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UNITED STATES ARMY
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

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INTERVIEW

OF

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

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

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16 JUNE 2007

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BAGHDAD, IRAQ

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

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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

This is

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

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

6 (b)(6)

U.S. Army Center of
7 Military History.

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

Today we are interviewing

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

the MNCI C-3.

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

if you could introduce yourself
11 in your own voice.

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

I go by

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

As you said, the MNCI Operations Officer or C-3.

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

All right, sir.

15 You were interviewed almost exactly three months
16 ago by (b)(6), and that recording we have in the archives
17 for records. So we really wanted to just kind of pick up
18 from there, and I think the first question I had would really
19 -- Do you have a sense in your mind -- Thinking back over the
20 last three months, how would you summarize the key
21 developments of the situation since mid-March?

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

I think, since the last time we

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1 talked, probably the key differences are, obviously, we have
2 gotten more forces on the ground with the plus-up. The last
3 of the five plus-up brigades became fully operational on the
4 15th of this month. So I guess that was yesterday, with 2-3
5 ID Infantry starting their first major combat operation last
6 night.

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

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

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

20 Things in the north have not changed that much.
21 The most encouraging thing, I think, since three months ago
22 is the continued progress in Multinational Force - West with

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1 a very significant drop in the level of violence in the Al-
2 Anbar Province and the continued progress and success with
3 the tribal movement in the west; and of course, with that, we
4 weren't even really talking seriously engagement and
5 reconciliation efforts the last time that (b)(6) and I talked,
6 and I think that is dramatically different now than three
7 months ago.

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

12 (b)(3), (b)(6) January.

13 (b) 3, b 6 I'm sorry, in January -- and
14 then just the last one, you mentioned, day before yesterday
15 or yesterday, rather.

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

22 (b) 3, b 6 Mostly availability, and I

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

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

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

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

20 (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you have some sense for, now
21 that all the forces are in place, what does the strength of
22 the Coalition look like overall, any sense for how this

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1 compares to other points in the fight here during Operation
2 Iraqi Freedom?

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

6 [redacted] b 3, b 6 Oh-five, right?

7 [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah. So I mean, from that
8 point, I mean, obviously, there's more U.S. forces on the
9 ground than there was before March of '04. Coalition forces
10 have dwindled. The U.K. has gone down slightly. The
11 Coalition contingent has gone down slightly. The Korean
12 contingent has gone down slightly.

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

21 [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) Now that all these forces are in
22 place, is there a specific integrated operation that is going

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1 to take place now that everything is here or is it going to
2 continue to be a very decentralized approach or are there
3 some specific new objectives, new operations in store?

4 b 3, b 6 I think the environment we are
5 and just the nature of a counter-insurgency fight drives you
6 to a very decentralized operation, and that's just not at the
7 corps level. I think that's at the division and, from
8 experience, even at the brigade level.

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

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

21 So all that is kind of going together. So when
22 you look at it from the corps perspective, it's not so much -

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

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

17 [b 6]: But the Corps -- Correct me if I'm
18 wrong -- picking the area for these initial operations.
19 Could you tell the Divisions this is where we think you ought
20 to go?

21 [b)(3), (b)(6)] It's basically the--

22 [b)(6)]: Especially up in the north.

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1 (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. I mean, we are going to
2 Diyala, because that's where the issue is, the biggest issue
3 we've got is right now in terms of Al Qaeda.

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

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

15 Now Baqubah is a -- in Diyala Province is a
16 different fight. We think the issues up there now are
17 primarily caused by Al Qaeda, and they are there now because
18 Al Anbar has become so anti-Al Qaeda in terms of the tribal
19 effort. So as pressure is applied to Al Qaeda out in Al
20 Anbar by the tribes, by the people, by us, they have had to
21 migrate someplace, and they have migrated to the Diyala River
22 Valley, specifically Baqubah.

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1 So, yes, that operation was by direction of the
2 Corps Commander.

