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CG's Office, Al Faw Palace, Victory Base Camp

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## Abstract

This interview covers the summer of 2003 through June of 2004. CJT 1.4a faced drastic mission escalation. We expected more coalition contributions than showed up. Iverson does not know how much the NSC tried to enlarge the coalition. Organizing CJTF 1.4a was the hardest thing Iverson's ever done. A few principals worked with the CPA in the Green Zone while Wodjakowski was the war fighter at Victory. The CPA did not know how to function. De-Ba'athification and disbanding the Army was a disaster. The relationship with the UN was good, but they were naïve. Iverson went to the UN compound after the 17 August attack. It was a bad scene. A visit to Abu Ghraib on 30 September 2003 showed there was no leadership and the conditions were appalling. It was clear in fall '03 they needed a four star HQ. Bremer blustered without thinking about resources or implementation. MNSTC-I replaced the OST because the mission was that big. Likewise, CJTF 1.4a was not big enough and we needed a four-star HQ. III Corps came in January '04 and was able to add its staff resources to the JMD. By then, we had a number of functional C staffs in place, as well as an Intelligence Fusion Cell. It was good for the CPA to go away in June '04. We have a much more mature situation now than in '03/'04, so the current headquarters re-organization effort faces a different set of conditions. Petraeus is a master of this fight, and he is thinking ahead of the rest of us, thinking strategically and broadly.

1:18:20

## Planned Questions

In the early summer of '03, did you expect a growing coalition would relieve U.S. forces of the stability mission?

How did CJT 1.4a function in the summer of 2003, given that it was trying to organize itself at Victory Base Camp, support the CPA with staff in the Green Zone, and trying to get a JMD approved and get more personnel?

What was your impression of the relationship between Bremer and LTG Sanchez?

What was the relationship with the UN like? What was the impact of the UN bombing?

What was the detainee situation before October '03.

Why did Central Command direct CJTF 1.4a to transform into MNC-I and MNF-I?

## Interview

*I believe we did not have enough troops for the mission even before de-Ba'athification and disbanding the Army. Is that your impression?*



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1:37. Well, that's mixed, to be honest. If you look at the missions that CJTF [4] as given, the answer was they had enough troops for the mission, which was post-combat operations, stability, and overseeing the return to normalcy in Iraq and in Iraqi society, but that is not what happened. We faced a rapidly escalating insurgency, and the escalation was steep. If you look at de-Baathification and the missions we found ourselves having to do, that were not in the orders that we were given, you could say there were not enough troops on the ground, absolutely. The commander was given a set of missions. He believed he had the troops to accomplish the mission, but this was not mission creep, this was mission explosion, so events on the ground were developing quicker than anyone could respond to them.

***An example of the kinds of problems commanders faced immediately were handling weapons caches, which were everywhere, which was not a mission task, but which someone had to do something about immediately.***

3:40. Right. And, when CJTF [4] as stood up, they had no clue that these caches were as broad as they were, as large as they were, as widespread as they were, and that was just one of the tasks that we found ourselves having to do, and without the Iraqi military to assist in locating them, guarding them, getting control of them, yeah, that was just one of the missions that . . . blew out of proportion, exploded on us, literally, and we found ourselves struggling just to keep up with that portion of it.

***How long were you with CJTF [4]***

4:25. I was here for the MNF-I transition and I left on 4 June 2004.

***In the early summer of '03, did you anticipate that expanding coalition forces would relieve U.S. forces of the stabilization mission?***

5:00. Coalition forces were flowing in to the country. I think we were flowing about 168,000 at the time, US plus coalition, but that flow was not very smooth. You had units coming in, finding their area of operations, and literally having to build their complete support systems. So they were focused on building systems, getting troops on the ground, getting logistics organized, trying to maintain law and order. What was the question again?

