalions, have always
been the lowest priority of any security force. So we stood
them up probably -- and this is history I'm not really
totally familiar with, but I'm sure we stood them up. We
probably equipped them with only the most basic, probably not
even an AK-47 per SIB soldier or SIB individual, probably, if
any training, probably no more than a five-to-eight day basic
training course, and then said, you know, go forward and
protect the infrastructure.
So it's probably a decent idea, but just not well resourced and executed, and it's not by anyone's fault. At the same time we tried to stand up the Army, build the police. That happened to be what was chosen as (inaudible).

Recently, though, we've gotten the MOD to issue a directive, which is: SIBs are no longer independent organizations; each one of them now belongs to an Iraqi Army division.

Right, yes.

And they will eventually, as we start going through, go through a very formal training program, be equipped more appropriately, and be re-flagged as an Army unit with an infrastructure protection mission and be re-flagged as an Army unit.

You spoke a little bit about the southeast and some of the issues there. I just wanted to ask your perspective on that, but probably more MND-Central-South. Seems like they have had, in particular, through this span of time some increased difficulties and times here, keeping on the situation in their region.

Can you discuss what the challenges have been with the MNDCS region and why that's been a source of perhaps
more challenges of late?

Diwaniyah and (Several words inaudible) provinces -- Diwaniyah and (Inaudible) and Khut, Al Khut (Phonetic) in (Inaudible) Province, and then, of course, you've got Basra and the issues of indirect fire down there.

I think the issue, probably from about (Inaudible) and all the down to the Saudi-Iranian borders, Kuwaiti and Iranian borders, are not the same every place you go, but basically the same. It's an intra-Shia struggle for power between what used to be called security, and I can't remember what their new name is. They just recently changed that, because of the revolution out in the Supreme Council. It used to be Supreme Council.

Anyway, now Bader is hearing, saying -- Bader is the armed organization of Haskeryi (Phonetic) -- Jaish al-Mahdi, (Inaudible) and the Fahila (Phonetic) party in far south down into Basra -- So here they struggle for power, but then the Shia set in the south, and it is going on in a lot of other places than as you mentioned.

Samawa in the Meson (Phonetic) it's going on. In Nasiriyyah it's going on. In some ways it's going on in
Hillah (Phonetic). It's going on in Najaf, a little bit in Karbala. But it gets worse where we are, I think, because we come in (Inaudible) and there is a desire to drive the Coalition out of those areas.

I don't think anything in the south is out of control, and I think you are going to see those struggles for power for years, and I think it's going to be a violent struggle. I mean, that's just kind of the way things are settled in this country.

As long as it doesn't spiral out of control, and as long as the Sistani (Phonetic) primarily, and the United Iraqi Alliance, UIA, can keep some semblances of Shia unity, I think we'll be okay.

If we lose the sense of the Shias have to maintain some sense of unity to maintain that grip of power in this country, then I think you are going to see a lot more violence than what you see right now. But everything down south right now, to include Diwaniyah where the MND Center-South and the Coalition contingent -- [b/(b)] -- I think, is an intra-Shia struggle for power.

What's going on, I think, in a lot of this country is posturing for what they see as the fight yet to
come. I think they -- Everybody talks about the long term
presence of the U.S. I don't think they worry about that.

I think they clearly see us as a short term
irritant in this country. They would like to see us go.
Most people would like to see us go. They will tell you they
would like to see us go soon. Most people realize that, if
we did, it would be the worst.

I think what you are seeing right now is in the
Shia south, in the far north, in the west, in some ways in
northern Diyala Province where the Kurds are posturing for
the fight they all know is coming, and we hope doesn't come,
but they all believe it's coming, and that is the -- you
know, the Shia-Sunni-Kurd, either politically or through
violence, struggle for control of this country.

I deliberately did not use the term civil war. I
don't think it will turn into that. I think this country
will have a level of violence for a long time to come,
whether we are here or not. I don't think that's necessarily
bad.

I had the opportunity
in April to get the V Corps AAR, and the Executive Summary.
In fact, I've got a copy of it here, but I don't have
electronics. So I gave a copy to the Chief.

They made some interesting observations in their Executive Summary, one of which was that, during the time of '06 where V Corps had it, the security situation, quote, "became more difficult to maintain during their tenure."

So far, you've been here about six months. Would you think the security situation has been more difficult to maintain since you arrived or has it deteriorated?

Well, I would assume, without reading -- Given the context of what you just said, I would assume that that was post-Samarra mosque and the shrine bombing.

Right.

So I would relate that directly to the level of sectarian violence, primarily murders, killings --

Right.

-- which we have seen a decline in.

Right.

Now does that mean that security is easier to -- Absolutely not. But the overall casualty
rates in this country have really not gone down. What you have seen going down dramatically is civilian casualties rates, Iraqi civilians, by probably -- I haven't looked at the number for a couple of weeks, but probably on the order of magnitude somewhere between 40 and 50 percent, if not maybe a little bit more, reduction in civilian casualties.

The numbers of what we could -- what we think were sectarian based murders, numbers of bodies found with hands bound, gagged, shot in the back of the head, type of bodies we were finding has decreased dramatically. But U.S. losses and casualties have gone up, and attacks against Iraqi security forces have gone up.

So it's been, I think, more of a shift of the targeting. So does that make the security easier or more difficult to maintain? I don't think it's any easier now nor any -- It definitely is not any harder or any worse, I think, than when we first got here, which would have been November-December of last year, of '06. But it definitely hasn't gotten any easier.

We are seeing a growing number of underbelly IEDs attacking the most vulnerable part of our vehicles. When we first started Fardel Kanoun, we saw a significant drop in the
number of explosive floor penetrators, EFPs, which is now back up.

The COPs, combat outposts, the joint security stations that we have built all over Baghdad and pretty much all over the country draw a lot of attention, a lot of small arms fire, RPGs, a lot of indirect fire, which to me is almost a measure of their success. They obviously don't want us there.

But I would not say that overall it's gotten any easier, but I don't think the situation has declined.

[b6] Right. Would you say that, you know, as you assess the various commands and agencies that MNC interfaces with, mostly in the NAF ( Phonetic) but also the Embassy piece and all that MNF controls, do you -- would you say that they are focused on the same end state? Everybody is in sync with the same end state? Are they pulling in the right -- same -- in the right direction toward that same end state?

Talking really of a coordinated effort and unity of effort.

(b)(3), (b)(6) I'm trying to think in my own mind what's the common end state we are all pulling toward.
Is it, you know, the end state as designed -- as described by the Force? Is it the end state described by the Embassy (Inaudible), the end state described by the national leadership, or is it the end state described by the Corps?

To answer to your question, I think, yes, that in a broad sense everybody is focused on establishing a level of stability, and it's really stability and security in this country that the government of Iraq can operate effectively in, establishing -- developing the Iraqi security forces to the point where they can deal with the level of violence that will be in this country for a while. So driving down the level of violence, pushing up the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces to where, you know, eventually those two lines cross as one goes down, one comes up, have the Iraqi security forces capable of dealing with the level of violence that will be here, which really -- You get the violence down, it allows the government of Iraq to function as a government and better address the needs of its people.

So that is a very broad end state that I think everybody is focused on.

Okay.

We are at the end of our time,
sir, unless there is anything else that you wanted to mention.

That's great. Thank you very much.

Thanks very much for your time.

That completes this interview.