3 [b 3, b 6] Was that a named operation? Is
4 there a name that --

5 [(b)(3), (b)(6)] (Inaudible).

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

8 [(b)(6)] Right.

9 [(b)(3), (b)(6)] After that -- [b 6]

10 [b 6] [(b)(3), (b)(6)] can you tell me a little bit or tell
11 us a little bit about the development of Op Ord 0701? It
12 looks like a more detailed refinement of the Corps
13 operational concept of 6 March. Can you talk about that?

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

17 [b 3 b 6] (Inaudible) probably developed
18 over the last six months. I mean, there's nothing in 0701
19 that we haven't been talking about for six months. I think
20 we talked about this a little bit, too.

21 As we got here -- This is just the way things
22 work, is -- and we'll do the same thing, is V Corps wrote the

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1 campaign plan that would take us into our first four to six
2 months before it had to be rewritten.

3 [b 6] Right.

4 [b(3), (b)(6)] So it was time to rewrite the
5 campaign plan. But really, as soon as we got here, the major
6 thing is we went through our mission rehearsal exercise back
7 at Fort Hood in --

8 [b 6] June-July?

9 [b(3), (b)(6)] -- June-July -- Actually, I
10 think it was August of last year. We were starting to try to
11 figure out how we were going to execute this mission with
12 somewhere between 10 and 12 BCTs. We TOA'ed, I think, on the
13 14th of December, and it was probably -- It was before
14 Christmas, so the week of the 20th, in there someplace, of
15 December, we were figuring out how to do it with 20, how to
16 get 20, additional five then and where we would put the
17 additional five and how we would use them.

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

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1 almost the day we took over.

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

7 [redacted (b)(6)] Right. Now that's it looks like, and
8 really, from your first mission on the 29th of December or
9 your first operational concept, your 6 March, it looks -- You
10 know, it does look very sophisticated compared to anything
11 that I've seen in the V Corps files of their last Op Ord, and
12 it looks like that you have -- that your Corps staff, and
13 especially the C-3, has a much greater understanding of the
14 situation here than V Corps did, or you work together better.
15 But the narrative part of your 0710 and your operational
16 concept -- Looks like a lot of work went into that.

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

19 [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] Well, the key guy is [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]

20 [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]

21 [redacted b 6] [redacted b 3, b 6]

22 [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] Which is the lead planner for

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1 0701. [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)], which is my Chief
2 of Plans, had a key role in it; and of course, I think we
3 have a fairly good system for bringing in experts across the
4 Corps staff, even in some cases outside the Corps staff.

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

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

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

21 We do it in groups of less than 20, usually
22 closer to 10 than 20, depending on the subject. So it almost

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1 turns into, you know, a back and forth with the boss as we
2 (Inaudible) down what it is he wants.

3 The other thing that helps is, with General
4 Petraeus' arrival and Ambassador Crocker's arrival, they
5 chose a slightly different course or a modification of the
6 course we were on. So they brought in some people -- H.R.
7 Masters, [redacted (b)(6)] (Phonetic) and some other people -- that
8 formed this JSAT, and I forget what JSAT stands for.

9 [redacted (b)(6)]: Joint (Inaudible) Action Team, or
10 something.

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

17 [redacted (b)(6)] Would you say you are totally in
18 synchronization with --

19 [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] They haven't published it yet.
20 So, yes, I'd say right now we are. We'll see whether we are
21 when they publish it. And that was a deliberate decision,
22 too, because they had a very, very aggressive timeline in

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1 that.

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

7 [b 6] Right.

8 [b)(3), (b)(6)] So it's a deliberate decision to
9 go ahead and publish ours without theirs, and that was
10 because of the level of confidence that we are nested with
11 whatever it is they publish.

12 [b)(6)]: Right. It looks like, because they
13 haven't published that strategic guidance, that you are way
14 out ahead of them now. But because, like you say, you are
15 nested in there, then you are really just in synchronization
16 with them. Is that correct?

17 [b)(3), (b)(6)] And we are focused on the
18 security line of operation, obviously.

