INTERVIEW

OF

BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES MCDONALD

DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL-FIRES

MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS-IRAQ

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This transcript was produced from tapes provided by the U.S. Army Center of Military History.
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 listener'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?


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

BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: Excellent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lethal fires, I think, we are aware. You know, Army surface to surface and then joint air to surface. Couple those together, and you just about take care of joint fire.
Then there is the nonlethal piece, some air delivered nonlethal piece, You've got information operations. You've got civil military operations. All of those we are considering as nonlethal fires, and we think the doctrine is going that way as well.

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

When did that actually take effect, sir? Do you recall?

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: My job title change?

Yes.

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: It was sometime in August, late August, I believe, possibly September.

Okay. I'll run it to ground based on that. I just want to get a general sense. I didn't miss it when we sat down last time.

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: Right. We were still in the throes of doing that. See, we reorganized based off of Army doctrine. We didn't
come over here to do -- this be the effects cell, but we didn't fully change the name. Finally, after we came over here and validated what we were doing, the CG decide to go ahead and change the name.

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

Great. Sir, in that same vein, I wanted to ask: Since we talked last, have there been any noteworthy changes in terms of the organization of the section? Any specific change in the responsibilities that you have or noteworthy key personnel changes since we sat down the end of July?

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: I don't think so.

One thing I wanted to ask about that is one of the things, I think, that was new when we sat down last was the idea of the engagement reconciliation piece, and just wanted to -- because it was something that was still kind of new under your umbrella, I wanted to kind of talk about how you have seen it mature and what role it has taken on, and has that been a really critical piece?
BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: I'll be happy to talk about that, if you allow me just about three minutes to put it in context.

Absolutely.

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

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

So those soldiers that fought at el
Alamain, they didn't know they were fighting the turning point for the British, for the British land forces in European Theater of Operations.

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

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

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

Now we have done that in the places we exist and where we have expanded to. The Iraqi population now believes when the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces come in, they come in for good.
can be settled, and they can start to live a normal
life, because they don't think that the forces are
going to leave an al Qaeda is going to backfill them
or extremist militia.

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

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

I would tell you the majority of the Iraqi
people, if you poll them, and we do, will tell you
they've got a lot of confidence in their security
forces, and that's who they would prefer to secure,
the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police, and the National
Police, which a year ago you never had anybody tell
you they want the National Police securing them.
Their image has changed, and their abilities have
changed greatly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That has started slowly, but gotten
better, and then 2 December -- I think it was 2 December, 2 or 4 December at an MNC-S brief --

I believe it was 2 December, sir.

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

So that program has been very successful.

Now let me describe to you what that program really is, and my thoughts.

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

Most of them, we have put on critical
infrastructure security contracts, guarding checkpoints, guarding major roads, guarding neighborhoods, defensive in nature. These have been small groups, groups of 70, 50, 150, 200, not banded together as a single homogeneous force, but providing local security in the place where they live, in conjunction with Coalition forces and always growing in conjunction with Iraqi Security Forces.

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

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

That's why you can drive around Iraq in most of these little towns that we have gone to, and
the markets are open, and people are living normally, because they are not being suppressed by extremists.

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

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

I will tell you, this is indicative that the population has made a determination that they are going to support Iraq. They are going to support the constitution, their elected authorities and the Iraqi Security Forces, and they have decided -- They have
decided where they want to go, and they are moving away from the insurgency, away from al Qaeda, and in large measure we are seeing away from Shia extremists.

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

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

You talked about the -- You just touched on it briefly, about the Shia aspect of this. Can you talk me through how the evolution of the CLCs has primarily been a Sunni -- even as recently in the press today, I think there was discussion about the Kurds and the Kashmirga and their
roles as a potential CLC element, and it has not been something that's been pushed in the predominantly Shia provinces.

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

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

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

So it's a way to have that happen, and they look at the two little towns next to them and they see it happening. So it's probably natural that,
if that groundswell is to go toward the government of
Iraq, these people are going to want to go there, too.

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

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

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

Was that just an informal agreement?

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: It was an
agreement at that 2 September meeting.

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

Were you at the 2 December meeting?