***There was talk at the time of Poland sending a division, and India . .***

6:10. Oh, that's true, and the Turks as well, and an Arab division. There was hope at that time that those types of units would join the coalition and lend a regional touch to it, a regional support for what we were doing here. I was not in on the discussions for that, but I know that the Turks were initially approached to bring in a division up in the north, which of course showed that somebody didn't know their history. And then they were asked to come further south, probably down into Tikrit and Anbar and out into the Sunni areas. Those negotiations broke down. There was a huge Kurdish outcry against bringing the Turks in in any form. The Indians and the Pakistanis . . . I think the Pakistanis were the most forward leaning on this, but I don't know why divisions from either of those countries ever came in. I think the escalation of violence probably discouraged them. And then, there was an Arab division that was sought. That broke down too . . . probably for a lot of reasons, but 1) not knowing what was going on, 2) the

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escalation of violence, believing they would be targets as much as anything else, and of course they were being threatened, and there was an insurgency developing, which was largely Sunni led, which stated that we're going to take this back, don't get involved, we'll call when we need morale or financial support, so those divisions didn't pan out, at all. The European and Asian divisions, those from across the world . . . I think we had 37 countries at one time, El Salvador, and Guatemala I think, and several countries from South . . . Central America, and the Spanish in, and the Thais, and they were large for the size of their armies, they were organizations they were more than willing to contribute, but they came in with a different set of rules. There were very few that came in with rules that permitted them to engage in combat. We found ourselves doing most of the combat operations along with the British, and some of the Europeans were engaged in combat, and some of the Central Americans were engaged in combat because they got attacked down around Najaf and Karbala. So yeah, some of the coalition forces did not pan out, and that was disheartening, but to be honest, with the coalition in place, it was a lot of . . . I think a lot of satisfaction that we had the support we had and that each could contribute according to their national red lines.

***It is not clear to me that policy makers, the National Security Authorities, that they had any conception of how great a need we had for a robust coalition.***

10:20. That's possible. I mean, we had a UN mandate, but we didn't have a UN agreement to go to war, and you're probably right about that. I probably am not qualified to comment on that.

***In October '07, the reliance on split-headquarters operations struck me as complicated, with staff principles in the Green Zone, assistance here, and trying to support the CPA and get the JMD approved and get personnel. How did you conduct operations or organize operations when you were struggling to organize yourselves?***

11:29. It was the hardest thing I've ever experienced. If not for LTG Sanchez and his absolute determination, imposing his will, to build the systems and a great supporting staff, austere as it was, we would never have got to where he brought us in that year that he was there. That sounds, that's a little bit vague, but . . .

He came in with a Corps staff, as you know, austere, but it's a Corps staff. And he had to split that into a political or diplomatic piece, and a war fighting piece. And I believe that when CJTF-4<sup>14</sup> stood up, that was not the intent, I believe. The intent was to be a caretaker, constabulary, well that's probably the wrong word, but a caretaker organization to oversee the transition from the days of Saddam Hussein to a new government, and they believed that would take place rather quickly, and I can tell you because I saw the plans and looked at the campaign plan which Bremer put together. The primary planners were military guys, but they were leading each of his civilian agencies through the planning process because Army officers are good at that, but the problem with his campaign plan was, which identified all the LOOs, the problem was that the timeline was unbelievably unrealistic. It was six months long, from July to January of '04. That just shows you that the . . . complete misunderstanding of the task at hand at the time. I mean, LTG Sanchez brought in some key players. He brought in Maj Gen Tom Miller as the C3, BG Barbara

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Fast as the C2 (promoted to MG), and MG West as the C4. And in my mind, they were the key players. I believe (b)(3), (b)(6) was the signal brigade commander and (b)(3), (b)(6) as the SJA. He had the right horses to do the work, and I was his pol-mil, and I was leaving forward, and (b)(6) was his POLAD and she was looking forward very much at the political level for him and the interaction with Ambassador Bremer, but he had very little to work with down in the Green Zone. It was him, it was BG Hahn, it was his POLAD, it was me, it was his aide, [and] it was his XO. We were standing up the JOC, which is now the SOC. We were literally building it because it didn't exist, and trying to get systems in place, everything from communications to electricity to plumbing to a JMD, which was literally building it on the run. The war fighter down at Victory was Maj Gen Wodjakowski, and he . . . he had day-to-day operations, working very well with the division commanders, to resources them and cut through the issues they were dealing with. And of course, the divisions were out on their own making it happen on their own. There wasn't a template, a horse blanket, or anything to look at. And you're looking at AQI infiltration and other groups, and you had the Sunni insurgents, Anti-Coalition Forces, or Anti-Iraqi Forces as they were called at the time, and this was an insurgency that was moving ahead at lightening speed at the time, and so if you can imagine an escalating insurgency and escalating violence . . . an understanding finally that the infrastructures of Iraq, whether it was government infrastructure, political infrastructures, police infrastructures, were very much wanting and very much broken. And then, you're trying to do this with the Corps staff. It was the most difficult thing I'd ever seen.

