*SECRET*

U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

+ + + + +

INTERVIEW

OF.

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

RECONCILIATION CELL

MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS-IRAQ

+ + + + +

JANUARY 30, 2008

BAGHDAD, IRAQ

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

*SECRET*
PROCEEDINGS

This is the 3 Corps Writing Historian and Multinational Corps Historian from the Center of Military History. Today is 30 January 2008, and I am at the al Faw Palace, the Headquarters of the Multinational Corps outside of Baghdad, Iraq.

could you please state your full name and the position you now fill in the Joint Fires Cell?

Yes. and I am the Chief of Targeting and the Deputy for MNCI Reconciliation Cell.

Did I get that correct? You are in the Joint Fires Cell?

Yes, we are in the Joint Fires Cell, but the Reconciliation Cell is subordinated to the Corps overall and has a line directly to General McDonald. It is in the JFC, but since it was added in the middle of our deployment, it actually isn't part of the JFC other than its allegiance to General McDonald as our first General
Officer supervisor.

So you --

It's actually the MNCI Reconciliation Cell versus the MNCI Joint Fire Cell Reconciliation Cell.

Right, but you report directly to General McDonald on reconciliation?

Yes. (Phonetic) and myself is direct to General McDonald and then to General O.

And I understand you are the Deputy. May or may not return to this position. Is that correct?

We plan on him coming back in the early part of February, and then with the change in the Corps, the make-up and composition of how they decide to organize to do the function of reconciliation is still being worked at this time.

All right. Okay.

We chose to do a cell only because we had to stand it up very quickly and
group of people instead of spreading it out across the staff. 18th is looking at possibly operationalizing, since it has gotten so big, and putting those things in FUOPS and embed it across the staff.

(b)(6) I see. Okay. Can you describe what the Rec. Cell, Reconciliation Cell, is supposed to do at your level?

(b)(6) The (Inaudible)

Reconciliation Cell mission and intent has not changed much since we stood it up in June. How we are actually executing that intent has changed dramatically.

With this entire effort that has grown so rapidly since the spring of '07 time frame, we had to constantly adapt and change to the environment in Iraq, so that we are doing the appropriate tasks and guidance in support of General Odierno's intent to ensure that the divisions and the MEF are conforming with that general guidance and accomplishing the goals as they continue to evolve.

This reconciliation effort is not only a...
political line of operation and, therefore, there is many more nuances that are outside the Corps' control that we have to be a stakeholder in and be flexible to adapt to those changing conditions in the environment.

(b)(6) How would you describe General McDonald's, your boss's intent for reconciliation?

(b)(3), (b)(6) General McDonald has a -- First and foremost, he is the executor of General Odierno's guidance and intent, and executes what the Corps Commander decides for us to do, that he does in conjunction with Force.

Then he is also the primary General Officer interface with the IFCNR or the Iraqi Formal Council for National Reconciliation that Prime Minister Maliki has designated as the conduit for reconciliation activities for the government of Iraq.

General McDonald -- His intent is to continually work with that organization and with the Force FSEC, the Force Strategic Engagement Cell, to shape those two entities that are in the international zone so that our interests and General Odierno's interests are best represented.
This is not like a military operation: We cut an order and, therefore, it is. There is much negotiation, compromise and continued organizational effort to get the things done the way that we think is in our best interest and in the best interest of the Iraqi people.

(b)(6): All right. I am going to drop back a little bit on the organization that you are in, the Joint Fires Cell.

Could you describe the change, the name change that was undertaken of your cell back in September, I believe it was.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. Yes, sir. We changed both General McDonald's title and the title of the cell based on a continuing evolution of how the Corps visualized itself in terms of the processes, procedures and organizational construct we used as the operational headquarters in Iraq.

In previous rotations and even in the beginning of our rotation, the effects based approach to operations was looked at as at least a methodology for critical thinking and problem analysis that the
staff did as a whole. That is why we are the Joint
Fires and Effects Cell, and General McDonald was the
Effects Coordinator.

That turned out to be problematic on a
number of levels, both at the individual and
organizational level. As we matured our processes and
General Odierno became more experienced here in Iraq
as the months went by, we evolved into a more
traditional construct of full spectrum operations that
fully take into account the Commander's intent for
achieving certain types of objectives on the ground
and certain conditions in the battle space without
using the problematic effects word that tends to hang
up a lot of people, both in planning, executing and
assessing operations.

And that word is?

Effects.

Effects. Okay.

