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U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

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INTERVIEW  
OF  
BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES McDONALD  
DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL-FIRES  
MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS-IRAQ

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1 FEBRUARY 2008

BAGHDAD, IRAQ

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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

This is

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

the Multinational Corps-Iraq Historian.

Today is Friday, the 1st of February 2008 at approximately 1135, and we are here at the al Faw Palace outside of Baghdad, Iraq, and I am interviewing Brigadier General McDonald, the Deputy Commanding General for Fires.

Just for the listen's benefit, this is the second interview with General McDonald. The first was conducted on the 31st of July 2007.

Sir, just to validate the recording, could you go ahead and introduce yourself in your voice with your rank, first name, middle name, last name, and your title?

BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Sure. Brigadier General James Marcum McDonald. I am Deputy Commanding General of Fires, lethal and non-lethal.

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

Great. Thank you very

much, sir.

Sir, if it is acceptable to you, we did a release form the first time we sat down. If it is all

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1 right with you, we will consider that to still be  
2 active.

3 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Excellent.

4 (b)(3), (b)(6) All right, sir.

5 Sir, my first question was just -- We were  
6 chatting just a moment ago, but could you talk me  
7 through the titling, because I think when we spoke  
8 last we were just coming out of or had recently  
9 adjusted the title from Effects to Fires. Can you  
10 talk me through that?

11 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Yes. The Joint  
12 Forces Command is that concept of effects based  
13 approach to operations. They are really talking about  
14 now effects based thinking, and at the geo-strategic  
15 level it is a very good construct.

16 The Army and, I believe, the Marine Corps  
17 as well, relooked this doctrine for service-specific,  
18 and had made decisions not to change their doctrine to  
19 include that type of approach. (Inaudible) as the  
20 Army rewrites FM-3 -- Number one, the Army never  
21 changed its doctrine and included effects. So a lot  
22 of the people that were trying to do effects based

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1 operations were doing so kind of out ahead of the  
2 Army.

3 The Army has decided we are not going to  
4 use the term effects or effects based operations, and  
5 we all actually think that's pretty good, because  
6 effects -- When you get down to a division, a corps  
7 and division level and below, what does effects mean?

8 Effects could mean anything. You know, it  
9 can be IO operations. It could be civil-military  
10 operations, because they all have an effect. Well,  
11 guess what? A platoon maneuvering down the street has  
12 an effect, and it certainly wasn't effects coordinator  
13 for operations.

14 So when you think about it, it's too  
15 imprecise a term. So the Army has gone back, and we  
16 have terms for just about everything we do, and most  
17 of the things I am doing fall under the terms lethal  
18 or nonlethal fires.

19 Lethal fires, I think, we are aware. You  
20 know, Army surface to surface and then joint air to  
21 surface. Couple those together, and you just about  
22 take care of joint fire.

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1 Then there is the nonlethal piece, some  
2 air delivered nonlethal piece, [REDACTED] 1.4a, 1.4g

3 [REDACTED] 1.4a, 1.4g You've got information operations. You've got  
4 civil military operations. All of those we are  
5 considering as nonlethal fires, and we think the  
6 doctrine is going that way as well.

7 So that's why we changed it, because it is  
8 a more precise term, and it better describes what we  
9 are doing here.

10 [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) When did that actually  
11 take effect, sir? Do you recall?

12 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: My job title  
13 change?

14 [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes.

15 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: It was sometime  
16 in August, late August, I believe, possibly September.

17 [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) Okay. I'll run it to  
18 ground based on that. I just want to get a general  
19 sense. I didn't miss it when we sat down last time.

20 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Right. We were  
21 still in the throes of doing that. See, we  
22 reorganized based off of Army doctrine. We didn't

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1       come over here to do -- this be the effects cell, but  
2       we didn't fully change the name. Finally, after we  
3       came over here and validated what we were doing, the  
4       CG decide to go ahead and change the name.

5               So this is not the Joint Fires and Effects  
6       Cell anymore. This is the Joint Fire Cell, and I am  
7       DCG-Fires.

8               (b)(3), (b)(6)       Great. Sir, in that same  
9       vein, I wanted to ask: Since we talked last, have  
10      there been any noteworthy changes in terms of the  
11      organization of the section? Any specific change in  
12      the responsibilities that you have or noteworthy key  
13      personnel changes since we sat down the end of July?

14              BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I don't think so.

15              (b)(3), (b)(6)       One thing I wanted to ask  
16      about that is one of the things, I think, that was new  
17      when we sat down last was the idea of the engagement  
18      reconciliation piece, and just wanted to -- because it  
19      was something that was still kind of new under your  
20      umbrella, I wanted to kind of talk about how you have  
21      seen it mature and what role it has taken on, and has  
22      that been a really critical piece?

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1                   BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I'll be happy to  
2 talk about that, if you allow me just about three  
3 minutes to put it in context.

4                   (b)(3), (b)(6) Absolutely.

5                   BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I don't know what  
6 the official brief is going to look like after we get  
7 done, but I believe that at the end of this 15 month  
8 tour there has been a measure of success.

9                   We came in, and Iraq was at one level.  
10 Now we are going to leave, and Iraq is at a different  
11 level. Not saying we won, but I will say that I  
12 believe at the end of the day we will be categorized  
13 as we are winning at this point, and it's really hard  
14 to tell. We won't know until later.

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18                   1.4d  
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22                   So those soldiers that fought at el

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1 Alamain, they didn't know they were fighting the  
2 turning point for the British, for the British land  
3 forces in European Theater of Operations.