***What was your impression of the CPA at the time?***

17:40. Well, Bremer came in with his team, and it was a decent team that came in initially, because they didn't see a war out of this, they saw this as a caretaker thing and rapidly turning things over to the Iraqis rather rapidly, and they were thinking in terms of Chalabi and Allawi and others. But when bullets started flying, people left, left and right. They just abandoned ship. I can't criticize them for that. They weren't soldiers, you know, but they abandoned ship. And then there were a hodgepodge of contractors coming in to do this, do that, do the other, trying to keep the pieces together, trying to bring in staffs to work with CPA so they were functional trying to put together ministry teams and trying to put together the directors for each of the lines of operation that they saw. Very difficult. The guidance that LTG Sanchez followed to the end was, we stand shoulder to shoulder with Ambassador Bremer and there'll be no space between us. And LTG Sanchez tried very hard to do that always, and he was frustrated a lot, I can tell you, I know he was frustrated a lot, because there were some decisions made in the summer of '03 that have haunted us for five years now.

***So this is decisions past de-Ba'athification and disbanding the Army.***

19:25. Those were the main ones.

***What other ones?***

I think there were decisions made on the police, for example, like on how to grow the police, but there is an international police training organization. I don't remember the name of it . . . not Interpol. There is an organization that training police in Bosnia, and it is

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an international organization of policemen that are pulled out and do these training programs. But [Bernard] Kerik came in to put that together, and for seven months, nothing happened with the police forces. Escalation of violence caused the police trainers not to leave the Green Zone, the money was allocated but not spent for police equipment, for every police force, local and across Iraq, but for eight months nothing was ordered, or very little was ordered. So the police were out there flapping, no authority, no equipment, no ability to impose order in their towns. It was an absolute . . . and there weren't decisions made . . . or not implemented, there were decisions made that were not implemented, to help grow the police force, which we all know is vital to our success here. So we lost at least eight months on the police, on that decision. The de-Ba'athification decision was an absolute travesty, because they went after every Ba'athist, which really means that they discarded the entire professional elite and technocrats of Iraqi society, teachers, doctors, nurses, you name it, they were forced out, and the same with the Army.

***Ambassador Bremer and his supporters have frequently claimed that the de-Ba'athification decree only applied to the top 1%.***

21:50. That wasn't clear to anybody, even into the fall of '03, and of course, where you have locals who are imposing their own authority, and they tell a teacher or teachers that, if you come to work, we're going to kill you, and that did happen, there was a de-Ba'athification process on-going. And they flip-flopped on it, and they flip-flopped on it for several months, and they argued it was [only] the top tiers that they were going after, but in reality, those in authority, who were anti-Ba'athist, went after every Ba'athist. Can you imagine what would have happened in the old-USSR if you had booted out every Communist-party cardholder; it would have been the same thing. Then with the Army, you know, the Army was disbanded, and Bremer can say, "well, they disbanded themselves." Say, "well, no, you're wrong." Their general officers came to us and asked what they could do. And they agreed not to fight. Had we called them back to their bases, they would have reported back to their bases, and you would have had something to build on there. And oh by the way, those soldiers in those Republican Guard and Regular Army units weren't Ba'athists, they were just soldiers, trying to make a living, trying to provide for their families, trying to do an honorable job serving their country. And if anybody doesn't think they would have pointed out the real bastards among the leaders there, who tormented them, or hard-core party members, they're dreaming. These people would have turned them in. Once they recognized that there was a new order being imposed. He can make all the excuses he wants; he's wrong.

***What was the relationship with the United Nations in the summer?***

23:45. The UN was reluctant to come in, but we were under the UNSCR, a UN mandate, and they did come in. The Special Representative of the Secretary General, Sergio Vieira de Mello, was a very prominent and well known representative of the UN. He came in with a very austere organization but with some great plans. They thought when they came in that the factions here would respect the United Nations. They thought they would be given that special status in which they would be immune from attack, in which they would be welcomed as true mediators for all factions in Iraq, and they came in in July and set up their operations on Palestine Street. And on August 17, a truck bomber

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pulled in an unsecured gate at the building they were in and detonated his explosive-laden truck right near the conference room where people were just gathering for a meeting, and killed scores.

