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(b)(6)

16 January 2008

American Embassy Annex, International Zone, Baghdad

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

MNFI Historian

Interviewers Comments

The first interview was in the morning at 1000 and the second at 1500. (b)(6) discussed the evolution of British military and strategic doctrine in the 1980s and 1990s, the Cold War, end of Cold War, impact of 1991, and Balkan peacekeeping; the question of Iraq in late 2002 and the British firefighters' strike; and the 2003 campaign and Rumsfeld's transformation. In the second part of the interview, (b)(6) gave a good account of his March 2004 brief to CFLCC and the cold reception on his presentation of insurgency. Worked with the COIN manual, (b)(6) and all that led up to the JCPs of June and December 2007. Transcription priority: High for subject matter.

Background

His education was in geography, defense studies, and European defense studies. He is working on a dissertation in international and security affairs with the topic of the Effect of Iraq on the British Doctrinal Approach to Counter-Insurgency.

First Recording

In 1986, British doctrine underwent a change with a new emphasis on maneuver warfare. It emphasized mission analysis and mission command. By the end of the 1980s, with the pending end of the Cold War, we faced transitioning from a conflict on the NATO central front to new questions about out of sector operations.

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Then, the curtains were drawn over maneuver warfare. Balkans civil unrest led to civil war in Croatia and Bosnia. The UK watched it for a year before committing troops. The emasculated terms of UNPROFOR raised many concerns, and it had the effect of leaving all our vulnerabilities exposed. We went through 18 to 24 months of soul searching until the US and NATO stepped up with air power and the Dayton peace accords. NATO took

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operational control, and this put many concerns aside. The Dayton model became the accepted truth, that [you had to be?] amongst the population. This allowed us by late '90s to move back to central front thinking. Warfighting seemed the most complex and most dangerous task. So we focused on what we called "Type A" fighting against a near peer competitor. There was not much discussion of non-combatants, which concerned Type B, having to worry about the civil population. But, Bosnia in 1997 describes where we are today in Afghanistan and Iraq. Type B is sectarian, ethnic, irreconcilables, difficult to discern friend from foe and apply appropriate force. The Balkans told us a major fighting force could step down to peacekeeping and peace support. It seemed to validate our capabilities. The UK also brought the experience of complexities from Northern Ireland and the task of military assistance to civil authorities.

Bosnia scaled down in late 2000, and Iraq was starting to become a more prominent problem again internationally. Northern Ireland was going well. Then, after 9/11, "all bets were off." The new question was how do we apply military force now? And there were other questions, including the unfinished business of 1991 and Iraq. In 2002, we sent a Marine Commando brigade to Afghanistan. (b)(6) was a battalion commander at the time and the question became what we were going to do about Iraq. Any possible planning for Iraq in the UK was complicated by the prospect of a national firefighters' strike which, if called, would require the MoD to provide the nation's first response.

(b)(6) gave up command in December 2002 and went to the Joint Services Command and Staff College, doing planning and joint campaign planning. He watched OIF unfold along with the post-conflict stabilization. In late 2003, the UK had its second roulement of commanders coming out of Iraq. Commanders were trying to bring local Iraqi leaders together to normalize the situation. The reality is that in late '03 it was a much more complicated picture that we picked up. We then went back to look at (b)(6) (b)(6) and they all described the looting that followed regime changes and the roles of the Marsh Arabs and the Bedoins. We looked at how Iraqi had been built. A Cordesman noted a state of denial in terms of recognizing an insurgency.

In April '04, the UK in Basra was hit with three AQ suicide bombers. It was our first experience with it. Otherwise, Basra was very different from the Sunni triangle, but the state of denial was very troublesome.

On Rumsfeld's transformation, Shinseki was trying to get ahead of transformation with Future Combat System, and there was a lot going on. It was complicated, confusing, and there were contradictory themes.

(b)(6) looked at transformation closely, and he remembers seeing a couple of slides that were supposed to signify what transformation meant on operations against Iraq. There was a slide depicting the 1991 campaign as one huge thrust from Saudi Arabia or a big hammer. The next slide depicted a more precise thrust from Kuwait in 2003 operating along more axes. The "networked" future was supposed to be even more precise.

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However, (b)(6) made it clear stabilization was a labor intensive task, and Shinseki's warning about several hundred thousand was dead-on. This is nothing new. Ireland demonstrated the same thing, as did with Bosnia with UNPROFOR being a light an incapable force.

In early '03, UK deployed 45,000 servicemen. By June '03, "we were down to about 15,000 for the four provinces for which we had control. And friends of mine, battalion commanders in Iraq, I knew were working very hard to cover their enormous areas of responsibility. As far as those battle groups deployed in Basra were concerned, they were working very, very hard to maintain a presence throughout the city, and at that time they had a number of operating bases around the city, which we don't have currently.

Going back to information operations, my personal view is that things did not add up. We had statements from Rumsfeld, his view, and then we had reports from the ground."

Did Rumsfeld make it harder to recruit a larger coalition?

