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INTERVIEW

OF

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

CHIEF BAGHDAD OPERATIONAL COMMAND ADVISORY TEAM

MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS -- IRAQ

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AUGUST 4, 2007

This transcript was produced from tapes
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P R O C E E D I N G S

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

This is (b)(3), (b)(6)

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

, the Multi-National Corps Iraq historian.

Today is Saturday, the 4th of August 2007. I am here at the Adenon (Phonetic) Palace outside the Green Zone, Baghdad, Iraq. It is approximately 1040 a.m., and I am here at the Baghdad Operations Center Assistance Team Headquarters meeting with the Chief,

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

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

can you go ahead and introduce yourself in your own voice, with your rank, first name, middle name and last name?

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

Yes.

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

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

and I go by (b)(3), (b)(6) and I am the Director here at the Baghdad Operations Command of the Advisory Team, and known as the BOCAT. So that would be the acronym we use for later reference.

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

Great. We are going to take your bio and put it in the same archival files. I am not going to go into your personal background that much. But if you could, highlight, though -- We

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were talking before we started about your brigade command in Afghanistan. If you could just tell me when you commanded, locations, and also if you've got other deployments during an operation and during the Iraqi Freedom.

Yes. I have not had any other operations here in Iraqi Freedom, but one of my battalions when I was in brigade command was deployed here at the same time the rest of my brigade was in Afghanistan, and that was the 1st of the 25th Attack Battalion that was attached at 1st Cavalry Division here in Baghdad under the command of .

They did a great job here with 1st Cav and I got a lot of insights from him about their operations and how they were doing things from an aerial perspective, air-ground integration when I was in command in Afghanistan.

I was in command in Afghanistan. My brigade command was with the 25th Aviation Brigade out of Hawaii, and we were the CJTF 76th rotation in

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Bagram, stationed at Bagram, and I had about two years in command.

I spent the last year, which was 2004 to 2005, May 2004 to May 2005, in Bagram, Afghanistan, and I commanded all the aviation minus the Air Force assets in Afghanistan, to include a task force that included Marine squadrons, a light attack and also a heavy lift Marine squadron there at Bagram.

I had my aviation units spread out all over Afghanistan, to include Salerno, a major hub there, one at Kandahar (Phonetic), and one out at Shindan (Phonetic) close to the Iranian border.

We flew about 80,000 hours over there in that year's period, and all kinds of missions from fixed wing to attack, lift, support, etcetera.

So that was basically where I spent most of my time in the GWOT effort, global war on terrorism effort. Then I was on short notice -- I was at Fort Carson as the Chief of Staff there for the Senior Mission Command of 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson. On short notice, about five days notice, to

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come here and stand up the Baghdad Operations Command Advisory Team, and I have been here about six months and will be departing here this next week, probably on the 11th of August.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Do you recall your specific arrival date in Iraq on this trip?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. I departed Fort Carson on Valentine's Day, the 14th of February, and arrived in Kuwait on the 15th, and actually flew up and was here about eight o'clock in the morning on the 16th of February '07.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Great. Can you talk to me a little bit about why you were picked for this?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Well, the nomination process, I understand, was pretty quick. It was at Department of the Army level. This Baghdad Operations Command was, I believe, derived when General Casey was here, had its roots when he was here, and was stood up very quickly to execute the Baghdad security plan, Fardel Kanoun (Phonetic), here in Baghdad, as part of the overall security plan for Iraq.

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The selection process, I think, was done by who was available, who had been in country -- or who had not been in country in, say, six months to a year, and probably the qualifications.

I was a pretty senior Colonel at the time, and had deployments to Bosnia and Afghanistan and had a Special Ops, air-ground, JRTC (Phonetic), OC experience, probably one of the more experienced Colonels to set something like this up in the Army, and I think it came down to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army making the final selection, and I had orders within about five days to come.

So it was very short notice, pulled me out of the Chief's job there at Fort Carson, clocked the G-3 and made him the Chief, and sent me over here.

(b)(3), (b)(6) When you arrived here, what was the initial Commander's guidance you got? I've known that there was some discussion at the beginning as to who the BOCAT would work for. Was that additional guidance from General Petraeus or from General Odierno or both?

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(b)(3), (b)(6) It was mainly from General Odierno, General Anderson, the Chief of Staff, and the C-3, (b)(3), (b)(6) over at MNCI, and really just they selected me and my deputy at the Department of the Army level, and his name is (b)(3), (b)(6) --

(b)(3), (b)(6) He has already departed to go to the War College about three weeks ago, and about six others from the 3d Army that was sent here on short notice. Then the others came from MNCI internally to make up the Advisory Team.

My guidance was basically come over and stand up the Advisory Team. It would be a partnered unit with the Corps, with MNCI, and we would develop that partnership and execute in a combined fashion, a joint fashion, if you will, with coalition forces and Iraqi Security Forces, the Baghdad security plan, i.e., Fardel Kanoun, law and order here in Baghdad.

(b)(3), (b)(6) -- organization, and what is the command and control piece? Who are you responsible for reporting to? Where does the BOCAT plug in?

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(b)(3), (b)(6) : Well, the Advisory Team, the BOCAT, covers down on the Baghdad Operations Command, commanders and staff, and of course, Lieutenant General Aboud is the Commander of the Baghdad Operations Command, and he has a staff here, corps level staff. Although it may not be as robust as the MNCI staff, it serves many of the same functions for the Iraqi Security Forces.

