

22 May 2006

1. GEN Casey met with PM Blair in the morning together with the Ambassador. GEN Casey had said earlier that there was conscious Washington decisions to let the British leader travel first to Iraq, and to also begin the public discussion about force draw down. The CG had coordinated on the proposed statements that the UK PM would make, and so was cautiously optimistic that this would resonate well with both the British and the Iraqi public. Both countries could use a little boost and benefit from the momentum this positive and public move could generate. The CG did not say much about his meeting with Blair although they did discuss the predictable issues of security, sectarianism, ministerial capacity, resourcing, and government communication.

2. The CG also met with the current MOI candidate Tawfiq al-Yasiri for the first time. He was extremely impressed. He said they had a full discussed of his career, and although he has not held Ministerial level jobs in the past, he seemed to be a capable, competent candidate. He said he had been wounded twice. His last job in the Saddam army was as a Brigadier General in command of the Military Administrative and Technical school. He also served as the Commander of the Arab Gulf Military Academy, and was the Iraqi MOD rep in Kuwait at one time. Post liberation Yasiri was given the rank of Lieutenant General by the MOD. He asked him what the greatest challenge would be, and Yasiri said sectarian violence, and the need to restore confidence in the integrity of the Ministry. GEN Casey asked him if he thought he could run a Ministry with a quarter million people, and Yasiri replied he thought he could, but did not really know. The CG thought this was a pretty honest answer and gave him credit for his candid response.

3. At the conclusion of the meeting General Casey phoned former prime minister Ayad al-Alawi and asked him for his views on Yasiri, since Alawi knows what it takes to run the MOI and knows Yasiri. Alawi provided some very positive comments. He described him as a man of strong character, brave, and open to ideas. He said he had good credentials for the job, and a good family. He is cool and calculating but not over confident. With that strong endorsement from Alawi, the CG told the Ambassador that he was very favorably disposed toward Yasir, and, of all the

candidates, he was the most impressive and most likely to succeed.

4. On other security posts, Hajim al-Hasani and Nasir al-Rubai are still in contention for the MOD, but CG said Tawfuq is still threatening to walk out of they do not get the MOD. The Iraqis are looking for a candidate to fill the Minister of State for National Security position with Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih is currently presiding over. The thought is that a Kurd should fill this as the Sunnis have the MOD and the Shia have the MOI. The CG thought that Sadun al-Dulaymi was still a candidate for DG/INIS.

1.4b, 1.4d