"I'm not in a position to judge that. It didn't affect British commitment to the operation. The 'old Europe/new Europe' divide, the French Army wanted to be involved. They saw it was professionally demanding, potentially rewarding, but politically, they showed no outward interest in what was going on. All their focus, as seen in their professional journals, was on central Africa. We were alright in the UK because Tony Blair said we're standing "Shoulder to shoulder," with the US."

I have a sense that the fall of the regime in April '04 opened a window of opportunity to reconsider strategic relationships. Perhaps countries that had opposed the invasion, depending on the media tact and policies taken, might have reconsidered their stance in the wake of what seemed a decisive victory.

"I can see that, and I can also see how it might fit into a misunderstanding of the nature of the problem. Things were never going to be solved with the force levels and the approach that the majority of commanders were taking in Iraq. I heard a senior four-star American general give a presentation . . . if anyone is in a position to make an accurate assessment, it is him, and he said it wasn't as black as people painted. There were some outstanding results. Commanders, bde, bn, and company commanders who showed their intuitive feel for operating amongst the people to come through, and they were achieving great things. But they were a substantial minority. The majority found themselves in a position for which they hadn't been trained, weren't prepared, didn't have the resources or in a weren't prepared [and] didn't have the training, resources, and skills sets to cope with non-combat operations, and that was the view that was transmitted around the world. I heard him say that in September last year."

In early March 2004, while (b)(6) was teaching at the staff college, MOD received a request to send a COIN doctrine expert to brief CFLCC on British COIN doctrine.

(b)(6) got the tasking to go along with (b)(6). His guidance was to prepare and deliver a non-contentious view on doctrine, just to place it on the table for

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consideration. The keys were putting together principles, including minimal force. He got this tasking on Monday night, worked on it through the week, and headed to Kuwait [on Friday?]. Before he went, his commandant cleared the script [LTG McColl].

He arrived in Camp Doha, and spent the day getting ready to brief CFLCC. The presentation was a large hall, and McKiernan had three "grey beards" beside him. This was the incoming TUSA HQ. It had been a long day with an intense battle rhythm, and (b)(6) faced a tired audience.

(b)(6) spoke first, and his presentation was inflammatory. He compared US, UK, and French approaches, and he used the 19th century Indian Wars as the US example. This devolved into an academic pissing match with members of the audience.

(b)(6) suddenly felt he became the forerunner of Brits trying to badger the Americans.

We ran out of time for the interview, and continued with a second recording in the afternoon.

Second Recording

During the presentation to CFLCC, LTG McKiernan stopped (b)(6) to ask if he thought the United States was fighting an insurgency in Iraq. (b)(6) sensing the hostility in the room and in the question, stepped out from behind the podium and said he was not privy to the intelligence or the sources McKiernan had. (b)(6) information was based only on open source and what was being reported in the news. However, based on the British doctrinal definition of an insurgency (both high and low tempo operations, sectarian strife, criminality, terrorism, challenges to the political system and a few other things) the United States in Iraq was facing an insurgency, and (b)(6) tried to stress the definition depended on the nature of the conflict, not its tempo. McKiernan told (b)(6) he "fundamentally disagreed," but told him to continue his presentation.

(b)(6) continued to the end in a silent room, delivered his last slide without any response, and left. It was a chilling experience. Outside, the conference organizer met (b)(6) and handled his direct transport to the airport to return to the UK. (b)(6) wrote up his experience in a report he sent to the Chief of Joint Operations. He felt the trip had been a complete waste of time.

In 2006, he was at a conference of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, where an American one-star came up and slapped him on the back like an old friend and said he knew (b)(6) from somewhere, but (b)(6) did not recognize him. They kept mentioning places, none of which were correct, until they realized it was from (b)(6) 2004 brief to CFLCC. (b)(6) explained his take on the experience, and the one-star said "No, you've got it wrong." Despite that cold reception, (b)(6) briefing had made them all think. That one-star was serving as the Assistant Chief of Operations for ARRC.

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Later, a CALL report assessed that Marine operations in Fallujah in April 2004 had alienated the population. It had been a quick, dirty attempt to restore order. The 2nd attempt in October was a much more carefully prepared operation, and it was successful.

At the end of '04, (b)(6) was at the British Army Land Warfare Center in Wilshire, Warminster. After Fallujah in April, we began receiving serious requests for our doctrine, from the Combined Arms Center, from the British Staff, from DA G3, from the Peacekeeping Studies Institute (name uncertain) at Carlisle, PA. (b)(6) kept thinking of that blank audience he had seen in Kuwait.

From the Combined Arms Center, he linked up with (b)(3), (b)(6) who was in charge of the Combined Arms Doctrine Division. He had been working on an interim COIN manual (FM 3-0 7.22?) since the summer of '04. He had not had much time and was working a tight timeline and was reevaluating the work. Began email information exchange through the spring and summer of '05.