LTG Sanchez and I and his team rushed to the site and arrived within an hour. There were Iraqi firemen and police already there. A US battalion was there, and we worked feverishly to pull people out. I was under a building with another guy trying to pull a lady out, and we pulled her out with the help of a lot of people, and she died the next day. Sergio was alive when they arrived there but he was mortally wounded. It was terrible. There were bodies strewn all over the place and buried in the rubble, and you couldn't get them out, and the structure was unsound, but we were there for probably four hours.

26:40. It was hard, and there was some criticism of CJTF-4 and I have to say that we offered security to them at the time but they turned it down, because, again, they believed as the UN that they would be given protection by anybody. 27:15.

#### SECOND RECORDING

After the bombing of 17 August, the UN pulled out. They were not a player for the rest of the year, until I left, though they did have a representative here. But they backed out after the bombing, realizing that their situation was untenable. Since then, they've come back and played a strong role in each of the elections.

I remember the day before the bombing, the SRSB was in with LTG Sanchez, and he was very positive about their mission, though less so about how successful they would be, but they were willing to give it a shot.

***I'm struck by the fact that there were Iraqi fireman and policemen who responded. These were from the former regime and they'd returned to work.***

1:50. That's right. Some of them held to their positions, they thought they'd be safe returning to their positions, and they responded to the bombing and assisted every way they could. There was a lot of violence against the police at the time. AQI or the insurgents could easily threaten them, that they were being paid by an illegal government, that they were supporting coalition forces, which meant they were an enemy, and in a lot of instances the police just backed out, or they were infiltrated in many neighborhoods, or they became self-protection organizations, or criminal organizations in their own right.

You know the police, and LTG Sanchez and I had a discussion on this back in November of '03, that the hardest one to fix and the one that needed to be fixed the most, was the police, and we knew that the institution that came into contact with the Iraqi citizens every day was the one that had to be trained the best. We knew they would be the hardest to train. The armed forces would be easier to develop, but we were running way behind on that (on everything).

***There was an incident in Fallujah where insurgents attacked a police station, the police gave chase, right by coalition forces, and the coalition opened up shooting, killing six policemen.***

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4:10. Yeah, I remember that. We went out there the next day and visited the police station that a group of about 30 insurgents had attacked. It was the Alamo that night, and we saw they barely survived. Then the April slaying and mutilation out there of the PSD members.

*As I've written accounts of the course of events, I've described battalions and brigades responding to insurgent attacks with cordon and search operations that rounded up hundreds and thousands of suspects. With nothing else to do with these guys, the units sent them up to higher, and they wound up at Abu Ghraib in the control of MP units that were not prepared for thousands of prisoners, and the system was overwhelmed.*

6:13. My first visit out there was 30 September 2003 with LTG Sanchez. I was personally appalled by the conditions out there. The prisoners were contained within concertina-wired mini-compounds and GP medium tents. The conditions were not good. They were being fed and had water. I'm not sure how their sanitation was. I was most appalled at the condition of U.S. soldiers who were living there. We went out there the day after two MP HMMWVs responded to an IDF attack. One HMMWV had gone into a canal, with one drowning. They were a QRF responding to hostile fire outside the prison.

7:15. We got in there the next morning and went in for an O & I brief with the battalion commander, and then went through the facilities to see how the troops were living. These soldiers were in despair over the loss of their comrades and you could just see it in their eyes, and the stress . . . the trauma counselor was in tears talking to somebody. The only one who had their stuff together was the female chaplain, and she had her section set up there and it was orderly and set up for visits. But the O & I was really disturbing for all of us, but especially for LTG Sanchez, because the battalion commander could not brief anything with regards to security and the reaction plan for his FOB, which was Abu Ghraib prison, and it was evident that there was a severe lack of leadership. And I'll tell you, when it boils down to it, the things that happened at Abu Ghraib are due to zero leadership out there, and that is battalion commander, his subordinates, and I'll tell you it was the brigade commander too.