4 So we won't know. We won't know what's  
5 going on, but I would categorize the level of success  
6 that has occurred. I think there has been some  
7 success. The level of success that has occurred has  
8 come on three major axes, but all backed up by the  
9 cumulative work that had been done before.

10 I'm not saying that this Corps that came  
11 in had three good ideas, and that's all. There was  
12 lots of work that came into this.

13 Piece number one is the surge gave us the  
14 flexibility to change our tactics, and instead of  
15 operating out of a large FOB and going downtown and  
16 securing and coming back in, it gave us flexibility to  
17 move downtown, to occupy the joint security stations  
18 in the town, protect the population where they live.

19 Now we have done that in the places we  
20 exist and where we have expanded to. The Iraqi  
21 population now believes when the Coalition and Iraqi  
22 Security Forces come in, they come in for good. They

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1 can be settled, and they can start to live a normal  
2 life, because they don't think that the forces are  
3 going to leave and al Qaeda is going to backfill them  
4 or extremist militia.

5 Two, the quality and the abilities of the  
6 Iraqi Security Forces are now such -- They are in such  
7 a state that they can be counted on to provide  
8 security in the local areas. I mean, they provide a  
9 large share of the security that's there, again  
10 cumulative effort.

11 That didn't just happen this year. That  
12 happened off of three or so long years of building  
13 that capacity. They are not perfect. They still have  
14 a ways to go, and they are still standing up new  
15 units. But they have proven that they can provide the  
16 security.

17 I would tell you the majority of the Iraqi  
18 people, if you poll them, and we do, will tell you  
19 they've got a lot of confidence in their security  
20 forces, and that's who they would prefer to secure,  
21 the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police, and the National  
22 Police, which a year ago you never had anybody tell

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1 you they want the National Police securing them.  
2 Their image has changed, and their abilities have  
3 changed greatly.

4 The third major thing that has happened,  
5 I think, is this concept of the CLCs, Concerned Local  
6 Citizens. Really, what that is, it is a temporary  
7 measure that we have all taken -- us and the  
8 government of Iraq have taken into consideration and  
9 put into action, where -- Actually, let me back up  
10 just a little bit.

11 The idea behind it came from watching  
12 Anbar, and you watched Anbar as the tribes banded  
13 together to fight against al Qaeda, and they decided  
14 they would kind of join in with the government of  
15 Anbar and the Coalition forces, and they, coupled  
16 together with the Marines and the Army units that were  
17 out there, kicked al Qaeda out of Anbar.

18 So we all kind of sat down and asked  
19 ourselves, well, how can we replicate this? Is it  
20 time for the population to do this now? Can they  
21 replicate this?

22 So we kind of analyzed that and said,

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1        yeah, we think it is. So we proposed that to the  
2        government of Iraq. What we proposed to them was a  
3        police auxiliary force. They didn't bite on that  
4        exactly. So we kind of told them, well, we were going  
5        to do it, and we'd sure like them to help and work  
6        along with us.

7                They immediately formed the IFCNR, the  
8        Implementation and Follow-on Committee for National  
9        Reconciliation. IFCNR is what we call that.

10               While we were moving out with CLCs, the  
11        IFCNR was kind of dealing with that we kept them  
12        informed of what is going on, and the IFCNR has direct  
13        ear to the Prime Minister. So it's not like, you  
14        know, the Iraqi government didn't know what was going  
15        on. We kept them informed.

16               Now their level of participation has been  
17        different overtime. When I briefed you last, we were  
18        still trying to get them involved in it. Around the  
19        September time period, directives from the Prime  
20        Minister's office through the IFCNR came out that  
21        Iraqi Security Forces were to cooperate with the CLC.

22               That has started slowly, but gotten

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1 better, and then 2 December -- I think it was 2  
2 December, 2 or 4 December at an MNC-S brief --

3 (b)(3), (b)(6) I believe it was 2  
4 December, sir.

5 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Okay, where  
6 General Odierno went down and laid out the new rules  
7 for the CLCs and how we were all going to work  
8 together, and they all bought into it, were buying it.  
9 The Prime Minister said write it, we are on board, and  
10 we are going forward.

11 So that program has been very successful.  
12 Now let me describe to you what that program really  
13 is, and my thoughts.

14 It is a program. It is a temporary  
15 measure where you get locals in the area that have  
16 decided that they don't want to support extremists --  
17 and that can be either Shia extremists or it can be al  
18 Qaeda or Sunni extremists that were insurgents and/or  
19 learning toward supporting al Qaeda -- that they want  
20 to have peace and security in their neighborhoods, and  
21 they've decided to stand up and do it.

22 Most of them, we have put on critical

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1 infrastructure security contracts, guarding  
2 checkpoints, guarding major roads, guarding  
3 neighborhoods, defensive in nature. These have been  
4 small groups, groups of 70, 50, 150, 200, not banded  
5 together as a single homogeneous force, but providing  
6 local security in the place where they live, in  
7 conjunction with Coalition forces and always growing  
8 in conjunction with Iraqi Security Forces.

9 Where practical, they are subordinate to  
10 the Iraqi Security Forces, and we try to push that and  
11 advance that as much as we can.

12 Now having described that local security  
13 effort to you, what it really has summed up to today  
14 is just a little over 80,000 people. It's 80,000 that  
15 potentially were, if not actively but supportively,  
16 supporting the insurgency or al Qaeda or something  
17 like that, and now they have changed over, and they  
18 are supporting the government of Iraq. They are  
19 supporting Iraqi Security Forces, and they are  
20 supporting us to achieve local security.