Effects is the
problematic term. So in September right around the
time we went to Fort Bragg, General McDonald decided
that he would become the Deputy Commanding General of
Fires, and we would take out the E of the Joint Fires and Effects Cell and become just the Joint Fire Cell.

Did that really change what we were doing?

Not really, but it changed the way that critical thinking was done and how missions were coordinated across the staff.

(b)(6) Do you know how 18th Airborne Corps is configured, what they are going to call themselves, your counterparts?

Yes, sir. 18th -- The only challenge that we faced here, we are the last legacy corps by MTO (Phonetic) to come into theater. 18th Airborne Corps has already transformed to a modular design, and obviously, how the staff organized is ultimately the Commander's decision, and here when a corps comes to MNCO, you are fitting into a larger JTF structure, but they are going to have a Fire Support Cell that is subordinate to the C-3 and will only do the traditional lethal fires and air support and EW coordination that a fire support cell does at the lower tactical echelons.

They will not have the equivalent of
General McDonald that will have IO and other pieces. Those coordinations will be under the larger C-3 umbrella, under DCG Fairder ( Phonetic) who is their Deputy Commanding General of Operations. So a slightly different approach to accomplishing the same functions.

(b)(6) I see. I also want to clarify one thing. The reconciliation is really Reconciliation and Engagement Cell. Is that correct?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. It is Reconciliation and Engagement Cell. However, due to the amount of operational requirements that the CLCs, the Concerned Local Citizens, have become, the cell is consumed with reconciliation activities vice reconciliation and engagement planning.

We do very limited engagement planning. Operations inside the REC are then coordinating physical link-up of certain individuals across various levels of headquarters to execute the engagement.

We do not do the engagement planning at the level like the FSEC does, because we have a much larger operational burden managing the 8,000 CLCs in
accordance with the divisions.

(b)(6) Right. I'd like to take you back in time to the April-May time frame and have you discuss about the term reconciliation and how that term became so important to the Corps.

What caused it to do that?

(b)(3),(b)(6) Well, I will say it from my perspective, and this is now probably the Corps' perspective. This is just my perspective as the lead action officer for this activity for the Corps.

What happened is with the Awakening movement in Anbar that really started in the summer of '06-fall '06 time frame in a very heavily Sunni homogeneous area with the Marines, traditional reconciliation activities were starting. However, when that migrated closer into Baghdad and into the Belts of Baghdad that we saw with Abu Ghraib and Abu Zahm (Phonetic) and such, it really wasn't reconciliation.

It really was more accommodation, because we as a third party between the Iraqi citizenry and
government of Iraq are heavily involved in what they do. We were already down the road of reconciliation having a meaning that had changed for how things were happening here in theater. That had gained traction both in military lexicon as well as in the media.

So we were stuck with reconciliation being the label put on this larger popular movement that was starting, and we actually did discuss changing the term of what we were doing.

General O. never really made a decision to change it. We weren't happy with reconciliation, because it wasn't what we were doing, but as I said, the ball was already in the court and in play. So we decided to continue it, and we also were hoping that, when you look at reconciliation at the larger level, we were hoping that it would -- this would be very temporary, and we would actually get into true reconciliation between GOI and its people in a more rapid fashion than we've been able to thus far.

All right. You know, I was here in June, and of course, this is our second interview with you. I did one with you in June. But
in June it seemed like the CG especially, but there
was a lot of talk at the Corps staff and in the BUAs,
the briefings, about reconciliation.

Then the Frago on reconciliation came out,
I think, at the beginning of June, the 4 Frago. What
I'm trying to get at is why you think it burst on the
scene, because it almost seems like, you know, when I
was here in March, I don't even recall hearing that
term used, and I come back two months later, and
everybody is talking about it.

So in my view, it looked like it burst on
the scene, and so why is that? Why did it happen so
suddenly? It seemed to.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. Well, first
and foremost, and I cannot stress this enough, and if
you had (Phonetic) or one of the Intel
guys in here, he would tell you the same thing, is we
were very fortunate that General Petraeus and General
O. put the puzzle together and saw this wave that was
already happening with the local Iraqi citizenry, in
many ways almost across the country, and I call it
like you catch the big wave, and we were just lucky.
We jumped on the surfboard at the right time, and we rode the wave, and we capped it right away.

We were lucky that we did, because it was ready to burst. And as soon as we found a vehicle to bring these people in from the cold -- We were hoping it would not be a Coalition vehicle, i.e., the critical infrastructure security contracts and our allegiance with them through the rewards program.

