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(b)(6)

UK, Royal Welsh)

9 October 2008, 1700 to 1800
M235, Embassy Annex, International Zone

By (b)(3), (b)(6)
MNFI Historian

Abstract

(S//ACGU) (b)(6) is an Infantry officer with experience in N.I., Falklands, Afghanistan, Sandhurst. MoD is embracing the 'comprehensive approach.' In 2002-2003, the firefighters' strike left them fighting fires than that the invasion. Views on Iraq in 2007 were pessimistic, and April 2008 seemed to confirm it, but "something [good] has happened." Sunni Lane is trying to slice of wedges of the insurgency and promote reconciliation. The Sol transition is thorny. We are dealing with the PM's Sadrism Reconciliation idea. A meeting with FREs in a third country fell through. This has been a remarkable tour. Engagement is vital, and Petraeus is promoting an FSEC concept for Afghanistan. *This was a good interview worth listening to for quotes. About 1:00.*

Interview

(U) (b)(6) is an infantry officer in the Royal Welsh, which was recently amalgamated from a couple of other organizations, I believe the Royal Welsh Fusilliers and the Royal Welsh Regiment. He has had seven tours, including two each to Northern Ireland and the Falklands, one to Afghanistan, and a tour fighting fires during the fire fighters strike of 2002-2003. He came to Iraq on promotion from Sandhurst, where he was a tactical officer. He has served in armored units and infantry. His degree was in geography and he has an M.A.

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(U) In 2002, he was in Germany and all his unit was eager to come to the desert for the war, regardless of how they felt of the cause. But, the fire fighter's strike broke out, and the

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question was could we do both a war and fire fighting. It was a quandary at the highest level, and it did impact planning and deployments. (b)(6) unit wound up fire fighting. (U) The UK just released its new COIN manual. (b)(6) has read part of 3-24. He has been out in Anbar and in the north, and he has been very impressed by the complexity and subtlety of tactical operations out there. There is a definite air gap. In the 1980s and 1990s, in N.I. they were mastering the small things: surveillance, fusion of intelligence, and how to do intelligence and intelligence fusion.

When did you arrive in Baghdad and how did your perceptions evolve?

(U) He arrived on 13 April 2008. In 2007, his views were pretty pessimistic, given how the situation looked from a distance. Arriving in Baghdad in mid-April and having all that shelling (from Sadr City) only seemed to confirm how bad it was, but something has happened. It is many pieces, the surge, the Sol, the Sadr ceasefire, tactics . . . we have moved from failed to fragile. We've seen improvements.

Could you explain your responsibilities?

~~(S//ACGU)~~ We each have different projects, and mine is Sunni Lane. I deal with the aftermath of the disenfranchisement of 2003 and conduct senior officers' interviews and deal with Former Regime Elements. We see the key link to the insurgency. The goal is to slice away a piece of the insurgency. We've managed three meetings between FREs and the IFCNR, in March, July, and August.

~~(S//ACGU)~~ In the March meeting, the FREs and IFCNR signed a 12-point statement, but both sides interpreted the statement differently. The FREs interpreted the signing as a commitment to address 12 points having to do with human rights, the Sahwa, pensions, jobs, properties, etc. The IFCNR interpreted the statement as a commitment to investigate these points. The FREs had already been getting emergency stipends.

17:30. ~~(S//ACGU)~~ The Rehire/Retire initiative has come out of the MoD. It was announced in August and began in September. It focuses on 140K former soldiers and officers. It has a registration period running for eight weeks in Iraq and twelve outside. In Iraq, the registration centers are at the 10 divisional headquarters. Once they register, the stipend payment stops, they receive an interim payment of approximately \$200, and then they can say whether they want to be rehired, or retired. We have had 103K who have registered, which is remarkable. From the 6th to 12th of September, there were 6K officers and 24K NCOs. Of those 738 officers and 1400 NCOs will be given their jobs back. So, you've got a 1 in 8 chance if you're an officer and a 1 in 16 chance if you're an NCO. Now, we don't know if that is going to be enough to enfranchise all of these people, but they are getting an interim payment, some of them will get

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their jobs back, and all of them will get a pension. It is whether economics will out and is that enough to get them to lay down their arms or stop providing arms or facilitating insurgency.