He has a Chief of Staff, Major General Chief of Staff Hussan (Phonetic), and two deputy commanders. One is the National Police Chief, Hussein al-Wadi (Phonetic); and the other one is -- or was Major General Riyadh (Phonetic). He is now the Risahfa (Phonetic) Area Commander as of about a month ago, and they are looking for a replacement for him to be the other Deputy Commanding General of the Baghdad Operations Command at this time.

Underneath that, you have an Operations Cell or Section, if you will, for the Operations Command. You also have an Intel Section, a Logistics Section, a Communications Section, and those are

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staffed accordingly underneath the Operations Command.

Underneath the BOC, if you will, you have the Risahfa Area Command, which is basically everything on the east side of the Tigris River in Baghdad and the Cart (Phonetic) Area Command, which is basically everything in Baghdad on the west side of the Tigris River, and you have a Major General in command of each one of those area commands.

The BOC is equivalent to a corps level over those two area commands and is partnered with the MNCI Corps level operations out at al Faw Palace.

So Lieutenant General Aboud and Lieutenant General Odierno, both three-star generals, are partnered together in this effort from the ISAF (Phonetic) side and from the coalition force side.

MND-Baghdad works hand in hand in daily operations with the Risahfa and Cart commanders, along with their brigade commanders on joint and combined operations throughout the Baghdad operational environment.

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

How close is that hand in

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hand relationship, and how -- Can you talk me through a little bit about your role in facilitating that?

(b)(3), (b)(6) I can. At the Lieutenant General level, it is really probably about a once a week, twice a week communication/coordination relationship. For General Odierno, he has Major General Berrigan, which is the Senior Advisor for the Corps to General Aboud, that I share an office with here, and he comes down, flies over or drives over probably about every other day, and conducts battlefield circulation, exchanges the Corps Commander's advice and guidance to General Aboud, and develops the way ahead for execution of the plan.

He is a British Major General, and he is actually Deputy Commanding General for MNCI for Operations.

So that relationship there and engagement at the two-star to three-star level on General Odierno's behalf is a very frequent -- like I said, every other day and maybe every third day, and talking the very heart of the issues that we are working here

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in the Operations Command.

So that is probably the main point of contact for MNCI. Since General Aboud is focusing mainly on Baghdad to secure Baghdad and the immediate belt areas around it, he has more time to focus on that particular objective, where General Odierno is actually focused on the whole country.

So he uses General Berrigan as his senior advisor at the General Officer level, and me as his senior advisor on site here at the Baghdad Operations Command.

I'm the Director over the whole operation here for the Advisory Team, and we cover down on every aspect of the Operations Command staff, to include, like I said, logistics, operations, and intelligence, and actually the command and control, C-2 officers, including General Aboud and his subordinate commanders and staff.

We cover everything from A to Z, from writing orders to giving command guidance, to interfacing with the Government of Iraq, to

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interfacing with the zone commanders.

When we first stood up here, as we built our office spaces and automated the Iraqis along with ourselves, we actually facilitated the BCTP team out of Fort Leavenworth to come in --

(b)(3), (b)(6) I'm sorry, BCTP?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. It's a Brigade -- or Battle Command Training Team that comes in and actually gives professional classes on whatever is needed to bring the Baghdad Operations Command's commanders and staff up to an operating level, if you will, help facilitate their organization and effectiveness.

They do this -- Not only did they come over and do this special project for the Baghdad Operational Command and the Iraqis through interpreters, they do this for every Division and Corps level Headquarters in the United States Army as well. So they are the same professionals we use, the teams that we use to train our own forces, and we brought them specifically here to train the Iraqi

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forces.

We presented classes, and we presented things that we use on the coalition side of the house, and wherever they fit for the Iraqi forces to use, they adopted those, and we discussed those and put those in place also, and we listened to any of their suggestions they had from their experiences, because they are all very experienced Iraqi officers in the Iraqi Army during the Saddam Hussein era, and they do have some good practices, and we melded the two together and came up with a way ahead that they were comfortable with.

So I thought this was very beneficial when they came on board.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Relative to that initial -- and because you were brought in to stand something up that didn't exist before, was the Iraqi side, the Baghdad Operations Center -- was it already stood up and running when you got here and started this with the BOCAT piece?

I am also curious to know: How did they

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react to this or was that always a known component, that there was going to be this teaming? How did you build that relationship between -- especially the lining up one-on-one with (Inaudible)? How did you kind of go about building that relationship and getting buy-in to something like this?

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

Well, no, they were not up and operational. They were still recruiting their own folks, much like we were recruiting ours, and we came together about the same time.

They did know who the Commander was going to be. He was actually selected, I think, by the Government of Iraq, mainly with a lot of influence from the Prime Minister because he works directly for the Prime Minister.

They were just picking up their team, too, from different places in the government. Office of the Commander in Chief, OCINC, was one of the places they got several of their officers, but from various aspects around the ISF (Phonetic), Iraqi Security Force, structure to include IGFC and OCINC, they

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brought a team together, a hand picked, selected team together, and we met them basically on the doorstep as the walls were going up here in Adenon (Phonetic) Palace.