19 [b)(6)] Right.

20 [b)(3), (b)(6)] And we are responsible in this
21 theater, although the Forces campaign plan -- I mean, we are
22 the lead proponent for the security line of operations. So I

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1 think the Force will pull from what we have in terms of the
2 security line of operation.

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

7 [redacted] (b)(6) Right.

8 [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) But I don't think there will be
9 anything major. I think we will be well nested when they
10 publish it.

11 [redacted] (b)(6) Right.

12 [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) Looking at the preparation for
13 0701 and the preliminary presentations, one of the
14 interesting slides, I thought, was the discussion about the
15 possible range of enemy or anti-Iraqi force play into this,
16 and I just wanted to ask your perspective on: Given that
17 spectrum of anti-Iraqi force and your possible courses of
18 action -- and that other phrase that I hear a lot is the
19 enemy has a vote -- which one of those possible courses of
20 action on the enemy's part concerns you the most?

21 [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, you always plan for the
22 most likely and account for the most dangerous, I guess.

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1 You know, it's clear in my mind that the threat
2 that we have seen over here to address is still there, and
3 the threat that we should continue to focus on is Al Qaeda.

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

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

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

18 I don't think they are anywhere near establishing
19 a (Inaudible) or even a safe area, safe haven, in Iraq. A
20 lot of that is due to our efforts or our Coalition partners'
21 efforts, and a lot of that is due to what has now shown
22 itself to be an Iraqi populous unwillingness to accept Al

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1 Qaeda in their country.

2 That's what we got to capitalize on over here in
3 the next three or four months, is continuing to strengthen
4 that unwillingness to have -- you know, live the lifestyle
5 that Al Qaeda wants to impose on the Iraqi people.

6 The special groups piece of it: I've heard
7 people say did you include the boss. I mean, it's an
8 irritant, but it is killing our soldiers. So we continue
9 address it with targets, and not all of Jaish Al-Mahdi, but
10 primarily the special groups and the 1.4b, 1.4d that
11 affects those groups -- supplies them with weapons, supplies
12 them with explicitly formed penetrators, EFPs or the
13 straight-up IEDs.

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

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

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1 movement.

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

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

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

15 (b)(3), (b)(6) Relative to the one piece of
16 that, which is the turnaround in Al Anbar that has been so
17 successful and with the Sunnis becoming fed up with AQI, what
18 has been the decision or where are we at with the decision as
19 far as do we arm these local tribal militias? Do we not arm
20 them?

21 Can you speak to what the current status is as
22 far as what is the operational approach to how to take

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1 advantage of them but yet not create emotions that will fight
2 us again someday?

3 (b)(3), (b)(6) I can answer for us. I mean, a
4 large part of this is Government of Iraq and what their long
5 term plans -- what their willing to accept and what they are
6 not willing to accept.

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

13 So this is these organizations, the provincial
14 support units, PSUs, are all about local security. One of
15 the key pieces that we think is what you said -- you cannot
16 create another Moishie, and that's probably the Iraqi
17 government's biggest fear, especially with the Sunni groups,
18 is creating a Sunni militia and equipping Sunni militia -- is
19 there will have to be, and it's yet to be determined, some
20 limits in terms of numbers, some limits in terms of
21 capabilities, and some limits on how long these things can
22 last, with the ultimate goal, and what we will continue to

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1 push for, to integrate them into the recognized, legitimate
2 security forces, probably Iraqi Police, because they are
3 local forces and their driving factor is to ;protect their
4 families and where they are living.

5 b 6 To get back to Fardel Kanoun, you had
6 mentioned early -- earlier, and we discussed this in March at
7 the March interview when it had been about a month old.

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

11 (b)(3), (b)(6) The Fardel Kanoun is obviously
12 focused on Baghdad. Some people -- You know, across the
13 country, Fardel Kanoun, some people call Fardel Kanoun just
14 Baghdad. Probably calling it just in Baghdad and the belts
15 area, the support belts, would be the most accurate
16 description of Fardel Kanoun.

