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U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW

OF

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

C-3

MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS - IRAQ

JANUARY 24, 2008

BAGHDAD, IRAQ

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PROCEEDINGS

This is the 3 Corps Writing Historian from Center of Military History.

just to validate the recording, could you go ahead and introduce yourself in your own voice?

I go by (b)(3), (b)(6)

Great. Thank you.

For the listener's benefit, the last interview was on the 23rd of September and, if it is acceptable to you, we will just consider the previous release agreement to still be in effect.

It's acceptable.

Great. My first question was just to ask: Have there been any key changes in the organization or staffing of the C-3 overall since we spoke at the last interview?

No major changes. Of course, we have had the normal rotation of what we call individual augmentees or IAs in and out, Navy,
Air Force. Most of them rotate in on a four to six-month basis.

We have had -- started to redeploy some folks. For instance, I lost \textbf{(b)(3), (b)(6)} to CHOPS (Phonetic) about three weeks ago, redeployed him. He was -- We had to get him back so he could get his year of dwell in before he came back on the next rotation.

\textbf{(b)(3), (b)(6)} I wanted to ask just kind of first a big picture question, which is: As you look back to our last discussion in late September and where we are today, could you just kind of bring us up to speed on a current update on what the operational situation is in Iraq right now and what is different from where we were four months ago?

\textbf{b3 b6} I think there is probably three things that jump in my mind as being different as I think back to September.

I think Sadr had just declared his ceasefire at that time or just before that, and we were still very much in a wait and see how much of an impact that would actually have.
I think it is pretty well accepted that it has had an impact on the level of violence, particularly on the -- obviously, on the Shia and JAM side. There is still Shia violence ongoing against Coalition forces, Iraqi Security Forces, and Iraqi civilians, but it is very much a splinter group, we think, or special group that is not following the JAM ceasefire, Sadr ceasefire. That has definitely had an impact.

I think probably the other thing that was just beginning or just starting and was in no way mature was Concerned Local Citizens or the CLC program. If I'm correct, we were just starting that program or had just started, and I think we are up to a little over 80,000 now of Concerned Local Citizens in Iraq, mostly Baghdad, MND-C just south of Baghdad, some up north, a few out west.

Probably the third thing that I think has probably been a major change since September is Phantom Phoenix, the third Corps major operation behind Phantom Thunder, Phantom Strike and now Phantom Phoenix.
Phoenix was basically a response to our assessment that al Qaeda, although not completely, had been somewhat or mostly driven out of Baghdad, Baqubah, al Anbar, and were migrating north, establishing sanctuaries, safe havens, training areas in the upper Diyala River Valley vicinity of Moqtadiyah and the Hammerin Lake in the Zahib (Phonetic) Triangle Area along ASR Golden cut by Lake Tharhar (Phonetic), and migrating up toward Mosul.

So Phoenix was really a realization that we needed to continue the pursuit of al Qaeda, and started Phoenix, I think, setting the conditions on or about the first of January. I think the actual operation started on the 8th, and is ongoing as of today.

[b3,b6]: Great.

[b6]: You mentioned Phantom Phoenix. I would like to take you back to June at the beginning of Phantom Thunder, and could you walk us through Phantom Thunder, what you think that accomplished, to Phantom Strike. You have already discussed Phantom Phoenix. So that will sort
of summarize and bring us up, if you would start with
Phantom Thunder back in June.

I think they are all linked in purpose. Of course, 15 June was when we got
the last surge brigade in. So Phantom Thunder was really the Corps' plan to go into areas that had been really long term al Qaeda safe havens and sanctuaries, mostly in the Baghdad Belts, south of Baghdad in Arab Jabour, down in toward Moqtadiyah, Iskandariyah, to the north in Balad Ruse (Phonetic), Kamibanisahd (Phonetic), Baqubah and up a little bit into the DRV.

I say it was tied in purpose, because really the purpose of Phantom Thunder was to take those sanctuaries away from al Qaeda, and then, of course, the fight out west was on a significant downward trend.

Well, actually, it wasn't. It was on a downward trend. It really turn significant until -- I take that back. Out west it was on a significant downward trend by June, but to go into areas where al Qaeda felt safe, felt they had sanctuaries, were able to train and, most importantly, stage high profile
attacks into Baghdad, to take those areas away from them.

That was really why Thunder was designed and executed, and the five surge brigade gave us the capability to go into that terrain that we had never been able to get to before, never had the combat power to get to.

The focus of the five surge brigades -- we've covered this before -- it was not necessarily inside of Baghdad, but it was on the accelerants getting into Baghdad, car bombs in cases of the Sunni.

The only thing different about Thunder, I think, is it was also a Shia extremist focused operation as well. Some significant operations in and around Sadr City, a new Baghdad area that the traditional Shia extremists safe havens or strong points, if you will. Significant operations up into Baqubah, which is a significant fault line between Sunni and Shia against the Shia extremists, and that was really the two focus areas in Baghdad.

I said, you know, on the east side, also on the west side of the river, Shia; east and west.
Rasheed, to get in there and clean that out of both al Qaeda and the Shia extremists.

Once again, it was to break the cycle of sectarian violence. So to break that cycle, we had to stop the car bombs from coming in, killing massive amounts of Shia, and then the Shia retaliation for those suicide attacks or those attacks against the Shia at gatherings.

I think, about a two or three month effort to do that, and then we went into Phantom Strike, because what we saw with Thunder was the migration of, in particular, al Qaeda, and then as al Qaeda migrated, the migration of Shia special groups right in behind them to try to control that area.

So Strike was designed to go after a phenomenon that we started looking at, because that was about the same time that we were losing -- The primary killer of our soldiers at that time was the buried IEDs. So we plotted where most of the buried IEDs were happening, down near (Inaudible), and then where we thought al Qaeda was trying to reestablish sanctuaries or still had sanctuary area to stage and
train, and they corresponded very, very closely.

So Strike was really the first pursuit operation of al Qaeda. If Thunder got them moving, Strike was a pursuit, and it also had a Shia focus in terms of where the Shia sectarian violence against the Sunnis was occurring.

