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INTERVIEW
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HEADQUARTERS MULTINATIONAL CORPS - IRAQ
BAGHDAD, IRAQ

(This transcript was produced from tapes provided by the Center of Military History.)
PROCEEDINGS

This is writing a story on Multinational Corps - Iraq in the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Today is 21 -- Correction, today is 26 June 2007, and I am about to interview C-2 Multinational Corps - Iraq at Headquarters, Multinational Corps - Iraq, Al Faw Palace, outside Baghdad, Iraq. This is the second in a series of interviews with the C-2.

I last interviewed you three months ago on 21 March, and Fardel Kanoun (Phonetic) had been in progress for about a month. The Fardel Kanoun was the operation to secure Baghdad, and the surge was about -- I think, about two-fifths complete. That is, two brigades had arrived.

You indicated at the time -- and you said in that interview -- you were cautiously optimistic. What I'd like to do is ask you for an update on that, how you feel, how the progress is going from where you sit as the C-2.

Okay. As you know, the surge forces have recently all arrived, and so we are really now just in the surge -- As my boss would say, we've gone from a
surge in troops to a surge in forces to a surge in operations. And so that's just -- It really began on the 15th of this month.

So the things that we expected to happen have. Sectarian violence in Baghdad has been reduced because of the presence of more Coalition forces and the activities of Iraq security forces.

Equally important, I believe, the forces outside Baghdad, particularly in the Baghdad belts, but also in Diyala, particularly Baqubah, have done two things, really. One is that they have reduced what we call the accelerants coming into the Baghdad area, those things that cause sectarian violence like VBIEDs. But then they have also been there for the forces that have -- the enemy forces that have departed Baghdad, so something to deal with them, not allowing them to have safe havens in places that they have gone before.

So all of this has given -- beginning to give the Iraq security forces both room and time to gain capability so that they will be able to, hopefully, eventually stand on their own.

So I think it's gotten off to a good start. It
is still just at a start.

And so would you characterize your assessment as cautiously optimistic again?

I would. Nothing has changed in terms of that.

But there is a decrease in sectarian violence in Baghdad?

There is.

As a result of Fadel Kanoun.

Correct.

Under Op Order 0701 under the threat situation, you assess the GOI's current condition as, quote/unquote, "a failing state." I wondered if you could explain that a little bit?

I think -- Well, a failing state or part of a failing state, I would say, is still in effect, because if we were to leave right now or decrease rapidly, I do not believe they are mature enough to stand on their own.

So that's how I would define that, the inability to secure Iraq and, therefore, preserve it as a state. And that hasn't changed either. They need time, room and time, as I said before, and so at least several months of surge
operations to mature and have an opportunity to do that.

Today we see the security situation as improved in Anbar, and other Sunni groups appear to be willing to cooperate with Coalition forces.

Should this movement be seen as reconciliation or some tactical move on the part of the Sunnis to strengthen their positions, and reconciliation, you know, implies reconciliation between the Sunni and Shia, but what we see like in Anbar is that the Sunnis are really kind of aligning themselves with us for their own protection against AQI.

Right. So I think the simple answer to your question is both. Some places, it is for their own security. Yes, there are more reconciling with us than the Shia in those particular areas.

Other places, it's both. They are reconciling with both us and the Shia, but what we also see -- and it's not in the headlines as much -- is outreach from both Shia groups to Sunni groups and also Sunni groups, specifically in Anbar, to Shia groups.

Example: Yesterday's suicide vest bombing. It was actually after a reconciliation conference at the Monsur (Phonetic) Hotel in Baghdad. Among the dead were both Shia
and Sunni representatives. So that's an example of it was both involved in that. But it's not a clean definition of what they are reconciling with.

Right.

Clearly, among just the Sunnis there is movement to fight against Al Qaeda in Iraq, simply because they are tired of being intimidated and run by Al Qaeda in Iraq.

So you know, aside from the Shia reconciliation, that's going on, again for their self-preservation and for their ability to gain power and, therefore, self-determination in their area but also to participate in the central government. And they've got to get past Al Qaeda in Iraq to do that.

Right.

Get rid of the intimidation against them participating to be able to do that. But that's all part of reconciliation, in my view, participating in the political process.

You know, General Odierno has been placing a lot more emphasis on reconciliation, as I'm sure you know, and in particular this past month or so. I also
noticed in 0701 where reconciliation appears as a key task, and in the past it hadn't. It was mentioned, but not as a key task.

I wondered how much are you and your staff section, intelligence staff section, playing in this reconciliation emphasis, if you will, that the CG is placing on it?

b.6 Well, we're playing very heavily. As you know, it began with the successes that started in Anbar, but then in 1.4c we started seeing this attract the attention of groups in other places.