8:45. And I'll tell you, I'm an engineer, but I dual track as a Middle East FAO, but I talked to the brigade commander out there, and I said, "Ma'am, the 94th Engineers is just down the street. You need to get a request in for their folks to come down here." The 94th Engineers is a combat heavy construction outfit, and they'll come out here and do an assessment and give you the facilities you need to take care of your soldiers and these prisoners out here." The 94th actually, (b)(6) was the commander, he went out there with his team, and the next time we went out, the 94th was out there improving the facilities, building infrastructure out there.

I don't want to dwell on that. The point is that Abu Ghraib was a . . . it was a challenge to say the least for anybody who was down there, but even if you are overwhelmed, and even if you are struggling with something, if you have the leadership in place, and you set the conditions for your soldiers, you can avoid disaster and in fact be successful and

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accomplish the mission. Lacking leadership and foresight and discipline, you get what you get. I hate to put it in those terms, and I'm probably being polite about it. But, I personally was just . . . I was shocked.

***Besides the idea and contact you gave the brigade commander, did LTG Sanchez give any immediate guidance or priorities to the battalion commander in the O & I?***

10:50. I can't recall exactly, but he asked "have you checked your fires?" "Are your . . . ?" I mean, he had to get at the basic tactical level here, because these people didn't have it together. They . . . were able to respond with the MPs chasing the folks down the night before I suppose, and they had folks up in the guard towers, but there was no discipline there. There was absolutely no discipline, and I put that squarely on the leaders' shoulders. But LTG Sanchez found himself having to address the issues at the purely tactical level, and telling the brigade commander to be out there. I don't think she spent a lot of time out there. LTG Sanchez was teaching basic combat leadership to battalion commanders and higher, stuff that we all learned as lieutenants. He didn't have time to be teaching that.

***Another factor that played a role was the sense that we needed intelligence to know who the enemy was, and a belief that the prisoners or someone among the prisoners could tell us what we needed to know.***

12:45. Yeah, but they had an intel cell and they were doing interrogations, and we got a briefing on it. They seemed to be standard techniques. The tracking wasn't very good. They did not have systems to track and fuse information, to corroborate or catalogue information, but the interrogators we saw had a linguist with them. They had a system, not a very good one, but a system for interrogations, that was not . . . that you could not see as being illegal . . . based on Law of Land Warfare . . . and they had medical facilities and surgeons, so they had the basics in place, but no systems for it all. Then, over time, that all went downhill and some other . . . I guess . . . we all know the Abu Ghraib story, and much to the surprise of a lot of people. We went out a couple of more times and gave a couple of Purple Hearts.

***How, when, and why was Ambassador Bremer directed to return Iraqi sovereignty by the summer of '04.***

15:40. There were several documents that were in the works. There was CPA Order 17, there was the Transitional Authority . . . (TAL?), that they negotiated with the Governing Council. There were on-going negotiations, and they were significant discussions. There was a recognition that we had to turn over authority to the Iraqis sooner rather than later. And there were some of the structures in place among higher Iraqis to make that happen. But, with de-Ba'athification, you'd gotten rid of all the leadership (and more), and the technocrats and bureaucrats were fleeing because they were being threatened, the ministries were very short of any expertise, and the Iraqi political parties were all vying for control of different ministries, and when this party got control of a ministry, they brought their own folks in, and not many of them, probably a fair number of them were not qualified to do the things they were doing. It was going to be very hard to turn over control when there was not the institutional knowledge . . . at least. . . the institutional

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knowledge that could contribute is not allowed to contribute. But there was a sense that within a year that things would be right to turn it over, and of course Allawi took over as the first Governing Council President or Prime Minister, and that's not really. . . I was not intimately involved in.

***In the late winter of '04, 1st Cavalry Division was coming in to Baghdad to replace 1st Armored Division and the MEF was coming in to take over Anbar.***

19:30. I believe that LTG Metz came in with III Corps before Christmas ['03], and began the transition to MNC-I in May, and he assumed command of the forces and executing all the war fighting missions.