In October '05, went to Ft. Belvoir for staff talks. There was a US Army delegation on COIN from the G2, PsyOps, SF, returnees from Iraq. These were small teams of subject matter experts. (b)(6) brought a small British doctrine team. They spent five days discussing approaches, identifying gaps, and considering the British view. The British Army had no notion of revising UK COIN doctrine. UK thought our doctrine was just fine, but we lacked the resources necessary. A report from the House of Commons confirmed that sense. In the fall of 2005, there were new benchmarks. We had to consider the Sunni triangle and Baghdad's complexities.

In Dec '05, early '06, P went to the Combined Arms Center. He invigorated a doctrine review, and brought (b)(6) in to edit it. P trusted (b)(6), a West Point classmate. He also brought in (b)(6), from the Harvard Center for Human Rights, (b)(6). These were brains and ideas working under P's direction. When you compare this product to the interim 3-24, it is clear that strong points continued, it sound principles remained. What was important was that it had personal buy in from senior officers, a broad academic base. How it brought to where we are today is that our operations confirm to the classic theories of counterinsurgency. You have to secure the population, so P employed classic theories.

One of the chapters in the manual is on campaign planning, and it shows up in the MNFI JCP of June-Jul '07. It is the first JCP to echo the themes in 3-24.

Petraeus was not just re-writing doctrine. In his running of all the Army's Field Training Centers, he re-oriented the Army's entire approach.

P's view of a COIN campaign, which came through in the July '07 JCP, puts emphasis on the non-kinetic approach. In Sept '07, it reinforced the notion that the military is only 20% of the COIN strategy.

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Petraeus' approach has linked Doctrine--Training--and Practice. There were commanders who "got it," and there were those it didn't. It was securing the population (common sense), because that was more important than chasing insurgents. Much of AQ was not from the population. They were alien to Iraqi culture, and this made them vulnerable to being isolated from it. H.R. McMaster notably got it. But many more did not. Now, brigade and battalion commanders do get it.

In the early summer of '07, (b)(6) visited the COIN center in Taji for a study and met (b)(6), who had become the Deputy Commandant. (b)(6) showed (b)(6) DVDs of what went on that year in Taji. There were commanders who, having gone through the training, clearly still did not get it. (b)(6) asked P "what do you do when a BCT commander doesn't get it?" P explained the division commander would visit, and if the commander still didn't get it, then the Corps commander would visit, and the BCT commander really did not want a visit from Petraeus.

I asked whether today is like May '03. He said they were like May '06, when the situation was hanging in the balance after the elections, when it could go either way. The first half of the year and its political vacuum was very unhelpful.

The December JCP update makes the mission more explicit about GoI and the people. I contains five tasks, to transition 1) from surge, 2) to ISF, 3) to Iraqi control, 4) through GWOT, 5) to enduring relationship. The center of gravity of the conflict has shifted from the coalition's will to the support of the Iraqi people for the GoI. We can all focus on how this benefits Iraqis, and judge our actions against that. In Iraq, the view of the coalition and ethnic groups varies from place to place. We have a change of mission and a change in the center of gravity. Our themes are transition and reconciliation. We always knew there would be an end, but we lacked a clear sense of how. The main effort is political. Now, we have three steps or criteria:

1. An Iraq at peace with its neighbors.
2. That is not a haven for insurgents.
3. An Iraq that has long-term CF relationships.

Reconciliation has to resolve many conflicting interests. 1) All our local security accords and a patchwork mosaic that ties it all together for a unified Iraq. 2) Local ability of civic life to proceed. 3) ISF has to sustain civic functions. Our operations go from Leading, to Partnering, to Overwatch. All this does not address the IP issues, and the four LOO are not enough on their own. Support includes the Rule of Law, which means many police issues. Rule of law is fundamental and is strategic communication. There are many supporting activities to this, and this means coalition forces are stepping down and ISF are stepping up.

I asked about the influence of (b)(6) on the COIN manual based on (b)(6) input. P was clear he manual had to be a big tent. From the outset, there were soldiers who did not want to know about COIN. An early draft went out of the internet, apparently unintentionally. (b)(6) wrote up a very critical article and appealed to the warrior ethos to reject it. (b)(6) response is that there is nothing politically correct about Operation Phantom Pheonix. (b)(6) never refer to the role of the commander, only the so-

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called 'warrior ethos' of 'kill them all.' No doubt, OPP will demonstrate the reality of the warrior ethos.

The whole idea of capturing and killing the insurgent fails when that is all you've got. It failed the British miserably in Aden. Other cases are sometimes cited, including Kenya and the Mau Mau. There, the internecine fighting destroyed the insurgency more than the British did. Regarding (b)(6) it is always easier to dam than to praise.

What about the future? (b)(6) believes the UN will show greater interest in Iraq this year, as may NATO in terms of bolstering the training mission. These are just feelings. Regarding neighboring countries, both formal and informal relationships are important. 1.4b, 1.4d are both interesting in their pressure on Umm Qasr. They both influence it. In the absence of a national port authority, it is harder to get Umm Qasr sorted out.

1.4b, 1.4d is trying to build positive economic relationships, and that is good.

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