We had to finish the construction with the help of MNSTCI and provided their life support trailers out back at Adenon Palace here, and all those were put into place after the Advisory Team was here, and we came out on a daily basis and facilitated that with MNSTCI, with the Operations Command, the Iraqis, with the contractors.

We were doing operations as we were building out the support structure within Adenon Palace here. Albeit those operations were fairly primitive and we did whatever we could on a 24-hour basis, it really went from about cellphones and passing around notes and stickies in the Operations Room to what it is now, and basically what it is now is we have automated the Operations Room.

They keep a daily log there. They battle track operations. They write written orders now and

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deliver those down to their subordinate commands. They have weekly meetings, plans and ops meetings, here in the Palace to discuss current and future operations.

They have an active targeting cell here where targets are nominated in various agencies within the government of Iraq and also coalition forces, and that is a joint targeting team, mainly hosted by MND-Baghdad, along with our assistance.

General Aboud chairs that targeting effort and approves or denies the target, or tells them to go back and get more information for further development of the target, and then hands that off and gives an order for that target to be executed through his Risafah and Cart Commanders.

So we've come a long way in a six-month period of time, and I think I can honestly say that we are still improving. I think we will continue to push and improve and put more of an Iraqi face on what we are doing here in the Operations Command and less of an advisor role as they get stronger in their systems

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of systems so that they can do the daily operations to secure Baghdad.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Is there a point down the road -- You were making some comments this morning. I kind of caught the last few minutes of your morning team's brief. But you talked about looking ahead, that this is a point in time of kind of, okay, we've been through the first six months now, where do we go from here.

What is the future to BOCAT? Is there a day when you think the BOCAT will stand down? How do you see that in the context of the fight and where we are now?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Well, initially when I was given the mission, it was thought that at a minimum we would be here six months, and we would make an assessment at that time to where the BOC was in relationship to being able to take over and move out.

In about three months into our advisory role here, we knew that it was going to probably take about another six months just to make sure we had all

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the systems in place, the right people executing the functions required of Fardel Kanoun.

So at this particular point when we are going to be transitioning some advisory team members ourselves, about a month ago we did a detailed assessment of where the BOC stood, and we made -- pointed out good things and things they needed to improve upon.

We gave that to them in writing, and they have agreed to basically 80 to 90 percent of all the recommendations we had, and they accepted that very readily, and they need to act on those items now, and they are acting on them.

That will include an expansion of the BOC to include civil/military operations, to include IP integration for Phase 3 of this plan where the Iraqi Police will eventually take over the security of Baghdad, and once the terrorist activity is under control, then the Iraqi Army can be an overwatch. The Iraqi Police will go out and secure the local neighborhoods and businesses and basically the whole

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city of Baghdad, is the plan. Then the Iraqi ISF forces will be in tactical overwatch and reinforcement role.

So that's one of the reasons we are bringing Iraqi advisors in, Iraqi Police advisors in from the coalition. We are also bringing Iraqi Police LNOs in that will help facilitate the transition of that plan, and that is all going to happen over the next, I would say, 30 to 60 days.

We are actually bringing in more life support trailers out here for them to live in, so they can be on site 24/7, and that will another -- I think, another 25 trailers we are going to bring in, sleep trailers for life support.

We are also expanding their food contract, etcetera, etcetera. And instead of the coalition forces funding all that, we are going to have the Iraqi government fund those efforts.

So another step in turning over the responsibility to the Iraqis is to have them have more of a role, more people on their staff, on their corps

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level staff, and less of an advisory role as we start to unplug here as an advisory team.

Probably I would say around the first of the year, we will be looking at going from a full-up advisory team, as we are now, and scaling back to more of an LNO team, maybe a pol-nil (Phonetic) type of an arrangement with some key LNOs to keep things going in the right direction, interface with coalition forces, where needed.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Since the start of the Baghdad Operations Center, the concept of this operational center for a specific area has grown. There has been now the Diyala Operations Center. There has been the -- I don't know if it's in motion yet, but the talk of the Basra Operations Center.

What has the interaction been there? Have the elements responsible for that -- has there been a lot of comparison with, okay, what have we learned in the Baghdad Operations Center, the BOCAT, and how do we apply that there?

(b)(3), (b)(6) There has been some.

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We've been in contact with those folks setting up those operations centers. One of them used to work for me. His name is (b)(6) out at the DOC in the Diyala Operations Center.

They are smaller than we are, but they have a similar type mission. I think he's got about a dozen folks out there right now, and he is a Lieutenant Colonel out of the 25th Infantry Division, used to be one of my brigade Threes -- or battalion Threes when I was in brigade command; a very capable officer, and they are having some good success out there.

We have given them our structure and how - - you know, the lessons we've learned here at the BOC, and how they can apply that to their own situation out there, you know, with our guidance.

So I think lessons learned here will probably permeate or, if you will, branch out all over Iraq. So the BOCAT, if you will, will have a sort of a spider type effect to these other operation that are kind of set up.

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Although their environment may be a little bit different, their operational environment, some of the same advisory things that we've seen here and lessons learned will certainly be shared with them and be put to good use.