19:15. The other part of it is the senior officers. It will not apply to 1300 senior officers from brigadiers to three star generals. They are frustrated, and they are influential in the Sunni community and the insurgency. The MoD will not take anyone back who was over the rank of LTC or who is over 49 years old. We're halfway through this process. Individuals have to come back from outside the country, or report to Iraqi embassies, and not all the embassies are well prepared for that process.

The rehire process is not going to be easy, because expanding the Army further is difficult.

Could you describe the IFCNR?

(~~S/ACGU~~) The chairman is M. Salman, who has been wobbly on issues. He is the CoS to the PM, and he is Dawa party. He will not make decisions without the PM's approval. (b)(6) tried to get back in, but she is out. There are also former officers on it, including General Adnan, Ali, and Hashim. They get the issues.

What is the state of the Sol transition?

(~~S/ACGU~~) The Sol are 85% Sunni and 15% Shia. The Gol seems ready to take it on. There are former insurgents and former Sunni soldiers in it. It is all heavily linked. MNCI has the lead on the transition and is working with IFCNR. It is a big thorny issue.

What are FSEC's top priorities?

24:20 (~~S/ACGU~~) I would say the main one . . . my project, the Sol transition and the retire/rehire initiative is probably #2. The top priority is pretty sensitive, it is the PM's plan . . . or the Gol's idea, can he continue with the Dawa/ISCI powerbase or does he need to reach out to the Sadrists. I think that is where we are with that, and that has really grown arms and legs in the last three weeks.

Who are the key Iraqis dealing with that?

I think, and it is not in my lane, but (b)(6) is the key man at the moment. That is (b)(6) The number three priority would be the Political Council for Islamic Resistance. Six insurgency groups formed this council for a political voice. . There is also the Jihad & Reform Front and the Jihad and Change Front. There is also Jaysh al-Islami. To varying degrees, some groups are engage able and can serve as interlocutors. Some deemed engagement as unacceptable. We tried to have a meeting four weeks ago in a regional country. Engagement is very complex.

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Why did that meeting not happen?

(~~S//ACGU~~) We don't know definitively, but the possibilities include 1) interference by the country hosting the meeting, 2) disagreement among insurgent groups on talking to us or on what to talk about, 3) new pre-conditions they imposed, like demanding SOFA talks stop until they can take part or demanding high-level meetings with VPOTUS or SECSTATE. It is a process of establishing trust and relations. They have not registered for elections. Whether they can follow what the IRA did in setting up a political arm and then moving from violence to politics is the central question.

Could you explain FSEC?

(~~S//ACGU~~) FSEC includes US, UK, and Australians of all the services, and it brings everything together. It plans, engages, and reports. It is small and agile, working through a two-star and an ambassador's representative straight up to the CG and the Ambassador. It is very fast in its response times to the top and works closely with the CIOC and the CJ2. It works outside on a limb and commits us to sensitive talks.

When do you leave?

(U) I have just two weeks left, and that's unfortunate. It took four months to understand what was going on, another to master the trade, and now I'm about to leave just when I've become most effective. A nine-month tour would be much better, and I will recommend that change.

What will be your lasting impression of this time?

(U) I volunteered for this position after talking to a couple of others who had done it. It offers freedom of maneuver and risk taking, and I've felt very lucky to be able to do it. It is heavily interagency, and 40% of the work is with State counterparts. I believe my risk analysis skills have increased tremendously in learning to work in an unfamiliar environment. Engagement is barely mentioned in 3-24. It is a failure to fail to take risk and sit down with nasty people. This normally was done through Special Forces in the past. It is a requirement in Afghanistan, and I understand General Petraeus in visiting Britain has really pressed the FSEC concept for Afghanistan.

(~~S//ACGU~~) The Gol knows about us, and we make them nervous, but they recognize the importance of what we do. Maj Gen Porter has talked to Rubaie, and Rubaie told him "we know who you're talking to. It is delicate. Keep us informed." Dealing with redlines is necessary and delicate. . . Afghanistan . . . Taliban . . . Karzai . . . IO . . . talk to an enemy, and respecting a sovereign.

(U) We can't afford not to learn . . . we will sit down . . . we will assess . . . the earlier the better . . . redlines may lengthen . . .