21 That's why you can drive around Iraq in  
22 most of these little towns that we have gone to, and

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1 the markets are open, and people are living normally,  
2 because they are not being suppressed by extremists.

3 If you just go back to the COIN doctrine  
4 and the COIN model, and it is really about the  
5 population, and out of the population, you know, if  
6 you've got a bar that represents a population and it's  
7 a yard long, three feet long. On each end you got  
8 about two inches. One end is the new government, and  
9 now the government is standing up. The other end is  
10 the insurgency. In the middle is the mass of the  
11 population.

12 How you determine whether an insurgency  
13 works or doesn't work or whether the new government  
14 and the forces supporting that, which is us, win or  
15 don't win is where does the population go? Where does  
16 the population make the determination that they are  
17 going to support?

18 I will tell you, this is indicative that  
19 the population has made a determination that they are  
20 going to support Iraq. They are going to support the  
21 constitution, their elected authorities and the Iraqi  
22 Security Forces, and they have decided -- They have

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1 decided where they want to go, and they are moving  
2 away from the insurgency, away from al Qaeda, and in  
3 large measure we are seeing away from Shia extremists.

4 This is a very, very positive movement,  
5 and that is -- When I say the third component of the  
6 success that's occurred this year, we've categorized  
7 this CLCs, but you can see when you get in the  
8 underlying piece behind it, it's much bigger than the  
9 CLCs. It's the Iraqi population has decided that they  
10 want to get back their normal life.

11 They see a way to do it, and they think  
12 that this government of Iraq is the way to go. I  
13 think that's where you are going to see it continue  
14 on. If we can continue on those three lines, and it  
15 looks like all three can continue on, then I think you  
16 will see this thing getting better next year.

17 (b)(3), (b)(6) You talked about the --  
18 You just touched on it briefly, about the Shia aspect  
19 of this. Can you talk me through how the evolution of  
20 the CLCs has primarily been a Sunni -- even as  
21 recently in the press today, I think there was  
22 discussion about the Kurds and the Kashmirga and their

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1 roles as a potential CLC element, and it has not been  
2 something that's been pushed in the predominantly Shia  
3 provinces.

4 Can you talk me through what the sort of  
5 either formal agreements or informal agreements around  
6 that?

7 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Well, I mean, the  
8 group most disaffected was the Sunni, and the group  
9 involved mostly in the insurgency was the Sunni. So  
10 it's kind of natural that that's where this kind of  
11 came into groundswell from.

12 The other pieces, the potential Kurd and  
13 the potential Sunni -- I mean Shia -- You know, in the  
14 little towns we have gone through down south of  
15 Baghdad and some of the little towns up in the Diyala  
16 area that are mixed or some of them are Shia area --  
17 you know, they are just as repressed as the little  
18 Sunni towns were, and they want the same thing  
19 everybody else wants. They just want to live normal.

20 So it's a way to have that happen, and  
21 they look at the two little towns next to them and  
22 they see it happening. So it's probably natural that,

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1 if that groundswell is to go toward the government of  
2 Iraq, these people are going to want to go there, too.

3 Now the predominantly Shia government --  
4 she's the requirement on the Sunni side, because they  
5 see the very dangerous element of al Qaeda and the  
6 insurgency on the Sunni side -- I think I said Shia --  
7 on the Sunni side, they have seen that, and they are  
8 happy to have that done.

9 On the Shia side, because the government  
10 of Iraq is predominantly Shia, they are less anxious  
11 to have these organizations stand up against the Shia  
12 organizations that are there. So they have asked us  
13 in the predominantly Shia south not to stand up CLCs,  
14 and in places where we haven't stood them up, we are  
15 not standing them up now.

16 Now they may stand up something like that  
17 as it goes, but we are not, for the time being.

18 (b)(3), (b)(6) Was that just an informal  
19 agreement?

20 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: It was an  
21 agreement at that 2 September meeting.

22 (b)(3), (b)(6) 2 December meeting?

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1 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: 2 December  
2 meeting, yes.

3 (b)(3), (b)(6) Were you at the 2  
4 December meeting?

5 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I was not. I was  
6 not.

7 (b)(3), (b)(6) I wanted to ask also,  
8 too, just as recently as yesterday for the first time  
9 I heard this term, sons of Iraq, as a new term to  
10 describe the Concerned Local Citizens.

11 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Yes. Here is  
12 what we are trying to do with that. It really gets at  
13 trying to make sure we've got this thing separated  
14 from any political business that goes on.

15 You heard me refer to this as CLCs. If  
16 you listen to an Iraqi, they will call it the "sahwa"  
17 (Phonetic), the awakening, and it's all fashioned  
18 after the sahwa, the awakening movement that happened  
19 in Anbar.

20 Well, here's what's going on, and here is  
21 why we need to introduce a new term, and we'll see if  
22 it catches. Sometimes things like catch on; sometimes

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1 they don't.

2 The CLCs that we have stood up, I've just  
3 described to you at length, have all been about  
4 security, local security. That's what it's about,  
5 local security.

6 The sahwa (Phonetic) in Anbar has turned  
7 into a political movement. They are spreading their  
8 political movement around. The informal agreement  
9 that was made is we wouldn't stand up any new CLCs in  
10 the south.