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

22 Would they let us, and him, do what we need to do

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1 to secure the population of Baghdad? That has been mostly
2 positive. There has been some instances of political
3 interference to what was going on, but not coming from the
4 PM, as best we can tell, which was not the case in the fall
5 of '06, I guess.

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

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

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

21 I'm not sure that's the concept we want to
22 continue. It just creates a lot of disruption when you are

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1 rotating, and that is three brigades and nine battalions.

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

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

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

18 Integration of the National Police and the Iraqi
19 Army into the same brigade or division has gone mostly well.
20 We still have sectarian issues, primarily in the National
21 Police where they will execute operations, clearly, with a
22 sectarian agenda.

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1 The regluing of the National Police which was
2 started before we got here -- We send them down to Numaniya
3 (Phonetic) for about an eight-week course. Basically, they
4 try to clean out the bad actors, put them through some
5 retraining, bring them back into Baghdad. That has
6 continued.

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

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

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

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1 (b)(6) Paranoia of the Sunnis' fear that --

2 (b)(3), (b)(6) The fear of the Sunnis taking
3 back -- You know, I didn't grow up over here, and if I would
4 have, I could possibly share the same paranoia, and it's hard
5 to understand that paranoia unless you've lived through it.
6 But there is definitely a deep seated fear of the Sunnis
7 regaining power in this country.

8 (b)(6) With the Baghdad Operations Command,
9 you said basically it has been very successful. It has
10 developed since February when you formed it.

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

13 (b) 3, b 6 It was an Iraqi idea.

14 (b)(6) It's an Iraqi idea?

15 (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, because you are going to
16 see the Karbala Operations Center, too, and there has been
17 talk of the Basra Operations Center.

18 Some of them, I think, are good ideas; some of
19 them, I think, are terrible ideas. And I think it's based on
20 the success of the Baghdad Operations Center. It is the
21 Iraqis have seen something that, at least initially, they
22 thought was working, and there's been ups and downs with it,

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1 I think, whether it is actually effective or not. But I
2 think overall they see it as an effective way of command and
3 controlling Iraqi forces.

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

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

22 So a way to -- and I think probably the most

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

9 [REDACTED] (b)(6) Do you think General Mixon is very
10 much involved in helping that?

11 [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) I think General Mixon is very
12 involved, and they have -- MND-North is putting a very robust
13 tactical forward TAC in -- let's see, I think it's in Diyala.
14 It's F-5 Warhorse. It's not far outside of Baqubah.

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

20 It is paired with the Provincial Police. It's
21 paired with the Governor. So it is both a civilian and
22 military organization, but the unifying thing is there is one

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1 Iraqi that's in charge of that.

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

6 General Aboud is -- To go back to Baghdad,
7 General Aboud is a pretty unique character, because he has
8 been more effective than any of us thought he would be and
9 more -- probably more balanced in terms of Sunni-Shia issues
10 than any of us thought he would, in the security operations.
11 But that is not a trait that is in abundance in terms of what
12 the government of Iraq will accept as the senior military
13 leaders.

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

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

20 (b)(3), (b)(6) Oh, yes, it's stood up. It's
21 about like it was with Baghdad the last time we talked. I
22 mean very, very immature at this point.

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1 (b)(6) : Okay. But they don't have an overall
2 commander yet?

3 (b 3, b 6) They had one. I'm not sure
4 where we are now, to tell you the truth. There may be --
5 General Ali, which is over here at the Iraqi Ground Forces
6 Command, has been sent up there.

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

12 (b)(6) Okay. I'm going to go interview
13 General Mixon on Monday.

14 (b 3, b 6) : He can clear that up for you.

15 (b)(3), (b)(6) I wanted to ask a little bit
16 about the infrastructure piece. This is -- certainly, just
17 sitting in and listening to you, the Force level and the
18 Corps level battle update assessments -- a lot of focus on
19 the oil pipelines, the electric lines, in particular now, the
20 bridges.