Continued to drive them primarily north up the DRV, the Diyala River Valley, to south of Baghdad but drove them further south down into southern Arab Jabour, and then west. Al Anbar by that time had been pretty much -- We think most of al Qaeda had been driven out of al Anbar.

So the migration was definitely to the north at that point up Tampa, Samarra, Balad area, up the Diyala River Valley toward Moqtadiyah and then up toward Mosul and along the Hammerin (Phonetic) Mountain range. That's when Phantom Phoenix came around.

Do they have definite -- like Thunder and Strike, did they have definite end dates where you concluded you've accomplished what you set out to do?
When we designed them, they did not. Thunder was an open-ended operation, and Thunder, I think, really didn't end until we started Strike; because it almost rolled directly into Phantom Strike.

Now Phantom Strike -- Although we never published an end date or stated an end date, I think Phantom Strike probably came to conclusion in the November time frame.

Then we went into an analysis phase to kind of try to figure out where we were with primarily al Qaeda at that point, started coming together in the December time frame, started socializing the concept with the boss in mid-December, kicked it off on 1 January.

I wanted to ask a few more questions about Phantom Phoenix. Just as you look back on that being the last main operation of 3 Corps as the base command element for Multinational Corps-Iraq, as you think back through the process, through getting with General Odierno and the plans process that you talked to us about before, what
sticks out in your mind as the pieces of that
operational planning process that engendered the most
discussion, the most debate.

I know there was some realignment of the
units, for instance, some decisions about where to put
the reserve, these sorts of things. As you think back
on that process, can you talk us through what you
think were some of the key decisions in that, that the
boss had to make, and which were the toughest ones?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Well, obviously, I mean
I think probably the thing that sticks out in my mind
is even with -- and we lost -- We didn't lose. 31 Cav
was -- The conditions were set to pull 31 Cav out as
part of the first move from 20 to 15 in late December,
and 31 Cav was up in the Baqubah area and little bit
up into the DRV, Diyala River Valley.

So there was a pretty significant movement
of forces as 31 Cav came out and 42 Stryker assumed
that battle space. So that was all being orchestrated
while we were talking about where we need to focus for
Phantom Phoenix.

I think one of the things that the boss
has been very focused on, and he has done very well, is even as a brigade comes out, it will be the same as we go down to 15 -- as a brigade comes out, we are just not unplugging the brigade. There is a backfill of units into that space.

So actually, in Diyala we have more combat power there now than we did when 31 Cav was up there, and part of that was the commitment of his operational reserve 242 to operate up in the area we call the bread basket just on the west side of Moqtadiyah.

The thing that sticks out in my mind is, even with 19 brigade combat teams, you still don't have everything that you want to go to the areas you think you need to get to. The Diyala River Valley was probably -- is probably the biggest part of Phantom Phoenix, if there was a main effort of Phantom Phoenix.

Southern Arab Jabour, we pulled 57 Cav from MNF-West, gave that operational control of that to MND-Center, General Lynch in 3 ID, to operate south of Baghdad. Then about the same time, we were bringing 225 Stryker in to rip out with 11 Cav. So
there was a significant shifting of forces that went
on associated with Phantom Phoenix.

All that looks easy, but it is hard to
orchestrate, and it does involve some pretty hefty
decisions by the boss in terms of where he is going to
pull from; because every time you pull from someplace,
you do accept some level of risk to go someplace else.

(b6): He also put the Cav up north, right, the MND-B Cav?

(b3, b6): We put 18 Infantry, yes.

18 Infantry went up to Mosul.

(b6): Oh, okay.

(b3, b6): That's out of -- 3d Brigade of 4th ID is his parent brigade. He
was due to come in and occupy battle space in Baghdad
in Kadhmiya (Phonetic). And that is exactly right.
Taking a full battalion set out of Baghdad, you know,
your main effort, and pushing it out to Mosul implies
or does -- He is assuming some risk by doing that.

So the decision on where to take -- It's
not so much where you apply the combat power. It is
where you take it from, I think, is probably the
weighty decisions, because you do assume risk when you do that.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Was there much push-back from the divisions in terms of who was being taken from who, and an you speak a little bit to that?

(b)(3), (b)(6) There's always a little push-back.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Did any of that rise to the boss's level or did that happen sort of at the 3 to 3 level?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Mostly 3 to 3. I mean, commanders are all good enough to understand the bigger picture and what the boss is after, and General Odierno is very good about explaining what he's after and what his intent is and why he is doing what he is doing. So it usually gets handled at the 3 level.

I mean, there is always angst when you are taking resources away from a unit.

(b)(3), (b)(6) I wanted to ask one more thing about Phantom Phoenix. When the operation first started, there seemed to be a -- certainly, in the open media, and there seemed to be some discussion

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about how much of a surprise was lost, the surprise
factor, so to speak, and the issue of the Iraqi Army,
Iraqi Force elements that were involved, who was
informed when, were the enemy already gone by the time
we got there in some of the key areas when we first
kicked it off. Can you comment on what really
happened there, from your perspective?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Well, a couple of things.

One is we moved a brigade from the 1st IA, the 3d
Brigade of the 1st IA from al-Anbar into Baqubah -- or
into Diyala, the province of Diyala. We moved a
Stryker battalion from Baghdad up there, and it's just
-- it's impossible to hide movement of those size
units. So we plussed up the strength up there
significantly.

So I think the expectation that nobody
would have any idea that anything was going to go on
is unrealistic. So I think that's just natural.
There's going to be expectation that something is
going to go on.

We have also -- the thing that never got
covered -- picked up a few al Qaeda mid-level leaders
that, when questioned, said that if they had known we
were coming, they would have left. So we may not have
surprised everybody, but we certainly surprised some.

So I think that it was a complete -- not complete. It was a success in terms of achieving
surprise.

The stuff in the media about not informing
the Iraqis until the last minute, that's kind of the
way things -- That is an attempt to maintain op sec,
and it's not the leadership of the Iraqi Army who we
worry about. It's the foot soldiers. Sometimes --
Very few intentionally, but mostly just
unintentionally start talking at the wrong time, at
the wrong place. Somebody overhears something, and
that word gets relayed to somebody that shouldn't hear
it.