We were hoping the GOI under a traditional DVR would do that. But that was not happening. That was stalled and dying, and General O. and General Petraeus saw we had a window of opportunity here. It was high risk, but at that point, you have to remember what the conditions were in the spring time frame, and our casualty rate, our political conditions back home in the States and the general outlook of where we were at here to get the surge to pay off, we had to roll with it and take a gamble.

Luckily, we've got commanders like those two that are willing to make those hard calls and find -- force the staff to find a method to get it done, which we did, and then everything just took off from
there.

We ended up putting the cap in place in December due to political friction at that point between Force in the greater aggregate and Prime Minister Maliki, but that has since become less of a critical boundary with the PM and more of a containment on our own end, just because this was getting so large, it was becoming unwieldy.

We probably -- If we did not cap, we probably could have -- I don't know; this is speculation, but probably in the hundreds of thousands of individuals come forward, because this has truly become a local grassroots political movement, as well as a security movement; because the Iraqi people are tired of us, tired of an ineffective GOI, tied of AQI, tired of JAM special groups, and really want to get on with their lives, return to normalcy, have a functioning economy, schools that work, essential services that work, and get on with everyday lives like any other human beings do in the world.

(b)(6) Now one of the key vehicles that made that work, I guess, beginning in June was
the CERP program. Right? The Commander's Program to be able to, on the ground at the grassroots level, to recruit and to pay on a salary basis for a period of 90 days, every 90 days a group of Concerned Local Citizens. Is that right?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. Sir, initially we attempted to get the government of Iraq to buy off on what we were terming police support units, which are police auxiliaries that would be paid less than an IP but would be local security augmentation to the IP forces; because as part of the surge, as part of securing the population, which is our number one objective, you've got to live with the population in order to secure it.

That takes a lot of manpower, and even with 20 brigades, we still had to figure out how to be bigger than we are, and the way to do that was to bring these people in that already wanted to participate but had nowhere to go, and bring them into the local security structure in their neighborhoods, because they didn't want to lose the neighborhoods. They want to secure their homes and their families and...
their businesses and their schools, like anybody else would.

We tried and tried to get the PSUs to get adopted by GOI, couldn't get the traction --

(b)(6) : PSU?

(b)(3), (b)(6) : PSUs, Police Support Unit. We tried that concept for about 30 days we worked that hard, and then we said, okay, this is not going to work; we have to find some other means.

Some very smart guys here in the Rec., our lawyers and our C-8 resource managers found a way that we could get them into a CERP security contract, called a critical (Inaudible) security contract, where they are guarding their neighborhoods on a CERP contract from us to perform local security activities of that infrastructure.

That allowed them to function on the ground, have ties with local ISF through the IA and the IP and with us, and increase our security footprint at the local level, which is where it matters.
That vehicle was able to propel our security gains, kind of like a nitrous oxide boost, if you will, to what the growth in the ISF and the growth of our 20 brigades allowed us to do. So it was kind of like a supercharge to the surge.

It is not solely responsible for the success, but it is a key ingredient to the cocktail that we brewed here in the summer of '07.

Now CERP is C-E-R-P, and that's the Commander's Emergency Response Program. And we use CERP dollars to do many, many different things, and the reason why we defaulted to CERP as a funding stream, even though we are working now with different streams and different transition plans we'll get into, but that is the only available funding stream that military commanders have 100 percent access to and can do things rapidly here on the ground.

CERP is ammunition. It is money that is ammunition in this fight here in Iraq, and it is absolutely critical to enabling the Commander's
flexibility to meet conditions on the ground, and we keep having to use CERP to do a lot of different things due to the inability of the U.S. government funding programs to get money on the ground where and when we need it, how we need it. That's why we end up using CERP for so much.

(b)(6) Do you think this idea of paying the Concerned Local Citizens is a wise and sound investment?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Absolutely. General Petraeus has done many briefings with the media and back to DoD. They use a standard set of slides with the SECDEF to show - Some smart (Inaudible) have done some analysis of the money spent in CERP contracts versus lives saved and vehicle/equipment damage saved over time.

It is a very small sum of money for the amount of money and, most importantly, lives that we are saving on the return end. There's many areas where you can take vignettes, especially like in Mahmudiya where they had very high casualties in the spring, and since that time they have had, I think,
three KIAs over the last six months.

So that is heavily tied to the amount of CLCs they have in the area, because the people have always known where the insurgents are. They are now helping us find the insurgents, find theIEDs and are stopping the activity before it can kill our soldiers and the Iraqi Security Forces.

(b)(6) It also leads to -- I mean, when you get these Concerned Local Citizen groups together, you organize them, they are equipped. Now we don't pay for their weapons, I understand.