21 I just wanted to get your perspective on,
22 operationally and a counter-insurgency environment, how tough

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1 is it to deal with the piece of keeping that infrastructure
2 protected, and what is the current approach to doing that?

3 b 3, b 6 Well, I don't think the approach
4 has really changed that much since we've been here. The
5 infrastructure has always been something we worried about,
6 because of the impact it would have if we lose it.

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

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

21 So -- and that's just the oil. I mean, of
22 course, you've got the power infrastructure, whereas in the

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1 history of this country most of the power that came into
2 Baghdad, which always had the most power, was always brought
3 in from outside of Baghdad.

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

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

13 So there is definitely attempts -- I mean, this
14 has always been about Baghdad. I mean for at least back to
15 the 1920s. I mean, it's been about Baghdad. It remains
16 about Baghdad. I think most of that is historical. It is
17 the capital of the country, and I think a lot it's just
18 historical in the way it's always been approached. Iraq is
19 always about Baghdad, and Saddam had that approach when he
20 defended it during the Persian Gulf war and then again in
21 2003. But there is just so much one-year infrastructure out
22 there.

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1 It's next to -- There's not enough soldiers in
2 the United States Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy, if we
3 brought everybody over here to do a double-arm interval and
4 guard -- put in the infrastructure; and if we tried, that
5 would be the only thing that we would be able to do, is guard
6 the linear infrastructure.

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

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

15 [redacted] (b)(6) Crime?

16 [redacted] b 3, b 6 Crime. Black market. So if I'm
17 importing personal generators and selling a lot of personal
18 generators in Baghdad because, you know, I'm a Baghdad
19 resident and I'm only getting six hours of power a day, I
20 can't keep my refrigerator running or I can't watch my
21 favorite TV show at night, so I'm going to go out and buy
22 generators. Why would I want, you know, maximum amount of

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1 power coming into Baghdad for the Baghdad loop. If I'm --

2 (b)(3), (b)(6) Can you hold that thought for a
3 minute, sir?

4 (b)(3), (b)(6) If I were at a trucking company
5 that carries oil products, refined or crude, and I'm able to
6 make money off of that, not only legitimately but from the
7 black market, why would I want the pipelines to successfully
8 push oil? So I think there is a degree of that, and then
9 it's just a matter of argument whether you think that's a
10 large degree of it or smaller degree.

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

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

19 Saddam kind of handled the problem by paying off
20 the tribes to protect the infrastructure, and then when they
21 didn't do a good job of it, he had his way of dealing with
22 it. We don't have that way of dealing with it as an option.

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1 So we could -- There's probably a way in the
2 government to pay off the tribes and to protect the
3 infrastructure. What is different now is there is no
4 incentive for them not to take more money from somebody else
5 to take out the infrastructure, and you don't have Saddam's
6 way of keeping them in line. They are just taking more money
7 from somebody else.

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

11 **(b)(3), (b)(6)** That's probably something we
12 pushed them to do, much like the force protection service or
13 facilities protection services back in '03 and '04. But the
14 SIB, the Strategic Infrastructure Battalions, have always
15 been the lowest priority of any security force. So we stood
16 them up probably -- and this is history I'm not really
17 totally familiar with, but I'm sure we stood them up. We
18 probably equipped them with only the most basic, probably not
19 even an AK-47 per SIB soldier or SIB individual, probably, if
20 any training, probably no more than a five-to-eight day basic
21 training course, and then said, you know, go forward and
22 protect the infrastructure.

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1 So it's probably a decent idea, but just not well
2 resourced and executed, and it's not by anyone's fault. At
3 the same time we tried to stand up the Army, build the
4 police. That happened to be what was chosen as (inaudible).

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

9 (b)(6) Right, yes.

10 (b)(3), (b)(6) And they will eventually, as we
11 start going through, go through a very formal training
12 program, be equipped more appropriately, and be re-flagged as
13 an Army unit with an infrastructure protection mission and be
14 re-flagged as an Army unit.