So the way they did that in terms of
bringing the Iraqi units into it at the last minute,
the last day or so, that's kind of normal. That is
not abnormal for the way things are done.

Then if you look at what I said earlier
and what the purpose of Phantom Phoenix was,
especially in the upper Diyala River Valley, was to not allow them to stage, train and -- stage for attacks, train and establish a sanctuary, they are not there. You know, whether it is because we killed or captured them or because we forced them to move someplace else and kept them moving, they are not staging attacks from the upper Diyala River Valley.

So I would say, even if some of them got wind, moved, there was a level of success involved in that.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Not wanting to continue beat this horse, but I mention it only because the CG had made a passing comment about it:
The weather at that particular time, what was supposed to be the start of Phantom Phoenix -- (Inaudible) from his comments that he implied that actually the start date ended up being delayed by two to three days because of weather conditions. Does that stick in your mind as something that --

(b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, mostly weather had an impact on the rotary wing aviation in the ISR.

(b)(3), (b)(6): Do you think that
played into any of this perception that there was more
of an opportunity for --

I don't think so. I
don't think so. I think it would have been -- I think
somebody would have published that story, whether it
was -- I think it was originally slated to start on
the -- I think it was on the 4th, and we had to start
on the 8th. I would have to go back and look to be
sure, but I think if we started on time, I think
somebody would have said that.

I think it's just the reality of moving
that much stuff around.

I would like
to ask you kind of a reflective question on the C-3
organization.

You have worked now -- You changed the
structure to fold into Plans under you from the
previous Corps that had a C-5, and I understand 18th
Corps is coming in with a separate C-5.

I'd like you to reflect a minute, talk
about the effectiveness of your lash-up, the way 3
Corps did it for this rotation.
Actually 5th Corps did not have a separate C-5. 3 Corps the last time over here had a separate C-5, and I'm not sure what 18th Airborne Corps had. They replaced, you know, the 45th Corps. But [b 3 b 6] was the C-3 before me, and he had Plans underneath him.

You know, at the Corps level I think there's pluses and minuses of doing it either way. Obviously, you know, the stuff that I have to get involved in is much broader, if I've also got the Plans function underneath me. But I've got some pretty good 06s, [b(b)(3),(b)(6)] in Plans, [b(b)(3),(b)(6)] in FuOps, [b(b)(3),(b)(6)] (Phonetic) as the CHOPS, that I can kind of maintain wave tops and keep them moving in the right direction, and that's really what I've done.

I think the advantage -- and I prefer to do it the way we did it with Plans, FuOps and Current Ops all underneath me, just for the ability to keep those three areas sync'ed and tied together.

So as plans are generated longer range, I can bring to that process an eye on what's going on...
shorter range, future ops, and then what is currently going on today in terms of current ops, and the same way around.

Working with the planners all the time, I know what we are thinking two months down the road when I talk to the guys that are working what's happening over the next couple of weeks, and then the current operations piece.

So that's not saying that it can't be done. There's pluses and minuses either way, and whatever -- I think it's whatever the CG is really comfortable with, is the way to go.

And he was comfortable with this lash-up:

He hasn't fired me. So I'm assuming he's comfortable.

I wanted to ask about some ISF, Iraqi Security Force, perspective from your standpoint. One of the things, I think, since we talked last, it seems as if, as a casual observer watching it, that the ISF has continued to do more independent type of things.
I'm thinking about Operations Lions Paw, just recently the reinforcement issue up in Mosul after the bomb blast up there. Also is this continued evolution and establishment of these regional operation centers.

Can you kind of link those together, and tell me what you are seeing as the continued development of the Iraqi Security Forces, both what that means in a good way and what the challenges are in continuing to work this relationship we have with them?

Well, you know, it's kind of an advantage and a disadvantage. I was here in 2004 when we had -- Let's see, we started off with the ICDC, the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, and then went to the Iraqi National Guard and then turned into the Iraqi Army.

So I remember back at that time and then look at where they are at now. It is amazing, you know. What we've really done is standing up their army from scratch, and this is not taking an army and retraining it. This is standing up an army from
scratch. Where they have come in just four years, I
think, is incredible.

That's my advantage. Now I look at the
year or 14 months, whatever it's been I've been here
this time. It's kind of like watching your kids grow
up. I mean, they're babies, and then before you know
it, they are graduating from high school.

So you don't really see it when you are
involved with it every day. But looking back on the
year, I think there has been some pretty significant
growth.

You mentioned 8th IA and Lions Paw down in
Diwaniyah. I mean, that was completely an Iraqi
organized, planned, run, resourced operation. They
moved a tank company by themselves from Taji down to
Diwaniyah for operations. They moved an Iraqi Army
battalion from al-Anbar to Diwaniyah.

General Uthman (Phonetic), the CG of 8th
IA down there brought all that together and has done
a fantastic job in Diwaniyah. Diwaniyah has been
quite for three months now.

I mentioned earlier the Iraqis by
themselves with no help from us at all moved 3d Brigade of the 1st IA with about seven days notice from al-Anbar into Diyala, about a two-day move; and within 36 hours after they got there, they were operational in Diyala, conducting operations. The first major cache they found, I think, was within 36 hours of their arrival.

You know, the security situation in Baghdad is significantly better, and we are actually reducing -- We have reduced forces in Baghdad, and more and more everyday the Iraqis are stepping up. And it is just not independent operations. It is combined operations and independent operations in terms of their capability.

I think the major challenges that remain with the Iraqi Army is what you would expect them to be. Logistics are hard. Even for an army that's been around for 200-plus years, I mean, logistics are just not an easy thing to do, keeping supplies, people paid, fed, etcetera, especially when you are talking this type of numbers.

That and there are leadership issues at
the noncommissioned officer and the officer level. You know, in any army in the world, especially ones that are worth anything, you don't go out and hire -- That's why you just can't replace a major, a captain, sergeant major, sergeant first class. You can't just go out in the street and hire somebody, because it's experience that gets to where you've gotten.