(b)(3), (b)(6) No, we are not legally allowed to arm or equip the CLCs. They are not a paramilitary force. They are purely a local security arm.

(b)(6) Sort of like a neighborhood watch.

(b)(3), (b)(6) They are a neighborhood watch, but neighborhood watch in this part of the world means you got an AK-47, which everybody does.

What we do when the units -- and this is
all done at the company, task force, brigade level --
negotiate with -- I keep talking to that thing instead
of talking to you.

That's fine.

They negotiate with
the sheikhs or with the citizen groups, and then as
part of the contract negotiation, the contractor,
whenever that may be, has to provide them with
uniforms, radios, life support, all those things, and
that's figured into the contract cost so that he can
provide that for --

As well as salaries, for
example?

As well as -- the
CLCs, right, which we have not put in a cap into
effect where they cannot be paid more than $350 per
month, which is roughly equivalent to what an IP
private gets with their hazardous pay, because we
don't want to make it more lucrative than being in the
ISF, because we want to get them transitioned either
into the formal ISF structure, into another ministry's
security apparatus like MOO (Phonetic) or MOE or into
one of the employment programs like JTERP (Phonetic), VOTEC, CSC or, you know, in the perfect world into the private sector.

As the economic and governance gains happen under this bubble of security that we have, you know, the Iraqi version of Blockbusters and McDonalds and everything else will start sprouting up, and these guys will be able to just get jobs and be normal private sector people. That's the goal in the long run.

We are already seeing that happen out west in Anbar.

Now the fact that these are local, and the fact that the interaction takes place between U.S. company leaders and battalion leaders down at the grassroots level, also allows the benefit of intelligence and getting to know who the local people are.

So that can rebound to our benefit, like you just pointed out, where the IEDs are buried, where the caches are, and where the bad guys are. Is that right?
(b)(3) (b)(6)

Yes, sir. And if you look at graphs that Force produces and we produce, the amount of caches that have been found has gone up exponentially over the last year. We are spending in the neighborhood of 1100 percent more money this year in the DoD rewards program than we did a year ago, and the amount of tips received is also going up.

That is all a function of securing the population, living with the population, knowing the population, and being able to use those human sensors to help us prosecute the fight.

(b)(6) That's all good stuff.

(b)(3) (b)(6) And I would have to say that, when we deal with the CLCs and with the local citizenry, the two programs in the Commander's toolbox that we have built for them in our reconciliation framework, two most used are the CIS contracts, critical infrastructure contracts, and --

(b)(6) Critical infrastructure contracts?

(b)(3) (b)(6) Yes, sir, critical infrastructure security contracts, CIS contracts, and
the DoD Rewards Program that we did major reorganization to so that the Rewards Program is much more viable and responsive to the needs of the company, battalion and brigade commanders; because this is truly a grassroots, bottom up fight, and they have to be empowered.

Money is ammunition. They've got to be able to access it. In the previous years, the Reward Program was extremely cumbersome and was not useful -- as useful as it could be at the company, battalion and brigade level.

We have bumped the amount of money that the brigade commanders are allowed to approve for rewards, as well as, most importantly, got money down -- standing monies down to the company, battery, troop level so that they can pay immediate tip money on intelligence gained.

Three years ago, it would take two to four weeks and sometimes longer to get tip money paid and, obviously, you cannot reinforce -- people are risking their lives to get us information. By telling them, oh, come back in two to four weeks, and maybe we will
have money for you.

Now it is an immediate pay as you go system. The company commanders have money every day down in the companies, which makes it 1,000 times more effective.

(b)(6) Is the rewards program just targeted for tips or is it also for caches?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. It is encompassing for caches, IEDs, intelligence, and all manners of those things. We also use what we call rewards in kind with some of the volunteer groups.

When they bring us intelligence, we may reward them with cellphones, portable radics, other types of rewards in kind that are equivalent to a monetary reward but provide some functionality to even increase their value to us and to the Iraqi government even more.

So a very, very key piece by a lot of hard bureaucratic work, because one of the most challenging things with this whole reconciliation effort has been not -- It isn't so much fighting the Iraqi insurgency and dealing with the people.
SECRET

It's fighting our own bureaucracy and understanding between what is happening here on the ground in Iraq and getting that up the chain through Force, CENTCOM, OSD and into the U.S. government.

That is an ongoing daily battle. This has been an educational piece that we do all the time. We are on the road constantly explaining and educating and making people aware of what is happening, so that there is a more uniform understanding of what has happened.