11 Sahwa headquarters, offices, councils are  
12 standing up in the south, but not as CLCs under our  
13 program. They are standing up as political  
14 organizations. The government of Iraq has closed a  
15 few of them, potentially could close more, because we  
16 have agreed we won't stand up CLCs.

17 Now we are talking two different things.  
18 We are talking CLC security organizations. These  
19 other groups are sahwa political organizations.  
20 Remember, the Iraqis call them the same thing. That's  
21 why we are introducing this term so it's something  
22 that -- because when we talk about CLCs to Iraqis, the

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1 interpreters call it sahwa, awakening.

2 We need to give our interpreters a term  
3 that they could use to separate the two, so that we  
4 can clearly identify it. Sons of Iraq --- because  
5 CLCs -- You're asking why didn't we just use CLCs?  
6 CLC basically translates to "people that are worried."

7 These aren't people that are worried.  
8 These are --

9 [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) Not a good marketing  
10 phrase.

11 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: But it doesn't  
12 describe them. They are not people who are worried.  
13 they are people that have stood up to take care of the  
14 country. "Sons of Iraq" describes that.

15 [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) Does Sons of Iraq have an  
16 Iraqi -- Do you know the Iraqi words that that  
17 translates to?

18 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Abna al Iraq.  
19 Now it also can be used for the local: Abna al  
20 Habaniyah.

21 [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) Sure.

22 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: So it will work.

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1 [REDACTED] Great.

2 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: If it catches on,  
3 it will work, and we are doing this, and this will  
4 take a few months. This won't be overnight, and if it  
5 really does catch on, then we've named them more  
6 properly to separate them out between the security  
7 organizations that we have and the emerging political  
8 organizations that are using the term "sahwa."

9 [REDACTED] Sir, I think when you and  
10 I spoke last, really, at that point I don't think we  
11 had even finalized on CLC as the name. They were still  
12 being called different names --

13 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Absolutely. CLC  
14 just kind of fell out, because that was the  
15 predominant name that people were calling them.

16 [REDACTED] Along the lines of  
17 creating a more unified concept, I think at that time,  
18 too, still very much bottom up, and individual  
19 battalions in that area were sort of standing them up  
20 how they saw fit.

21 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Let me correct  
22 that. They were standing them up in accordance with

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1 the guidelines that we gave them.

2 [REDACTED] That's where I want to  
3 get.

4 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: The guidelines we  
5 gave them?

6 [REDACTED] Yes. How did those  
7 guidelines --

8 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Gave them left  
9 and right limits on what they could stand up and how  
10 they could stand them up, and the left and right  
11 limits were you could use -- You could have a program  
12 under this guidance if you stood them up for, like I  
13 talked about, local security, guard local areas, and  
14 what not. We had it run through all the legal with it  
15 and made sure it was legal, and we did that.

16 From the git-go, we never armed them. We  
17 didn't give them ammunition. That wasn't -- We are  
18 not allowed to. We didn't do it. It's not part of  
19 it. But as you know, you don't need armed people  
20 around here. They still got weapons. Now their arms  
21 are small arms. That's all they are allowed to have.  
22 They are not allowed to have heavy weapons, machine

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1 guns, mortars, RVTs, just small arms.

2 That was the general guideline we gave  
3 them. Out of the 2 December, we gave more guidance,  
4 and in conjunction with the government of Iraq. What  
5 we called this at our second phase -- we really  
6 tightening this up now. We got it organized. We got  
7 it out there, and to make sure it's a good package  
8 that's agreeable to the government of Iraq, we agreed  
9 on things.

10 Some of these things -- Some of the points  
11 were: One, they are not to be politically oriented.  
12 I already told you about some steps we are doing to  
13 make sure we separate it from political. They can't  
14 have political slogans, political names. They can't  
15 have paramilitary names.

16 They cannot have heavy weapons, which we  
17 have always contended, but now we've kind of codified  
18 that between us and the government of Iraq. We put it  
19 out in a frag order. They've put it out in a PM  
20 directive, and it's the same. So we agree on that.

21 They are local. They are for defensive  
22 purposes only, and they are temporary. We are going

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1 through a process right now. We are having another  
2 big meeting. We had several meetings on how we are  
3 going to transition the CLCs when the time comes.

4 When they are no longer needed for  
5 security, we will transition them in a very thoughtful  
6 and programmatic and methodical way from CLCs to other  
7 things. Some percentage, 20 to 30 percent, will go  
8 into the Iraqi Security Forces. That's the Iraqi  
9 Army, Iraqi Police, all the apparatus they have.

10 That's ongoing. We have already  
11 transferred about 7,000 into that. If you count  
12 Anbar, which started before this, it's more like  
13 17,000.

14 There are jobs programs that we are  
15 putting together. We are standing up -- We are  
16 standing up the civil service corps, which is like  
17 CLCs except, rather than guarding, they are going to  
18 be out there helping rebuild the infrastructure  
19 around.

20 There is a training component to that, a  
21 huge training component, because some of these guys  
22 have got to teach welding skills, masonry skills,

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1       woodworking skills. We are doing that in conjunction  
2       with the government of Iraq. That will be part of the  
3       CLC transition plan.

4               There is another component that is really  
5       more headed by the government of Iraq, is a education  
6       reintegration program. We are going to teach people  
7       skills and, oh, by the way, they are going to create  
8       jobs for these skills.

9               We are going to run pilot programs for all  
10       of these things during this spring, between now and  
11       June '08, and June '08 is our target date to really  
12       kick this thing and really start the transition of  
13       this, and industrials.