So when you start with a zero experience base or a limited experience base, you just can't create that overnight. And it is not the senior officer level, because a lot of those were hired out of the old Iraqi Army.

It is at the company commander, the operations officer at the battalion level, in some cases the battalion commander level, and the senior NCOs. You just can't go out and create those people overnight.

It's going to be a long term growing of that leadership skill in this army. But for what they have, where they started four years ago, I think they have made incredible gains.

That piece about the
operational centers and that sort of political -- Do you see that as sort of a political-military crossover point?

We started with the Baghdad Op Center. I'm trying to think where that -- if that was our idea or that was an Iraqi idea. I really can't remember. Probably doesn't matter. But the (Inaudible) into the Baghdad Operational Center or Operational Command or Op Center was basically, obviously, focused on Baghdad, and it is the Prime Minister's desire to have control of the security effort in Baghdad, thus the Baghdad Operations Center or Command was formed with General Aboud.

Really, what he wanted was -- The genesis of all of it, and we definitely agree with this piece of it -- is he wanted one commander as responsible that he could turn to for security issues inside of Baghdad, and from that we split the city in half down the river and gave -- or recommended that there be one commander responsible for the east side of the river, one commander for the west side of the river, and then split the city into 10 security districts and one
commander for each one of those security districts. When I say commander, these are Iraqi Commanders. So really, just kind of pinning the rose on somebody for security in Baghdad as you step down the levels.

Then originally, although it hasn't worked as well as we had hoped, or maybe not as hoped -- as designed -- all security forces, to include the Iraqi police, would work for General Aboud inside of Baghdad or inside those 10 security districts.

That was a direct link between Aboud and the Prime Minister. MOD had nominal oversight of General Aboud. (Several words inaudible) to the Iraqi Ground Forces Command. Minister of Defense, MOD, had some oversight of it, but it was really a direct link between Maliki and Aboud for security issues inside of Baghdad.

Now I think what the Prime Minister saw is that he enjoyed exercising that level of authority, I guess, or having that level of control over the security situation and the ability to direct things that affect the security in Baghdad.
Then you know, as Baghdad was starting to calm down, Diyala was kind of flaring up, and I think the Diyala Op Center was the next one we stood up. It was stood up because of the crisis that was -- quote/unquote, "crisis" that was going on in Diyala.

That is really where the Op Centers have merged and grown to, is they are supposed to be stood up -- or they are being stood up in areas where there is a crisis.

Now militarily, I guess, from a security standpoint, the ability to appoint one commander to answer directly to a central authority, whether that is the Minister of Defense or the Prime Minister, for security issues in that province is probably a good thing.

Politically, I think what has happened is under the Iraqi Constitution the Provincial Governor has control of the Iraqi Police in the Provincial Council that operates. So that the Prime Minister really has very little control except through the PDOP or the Provincial Director of Police and the Governor into the local security matters.
When you stand up one of these OP centers and appoint a military commander that has authority over all security matters, it gives, I think -- and this is just my opinion. I think it gives the Prime Minister a way of influencing the security situation in each of the provinces.

So I think these have started to pop up as a way for the Prime Minister to get his arms around the security situation in the provinces without having to work through a governor or a provincial director of police. That's just my personal opinion, but that's what I see.

Great. Thanks.

You had mentioned Diwaniyah and the 8th Iraqi Division going down there. But would you please review just the Corps effort, the CF effort to support MND-CS, and evaluate the effect of this support, because I do remember that back in October-September time frame there was a crisis mode back in CS.

When they briefed the BUAs, they would always seem to be in a crisis mode. Now I don't see
that when I come back in January. It seems to be
pretty calm down there.

Diwaniyah is always -- I
mean, that is a Shia -- I mean, there is no Sunni
issues, no al Qaeda issues in Diwaniyah. So it is
really an internal Shia issue between -- and we never
really completely understand that, but it's really a
struggle for power, I think, between Badr and JAM in
Diwaniyah.

There are -- Center South calls them rogue
JAM, and they call them militant JAM, and I tend to
agree with their categorization. It is really not
special groups. It is Shia extremists, probably JAM
affiliated, that have not followed Sadr's ceasefire,
really not following Sadr, the Sadr trend, much at
all.

Diwaniyah wasn't something new. 4 ID,
their last rotation -- I mean, they are back now, but
their rotation previous -- had sent a battalion to
Diwaniyah to get things settled down, and then back,
oh, I think it was the summer -- I've forgotten the
month now -- indirect fire -- I mean, 80 rockets and
mortars one night at Camp Echo, and that's when we had
to send a battalion down there to do some clearing
operations.

Every time we went down there, what
happened is all the militant JAM would just leave. We
would do operations there for about two, three weeks,
get a lid back on things, turn it back over to the
small number of Iraqi Army that was in the city and
the Iraqi Police. We would leave, and then three
months later you're right back in the same. So they
just come back and start it all up again.

A couple things that happened is we put --
Well, probably the primary thing is this rotation of
the Poles, which are TOA-ing today between nine and
ten, Rotation 9 brought more combat power with them in
terms of -- same numbers but more of it was allocated
-- There were more soldiers that could get off the FOB
and do work out in Diwaniyah.

So this rotation of Poles, from my
perspective, have been the best out of the three that
I have seen, because they got off the FOB and they got
out into Diwaniyah, and they actually did security
work out in Diwaniyah.

They have picked up the concept of the joint security stations that got started with the previous rotation, and they expanded that. I don't know how many they've got now, but it's a lot more than the one that was there on rotation 8.

General Uthman (Phonetic), who has responsibility for Kadasiyah (Phonetic) Province, which Diwaniyah sits in, allocated a battalion, an Iraqi Army battalion, to that. The Iraqis moved another battalion from Anbar to operate.

So what is different in Diwaniyah right now, in the last two months we have had two Iraqi Army battalions that have been in Diwaniyah every day 24/7, same concept we follow. They are in and amongst the population, protecting the population, day and night.

They have established joint security stations all through Diwaniyah. The Poles have been out with them. Center-South forces have been out with them, and we've had some pretty significant and successful SOF operations, CJSOTF, and the Poles also brought a special operations element with them. They
have been operating successfully with the Iraqi Army
down there.