15 (b)(3), (b)(6) You spoke a little bit about the
16 southeast and some of the issues there. I just wanted to ask
17 your perspective on that, but probably more MND-Central-
18 South. Seems like they have had, in particular, through this
19 span of time some increased difficulties and times here,
20 keeping on the situation in their region.

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

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1 more challenges of late?

2 (b)(3), (b)(6) Diwaniyah and (Several words
3 inaudible) provinces -- Diwaniyah and (Inaudible) and Khut,
4 Al Khut (Phonetic) in (Inaudible) Province, and then, of
5 course, you've got Basra and the issues of indirect fire down
6 there.

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

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

21 Samawa in the Meson (Phonetic) it's going on. In
22 Nasiriyah it's going on. In some ways it's going on in

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

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

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

14 If we lose the sense of the Shias have to
15 maintain some sense of unity to maintain that grip of power
16 in this country, then I think you are going to see a lot more
17 violence than what you see right now. But everything down
18 south right now, to include Diwaniyah where the MND Center-
19 South and the Coalition contingent -- (b)(6) -- I think, is
20 an intra-Shia struggle for power.

21 What's going on, I think, in a lot of this
22 country is posturing for what they see as the fight yet to

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1 come. I think they -- Everybody talks about the long term
2 presence of the U.S. I don't think they worry about that.

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

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

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

20 [redacted] (b)(6) : [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) I had the opportunity
21 in April to get the V Corps AAR, and the Executive Summary.
22 In fact, I've got a copy of it here, but I don't have

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1 electronics. So I gave a copy to the Chief.

2 They made some interesting observations in their
3 Executive Summary, one of which was that, during the time of
4 '06 where V Corps had it, the security situation, quote,
5 "became more difficult to maintain during their tenure."

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

9 [redacted] Well, I would assume, without
10 reading -- Given the context of what you just said, I would
11 assume that that was post-Samarra mosque and the shrine
12 bombing.

13 [redacted] Right.

14 [redacted] So I would relate that directly
15 to the level of sectarian violence, primarily murders,
16 killings --

17 [redacted] Right.

18 [redacted] -- which we have seen a decline
19 in.

20 [redacted] Right.

21 [redacted] Now does that mean that security
22 is easier to -- Absolutely not. But the overall casualty

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1 rates in this country have really not gone down. What you
2 have seen going down dramatically is civilian casualties
3 rates, Iraqi civilians, by probably -- I haven't looked at
4 the number for a couple of weeks, but probably on the order
5 of magnitude somewhere between 40 and 50 percent, if not
6 maybe a little bit more, reduction in civilian casualties.

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

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

20 We are seeing a growing number of underbelly IEDs
21 attacking the most vulnerable part of our vehicles. When we
22 first started Fardel Kanoun, we saw a significant drop in the

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1 number of explosive floor penetrators, EFPs, which is now
2 back up.

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

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

11 [b 6]: Right. Would you say that, you know,
12 as you assess the various commands and agencies that MNC
13 interfaces with, mostly in the NAF (Phonetic) but also the
14 Embassy piece and all that MNF controls, do you -- would you
15 say that they are focused on the same end state? Everybody
16 is in synch with the same end state? Are they pulling in the
17 right -- same -- in the right direction toward that same end
18 state?

19 Talking really of a coordinated effort and unity
20 of effort.

21 [b(3), b(6)] I'm trying to think in my own
22 mind what's the common end state we are all pulling toward.

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1 Is it, you know, the end state as designed -- as described by
2 Force? Is it the end state described by the Embassy
3 (Inaudible), the end state described by the national
4 leadership, or is it the end state described by the Corps?

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

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

21 b 6 Okay.

22 b 3, b 6 We are at the end of our time,

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1 sir, unless there is anything else that you wanted to
2 mention.

3 (b)(3), (b)(6) That's great. Thank you very
4 much.

5 (b)(3), (b)(6) Thanks very much for your time.
6 That completes this interview.

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