The CLCs are not a paramilitary group. They are not Sunni armed militia that we are designing to overthrow the Iraqi government. They are none of those things. But all those perceptions have been out there and have caused us problems in getting the resources that we need to our first line combat leaders on the ground who are dealing with the Iraqi people every day.

And I wondered if you would address the critical infrastructure security contracts. Does that come under the CERP program?

Yes. The CIS...
contracts are funded under CERP in accordance with CERP regulatory guidance.

Right. And can you give me an example of what a CIS, critical infrastructure security contract, would do?

Right. In any mulhollah (Phonetic) and in the rural areas as well, in areas where they have water pumping stations, sewer pumping stations, power substations, critical bridges or dams or those types of things that are important infrastructure to keep their local economies going as well as maintaining security in their areas against targets that the insurgents have liked to damage in the past, they secure those and fix site security.

So, basically, they are helping secure local areas so that the ISF and Coalition forces can conduct offensive operations and more aggressive operations against AQI, JAM special groups, or other forms of insurgency.

Again, it goes back to getting -- to secure the population, you have to live with it, and you have to be teamed with it. That is what we are...
trying to get at. That also helps us get larger than we are by bringing in these folks to help us control the ground so that we can move combat forces to other areas.

These CIS contracts also benefit the Iraqi local population. Right?

Right, yes, sir.

Then, sir, that is an excellent point, and we are working on now trying to figure out how we are going to assess this.

General Odierno, through all his battlefield circulation travels around the country each day, brought it up about a month ago. We are starting to realize now that the CLC monies have been getting pumped into various areas over the last six months or eight months, the accumulation of that spending and investment in local areas has had second and third order effects that we were not anticipating, because now these groups are having money.

So, therefore, they are spending money in their local neighborhoods that they don't want to leave, which therefore, helps the businesses come back
sooner, which forces those businesses to hire guys and go out and get distributors to bring in stuff.

So we are seeing a larger micro-economic impact above and beyond the first order direct spending of us paying a salary to the CLC. So it is actually now a double-win, and we are trying to figure out how we are going to measure and assess that additional value added that we are getting from each CERP dollar expended.

This is very helpful when you look at areas, especially in MND-North and MND-Center out in the more rural areas where the economic and reconstruction dollars have not been as tightly massed as they have been here in Baghdad.

So we are starting to get some additional economic benefit without going down the economic road, if you will, by using the CIS contracts.

Okay.

Can we stop? Be right back.

Yes.

(Short Recess.)
We are resuming now.

I wondered if you could please walk me forward from the May time frame to the present and identify from your position in the Corps what you consider key points in the reconciliation -- in the development of the reconciliation process?

Okay. Well, there's probably been three major points along the road here that we have went through.

First and foremost was: In June General Odierno and General Petraeus, rightfully seeing this window of opportunity we had with the Iraqi people, the Corps published Frago 107 to upward 07-01, which was our reconciliation guidance to unit, at least the original framework.

That was happening at the same time we had a ongoing effort that had been brewing for several months, which was b6 (Phonetic) and the 4,000 or so Sunni (Inaudible) in Abu Ghurayb in the 1st Cavalry Division sector, MND-B.

That's 25 Cav?

2-5 Cav.
and 2-5 Cav in 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division sector in Abu Ghurayb.

That was the first major group that came forward outside of the Anbar SAI piece that the West was working since '06. That took a lot of time to get through the political challenges with GOI and a lot of negotiations by very senior Generals in negotiation with GOI to get that done.

We finally got agreement. We got 2000 of them into training. 1742 graduated and are now Abu Ghurayb IPs.

Did that go perfectly? No, it didn't, because even when they went into training, we still had to provide them separate training areas and separate stationing when they came out, because they were in the IPs, but they weren't really in the IPs. They were getting paid. They got blue shirts, but there was still some sectarian issues and other organizational strike issues that forced us to do some different things to accommodate GOI's acceptance of these folks into the IP.

That was really the precedent event that
started our larger movements of bringing the CLCs on
the CIS contracts and then simultaneously working to
transition those where we could into the ISP
structure.

In July, the Prime Minister directed the
IFCNR to stand up the Iraqi formal Committee for
National Reconciliation led by (b)(6) (Phonetic) and
(b)(6) (Phonetic), and that organization was
directed by the PM to handle all matters national
reconciliation for him and report directly to him.

That became the focal point of many of the
Coalition engagements on larger reconciliation issues,
but as the CLC program got larger and larger and we
realized that the reintegration piece and transition
piece was going to get large, the IFCNR became
primarily focused on CLC management and those kinds of
things.