So I think we applied the pressure. IN
many ways, the same thing happened. They left the
city. We maintained the pressure. So they weren't
able to come back in, and then as things started to
calm down in Diwaniyah, this Polish rotation and
CJSOTF and the Polish Special Operations Forces also
targeted them, where they went.

So there have been some -- Outside of
Diwaniyah, inside the province and into other
provinces where they have fled to, there have been
some targeting going on. So I think the pressure has
been maintained this time.

They have stayed there.

Correct.

Now the long term issues for Diwaniyah are
the Iraqi Police. The Iraqi Police has just never --
I mean, we've just never been able to get them to the
point where they can maintain that pressure.

Force Gen. for 8th IA -- there is another
Iraqi Army battalion being generated that will go into
Diwaniyah. So it would be two battalions in Diwaniyah. That may be enough to do it. 

I wanted to ask a broader question about Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, CJSOTF. As you look back over this entire tour, now coming down to the last couple of weeks, I'm just curious to know how you've seen this special operations piece and that relationship with our conventional forces.

Has that been something that, in your mind, has been successful? To what degree has it been successful, and has that relationship changed over the course of this tour?

I'll talk a little bit broader than that. I think -- I mean, the experience as a commander over here in '04 and early '05, I think the synchronization and lash-up between Special Ops Forces, CJSOTF and others and conventional forces is probably better than we could ever expect it to be.

I think there is daily synchronization that goes on between the Special Ops Forces and conventional forces, and I think over the last couple
of years we have really learned to play to each other's strengths.

I think one of the things that is kind of unique is, once the concerned locals -- because before as a battle space owner, if you really wanted to -- one of the first places you went when you tried to get a feel for what was going on in your battle space were the SOF forces that were out there, you know, working with the population and talking to the citizens every day.

When you try to find out who the power brokers were, one of your main sources of information was you go to whatever SOF force was working in that area.

When CLCs started standing up and working with the conventional forces, in some ways that's turned around 180 degrees. So now I've had several units tell me that now what you find is that the battle space owners actually have a better feel for who the power brokers are and who the movers and shakers are in the battle space, because of their work with the CLCs, which I think has brought special Ops
Forces and conventional forces even closer, because they are working a lot of the same tasks.

SOF -- They bring very unit capabilities and skill sets, but I think that we have done a pretty good job about capitalizing on what they bring, integrating that with conventional, and then also using conventional to support the SOF operations.

Great.

I would like to talk a little bit about the Multinational Corps-Iraq's lines of operation that you outlined in your operations orders that go back to, really, your operational concept in March. They were the same in 07-01 as they are in 08-01.

Right.

And there are three of them. You have already talked about the security one, and actually, you have already talked about, through a previous question, the capable, credible ISF.

What I would like you to talk a little bit about is how the Corps sees the legitimate and capable government line of operation, how you feel we are
moving in that area.

Slower than we would like, and the Corps' focus is really at the provincial level, local and provincial level.

Right.

Although at General Odierno's level, he does have the opportunity, and uses that opportunity, to try to influence the central government in terms of development.

You know, probably the thing that has come the furthest is the allocation of budgets from the central government to the province, and then something we have been very focused on is getting the provinces to budget and execute the budget they have been given.

I think we've seen some pretty significant progress. It sounds like a simple thing for a local government to spend the money they have been given to spend, but it's been exceptionally difficult. So I think we've seen some progress there.

You know, back in 2005, I guess it was, when we had the provincial elections, obviously, most of the Sunnis didn't vote. So we have some inequities
in representation in provincial councils that I think is only going to be fixed with another round of elections.

Mosul, Nineveh really sticks out in my mind and is a predominant Sunni Arab population in and around Mosul, but it is really a Kurdish Provincial Council. So whether there is -- and it's more perceptions than it is reality.

So the Sunni Arabs feel like they are underrepresented or not represented at all, their interests aren't represented, which causes tension, which leads to sectarian -- potentially at least, and hopefully not in that area -- tension between the Sunni majority in that area, Sunni Arab majority in that area and the Kurdish minority that just happens to be sitting predominantly on the provincial council.

Basic services aren't really a provincial issue, but the Director Generals in each of the provinces work with the central government for provision of the central services.

Out of all the lines of operations, Bill, to tell you the truth, I think development of a
governmental capability, whether it's local, provincial or even national, is probably the most frustrating thing, just because it moves so slowly.

I don't think that is unexpected or -- and I don't think it is unrealistic to say that that is going to move slowly. I mean, you are really taking a society and thrust the concept of democracy on them and equal representation that's completely foreign to everybody in this country, and expect them to pick it up in four years, and it is just going to grow slow.

But I think that is probably -- you know, for 18th Airborne Corps' time here -- and I hope this is true -- 18th Airborne Corps' time here and then whatever corps follows them -- I think it's I Corps supposed to follow them -- I think that has got to be -- We've got to see some growth in the governance capability, you know, representative governance at the provincial, national, local level, to see progress sustained.

The security situation is good enough right now. There is an open window for them to step through and, if they don't step through it, it's just a question of how long that window is going to stay
open, I think.

(b)(6) Are you optimistic?

(b)(3), (b)(6) I am.

(b)(6) Based on what you know?

(b)(3), (b)(6) I am. I think Iraqis are optimistic, which makes me optimistic. I think they see that things can be better. I think Maliki has made significant progress in the time we've been here. Don't get me wrong. There's still a long way to go, but I just think, you know, here we had a civil war 90 years after the founding of our country.

So it takes - I mean, democracy takes a while, in my mind, to take hold. Starting from a cold start, this has never been about what's good for everybody else. This has always been a society of what's good for me, and it's just going to take a generation or so to really kind of break that mindset.

Now I don't have -- and this is my personal opinion here. I don't have any hopes for a Jeffersonian democracy in Iraq, but I think that there is great potential for some sort of stable, fairly representative government at the national and
provincial level.