***So he had already freed up LTG Sanchez to focus on the political/strategy side.***

19:56. That's right, because Metz came in with a robust corps staff, and of course the CJTF-4 staff by that time had grown into a functional staff, the C2, the C3, the C4, the C5 was coming along, so those staff were in place, and they were on a JMD, most of them, so LTG Metz was able to come in and devote most of his staff resources to the Corps. Of course, he put some individuals downtown in the Green Zone, but by and large I think he was able to focus on the war fighting effort there, when he came in. By '04, a lot of things had come into place. A lot of staffs were in position. We had the IFC, the Intelligence Fusion Cell. We had interagency buy in and participation. Not everything was perfect, we were still playing catch up in a lot of ways, but at least those systems were in place and we had personnel in place who could support the war fighter and operations on the ground and look forward also, for the boss.

***In March of '04, how did 1st Cavalry Division intend to handle Baghdad and how did the Marines intend to handle Anbar?***

21:35. The Cav came in under MG Chiarelli, and his intent was to use non-kinetic means as much as possible, so he came in and started rebuilding Sadr City. And he replaced MG Dempsey (1AD), and MG Dempsey had done a lot with the Baghdad City Council, capacity building, and trying to repair systems, put systems in place, governing councils and so on. MG Chiarelli came in, I believe, with the attitude of less kinetic and more non-kinetic stability type operations. Of course, that wasn't the case always, and they had some pretty significant actions. The Marines had been down in Hillah in '03, and they left in the late summer. They came back in I think the March time frame. I remember writing one of my special memorandums to the CG, and I remember that the Marines motto--"No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy"--and in my memo I said, Sir, as these new units come in, I think we should adopt the Marines motto, because they will go out to Fallujah, and they will go out there armed to the teeth, and they will have squads interacting with the people every day, and they will become no better friend, and they'll patrol the streets, and they'll meet the shop owners, and they will be buying bread and developing those relationships. They had had similar success in Hillah, and there was a way to approach it. So there was a different mentality when those two particular units came in in early '04.

24:00. And, of course, AQ, and Muqtada al-Sadr, and the killing of the two PSD individuals in Fallujah, all happened, and that was the explosion that turned everything

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around, you know, caused 1st Armored Division to be extended. There were several things that happened during that time. Muqtada al-Sadr was gaining popularity and a following, and in April Bremer made the decision to shut down Sadr's newspaper and they arrested a couple of his lieutenants. That was part of the reason that the fighting started down in the south and spread quickly to Sadr City, and that was the Shia piece of it. And then March 31 was when the PSD contractors were killed and mutilated in Baghdad. And Bremer said "This will not stand." And that caused us to cordon off Fallujah. I was on the negotiating team with MG Weber and Ambassador Jones. We went out to Fallujah to try to negotiate a surrender of the individuals who had perpetrated these crimes. Those were difficult negotiations. We were out there . . . I can't remember how many times, but they did not bear fruit, and there was some fighting, and then the Marines backed off until they went back in their in November with a robust force and took down the city.

***In Bremer's statement--'This will not stand'--did that . . . it seems disconnected to any political-military decision making process in terms of figuring out what resources do we have and what can we do about this.***

26:00. That's right. It's 'let's respond.' That was it.

***The weakness seeming that there was no recognition of the need to communicate and think through . . .***

26:23. He isn't a military guy. He doesn't have a clue about those . . . the planning that goes into it, the resources required for it. You just can't surround a city of that size . . . just because you say so. There should have been outrage about that, but . . . so we ended up cordoning off the city, part of it any way, and not very successfully because we didn't have the forces to do it. There were groups going out. The Marines did a great job obviously with the attached units, but when you take down a city like that, that requires detailed planning and rehearsals and map recons and you name it and we were not given the time to do that, and of course, we put that on the back burner until the fall.

28:00. We were not manned for this mission escalation. This was not mission creep; it was mission escalation that we were being given every day.

29:00. I think at that point that we were starting to understand . . . well, we understood what was going on, and we were trying to resource it. But again, the missions were growing faster than we could accomplish them, and it was the military that was holding down just about everything, whether it was ministry teams . . . now, Bremer had his people in there too, but they weren't a robust organization and they did not have freedom of movement. So the military was holding that down. The military was willing to stand up the PRTs, but there was a decision that we would get the right people from State or wherever to lead those teams, but there was not freedom of movement unless you were heavily guarded and heavily secured. So there were a lot of reasons why things couldn't happen back in those days. And we were a year into it, and we were still learning the environment that we were in and trying to understand it and reactions to our actions and the proper counteractions. People were learning quickly, but there were still learning.