14               (b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, during this time  
15       we've had a changeover of several of the commands of  
16       the Multinational Divisions, and likewise at the MNFI  
17       level some continued individual augmentees that  
18       happened during the summertime.

19               Just as you kind of look at those changes  
20       and have brought them down the chain of command, so to  
21       speak, has that changed any of the dynamics about your  
22       job in terms of the buyer's aspect and the

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1 interrelationships that you have both up and down the  
2 chain, that aspect, any of the relationships, the  
3 working relationships?

4 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Did you say  
5 buyer's?

6 (b)(3), (b)(6) Up and down the chain of  
7 command in the context of your position as DCG?

8 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Buyers? No, not  
9 really. I mean, the changeovers that have occurred,  
10 we've gone through them very carefully, monitored,  
11 explained, made sure people understand what the  
12 programs are.

13 We were probably more concerned about all  
14 the brigades changing out, because they are the ones  
15 that really execute things, put programs in place.  
16 Changeovers happen very well. We really didn't -- I  
17 mean, brigade and division level went amazingly  
18 seamless, a lot smoother than we had anticipated.

19 I thought that we would really have a big  
20 dropoff in momentum. I would tell you December kind  
21 of felt like we were dropping off a little in  
22 momentum. So we kicked off Phantom Phoenix, and the

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1 momentum has picked right back up, and I'm glad;  
2 because I think it's better for 18th Airborne Corps to  
3 come in while we got a big operation going and we are  
4 handing off to them an operation that's ongoing, as  
5 opposed to having a lull between the handoff and while  
6 they come in nothing is going on. Then they got to  
7 get something cranked up.

8 I think it just keeps the momentum, and  
9 that is what is really important, keeping this  
10 momentum going forward, keeping the pursuit of the  
11 enemy and not letting them get a break.

12 (b)(3), (b)(6) If you look at, in  
13 particular, some of the non-lethal fires issues, IO in  
14 particular, seems like it's a mix of both bottom-up  
15 and top-down programs.

16 Initially, you mentioned the brigade  
17 level. As you see the brigade changeout, battalions,  
18 companies, do you see our level of junior officers --  
19 is there a change in sort of the level of savvy, if  
20 you will, toward what the non-lethal part can be for  
21 them as they manage this COIN environment or has it  
22 been pretty steady?

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1                   BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I probably really  
2 don't have a good feel for that, to tell you the  
3 truth. I know what the programs are at the division  
4 level, and I know how they are continuing their  
5 programs on.

6                   From what I see from the brigade level,  
7 which is not much, truthfully, looks fine. When I  
8 have gone down and talked to several brigade  
9 commanders, they seem to be on it.

10                  So I get the impression that there is not  
11 a problem with that. My guess is it's better. These  
12 people coming in here with brigades aren't here on  
13 their first rodeo. They've been doing this. They've  
14 had time to think about it. They've been watching,  
15 and I would tell you the training system that near the  
16 end really helps them get finely tuned and focused  
17 gets them up to speed.

18                  You know, they all through the COIN  
19 academy, the training that we have. We send guys up  
20 there and give them the latest on where we are, and I  
21 think they got it.

22                  The divisions got it. I mean, what we put

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1 out, what the divisions have, and it gets put out.  
2 It's pretty nested. What I will tell you is the  
3 majority of things I see from brigade level are  
4 things that go wrong, and I don't see much of that.

5 You put out a bad product and it's goes  
6 wrong, it bubbles up pretty quick. I've seen two or  
7 three since I've been here. I'm not saying it's only  
8 two or three there, but I'm saying I haven't seen much  
9 that concerns us at this level.

10 (b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, you spoke about  
11 Operation Phantom Phoenix. I wanted to ask you: Can  
12 you just speak to me about what Fires' part has been  
13 in Operation Phantom Phoenix? What have been the key  
14 emphases in terms of lethal/non-lethal fires and the  
15 plan for Phantom Phoenix?

16 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Well, as I'm sure  
17 you are aware, Phantom Phoenix is not necessarily a  
18 Corps level operation where we are doing Corps level  
19 things, and then the divisions are following on their  
20 piece.

21 Phantom Phoenix is a concept of joining  
22 all the pieces that are going on down at the division

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1 level, and for those that weren't having something  
2 going on, it was really kind of a directive to get  
3 something going on.

4 I will tell you that our input to it,  
5 though, number one, at the Corps level we are putting  
6 out the word that Phantom Phoenix is going on, and in  
7 itself you could say that a large portion of Phantom  
8 Phoenix is a public affairs and an IO piece where we  
9 are telling them, hey, we got a big operation going  
10 on; you do that to al Qaeda. And in itself, they take  
11 some defensive or some evasive actions.

12 In reality, what the divisions are doing  
13 and moving out on -- they are pretty significant. I  
14 mean, you probably read about the air strikes we did  
15 down in Arab Jabour. As you moved into that area that  
16 had been a longstanding al Qaeda stronghold, the place  
17 was laced with buried IEDs.

18 The locals knew where they were. The  
19 locals told us where they were. The CLCs tell you  
20 where the IEDs are. So it's not like we did a big air  
21 strike to go down and just level Arab Jabour. We want  
22 Arab Jabour to be safe for the population.