Obviously, there is great opportunity for -- I mean, there's just wealth throughout this country, oil resources, agricultural resources, the potential for tourism. So I think this could be a very, very affluent country with some level of representative government, stable.

I think Iraqis see that opportunity, and I think 90 percent of the Iraqis want to capitalize on that opportunity. So, yes, I'm optimistic.

(b)(3), (b)(6) The CG has kind of voiced his frustration in a couple of cases about detainee operations. I just wanted to kind of ask where we're at with that. Has it been resolved? What level did it get resolved? Where do we stand now in terms of that interplay between the Corps' interest in the practical matters of detainees, how they are released, and tap into the relationship with Task Force [14a] that has the task of storing, processing and trying to get these guys back into society.

(b 3 b 6) I think there's been natural -- There's always going to be natural tension,
and really what is driving detainee release is really two things.

Number one is we don't want -- actually, there things. Number one is we don't want to detain anybody, to begin with, and we certainly don't want to continue to hold anybody that is no longer a threat to society or us.

Number two is you reach a certain capacity of detainees, and it starts to cause problems. So we've pretty much reached full capacity at Camp Bucca (Phonetic). So without expansion, you start to have overcrowding conditions, and it causes issues.

Number three -- I'm going to give you four reasons. Number three is that there are people out there that would say one of the most frustrating things to the Iraqis that continues to drive people that are sitting on the sense onto the side of -- or continuing to drive people to attack us or drive them into the arms of the insurgency or al Qaeda is the fact that we are still detaining their brother, father, uncle, son, cousin, etcetera.

Then fourth is we got the UNSCR for 2008,
but we think it will be some sort of status of forces agreement after 2008, and we do not know what authorities we will have to have to hold detainees once the UNSCR runs out, the United Nations Security Council Resolution.

So the numbers -- For all those reasons, the numbers have to come down. So then you get the debate of is this guy really -- you know, so you look at this guy, this individual detainee, for example. Is he still a threat to Coalition forces, Iraqi Security Forces and society as a whole?

We only have a problem, and it's rarely, when the battle space owner says yes, and he needs to remain in detention, and for whatever reason down in Bucca he's been processed, he's been rehabilitated, there is a disagreement on whether he should be released -- if that's one of the ones that should be released or not.

Now to go back to your question, yes, it has been resolved, because we have all agreed that the final say goes to the guy on the ground that knows the situation on the ground where that detainee is going
back into.

In many cases, he doesn't know the circumstances of the capture other than what is on paper, because it could have happened two years ago before he was the battle space owner. But he does talk to the tribal leaders in that area every day. He does talk to the local leadership. He does talk to provincial leadership in that area every day, and so in determining the impact of that guy coming back to that part of the Iraqi society, I think -- and it's the right decision -- he has final say on whether that detainee is released or not, with the full understanding we've got to bring the numbers down.

Had that not been the case before? Was that one of the reasons there was friction, that the system in place wasn't working smoothly?

I think there wasn't -- I think the system was working almost too smoothly. It had almost become automatic, and the battle space owners were being overruled, for whatever reason. So there was somebody above them making -- overruling

*SECRET*
their decision.

It's falling both ways, though. I think that, you know, if I'm there, I don't want anybody released, coming back into my battle space, and it's just a natural -- So there is a natural conflict there. I don't want any of these bad guys coming back in my battle space. I just got this squared away; so why would you want somebody to come back in that went to Bucca to begin with for setting out IEDs or whatever it was.

Then, you know, as numbers grow, there is a natural tendency down in Bucca that we've got to put a cap on this somehow and start to reduce the numbers. And there is a mandatory two-year review. Every two years, they come up for review. I think it's at the two year mark they come up for review.

So a lot of things just kind of came together to create that tension.

[b][3], [b][6] Great. Thanks.

[b][8] I'd like you to comment, if you would, on your perception as the 3 on the reconciliation efforts of the Corps.
Particularly, address the Concerned Local Citizens. Is that evolving to different groups.

Also please address the ability for the U.S. to continue to pay the local citizens. I know we do it in 90-day increments, and we want to migrate that to the GOI, the Government of Iraq.

I wondered if you could address that in a general way.

We will see on reconciliation, and I'm a firm believer that we can't reconcile -- Well, it's not important that we reconcile with insurgents. What is important is the government of Iraq reconciles with the insurgent groups, minus AQI, and there is just -- There is no reconciliation with AQI, in my mind.

So really, the CLCs were really a bottoms up approach to reconciliation, which is the only way I think it's going to work. The government of Iraq was not at all in favor of CLCs when we started standing them up, because they were mostly Sunni, and they saw it as -- I think they saws it as us standing up a coup force, for lack of a better way of
describing it.

Over time, they have become much more comfortable with the CLC program, and they are --
every day they are getting better at incorporating them into the legitimate Iraqi Security Forces, either preferably the Iraqi Police or the Iraqi Army.

You run into speed bumps all the time on this and log jams, but they are becoming more and more comfortable, and they are starting to see the value of the CLCs in terms of the security.

CLCs were only stood up in areas that we didn't have security forces to hold what we had gained, and south of Baghdad is a great example, the northern area of Jabour area.

MND-C went in and cleared that, would hold that for a period of time. There are no Iraqi Army units there. There are no Iraqi Police in that area.

So before they could go any further south to continue efforts against al Qaeda, there had to be something to hold that. So a local sheikh comes forward, willing to volunteer 100 of his tribesmen to provide -- to guard infrastructure, to guard a mosque,
to guard a checkpoint.

So we hire him or contract him to do that, working -- We leave a small force there to maintain oversight, and we continue further south to continue the operation against al Qaeda or special groups, whichever it is.

Then over time, those that want to go into the Iraqi Security Forces, incorporate them into the Iraqi Security Forces. Those that don't, try to find another employment is the concept.

Now the money piece of it is can we afford to keep paying them? I think that we can't afford to not keep paying them. There is no doubt in my mind that they have had a significant impact on the security situation, the CLCs.

Probably more importantly, I don't think there is any doubt in al Qaeda in Iraq's mind that they have a significant impact on the security situation, because al Qaeda is definitely targeting CLC leaders and CLC groups right now.