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

I wanted to ask also, too, just as recently as yesterday for the first time I heard this term, sons of Iraq, as a new term to describe the Concerned Local Citizens.

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

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

Well, here's what's going on, and here is why we need to introduce a new term, and we'll see if it catches. Sometimes things like catch on; sometimes
they don't.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(b)(3), (b)(6) Not a good marketing phrase.

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

(b)(3), (b)(6) Does Sons of Iraq have an Iraqi -> Do you know the Iraqi words that that translates to?

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: Abna al Iraq. Now it also can be used for the local: Abna al Habaniyah.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Sure.

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: So it will work.
*SECRET*

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

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

(b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, I think when you and I spoke last, really, at that point I don't think we had even finalized on CLC as the name. They were still being called different names --

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

(b)(3), (b)(6) Along the lines of creating a more unified concept, I think at that time, too, still very much bottom up, and individual battalions in that area were sort of standing them up how they saw fit.

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

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the guidelines that we gave them.

That's where I want to get.

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: The guidelines we gave them?

Yes. How did those guidelines --

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

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

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

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

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

They are local. They are for defensive purposes only, and they are temporary. We are going
through a process right now. We are having another
big meeting. We had several meetings on how we are
going to transition the CLCs when the time comes.

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

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

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

There is a training component to that, a
huge training component, because some of these guys
have got to teach welding skills, masonry skills,
woodworking skills. We are doing that in conjunction with the government of Iraq. That will be part of the CLC transition plan.

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

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

Sir, during this time we've had a changeover of several of the commands of the Multinational Divisions, and likewise at the MNFI level some continued individual augementees that happened during the summertime.

Just as you kind of look at those changes and have brought them down the chain of command, so to speak, has that changed any of the dynamics about your job in terms of the buyer's aspect and the
interrelationships that you have both up and down the chain, that aspect, any of the relationships, the working relationships?

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: Did you say buyer's?

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

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

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

I thought that we would really have a big dropoff in momentum. I would tell you December kind of felt like we were dropping off a little in momentum. So we kicked off Phantom Phoenix, and the
momentum has picked right back up, and I'm glad; because I think it's better for 18th Airborne Corps to come in while we got a big operation going and we are handing off to them an operation that's ongoing, as opposed to having a lull between the handoff and while they come in nothing is going on. Then they got to get something cranked up.

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

If you look at, in particular, some of the non-lethal fires issues, IO in particular, seems like it's a mix of both bottom-up and top-down programs.

Initially, you mentioned the brigade level. As you see the brigade changeout, battalions, companies, do you see our level of junior officers -- is there a change in sort of the level of savvy, if you will, toward what the non-lethal part can be for them as they manage this COIN environment or has it been pretty steady?
BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: I probably really
don't have a good feel for that, to tell you the
truth. I know what the programs are at the division
level, and I know how they are continuing their
programs on.

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

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

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

The divisions got it. I mean, what we put
out, what the divisions have, and it gets put out.

It's pretty nested. What I will tell you is the
majority of things I see from brigade level are
things that go wrong, and I don't see much of that.

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

Sir, you spoke about
Operation Phantom Phoenix. I wanted to ask you: Can
you just speak to me about what Fires' part has been
in Operation Phantom Phoenix? What have been the key
emphases in terms of lethal/non-lethal fires and the
plan for Phantom Phoenix?

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

Phantom Phoenix is a concept of joining
all the pieces that are going on down at the division
level, and for those that weren't having something going on, it was really kind of a directive to get something going on.

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

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

The locals knew where they were. The locals told us where they were. The CLCs tell you where the IEDs are. So it's not like we did a big air strike to go down and just level Arab Jabour. We want Arab Jabour to be safe for the population.
So we did air strikes on known IED positions, known IED locations, and they were successful. Lots of secondary explosives, and the ones that weren't secondary explosions, we know we defeated some of the devices. They are not absolutely rendered safe, but they are also not weapons usable right now. They can't go flip the switch, because the switches are gone and the wires are gone.

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

Was that air delivered incendiaries?