So you know, it was partially on our advice to the leadership and, you know, their knowledge of the situation and their intuitiveness as well, but also our advice based on 1.4c that this is something we needed to seriously consider, that the time was becoming right to do that. So we ended up actually sponsoring the first reconciliation conference that we had here over a month ago -- I'll get you the dates -- was an 1.4c

What are the opportunities that we see based on 1.4c out there? And we brought in all of the MNDs.
We ran that, and that was sort of a catalyst.

I have seen some of your documents on it.

That worked pretty well, and then that was the spark that got it over to the Operations side.

Now we formed in a case what was the analysis and control element on that, a reconciliation cell, and it tells -- It's Support to Reconciliation Cell. So we've got that going.

And when was that formed?

I would say it was about a month and a half ago. So that would have been toward the beginning of May.

Beginning of May? Okay.

First week or two of May. So that supports the efforts here in the Headquarters as well as the MNDs, many of which are standing up their own cells.

What we've seen is that is a sustained effort now, and actually growing. We are adding some folks from other areas to that, but it's no longer just an
operators are involved right now. We are into execution as opposed to what are the possibilities. So that's been a shift over the last month or so.

b6: Right. Okay, okay.

Can you tell me -- this is a little bit of a change in direction here -- you know, about your organization a little bit. You explained this the last time, your case, but I want to hear a little bit about the Red Cell team. How do you use them? Are they analogous to -- I don't know whether you know (b)(6) (Phonetic) at Fort Hood and his playing in the red cell area.

b3, b6: Well, the Red Cell doesn't work for me. It works for me. It works directly for the Commander and the Chief of Staff. So that's not my organization at all.

b3, b6: Okay. But it's under the case file on it that --

If you see that on there, it's an old one.

b6: It's an old one? Okay.

And that was a Red Cell, not a Red Team.
The Red Team that joined us is a trained --

Right.

-- Red Team that works for the Chief of Staff, the Commander, does alternative analysis, gives them advice, all the things that you think of that a real Red Team, they do that, don't work for me.

That Red Cell did not try to do that.

Okay. Well, that clarifies. I got an e-mail from and you know, and I had just been exploring your case cell, and I saw the Red Team, and I said, well, in the C-2, in the

*SECRET*
Well, no. That was a thought when we came over, but -- and in fact, I did the coordination with (Inaudible), and all of his guys. But when we finally got it coordinated that we were going to get the Red Team, it went like it should, a sort of separate and autonomous (Inaudible) by the Chief.

Okay. I am going to ask you a little bit about the you have focused on and this is a classified interview, up to Secret.

You know, the Commander and General Petraeus have both made statements about arms being identified as coming from and I wonder if you can elaborate a little bit on this from the 2's perspective.

So that has grown over time, and that's obviously a concern, because you want an Iraq that's independent, that
1 is not as influenced, and certainly don't want Coalition
2 soldiers being killed by the things that are coming across,
3 EFPs and other things.
4 So what we've done at the Corps level is focus on
5 those surrogates at Multinational Force-Iraq, and in CENTCOM
6 they are focused on itself, particularly CENTCOM. But
7 what we look at is the influence it has inside the country
8 and the groups that are operating under its influence using
9 its weapons and those kinds of things.
10 The answer to your question is: A growth in
11 influence that has continued. The boss asked the other day,
12 has there been a surge by to influence Iraq commensurate
13 with our surge. And the answer is no, but there continues to
14 be an increase, and it's a gradual, deliberate increase, it
15 appears to us, in influence, independent of our surge.
16 It was on the incline before, and it continues to
17 be on the incline.
18 b 6: Well, I know you track IEDs and the
19 use of IEDs and anti-armor IEDs. So I followed your charts
20 and what-not, and they all show an increase over the last
21 year in the use of IEDs, in particular anti-armor IEDs. Is
22 that a result of the influx from the knowledge, the
training, and perhaps the equipment?

1.4b, 1.4d, (b)(3), (b)(6)

So that's a gradual but steady system increase that I've talked about before. So, yes, that is one indicator, but of course, some of the press conferences have shown other types of conditions, whether it's armor piercing bullets or what, sniper rifles or whatever are on the increase from 1.4b, 1.4d, too.
b 6: What is that?

Okay.

b 6: Okay. I'd like you to talk a little bit about the CG's huddles. You know, the Chief of Staff had told me this, that the CG likes to work in small groups, and then when I interviewed him on Sunday, he says he likes to
work in small groups better and in kind of an iterative approach the planning and planning development.

I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that from your perspective, how often you are included in it, and how often they happen?

b3 b6: Okay. The CG every day has --
Well, I'll back up. There is one item that we talked about, but the first thing he does in the morning is a small group, me and my guys only.

b6: Just you and I.

(b(3), b(6)) About 15 minutes.

b6: -- C-2

(b(3), b(6)): Right, C-2.

b6: C-2.

b3 b6: Right.

b6: The first thing, before the BUA. 0700, yes, sir. Me, the night watch person in the JOC from C-2, from the case, the case chief and the CIA rep, (Inaudible). We all go in, and we give him an update on what happened last night, but it's more than that.