I don't think they would do that if they weren't having an impact on al Qaeda's operations, and
JAM special groups has targeted them, too. So just the fact that they are being targeted, to me, indicates that they are effective.

Now monetarily, I don't know how anybody can argue with this is probably one of the better investments we've ever made. So if you agree with the premise that CLCs are having an impact, a significant impact on the security situation which has led to less U.S. equipment being destroyed, less expenditure of munitions, less flying hours. I think, it is probably one of the better investments of CERT money we have ever made in terms of the savings.

That is not even mentioned. The most important thing is how many U.S. and Coalition soldiers' lives have the CLCs saved just by their efforts?

People say can we afford to keep paying them. I say we can't afford not to pay them. It's probably the best investment we have ever made over here. Now we don't want to pay them forever, and we do -- We want to pay them as long as they are needed there to provide that security.
When Iraqi Security Forces can replace
them or we can get them incorporated into the Iraqi
Security Forces or they are no longer needed there for
security, then I think -- but we got to transition
them to something. And, hopefully, the Iraqi
government does that, and not us.

(b)(3), (b)(6) We are coming up on
the last couple of minutes. I don't know how tight
your schedule is, but I wanted to have an opportunity
just to kind of ask you an open-ended -- throw it back
to you, given that we are coming down to the last
couple of weeks, if you have any broad thoughts that
have gone through your mind about what this tour has
meant to you personally in, certainly, the most
critical staff position in the Corps in what has been
a very successful tour here during this last 15
months?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Well, 15 months have gone
pretty fast. I wouldn't say that day by day, but
looking back on it, 15 months has gone pretty fast.

You know, it has been successful. I mean,
there's some regrets as I look back. I wish we could
have done a better job on borders, but borders is just hard.

We never really came up with a good solution for how to stop the flow of stuff across the border, whether it be foreign fighters on the western borders or munitions, lethal munitions on the eastern border.

I wish we had have gotten to Baqubah a little faster than we did. Yeah, there's things along the way -- I guess the thing that sticks out in my mind is -- and once again, I'm a victim of my own experience, so I think back -- is the incredible confidence of our Army, and it's really -- You know, you watch some of the kids are capable of doing.

I call them kids, because I'm talking company commanders, in some cases battalion commanders. Brigades -- just incredible good brigade commanders. Division leadership I've worked with, staffs - just incredibly good.

You know, I look at where the Army was in 2003, I guess, when we started this, and I look at what captains, sergeants, lieutenants, lieutenant
colonels, majors.

Their confidence level and what they are able to do right now is just -- and no matter how this turns out, our Army has -- and Marine Corps and Navy, I think, and Air Force has just done a remarkable job and grown significantly.

We've never had much success in COIN, counterinsurgency operations. I don't know if this is going to be a success or not. I'm not even sure it is, counterinsurgency operation, sometimes.

General Odierno has been probably the best commander I've ever worked for, able to make a decision very quickly and has just an incredible instinct for what's going on out there. He is very good with his commanders.

He does more battlefield circulation than I ever gave him credit for. He said he was going to spend most of his time out. I seriously doubted it, but he has, and he gets out with company commanders, with platoon leaders, walks the streets. He just has an incredible feel for what's going on out there, which significantly helps the planners and me when we
are making recommendations and discussions with him.

I think that's just -- That's the most of it, just stuff that I never could have done as a company commander, battalion commander, is being done routinely now.

(b)(6): Let me follow that up just a bit, and we'll get you out of here. But in looking back on what you just said in a general sense, I wondered if you could look back and identify two, perhaps three, critical decision points that you think General Odierno and the staff of 3 Corps made during the past 14 months?

(b)(6): I think -- and it was a hard decision for him, taking and 32 Stryker Brigade out of Baghdad and sending them to Baqubah was a critical decision, to go up in there and clear Baqubah, and that was during Phantom -- trying to think if that was part of Phantom Thunder or Phantom Strike.

Doesn't really matter, but 32 Stryker had operated up in Mosul into Baghdad, and when we were here, they were in Baghdad, pulled them out of Baghdad
and sent them to Baqubah to reinforce 31 Cav and clear Baqubah.

I think that was a critical decision and absolutely the right decision, because that got al Qaeda out of what they were then claiming as their capital in Baqubah.

I think, although it's come with a lot of -- really, even earlier than that, the decision to go ahead and fight to get the five brigades. And you know, it wasn't just we showed up and five brigades showed up behind us. I mean, there was a little bit of a tussle on getting those five brigades.

Then probably more importantly, the decisions that he made on where to employ them, because the five brigades were coming to secure Baghdad, and there was a little bit of angst, and there in the summer when things weren't looking real good, there was a little bit of concern that maybe we had put them or planned to put them in the wrong spot.

I say wrong spots -- outside of Baghdad, not physically sitting in Baghdad.

It all went back to the theory that you
had to interdict accelerants of violence coming into
Baghdad. So I mean his decision to deploy them in the
Belts and really follow the Belt theory, 32 Stryker to
Baqubah.

Then the entire year, 15 months, the
philosophy he has always followed, and I think it's
had a less visible but as significant of an impact, is
his focus and his drive to focus his staff on output
and enabling division and brigade commanders to do
their job.

ISR is a great example. We've got 10 to
15 times more ISR in theater right now than we had the
last time the Corps was here, and we hold none of it
at Corps level. It's all pushed out.

So he is very subordinate commander
focused. He has told us more times than I care to
count that the only reason the Corps staff is here is
to enable divisions and brigades to execute their
fight.

So -- and that doesn't just jump out one
day and hit you, but over the course of 15 months, I
think that has been a -- and that's not really a
decision. That's just the way he is. I think that's absolutely correct in this theater. It is a decentralized fight.

Okay. Well, thank you.

Great. (b)(6) do you have time for one or two more or do you have to go on to your next --

I have no idea what I've got, but go ahead.

Just because this is our last kind of chance to catch you. So just one or two more I might like to get in.

I just want to talk about the changeover in a couple of divisions since we talked last. Almost within a month after that, we changed over MND-North from the 25th ID to 1st Armored Division. Then in December we changed over in Baghdad from 1st Cav to 4th ID.