I wanted to ask in a broader sense, too, sir, just a question. Of course, it's evident here in the city and in any borough that at the highest level, at the MNFI level and General Petraeus talks about the message that we are getting out there, the message to
our own western media and also the message that we are trying to get out to the Iraqis that he takes great interest in that whole idea of messaging.

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

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

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

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

Public affairs is getting the word out in the press, albeit that is for us, mainly the western
press. Two is information operations, which we are
trying to shape and influence the behaviors and
attitudes of the people within Iraq. I mean, our
target sets in Iraq.

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

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

Two, equally important is to get the truth
out in the information operations realm. You know,
you can take IO and PSYOPS and you can put out things
that aren't true, if you want to. I don't know why we
would do that. I just don't know why we would do
that. If what we are doing is right, then we put it
out in that realm as well and counter the untruths
that they put out or, more importantly, put out the truth first and make them counter with untruths.

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

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

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

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

You cannot come into a different culture and say here's the truth; here is what we need to do,
here's where you got to go. You just can't do that. It's not acceptable.

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

When we got here -- Let me start over.

Most of our products that we do are played through cutouts. This is classified, right?

s, sir.

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: Okay, good.

At a Secret level.

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

As a matter of fact, that contractor may not realize they are working for us. So those pieces get put in the paper. Because of that, you know, the paper is not obliged to take this, and if it is too
condemning toward establishments and organizations within Iraq, al Qaeda, JAM, other special groups, they won't be played.

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

It didn't allow that, because it wasn't mature enough, and it also didn't allow it because our command approval process was hesitant to call the ball. Our command approval process has changed. Petraeus and Odierno will let us go into that information arena and call al Qaeda bad and call special groups from JAM bad and call...
have been more aggressive.

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

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

Did that happen at a specific point in time, sir, in terms of that willingness of General Petraeus and General Odierno to allow that?

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: They came in with that environment, and we've had to develop it. Now you just don't go from zero to 60, because you take it down to the newspaper and you try to put it in a newspaper, oh, by the way, that's controlled by -- so they won't play it.
So we started right away. We started where we could, and we always -- You know, I kind of gauge it in terms of are we getting our products in. If we get every one of our products in all the time, that tells me we are not pushing up against the edge far enough.

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

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

So I'm telling you, if the guys are getting approved all the time, then I tell them to...
turn the heat up some more, because we are not hitting hard enough.

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

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

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

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

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

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: I think what you can -- You can talk about 1.4g, 1.4c

(b) (3), (b) (6) 1.4g, 1.4c That's an authority that was given to us that we are working through that. I think that's unclassified at the secret level, just the name of it. So that will help you a little bit.

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

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

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

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

(b)(3), (b)(6) Sure. Sir, on the kinetic side or on the lethal side, any new weapons
system of note since we spoke last?

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

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.

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

BRIG. GENERAL McDONALD: About six or
eight months.

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

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

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

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

So I would tell you, as you draw down, and the premise behind 08-1 is, you will draw down some
forces, but enablers need to at least remain, if not potentially increase.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(b)(3), (b)(6) Are there any kind of vignettes that stick in your mind about when you go back and you go around briefing people, whether that
is informal just discussing with your peers about what your assignment was like, that are your takeaways that kind of represent your feelings about how things have come together here, humorous things perhaps?

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

What they do before they move into a town now, they send an advance party into the town, and they kind of prearrange some CLC guys. In the last week, instead of the Coalition forces clearing a town -- the Coalition force clearing the town, but they were led through the town by the locals and the CLC, and as they were led through rather than fighting through IEDs and fighting through booby traps, the CLCs would say, don't go down that road, there's IEDs down that road, we'll show you the exact locations,
this house is booby trapped, this area is safe.

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

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

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

That is weeks, weeks, weeks worth of work wrapped up in hours, if not days. So I would tell you
the nature of the conflict, where you have the locals cooperating, has become significantly different.

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

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

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

It's about winning this so that we can get after the war on terror. As soon as we get done here, they are going somewhere else. So we got to get after
it. I'd love to say it's over, but it's not over. They would attack our country in a heartbeat, if we weren't after them.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, thanks very much.

That's all I have, unless you have any last comments.

BRIG. GENERAL MCDONALD: The round is complete.

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

That concludes this interview.