(b)(3), (b)(6) The personnel piece: Is there something that isn't on the joint manning document? How challenging has it been to kind of get the resources on the personnel side of the house to kind of get what is kind of again fresh turf putting this together? Have you gotten what you needed? What have been the shortfalls? How have you gone about getting what you needed to do that job?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Well, I think that the initial set-up was done very quickly, like we have already covered, and brought together; and they needed somebody to bring it together as a team, and probably, not to toot my horn or anything, but having the experience I have had -- I as a senior observer controller at JRTC and doing this type of work before with the coalition forces or with American forces at

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JRTC, and then being the Deputy Commander of Ops Group there subsequent to that, and then having commanded at the Battalion/Brigade level and been a Chief of Staff for a year and a half, about 18 months, before I came here, I really facilitated being able to take a diverse group of individuals from all over the Army and put them together, defining the task at hand, and defining their strengths and weaknesses, pairing them up with the Iraqi counterparts, and then coaching my own team to coach the Iraqis to success was probably one of the main, I guess, problem sets that I had to deal with when I got here.

Fortunately, my background, my experience, well prepared me for that, and we didn't waste too much time doing that. We got everybody with a duty description right away, roles and responsibilities, determined their personalities and linked them up with the right Iraqi counterpart.

So even though it was a little bit of a pick-up team from Third Army, from existing forces here in country to Department of the Army level

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selections that were brought in here, to include a Marine Colonel that had some of the construction efforts already going when I got here, it all came together very quickly, and we were able to put that together in short order.

I will tell you that, as we progressed through that and some of the folks are starting to leave now, we've had more time to reflect on their replacements and how we would tailor the organization to better fit the needs of the BOC.

So we've recruited some people from in-house, from MND-Central, and recruited some people from Baghdad, MND-Baghdad, and they will now be included on the Advisory Team staff to give more of a, if you would, on the ground, boots on the ground flavor to the Advisory Team.

My Deputy, right now [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6)

[REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) (Phonetic), is from MND-Baghdad, and my Chief Battle Officer, [REDACTED] (b)(3), (b)(6) (Phonetic), is from MND-Central, and we are expecting to get one more person -- or two more people each from those commands,

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those major commands, Central and Baghdad, to augment the Advisory Team here in the next couple of weeks.

So they will have a vested interest in the boots on the ground. They will have first hand, first name knowledge of the commanders there in Baghdad and in Central, and so that should facilitate even a more closely knitted relationship to those efforts of MND-Baghdad, (b)(6) -- or General Fil at this time and General Lynch down in Central.

The Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Joe Anderson, has been very, very supportive of this effort. He is my immediate boss, and then General Odierno is my senior rater. So he has been very, very cooperative in supplying us with whatever we need down here, to include CPOFs (Phonetic) so we can monitor the battle from -- We have a CPOF, and that's the command post of the future, which gives us great situational awareness on what is going on on the battlefield in our Operations Room here for our advisors.

We have one of those for MND-Baghdad, one

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for MND-Central, and one also for MNCI. So we can -- We really know -- have greater situation awareness than the Iraqis do.

So when they are conducting operations, if we see gaps and voids where we need to inform them or give them better situational awareness, we can do it just about instantly down there in our Operations Room. So that really helps fill a void there that would be lacking if we weren't here to help them.

Of course, the Chief of Staff and MNDI has been very supportive in getting that equipment here to us. They have also helped us stand up a transportation security detachment here of 12 individuals, and supplying us with Blue Force Tracker and Humvees.

So we can actually go on battlefield circulation with General Aboud and his staff all over the Baghdad and the bowels of Baghdad, if you will, so that when he visits JSS or a subordinate headquarters or goes out to see some sort of event that's happened in the AEO or the operational environment, we have the

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secure means to be right along there with him on the ground, and we can track those movements right here in our battle space, in our TOC, the Advisory Team TOC.

So we have great situational awareness of what is going on out there, and provides him a bit of security, too, Lieutenant General Aboud, because we have instant access to the enablers, to include aviation assets, ISR platforms, even supporting close air support, if we needed it.

So this has enhanced the BOC's ability to get out and about the bowels of Baghdad and in his operational environment pretty much at will.

We also do an analysis, help him do an analysis on routes to take based on recent activity and IEDs or VBIEDs or whatever it might be, so that they are better prepared to take a safer route to whatever -- you know, wherever he wants to go on his battlefield circulation.

We are sharing these techniques, these TTPs with Iraqis and teaching them to do the same thing, so that when we do pull out as an advisory

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team, they will have the knowledge and the skills and actually the equipment, because we are giving them a QDSS equipment to put on their vehicles that is very similar to our Blue Force Trackers, so they can track themselves around the battlefield.

So all these things -- we are setting them up for success, and gradually pulling back our support in terms of dollars, in terms of our advisory role, as their capabilities are able to stand up.

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

From your seat -- and part of this is your own perceptions, but as you work one on one with the Iraqis, we've had a lot of initiatives in this last six months -- I mean, you kind of walked in the door at the start of a very pivotal time, right in the middle of all the surge. That completed in the middle of June. Operational Fardel Kanoun, which was a departure from the previous regime strategy, to move toward security first with Baghdad as the center of gravity.

Now looking at the end of your tour and getting ready to go home, what are your personal

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observations about where are we at with those initiatives? Are you seeing indicators that give you a sense one way or another as to where we are on track, where we still need to work?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Well, I do. That's a good question. I really have a bittersweet feeling about leaving right now because of the things we have accomplished and where we're at.