That was probably step number two, and
then from the summer into December things were
growing, growing, growing, and we had just explosive
growth.

(b)(6): Can you talk a little bit
about the growth --

Right. As of June 1st -- June 1st we had 2000 or so people, and by January 1st we were up to 80,000.

How many were we by September?

I would say around 35,000. I can get a better number on that. September '09 is the first -- I should say the 9th of September '07 is the first decent snapshot that we were able to get from units, because we had such great growth, it took a while to get the (inaudible) controls in place and get our arms around exactly how many we had.

I'm sorry. What was that date again?

9 September. That was our first reporting cutoff.

First reporting. Oh.

When we had good, clean numbers that were --

And it was about 35,000?

I will go back and get you the exact number, sir, but it was probably around
that. We had attempted to get various reporting as we were going, but at that point in the summer, from June to September, the focus was on growing contacts, and we were doing that in conjunction with ourselves with the local units, with the ORA (Phonetic) playing a heavy piece, CJSOTF.

A lot of people were involved in getting contacts linked up with our local units in areas, unlike (b)(3), (b)(6) where they came basically knocking on his door, and growing our contacts. Then in about September time frame, CIS took off, and then by January we were up to 80,000.

The third key point that I would submit is the 2 December MCN-S meeting between General Odierno, the Prime Minister and General Petraeus was a seminal day in terms of agreements that we made with GOI and O. decided to enforce for the Corps.

That is when we first had discussion of the cap. Well, there had been discussions that we were going to cap in November and in December, but we had not decided yet how we were best going to do that and how things were going to play out; because this is
not purely a military decision. Obviously, there's heavy political decisions that have to be made, depending on the current state of play with GOI.

So at the 2 December MCNS, General O. laid out a very, very transparent briefing to the PM, because up until that point we kept having to brief over and over again to the IFCNR everything we were doing, because they were accusing us of not being transparent, not laying our where the CLCs were.

There was a lot of mistrust from GOI against what we were doing, and we had a series of brigade, then division, and then ultimately General O. and General P. laid it out for the Prime Minister.

We agreed, at least verbally committed to supporting the reconciliation movement and the CLC movement, and we at that point as well agreed to capping at 103,000 -- I should say at around 100,000.

MCNS meeting -- what does that stand for?

It is the Ministerial Committee for National Security.

All right.
That is the big meeting each week that the very seniors have.

Right. I've seen it mentioned. I just wanted to capture that.

And so that was probably the third seminal point, and now we are into this phase of going hard on -- intensified (Inaudible), and now we have been going very, very hard in transition planning.

A couple of things on transition as this gets cashiered, because there's a lot of misperceptions out there that we keep fighting, both through orders, in the press and to our units.

We are in no rush to transition the CLCs to the government of Iraq. Our first priority, first and foremost, is security of the local Iraqi population, security of our soldiers, and security of the ISF.

So local security will drive any decision that the division and brigade commanders make, in conjunction with the MNCI commander, whoever that may be, going forward.
Security will drive our transition. There is no timeline that says we have to turn over by June of '09, by October '08. There is no hard mark on the wall. We have goals for transition.

As the security environment, hopefully, continues to improve, we will be able to transition more of these CLCs into other types of employment and not have to use them in security. But if the local security situation demands their presence, we will continue to either renew their contracts under our control or at some point in the future, transition them to MOI in a security contract role or find some other modicum of doing that.

We will not transition them just for the sake of transitioning to make some arbitrary timeline. We will not make those mistakes with this transition that have been made in some other transitions in the past.

(b)(6). The cap you talked about -- Is that the cap in total numbers, so it is capped at about 80,000?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Well, no, sir. The
cap has morphed over time. Like I said, everything in reconciliation is not cut and dry. It changes depending on the current state of play in the battle space, with militarily, politically as well.

So the cap started at 103,000, and that was for total CLCs, and total CLCs, we mean contracted, CIS personnel, plus active volunteers. Our active volunteer number has become less and less large of a factor, but initially we counted them into the CLC numbers.

So it was your contract number, plus your volunteer number gave you your CLC, which was your cap.

Earlier this month, General Odierno changed his guidance cap-wise, because we learned more, understood more, and realized what we were dealing with, and we changed the cap definition to only being our contracted CLCs.

(b)(6): All right, and that is still at about 103,000?

(b)(3), (b)(6): We just changed it today, in fact, to 107,000. We allowed more for
Center because of the issues. Center has done a tremendous job in expanding security, basically tying from Mahmudiya east across the river and into Wasit. They have had a larger and larger requirement for CLCs, just because they don't have the troop density down there for ISF and Coalition.