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***Why was the decision made to replace the Office of Security Transition with MNSTC-I?***

30:54. I think there was the recognition that our strategy here had to be a robust strategy to put in the firepower, the expertise, the structure, the command and control structure, to really grow the armed forces. Because we knew that number one because we knew it could be done; number two because an Iraqi armed forces, a strong Iraqi armed forces, focused on providing security for the Iraqi people, and believing they served the flag and the constitution was essential to our exit strategy there, to our success. And it was the right thing to do, because in my mind, if you're looking at those apparatus, at the security forces apparatus, not including the police, but the armed forces, and then if you look at the civil police side, then the government, and you look at those three at absolutely having to be developed before you can really exit, which one of those is going to develop the fastest? Well, it's going to be the armed forces, because with the armed forces you can have 24/7 influence on because they live on the base, they train every day, you can work closely with them, you can modify the culture, in fact, the military culture, because you're with them 24/7. I believe there was a belief that the military apparatus could be developed fairly quickly and adopt their responsibilities for protecting the people and protecting the borders, and so on. And then, while you're building that apparatus and giving it some muscles and some depth. You can build the organizations that take longer to develop, the government apparatus and the police forces. So I think there is . . . and if that was the logic . . . in my mind it just made sense to do it that way, that that was the way to proceed, and . . . all the while you're writing a constitution, you're working with the Iraqis as they negotiate their ways through this constitution and thinking in terms of the elections and developing capacity in the ministries, and civil works, and so on, and trying to modernize them into the information operations age, the technology age, modern business practices, private investment, you know all these things take time, but, you know, and . . . having a strong military which is subservient to the constitution and serves the people . . . gives that backdrop and that ability to then focus on the longer-term apparatus such as the police forces and the government. And then the police . . . you're ability to influence the police is limited. You train them in the police station in the morning, maybe in the evening, but they sleep in the police station. They sleep in their homes, in their neighborhoods, where they're subject to threats, subject to still believing the stereotypes of Americans, where their families are not safe, where they're prone to corruption, where they go back to the old ways of you pay a extra for extra service, and so on. So how much influence can you have on them? Well, it is a much smaller learning curve when you think about it. We've got some MPs that are doing a great job out there, but it is a touch one, really hard to do.

***Why was it necessary to transform CJTF<sup>4</sup> into MNF-I and MNC-I, and what was Central Command's position on it?***

35:30. We recognized in early fall of '03 that bringing in a four-star headquarters brought with it robust capabilities that we were struggling to build. It brought with it a certain level of expertise and authority that we did not have at the time. It is as simple as that. We knew that there had to be a four-star headquarters for what we were undertaking here, and that that four-star headquarters would bring the expertise, the resources, the

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additional tools to really do the job, and that would allow Central Command to focus on its entire AOR. I think it is that simple.<sup>1</sup>

*I notice there is a paradox at work--an inverse relationship between the resources committed and the magnitude of the policy goals. After Baghdad fell, there was a policy decision to drawdown forces quickly. Then, however, Ambassador Bremer came, and his decisions effectively expanded the mission exponentially. By the time the military responded with more forces to handle the growing tasks, the transition from CPA to the embassy saw a corresponding shrinkage of policy expectations and demands.*

38:40. I think the CPA going away and the embassy standing up was absolutely the best thing to do. The CPA had State Department, but it was a lot of contractors. It was a lot of folks with special duty here, whereas an Embassy brings a structure that is tried and true. That's my perspective on it. It is interesting though. You're right, the policy . . .