I just kind of wanted to talk about the nuance piece of those command relationships, new staffs coming in, in particular in North where that is still where the hardest fighting is going, the number
of significant acts, you know, five times what everybody else has got.

How has the chemistry worked on those changeovers, and again I would probably look at North harder.

\[ \text{b}3\text{b}6 \] Yes. There is a growing period for any new units coming in. Doesn't matter whether it's division, corps, brigade, battalion, to adjust to their battle space.

I think the thing that is unique about North is just what you pointed out, is that they came in at a point where the threat was changing radically from what 25th ID had before them had, before 1st Armored Division, and 25th did a fantastic job. But when you come into a situation that is changing rapidly, some of the benefit of that right seat, left seat and handover experience from the previous unit goes away, because the situation is different very quickly as you are trying to adjust to it.

So the 25th -- I'm sorry, 1st Armored Division came into a very difficult situation. I think they've done a fantastic job adjusting to a
threat that was moving their way.

That really didn't surprise me, and I
don't think it really surprised anybody. We kind of
said that all along, that if al Qaeda starts to move,
it's going to be north, because it's not rocket
science.

They tried to turn against them in al
Anbar. So they are not going to go west. The Shia
dominate the south. So they are not going to go
south. They couldn't stay in Baghdad. So I mean,
there's really only one place for them. They can't go
east to Iran, you know. So there's only one place for
them to go.

The other thing that North has -- whether
it's 25th or 1st Armor -- has working against them is
just generally distance. I mean, it's just a huge
battle space, and what is going on in one corner of
the battle space is just uniquely different than what
is going on in another corner.

That's -- You know, Baghdad, MND-B is the
main effort, has been the main effort, will remain the
main effort. One of the ways you weight a main effort
is by reducing the amount of battle space it's got to be concerned with.

So you look at Baghdad, the battle space. It is the city of Baghdad and a little bit of terrain north and toward Taji, Tarmiyah (Phonetic) and a little bit out to the west toward ASR Golden, but not -- MND-North's battle space is probably 10 times that big with all the Kurdish issues, Turkmen issues, Sunni Arab issues, Shia issues, border issues on both borders.

So it is a difficult transition in North, I think a much more difficult transition than for MND-Baghdad, and I think it takes longer. But like I said, I think 1st Armor is on it.

They came into a different situation that 25th ID really couldn't prepare them for. So it has taken a little bit longer, in my opinion, to get things back on track, but they are back on track, and they are engaged in Mosul.

They are engaged in Diyala, a significant fight down along Lake Tharthar (Phonetic) the other day, significant cache finds west of Samarra. They...
got the Jazeera (Phonetic) Desert, which is the next place al Qaeda is going to migrate to, in my opinion. So the fight is going to remain up north for a while.

I'd like you to reflect a little bit about General Petraeus' arrival here, what changes his leadership at MNF has provided to the Corps, and the relationship -- in your estimation, the relationship between General Odierno and General Petraeus.

You know, after -- I forget what month General Petraeus got here. It wasn't too long after we got here, three months, two months.

Two months.

I think General Odierno and General Petraeus -- Number one, they've known each other for a long time. So that helps. They were division commanders together here back in '03-'04. So that helps, and I think they are of a like mind.

I think the thing that General Petraeus brought is -- and this should come as no surprise --
is this is all about protecting the population, that you cannot achieve an increase in the effectiveness of governance, you cannot achieve a growing economy, you cannot achieve much of anything else if the population is fearful that they are going to get killed the next day by a car bomb just going to the market to buy some bread, or they can't drive from point A to point B in Baghdad for fear of being stopped by a Shia checkpoint and if I'm a Sunni, I got a Sunni ID card, I'm going to get shot in the back of the head and left on the side of the street.

I mean, it's hard for a society to grow and develop with that type of real fear out there. So what he brought with him was this was about getting off the big FOBs, living and working amongst the population to provide that security jointly with the Iraqis.

I think General Odierno agrees 100 percent with that philosophy, has from the beginning. So I think the power of Generals Petraeus and Odierno together are a like vision and a complete agreement on the way forward.
There are things they don't agree on, but it is not anything significant. Where this needs to go, how we transition which is the other piece of it, and it's not unplugging -- it is a very slow, methodical, as conditions permit, not timeline driven transition of responsibility to a fully capable -- not fully but a capable Iraqi Security Force -- they both agree on that.

So I mean, I think those are the main things that he brought.

When we look at Op plan 08-01 and the idea of going back down to the pressure levels, but also at the same time some of our key Coalition force allies going away by mid-2008, the Brits, the Australians, the Poles, what are you saying as the way ahead as you transition that piece over to 18th Airborne Corps?

I don't think the Brits are going away. I think they are going down in numbers. The Poles will go. The Aussies will go. When I say the Aussies will go, it's really only the contingent that is at Tillil, which is only about a
third of their contribution. The rest of it will remain, you know, the core staff, 4 staff, etcetera, etcetera.

You know, you would have a couple of options. You either replace it with other Coalition forces, to include U.S. potentially, you turn the facilities and the responsibilities over to the Iraqis, or you just don't cover down on it. You know, out of all those, just don't cover down on it is not an option.

So it would either get transitioned to, most likely, U.S. or Iraqi Security Forces. Diwaniyah, for example, probably be a combination of both. Talk about -- There was another battalion destined for Diwaniyah that is in force generation right now.

Kadisiyah (Phonetic) Province, when Center South finally folds their division colors later this year, will probably fall under the MND-C, and there will probably be a U.S. at some level presence put on FOB Echo.

The Australian battle group that is at
Tallil: 182 is already there, which is the current theater security brigade. So I don't see a huge change. 182 will probably pick up some of the responsibilities of what the Aussie battle group was doing, and we may or may not change that battle space. It currently falls under Southeast, and it's really more about as Southeast reduces their numbers, what are they capable of doing than anything else.

(b)(6): That's all I have. I've gone through all of my questions.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Good. All right.

 thanks very much. That concludes this interview. Thank you.