That is our point on the transition piece.

We may end up having small pockets of contracts, whether ourselves or, hopefully, under SDFI control 18 or 24 months into the future, because there's some places where there might not ever be ISF to be envisioned to go in there, but we have to still provide some sense of security until local conditions continue to mature.

Right.

So we may still have a small number, albeit a small number, on contract well down the road. We are not going to go to 100 percent transition just to make some arbitrary timeline that we have drawn for ourselves. Conditions on the ground will drive the train.

I went on your website and...
reviewed the reconciliation page, and I went through each division and tried to capture the numbers, MND -- each MND.

The MND-Baghdad and MND-Center have the most CLCs.

Absolutely.

And they are in the neighborhood of 30. I think Baghdad is about 30, and MND-Center has the most, about 31 or 32, something like that, when I looked at it yesterday.

I don't know how current those figures are.

Every week. They are updated every week, and in some cases, depending on the requests for information that come in, sometimes we end up updating them more than we want to, which is almost every day.

I looked at Multinational Division-North where the security situation is most precarious, and I didn't see too many up there. I forget the exact figure, but it was --

It's in the low teens.
*SECRET*

Yes. It was significantly lower by half than in Baghdad and in Center.

Correct.

I wondered why that was. If the security problem is greatest up there, is it a question of population density versus the wide open expanses up there or is it a question of the problem with the population, that they don't want to get into these? What do you think it is?

Right. It's a multi -- There's many different pieces to a very complex problem up north. As you know, the North has never been the center of attention that Baghdad has had. It is extremely complex battle space.

As you mentioned, it is a very, very large battle space. We have about half the number of soldiers up north than we do here in Baghdad, half the ISF.

What we have found is where we have forces and where the ISF have forces, the CLCs are. It is difficult to cultivate these folks away from our units and away from the ISF. When you take that into...
account, as well as the traditional AQI safe grounds and Ninevah and --

and very challenging. Then the whole Kurd piece coming out of the KRG region and into the Mosul-Kirkuk problem set, things become much more tenuous, and the traditional CLC model does not work as cleanly as it does here.

North is working that and has been working it for several months, but it has proved to be much more difficult up north than it has been in Baghdad and in Center, especially in Mosul.

Mosul has turned into being an extremely complex piece that we are currently engaged in, and probably will consume North for the rest of its rotation here at least, as it has got many, many competing demands facing it that sometimes we just sight on here in Baghdad as we are so Baghdad focused.

We hope -- North has got plenty of cap space. We have no shortage of money or resource, and we hope that North will use these forces to augment their security as best they can, given their local
conditions. But we will see how things play out.

   Everywhere in Iraq is different. I call it the patchwork of Iraq. What works in one brigade sector doesn't work in another brigade sector, doesn't work in the battalion nextdoor sector. So we have to be cognizant of that, and it is not a cookie cutter approach.

   We've got a very useful slide that shows the difference in the models between Anbar, Diyala, into Wasit and those things, because the Awakening is very different across the country.

   And I also noticed that in Anbar, of course, you have the Anbar Awakening first and the Sunni tribal structure itself has played a major role there, but the CLC numbers are very low there.

   Is that because they have already been incorporated into the local IPs?

   Yes, sir. Really, from my perspective -- and I tend to explain it to people -- is Anbar is a generation ahead of the rest of Iraq. They caught onto the program about a year
ahead of everybody else.

In some ways -- The Marines have done fantastic work, and not to cut down anything that the MEF has done, because they have done some tremendous, tremendous stuff in light of the fact that Anbar never is -- they may never -- Baghdad always is the main effort -- they have done a tremendous amount with the little that they have had. However, the homogeneous Sunni population and its lack of outside influences are not as pronounced as in other areas of Iraq.

So if there was a great place for us to start, it was in Anbar. SAI was able to stand up quickly with Sheikh Sittar (Phonetic). The Marines were able to get their arms around that. He had instant -- not instant, but very rapid control over the majority of the Anbari population.

They were sick and tired of AQI living in their backyard for the last four years. So they moved out well ahead of the rest of Iraq.

They never really had CLCs in the sense of the program that we needed, that we have done in other parts of the country, because they had no requirement
for it. They already had the local security provided by SAI, the IPs, the ISF and the Marines.

So we helped West in reconciliation effort, primarily with economics and governance support, which is really what they need to get fully reconciled from the regional to the national government, which we hope to get in the rest of the country this year as the rest of the country catch up.