I am going to go back. I'm going to be replaced by (b)(3), (b)(6) (Phonetic), Chief of Staff of 2nd Infantry Division, Korea, who will be coming in to take my place this coming week, and I've known (b)(3), (b)(6) for quite a while, and he's got all the right credentials to come in here and take this over. But my order is to go back, and actually I will be preparing, continue to prepare 4th Infantry Division to come over here and replace 1st Cavalry Division, continue to train them and get them out the door to come over here.

Half of them are at Fort Hood right now, and the other half is at Fort Carson, and it's really,

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with the BRAC initiatives and the movement of that Division up to Fort Carson is really a -- It's quite a task, and they need somebody to come back there and help them do that as they deploy out the door.

I'll continue to train them, push them out the door, and continue to move -- or make preparations for their Headquarters to move to Fort Carson so that, when they finish their rotation here, they can move back very temporarily to Fort Hood and then straight up to Carson within 90 days.

So that's been the mission I'll be given, and I'll do my best handover I can to (b)(3), (b)(6) and his team, and I don't think they will miss a beat, to tell you the truth.

So that's one of the reasons I won't be here for the next six months, but I fully think that we set the conditions for the success for the BOC to continue on and continue to get better and take more and more of their responsibility and role securing Baghdad.

The things I've seen since I've been here

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as we initially stood up and got our feet on the ground is the Iraqis really have started to take ownership, and they've got more and more confidence in themselves and their forces.

Each week I can still see improvements, that they are becoming more knowledgeable of how to put systems in place to train, equip, employ their forces. They are very good at gathering human intelligence, and now they are getting better and better at how to implement that intelligence into their operations to be more effective.

In the beginning, I felt like there was days that the BOC had little control over what was going on in the operation, because the terrorists were doing things at will that the Iraqi Security Forces were not able to counter.

I've seen that go from that state of being not situationally aware or being a little bit helpless to being more proactive through intelligence, targeting, positioning of forces, gathering of coalition TTPs and using those TTPs hand in hand with

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coalition forces, to where they've really got the insurgent forces on the run, in my opinion, at this time.

The insurgent forces, I think, are in a state of some disarray right now. They still get a spectacular attack in here and there, but not like it was, you know, three or four months ago.

I would say that has mainly happened within the last 60 days, and more so within the last 30 days. But I've seen a noticeable improvement in the Iraqi Security Forces' capabilities, and the decrease of violence and sectarianism and effectiveness of the insurgent forces in the last 60 and, more so, in the last 30 days, to the extent that I think, if we continue on this path, I really think that we are going to have control of this and be going on the upswing to where -- this is my personal opinion -- to where the BOC will be able to take this thing over by the first of the year.

I know that's another six months, but it's a gradual type of improvement and a gradual type of

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mission that is going to take hold, I think, if we keep the momentum that we have started here going.

Some of that, I think, is attributable to the Iraqi people and the reconciliation efforts that I hear the Iraqis talk about daily here at the BOC, and a synergy.

I have often wondered what it was going to take when I first got here. I knew it was going to take something very big and something to turn the tide to where the people would believe that they could get this done.

I never -- Well, I thought it might be reconciliation, but until we really started going out and engaging all these sheikhs and the local populace to say you have a vote in this, and you can take your country back over and, by the way, we are going to help you do that, I see more and more buy-in of that daily, and especially within the last 30 days, to where this may be the catalyst and the synergy that is required to overcome the insurgent forces and for the Iraqi people, which I've always thought is the only

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way to take this country back is through the people, that the reconciliation and the synergy that that brings with it, if done in the right way and kept in check, probably can defeat the insurgent forces, at least in Baghdad initially and then, hopefully, that will permeate throughout Iraqi.

That's kind of coming from my personal opinion, but that's what I see happening right now.

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

With regard to that reconciliation initiative, the sectarian piece -- As you see that play out, is there -- Realizing that crosses into the government of Iraqi piece as well as the actually staff that you've worked with as part of the BOC, how have you seen that change over the course of your tour, or has it changed in terms of that?

Now we have a Shia dominant government, but we have Sunni dominant areas. You had this issue of certain communities wanting to say, wait, we want to protect ourselves, but the issue being, okay, this is a Sunni area, should we arm or should we not?

What did you observe as you work with BOC?

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How do they wrestle with this animal, and have you seen their thinking change in the last six months?

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

Well, I think there's two things I would like to bring out on that point. And, yes, I have seen a change in the last six months.

So the first point is: Again, kind of like the insurgent activity to where in the beginning we were a little bit helpless about trying to curb that, same with sectarianism, I think.

In the beginning, there was so much of it going on that it really wasn't -- we didn't have a mechanism to keep it in check, and we would hear about things that were happening, and there wasn't much that the BOC could do about it. They were going to happen anyway.

As we have moved along through this, and more and more of those events have been kept in check, because we have learned where they are happening, for one thing, and why they are happening, for another, and what commanders, be they Iraqi Security Forces, be they the government of Iraq, what commanders and

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political leaders had a sectarian agenda, we've been able to determine where those are at so that we can keep those in check.

In the beginning when I got here, there was really no good definition of who was doing the sectarian activities, who was behind them, and they were just occurring without our knowledge, and it was very hard to get out in front of that.

Over the last six months, I've seen that we know where those are taking place, who in the government, who in the Iraqi Security Forces had those type of agendas, and they have either been -- Unfortunately, some of them have been killed, or some of them have been replaced because of those activities.