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1                   So we did air strikes on known IED  
2 positions, known IED locations, and they were  
3 successful. Lots of secondary explosives, and the  
4 ones that weren't secondary explosions, we know we  
5 defeated some of the devices. They are not absolutely  
6 rendered safe, but they are also not weapons usable  
7 right now. They can't go flip the switch, because the  
8 switches are gone and the wires are gone.

9                   So a pretty extensive use of fires there.  
10 Up north, out in the Jazeera (Phonetic) Desert, you  
11 know, where there were some canal systems on the edge  
12 with very thick brush, we used some incendiary devices  
13 to burn out the brush and expose tunnels, defensive  
14 complexes. So a lot of lethal fires but on top of it,  
15 continued use of non-lethal fires and the CLCs.

16                   **(b)(3), (b)(6)** Was that air delivered  
17 incendiaries?

18                   I wanted to ask in a broader sense, too,  
19 sir, just a question. Of course, it's evident here in  
20 the city and in any borough that at the highest level,  
21 at the MNFI level and General Petraeus talks about the  
22 message that we are getting out there, the message to

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1 our own western media and also the message that we are  
2 trying to get out to the Iraqis that he takes great  
3 interest in that whole idea of messaging.

4 I'm just trying to get a sense for how  
5 you've seen this command experience as you roll down  
6 to the last couple of weeks in terms of that role of  
7 this messaging piece, much of which falls into the IO  
8 side of the house.

9 How critical has that been to taking us  
10 where we are at this point in the fight?

11 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: It's a key  
12 component, just like all the other key components are.  
13 I mentioned that we have had some success, and we've  
14 had some success based on the cumulative effect, as we  
15 have been going on for years.

16 This is one of those cumulative effect  
17 things as you progress on with full spectrum  
18 operations. You know, there are two really separate  
19 aspects of this. One is the public affairs aspect,  
20 and the other is the information operations aspect.

21 Public affairs is getting the word out in  
22 the press, albeit that is for us, mainly the western

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1 press. Two is information operations, which we are  
2 trying to shape and influence the behaviors and  
3 attitudes of the people within Iraq. I mean, our  
4 target sets in Iraq.

5 General Odierno gave us some great  
6 guidance early on. It is get the truth out. Be the  
7 first to get the truth out, and continue to push the  
8 truth. So that's what we do, in both realms.

9 So if in the public affairs realm with  
10 what we are doing, if it is really good, what we are  
11 doing, we've put the word out, and it's truthful which  
12 is what we do. That's important. We'll get the word  
13 out first, the truth, before the enemy gets on the  
14 television and puts out some counter to that. So  
15 that's important.

16 Two, equally important is to get the truth  
17 out in the information operations realm. You know,  
18 you can take IO and PSYOPS and you can put out things  
19 that aren't true, if you want to. I don't know why we  
20 would do that. I just don't know why we would do  
21 that. If what we are doing is right, then we put it  
22 out in that realm as well and counter the untruths

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1 that they put out or, more importantly, put out the  
2 truth first and make them counter with untruths.

3 So there is a counter-propaganda piece to  
4 this. They put out untruths, and we put out  
5 information to correct it.

6 (b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, in particular, as I  
7 kind of do my last wrap-up interviews with General  
8 Odierno and a couple of other of our senior leaders,  
9 there was a lot of positive comment about where they  
10 felt the IO piece was now, and just a much more marked  
11 sense that we were winning that piece in a way that I  
12 hadn't heard that kind of comment in June/July time  
13 frame.

14 Did you see something turning the corner  
15 since we spoke last with regard to the IO piece?

16 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: It really goes  
17 back to that cumulative piece. You know, IO is not  
18 one of these things that you can just -- Well, let me  
19 take the moniker of IO off. Let's talk PSYOPS right  
20 now, Psychological Operations.

21 You cannot come into a different culture  
22 and say here's the truth; here is what we need to do,

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1 here's where you got to go. You just can't do that.  
2 It's not acceptable.

3 You have to slowly build it. This is  
4 built over the years. The difference this year has  
5 made is General Odierno has set the environment, as  
6 well as General Petraeus, to allow us to go ahead and  
7 push the envelop.

8 When we got here -- Let me start over.  
9 Most of our products that we do are played through  
10 cutouts. This is classified, right?

11 (b)(3), (b)(6) s, sir.

12 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Okay, good.

13 (b)(3), (b)(6) At a Secret level.

14 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Yes, that's okay  
15 -- are put on the television, put on the radio and put  
16 in the newspapers through cutouts. The contractor  
17 that puts them on there, they don't know that  
18 contractor is working for the United States.

19 As a matter of fact, that contractor may  
20 not realize they are working for us. So those pieces  
21 get put in the paper. Because of that, you know, the  
22 paper is not obliged to take this, and if it is too

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1 condemning toward establishments and organizations  
2 within Iraq, al Qaeda, JAM, other special groups, they  
3 won't be played.

4 When we got here, you couldn't even -- In  
5 our pieces on TV and in (Inaudible), you couldn't use  
6 the term al Qaeda. You couldn't use the term JAM.  
7 You couldn't use Shia extremists. It wouldn't play.  
8 The information environment didn't allow that.

9 It didn't allow that, because it wasn't  
10 mature enough, and it also didn't allow it because our  
11 command approval process was hesitant to call the  
12 ball. Our command approval process has changed.  
13 Petraeus and Odierno will let us go into that  
14 information arena and call al Qaeda bad and call  
15 special groups from JAM bad and call 1.4b, 1.4d

16   
17 1.4b, 1.4d  
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19 That helps turn the population against  
20 those organizations. We weren't allowed to do that in  
21 the past. When they came in, they suggested we do  
22 that, and we have been able to turn that. So, yes, we

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1 have been more aggressive.

