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By b 3 b 6

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Abstract

There has been great success in the south. It is time for a new strategy to match the changing circumstances. We're beyond 'fragile progress.' SOFA is [or is not] an easy sell to the Iraqi people. We need Iraqis to travel to the US with words of encouragement and thanks to the United States. The media has turned against the war in Iraq and opposes good news stories. Terrorism and suicide bombs will long be part of Iraqi political life, but Iraqis are resilient and their moving forward. We need to stop wringing our hands.

Discussion

Keane: The south has seen a stunning setback for the militias. There is a conviction, however, that they will be back. 1.4b, 1.4d They've gone back to rethink their tactics and means. Most are convinced . . . the analysis is they'll come back more isolated, and they'll focus on the Americans. A number of good things are happening in the south. There is confidence. If General Aziz, whom we met, is the face of the new ISF, then they'll do great. Every battalion and brigade commander has new confidence in the Iraqis. There are issues in Mosul, but TF 1.4a has done tremendous damage to foreign fighters. They've lost their network. They tried falling back to anbar, but 1.4a stopped them cold. Sunnis told us they're determined to stop AQI, but so long as their enfranchised. I said I figured they would have 90% turnout for the elections. He said no, it will be 100%, guaranteed. That is encouraging. 1.4b, 1.4d

1.4b, 1.4d We need the right strategy. JAM lacked AQI's tenacity. Goons lack the moral fiber and military skills necessary to keep up a fight. It has been a dramatic turnaround. I don't see the enemy regaining momentum, though the command doesn't agree. The question is how do we look ahead and Red Team this. We're cautious because we got it wrong before. Petraeus' predecessors, Sanchez and Casey, overestimated the Iraqis leaders they were cultivating and underestimated the threat. Now, the current leadership keep talking about 'fragile progress.' I think it is better than that. We have already crossed a line, because we're cautious to a fault of drawing conclusions.

Bergner: I asked an Iraqi if this was irreversible. He answered that the chances of a reverse were decreasing daily. 1.4b, 1.4d

1.4b, 1.4d It is interesting the way the Iraqis are learning new relationships.

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Keane: But don't drink the Iraqi koolaid. It was us fighting and forcing them to meet standards that made the difference. We can't pull away prematurely. We can give our adversaries a perceived opening. Talk to brigade commanders and you'll find that nobody has enough forces.

Fred Kagan: We're in a lull. The enemy will come back.

1.4b, 1.4d

Tueller: They're pushing back against us.

Fred Kagan: These are weird dynamics. We don't hear opposition to the SOFA anywhere in Iraq except in the COR. As a result, American politics is getting the wrong message.

b 3 b 6 I disagree. There is a substantial anti-SOFA movement. In general, they prefer we see our way out.

BG Perkins: There is a problem getting an accurate picture out there.

Tueller: Iraqi oil and troop presence are very sensitive issues. Thank goodness Sharistani is the Minister of Oil. His nationalist credentials are beyond question, and he knows he needs foreign investment.

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

Tueller: That is 50-years of work, and it will continue regardless.

Bergner: In press conferences, it used to be me hosting. Now it is an Iraqi hosting. They are carrying things. I'm the guest. We provide visuals and the talking points, but it is conveying respect and sovereignty for them to lead. I use a barbershop assessment. When I get my haircut downstairs, the barbers tell me they notice these things, and they appreciate them.

Keane: Getting Iraqis to come to the US to address these issues would help and would be seen as thanking Americans for their sacrifices. The current administration has no credibility.

Bergner: What about Sumaidi?

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Keane: Positive stories are there, but they don't take adequately. I just want American people to know the Iraqis appreciate us.

1.4b, 1.4d

b 6 There is an opportunity to bring Iraqis with credibility to address Americans.

Bergner: Nasir Obeidi would be best.

Keane: He's never been invited to the states. (b)(6) He wants to come, but on an official visit. He is understated and very credible.

Bergner: MG Othman of the 8th IA Division has huge credibility.

Keane: My assessment is that we are failing to convey this story to the American people. The % of Americans who think the surge has been a success has dropped.

Bergner: What do you want us to do?

b 6 We need American brigade commanders to speak, to address the press.

Bergner: We get them in front of the press, but get very little coverage.

Tueller: They've stopped listening to Iraq.

Bergner: We're working hard.

Keane: The media opposes good news from Iraq. When Obama comes [to Iraq], you need to seize on the expected attention.

Bergner: What is your objective?

Tueller: We think people have tuned out.

Keane: What people are not getting is that this has anything to do with the national interests. The narrative that AQI is not AQ is the ruling myth that we must defeat.

Tueller: There is more here than the global war on terror, but that is very difficult to communicate.

Keane: There is an opportunity. There are two things we are doing: 1) We defeating AQ. 2) 1.4b, 1.4d
1.4b, 1.4d If you change your narrative, that will be a story.

b 6 It is hard.

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Keane: Change messaging points and push Iraqis to the front of Americans' views. Get Iraqis' stories out there.

b 6 I'll be working on a documentary over the next few months. The print media is overwhelmed with election politics.

Tueller: Don't discount the CoR, which many emerging Iraqi nationalists . .

Keane: The nature of the enemy's tactics. The suicide bomber . . we've had enormous tactical success and it will be long studies. A UK officer said the British had long thought that counterinsurgency was the coin of the realm, but he said what the US has achieved in Iraq is unparalleled. This is an absolutely new standard. One thing that spooks the command . . Crocker has said "we have to kill all the car bombers," but we'll never kill every one of them. They'll always be here, but the population hates them and they'll have no future in Iraq. We've seen enough. Iraqis are resilient, like Israelis. They've decided to live and to participate. Nothing is inhibiting their living. We now have to re-assess. Iraqis are moving past it; we need to move past it. We need to find a new paradigm.

(b)(6) There are traffic jams, and real estate is going up.

Keane: I do not believe the Sol is crucial. You've got Sunnis overwhelmingly moving forward, and they're not going to go back, Sol or no Sol.

Bergner: The criminal aspect is there. We need employment for them.

Keane: We need to stop wringing our hands.

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