That has helped curb the sectarianism. One of the things -- The second point I want to make that is behind that is -- and I really believe this -- is because General Aboud, although he is a Shia, he has taken the stance from Day One since the first word I have heard him speak that there will be no

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sectarianism, that we are all for the government of Iraq; and he has permeated that through his commanders. He has permeated that through his staff, and he permeates that to the government of Iraq and the people that he engages with.

Now I see him on a daily basis. I attend all the meetings he does, basically, and that has been his constant theme, and it has also been his constant -- not only his theme, he walks the walk, if you will, not just talks the talk.

When I see him approve targets, and if they are all one -- if they are all Sunni or all Shia and that is brought to light, he will interject whatever he needs to, to curb those type of activities and make sure that they are on the up and up. And he holds his commanders accountable for their actions, if they are sectarian.

He will replace them or punish them or take actions to make sure there is not sectarianism going on within his command.

I will still say there's still some of it

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going on, from our observations, and when we find out that it is going on, we will bring it to light, and he has not hesitated once to take action on it, affirmative action to stop it.

So he is very much the type of leader we need to stop sectarian actions, and we need those wherever we find them in the government or in the ISF forces to take swift action to make sure that that's not happening.

So I would say over the last six months we have been able to identify and isolate those pockets and get rid of them or take appropriate action, and I see that getting stronger over the next six months, too.

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

Just in talking in a little more depth about General Aboud, do you have a daily relationship with him? Can you tell me a little bit more about what his leadership style is? How do you see him interacting to try and bridge that gap?

I'm sure he has to deal with both the political side and the military side. What have you

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observed there, and what's been the sort of basis of that observation?

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

Well, I do see him in action basically daily. There will be maybe a day or two that he is doing activities that I don't personally interact with him, but it's basically daily.

At all of his major meetings, somebody on the Advisory Team is covering down on him 24 hours a day. You know, I've met his family. I know his background. I know how he thinks.

He was -- You know, he was in, of course, the Iraqi Army and went up -- and one of his latest jobs was the Inspector General, Iraqi Army, and he is a very fair man. He has a very calm demeanor about him.

Although he can carry a big stick when he needs to, he doesn't use that big stick unless he feels like he has to do that, which gains him a lot of respect with his subordinate commanders. Although he may not have the tactical background that some of his

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subordinate commanders do, his sense of fairness, his sense of -- his vision of where Iraq needs to go and his personal presence is respected, commands respect just when he walks into a room.

So that carries him a long way, and the fact that he listens to coalition forces, especially General Officers such as General Campbell, General Odierno, General Fil, General Berrigan, and he also listens to even coalition Colonels like myself.

For larger issues, you know, we may bring things up to General Berrigan or General Odierno to bring up with General Aboud, and use the rank structure. But he also listens to all of us, including my Lieutenant Colonels and Major advisors, and he does that through his staff but also personally, if they need to engage him personally. He will listen and, like any other commander, make a decision once he has heard all the facts.

That's one thing he has in his favor, is he does listen to both sides of an argument. Then when he feels like he needs to weigh in, if it's not

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going to be solved at a lower level, he will weigh in and make a decision. However, I will say he is very mindful of where he works, who he works for, the Prime Minister, and he wants to make sure he has buy-in or top coverage from the Prime Minister before he makes any major decisions, like on reconciliation or something of that nature, moving commanders around within his organization, General Officers, if you will, he has the Prime Minister's and his boss's approval before he does that, which is not unlike any other army or force.

I will say, from observing him through his own -- the way he treats his officers, the way that he does his battlefield circulation and supports, embraces good behavior and takes action where he needs to, and his personal interaction with his family, his sons, he is a very compassionate person and believes in doing the right thing for the people and the country, the nation of Iraq. And that's his bottom line.

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

Has he ever shared his

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kind of personal perspective or concerns about -- or Iraqi mission about, you know, the political dynamic for us, the what ifs: You know, what if the political situation should change and our forces should leave sooner rather than later? Has he ever had that discussion with you or his perspective on these sorts of things and how they would handle that, and when they are going to be ready, and these sorts of things?

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

Well, you know, I haven't gotten into that dialogue personally with him, but I have heard sidebar conversations. I've been in the same room when he has had those conversations with others.

I think that he really feels that we make a great team. He's one to take our advice. But he will be glad when the day comes when Iraqi Security Forces can stand on their own two feet and secure Baghdad and Iraq.

So he knows that that is in progress. He does think -- I think he has a vision of when that might be able to take place. He hasn't shared an

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exact date with me, but I think, if it happened today, that he still feels like he could stand up with his Iraqi Security Forces and continue and get the job done.

Realistically, in my opinion, they need at least another six months to get them on firm ground, firm footing, probably a year, just to give us some assurance and to give them some assurance. But I think he would be willing to take on the task as the BOC commander if we were to pull out today, and he would not hesitate to give it his best effort.

I think he probably thinks in his own mind that he could still succeed, if the coalition forces were to leave today.

(b)(3), (b)(6): When you look back over this six-month period, what have been the biggest challenges in terms of issue, working one on one with the Iraqis?

(b)(3), (b)(6): Yes. I guess probably the big challenges, I would think, would be the fog of war in the beginning, getting beyond just the initial

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working together in the fog of war, if you will, of not having situational awareness of his own troops, and whether or not the sectarianism could be brought under control or not.