2 When you hear people talk about aggressive  
3 information operations, that's what they are talking  
4 about. We are past the nuance now, and we are calling  
5 the bad folks bad by name, and the population agrees  
6 with it, because the population has been suffering  
7 under each one of these organizations. Now it's in  
8 the paper. Now it's on TV.

9 Now what they've thought in their heart  
10 and they have known they have been oppressed by it,  
11 they see it in the information run. So that's been a  
12 big change.

13 (b)(3), (b)(6) Did that happen at a  
14 specific point in time, sir, in terms of that  
15 willingness of General Petraeus and General Odierno to  
16 allow that?

17 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: They came in with  
18 that environment, and we've had to develop it. Now  
19 you just don't go from zero to 60, because you take it  
20 down to the newspaper and you try to put it in a  
21 newspaper, oh, by the way, that's controlled by -- so  
22 they won't play it.

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1           So we started right away. We started  
2           where we could, and we always -- You know, I kind of  
3           gauge it in terms of are we getting our products in.  
4           If we get every one of our products in all the time,  
5           that tells me we are not pushing up against the edge  
6           far enough.

7           I mean, we are still -- I mean, we just  
8           had a great TV product that showed a water truck, and  
9           riding on top of the water truck is a guy with an AK-  
10          47. It doesn't say JAM, but you know it's JAM, and  
11          they drive up, and they are filling up the water jugs,  
12          and you see some people, clearly not JAM affiliates,  
13          and they turn the water off and they won't let them  
14          have water. And it says, "You cannot govern through  
15          the gun" at the end of it.

16          Some JAM affiliated stations wouldn't play  
17          that. Some JAM affiliated stations would play it.  
18          That tells me we are still pushing up next to the  
19          edge. We are getting them where it hurts them, and  
20          that's good.

21          So I'm telling you, if the guys are  
22          getting approved all the time, then I tell them to

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1 turn the heat up some more, because we are not hitting  
2 hard enough.

3 (b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, before departing IO,  
4 is there any other aspects I haven't asked you about,  
5 about the IO/PSYOPS piece when you look back on this  
6 tour?

7 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I would keep this  
8 at the Secret level. Our command environment has  
9 allowed us and required us to push on the Internet.  
10 Now I'm not going to tell you much about what we are  
11 doing there, but we have received authorities to  
12 operate on the Internet, and we are out there pushing  
13 in that uncontested environment.

14 We've got a ways to go, and I will -- I'm  
15 just telling you, I get back into Fort Hood on the  
16 15th, and on the 20th I'll be in D.C. going to  
17 organizations to help advance this effort.

18 We've got an area that we can continue to  
19 push in. It's been uncontested battle space. The  
20 enemy has got it. We are starting to contest it, and  
21 I just need to take what we know and our lessons  
22 learned back to the organizations that do that and

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1 help advance that.

2 (b)(3), (b)(6) Is there a program or  
3 operational name associated with that, sir, just for  
4 the sake of referring someone at the TS (Phonetic)  
5 where to go?

6 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I think what you  
7 can -- You can talk about (b)(3), (b)(6)

8 1.4g, 1.4c

9 1.4g, 1.4c That's an authority that was given  
10 to us that we are working through that. I think  
11 that's unclassified at the Secret level, just the name of  
12 it. So that will help you a little bit.

13 (b)(3), (b)(6) Great.

14 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: And then the rest  
15 of them, I just -- I don't know what -- I'd prefer not  
16 to say right now.

17 (b)(3), (b)(6) I understand, sir. Now  
18 at the CENTCOM level, they will go into the TS side.

19 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: And I can't  
20 remember what's what. So I got to be careful.

21 (b)(3), (b)(6) Sure. Sir, on the  
22 kinetic side or on the lethal side, any new weapons

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1 system of note since we spoke last?

2 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I don't think any  
3 new weapons systems, just continued use of them. I

4 think

1.4a, 1.4g

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1.4a, 1.4g

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Page 42 redacted for the following reason:

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1.4a, 1.4g

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1.4a, 1.4g

1.4a

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

Sir, I heard a system mentioned just one or two BUAs ago, a 777.

BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Yes, it's a lightweight 155. The Marine Corps and the Army have a lightweight 155 millimeter howitzer, which replaced the M-198 howitzer.

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

Do we have those in theater now?

BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: We sure do. Marines have got them, and the Army units have them, too, here and Afghanistan.

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

Is that a recent arrival into theater or I just missed it?

BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: About six or

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1 eight months.

2 (b)(3), (b)(6) Okay. In a broad sense,  
3 sir, Op Order 08-01 which came out in late December  
4 talks about our longer range strategy and the drawdown  
5 to pre-surge level forces and the continued process of  
6 moving to that tactical overwatch, strategic  
7 overwatch, etcetera, phases.s

8 From your standpoint, looking at the Fires  
9 piece, where do you see the road ahead for Fires  
10 relative to Op Order 08-01 and the change in roles?

11 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I think you need  
12 to -- I really wouldn't call it Fires. I would call  
13 it enablers. And as you draw down BCTs, you need to  
14 at least maintain enablers at the level you have. If  
15 not, possibly increase enablers.