39:18. Imagine this. In the summer of '03, we disband the armed forces, and we arm the population. Everybody can own an AK-47. What? [laughter] Tell me what is wrong with this picture. You know . . . when you think about it, and we did think about it. That is why we argued so vociferously to call the Army back. Go to those general officers and call the Army back, tell them to report to their posts. Tell them they would be paid. Tell them to contribute to the rebuilding of their country. Because what we didn't understand was that a very small proportion of the Army was real hard-core Saddam Hussein followers, a very small proportion. If you'd looked at the Regular Army and even some of the Republican Guards, and called them back, and then the Saddam fedayeen and the SRGs that disguardated them, it really would have been miniscule. I don't know if its clear, but Saddam surrounded himself with concentric circles of support and allegiance. Of course, the inner circle was most tied to him and benefitted the most from his authority, and each concentric circle, the further out it went, had less and less resources and fewer benefits. And the Iraqi Army was respected in Iraq. The Iraqis had pride in it, pre-Saddam Hussein. So you could have . . . rejected the Saddam fedayeen and some of the special, the elite Special Republican Guard units, the ones on the inner circle, at no great real cost to the Army and to security in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> I interviewed MG Wodjakowski at Camp Victory in October '03. He was the CJT 14 CG. I asked him about concerns I'd heard some staff officers bring up, that having CJTF 4 principals over in the Green Zone dealing with the CPA was hobbling CJTF 4 staff ops and that communications with the Green Zone were very difficult. This was known as "split-headquarters operations." It seemed alarming to me and I asked Wodjakowski about it. He pooh-poohed the notion that it posed any difficulties at all or that the headquarters and staff were struggling with the scope of the mission. I think his was a knee-jerk reaction of praising how well we're doing and denying difficulties for the sake of the official record. Double check my recollection by looking up Wodjakowski's interview tape and transcript at the Center of Military History under files associated with me.

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***We disbanded the Army and the Republican Guard that Saddam did not trust enough to allow into Baghdad.***

41:30. That's right. So the concentric circles . . . in our summer of 2002 planning, I talked about it then, because I've lived a quarter of my life in the Middle East, but if you look at it as concentric circles, you can see where you need to focus your efforts.

***What guidance did Central Command give that played into creating MNF-I and MNC-I? This question also plays into issues the staff needs to take account of now as they work through merging the two headquarters as part of C2 Transformation.***

42:30. I don't know. It's mature. We've developed institutional knowledge. We have an Iraqi Armed Forces which is relieving pressure on us now. I don't know. I'll be honest with you, I'm leery about standing down MNFI down anytime soon. Because I don't think the environment is not stable enough, and there are enough opportunities to backslide, and the vulnerabilities are such that I think you need to keep that apparatus in place to drive this thing so that the vulnerabilities and the obstacles are tolerably small. Even in General Petraeus' last testimony, he said we're still in a very vulnerable state here. So it was way too early to stand down here.

44:15. We're going down to fifteen brigades this summer. As long as you have . . . I think, above 12 or 13 brigades here, I think you still require . . . it tells you the situation is such that you still need that higher headquarters here.

***One way I've thought about it is, as long as you have an Ambassador and a CG who have to go testify before Congress every six months and it gets heavy national press coverage--because it is that vital a mission--then you have to have a four-star headquarters.***

45:21. That might be a good way to look at it there actually. But I think the bottom line is, for me coming back, after two years, because I lived through the pain, fifteen months in '03-'04, and then '05-'06, and I just . . . for me coming back now and seeing the systems that are in place, the mature systems that in place . . . look down in Basra and see what they did, pretty darn good, and when you have somebody like General Petraeus who is . . . and I'm not a groupie, but I'm in just total awe of what he has done here as the MNFI commander. I am not a blind loyalist, but when I look at the interagency and the development of the armed forces, when I look at his relationship with Iraqi officials, I just . . . if we're going to be successful, it's going to be on his shoulders. I think LTG Odierno will come in . . . and he's a great leader himself, and I don't know him personally, but he has got the same kinds of experiences as General Petraeus.

***General Petraeus and LTG Odierno were a great 1-2 here, but with General Petraeus and LTG Odierno face potential friction because those different kinds of positions impose different kinds of strategic calculations for each? I wonder how having to play a new hand may change General Petraeus' approach, may force him to think differently about how to approach Iraq?***

47:24. He's already doing that. [laughter] He is a master.

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*In what way?*

He just thinks broad thoughts . . broad thoughts. He's just an awesome leader. He is thinking broad strategic vision, executing US strategy, and how do we successfully conclude this war here. Without getting too far out of my lane, because I'm already out of my lane.

Much of the Central Command AOR has a direct, or at least an indirect impact on Iraq, and vice-versa, so he's got all that in mind, but for now he's focused on this mission.  
51:05.

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