As we worked our way through that and he actually got a good feel for his command, and the Advisory Team also got a good feel for the situation on the ground within about the first three weeks, that was probably the initial hurdle to get over.

Then seeing his staff come together about the same time after that three weeks and start doing more than just having one or two people call them on the cellphone trying to get SA, getting past to where they can actually plan operations, those plans are handing off -- being handed off to their operations people to battle track, and to send written orders down to their subordinate commands was probably the next hurdle.

Then having his staff and his commanders believe in themselves happened about the same time, I think, and that was about after the first 30 days to

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60 days. They believed in themselves and their abilities to command their organization about 30 to 60 days into this.

They began to have successes and, you know, actually producing their own plans and orders with less of our assistance, and then they started having their own updates in the mornings, battlefield circulations that were successful, and rewarding good efforts out there and taking action where they needed to be taking action, such as checkpoint that were irrelevant or checkpoints that weren't being manned or organizations in their command that needed logistics or support from MOI or MOD, probably the next big obstacle we came to.

So their system still struggles with that today, and I would say that is going to be something they have to overcome in the future, in the next six months to a year.

There is a better way to fuse the logistics efforts so that they are not playing catchup with their security forces. Right now the MOI and MDO

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are usually about, you know, a day or two or a week or two weeks behind the needs of the forces on the ground, especially if they are not static.

If they are moving around the battle space, they still struggle with trying to plan and project logistics, fuel, ammunition, even personnel sometimes, to get out in front of future operations.

That is one of the things we are working very hard with him here that -- the Advisory Team is working hard with the BOC to get them to see that, when they do a plan, they need to include MOI and MOD, which provides mainly the AdCom relationship. It provides all these logistics services to them.

They need to project those and have those logistics available to them in time to do continuous operations and future operations. So that's still a struggle with them.

I think that will be one of the main efforts that (b)(3), (b)(6) and his team will have to tackle over the next six months to a year, especially over the next six months.

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That is going to take the cooperation of MOI, MOD, and others in the government of Iraq, as well as the BOC and IGFC forces.

Then probably -- I've talked about that initial fog of war, the logistics piece of it, and then being confident in themselves.

The next piece I see that we have overcome or might have been one of the main challenges is for them to use their chain of command and their staff in a way that keeps everybody informed.

The Chief of Staff here -- and he is a War College instructor for several years, and he really knows what he is doing, but he has trouble with keeping his staff informed and being able to use his chain of command in a way that we would like to see him use his chain of command, which at times has been effective.

What I'm talking about here is he will get information to -- or whatever information, however he gets it, and maybe the only person he tells about that is General Aboud, and he will get directly on the

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phone down to a subordinate commander, wherever he thinks he needs to within the operational environment and gives an order verbally, and doesn't inform his staff, doesn't give them the opportunity to do some analysis, perform an analysis, and maybe even doesn't inform the coalition force Advisory Team in a timely manner so we can support that operation.

Instead, he goes down and gives an order and tries to conduct an operation sort of on the spur of the moment, kind of like a hit shoot, if you will, for an artilleryman. And all of a sudden, that causes repercussions or is not vetted with our coalition MIT teams or NIPPA (Phonetic) teams on the ground, and they are doing uncoordinated actions in the environment.

That is something that has gotten better over time. Initially, it was happening very frequently, and now it probably only happens maybe, you know, once a week; and we have put people on to cover specifically down on General Hussan (Phonetic) 24 hours a day when he is here, to make sure that we

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are abreast and that he keeps us informed and gives his staff time to react.

We have actually told him he will not get our coalition force enablers to help him do operations unless he tells us about these operations in advance in a timely manner, at least 24 hours, and we would like to have it 72 hours in advance.

Now I will say that some of these cellphone type orders have resulted in good -- in productive -- good operations that have probably saved lives, and that's the way the Iraqis, I think, did things, to a certain extent. At least, I feel like it was, because that's the way he's been taught somewhere down the line.

Then I think also you see the other side of the coin, that you see some Iraqi officers, probably under the Saddam Hussein era, that wouldn't do anything unless they were told to by their chain of command, specifically you will do this at this time at this place.

So there's a mixture of that with General

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Hassan and the rest of the ISF that we struggle with.

So that's probably the third main hurdle I would tell you that we have had to overcome, and still overcoming that one and the logistics, and to some extent the fog of war, and that's always going to be there, but that one is to a less extent at this time.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Have I still got a couple more minutes of your time?

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

(b)(3), (b)(6) I've got one specific kind of question, and you may not know the answer to this, but I just want to kind of -- It's one of those sort of pieces that historians want to know, kind of a date, a place, a document that might match it, which is: As part of Operation Fardel Kanoun was the issue of establishing joint security stations, and also the barrier piece is a part of that.

In your recollection, was there a common discussion of that that took place within the BOC about joint security stations? Was there a common buy-in on that idea? Do you have any recollection of

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that discussion happening, or when there was sort of a mutual thumbs up or a document that said, yeah, here we are going to start (Several words inaudible) and start putting them out there?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, I do recall that evolving over the six months I have been here. I do recall several late night meetings with his subordinate commanders about JSSes, about gated communities, about gated markets.

What I'm talking about by gated, I mean by concrete barriers where VBIEDs couldn't get into those places and wreck their havoc -- and about setting up the JSSes and defining their roles and who would be in the JSS and where they would go.