That's our opportunity to tell him the hot stuff
that's going on and --

(b)(6) That's in his office?

(b)(3), (b)(6) It's in his office, desk-side. He sits at his desk.

b 6 Right.

b 3, b 6 We give him the update, and our night guy from the JOC tells him the stuff that happened overnight. So that's the immediate information he needs.

The Case gives him a little bit more in depth analysis of the high side, the (Inapplicable) and all that kind of stuff included, that they get down there that the watch doesn't get.

Then (b)(6) the Case Chief, will give some what I call high end analysis, some Sadr stuff, some AQI stuff, just what's going on, and our goal is to give him a quick update to make sure he's ready for what he's going to hear in the BUA from MNFI and he's ready for his small group with General Petraeus, which he goes to.

b 6 Right.

b 3, b 6 That's what we do first thing.

Then, of course, the BUA. He goes to small group. While he's in small group, we have the Chief of Staff huddle, which
is (Inaudible) --

b6: Right.

b3,b6: And then after that, we come together in the small group, the CG/Senior Leader Huddle. That's what he calls it.

b6: Right.

b3,b6: That's where he's got -- You've probably heard who goes to that.

b6: The 3, the planner.

b3,b6: The only two colonels are me and the 3.

b6: Okay.

b3,b6: The rest are the three DCGs.

b6: Right.

b3,b6: The CG -- I'm missing one. CG, three DCGs, Chief of Staff, ECORD (Phonetic), the (Inaudible), the ORA rep --

b6: Who?

b6: Okay.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Me and the 3. And that is the small group that comes together. It gets smaller sometimes.
Okay, so we do that. That's the everyday thing.

Then I think it's four nights a week now, we have either a planner's huddle meeting with MND-Baghdad or meeting with MND-Center. These are at 1930, and those are small sessions like you described at the beginning. And that's that group plus whoever it is that's briefing.

So if it's a planner's huddle, the Plans team comes in and briefs him. If it's MND-Baghdad or MND-Center, because they are close, either we go to their place or they come here, and it's that group plus the CG and whoever he wants to bring to do the update. I mean their CG.

[Blank Space]

Well, when you do it like at one of the MNDs that are close here, is that more formal?

[Blank Space]

No. It's around their conference table. Just around the table. It's not a briefing. Usually, you don't use the audio-visual. They can, if they want. It's usually paper copies, talking around the table. Very, very informal.

Trying to make sure I -- Now there is also -- and the ECORD (Phonetic) can tell you this. It's his (Inaudible). There are periodic Effects Board, either a synchronization meeting or an assessment meeting. It's the
same group plus whoever the ECORD wants to bring.

Right.

And now there is the reconciliation meetings that we have. There are at least one a week. Right now I can't remember when. They chose, I think, Tuesday nights. Small group plus the reconciliation people. That just highlights this core group of people who are meeting with whoever it is that's meeting.

And how effective do you think that is?

Very effective.

Very effective, okay. You know, I know we are running a little short on time, but I've tailored the questions to get what I wanted, but I wanted to leave it open to you to bring out anything else that you want to at this point.

First of all, I want to make sure. I realize there are people who would like bigger groups, because they would like to hear the boss's guidance or thoughts or the information that he is getting as well, but I think we do a good job of disseminating it afterwards.

The reason I say very effective is that's just
the way he likes to operate and he feels comfortable; therefore, that is how he is most effective (Several words inaudible). But there is another side to that.

That's also demanding of the two colonels who do go in there all the time, but I think for the box it's real effective.

Organizationally, mission-wise and everything else, looking at it kind of holistically, having done the mission here before and now back in the same job doing it again, this is a much more complex environment, much more difficult.

You are balancing, as you mentioned, the reconciliation type of operation with some serious kinetic type operations that are going on, too, with the most troops that have been here since the end of major combat operations, really, more Division Headquarters and everything else.

Right.

I think that effective may not be the right word, but impressive is how I would describe the operation that got everybody in here, a plan together to execute, and then the execution of that. Whether or not it is successful, as we said earlier, I'm cautiously optimistic.
But that has nothing to do with all these things I just mentioned, the success or failure of -- it won't be failure, but the level of success of the operation has nothing to do with how well it's been executed.

b6: Right.

b3 b6: Planned and executed. It's amazing. That is the most well planned and executed thing I have seen in now 20 months of being over here in the two tours. So --

b6: And, again, how long have you been in the service?

b3, b6: Twenty-seven years.

b6: Twenty-seven years,

b3, b6: Good stuff, and I attribute that to two great commanders, General Petraeus and General Odierno and some great staffs. And a lot of it fell on the Corps staff, because we are kind of the continuity side.

b(0) Well, thank you very much, b3, b6 I appreciate it. This concludes the interview. Thank you.