16 You know, ISR becomes more important.  
17 Joint fires becomes more important, because you can't  
18 call in a bunch more troops. Potentially, if you've  
19 got a situation, you will need Air Force fires. You  
20 will need GMLRS. You will need those type of things.

21 So I would tell you, as you draw down, and  
22 the premise behind 08-1 is, you will draw down some

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1 forces, but enablers need to at least remain, if not  
2 potentially increase.

3 (b)(3), (b)(6) Has there been much  
4 discussion or continued discussion about how do we at  
5 some point, as the ISF continues to refine -- and you  
6 talked about how much improved they were, -- providing  
7 them with the ability to control supporting arms?

8 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: That's been an  
9 ongoing piece since we got here. We are working very  
10 closely with Iraqi Army crews, been back at Fort Sill  
11 to ensure that all of our MIT (Phonetic) teams that go  
12 out have joint fires observers in them, so that you  
13 can bring -- because you won't have a JTAC, a Joint  
14 Tactical Air Control team. You won't have a JTAC in  
15 each MIT, which is a -- What's a MIT?

16 (b)(3), (b)(6) The Military Transition  
17 Team?

18 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Yes, Military  
19 Transition Teams. But we can put a joint fires  
20 observer, and a joint fires observer can enable the  
21 introduction of joint fires much more rapidly.

22 We are thinking through that. We are not

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1 doing joint fires observer training for Iraqis. I  
2 don't anticipate anytime soon that we are going to  
3 release joint fires to them. I believe we will always  
4 have to have -- well, not always, but for the  
5 foreseeable future, a Coalition component to bringing  
6 joint fires in.

7 (b)(3), (b)(6) Great, sir. Sir, I've  
8 asked you a bunch of questions. You've been very  
9 gracious to answer them. But I wanted to throw it  
10 back into your court again as you kind of come to the  
11 end of a long tour with a lot of key changes and  
12 progress. Anything I have not asked you about that  
13 you would --

14 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: I think I shot my  
15 final protective fires right off the bat when I talked  
16 about the three major components and how it all fit in  
17 there, and then all the questions have supported that.

18 So I really got the message through to  
19 you, I think.

20 (b)(3), (b)(6) Are there any kind of  
21 vignettes that stick in your mind about when you go  
22 back and you go around briefing people, whether that

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1 is informal just discussing with your peers about what  
2 your assignment was like, that are your takeaways that  
3 kind of represent your feelings about how things have  
4 come together here, humorous things perhaps?

5 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Well, I think, if  
6 I share vignettes, it will be not personal  
7 experiences, because you know, there is not much very  
8 exciting that happens up on staff like this, but  
9 seeing the results of some of our programs, seeing the  
10 CLC actions, watching things like the Marines -- not  
11 the Marines, but the MND-Central moving into Arab  
12 Jabour now.

13 What they do before they move into a town  
14 now, they send an advance party into the town, and  
15 they kind of prearrange some CLC guys. In the last  
16 week, instead of the Coalition forces clearing a town  
17 -- the Coalition force clearing the town, but they  
18 were led through the town by the locals and the CLC,  
19 and as they were led through rather than fighting  
20 through IEDs and fighting through booby traps, the  
21 CLCs would say, don't go down that road, there's IEDs  
22 down that road, we'll show you the exact locations,

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1       this house is booby trapped, this area is safe.

2               That's a heck of a different way to clear  
3       a town. I would choose vignettes like as in the  
4       middle portion, the CLC began to stand up, and they  
5       started going through the town. You know, I would  
6       describe the intel that CLCs give you as like intel on  
7       steroids. You are familiar with that, our intel  
8       process.

9               You develop your targets. You put out  
10       your information systems and your named area of  
11       influence, and you gather and you collect on them.  
12       Then you gather bits and pieces, and after several  
13       weeks of detailed work, you might be able to wrap up  
14       one or two high value individuals.

15              It's different when you come in with a  
16       list of 10 people in town and say here's the known  
17       troublemakers in town, and by the next morning some of  
18       them are already rolled up for you. Some of them are  
19       there, and some of them are pointed out: This house,  
20       this guys is in this house, this guy is in this house.

21              That is weeks, weeks, weeks worth of work  
22       wrapped up in hours, if not days. So I would tell you

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1 the nature of the conflict, where you have the locals  
2 cooperating, has become significantly different.

3 (b)(3), (b)(6) Any key issues as you  
4 hand off to 18th Airborne Corps, sir, that you are  
5 kind of highlighting for them, other than what we've  
6 talked about?

7 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: No, just try and  
8 share with them everything we are doing, and then pile  
9 it in as well as we can what we know. We think we  
10 moved the football farther down the field, and all I  
11 want to do is empower them to keep that football  
12 going, and there is no us or them.

13 I mean, the 5th Corps got us to where we  
14 were. They empowered us to be able to move forward,  
15 and it is our responsibility to empower 18th Airborne  
16 Corps so that they can keep this ball going. It's  
17 about momentum. It's about winning this. It's not  
18 winning this for any corps or any division or any unit  
19 or any country.

20 It's about winning this so that we can get  
21 after the war on terror. As soon as we get done here,  
22 they are going somewhere else. So we got to get after

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1 it. I'd love to say it's over, but it's not over.  
2 They would attack our country in a heartbeat, if we  
3 weren't after them.

4 (b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, thanks very much.  
5 That's all I have, unless you have any last comments.

6 BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: The round is  
7 complete.

8 (b)(3), (b)(6) All right, sir.  
9 That concludes this interview.

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~~\* S E C R E T \*~~