That has all evolved incrementally over time. The BOC has never been against any of those initiatives. The government of Iraq was back and forth on some of those.

The JSSes, I think, have always had some buy-in by the government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces, but how we would going to man those

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and their purpose and how we would -- where we would place those, has been ongoing.

I would tell you that probably the two main players in that have been MND-Baghdad and the BOC, and they have come to common agreements about how they would be manned, what their useful role was, and where they would be placed or relocated.

It has gone from just a checkpoint for a JSS, a glorified checkpoint, to putting it -- co-locating it with a police station or even building a new facility for it. Depending on the situation and their operational environment on the ground and the enemy activity and the support, needed support from the local populace.

So that is still evolving, if you will. The JSSes are, and how we are manning those and setting those up, although we have a pretty good definition, that we want Iraqi Police, National Police. We want Iraqi Army close supports, and others involved in those JSSes, and we would like to have them located in a place to where the local populace is

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not afraid to call them or come to them and give us tips to help secure their neighborhoods, to help secure the security district that they are located in.

The Iraqis now understand what those are all about. They understand what a combat outpost or coalition outpost is now, and that's been an ongoing education process with them and an evolution of what those are meant to be, and an awareness of them that these not only are just places for tips to come into but also where we stage patrols out of that we put boots on the ground.

So it gives confidence to the local populace that we are going to be there for the long haul, that we are there to stay. We are hand in hand with the Iraqi Security Forces, the Police, and the government to do the right thing and secure those neighborhoods, instead of just going back into our FOBs, forward operating bases, at night and letting the insurgents run wild to do what they want to at night.

So -- and that really has increased our

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ability to find caches or increase tips that are coming in, our ability to get the insurgent forces on the run.

You know, everybody doubted this strategy and everything (Inaudible). As I said earlier, I do think that that strategy is working, and it's because of the tenacity of not only coalition forces on the ground but the emboldenment, if you will, of the Iraqi Security Forces and their confidence as they see this working on the ground and the gated communities keeping the VBIEDs out, to an extent to where now they are talking about building some sort of wall around Baghdad, the great wall of Baghdad, which I don't know if it's ever going to come to fruition or not, but they have cited things like, well, you're doing it on the United States-Mexican border, you know, and you've done it in other places, and other governments have done it Israel and other places.

So they are seeing the value of this. They are seeing that this does work and that it is keeping the insurgents at bay, and it's giving the

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footholds that they need in Baghdad.

If they can ever secure Baghdad -- They realize that, if they can ever secure Baghdad and get enough good people in the Iraqi Police and the National Police and Iraqi Security Forces believing in it that they could take their city back, that that will expand to where they can take their country back.

So the evolution of that has been something really kind of a good news story, because of not only just the doubt in the Iraqi Security Forces and the government but also the doubt of the American people back home, whether that would ever work or not.

I would tell you that it's gone from hopefully optimistic about three months ago to, wow, this is probably going to work, from my foxhole anyway.

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

We've covered a number of different topics. Is there anything before we wrap up that I haven't asked you that you think, hey, he's a historian, he didn't ask me about this?

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

No, I don't think so. I

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think we've covered most of the big areas.

I would like to say that we are on the verge of an expansion here of the BOC and, really, that expansion will mean just more that they are going to stand up on their own two feet, and it sort of means a shrinking of the Advisory Team over the next six months.

That's what we envisioned going into this.

We didn't know if it was going to take six, 12 or 18 months. I think it's going to take at least 12 months, another six months, and it could very well -- Like I said, we will shrink down to some sort of a smaller advisory team, an LNO function, out to about 18 months, if we are allowed to stay here that long.

That's about where I think, you know -- When I took over in February, I think 12 to 18 months you are going to see this advisory team, the BOCAT will shrink away into the sunset and be part of history, I guess, of this whole operation. But it was a very important role.

I've got 30 -- I guess 30 1/2 years of

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commissioned service now and 26 years Active, and of all the things I have been involved with, including Bosnia and Afghanistan and Special Ops, etcetera, this is probably the most relevant and rewarding things I've done in my career, is certainly being able to be a part of this and be a part of this historical piece right here in the very heart of Baghdad, and then seeing this effort beginning to produce fruit and come to fruition, and being able to set the conditions for the continued success of the BOC, General Aboud and his staff, and the continued success of the Advisory Team, which it's a little function here.

I think we've peaked out at about 52 people, and now over the last week we are starting to shrink down to about 46, and that will continue to shrink. It has had a key and important and vital role in the securing of Baghdad, Baghdad security plan and Fardel Kanoun, and it will always carry a little special place for me in the Advisory Team, the mission members, and probably the final members that are here doing this.

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Then I guess the last thing I would say is the experience I've had here on the Advisory Team, from my deputy down to the TSD, Transportation Security Detachment, the experiences we have gained here need to be documented and put into revisions into our COIN manuals that will serve us for years and years to come.

So we all have a duty and obligation to provide that input. So I know it will be sought by the Leavenworth teams, etcetera, to capture and put into future operations. But there's definitely some nuggets here, I think, in the BOCAT and probably going to be the DOCAT, if you will, at Diyala and Basra, that need to be captured and included.

So just something that we need to be thinking about for future ops.

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

Thanks very much.

That concludes this interview.

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