So they really didn't have the CLC in a traditional sense of CIS guards.

(b) Can you briefly describe the ongoing reconciliation efforts and MND-Center South and MND-Southeast? I know it is a little bit beyond -- outside the range, but I know there are some reconciliation units there.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. Again, this is my perspective and not the Corps' perspective.

We have made at some level above us, I guess national strategic level or somewhere above the Corps or in conjunction with the Corps, decisions not to pursue the Awakening, as the Iraqis call it -- the reconciliation movement in the south. When the Iraqis
say the south, that means MND-Center South and Southeast area.

That has been a political decision to accommodate GOI and the PM's requests to our leadership at whatever level. That -- In our opinion, the narrow view of reconciliation is problematic, because just like we saw in MND-Center's area, and we know in Kadicea (Phonetic) and in Diwo (Phonetic), the people are ready to come out.

They are not happy with their provincial government. They are not happy with the ISF -- Well, I shouldn't say that. They are moderately happy with the Iraqi Army, not so much the IP. They don't like the provincial government. They really don't like having the Coalition there either, but they are ready to come forward.

We could have had many, many thousands down there, but we chose not to pursue that at this time.

I see.

And that has, in some ways, limited our abilities to be bigger than we are
down south, because we don't have the CLC mechanism to help secure those areas and provide the accelerants. So we will see how that plays out. If we had 30 brigades, we probably wouldn't have done that. I don't know that, but I'm saying I would assume that we wouldn't.

We would like, obviously, to be able to cut off the border and it does not keep sending EFPs into this country. So our inability to get bigger down there has caused us some problems we are working.

We are working to get every piece of enabler and some other things. In fact, we are going to meet today with 18th Airborne Corps. We, [b3b6] (phonetic), and our cell did some exploratory work for General Odierno on how we would do stuff in the South, given our limited resources and given the challenges that we are now in politically down there, because we realize that it's critical.

Everyone knows it's critical. It's just how you get there and how you execute it. And that has been a contentious point for us inside the
reconciliation cell, because in our dealings with the
divisions we are very, very sensitive to the south of
Iraq being really the long term issue for Iraq
stability in the near -- or I should say, in the mid-
to long term.

There is no doubt that the Iraqi people
have realized that AQI's ideology is bankrupt. They
will probably not let it resettle here. We will
commit and stay committed with a large amount of
counter-terrorism forces from now until forever
against AQI.

JAM special groups, JAM, Badr, OMUS
(Phonetic), all those pieces are much, much harder to
differentiate and much, much harder to separate from
the people. If we allow Shia extremism, extremism of
any kind -- Sunni, Shia, it don't matter; purple,
black, white, doesn't matter. We have got to stop
extremism from affecting the middle of the population
that just wants to go about life like you and I do in
suburban America.

That becomes the problem. When we don't
have forces down there, we take these provinces, and

*SECRET*

NEAL R. GROSS & CO.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701  www.nealrgross.com

(202) 234-4433
we don't have ISF, we don't have CLCs -- how we actually are able to shape that environment is going to be extremely complicated going forward.

Our concern going forward is that it may be too late until we realize the unintended consequences of decisions we made in 2007.

(b)(6) All right. That's actually all the question I have, except for one last one.

This last question I have is to give you an opportunity to cover something that we may not have discussed that you think important to get on the record.

(b)(6) Well, what I would say: When it comes to reconciliation efforts is this is nothing new. What we are doing dealing with the local population has been done time immemorial, from the time of the Romans into earlier Colonial times to what we did in Vietnam and to where we are now. This is nothing new.

The tools and how we actually did it may be different, but conceptually it's the same thing, and it goes back to the fundamental piece: Secure the
population. You got to limit the population. You got to be teamed with it, and you have to have its support.

If you don't have those three things happening, you will not be successful prosecuting the counterinsurgency fight, which leads to getting into stability.

The problem that we have with reconciliation that we've done here is we have a lack of understanding and education inside the U.S. military and inside the U.S. government in getting it done rapidly in support of our guys at the tip of the spear, at company, battery, troop level out on the ground.

That is, if we take anything away from this, is that we need to understand how to do this right away, up front, monies, ammunition, and put this into the fight.

We were already, in fact, starting this -- not at this scale, but we had plans in my last rotation here in (Inaudible) to do this on a very small scale up in west Rasheed in 2004.
So being able to do this earlier in the fight as part of the overall campaign plan will help us not get into extended, protracted issues that we face now.

All right. Thank you very much.

This concludes the interview.

---